

STATE OF  
IDAHO

# Lobbyist Manual

## For Lobbyist Activity Disclosure

*Promoting Openness and Public Confidence in Government*

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# INTRODUCTION TO LOBBYING & STATE ENTITY REPORTING IN IDAHO

## Introduction

The Idaho Secretary of State's Office regulates Idaho's lobbyist and state entity disclosure. This handbook is a reference to assist lobbyists and state entities in complying with statutory registration and reporting requirements.

As of July 1, 2025, all lobbyist and state entity disclosure requirements have moved from Title 67, State Government and State Affairs, to Title 74, Transparent and Ethical Government.

## What is lobbying?

Lobbying in Idaho means anyone who is employed or contracted to:

- Attempt to influence the passage or defeat of any legislation by communicating or causing others to communicate with members of the legislature or executive officials
- Attempt to influence any rule or rulemaking
- Attempt to influence any rate-making decision, procurement, contract, bid, or bid process, financial services agreement, or bond issue
- Develop and maintain relationships, entertain, and promote goodwill with members of the legislature and executive officials

I.C. § 74-702(7)

## Lobbying does NOT include

- Members of the public who contact legislators and executive officials that are not being paid to lobby
- Communications between an association or other organizations with members of that association or organization
- Communicating with an executive official to carry out ongoing negotiations following the award of a bid or a contract
- Communications and negotiations involving ongoing legal work between attorneys for executive agencies

- Interactions between parties in litigation or other contested matters
- Communications between members of the legislature and executive officials and employees
- State employees acting in their official capacity or within the course and scope of their employment
- People who limit their lobbying activities to appearances before public sessions of committees of the legislature
- News media
- People who are not compensated or receive less than \$250 a calendar quarter for lobbying
- Members of a trade association if the association has a registered lobbyist
- Elected state officers and state executive officers appointed by the governor subject to confirmation by the senate acting in their official capacity
- Members of a church that lobbies for protecting the constitutional right to the free exercise of religion
- Employees of a corporate entity, if the corporate entity has a designated lobbyist

I.C. § 74-704

### **What is state entity reporting?**

Any office or agency of state government or a state-funded educational institution that offers gifts of any kind through interaction with the legislative or executive departments of state government must follow the same reporting requirements as lobbyists unless the entity is otherwise represented by a lobbyist who files all disclosure reports.

I.C. § 74-706

## REGISTRATION

### Who needs to register as a lobbyist?

- Any person who engages in lobbyist activity defined by I.C. § 74-702(7), unless that person is exempt under I.C. § 74-704.
- Lobbyists register and report on behalf of their employer or client; an employer or client is not required to register in addition to the lobbyist's registration, except for designated lobbyists, who require an additional registration fee for the corporate entity.

I.C. § 74-703, 74-704

### When does someone need to register as a lobbyist?

- Lobbyists must register with the Secretary of State's office before engaging in any lobbyist activity or within 30 days of being employed or contracted as a lobbyist, whichever occurs first. A lobbyist must register each client or employer with a \$10 filing fee.
- Registration is on an annual basis. Registration will be terminated on January 11 for the previous year for lobbyists who do not re-register.

I.C. § 74-703

### How do I register as a lobbyist?

- Registration and reporting are exclusively done online on the Secretary of State's website. A person wishing to register as a lobbyist must go to [sos.idaho.gov](http://sos.idaho.gov) and navigate to the Lobbyist Information page. There, Idaho's Lobbyist Registration & Reporting System and historical data can be accessed.
- Idaho's Lobbyist Registration & Reporting System also contains helpful tutorials regarding the filing process.

I.C. § 74-710(2)(g)

### When does registration open?

- Registration for the preceding year typically begins early to mid-December.
- Registration will be terminated on January 11 for the previous year for lobbyists who do not re-register.

