



# LOBBYING FOR NONPROFITS 101

MARCH 2025

## MAIN TAKEAWAYS

### What is Lobbying?

- Lobbying is when you try to influence government actions, such as laws, policies, regulations, or funding decisions. It is heavily regulated at both the city and state levels

### Do You Need to Register?

- Organizations spending \$5,000+ annually on lobbying (prep, meetings, social media) must register and submit compliance reports.

### Who to Lobby?

- Target key decision-makers—city/state legislators, agency officials, and budget committees. Knowing committee structures is crucial.

### Best Practices for Lobbying & Advocacy

- Timing matters—align lobbying efforts with budget cycles and policy decision-making windows.
- Be strategic in who delivers the message—an organizer, a facts-driven messenger, and a compelling storyteller.

### Making an Effective Ask

- Use strong advocacy tools (one-pagers, newsletters, site visits, legislative briefings).
- Use data to back your asks ([AAAF Data Center](#))
- Meetings should be structured, with clear messaging and follow-up.

## TIPS FOR NONPROFIT LOBBYING

### 1. Legislative Staff Matter More Than You Think

- Many meetings happen with staffers, not elected officials—but these staffers often have significant influence and can become key allies in decision-making.

### 2. Avoid Outdated Messaging in One-Pagers

- Legislators stop responding to overused justifications (e.g., COVID recovery). Ensure messaging reflects current, urgent policy concerns to remain relevant.

### 3. You Can Register Late—But You Shouldn't Wait

- If you pass the \$5,000 lobbying threshold and haven't registered yet, register immediately to avoid compliance risks. Delaying registration can create complications for your organization.

### 4. Know Who Holds the Budget Power

- Beyond local representatives, budget negotiating teams, finance committee chairs, and delegation leaders control funding allocations. These are crucial targets.

## RESOURCES

### State Registration

- [State Website](#)
- [Email: lobbyinghelpdesk@ethics.ny.gov](mailto:lobbyinghelpdesk@ethics.ny.gov)

### City Registration

- [Office of the City Clerk Filing Website](#)
- [Email: Lobbyist\\_Helpdesk@cityclerk.nyc.gov](mailto:Lobbyist_Helpdesk@cityclerk.nyc.gov)

**City Council Expense Website:**  
<https://council.nyc.gov/budget/>

**City Clerk's Website:**  
<https://www.cityclerk.nyc.gov/>