

# Annual Report

Office of the Ethics  
Commissioner of Alberta

April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023

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## COMMISSIONER'S MESSAGE

I am pleased to submit my annual report for the year ending March 2023.

It was a year marked by increased activity over the previous two years.

As at the end of March 2023, 274 Members of the Legislative Assembly, Designated Office Holders, Designated Senior Officials and political staff members were required to submit financial disclosure and were subject to either the *Conflicts of Interest Act* or the *Public Service Act*.

Last year we received 613 requests for advice, mainly about gifts and post-employment.

Requests for an investigation were down to 68. I believe that the decrease was due to a more detailed description on our webpage of the office's jurisdiction.

Timely yearly financial disclosure continues to be a problem, notwithstanding all those required to provide financial disclosure are provided with two months' notice that it is due for submission.

Ten Members of the Legislative Assembly received letters that financial disclosure was overdue, and one received an administrative penalty. One Designated Office Holder received a letter that financial disclosure was overdue, although this category of officials has a good record of timely disclosure. Two Designated Senior Officials received late letters. Eleven political staff members received letters that disclosure was late and six received penalties. Two had judgements filed against them, one which has not been paid. The problem with political staff members has subsequently been satisfactorily resolved.

The *Lobbyists Act* was reviewed last year and a report was filed on May 25, 2022. Unfortunately, nothing further has happened. There are many changes that need to be made to the *Act*, so that Albertans get the transparency they deserve.

A review of the *Conflicts of Interest Act* commenced last year but had to be postponed because of the general election. This legislation also needs a complete overhaul to ensure that those serving the public meet the standards of conduct that are expected by the public. Amending both the *Lobbyists Act* and the *Conflicts of Interest Act* should be high on the government agenda.

I look forward to working on meaningful changes to both pieces of legislation in the coming year and to continuing to serve Albertans.

## MANDATE

The *Conflicts of Interest Act* was passed in 1991, S.A. Chapter C.22.1 (now R.S.A, Chapter C-23), and created the Office of the Ethics Commissioner of Alberta. The Office is also responsible for the administration of the *Lobbyists Act*, Statutes of Alberta 2007, Chapter L-20.5 (“*Lobbyists Act*”), under which the Ethics Commissioner appoints the Lobbyist Registrar. The Ethics Commissioner is an Officer of the Legislature and is appointed by an Order in Council following a motion in the Legislative Assembly approving the appointment.

The Ethics Commissioner reports to the Legislative Assembly through the Speaker and files annual reports and investigation reports with the Speaker of the House for tabling in the Legislature. The Ethics Commissioner presents budgetary estimates through the Standing Committee on Legislative Offices. The Legislative Assembly approves the budget for the Office of the Ethics Commissioner.

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST ACT

The preamble of the *Conflicts of Interest Act* sets out some of the basic ethical requirements:

- Ethical conduct of elected officials is expected in democracies;
- Members of the Legislative Assembly serve Albertans most effectively if they come from a broad spectrum of occupations and continue to participate actively in the community;
- Members of the Legislative Assembly are expected to perform their duties of office and arrange their private affairs in a manner which promotes public confidence and trust in the integrity of each Member, maintains the Assembly’s dignity and justifies the respect in which society holds the Assembly and its Members;
- Members of the Legislative Assembly, in reconciling their duties of office and their private interests, are expected to act with integrity and impartiality; and
- Ministers and their staff must avoid conduct that violates public trust or creates an appearance of impropriety.

Through the *Conflicts of Interest Act*, and the *Public Service Act*, the Office of the Ethics Commissioner:

- Promotes an understanding of obligations of Members of the Legislative Assembly, Designated Office Holder, Designated Senior Official, and political staff under the Acts;
- Receives financial disclosure statements from Members, Designated Senior Officials, Designated Office Holders and political staff in the Premier’s and Ministers’ offices;
- Provides advice to Members and former Members, current or former political staff, Designated Senior Officials, and Designated Office Holders;
- Provides advice to individuals governed by post-employment restrictions; and
- Investigates alleged breaches of the Conflicts of Interest Act by Members, Designated

Senior Officials, political staff and breaches of the conflicts of interest and post-employment provisions of the Public Service Act by Designated Office Holders.

