

Chapter 2.06 LOBBYING REGULATIONS

2.06.005 Statement of policy

It is City policy to encourage the full participation and expression of interest of all of the people of the City in the legislative process. The provisions of this Chapter 2.06 shall be construed to promote full disclosure of lobbying in order to protect the openness and integrity of the legislative process while preserving an individual's right to organize and petition the government.

(Ord. No. 126260 , § 1, 2020 [style cleanup]; Ord. 122645 , § 1, 2008.)

2.06.010 Definitions.

For the purposes of this Chapter 2.06, the following terms apply:

"City" means The City of Seattle.

"City officer or employee or agent" means every person elected or appointed to any City office or position of employment, including volunteers performing work for the City, when acting within the scope of their City duties, and contract workers and consultants when acting within the scope of their contract with the City. The term also includes persons appointed to City boards, commissions, and committees when acting within the scope of their City duties, regardless of whether those persons are paid by the City.

"Commission" means the Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission.

"Compensation" includes anything of economic value that is provided or promised to a lobbyist or lobbying entity in return for lobbying. The term includes compensation for preparation and planning activities, research, and other background work that is intended, at the time it is performed, for use in connection with lobbying.

"Executive Director" means the Executive Director of the Commission or designee.

"Expenditure" means anything of economic value that is provided, given, loaned, or promised in furtherance of lobbying. The term includes expenditures for preparation and planning activities, research, and other background work that is intended, at the time it is performed, for use in connection with lobbying. The term also includes agreements to provide things of economic value even when those agreements are unenforceable. Expenditures other than money or its equivalent shall be valued according to their fair market value.

"Gift" means anything of value transferred or promised by one person to another without consideration.

"Legislation" means any council bill, ordinance, resolution, ballot measure, or charter amendment. The term also includes making, confirming, or rejecting appointments to City positions. The term does not include quasi-judicial matters subject to the appearance of fairness doctrine.

"Lobby" and "lobbying" each mean communications with City Council members, the Mayor, City officers or employees or agents either of the Legislative Department or working in the Mayor's office, a department director, or a deputy director or other employee who reports directly to a department director in an attempt to influence any of those individuals to develop, propose, draft, consider or reconsider, promote, adopt, enact, reject, take favorable action upon, approve, disapprove, veto, or fail to take action upon legislation.

"Lobby" and "lobbying" do not include the following:

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1. Communications or other actions by any City officer or employee or agent acting within the scope of his or her employment authority or contract with the City;
 2. Communications or other actions related to existing or proposed collective bargaining agreement(s) with the City or other legislation that could affect specific existing or proposed collective bargaining agreements with the City;
 3. Communications or other actions by members of the news media related to news and feature reporting, commentary, and editorial opinion in a regularly-published periodical, on television or radio, or on a regularly-maintained internet website or other means of electronic communication devoted to the dissemination of news or opinion and not created solely to influence specific legislation;
 4. An association's or other organization's act of communicating with the members of that association or organization.

"Lobbying entity" means a law firm, consulting firm, public relations firm, or other similar organization that engages in lobbying through its employees or agents.

"Lobbyist" means any individual who lobbies for compensation, except individuals reimbursed for minor incidental personal expenses.

"Lobbyist's employer" means any person who employs or compensates a lobbyist or lobbying entity for lobbying to promote that person's interests.

"Minor incidental personal expenses" means expenses actually incurred for lodging, mileage, parking, meals, copying, telephone, and facsimiles, which expenses are directly related to lobbying.

"Month" means a calendar month.

"Organizational member" includes a person as defined in this Chapter 2.06 but excludes individuals.

"Person" includes an individual, partnership, joint venture, public or private corporation, association, federal, state or local governmental entity or agency however constituted, candidate, committee, political committee, political party, executive committee thereof, or any other organization or group of persons, however organized.

"Quarter" means a calendar quarter, i.e., January through March, April through June, July through September, and October through December.

"Year" means a calendar year.

(Ord. No. 126260 , § 1, 2020 [style cleanup]; Ord. 122645 , § 1, 2008.)

