

Rule 17.1(i) – DISCLOSURE OF CONTRACTS FOR LOBBYISTS WHO REPRESENT PUBLIC ENTITIES FAQ

What new disclosure is required for contract lobbyists representing public entities?

Rule 17.1(i) requires that lobbyists or lobbying firms who represent a public entity and certain semi-public taxpayer supported entities must submit a copy of their lobbying contract to the House. *This is required even if the lobbying contract is limited to Executive Branch lobbying.* (However, if the lobbyist does not lobby the legislature at all, they would be exempt from this House rule.)

Employees of public entities are exempt from this requirement if their salaries are published and they represent only their employer.

What is the purpose of this rule change?

The purpose is to increase transparency and public disclosure of how taxpayers' money is being spent.

What is considered a public or semi-public taxpayer supported entity under this rule?

The covered entities include Executive and Judicial Branch departments, local governments, political subdivisions, special districts, public authorities, public hospitals, local government councils or commissions, and public education entities, as well as direct support organizations or foundations created to support one of those public entities. Also included is any entity that is entitled, by law or ordinance, to any distribution of tax or fee revenues (but not mere appropriations).

Does this include associations of public entities or public officers such as the Sheriffs Association or Association of Counties?

No. The non-profits covered by the rule are those foundations and similar entities formed to support a single public entity. If an association entered into a supplemental contract to lobby for one or more of its public entity members for any purpose over and above association interests, the association would be lobbying for each such principal and would have to register as such and disclose the contract(s).

How would a public entity comply with this rule?

This rule is directed at the lobbyist or lobbying firm who is contracted by a public or semi-public taxpayer supported entity as defined by this rule. A public entity that employs an outside lobbyist or firm does not need to separately submit the lobbying contract to comply.

When does the contract have to be disclosed?

The rule requires provision of a copy of a contract "when the lobbyist or lobbying firm registers to lobby" on behalf of the covered principal. Accordingly, when a new principal is registered through either the Executive or Legislative lobbying registration, if covered, the contract should be then disclosed. Annual registration is required for continuing relationships, so a copy of the covered contract should be provided each January 1 when the lobbyist registration is renewed.

How do lobbyists or lobbying firms comply with this rule?

Lobbyists and lobbying firms should email digital copies or scans of any contracts that meet the definition of rule 17.1(i) to: LobbyistDisclosure@myfloridahouse.gov.

In the subject line of email, please include the lobbying firm or individual lobbyist who is the primary contractor on the contract followed by the principal's name, separated by a hyphen.

(Example: Subject: Joe Lobbyist Firm – City of Tallahassee)

Lobbyists and lobbying firms may also submit hard copies of their contracts if it is not feasible to submit a digital copy or scan of their contracts. Hard copies should be delivered to:

Public Integrity & Elections Committee

Rule 17.1(i)

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