- Hear appeals pertaining to conflict of interest decisions of Deputy Ministers under the Public Service Code of Conduct.

Upon receiving an investigation report of conduct of a Member from the Office of the Ethics Commissioner, the Speaker is required to release the report publicly. If the Legislature is in session, the report is tabled in the Legislature. If the Legislature is not in session, the report is filed as an intersessional tabling. If the Ethics Commissioner recommends a sanction in an investigation report, the Legislative Assembly debates and votes on the investigation report within 15 days after the report is tabled, or at such other time determined by a resolution of the Legislative Assembly.

Under section 29 of the *Conflicts of Interest Act*, the Legislative Assembly may accept or reject the findings of the Office of the Ethics Commissioner or substitute its own findings. If the Legislative Assembly determines there is a breach, it may impose the sanction recommended by the Ethics Commissioner, any other sanction referred to in section 27(2) which it considers appropriate, or the Legislative Assembly may refrain from imposing a sanction. The Legislative Assembly has final authority about disciplinary matters relating to its Members.

Under the provisions of the *Conflicts of Interest Act*, reports of an investigation involving a Designated Senior Official may only be disclosed to the responsible Minister and the Chief Executive Officer or Chair of the Board of the agency. Investigations of political staff serving in the Office of the Premier or a Minister under the *Conflicts of Interest Act* are disclosed to either the Premier or the relevant Minister.

Reports of an investigation under the *Public Service Act* involving a Designated Office Holder may only be disclosed by the Ethics Commissioner to the Deputy Minister of Executive Council and the relevant Minister if it pertains to a Deputy Minister, the Premier if it pertains to the Deputy Minister of Executive Council, or, if it pertains to a Designated Office Holder other than a Deputy Minister, to the Minister responsible for that entity. The Office of the Ethics Commissioner is not authorized to publicly release any of these reports.

## LOBBYISTS ACT

The *Lobbyists Act* is intended to enhance the integrity and accountability of government by fostering openness and transparency about who is influencing decisions made by public office holders. The *Lobbyists Act* establishes two categories of lobbyists: consultant lobbyists and organization lobbyists. The *Lobbyists Act* prohibits a person from lobbying the Government or a prescribed provincial entity and providing paid advice at the same time, and from lobbying in respect of a subject matter if a person associated with them provides paid advice to Government or a prescribed provincial entity on that subject matter (and vice versa), unless an exemption is granted.

The *Lobbyists Act* preamble describes its basic principles:

- Free and open access to government is an important matter of public interest;
- Lobbying public office holders is a legitimate activity;
- The public and public office holders should know who is engaged in lobbying activities;
- A registration system of paid lobbyists should not impede free and open access to government; and
- The public and public office holders should know who is contracting with the Government of Alberta and provincial entities.

During the fiscal year, the requirement to register as an organization lobbyist applied once a lobbyist performs, or is required to perform, over 50 hours of lobbying annually (including preparation time), either individually or collectively with others in their organization. However, some lobbyists, as a matter of practice, register before they reach the threshold. Consultant lobbyists are required to register within ten days of entering into an undertaking to lobby. The Office of the Ethics Commissioner maintains a web-based lobbyist registry system and database. It is searchable by the general public. The registry provides openness and transparency by:

- Recording the identities and activities of people paid to lobby public office holders;
- Recording the identities of organizations and clients who pay lobbyists to lobby public office holders on their behalf;
- Allowing lobbyists to file, update, renew and terminate registrations by submitting returns and notices for acceptance into the system; and
- Allowing public scrutiny.

The registry allows access 24 hours per day, seven days per week, for both the public and lobbyists.

The Ethics Commissioner may authorize any individual in the Office of the Ethics Commissioner to act as Registrar and to perform any of the powers, duties or functions of the Registrar under the *Lobbyists Act*. The Ethics Commissioner delegates the administrative and enforcement responsibilities of the Registrar to the Lobbyist Registrar, who is also the General Counsel to the Ethics Commissioner.

