

STATE OF LOUISIANA

SUMMARY OF THE LOCAL LOBBYING LAWS

LSA-R.S. 33:9961-9669

I. Introduction to the Statutes Governing Local Lobbying

A. Purpose (LSA-R.S. 33:9661)

- Preserve and maintain the integrity of local government action.
- Provide public disclosure of the identity of persons who attempt to influence the actions of local government and the expenditures made by those persons.

B. Administration (LSA-R.S. 33:9961 et seq.)

- Louisiana Board of Ethics
 1. Promulgates rules and forms for the implementation and administration of the local lobbying program
 2. Prepares and distributes forms
 3. Registers local lobbyists and assigns registration numbers
 4. Enforces the statutes governing local lobbying
 5. Imposes and collects penalties for violations of local lobbying laws
 6. Receives reports and makes them available to the public
 7. Issues advisory opinions interpreting local lobbying laws
 8. Has staff available to provide assistance

II. Persons Required to Register as Lobbyists (LSA-R.S. 33:9662)

A. Each person who meets the definition of a “lobbyist” must register with the Louisiana Board of Ethics.

B. Definitions

1. **“Lobbyist”** means any person who acts in a representative capacity and makes an expenditure in excess of five hundred dollars in the aggregate within the calendar year.
2. **“Expenditure”** means the gift or payment of money or anything of value for the purchase of food, drink, or refreshment for a local government official or for the spouse or minor child of a local government official for the purpose of lobbying or any gift or payment permitted by R.S. 42:1123(13) for the purpose of lobbying when the lobbyist

or principal accounts, or would be expected to account, for the expenditure as an ordinary and necessary expense directly related to the active conduct of the lobbyist's, his employer's or the principal's trade or business.

NOTE: *Please review the Louisiana Code of Governmental Ethics (LSA-R.S. 42:1101 et seq). which contains limitations on the receipt of gifts by public employees and consequences for giving a public employee a gift which he is prohibited from receiving.*

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3. **“Person”** means an individual, partnership, committee, association, corporation, and any other organization or group of persons.
 4. **“Lobbying” or “to lobby”** means any direct act or communication with an local government official, the purpose of which is to aid in influencing a local government action.
 5. **“Local government official”** means an elected official, an appointed official, or an employee in a local government agency.
 6. **“Local government action”** means any act by a local government agency or official to effectuate the public powers, functions, and duties of a local government official or a local government agency, including but not limited to any act in the nature of policymaking, rulemaking, adjudication, licencing, regulation, or enforcement; relative to contracts, requests for proposals, development of specifications, or engaging another person to perform a governmental function; to adopt, repeal, increase, or decrease any fee imposed on the affairs, actions, or persons regulated by a local government agency; or to affect the passage, defeat, or implementation of any legislation.
 7. **“Local government agency” or “agency”** means any political subdivision, including any parish, municipality, school board, or special district, and any other unit of local government and any department, office, agency, board, commission, district, governing authority, committee, subcommittee, advisory board, task force, or other instrumentality of a political subdivision or other unit of local government. The terms “local government agency” or “agency” shall not include any entity which is an executive branch agency as defined in La. R.S. 49:72 or any unit of the legislative or judicial branch of state government.

III. Persons who are not considered to be lobbyists (LSA-R.S. 33:9663)

- A. Elected or appointed public officials or any designee of such official acting in the performance of his public duties.
- B. A principal or employer of a lobbyist.*

****NOTE:** A principal or employer may make itself subject to some provisions of the Local Government Lobbying laws by opting to file expenditure reports on behalf of all of its lobbyists in accordance with Section 9666F(2).*

IV. Registration Requirements (LSA-R.S. 33:9664)

- A. Each lobbyist must register with the Louisiana Board of Ethics as soon as possible after the date of employment as a lobbyist or after the first action requiring registration as a lobbyist, whichever occurs first. Each lobbyist must register no later than five (5) days after employment as a lobbyist or within five (5) days of the first action requiring registration.
- B. Each lobbyist must provide the following on the online form approved by the Board of Ethics:
 - 1. Name and business address;
 - 2. Name and address of each person by whom he is employed or whose interests he represents, including the business in which that person is engaged;
 - 3. Name of each person by whom he is paid or is to be paid, the amount he is paid or is to be paid for the purpose of lobbying, and a characterization of such payment as paid, earned but not received, or prospective;
 - 4. An indication of the potential subject matters about which he anticipates lobbying;
 - 5. The identity of each elected local government official or spouse of a elected local government official with whom he or his employer or principal has, or has had in the preceding 12 months, a business relationship.
 - 6. 2 inch by 2 inch photograph made within the prior 6 months, and
 - 7. \$110 registration fee.