2.06.020 Registration of lobbyists

- A. Before lobbying, or within 30 days after being employed as a lobbyist, whichever comes first, a lobbyist shall register by filing with the Executive Director a lobbyist registration statement, in such detail as the Commission shall by rule prescribe, showing:
 1. The lobbyist's name, permanent business address, business telephone number and business e-mail address;
 2. The following information for each of the lobbyist's employers:
 - a. The name, permanent business address, business telephone number, business e-mail address, and occupation or business of the lobbyist's employer;
 - b. The duration of the lobbyist's employment;

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- c. The lobbyist's compensation for lobbying, and any compensation for lobbying provided to a lobbying entity for the lobbyist's services, how much the lobbyist is to be paid for expenses, and what expenses are to be reimbursed;
 - d. Whether the person from whom the lobbyist receives that compensation employs the lobbyist solely as a lobbyist or whether the lobbyist is a regular employee performing services that include, but are not limited to, lobbying;
 - e. The general subject or subjects and, if there is one, the piece of legislation related to the lobbyist's lobbying, including council bill, ordinance, resolution, or initiative number, if established;
 - f. If the lobbyist receives compensation from a lobbying entity, then the name of such entity; and
 - g. If the lobbyist's employer is an entity (including, but not limited to, a business or trade association) not exempted under Section 2.06.070, whose members include businesses, groups, associations, or organizations or which as a representative entity undertakes lobbying activities for businesses, groups, associations, or organizations:
 - 1) The name and business address of each business or trade association, or other organizational member of such entity; and
 - 2) The name of each person represented by such entity, whose payments or other consideration paid to such entity for lobbying during either of the prior two years have exceeded \$500 or who has paid or is obligated to or has agreed to make payments or other consideration exceeding \$500 to such entity for lobbying during the current year. Membership fees, dues, or other consideration paid to such an entity, but not provided for the specific purpose of lobbying, shall not be regarded as consideration for lobbying under this subsection 2.06.020.A.2.g.2.
 - 3. A written authorization from each of the lobbyist's employers confirming such employment; and
 - 4. The name, business address, business telephone number, and business e-mail address of the person who will have custody of the accounts, bills, receipts, books, papers, and documents required to be kept by Section 2.06.090.
- B. Whenever a change, termination, or modification of the lobbyist's employment with a lobbyist's employer occurs, or whenever there is a change in any of the information required to be supplied by subsection 2.06.020.A, the lobbyist shall furnish full information regarding the same within 30 calendar days of such termination or modification by filing with the Executive Director an amended registration statement.
- C. Each registered lobbyist shall file a new registration statement, revised as appropriate, on the second Monday in January of each even-numbered year. Failure to do so terminates the lobbyist's registration.
- (Ord. No. 126260 , § 1, 2020 [style cleanup]; Ord. 123342, § 1, 2010; Ord. 122645 , § 1, 2008.)

2.06.030 Reporting by lobbyists

- A. Each lobbyist not exempted under Section 2.06.060 shall either sign or certify and then file periodic reports of the lobbyist's lobbying activities. The reports shall be made in the form and manner as prescribed by rule adopted by the Commission. The reports shall be filed within 15 calendar days after the last day of the quarter. The reports shall each cover the preceding quarter.
- B. The report shall contain the following information for each of the lobbyist's employers:
 - 1. The name, permanent business address, business telephone number, business e-mail address, and occupation or business of the lobbyist's employer.

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2. The totals of all expenditures for lobbying activities made or incurred by such lobbyist and the totals of all expenditures for lobbying activities made or incurred on behalf of such lobbyist by such lobbyist's employer, lobbying entity, or any other person with the lobbyist's knowledge. Such total expenditures for lobbying activities shall be segregated by category, and include the following: food and refreshments, living accommodations, travel, entertainment, and other expenses or services, including but not limited to minor incidental expenses. Notwithstanding the foregoing, lobbyists are not required to report any unreimbursed expenses incurred for telephone and any office expenses including rent and salaries and wages paid for staff and secretarial assistance.
 3. The total compensation paid to the lobbyist for lobbying purposes and any compensation for lobbying purposes provided to a lobbying entity for the lobbyist's services during the reporting period by each of the lobbyist's employer(s).
 4. The legislation that the lobbyist has been supporting or opposing during the reporting period, including council bill, ordinance, resolution, or initiative number, if established.
 5. The names of the individuals lobbied, and the dates on which they were lobbied.
 6. Other information relevant to lobbying activities as shall be prescribed by rule consistent with this Section 2.06.030.
 7. Information regarding any termination, change, or modification of the lobbyist's employment.
 8. If, during the quarterly reporting period, the lobbyist provided compensated services, including consulting services, to the campaign of any candidate for elective City office, or to a campaign for or against any City ballot measure, the name of the candidate, the elective City office sought by the candidate, the ballot number of the ballot measure, the date of the election, the amount of compensation earned for the compensated services, and a description of the nature of the services provided. Such information shall be reported if the lobbyist personally provided the services, or if the services were provided by a business entity in which the lobbyist owns at least a ten percent investment, whether the compensation was provided directly to the lobbyist or to the business entity.