Under the *Lobbyists Act*, certain powers and responsibilities are reserved for the Ethics Commissioner and cannot be delegated, including:

- Exemptions from the contracting prohibitions in s. 6 of the *Lobbyists Act* (e.g. allowing a person to provide paid advice to government while at the same time lobbying the government), with or without conditions;
- Issuing advisory opinions and interpretation bulletins; and
- Banning serious offenders from lobbying.

The Ethics Commissioner reports to the Legislative Assembly through the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly on investigations under the *Lobbyists Act*. If the House is sitting, the report is tabled. If the House is not sitting, the report is distributed to Members, after which the Ethics Commissioner may make the report public. A report provided when the House is not sitting is tabled when the House next sits.

## DISCLOSURE PROCESS

This year, all Members of the Legislative Assembly, Designated Office Holders, Designated Senior Officials and political staff complied with their obligation to file disclosure statements. However, several were late in filing and had to be reminded they were late and would be subject to an administrative penalty if the disclosure was not filed within a set period of time. This year, 24 warning letters and 7 administrative penalties were assessed.

There is no excuse for late filing as two month's notice is given prior to the submission date and there is a ten day reminder sent.

Disclosure statements include information about the Member, Designated Office Holder, Designated Senior Official or political staff, spouses or adult interdependent partners and minor children. It requires disclosing:

- All assets, including ownership of publicly traded securities, all liabilities, and financial interests in any private corporation where they are Director or the entity is controlled by them or their spouse;
- Any income received in the previous twelve months;
- Any legal proceedings brought against them and any taxes owing.

The Office of the Ethics Commissioner received private disclosures from 87 Members and met with each Member personally to discuss their disclosure. Previously, Members' public disclosure statements were released through the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. However, as a result of the changes to the *Conflicts of Interest Act* in December 2014, public disclosure statements are now posted on the Office of the Ethics Commissioner's website sometime after the Member's meeting with the Ethics Commissioner.

Designated Office Holders are required to submit disclosure statements under the *Public Service Act* and Designated Senior Officials are required to submit disclosure statements under the *Conflicts of Interest Act*. Disclosure meetings were conducted with all Designated Office Holders and all Designated Senior Officials. There are no public disclosure statements for Designated Office Holders or Designated Senior Officials.

Senior political staff working in the Office of the Premier, certain Premier's Office staff, Chiefs of Staff, Press Secretaries and Ministerial Assistants are also required to provide financial disclosure to the Office of the Ethics Commissioner. There are no public disclosure statements for political staff.

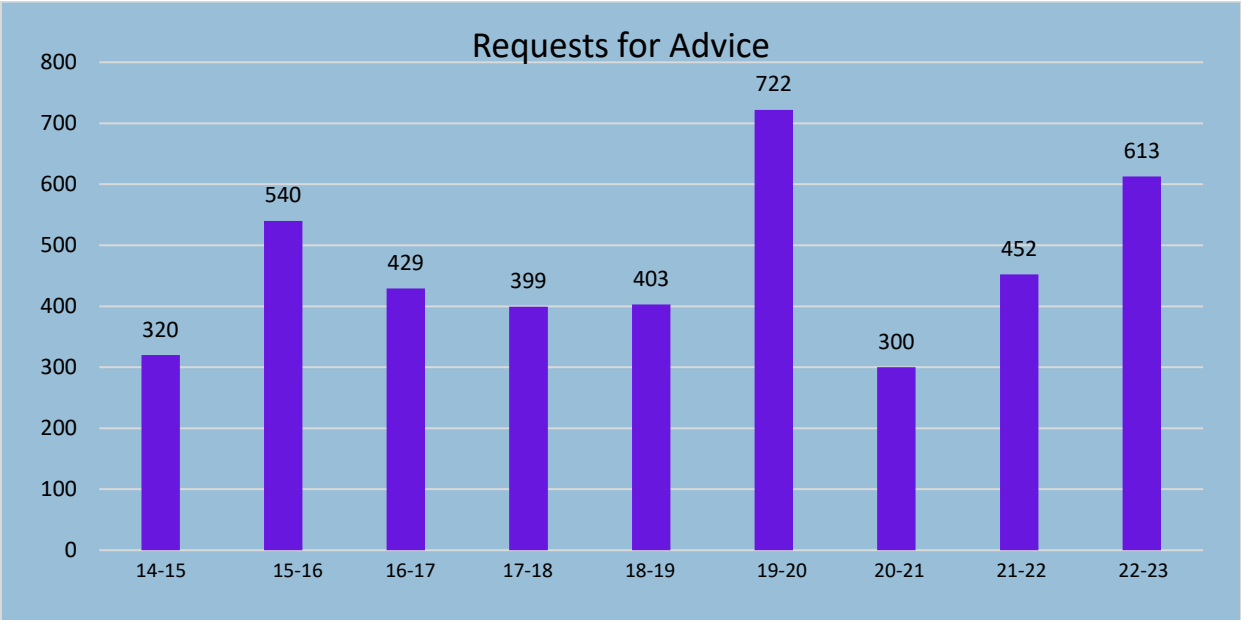
*Number of individuals who were late in submitting all disclosure information*