***NOTE:** The absence of any of the above information on a registration form and lack of payment of the \$110 registration fee may delay the processing of your registration and issuance of your registration identification number until all necessary information and fees have been received.*

- C. Registration expires on December 31st of each year unless the lobbyist submits a renewal* along with a fee of \$110. Renewals may be filed any time between December 1st and January 31st.
- D. Supplemental registration forms must be filed:
 - 1. Within **10 days** of termination of a lobbyist's employment or representation of a person or termination of all lobbying activities
 - 2. Within **5 days** of the addition of a new representation **or** all other changes in a lobbyist's

registration information.

- E. There is no fee for supplemental registrations.
- F. Each lobbyist who has terminated his registration is required to file disclosure reports for each reporting period during which he was registered.

V. Reporting Requirements (LSA-R.S. 33:9666)

- A. Lobbying Expenditure Reports must be filed with the Board by all registered lobbyists, using the electronic filing system, on a monthly basis.

Monthly reports are due on the 25th of the following month.

- B. Lobbyists are required to maintain records that document all the reports made for no less than 3 years.
- C. Each report must contain the aggregate amount of expenditures on an individual local government official during the month, including his name and his agency, and the aggregate amount of expenditures on the spouse or minor child of an local government official during the month.
- D. Each report must include all expenditures for each reception, social gathering or other function to which more than 25 branch officials have been invited.
- E. Each report must include a listing of the subject matters lobbied during the month.
- F. Each report must contain the total of all expenditures for the month.
- G. Each report must contain the aggregate amount of expenditures on an individual local government official during the month including his name and his agency, and the aggregate amount of expenditures on the spouse or minor child of an individual local government official during the same calendar year.
- H. Exemptions from Reporting:
 - 1. Any expenditure for any reception or social gathering sponsored in whole or in part by a lobbyist, individually or on behalf of a principal he represents, held in conjunction with a meeting of a national or regional organization of branch officials
 - 2. Any expenditure for any meal or refreshment consumed by or offered to a local government official which is incidental to the local government official giving a speech, being a member of a panel, or otherwise being involved in an informational presentation

to a group

- I. Any expenditures by a lobbyist's principal or employer made in the presence of the lobbyist shall be reported by the lobbyist. Information regarding such expenditures must be provided to the lobbyist by the principal or employer within 2 business days of the close of the reporting period. Failure by the principal or employer to timely provide such information to its lobbyist will cause the principal or employer to be required to register as a lobbyist under the Local Government Lobbying Laws and will subject it to any applicable penalties.
- J. A lobbyist's employer or principal may opt to file expenditure reports for all of its registered branch lobbyists.
 - 1. An employer or principal must notify the Board of its intention to file on behalf of its lobbyists no later than January 31st of each year.
 - 2. Such option will be effective for the reporting of all expenditures made during that calendar year.
 - 3. Any lobbyist whose employer or principal opts to file reports on his behalf must provide all information about expenditures no later than 2 business days after the close of each reporting period.
 - 4. An employer or principal who opts to file on behalf of its lobbyists shall be liable for any applicable late fees and penalties for late filings.

NOTE: *In order to exercise this option, a Local Government Lobbying Expenditure Reporting Designation Form must be completed and submitted to the Board by January 31 of the calendar year.*

VI. Penalties

- A. Any person required to register and who fails to timely register and any person who fails to timely file any report shall be assessed a late fee of \$50 per day, up to a maximum of \$1,500.
- B. Any person whose registration or report is filed 11 or more days after the day on which it was due shall be assessed a penalty of up to \$10,000 in addition to any late fee.
- C. If a report is inaccurate or incomplete, the Board shall notify the lobbyist and give the lobbyist 14 days to correct the inaccuracy before the implementation of any penalties.
- D. The Board may censure any person found guilty of a violation of these laws by the Board of Ethics and prohibit such person from lobbying for not less than 30 days and not more than one year.
- E. The Board may file a claim to offset any late fees or other penalties imposed against an individual's state income tax refund.

NOTE: This outline was compiled as a summary to give an overview of registration and reporting requirements for the Local Government Lobbying Program. It does not purport to fully state the law. For further information, or registration and reporting forms, please contact the Louisiana Board of Ethics, P.O. Box 4368, Baton Rouge, LA 70821, (225) 219-5600 or toll free at (800) 842-6630.