(Ord. No. 126260 , § 1, 2020 [style cleanup]; Ord. 123342, § 2, 2010; Ord. 122645 , § 1, 2008.)

2.06.040 Reports by employers of registered lobbyists

- A. On or before the last day of February of each year, every employer of a lobbyist not exempted under Section 2.06.070 shall report on such employment either by:
 1. Verifying, by signing or certifying along with the lobbyist, each quarterly report for the preceding calendar year required to be filed by Section 2.06.030; or
 2. Filing with the Commission a statement disclosing for the preceding calendar year the following information:
 - a. The total expenditures made by the employer for lobbying purposes, whether through or on behalf of a registered lobbyist or otherwise;
 - b. The legislation the employer has been employing a lobbyist or lobbying entity, or compensating a lobbyist or lobbying entity to support or oppose, including council bill, ordinance, resolution, or initiative number, if established;
 - c. The name, permanent business address, business telephone number, and business e-mail address of each lobbyist or lobbying entity employed by the reporting person and the total expenditures made by the employer for each such lobbyist or lobbying entity for lobbying purposes;

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- d. Any contract the entity or any of its subdivisions has with the City; and
 - e. Such other information as may be prescribed by rule consistent with this Section 2.06.040.

(Ord. No. 126260 , § 1, 2020 [style cleanup]; Ord. 122645 , § 1, 2008.)

2.06.060 Registration and reporting—Exemptions

The following persons are exempt from registration and reporting under this Chapter 2.06:

- A. Lobbyists who limit their lobbying to appearing before public sessions of the City Council or its committees.
- B. Lobbyists who restrict their lobbying activities to no more than four days or parts thereof during any quarter and are paid no more than \$5,000 for lobbying in that quarter. Appearances before public sessions of the City Council and its committees are not counted as lobbying activities.
- C. Lobbyists' employers, to the extent that the activities of the lobbyists they employ are exempt from registration and reporting under this Section 2.06.060.
- D. Elected officials, officers, and employees of any local, state, or federal government agency acting within the scope of their representation of or employment with such agency; provided, however, that this subsection 2.06.060.D shall not apply to persons specifically employed or retained by a government agency to lobby.

(Ord. No. 126260 , § 1, 2020 [style cleanup]; Ord. 122645 , § 1, 2008.)

2.06.070 Registration and reporting—Request for exemption

- A. An exemption from the registration requirement of subsection 2.06.020.A.2.g or 2.06.115.B shall be granted by the Commission to a lobbyist's employer or sponsor of a grassroots lobbying campaign if such lobbyist's employer or sponsor of a grassroots lobbying campaign has applied in writing to the Commission for such exemption and has demonstrated by a reasonable probability that the compelled disclosure of identifying information under subsection 2.06.020.A.2.g or 2.06.115.B will subject those persons to threats, harassment, or reprisals from either government officials or private parties.
- B. The decision to grant or deny an exemption from disclosure, with the reason or reasons therefor, shall be set out in writing with a copy kept on file with the Executive Director.

(Ord. No. 126260 , § 1, 2020 [style cleanup]; Ord. 122645 , § 1, 2008.)

2.06.080 Voluntary registration and reporting

Any person exempted under this Chapter 2.06 from registering and reporting may voluntarily register and report under this Chapter 2.06.

(Ord. No. 126260 , § 1, 2020 [style cleanup]; Ord. 122645 , § 1, 2008.)

2.06.090 Duty to obtain and preserve records; inspection and audit of records

- A. Persons required to register or report under this Chapter 2.06 shall obtain and preserve all records necessary to substantiate all registration statements and reports that this Chapter 2.06 requires. Records required to be preserved under this Chapter 2.06 include but are not limited to receipts, bills, invoices, checks, and

records of electronic financial transactions. All such records shall be preserved for at least five years after the registration statement or report to which they pertain has been filed.

- B. All records required to be maintained under this Section 2.06.090 are subject to inspection, copying, and audit by the Executive Director, with reasonable prior notice, during regular City business hours.

(Ord. No. 126260 , § 1, 2020 [style cleanup]; Ord. 122645 , § 1, 2008.)

2.06.100 Employment of unregistered persons

It is a violation of this Chapter 2.06 for any person to employ a lobbyist who is required to register but is not registered under this Chapter 2.06.

(Ord. No. 126260 , § 1, 2020 [style cleanup]; Ord. 122645 , § 1, 2008.)

