



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **Do I need to register as a lobbyist?**
 - The key elements of lobbying activity that trigger registration with the OLIG are as follows:
 - Compensation - you must receive something of value in exchange for your efforts;
 - Direct Communication - may be either written or verbal and can occur in any medium;
 - Amount of time for which you are paid that is spent lobbying on behalf of a specific client
 - Legislative - 5% or more of your compensated time
 - Executive - 25% or more of your compensated time
 - Retirement - 25% or more of your compensated time
- **How do I register to become a lobbyist in Ohio?**
 - Once it is decided which type of lobbying you will be participating in, (Executive Agency, Legislative, Retirement System) you will need to file an Initial Registration for **each** type using the Ohio Lobbying Activity Center (OLAC).

Note: See OLAC Tutorial for Step-by-Step instructions on how to file Initial Registration Statements. [Initial Registrations Tutorial \(.pdf\)](#)

- **What does Date of Engagement refer to?**
 - The date of engagement is the date a lobbyist begins to actively advocate for a specific entity.
 - All Initial Registration Statements must be filed in OLAC within **ten (10) calendar days** of the lobbyist beginning lobbying activity.
 - In order for the registrations to become active, all completed signature pages and filing fees must be received by the OLIG within **fifteen (15) business days** of the date the registration was filed.
- **What/who does the 'Employer Contact' on the Initial Registration Statement refer to?**
 - The Employer contact should be an individual authorized to enter into the lobbying engagement on behalf of the Employer.
 - The Employer contact will be responsible for filing the Activity and Expenditure Reports on behalf of the Employer, and will certify the accuracy of the information. The Employer contact should be the individual who has the most knowledge of the lobbying activity in Ohio. Only one individual can be listed as the Employer contact.
 - The contact will receive all information relevant to Employers of lobbyists. The Employer contact will also be the person our office works with to achieve compliance with lobbying requirements.

- **How do I terminate my engagement(s)?**
 - Engagements can be terminated in OLAC by either the Agent or the Employer.
 - Agents: Once you terminate an engagement, you can file your last Activity & Expenditure Report for that Employer.
 - Employers: If you are terminating ALL of your engagements you can also file your final Activity & Expenditure Report for the specific period. If you have any remaining active engagements you will file your Activity & Expenditure Report at the end of the respective reporting period.
 - Anytime an engagement is terminated in OLAC, the Agent and Employer will receive an email confirmation.

- **When do I need to terminate?**
 - Once an Agent ceases their lobbying efforts on behalf of an entity, a notice of termination must be filed in OLAC by either the Agent or the Employer within **thirty (30) days**.

- **When do my registrations expire? What do I need to do to become an active lobbyist again?**
 - **Engagements expire in OLAC as follows:**

<u>Registration Type</u>	<u>Expiration Date</u>
Legislative Lobbying	December 31st of EVEN numbered year
Executive Agency Lobbying	December 31st annually
Retirement System Lobbying	December 31st annually
 - If you intend to continue lobbying beyond these dates, you must renew your registrations in OLAC.

- **I work for a state agency, should I register as an Executive Agency Lobbyist?**
 - As an employee of a state agency you will likely be attempting to influence legislation that would affect your agency, or advocating on your agency's budget. Therefore state employees lobbying on behalf of their agencies should register as a Legislative Agent.

- **When registering, who do I list as my Employer? The company I work for or the company who is retaining my services?**
 - Agents should list the name of the Employer that they are holding themselves out as lobbying on behalf of. For instance, if you are lobbying on behalf of the interests of ABC Corp., you would register for this entity regardless of whether they pay you directly or through an outside source (i.e. contractor, sub-contractor).

- **What is the difference between Initial Registration Statements and Activity & Expenditure Reports?**
 - **Initial Registration Statements** are filed for each entity that a lobbyist represents. These statements disclose the person on whose behalf a lobbyist has been hired, the industry of the client and the policy area in which the client has an interest.
 - **Activity & Expenditure Reports** are filed **three (3)** times a year. These reports provide specific information about the Agent's and/or Employer's lobbying activities (Executive Agency decisions, Legislation, Retirement System

decisions) and expenditures (gifts, meals and beverages, all-invited events) made on behalf of a public official during a reporting period.

- **When are the Activity and Expenditure Reports due?**

<u>Reporting Period</u>	<u>Reporting Deadline</u>
January - April	May 31st
May - August	September 30th
September - December	January 31st of the following year

- **Why do I need to file more than one Activity & Expenditure Report?**

- Activity & Expenditure Reports are filed for **each** lobbying engagement and for **each** type (Executive Agency, Legislative, Retirement System) of lobbying. This requirement applies to **both** Agents and Employers.

- **What is the difference between Agent and Employer Activity & Expenditure Reports? Do both need to be filed?**

- An Agent reports all lobbying activity and expenditures made during a particular reporting period on behalf of their clients/Employers, for the benefit of a public official.
- The Employer Activity & Expenditure Reports should include any activities and expenditures the Employer made during a specific reporting period.
- Both Agents and Employers are required to file these reports.

Note: If you are the Employer contact as well as the lobbyist for an entity, you are required to file both the Agent and Employer Activity & Expenditure Reports.

- **Why do I owe Activity and Expenditure Reports if I terminated my engagement?**

- Agents and Employers are required to file Activity & Expenditure Reports for all reporting periods in which lobbyists are registered. Even if a lobbyist is only registered for a week during a reporting period, the report(s) still need to be filed.