Category of Filer:	Compliance:
<b>Members of the Legislative Assembly</b>	10 late filing warning letters were issued
	1 MLA was issued an administrative penalty
<b>Designated Office Holders</b>	1 late filing warning letter was issued
	0 DOHs were issued an administrative penalty
<b>Political Staff</b>	11 late filing warning letters were issued
	6 political staff members were issued an administrative penalty (two filed as judgements)
<b>Designated Senior Officials</b>	2 late filing warning letters were issued
	0 DSOs were issued an administrative penalty

## REQUESTS FOR ADVICE

If Members, Designated Office Holders, Designated Senior Officials, or political staff seek and follow advice from the Ethics Commissioner, they are protected from any proceeding or prosecution for a breach of the *Conflicts of Interest Act*. Advice is typically given in writing.

*Total Requests for Advice under the Conflicts of Interest Act 2022-23*





### *Breakdown of Requests for Advice*

<b>Types of Advice</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>
Gifts	219	407	61	200	276
Post-Employment	29	90	24	87	166
Outside Activities	26	41	39	19	23
Investments	35	54	59	54	58
Family	6	15	9	6	19
Constituency Issues	5	5	4	5	7
Codes of Conduct	22	6	10	4	5
Contracts with the Crown	0	2	5	4	1
Taking Part in Decisions	15	19	24	5	8
Conflicts of Interest/Other	21	48	38	28	21
Reviewing SO Appointments	19	20	5	12	12
Concurrent Employment	6	15	22	28	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>722</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>452</b>	<b>613</b>

#### *Gifts*

Questions are raised about accepting tickets to sporting events, invitations to fundraisers, invitations to conferences and non-commercial flights. Members are required to track all gifts over \$100, including event tickets, to ensure they have accurate records for yearly disclosure and are mindful of both the value of cumulative gifts they receive from one source in a reporting year and any connection between a source and the Member's public responsibilities.

#### *Post-Employment*

Post-employment questions arise from departing Ministers, Designated Office Holders, Designated Senior Officials and political staff.

#### *Outside Activities*

Questions regarding outside activities almost exclusively deal with volunteer board activities in community organizations and clarification on external business activities.

### *Investments*

Investment requests relate to blind trusts and personal investments of the individual or their family. Where potential conflicts existed, appropriate steps were taken by the parties to remove themselves from the situation prior to a conflict arising.

### *Family*

Questions involving family members involve either the employment or activities of a spouse or child.

### *Constituency Issues*

Questions relate to assisting constituents, using the constituency allowance for social obligations within the constituency. Where questions about the Member's constituency allowance fall within the mandate of the Office of the Speaker, the Member is referred to Legislative Assembly Office.

### *Codes of Conduct*

Several agencies, boards and commissions, seek informal confidential advice on conflict of interest matters relating to their agency's code of conduct.

### *Contracts*

Contract questions are often raised by individuals about their dealings with Alberta Treasury Branch, and by others regarding other business, financial or Crown contracts.