I.C. § 74-703

## **What information is required to register?**

### Lobbyist information:

- Name, email address, and permanent business address
- Temporary residential or business address during the legislative session
- Whether the lobbyist receives compensation as a lobbyist or an employee providing services for their employer

### Employer & Client information:

- Business name and permanent address
- General occupation of the employer or client
- Name and email address of the employer or client's contact person
- Name of the person who has custody of the accounts, bills, receipts, etc., required to be kept under statute
- Duration of the employment or contract between the employer/client and the lobbyist
- Whether the activity is directed at the executive branch, the legislative branch, or both

I.C. § 74-703

## **What is a designated lobbyist?**

A designated lobbyist is someone who can report activity on behalf of employees of a corporate entity, allowing employees or the corporate entity to be exempt from registration. The designated lobbyist shall fully report all activity and expenditures made by employees, in addition to the names of employees who spend more than \$50 on lobbyist activities through any calendar year.

- During the registration process, the designated lobbyist must pay an additional \$10 fee for the corporate entity. All activity for the corporate entity and its employees is contained in the lobbyist's registration and reporting portal. No additional account is required for the corporate entity.

I.C. § 74-703(c), 74-704 (7)

## REPORTING

### When and where are reports due?

- All registered lobbyists and state entities report monthly.
- Monthly reports are due on the 15<sup>th</sup> for the previous month's activities.
- Reports are filed online in [Idaho's Lobbyist Registration & Reporting System](#).

I.C. § 74-705

### What is required to be reported?

- Expenditures made to influence the approval, modification, or rejection of any legislation by the Idaho legislature or any committee thereof or by the governor
- Any expenses made for developing or maintaining relationships, promoting goodwill, or entertaining members of the legislature or an executive official
- Any one-time expenditure of \$135 or more made for the benefit of or for any purposes related to the official capacity of any legislator or executive official must be itemized, including the date, payee, purpose, and name of the official to whom the expenditure relates
- Any one-time expenditure of \$100 or more for the purposes of indirect lobbying must be reported within forty-eight (48) hours of the activity, including the financial category, the date, and subject matter of indirect lobbying activity
- The subject matter of proposed legislation and the number of each Senate or House bill, resolution, or memorial
- Any lobbying activities on rules, rate-making decisions, procurement, contracts, bid or bid processes, financial services agreements, or bonds
- Specific sections of appropriation bills supported or opposed
- Designated lobbyists of a corporate entity must report the names of all employees who make expenditures of \$50 or more during any calendar year

- Lobbyists **do not** report the payment of the lobbyist's compensation, housing, commuting, or other personal expenses

I.C. § 74-705(3a) - (3d)

### **What is indirect lobbying activity?**

- "Indirect lobbying" means attempting to influence the opinion of the public with respect to legislation, members of the legislature, or executive officials, and encouraging the members of the public to act with respect to such legislation or individuals.
- Indirect lobbying activity shall include, but shall not be limited to, attempts to influence the opinion of the public through email, text messaging, direct messaging, door-to-door solicitation, billboards, television broadcasts, radio broadcasts, online advertising, and social media messaging or solicitation
- Any expenditure of one hundred dollars (\$100) or more that is related to any indirect lobbying efforts within forty-eight (48) hours after such expenditure is made.

I.C. § 74-702(6), 74-705(4)

### **How do I file a 48-hour indirect lobbying report?**

If the lobbying activity meets the criteria for a 48-hour indirect lobbying report, you must log in to Idaho's Lobbyist Registration & Reporting System and select the 48-hour report. Once the report is created, the system will automatically add the expenditure information to the relevant monthly report.

I.C. § 74-704(4)

### **Do I have to file an annual or semi-annual report?**

No. As of July 1, 2025, the statute no longer requires the filing of annual or semi-annual reports.

### **When do I need to terminate my employer or client?**

Whenever a change, modification, or termination of the lobbyist's employment or contract occurs, the lobbyist shall, within one (1) week of such change, modification, or termination, furnish full information regarding the same by filing the termination amendment in Idaho's Lobbyist Registration & Reporting System.

