Hawaiʻi State Ethics Commission – Lobbying E-Filing System FAQs
(updated as of January 2025)

Account Sign-up

- What type of account do I need?

  You must have a user account to use the E-Filing System. Your account will allow you to file and view your lobbyist registrations and expenditure reports.

  - If you are an external lobbyist or an employee of a lobbying firm, sign up for a **Lobbyist User Account**.

    For example, if you work for the ABC Law Firm, and you've been hired by multiple clients (like the XYZ Corporation or the 123 Non-Profit Organization) to lobby for them, then create a ***Lobbyist User*** *Account.*

  - If you are the client (that is, the person or organization represented by the lobbyist), or you are an in-house lobbyist or company representative, sign up for a **Client/Organization User Account**.

    For example, if you are an employee of XYZ Corporation or the 123 Non-Profit Organization, and you or someone else will be lobbying to promote XYZ Corporation's or 123 Non-Profit Organization's interests, then create a ***Client/Organization User*** *Account.*

- Can I use the same e-mail address to create multiple user accounts?

  No. Each account needs to be created with a unique e-mail address within our system. (Note that if you previously filed a financial disclosure or a gifts disclosure using our disclosure e-filing system, you will need to use a different e-mail address for the lobbying e-filing system. Call us if you need help.)

- I work for an external lobbyist (for example, as an assistant, secretary, or other employee of an external lobbyist). Can I create a user account?

  Yes. Create a **Lobbyist User Account** and designate the same Lobbying Firm.

- What is a “Lobbying Firm”?

  If you are an in-house lobbyist, then the “Lobbying Firm” is your employer. *For example, if you work for the XYZ Company as an in-house lobbyist, then the XYZ Company is the Lobbying Firm.*

  If you are an external lobbyist – that is, you are contracted by clients to lobby on their behalf – then “Lobbying Firm” refers to the law firm or lobbying consulting firm that employs you. *For example, if you are a lobbyist for the ABC Law Firm, and your clients include the XYZ Company and the 123 Non-Profit Organization, then your “Lobbying Firm” is the ABC Law Firm.*

- Do I need to designate a Lobbying Firm?

  Yes. If you are an external lobbyist (or an employee of a law firm or lobbying consulting firm), you will need enter the name of your firm to link your account to a Lobbying Firm. This allows you to file and share lobbyist registrations and expenditure reports with other associates in the same Lobbying Firm.

  If you are a solo, external lobbyist – then enter the name of your consulting business or your individual name (if you do not have a separate business entity such as a corporation or LLC). If you hire other staff in the future, this allows you the flexibility to link them under the same Lobbying Firm.

- Can I create accounts for other Lobbyists or Users within my Lobbying Firm?

  Yes. Just make sure to designate the same Lobbying Firm. Each new user will receive an e-mail verification to create a password.

- Can I create accounts for my clients?

  Yes, you can create a **Client/Organization User** account for in-house lobbyists, and for company representatives of organizations that you represent, but we suggest that you give them a courtesy notice before you do so. (Once you create the account, they will receive an e-mail verification to create their password, so you might want to give them advance notice, so they don’t think the e-mail verification is spam.)

- Can I create accounts for Lobbyists that are in another Lobbying Firm?

  We recommend that they create their own user accounts. They will need to designate the name of their Lobbying Firm.

- As a small non-profit organization, we don't have a lobbyist, but we do file expenditure reports. Do I still need to create an account?

  Yes. Please sign up for a **Client/Organization User** account to file your expenditure reports.

- If my client does business under a "dba" or tradename, how should the organization be identified?

  If the client/organization does business under a different name (such as a dba or tradename), list both the legal name and the dba/tradename. *For example, "XYZ Corporation (dba The Waikiki Company)."*

- I am an in-house lobbyist for a large company and several subsidiaries. How do I set up my user account?

  If you are an in-house lobbyist that represents multiple subsidiaries or affiliated companies, it may be easier to create a **Lobbyist User** account. This would allow you to list each subsidiary as a separate client and see all of your filings on one account (similar to how an outside lobbying firm would manage its account for its various clients). Your lobbying firm would be the name of the parent corporation or your primary employer.

  For example, you are employed by XYZ Corporation, and you lobby on behalf of XYZ Corporation and its wholly owned subsidiary, XYZ Resorts. You can create a Lobbyist User account and list XYZ Corporation as the lobbying firm. This would allow you to file registrations and expenditure reports on behalf of both XYZ Corporation and XYZ Resorts (as individual "clients").

  If this scenario applies to you, please contact the Commission for further assistance.

Lobbyist Registrations

- Do I need to file a Lobbyist Registration for each client that I represent?

  Yes. File a separate Lobbyist Registration for each Client/Organization that you represent.

- What do I put as the Effective Lobbying Date?

  The date when the lobbyist engaged in lobbying activities in the State of Hawaiʻi on behalf of the client/organization. In other words, the date you started lobbying.

