



# Lobbyist Compliance

CITY COUNCIL AUDIT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

APRIL 27, 2022

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OFFICE OF THE CITY AUDITOR

# Background



- City Code requires that the City Auditor perform regular audits of a sample of registered lobbyists' filings
- We also looked at whether City Code requires lobbyists to report virtual meetings

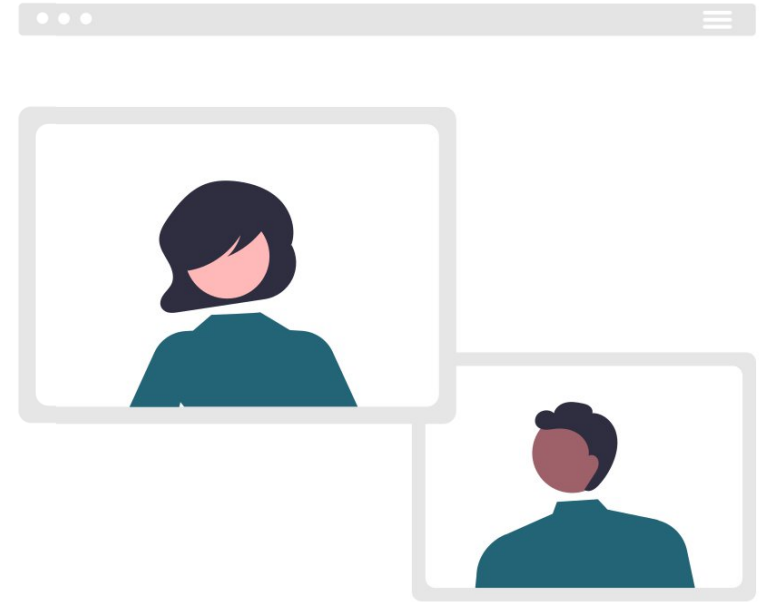
# Finding 1

Sampled lobbyists' filings were largely compliant with City Code requirements. We identified an issue related to late fees for one lobbyist.

- 11% random sample of lobbyists—12 of 13 were compliant
- City should have assigned more late fees to one lobbyist
- Late fees are issued manually

# Additional Observation

Austin's City Code only requires that lobbyists report in-person meetings with City officials. Also, the City is not using consistent methods to track lobbyist meetings.



## Chapter 4-8-8(C) of City Code

“A person who communicates **in person** with a City official for compensation on behalf of another person during a scheduled meeting on a municipal question shall disclose in writing to the city department, or office...”

# Virtual Meeting Tracking Methods

- Received information from three departments and nine Council offices
- Collection methods included:
  - Electronic form linked in an email signature (see example at right)
  - Maintaining meeting information in electronic calendars

PER CITY ORDINANCE: All individuals scheduling or accepting a meeting invitation with a City Official are requested to provide responses to the questions at the following link: <https://bit.ly/HPDLobbyingForm>  
Please note that all information provided is subject to public disclosure. For more information please visit: [City of Austin Ordinance 2016-0922-005](#) | [City Clerk's website](#) | [City Clerk's FAQ's](#)



**Housing and Planning Department Lobbying Identification Form**

HOUSING AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT LOBBYING IDENTIFICATION FORM:  
Per City Code 4-8-8(C), visitors who meet the following criteria must answer the questions below:  
1) Are appearing on behalf of a client or another person for a scheduled meeting on a "Municipal Question" under the terms of the Lobbying Ordinance; AND  
2) Have received or expect to receive compensation for attending this meeting; AND  
3) Are not a government employee or official.  
Definitions and additional information can be found below in the FAQ and at:  
<http://www.austintexas.gov/department/lobbyists>

\* Required

Lobbying Identification Form

1. Your Name \*

Enter your answer

2. Your Address \*

# Virtual Meetings in Peer Governments

- Dallas and San Antonio require that lobbyists report virtual meetings
  - However, information about meeting dates is not required
- Texas treats in-person and virtual meetings the same for reporting, but reporting is not required if spending thresholds are not met



Source (from left): Photos by Shiva Shenoy, Scott Beale, and Keith Ewing





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