I.C. § 74-703(3)

**Can I make political contributions as a registered lobbyist?**

Yes.

**Do I need to disclose political contributions as expenses on my lobbyist report?**

Political contributions made to any legislator, executive official, or candidate are not required to be reported on the lobbyist's report. A political contribution is reported under the campaign disclosure portion of the Sunshine Law by the individual receiving the contribution.

## Reported Expenditure Categories

### Food & Beverage

Any meal or beverage bought for members of the legislature, executive officials, or household members. Food and beverage expenditures that fall under "sponsored group events" do not need to be reported in this category.

### Sponsored Group Events

Receptions, galas, award ceremonies, and educational field trips for members of the legislature, executive officials, or household members. This includes the purchasing of tables for these events.

Example: A lobbyist and their client purchase a table at a gala for \$2,000 for eight seats. Each seat has a cost of \$250. If there are three elected officials and their spouses at the table, it would be reported as \$250 for each official and \$250 for each spouse.

Date	Person	Category	Payee/Vendor	Amount
02/10/2025	Senator X	Spon. Group Events	Charity Gala	\$250
02/10/2025	Spouse X	Spon. Group Events	Charity Gala	\$250
02/10/2025	Representative Y	Spon. Group Events	Charity Gala	\$250
02/10/2025	Spouse Y	Spon. Group Events	Charity Gala	\$250
02/10/2025	Senator Z	Spon. Group Events	Charity Gala	\$250
02/10/2025	Spouse Z	Spon. Group Events	Charity Gala	\$250

### Gifts/Awards

Plaques, trophies, gift baskets, promotional materials, etc., for members of the legislature, executive officials, or household members.

### Sporting Events

Tickets for members of the legislature, executive officials, or household members. Events that fall under "sponsored group events" do not need to be reported in this category.

### Movies/Performances

Tickets for members of the legislature, executive officials, or household members. Events that fall under "sponsored group events" do not need to be reported in this category.

### Use of Personal or Chartered Airplane and Lodging

Travel or living accommodations provided for members of the legislature, executive officials, or household members. This category includes hotel accommodation, short-term rentals, the use of personal property, the use of a company or personally owned airplane, and airline tickets. The fair market value of personal property must be reported.

Example A: *A lobbyist lets Representative X, and their family use his lake house for the weekend. The lobbyist reports on the fair market value of the weekend rental, which is \$400.*

Date	Person	Category	Payee/Vendor	Amount
07/03/2025	Representative X	Use of Lodging	Lake Street Cabin	\$200
07/03/2025	Spouse X	Use of Lodging	Lake Street Cabin	\$200

Example B: *A lobbyist representing company Q flies two legislators to tour their new facility in Pocatello on their company X's airplane and pays for one night's hotel stay for both legislators. The lobbyist reports on the fair market value of the flight and hotel rooms, which is \$9,000.*

Date	Person	Category	Payee/Vendor	Amount
05/14/2025	Senator W	Use of Airplane	Company Q	\$4000
05/14/2025	Representative X	Use of Airplane	Company Q	\$4000
05/14/2025	Senator W	Use of Lodging	Milton Hotels	\$500
05/14/2025	Representative X	Use of Lodging	Milton Hotels	\$500

## Advertising Categories (Direct Mailings, Phone/Texts, Social Media, Television)

Any advertising or promotional expenses made to promote the passage, rejection, or modification of public policy and activities that express support or gratitude for doing the same. All indirect lobbying activity will fall under one or more advertising categories.

