

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY ETHICS COMMISSION
HERITAGE OFFICE COMPLEX
2666 RIVA ROAD, SUITE 160
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401
Phone: 410-222-4412 Fax: 410-222-4414

GENERAL INFORMATION ON LOBBYING

(Pursuant to the Public Ethics Law, Anne Arundel County Code, Article7)

1. A lobbyist is required to file a **Lobbying Registration Form** and an **Employer Authorization to Lobby Form** with the Anne Arundel County Ethics Commission before undertaking any lobbying activity. The registration is valid from the time it is filed until December 31 of that year. A new registration form must be filed for the next year, prior to engaging in any lobbying activity. §7-7-102(b).
2. "A lobbyist is any person who:
 - a. communicates with any employee in the Legislative or Executive Branch of County government for the purpose of influencing any executive action or legislative action, and who, for that purpose, incurs personally, or through a representative, expenses of \$100 or more, or receives \$100 or more as compensation, exclusive of personal travel or subsistence expenses;
 - b. expends cumulatively \$50 or more during a reporting period on one or more employees in the executive or legislative branch for meals, beverages, special events, or gifts in connection with or with the purpose of influencing executive or legislative action;
 - c. expends \$1,000 or more, including postage, in a reporting period for the express purpose of soliciting others to communicate with any employee to influence any legislative or executive action; or
 - d. spends at least \$500 to provide compensation to one or more persons required to register under this article." **Note:** This subsection is new. It does not require an employer to register as a lobbyist, unless the employer personally engages in lobbying activity. See, Art. 7, §7-1-101(18).
3. A lobbyist must file a separate Registration and Authorization form for each client or employer. §7-7-102(f).
4. Lobbying Activity Reports must be filed twice a year. One report covers the period from November 1 through April 30, and is **due by May 31**. The second report covers the period from May 1 through October 31, and is **due by November 30**. A lobbyist must file a separate Activity Report for each client or employer. §7-7-105. If a fully completed report is not filed by the due date, the Ethics Commission may revoke the lobbyist's registration upon 20 days prior written notification. §7-5-106. In addition, the lobbyist will be subjected to a late fee of \$10 per day, not to exceed \$250. §7-4-104(d)(1).
5. A registration may be terminated at any time upon **written notification**, specifying a date when the termination will be effective. A **final Activity Report** shall be filed **within 10 days after the termination date**, covering the period between the filing of the previous Report and the effective date of the termination. §7-7-103.
6. A lobbyist's compensation may not be dependent in any manner on the passage or defeat of any proposed legislative or executive action. §7-7-104.

7. The Ethics Commission may, upon request, provide advisory opinions on any issue relating to a lobbyist's activities or responsibilities under the Ethics Law. Charter, §1001B(f).
8. The following activities are exempt from lobbyist registration and reporting requirements:
 - a. professional services in drafting bills or in advising and rendering opinions to clients as to the construction and effect of proposed or pending legislation, if these services do not otherwise constitute activities as a lobbyist;
 - b. appearances before the County Council at its specific invitation or request, but only if the person engages in no further or other activities in connection with the passage or defeat of legislation;
 - c. appearances as part of the official duties of an elected or appointed official or employee of the State, political subdivision of the State, or the United States, and on behalf of any other entity;
 - d. actions of a publisher or working member of the press, radio, or television in the ordinary course of the business of disseminating news or making editorial comments to the general public, if that person does not engage in lobbying that would directly and specifically benefit the economic, business, or professional interests of that person or that person's employer;
 - e. appearances before the County Council at the specific invitation or request of a lobbyist, if no other act is undertaken for which reporting is required and if the person appearing states to the County Council that the person is appearing at the request of the lobbyist;
 - f. representation of a bona fide religious organization solely for the purpose of protecting the right of its own members to practice the doctrine of the organization;
 - g. appearances as part of the official duties of an officer, director, member, or employee of an association engaged exclusively in lobbying for counties and municipalities and not on behalf of any other entity; or
 - h. activities undertaken by a [County] employee in connection with the employee's official duties, and not on behalf of any other entity. §7-7-101(a).
9. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in the imposition of civil fines or other penalties. §7-4-104.
10. If you have any questions or would like assistance in complying with these requirements, call the Ethics Commission.