- Whose signature do I put in the Electronic Signature?

    The person who completed and filed the lobbyist registration.

- How does the Client/Organization authorize their signature on the lobbyist registration?

    With the new system, the client/organization no longer needs to provide a signature of approval on the lobbyist registration. With a **Client/Organization User** account, they'll be able to see all the lobbyist registrations filed to represent them with lobbying activities. If they believe a registration was incorrectly filed, they can contact our office.

- Can I create registrations for other Lobbyists in my Lobbying Firm?

    Yes, you can register other associates in your firm as long as each person has a user account.

- Will the Lobbyist see the lobbyist registrations I created?

    If you are in the same lobbying firm, then all those users associated with the lobbying firm will see those lobbyist registrations.

- Will my Client/Organization see the lobbyist registrations I created?

    An in-house lobbyist or a company representative with a Client/Organization user account can see all the lobbyist registrations created for the Client/Organization, as long as the Client/Organization name is designated in the lobbyist registration.

- I work for an outside lobbying firm. Can I file a Lobbyist Registration for someone who is not part of my firm (such as an in-house lobbyist)?

    Yes, as long as the individual has a user account, you can create a lobbyist registration for that person. For in-house lobbyists, select the name of the Client/Organization as the Lobbying Firm.

- If I have a Client/Organization user account, can I register my in-house lobbyist?

    Yes. As long as the in-house lobbyist has a **Client/Organization User** account, you can register them.

- How do I confirm that my lobbyist registration has been filed?

  If you created and filed the registration form yourself, you will receive an e-mail confirmation shortly after you submit the registration form. If you do not get an e-mail within a few moments, please check your Junk/Spam folder. You can also click on the **Lobbyist Registration** tab on the menu bar to see a list of your registrations. Once you submit the form, your lobbyist registration will be listed with the date when it was electronically filed.

- How often do I need to renew my lobbyist registration?

  The Hawaiʻi State Legislature operates on a biennial legislative system, starting in every odd year. For example, if you registered for 2025-2026, your registration is valid until December 31, 2026.

  If you continue to lobby for the same client after that time, you'll need to file a new registration before the next biennium begins.

Lobbyist Terminations

- How do I terminate my lobbyist registration?

  You can terminate your lobbyist registration through your e-filing account.

  Click on the **Lobbyist Registration** tab on the menu bar and select your registration form. Click **File Termination** (top right). In the pop-up window, select the effective termination date (current date is set as default), select reason for termination, and check the certification box. Then click **Save** to file the termination notice.

  The lobbyist terminated is the only person who will receive the email confirmation. So, if you are filing on behalf of someone else, you will not receive an email; instead, you can check the filing on the **Lobbyist Registration** tab.

  All lobbyist registrations automatically expire on December 31st at the end of the legislative biennium (which ends in an even-numbered year).

- I plan to continue lobbying during the next legislative biennium. Do I need to manually terminate my lobbyist registration?

  No. Your current lobbyist registrations will *automatically* terminate on December 31st at the end of the legislative biennium. So, if you do not manually terminate your lobbyist registrations, the E-Filing system will automatically close out your old registrations.

- I am listed as the contact for the Client/Organization. Can I terminate the lobbyist registration if my registered lobbyist is unable to do so?

  Yes. As long as you have a **Client/Organization User** account, you can terminate a lobbyist registration form on behalf of your organization.

  Click on the **Lobbyist Registration** tab on the menu bar and select your registration form. Click **File Termination** (top right). In the pop-up window, select the effective termination date (current date is set as default), select reason for termination, and check the certification box. Then click **Save** to file the termination notice.

  For security purposes, the lobbyist who was terminated is the only person who will receive the email confirmation. So, you (as the Client/Organization contact) will not receive the confirmation email. Instead, you can check the filing on the **Lobbyist Registration** tab on your user account.

- Once I terminate my lobbyist registration, do I need to file anything else?

  File Expenditure Reports for each Client/Organization and report any lobbyist compensation for the applicable reporting period through the date of termination. Both you and your Client/Organization are still subject to all reporting requirements for the period during which your lobbyist registration was effective.

  So if you terminate your lobbyist registration in June after the legislative session ends, you and/or your client are still required to submit a final expenditure report for the May – December lobbying reporting period and include all lobbyist compensation that was paid (or otherwise owed) for services rendered through the month of June.

Expenditure Reports

- How do I create an expenditure report?

  Click on the Expenditures Reports on the menu bar and then click on the **New** button to create a form.

- Whose signature do I put in the Electronic Signature?

  The person who completed and filed the expenditure report.

- Where do I enter Lobbyist Compensation?

  After you click **Save** on the initial window, scroll down to the **Lobbyist Compensation** section on your form. A list of all registered lobbyists for the selected Organization should be automatically populated on your form based on registrations as of that date. If you have more than 6 registered lobbyists, click **View All** to see the full list.

