

January 19, 2021



RETREAT AGENDA ITEM

DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL CRTPA LOBBYING POLICY

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

Staff has been requested to review potential lobbying policies for the CRTPA. Should the CRTPA decide to move forward with policies related to lobbying, staff would work with CRTPA General Counsel, Thornton Williams, to develop these policies and a process for administering said policies.

BACKGROUND

Over the past few years, both the City of Tallahassee and Leon County have implemented lobbyist registration and reporting requirements. The purpose of these requirements is to provide transparency in the decision-making process for each entity.

The following is a general outline of the two local ordinances. This is not meant to be a comparison of the two, more so a review of the structure and topics covered by each. By and large, both are very similar with a few minor differences.

Definitions

Lobbying: communication, written or oral, by a lobbyist with a commission member, member of a decision-making body under the commission's jurisdiction or employee which seeks to influence a decision on an item before a decision-making body or presented by an employee as a recommendation to a decision-making body.

Lobbyist: a person who receives compensation to lobby as described above.

Principal: person, firm or other legal entity that has retained a lobbyist.

Registration

Lobbyists are required to register annually at a cost of \$25 per principal, per lobbyist. Information required includes (but not limited to) firm name, address, and principals that have retained firm and areas of legislative interest. Also requires lobbyist to disclose any direct business relationship with any commissioner, employee or person sitting on a decision-making body.

Note: Currently, the CRTPA is not able to accept funds in this manner. Would require administrative changes in order to receive this type of payment.

Exemptions

Identifies persons who meet the definition of a lobbyist but would be considered exempt from registration and reporting. Such individuals include government employees conducting government business, law enforcement conducting an investigation, persons who communicate with commissioners or employees acting in an individual capacity without compensation and a consultant under contract who communicates with commissioners or employees on issues related to the scope of their contract.

Reporting

Requires quarterly reporting on compensation received or owed to the lobbying firm. Compensation is by reported by tiered amounts for both the firm and principal. Reports are required to be filed no later than 30 after the end of the reporting period.

Compliance/Penalties

Staff is assigned the responsibility to monitor compliance and review instances of non-compliance. Fines are assessed for instances of non-compliance.