

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)
ABOUT THE
SPECIFIC PROJECT EXPENDITURE REPORT

Updated 3-1-11

WHAT IS A SPECIFIC PROJECT EXPENDITURE REPORT (SPR)?

A Specific Project Expenditure Report (SPR) is a report required under Section 2-354(b) of the Orange County Lobbying Ordinance, codified at Article X of Chapter 2 of the Orange County Code, reflecting all lobbying expenditures incurred by a principal and his/her authorized agent(s) and the principal's lobbyist(s), contractor(s), subcontractor(s), and consultant(s), if applicable, for certain projects or issues that will ultimately be decided by the Board of County Commissioners (BCC).

Matters specifically exempt from the SPR requirement are ministerial items, resolutions, agreements in settlement of litigation matters in which the County is a party, ordinances initiated by County staff, and some procurement items, as more fully described in 2.20 of the Administrative Regulations.

Professional fees paid by the principal to his/her lobbyist for the purpose of lobbying need not be disclosed on this form. (See Section 2-354(b), Orange County Code.)

WHO NEEDS TO FILE THE SPR?

The principal or his/her authorized agent needs to complete and sign the SPR and warrant that the information provided on the SPR is true and correct.

A principal that is a governmental entity does not need to file an SPR.

HOW ARE THE KEY RELEVANT TERMS DEFINED?

Expenditure means “a payment, distribution, loan, advance, reimbursement, deposit, or anything of value made by a lobbyist or principal for the purpose of lobbying. This may include public relations expenditures (including but not limited to petitions, flyers, purchase of media time, cost of print and distribution of publications) but does not include contributions or expenditures reported pursuant to Chapter 106, Florida Statutes, or federal election law, campaign-related personal services provided without compensation by individuals volunteering their time, any other contribution or expenditure made by or to a political party, or any other contribution or expenditure made by an organization that is exempt from taxation under 26 U.S.C. s. 527 or s. 501(c)(4).” (See Section 112.3215, Florida Statutes.) Professional fees paid by the principal to his/her lobbyist for the purpose of lobbying are not deemed to be “expenditures.” (See Section 2-354, Orange County Code.)

Lobbying means seeking “to encourage the approval, disapproval, adoption, repeal, rescission, passage, defeat or modification of any ordinance, resolution, agreement, development permit, other type of permit, franchise, vendor, consultant, contractor, recommendation, decision or other foreseeable action of the [BCC],” and “include[s] all communications, regardless of whether initiated by the lobbyist or by the person being lobbied, and regardless of whether oral, written or electronic.” (See Section 2-351, Orange County Code.) Furthermore, *lobbying* means communicating “directly with the

County Mayor, with any other member of the [BCC], or with any member of a procurement committee.” (See Section 2-351, Orange County Code.) *Lobbying* also means communicating “indirectly with the County Mayor or any other member of the [BCC]” by communicating with any staff member of the Mayor or any member of the BCC, the county administrator, any deputy or assistant county administrator, the county attorney, any county department director, or any county division manager. (See Section 2-351, Orange County Code.) *Lobbying* does not include the act of appearing before a Sunshine Committee, such as the Development Review Committee or the Roadway Agreement Committee other than the BCC.

Principal means “the person, partnership, joint venture, trust, association, corporation, governmental entity or other entity which has contracted for, employed, retained, or otherwise engaged the services of a lobbyist.” *Principal* may also include a person, partnership, joint venture, trust, association, corporation, limited liability corporation, or other entity where it or its employees do not qualify as a lobbyist under the definition set forth in Section 2-351 of the Orange County Code but do perform lobbying activities on behalf of a business in which it has a personal interest.

DOES THE SPR NEED TO BE UPDATED IF INFORMATION CHANGES?

Yes. It remains a continuing obligation of the principal or his/her authorized agent to update the SPR whenever any of the information provided on the initial form changes.

WHERE DO THE SPR AND ANY UPDATES NEED TO BE FILED?

The SPR needs to be filed with the County Department or County Division processing the application or matter. If and when an additional expenditure is incurred subsequent to the initial filing of the SPR, an amended SPR needs to be filed with the County Department or County Division where the original application, including the initial SPR, was filed.

WHEN DO THE SPR AND ANY UPDATES NEED TO BE FILED?

In most cases, the initial SPR needs to be filed with the other application forms. The SPR and any update must be filed with the appropriate County Department or County Division not less than seven (7) days prior to the BCC hearing date so that they may be incorporated into the BCC agenda packet. (See Section 2-354(b), Orange County Code.) When the matter is a discussion agenda item or is the subject of a public hearing, and any additional expenditure occurs less than 7 days prior to BCC meeting date or updated information is not included in the BCC agenda packet, the principal or his/her authorized agent is obligated to verbally present the updated information to the BCC when the agenda item is heard or the public hearing is held. When the matter is a consent agenda item and an update has not been made at least 7 days prior to the BCC meeting or the update is not included in the BCC agenda packet, the item will be pulled from the consent agenda to be considered at a future meeting.

WHO WILL BE MADE AWARE OF THE INFORMATION DISCLOSED ON THE SPR AND ANY UPDATES?

The information disclosed on the SPR and any updates will be a public record as defined by Chapter 119, Florida Statutes, and therefore may be inspected by any interested person. Also, the

information will be made available to the Mayor and the BCC members. This information will accompany the other information for the principal's project or item.

CONCLUSION:

We hope you find this FAQ useful to your understanding of the SPR. Please be informed that in the event of a conflict or inconsistency between this FAQ and the requirements of the applicable ordinance governing specific project expenditure reports, the ordinance controls.

Also, please be informed that the County Attorney's Office is not permitted to render legal advice to a principal, his/her authorized agent, or any other outside party. Accordingly, if after reading this FAQ the principal, his/her authorized agent or an outside party has any questions, he/she is encouraged to contact his/her own legal counsel.

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