

New York City Amends Lobbying Ordinance

January 2014

During the final days of his tenure, outgoing Mayor Michael Bloomberg signed into law a bill that makes significant changes to New York City's lobbying ordinance. Unless otherwise specified below, these changes become effective on May 8, 2014. The new provisions include:

- **Expanding the definition of lobbying.** The revised definition of lobbying now encompasses activities prior to the formal introduction of legislation or proposal of rules, as well as attempts to influence city officials, officers, or employees to support or oppose federal or state legislation or rulemaking in their official capacities.
- **Increasing the lobbyist registration threshold from \$2,000 to \$5,000 per calendar year.** The increased lobbyist registration threshold, which took effect on January 1, 2014, now aligns with state law.
- **Streamlining reporting for some organizations that employ solely in-house lobbyists.** Organizations that lobby solely on their own behalf by utilizing the services of employees are eligible for reduced reporting requirements if their total lobbying expenditures do not exceed \$10,000 during a calendar year.
- **Implementing mandatory training for lobbyists.** Organizations will be required to designate one to two lobbyists, depending on the size of the organization, to complete biennial training on behalf of the organization.
- **Directing the city clerk to proactively search for noncompliance.** The city clerk has two years to develop a system for identifying organizations and individuals who have not registered as lobbyists but were required to do so. Specifically, the ordinance directs the city clerk to examine state lobbyist filings, the city's "doing business database" (which lists city contractors), and appearance notices filed with city agencies.