

## Federal Lobbying Act: How Does It Impact Non-profits?

There is no limit on how much organizations are allowed to lobby the federal government. But there is a point at which organizations are expected to register their lobbying.

This factsheet explains when and how your organization will need to register. While many organizations have a good sense of the rules, the federal government recently reinterpreted how much time an organization — including a non-profit — can spend lobbying before it needs to officially register as a lobbyist.

As a non-profit engaged in this work, what does this mean for you?

### What is Considered a Lobbying Activity?

Some activities at your organization could be considered lobbying. These might include:

- Any communications you have with federal elected officials (MPs) on:
  - Federal legislation, like Bills and regulations;
  - Policy changes;
  - Grants or financial benefits.
- Time spent preparing these communications, including:
  - Researching, drafting, and/or editing communications.
- Grassroots advocacy on a federal issue.

Communications can mean things like letters, pre-budget submissions, and briefing materials for an in-person meeting.

Here are some examples of lobbying activities:

- An employee spends three hours drafting a letter to an MP (3 hours total);
- One employee spends two hours preparing a one-page brief, and another employee spends an hour editing it (3 hours total);
- Four employees each spend 30 minutes in a meeting with an MP (2 hours total).

### What *Isn't* Considered a Lobbying Activity?

Any communications you might have about government contracts don't count as lobbying. This includes contracts you may already have, or ones that you are applying for.

**Importantly, the new interpretation of the Lobbying Act only applies to employees of your organization.** It doesn't apply to consultants your organization may hire to lobby on your behalf.

### When Should We Register?

If you pay an outside person or an organization to lobby on your behalf, you should register. If you have a paid member of your organization who lobbies enough to be considered an "in-house lobbyist," you should also register.

## **How Much Time Can Staff In My Organization Spend on Lobbying Before We Register?**

According to the new interpretation of the Lobbying Act, an “in-house lobbyist” is any paid member of your organization who spends eight or more hours on lobbying during any consecutive four-week period. This is much shorter than previously, so double-check how much your staff lobby.

This doesn’t impact your ability to lobby or advocate, but it does mean that you may need to register with the federal government if you do lobby or advocate.

### **What Happens if My Organization Spends Enough Time Lobbying?**

Once your organization spends enough time lobbying (eight or more hours across four weeks), you have two months to register in the [Registry of Lobbyists](#).

Registration should be done by the most senior paid employee in your organization, e.g., the Executive Director.

**[Learn more about the new interpretation of the Lobbying Act.](#)**