



City of Bowie Ethics Commission
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General Information About Lobbying

“Lobbying” is defined in §2-68K of the Bowie Public Ethics Ordinance, as:

1. Communicating in the presence of a City official or employee with the intent to influence any official action of that official or employee; or
2. Soliciting others to communicate with a City official or employee with the intent to influence that official or employee.

“Lobbyist” is defined in §2-68L as “a person or entity that engages in lobbying.”

“Lobbying registration” is required under §2-73A, of any person who engages in lobbying before the City Council, or who acts as a lobbyist, if that person:

1. Spends, exclusive of personal travel and subsistence expenses, a minimum of \$200 during the calendar year in furtherance of lobbying activities; or
2. Receives compensation in excess of \$100 in connection with lobbying activities during the calendar year.

Exemptions to the registration requirement, under §2-73M, are provided for the following activities:

1. Professional services in drafting bills or in advising and rendering opinions to clients as to the construction and effect of proposed or pending City Council actions when these services do not otherwise constitute lobbying activities.
2. Appearances before the City Council upon its specific invitation or request, but only if the person or entity engages in no further or other activities in connection with the passage or defeat of City Council actions.
3. Appearances as part of the official duties of a duly elected or appointed official or employee of the State or a political subdivision of the State, or of the United States and not on behalf of any other entity.

4. Actions of a publisher or working member of the press, radio, or television in the ordinary course of business of disseminating news or making editorial comment to the general public who does not engage in further or other lobbying that would directly and specifically benefit the economic, business, or professional interests of the person or entity or the employer of the person or entity.
5. Appearances by an individual before the City Council at the specific invitation or request of a registered lobbyist if the person performs no other lobbying act and notifies the City Council that the person or entity is testifying at the request of the lobbyist.
6. Appearances by an individual before a government agency at the specific invitation or request of a registered lobbyist if the person or entity performs no other lobbying act and notifies the agency that the person or entity is testifying at the request of the lobbyist.
7. The 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.
8. 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 in behalf of any other entity.

An additional exemption from the registration requirement is provided under §2-73N where:

A person or entity who compensates one or more lobbyists and who would otherwise be required to register as a lobbyist and submit reports pursuant to this section is not required to file a registration and file lobbying reports if he reasonably believes that all expenses incurred in connection with his lobbying activities will be reported by a properly registered person or entity acting of his behalf. The authorization required by subsection B3 of this section shall be completed by these individuals as to persons acting on their behalf. Persons or entities exempted herein, however, become subject to the provisions of this section immediately upon failure of the lobbyist to report any information required by this section.

Failure to comply with lobbying registration and reporting requirements may result in the imposition of late fees (§2-69M).

If you have any questions about registration or reporting requirements please contact the ethics commission or the assistant city manager.