  Be sure to verify the names of lobbyist listed on your form. The list should include lobbyists who were terminated during the reporting period (so you can report their final compensation). If someone is not listed, check if the person is registered in the E-filing System.

- Do I need to report the compensation for each lobbyist even if they were not paid for this period?

  Yes, you must report the amount of compensation that was paid (or otherwise owed) to <u>each</u> registered lobbyist during the specified reporting period. Enter "$0" if you have nothing to report.

- I created a draft expenditure report last week, but one of my lobbyists just registered today. How do I add them to my form?

  Under the **Lobbyist Compensation** section, click **New** to manually add the lobbyist to your form. Type the lobbyist's name in the Registration search field and select one of the results. Enter the compensation amount and click **Save**.

- I can't find my Lobbyist to enter their compensation.

  Confirm that the Lobbyist has an e-filing account and a Lobbyist Registration for the selected Client/Organization.

- My Lobbyist does not have a Lobbyist Account on the e-filing system. Can I still file my expenditure report without listing them?

  Please contact your Lobbyist and have that person create the account (and e-file a Lobbyist Registration) so they can be listed in the expenditure report. If the Lobbyist does not do so, then they must file the paper version of the Lobbyist Expenditure Report for each reporting period.

- If my client is represented by multiple lobbying firms, can affiliated users edit and view the expenditure report?

  Yes. Once you create a draft report and select the **Client/Organization**, any user that is linked to that **Client/Organization** will be able to view and edit the draft report. Therefore, any lobbyist that is associated with that organization can edit their compensation and make other changes before the report is filed.

- How do I confirm that my expenditure report has been filed?

  If you were the person who initially created the draft report, you will receive an e-mail confirmation shortly after the report is filed. All Client/Organization users will also get an email confirmation. If you do not get an e-mail within a few moments, please check your junk/spam folder.

  You can also click on the **Expenditures Reports** tab on the menu bar to see a list of your Organization Expenditures reports. If the report was filed, it will be listed with the date when it was electronically filed.

- I am a registered lobbyist. My client has already filed an Organization Expenditure Report. Do I need to file a separate <u>Lobbyist</u> Expenditure Report?

  No, you do not need to file a separate Lobbyist Expenditure Report if all lobbyist compensation and lobbying-related expenditures are reported by your Client/Organization on an Organization Expenditure Report.

  If you incur lobbying-related expenditures that are <u>not reimbursed by a Client/Organization</u>, you must file a separate Lobbyist Expenditure report to report those items. To request the form, contact the Commission's office at (808) 587-0460.

Lobbying Bill Reporting (New!)

- When does the new lobbying bill reporting requirement take effect?

  The new lobbying bill reporting requirement under Act 8 takes effect on **January 1, 2025**, and will apply to your Jan-Feb 2025 expenditure report and on.

  It does not apply to your May-Dec 2024 report, which covers lobbying activities during May through December 31, 2024 and is due on January 31, 2025.

- What do I need to report?

  You must report the specific items lobbied on during the statement period (by bill number or other similar identifier) and indicate whether you supported, opposed, or commented on the matter.

- How do I enter items?

  Method 1: Manual Entry

  1. Scroll to **Legislative/Administrative Action Report** (bottom of form) and click **NEW**.
  2. Enter items and click **SAVE** (or **SAVE & NEW** for additional items)
  3. Bill items entered will be listed on your draft report. Be sure to file your form when you are done.

  Method 2: Upload worksheet

  1. To enter multiple items, click **Import Leg Admin Action Report** button (located at the top and bottom of form). A pop-up window will appear.
  2. **Click to Download Template** and use this template to track your bills.
  3. When you are ready to upload the bill reporting information, click **Import Leg Admin Action Report** button & **Upload Files**, and then select your template file (or **drag & drop** the file).
  4. Once items appear in the pop-up window, click **Confirm & Create**.
  5. Bill items entered on your worksheet will be automatically populated onto your draft report. Be sure to file your form when you are done.

- How do I use the template worksheet?

  Save a copy of the template and use it as a "clipboard" to upload items onto your form. NOTE: **the template (including the columns and Sheet1 label) must be left "AS IS" to ensure data is properly uploaded onto your form.**

  If you want to maintain a separate worksheet for your Client/Organization, you can save a **second copy** of the template worksheet, rename the file for your Client/Organization, and create separate tabs for each reporting periods (Jan-Feb, Mar-Apr, May-Dec, etc.). The information that is maintained on this **CLIENT-SPECIFIC** worksheet can then be copied and pasted onto the **CLIPBOARD** template and uploaded to your expenditure report.

- What if my Client/Organization changes its lobbying position on a bill?

  Under bill position column, enter the **most recent** position taken on a particular bill, as of the date of the filing of your expenditure report.

  For example, you initially opposed HB200 in January. But, after the bill was amended in February to address various concerns, you testified in support of the amended version of the bill. Select HB (bill type), enter "200" (bill number), and select "support" (bill position) on your Jan-Feb expenditure report.