Example A: *A lobbyist buys consumer data for \$1500 and mass text messaging for \$1700, in addition to running Facebook advertisements for \$150, to encourage constituents to contact their legislators to oppose H789. Since the lobbyist is communicating to the public, they file a 48-hour indirect lobbying report, which automatically places the expenditures on the monthly report.*

Date	Person	Category	Payee/Vendor	Amount
03/06/2025	n/a	Other (Consumer Data)	Data Solutions	\$1500
03/06/2025	n/a	Phone/Texts	RoboText	\$1700
03/06/2025	n/a	Social media	Facebook Ads Manager	\$150

Example B: *A lobbyist buys direct mailers for \$5000 that encourage members of the public to thank the Senate Transportation Committee for passing S1234 in committee. The lobbyist divides the total cost of the mailers by the number of committee members (a committee of 4 in this example). Since the lobbyist is communicating to the public, they file a 48-hour indirect lobbying report with the cost per committee member. The 48-hour report automatically places the expenditures on the monthly report.*

Date	Person	Category	Payee/Vendor	Amount
01/24/2025	Senator A	Direct Mailings	Mailers1234.com	\$1250
01/24/2025	Senator B	Direct Mailings	Mailers1234.com	\$1250
01/24/2025	Senator C	Direct Mailings	Mailers1234.com	\$1250
01/24/2025	Senator D	Direct Mailings	Mailers1234.com	\$1250

## **Polling/Canvassing**

Information gathered by polling, canvassing, or paid research that is used to attempt to promote the passage, rejection, or modification of public policy is to be reported in this category.

Example: *A lobbyist pays \$10,000 for polling on a tax bill, H123. The lobbyist then provides the polling results to all members of the House Revenue & Taxation Committee to influence opposition to H123. The lobbyist divides the total cost of the mailers by the number of committee members (a committee of 4 in this example).*

Date	Person	Category	Payee/Vendor	Amount
03/17/2025	Representative W	Polling/Canvassing	Outreach Services Inc.	\$2500
03/17/2025	Representative X	Polling/Canvassing	Outreach Services Inc.	\$2500
03/17/2025	Representative Y	Polling/Canvassing	Outreach Services Inc.	\$2500
03/17/2025	Representative Z	Polling/Canvassing	Outreach Services Inc.	\$2500

## DUTIES OF LOBBYISTS & SECRETARY OF STATE

**74-708. DUTIES OF LOBBYISTS.** A person required to register as a lobbyist under this chapter shall also have the following obligations, the violation of which shall constitute cause for revocation of his registration and may subject such person and such person's employer or client, if such employer or client aids, abets, ratifies, or confirms any such violation, to other civil liabilities as provided by this chapter:

(1) Such persons shall obtain and preserve all accounts, bills, receipts, books, papers, and documents necessary to substantiate the financial reports required to be made under this chapter for a period of at least three (3) years from the date of the filing of the statement containing such items, which accounts, bills, receipts, books, papers, and documents shall be made available for inspection by the secretary of state at any reasonable time during such three (3) year period; provided, however, that if a lobbyist is required under the terms of his employment contract to turn any records over to his employer or client, responsibility for the preservation of such records under this subsection shall rest with such employer or client.

(2) A person required to register as a lobbyist shall not:

- (a) Engage in any activity as a lobbyist before registering as such;
- (b) Knowingly deceive or attempt to deceive any legislator to any fact pertaining to any pending or proposed legislation;
- (c) Cause or influence the introduction of any bill or amendment thereto for the purpose of thereafter being employed to secure its defeat;
- (d) Knowingly represent an interest adverse to any of his employers or clients without first obtaining such employers' or clients' consent thereto after full disclosure to such employers or clients of such adverse interest;
- (e) Exercise any economic reprisal, extortion, or unlawful retaliation on any legislator by reason of such legislator's position with respect to, or his vote on, any pending or proposed legislation;
- (f) Accept any employment as a lobbyist for compensation dependent in any manner upon the passage or defeat of any proposed or pending legislation or upon any other contingency connected with the action of the legislature or of either house thereof or of any committee thereof. This contingent fee prohibition shall also apply to lobbying activities that pertain to communications with executive officials as defined in section 74-702(4), Idaho Code; or
- (g) Lobby any member of the legislature or any executive official who is the spouse, child, child-in-law, parent, parent-in-law, sibling, or sibling-in-law of such person.

