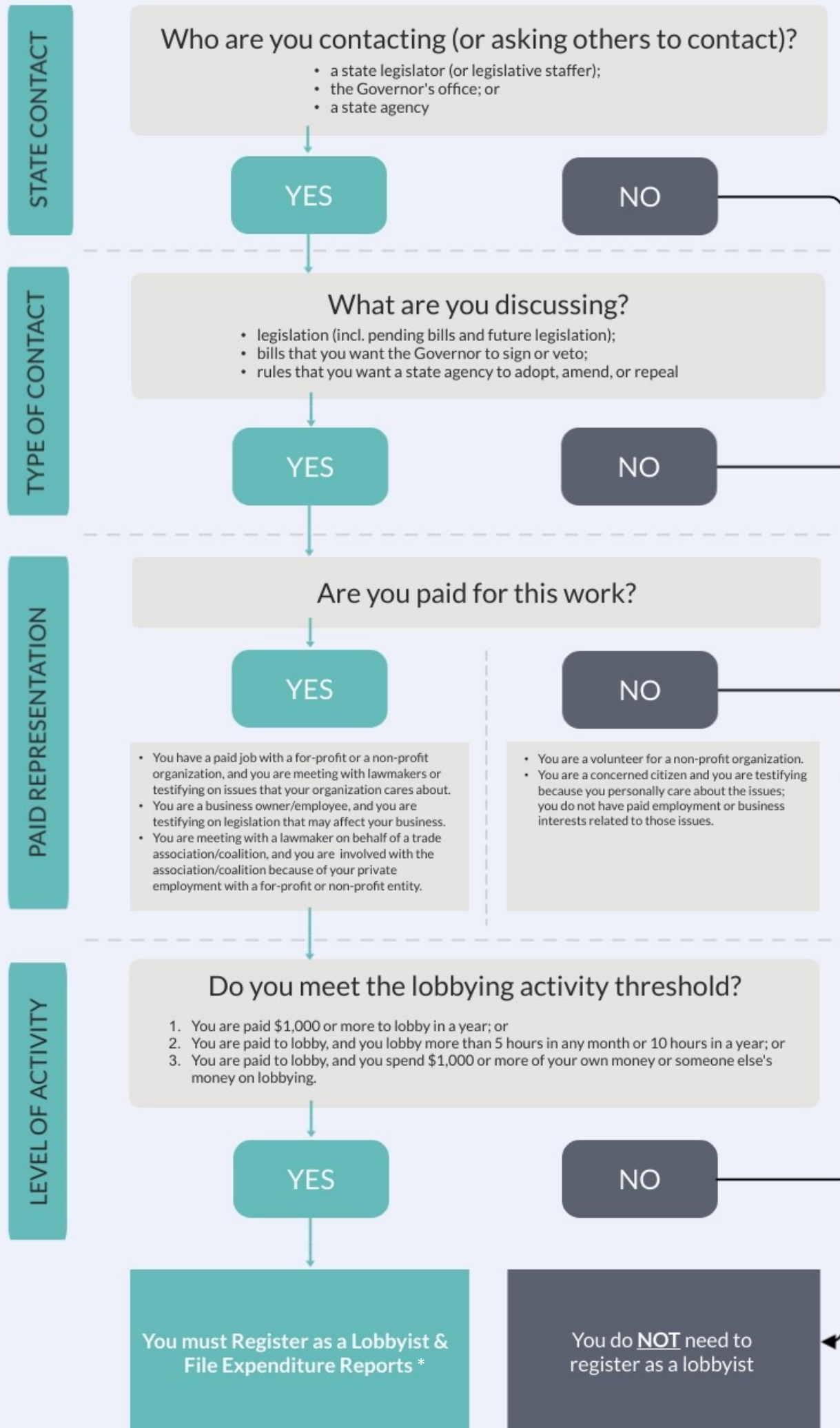




HAWAI‘I STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

1001 Bishop Street, Suite 970 | Honolulu, Hawaii'i 96813 | ethics@hawaiiethics.org | (808) 587-0460 | Twitter: @HawaiiEthics

DO I NEED TO REGISTER AS A LOBBYIST?



* Please note - there are some exceptions under the Lobbyists Law, HRS chapter 97 and HAR title 21, chapter 10.

What is lobbying?

Lobbying is communicating with anyone in the legislative or executive branch to try to influence legislative action, or communicating with any legislative or executive official about administrative agency rulemaking.

Lobbying also includes trying to get other people to contact the Legislature or the executive branch (“grassroots lobbying”). Among other things, lobbying includes:

- Testifying on bills (even if you are just submitting “Comments”) and meeting with lawmakers
- Drafting testimony
- Trying to get other people to contact their legislators
- Any efforts to influence the Governor to sign or veto a bill
- Any efforts to influence a state agency to adopt, amend, or repeal any administrative rule

How do I register as a lobbyist?

The Ethics Commission has an electronic registration system – it’s quick, it’s easy, and it’s free! Our lobbying e-filing site is available at <https://hawaiiethics.force.com/lobbying/s/>.

When do I need to register as a lobbyist?

Within **five days** of becoming a lobbyist. Once you are registered, you need to renew every odd-numbered year (2023, 2025, and so on).

Be sure to file a separate lobbyist registration for each client that you represent.

What happens when you register?

You and your client/organization will need to file expenditure reports with the Ethics Commission three times a year (**March 31, May 31, and January 31**). If you lobby during a special session, you must also file a special session report **within thirty days** after the special session ends.

Once you register as a lobbyist, you and your client/organization must file expenditure reports for each lobbying period (even if you had zero expenditures). If you are no longer lobbying, you can terminate your registration after you file all requisite expenditure reports.

What happens if you don’t register or file expenditure reports?

Fines of up to **\$1,000 per violation**.

Are there any exceptions as to who has to register as a lobbyist?

Yes. There are exceptions for government employees, non-profit employees lobbying in support of Grant In Aid applications, task force members, the media, and people who do behind-the-scenes work for a registered lobbyist (but who don’t communicate directly with lawmakers). See our website, ethics.hawaii.gov for more details.

Can I give a small gift to a legislator or legislative staff to show my appreciation for their work?

No. Legislators and legislative staff are generally prohibited from accepting ANY gifts from lobbyists and their clients. There are some exceptions – for example, you can usually give a modestly priced lei to a legislator to commemorate a special occasion – and you can contact the Ethics Commission for more information on whether a legislator could accept a gift you want to give. Generally, however, no gifts are allowed. If you offer a gift to a legislator or legislative staff person, you could get that person in trouble with the Ethics Commission.

Have questions?

Please contact the Ethics Commission for fast, free, and confidential advice. We can help you figure out if you need to register as a lobbyist, how to sign up for an account, and how to report your lobbying expenditures.