
Wisconsin Legislative Council

ACT MEMO



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2021 Wisconsin Act 266 [2021 Senate Bill 719]

Lobbying Law Changes

2021 Wisconsin Act 266 makes changes to the lobbying and ethics laws, many of which were recommended by the Wisconsin Ethics Commission. The act makes the following key changes:

- Allows an agency official, elective state official, or legislative employee to attend meetings to discuss government proposals and issues, an event typically referred to as a “Lobby Day,” without paying admission. These officials and employees may not receive food, beverages, or other items unless they pay the event organizer, including a principal or lobbyist, for the actual cost of the items.
- Eliminates a requirement that the Ethics Commission submit weekly reports on licensed lobbyists to the Legislature.
- Allows the Ethics Commission to notify lobbyists and principals of missing lobbying reports by email, in addition to regular mail.
- Allows a lobbyist to use a primary address when applying for a lobbying license and to keep that address confidential under Wisconsin’s Open Records Law.
- Amends the definition of “local public office,” a definition that impacts which individuals are subject to the local code of ethics. Under the act, the following individuals are included in the definition of “local public official”:
 - An employee of a school district who holds a school administrator license or permit issued by the Department of Public Instruction under rules promulgated pursuant to s. 118.19, Stats.,¹ and whose employment requires that the individual hold that license or permit.
 - An employee of a school district who acts as the head of facilities and maintenance and whose employment duties include making purchasing decisions or recommendations for the school district.

Effective date: April 17, 2022

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¹ See s. PI 34.035 and subch. VIII, ch. 34, Wis. Adm. Code.