(3) To ensure proper reporting and identification of the source of expenditures, any public communication made that is reportable as a lobbying expense under this chapter shall clearly state "Paid for by [the name of the filing entity, lobbyist's client, or lobbyist's employer]." If the communication is made for the purpose of soliciting funds, the disclosure shall also clearly state "This is an attempt to solicit funds."

**74-710. DUTIES OF SECRETARY OF STATE.** (1) The secretary of state is charged with enforcement of the provisions of this chapter.

(2) In addition to duties otherwise prescribed in this section, it shall be the duty of the secretary of state:

- (a) To prescribe forms for statements and other information required by this chapter to be filed and to furnish such forms and an instruction manual to persons required to file such statements and information.
- (b) To make statements and other information filed with him available for public inspection and copying during regular office hours and to make copying facilities available at a charge not to exceed actual cost;
- (c) To preserve such statements and other information for a period of four (4) years from date of receipt;
- (d) To investigate statements filed under the provisions of this chapter, to investigate alleged failures to file any statement required under the provisions of this chapter, and, upon complaint by any person, to investigate alleged violations of any provision of this chapter;
- (e) To report suspected violations of law to the appropriate law enforcement authorities;
- (f) To prescribe and publish rules, subject to legislative approval, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 52, title 67, Idaho Code, and to take such other actions as may be appropriate to carry out the provisions of this chapter; and
- (g) To require and prescribe methods for the filing of reports in an online database established by the Secretary of State's office for the filing and publication of all reports required pursuant to this chapter. The online database shall accommodate the filings of all lobbyists. The online database shall be accessible on the Secretary of State's website and be searchable by the public by address, date, expense, purpose, and any other content deemed appropriate by the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State may, on an individual basis, grant a hardship waiver and accept a report required by this chapter in another format specified by the Secretary of State, which shall be entered into the online database by the Secretary of State within three (3) days of filing.

## DEFINITIONS & TERMINOLOGY

**74-702. DEFINITIONS.** As used in this chapter, the following terms have the following meanings:

- (1) "Compensation" includes any advance, conveyance, forgiveness of indebtedness, deposit, distribution, loan, payment, gift, pledge, or transfer of money or anything of value, and any contract, agreement, promise, or other obligation, whether or not legally enforceable, for any of the foregoing, for services rendered or to be rendered, but does not include reimbursement of expenses if such reimbursement does not exceed the amount actually expended for such expenses and is substantiated by an itemization of such expenses.
- (2) "Contractor" means a person who receives compensation from another person for either full-time or part-time work based on a contract or compensation agreement, but who is not an employee of that person.
- (3) "Employee" means an individual who performs a service for wages or other compensation from which the individual's employer withholds federal employment taxes under a contract for hire, written or oral.
- (4) "Executive official" means:
  - (a) The governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, state controller, state treasurer, attorney general, superintendent of public instruction, and any deputy or staff member of any of those individuals who, within the course and scope of employment, is directly involved in major policy-influencing decisions for the office;
  - (b) A state department or agency director, deputy director, division administrator, or bureau chief as established and enumerated in sections [67-2402](#) and [67-2406](#), Idaho Code;
  - (c) The membership and the executive or chief administrative officer of any board or commission that is authorized to make rules or conduct rulemaking activities pursuant to section [67-5201](#), Idaho Code;
  - (d) The membership and the executive or chief administrative officer of any board or commission that governs any of the state departments enumerated in section [67-2402](#), Idaho Code, not including public school districts;
  - (e) The membership and the executive or chief administrative officer of the Idaho public utilities commission, the Idaho industrial commission, and the Idaho state tax commission; and
  - (f) The members of the governing board of the state insurance fund and the members of the governing board and the executive or chief administrative officer of the Idaho housing

and finance association, the Idaho energy resources authority, and the Idaho state building authority.

