

## **Background Information on Federal Lobbying Disclosure**

The Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (LDA) was an effort on the part of Congress to provide the public with transparent, easily accessible, searchable, timely information on:

- The identification of organizations engaged in federal lobbying activities and the representatives who lobbied on their behalf—internal or external. This identification was accomplished by an initial registration requirement shortly after federal lobbying activities commenced and subsequent periodic lobbying reports.
- The amount of money spent by organizations on federal lobbying activities during each six-month period.
- The specific issues being lobbied.
- Which legislative body (U.S. Senate or U.S. House of Representatives) and/or which federal department or agency was lobbied.

On September 14, 2007, the Lobbying Disclosure Act was amended by the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007, resulting in a new requirement of quarterly reports, rather than bi-annual ones, and other, more stringent standards regarding gifts (meals, entertainment and anything else of value), and travel.

The University of Pittsburgh, as a registered federal lobbying entity, complies with the quarterly reporting requirements of the amended LDA through filings by the University's Office of Governmental Relations with the Secretary of the U.S. Senate and the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Any University of Pittsburgh employee (faculty or staff) who engages in federal lobbying activities or who has contact with federal officials on behalf of the University must provide information about the lobbying activities and/or any federal contact to the Office of Governmental Relations on the Federal Lobbying Information Form—including the individuals contacted, issues, time, and expenses related to these activities. The information is then compiled for the quarterly report on the University's activities and total federal lobbying expenses filed with both the Senate and the House. The lobbying reports are maintained in an electronic database available to the public, which is frequently searched by members of the media, public interest groups, Congressional watchdog organizations, and others.

Federal lobbying activities include contacts (in person, written or by phone) with covered executive branch and legislative branch officials made on behalf of the University regarding 1) legislation, legislative proposals, rules, regulations, executive orders, programs, policies, or positions of the government; 2) the administration or execution of federal programs or policies (including federal contracts or grants); and 3) the nomination or confirmation of a person for a position subject to confirmation by the Senate. So-called "covered" executive or legislative branch officials are high-level administrators, often political appointees, not program managers or grant administrators. Responding to an inquiry from a Member of Congress or agreeing to testify at a Congressional committee hearing or respond to a committee request for information is not a lobbying activity.