



Lawyers Alliance for New York

Connecting lawyers, nonprofits, and communities

New York City and New York State Lobbying Registration: What Should You Know?

The deadline for registering an organization as a lobbyist in New York City and/or New York State is January 17, 2012. This deadline applies to both new and currently registered organizations. If your organization expects to spend in excess of \$2,000 this calendar year on lobbying in New York City, you must register with and report your lobbying activities to the New York City Clerk. If your organization expects to spend in excess of \$5,000 in the aggregate this calendar year on lobbying at the City and State level, you must register with and report to the New York Joint Commission on Public Ethics. Your organization should consider whether it should register as a lobbyist.

What constitutes “lobbying”? For purposes of City and State lobbying regulations, lobbying includes any attempt to influence legislation or an executive, administrative or other governmental determination that has the effect of law. Examples of lobbying include, but are not limited to, directly contacting legislators or policy makers to influence legislation or to express opinions on current or proposed legislation, encouraging others to do so, or communicating with public officials to influence determinations regarding a contract for State and municipal funding. Remember, the budget is a piece of legislation, so efforts to influence the budget will generally be considered lobbying. Lobbying does *not* include educating or informing others in a nonpartisan manner about pending or proposed legislation or determinations without an explicit or implicit “call to action.”

What happens if I miss the registration deadline? Organizations are required to register as soon as they anticipate exceeding the \$2,000 or \$5,000 thresholds. If your organization does not register as a lobbyist by the January 17, 2012 deadline but later exceeds the relevant threshold amount later in the year, the organization should immediately register with the New York City Clerk or the New York Joint Commission on Public Ethics. A fine may be imposed on an organization for its failure to register and report its lobbying activities and/or expenditures on timely basis.

This alert is meant to provide general information only, not legal advice. If you have any questions about whether your organization should register as a lobbyist or if you think your organization may exceed either or both monetary thresholds for the current year, please contact Elizabeth Perez at Lawyers Alliance for New York at (212) 219-1800 x 232 or eperez@lawyersalliance.org or visit our website www.lawyersalliance.org.

Lawyers Alliance for New York is the leading provider of business and transactional legal services for nonprofit organizations that are improving the quality of life in New York City neighborhoods. Our network of pro bono lawyers from law firms and corporations and staff of experienced attorneys collaborate to deliver expert corporate, tax, real estate, intellectual property, and other legal services to community organizations. By connecting lawyers, nonprofits and communities, we help nonprofits to develop affordable housing, stimulate economic development, promote community arts, and operate and advocate for vital programs for children and young people, the elderly, and other low-income New Yorkers.