(5) "Expenditure" includes any payment, contribution, subscription, distribution, loan, advance, deposit, or gift of money or anything of value, and includes a contract, promise, or agreement, whether or not legally enforceable, to make an expenditure. The term "expenditure" also includes a promise to pay, a payment, or a transfer of anything of value in exchange for goods, services, property, facilities, or anything of value for the purpose of assisting, benefiting, or honoring any public official or candidate, or assisting in furthering or opposing any election campaign.

(6) "Indirect lobbying" means attempting to influence the opinion of the public with respect to legislation, members of the legislature, or executive officials and encouraging the members of the public to take action with respect to such legislation or individuals and shall include but shall not be limited to attempts to influence the opinion of the public through email, text messaging, direct messaging, door-to-door solicitation, billboards, television broadcasts, radio broadcasts, online advertising, and social media messaging or solicitation.

(7) "Lobby" or "lobbying" means attempting through contacts with, or causing others to make contact with, members of the legislature or an executive official to influence the approval, modification, or rejection of any legislation by the Idaho legislature or any committee thereof or by the governor or to develop or maintain relationships with, promote goodwill with, or entertain members of the legislature or executive officials. "Lobby" or "lobbying" also means indirect lobbying. "Lobby" or "lobbying" also means communicating with an executive official for the purpose of influencing the consideration, amendment, adoption, or rejection of any rule or rulemaking as defined in section [67-5201](#), Idaho Code, or any ratemaking decision, procurement, contract, bid or bid process, financial services agreement, or bond issue. Neither "lobby" nor "lobbying" includes an association's or other organization's act of communicating with the members of that association or organization; and neither "lobby" nor "lobbying" includes communicating with an executive official for the purpose of carrying out ongoing negotiations following the award of a bid or a contract, communications involving ongoing legal work and negotiations conducted by and with attorneys for executive agencies, interactions between parties in litigation or other contested matters, or communications among and between members of the legislature and executive officials and their employees, or by state employees while acting in their official capacity or within the course and scope of their employment.

(8) "Lobbyist" includes any person who lobbies.

(9) "Lobbyist's client" means the person on whose behalf the lobbyist is acting, directly or indirectly, as a contractor, and by whom the lobbyist or lobbyist's employer is compensated for acting as a lobbyist.

(10) "Lobbyist's employer" means the person for whom a lobbyist is an employee and by whom the lobbyist is compensated for acting as a lobbyist.

(11) "Person" means an individual, corporation, association, firm, partnership, committee, political party, club, or other organization or group of persons.

## **Terminology**

**Contract Lobbyist:** A person who receives compensation for lobbying based on a contract or compensation agreement, but who is not an employee of the company or organization.

**Employee Lobbyist:** A person who lobbies for someone they are an employee of and who is being compensated for acting as a lobbyist.

**Designated Lobbyist:** A lobbyist employed by or representing a corporate entity who will be reporting all corporate and employee activities. The designated lobbyist will report the names of all employees who make expenditures of \$50 or more during any calendar year on behalf of the corporate entity's activities.

**State Entity Filer:** State government agencies and educational institutions give gifts of any kind to legislators and executive officials.

- State entities are subject to the same reporting requirements as lobbyists per I.C. §74-706.
- State entities will not file disclosures if they have a registered lobbyist who files all necessary reports and documentation.

**Good Will:** Goodness or generosity by a person or entity directed toward a legislative or executive official that could cause the legislative or executive official to have a favorable impression of or thankfulness to the person or entity.

**Member of Household:** Spouse and dependent children of the legislative or executive official, whom that official is legally obligated to support.

**Green Name Tag:** Name tags that lobbyists wear in the State Capitol Building. Green name tags are not required to be worn or regulated by the Secretary of State's office. However, legislative branch policies and procedures do require name tags to be worn in certain areas of the State Capitol Building. Name tags can be obtained from rubber stamp companies and sporting goods stores with an engraving service.

