



New York State Relations Lobbying Policies

The New York State Lobbying Act (Chapter 1040, Laws of 1981 and as subsequently amended) requires registration and regular reporting on lobbying activities to the New York State Joint Commission on Public Ethics (JCOPE). Please understand that there are severe civil and criminal penalties associated with lobbying without being registered and/or violating provisions of the lobbying act.

Any faculty or staff member whose interaction with any employee of New York State (or any municipality with a population of 50,000 or more) could be considered as lobbying on behalf of Rensselaer must report any and all lobbying activities to the Office of Government and Community Relations (GCR) so that they may register that individual as a lobbyist, and report that activity to JCOPE.

1. Definition of Lobbying in NYS

NYS lobbying is defined as any attempt to influence the introduction, passage or defeat of legislation, executive orders, ordinances, resolutions or regulations at the State or municipal levels (if the municipality has a population of 50,000 or more).

This includes any oral, written or electronic communications to public officials such as the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Comptroller, Attorney General, Members of the State Legislature, state officers and employees, officers and employees of the legislature and municipal officers and employees. It also includes any efforts in support of such contacts including preparation or planning activities, research and other background work that is intended for use in coordinating with the lobbying activities of others to public officials.

In addition, it includes influencing the outcome of rate-making proceedings and state/municipal contracts. Requesting public money is considered to be lobbying activity and in certain situations, speaking with the press may also become a reportable lobbying activity.

Several members of the faculty and staff are registered to lobby in New York State; only such individuals are authorized to lobby on behalf of the Institute. Lobbying is not discouraged – but it must be reported.

If you believe that you will be engaging in lobbying activity, please notify the GCR (x6359) **BEFORE** you engage in such activity, so that we may determine if you should become a registered lobbyist and receive lobbying training.

2. Reporting on Lobbying

It is the responsibility of GCR to maintain accurate registration of lobbyists and file all appropriate semi-annual and bi-monthly reports with JCOPE. Employees must disclose to GCR all costs associated with any lobbying activity engaged in on behalf of Rensselaer including salary, benefits, travel, and printing.

Employees must report their lobbying activities and related costs on the NYS Lobbying Activity Report form and submit it to GCR no later than the 7th day of the month following the lobbying activity, according to the following chart.

This information is also used by the GCR to fulfill the necessary federal filing requirements. *(If you are planning to lobby at the federal level, be advised that different standards apply. Please contact the Director of Federal Relations at (202)220-1324 for details.)*

Reporting Period	Report due to GCR
January	February 7
February	March 7
March	April 7
April	May 7
May	June 7
June	July 7
July	August 7
August	September 7
September	October 7
October	November 7
November	December 7
December	January 7

3. NYS Gift Rule

Elected officials and employees of New York State may not accept gifts from organizations, associations, or businesses that lobby.

The 2007 Public Employee Ethics Reform Act and Public Integrity Reform Act of 2011 amended the New York State Lobbying Act and established new ethics and lobbying standards that:

- Redefine "gift" as anything of "more than nominal value in any form including, but not limited to money, service, loan, travel, lodging, meals, refreshment, entertainment, discount, forbearance or promise, having a monetary value."
- Prohibit any lobbying entity or its personnel from offering or giving any gift of any value "unless under the circumstances it is not reasonable to infer that the gift was intended to influence" the elected officials.

As an employee of an institution that is registered to lobby, faculty and staff are prohibited from giving anything of value to any person on the State or municipal payrolls. There are very limited exceptions to this rule, please contact GCR prior to giving anything to a public official.

Please also contact the GCR prior to inviting a public official to any event – either on- or off- campus. Inviting a public official to an event where food and beverages are served could potentially violate the ban on giving gifts to public officials.

4. Political Activities

Rensselaer does not discourage employees from engaging in political campaign activity or lobbying activity on their own time in a personal capacity, or on behalf of groups or organizations to which they belong.

However, when activities are undertaken in a personal capacity, it is the responsibility of the individual involved to state expressly that the activity is conducted in a personal capacity and not as a representative of Rensselaer.

Subject to limited exceptions for permissible certain student activities, Rensselaer resources of any kind (e.g., letterhead, email, secretarial support, printers, office supplies, meeting rooms) may never be used in connection with any political campaign activity.

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