2.06.110 Other restrictions

In addition to other requirements imposed by this Chapter 2.06, a person required to register under this Chapter 2.06 shall not:

- A. Engage in any lobbying before registering as a lobbyist under this Chapter 2.06;
- B. File any statement or report with the Commission that is incomplete in any material respect or contains a statement that is false or misleading with respect to any material fact;
- C. Fail to comply with any of the reporting requirements of this Chapter 2.06.

(Ord. No. 126260 , § 1, 2020 [style cleanup]; Ord. 122645 , § 1, 2008.)

2.06.115 Grassroots lobbying campaigns

- A. Any person who has made expenditures, not otherwise reported by a registered lobbyist under this Chapter 2.06, or a candidate or political committee under Section 2.04.230 or 2.04.260, exceeding \$1,500 in the aggregate within any three-month period or exceeding \$750 in the aggregate within any one-month period in presenting a program to the public, a substantial portion of which is intended, designed, or calculated primarily to influence legislation shall register and report, as provided in subsection 2.06.115.B.2, as a sponsor of a grassroots lobbying campaign.
- B. Within 30 days after becoming a sponsor of a grassroots lobbying campaign, the sponsor shall register by filing with the Executive Director a registration statement, in such detail as the Commission shall prescribe, showing:
 - 1. The sponsor's name, address, and business or occupation, and, if the sponsor is not an individual, the names, addresses, and titles of the controlling persons responsible for managing the sponsor's affairs;
 - 2. The names, addresses, and business or occupation of all persons organizing and managing the campaign, or hired to assist the campaign, including any public relations or advertising firms participating in the campaign, and the terms of compensation for all such persons;
 - 3. The names and addresses of each person contributing \$25 or more to the campaign, and the aggregate amount contributed;
 - 4. The purpose of the campaign, including the specific legislation, rates, standards, or proposals that are the subject matter of the campaign;

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5. The totals of all expenditures made or incurred to date on behalf of the campaign segregated according to financial category, including but not limited to: advertising, segregated by media, and in the case of large expenditures (as provided by rule of the Commission), by outlet; contributions; entertainment, including food and refreshments; office expenses including rent and the salaries and wages paid for staff and secretarial assistance, or the proportionate amount paid or incurred for lobbying campaign activities; consultants; and printing and mailing expenses.
 - C. Every sponsor who has registered under this Section 2.06.115 shall file monthly reports with the Commission by the tenth day of the month for the activity during the preceding month. The reports shall update the information contained in the sponsor's registration statement and in prior reports and shall show contributions received and totals of expenditures made during the month, in the same manner as provided for in the registration statement.
 - D. When the campaign has been terminated, the sponsor shall file a notice of termination with the final monthly report.

(Ord. No. 126260 , § 1, 2020.)

2.06.120 Complaints and investigations

Enforcement under this Chapter 2.06, including complaints, hearings and investigations, shall be governed by the provisions of Sections 2.04.060 through 2.04.090. The prohibitions and penalties set forth in this Chapter 2.06 are not exclusive and are not intended to limit or preclude other prohibitions that may be applicable or remedies that may be available under the law.

(Ord. No. 126260 , § 1, 2020 [style cleanup]; Ord. 122645 , § 1, 2008.)

2.06.130 Civil remedies and sanctions

Upon determining pursuant to Sections 2.04.060 through 2.04.090 that a violation of this Chapter 2.06 has occurred, the Commission may issue an order requiring the party to take particular action in order to comply with the law, and in addition, or alternatively, may impose sanctions up to \$5,000 per violation. Any person who fails to file a properly completed registration or report within the time required by this Chapter 2.06 may also be subject to a civil penalty of \$75 per day for each day each such delinquency continues, except that during the last 30 days before any election such fine shall be at least \$250 per day and up to \$1,000 per day in the discretion of the Commission, for each day such delinquency continues.

(Ord. No. 126260 , § 1, 2020 [style cleanup]; Initiative 122 , § 3, 2015; Ord. 122645 , § 1, 2008.)

2.06.140 Enforcement

The Executive Director shall have the authority to enforce this Chapter 2.06 as provided in Section 2.04.510.

(Ord. No. 126260 , § 1, 2020 [style cleanup]; Ord. 122645 , § 1, 2008.)

2.06.150 Limitation on actions

Any action brought under the provisions of this Chapter 2.06 must be commenced within five years after the date when the violation occurred, or the date when the violation reasonably should have been discovered.

(Ord. No. 126260 , § 1, 2020 [style cleanup]; Ord. 122645 , § 1, 2008.)