- **Why do terminated Agents show up on Employer Activity & Expenditure Reports?**

- Terminated Agents will show up on Employer Activity & Expenditure Reports for whichever reporting periods they were registered. For instance, if an Agent's engagement is terminated on February 1st, that individual will be listed on the Employer's Activity & Expenditure Report for the January - April reporting period.

- **Is Agent activity also reported on the Employer's Activity & Expenditure Report?**

- The OLIG recommends that Agent activity (Executive Agency decisions, Legislation, Retirement System decisions) is mirrored on the Employer's Activity & Expenditure Report.

Note: Expenditures should not be reported on both the Agent and Employer Activity & Expenditure Report.

- **What are the differences between Agent and Employer expenditures?**

- Expenditures should be reported as either an Agent or Employer expenditure on the Activity & Expenditure Reports, but never as both. When determining whether the expenditure should be reported on the Agent or Employer report, use the "point of sale" test whenever possible.

- Even when a corporate credit card is used, if the Agent is providing the gift, meal or beverage, then the Agent has "made" the expenditure. The same holds true when cash is used. Reimbursement should **not** be a factor when determining who made the expenditure.
 - Employer expenditures are those that are directly paid for, or provided by, the Employer. For example,
 - A luncheon that is hosted in the corporate dining hall is an Employer expenditure regardless of who is in attendance.
 - Football tickets provided by an Employer, who is not registered as a Legislative Agent, is an Employer expenditure; and
 - A dinner provided by a CEO, who is not registered as a Legislative Agent, is an Employer expenditure.
 - When making a determination as to who "made" the expenditure, ask how the expenditure is perceived by the recipient at the time it is made. If Legislative Agent X picks up the tab for our lunch together, I am likely to see the expenditure as being made by Legislative Agent X, regardless of whether he uses a personal credit card, corporate card, or cash, for which he will later be reimbursed. If I attend a baseball game and sit in the Acme Corporate loge, I am likely to perceive that I am the guest of Acme even if Acme's legislative Agent is in attendance.
 - Alternatively, if an Employer gives their lobbyist tickets to a football game valued at \$70 and that lobbyist gives a legislator one of those tickets, it is perceived that the Agent provided the ticket regardless of who initially paid for it.
 - See the Common Expenditure Reporting Scenarios below for further assistance.
- **I previously filed my activity & expenditure report for a specific reporting period. I have since become aware of expenditures that were not included on my activity & expenditure report, what do I do?**
 - If you already filed an Activity & Expenditure Report and discover you need to update (add/delete) any information, you will need to file an Amended Activity & Expenditure Report. To do so, click the 'File Amended' link in OLAC next to the Activity & Expenditure Report you need to amend. You will be provided with any previously filed information. Edit accordingly.
 - **What is an All-Invited Event? How do I report it?**
 - Anytime all members of the General Assembly (all House, all Senate or both) are invited to a reception or similar event, the following is reported under Section C on the Employer's Activity & Expenditure Report: date, description of the event and the total amount spent on food and beverages.
 - For instance, if an entity invites all members of the General Assembly, as well as 300 additional guests, to a reception, the entity should report only the proportionate share relative to the General Assembly. To do so, calculate the per person cost by taking the total amount spent on food and beverages and divide it by the approximate number of attendees. That amount is then multiplied by the number of members or reportable staff of the General Assembly that were in attendance.

Note: There is no such thing as an all-invited ticketed event or sporting event (basketball, football, golf, etc).

- **Are Awards/Plaques reportable?**
 - Yes. Any award/plaque provided to a legislator that exceeds \$25 in value must be reported on the Employer's Activity & Expenditure Report. The recipient must be notified at least **ten (10) days** before the Employer report is filed.
- **What is Continuous File?**
 - Continuous File is a feature that allows Agents to view and easily file **ALL** of their Activity & Expenditure Reports directly from the Agent Homepage. After an Activity & Expenditure Report is filed, you will be directed back to a list of any additional reports that need filed.
- **I forgot my OLAC login information, how do I access my account?**
 - Click the 'Password Reminder' (Agent/Employer) link located on the OLAC homepage. The reminder will be sent to the email address on file.
 - If you need assistance, please contact the OLIG at 614-728-5100.
- **How do I obtain Employer login information if the Employer contact listed is no longer there?**
 - If the Employer contact on file is no longer with your organization, have the new contact inform the OLIG at 614-728-5100. Your Employer OLAC login information will then be provided to you.
- **How do I change my contact information?**
 - Agents and Employers can change their contact information, notification preferences or password by selecting the Change Contact Information and Notification Preferences link on their OLAC homepage.
- **What does Alternate Email refer to?**
 - Within each Agent and Employer OLAC account, there is a field for alternate email. The email address listed in this field will receive all notifications that the Agent/Employer has requested. This email address can also be provided with login information upon request.
- **Do I need to create a new OLAC Agent Account when I change employment?**
 - No. Regardless of who you are lobbying on behalf of, you will use the same OLAC account for all registration and reporting requirements.
- **How do I create an OLAC Employer Account?**
 - Upon receipt of registration signature pages and filing fees, the OLIG processes the engagement and assigns the appropriate Employer. If an Employer is new to OLAC, the OLIG will set up a new account and provide the Employer with their login information.
- **Why does OLAC say that I am already logged in?**
 - If you have navigated away from your account or closed your browser window without logging out, you may get this error when you attempt to login again.
 - First try closing all open browser windows and see if that will reset your browser history. If this does not work, restart your computer.