

Nova Scotia Registry of Lobbyists Fact Sheet

Lobbyists' Registration Act, 2001

What is lobbying? What is a lobbyist?

Communicating with a public servant in an effort to influence a decision is called lobbying. Under the Act, anyone who is paid to do this is considered a lobbyist; regardless of whether they are a hired consultant such as a lawyer or public relations professional, or an employee of a company or organization.

Not all communication with a public servant is lobbying. For example, sending a personal letter to your MLA or a government official to express your opinion about a policy or program is not lobbying unless you are hired to do so.

Who is a public servant?

Public servants, referred to in the Act as public office holders, include:

- MLAs and their staff
- an employee of most provincial government departments and agencies, and
- a person appointed by the Cabinet or a Minister to an agency, board or commission.

The following people are *not* public office holders under the Act:

- a judge or justice of the peace
- a Small Claims Court adjudicator
- a member of an administrative tribunal, such as the Labour Relations Board, exercising a judicial function
- the Ombudsman, and
- the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* review officer

How do I view information in the Registry?

The Registry contains information that lobbyists are required to file about their activities. Access to the Registry is free. It may be searched at any time by going to www.gov.ns.ca/lobbyist/ and clicking on "Search the Registry".

What sort of information is in the Registry?

- details about the lobbyist
- contact information for the client or employer
- whether the client or employer receives government funding
- whether there is outside funding for the lobbying
- the government departments and agencies to be lobbied
- the issues, policies or programs that are the subject of the lobbying, and
- the lobbying techniques used

Who needs to register? When?

Anyone who is paid to lobby a public servant may need to register.

- a consultant must register within 10 days of being retained by a client
- company employees who spend significant time lobbying must register within two months after becoming a lobbyist
- the senior officer of an organization such as a professional association or society must register employees who spend significant time lobbying within two months after they become lobbyists
- all active registrations must be renewed every six months
- where required, updates such as address changes must be made within 30 days

How do I register?

Registration can be done on-line, by mail, by fax, or by dropping off a form at any Access Nova Scotia location. You will not be considered properly registered until your registration is confirmed and activated.

Please consult your telephone directory for the address and telephone number of the nearest Access Nova Scotia location.

How much does it cost to register?

- \$59.69 to register on-line; free on-line registration for organizations
- \$119.38 to register by paper (mail, fax or by dropping off the form at Access Nova Scotia); \$53.25 paper registration for organizations
- \$29.84 to renew every six months; free on-line renewals for organizations

Why do organizations pay less?

In general, an organization can be distinguished from other entities subject to the Act (a consultant, person, partnership or company) because it is a non-profit or non-commercial operation. As such, fees for organizations are lower.

What is the penalty for not registering?

A first offence could result in a fine up to \$25,000, while subsequent fines could be up to \$100,000.

Where can I obtain more information?

The information in this brochure is general in nature. For greater detail, please contact the Registry, refer to the Act and its regulations, the Guide to the Nova Scotia Registry of Lobbyists or your legal counsel.

Registry of Lobbyists

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