

GENERAL LOBBYIST DISCLOSURE FAQ

I'm a member of the public and am concerned about an issue. Do I have to file an appearance form with the House to speak to my representative or at committee meeting?

No. Only registered lobbyists are required to file a House appearance record.

How does a lobbyist comply with rule 17.1(h)?

Before lobbying the House on any issue, a lobbyist must first file an electronic notice through the new lobbyist portal on the House website. The notice must include the principal and the specific issue, amendment, bill, or appropriation being lobbied on. Lobbyists will be required to file only once per issue, and they may identify multiple issues and principals in a single submission if convenient. Each notice is good for one legislative session.

Does rule 17.1(h) only apply to Members of the House or does it apply to staff as well?

Rule 17.1(h) applies to any employee of the House, including Members, their aides, all Committee staff, all Speaker's office staff and any other House employee the lobbyist chooses to lobby on behalf of a principal.

How do lobbyists access the new House Lobbyist Disclosure & Information page?

Lobbyists use their same username and password obtained when registering with the Lobbyist Registration Office, the same username and password they use to file their quarterly compensation reports. There is no need to obtain separate login information.

After a lobbyist is logged in, they will be immediately redirected to the online Lobbyist House Appearance Record Form.

How do lobbyists access the electronic form to notice the House before they lobby on an issue?

Once a lobbyist logs into the House Lobbyist Disclosure & Information webpage, they will be immediately redirected to the online Lobbyist House Appearance Record form to easily submit the required information.

Do I have to make separate filings for every issue?

While an appearance record on every issue lobbied on behalf of a principal must be filed with the House using the online form, a lobbyist may submit as few as one issue at a time or may submit many issues at one time for the same principal or group of principals.

Do I have to file a notice with the House to talk to a House Member about anything?

Lobbyists are only required to file a notice if they are intending to lobby an issue or bill on behalf of a principal. A lobbyist is not required to file a notice if they discuss an issue that is not of interest to any principal they represent.

Any issue discussed with a House member or staff that a lobbyist's principal could become interested in as a direct or indirect result of such discussion should be disclosed out of an abundance of caution.

Do I have to file a disclosure before every meeting?

No. You have to disclose before you lobby the issue the first time. Once an issue is disclosed, you may lobby that issue for the entire legislative session without repeating the disclosure.

Can I file disclosures after I have a meeting with a House Member?

No, Rule 17.1(h) requires that "The record shall be filed in the manner directed by the Speaker in advance of lobbying on the matter." Thus, you are prohibited from meeting on any issue before you disclose the issue by filing the notice. If an unexpected issue or matter arises during a meeting, every effort should be made to comply with the rule during that meeting or without delay if the failure is not noted until after the issue is discussed or after an unplanned meeting. If no principal that the lobbyist represents is interested in the issue, no disclosure is required.

What if an unexpected subject is raised in a meeting between a member and lobbyist?

Issue notification is not a "per meeting" requirement. Submitting a record on an issue constitutes disclosure for the entire legislative session. Thus, the question is only significant if the lobbyist has NOT filed any appearance record disclosing the issue in the particular legislative year.

If an issue is raised in a meeting that the lobbyist should disclose but has not yet done so, the lobbyist must file an appearance record immediately thereafter. Adding a notification of a single issue can be done easily by computer, tablet, or smartphone through the House Website.

What if the lobbyist's principal raises an issue that the lobbyist has not submitted a record on?

Only lobbyists who are required to register with the Florida Lobbyist Registration Office are required to file a House appearance record. Principals or their employees who are not primarily employed for government relations are not lobbyists and have no duty of disclosure with the House. Like any constituent, if a principal has traveled to the Capitol to advocate for their point of view, there is no reason to silence the principal while the lobbyist steps outside to submit an appearance record or otherwise be excused from the meeting.

Do I have to disclose every issue and bill I am monitoring for my clients?

No. You only need to disclose before you **lobby** any issue or bill. Monitoring is not lobbying unless and until you notify House members or staff that you are monitoring the issue for a principal that you represent.

I am a lobbyist and I have questions about how to fill how the online Lobbyist House Appearance Record form.

There is an additional FAQ document available at the top of the Lobbyist House Appearance Record web page that answers questions specifically about the form.

Who should I contact if I still have questions?

Contact staff at 850-717-4881 or email LobbyistDisclosure@myfloridahouse.gov. For a faster response, please type "QUESTION" in the subject line of the email.