### *Taking Part in Decisions*

Generally, individuals consider their personal holdings and those of close family members and ask whether it is appropriate to participate in a decision before the Legislative Assembly or one of its committees, or before Executive Council or one of its committees. The Office of the Ethics Commissioner advises whether a private interest is involved or whether the matter is a general application which affects the Member only as a broad class of the public, thereby allowing the Member to participate and vote.

### *Conflicts of Interest/Other*

This is a general category where requests for advice do not fall within the other categories but do fall within the general scope of the *Conflicts of Interest Act*.

### *Reviewing Senior Official Appointments and Vetting of Potential Board Member Appointments*

Sometimes, as part of the screening and hiring process, potential conflicts of interest issues arise with certain candidates for certain senior government or board positions. In these cases, or in cases where it is prudent to ensure there are no underlying conflict of interest issues, the Office of the Ethics Commissioner may review selected candidate's backgrounds and investment holdings to ensure there are no issues and provide related advice.

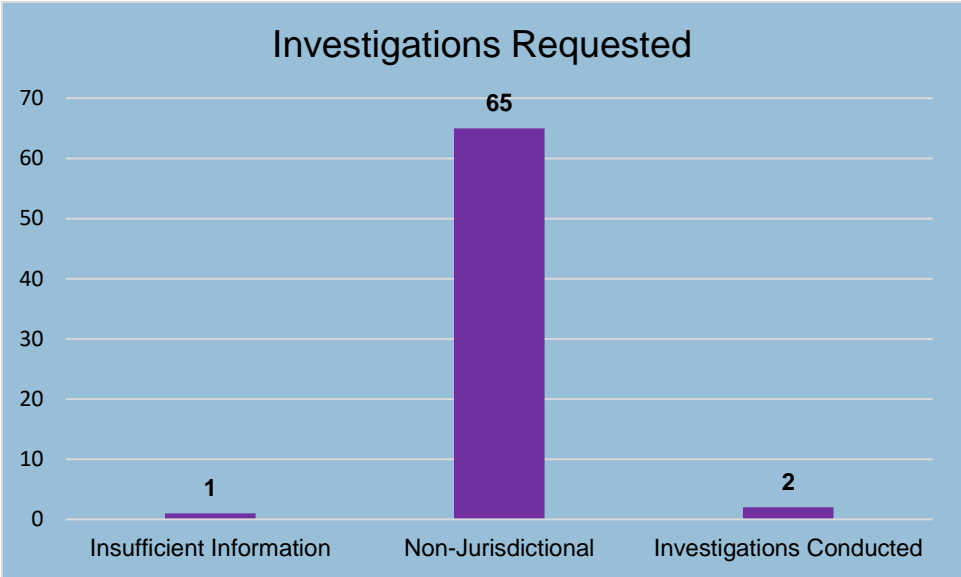
### *Concurrent Employment*

Beginning in 2018-19, Designated Senior Officials and Chief Executive Officers of certain public agencies were required to obtain the Ethics Commissioner's approval for any outside employment. There were 17 requests for concurrent employment approval made by Designated Senior Officials in 2022-2023.

# REQUESTS FOR INVESTIGATION

Investigation requests, once received, are considered and then acted upon accordingly. If sufficient evidence and grounds are provided, and the issue is within the jurisdiction of the Office of the Ethics Commissioner, an investigation is conducted. If the request is vague or frivolous or contains overly broad allegations, and further relevant information is not provided upon request, the request is categorized as “insufficient information”. If sufficient information is provided, but the request is determined to pertain to someone other than a Member, Designated Senior Official or political staffer, or is a complaint that does not fall within the scope of the *Conflicts of Interest Act*, it is classified as “non-jurisdictional”.

*Request for Investigations by Category 2022-2023      Total: 68 (down from 85)*



Of the 68 requests for investigation, the Office of the Ethics Commissioner found that the Office did not have jurisdiction on 65 of the requests. There was one investigation completed this year involving a former political staff member. Investigation reports are tabled in the Legislative Assembly and can also be found at:

<http://www.ethicscommissioner.ab.ca/publications/investigation-reports/commissioner-trussler/>.

An investigation was initiated at the end of March 2023 into the conduct of Premier Danielle Smith.

## REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

The Office of the Ethics Commissioner received 28 requests for information this year, up from 23 the year prior. The majority of requests were from callers seeking clarification about the Office of the Ethics Commissioner's mandate and the relevant legislation. Information requested concerned employment standards, professional standards and conduct, Member compensation, post-employment, blind trusts, gift acceptance, public disclosure, conduct in non-profit organizations and legislation surrounding investigations. Callers who could not be assisted were referred, where possible, to the appropriate office that could answer the inquiry.

Total Requests Received for	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Advice	403	722	300	452	613
Investigations	107	437	138	85	68
Information	27	35	50	23	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>1194</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>709</b>

## CODE OF CONDUCT REVIEWS

The Office of the Ethics Commissioner reviews and approves the Codes of Conduct of various agencies, boards and commission under Part 4.3 of the *Conflicts of Interest Act*. This year, the Office of the Ethics Commissioner approved Codes of Conduct for three new agencies and approved amendments to 14 existing Codes of Conduct. The Office of the Ethics Commissioner also provided advice regarding Codes of Conduct on at least 19 occasions.

## BUDGET AND FISCAL UPDATE

The Office of the Ethics Commissioner continually ensures prudent expenditure of public funds and strives to find internal efficiencies and savings wherever possible and reasonable. As a result, the office's expenses last year were less than budgeted.

Full copies of the 2022-23 audited financial statements are located on the Office of the Ethics Commissioner website: <http://www.ethicscommissioner.ab.ca/publications/annual-reports/>.

	2019-20 Budget	2019-20 Actual	2020-21 Budget	2020-21 Actual	2021-22 Budget	2021-22 Actual	2022-23 Budget	2022-23 Actual
Salaries	\$730,000	\$711,441	\$725,000	\$737,189	\$745,500	\$702,630	\$789,000	\$783,200
Supplies and Expenses	\$214,500	\$124,014	\$214,500	\$124,125	\$186,500	\$123,923	\$186,500	\$121,369
Capital Acquisitions	n/a	\$ 49,101	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$944,500</b>	<b>\$884,556</b>	<b>\$939,500</b>	<b>\$861,314</b>	<b>\$932,000</b>	<b>\$826,553</b>	<b>\$975,500</b>	<b>\$904,569</b>
<b>Unexpended Budget Allocation</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>\$59,944</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>\$78,186</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>\$105,447</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>\$70,931</b>

## EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

Participating in annual conferences is very beneficial to further the work of the Office. Conferences provide the Office of the Ethics Commissioner the opportunity to exchange information with peers on issues of common interest and to review legislative and regulatory differences and trends. The office attended the Canadian Conflicts of Interest Network conference, the Council on Governmental Ethics Laws and the Lobbyists Registrars and Commissioners Network conference in 2022.

## PUBLICATIONS

A routine review of brochures and guides is undertaken each year to ensure they are current. Educational information is reviewed to ensure it is as user-friendly as possible. Brochures and bulletins on the public website are reviewed and updated as needed.

## PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE ACT REPORTING

The Office of the Ethics Commissioner received no disclosures, and conducted no investigations, under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act* during the fiscal 2022-23 reporting year.

# LOBBYISTS ACT AND REGISTRY UPDATE

## REVIEW OF THE LOBBYISTS ACT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In May 2022, the Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future submitted its final report to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly regarding its review of the *Lobbyists Act*. The Committee's report can be found here: <https://www.ethicscommissioner.ab.ca/media/2989/final-report-review-of-the-lobbyists-act.pdf>

The Committee made one recommendation in its report: That any amendments made to the *Lobbyists Act* take into account the importance of public transparency with respect to the practice of lobbying. The Committee also directed that the Committee Clerk provide the Ministry of Justice and Solicitor General with a copy of written stakeholder submissions received by the Committee with respect to its review of the *Lobbyists Act*.

To date, no legislative amendments to the *Lobbyists Act* have been introduced in response to the Committee's report.

The Office of the Ethics Commissioner made a number of recommendations to the Committee during its review which would improve public transparency with respect to the practice of lobbying, including:

- that a "Communications Registry" be implemented requiring lobbyists to disclose direct lobbying communications (ie. meetings, letters, emails, etc.) with senior public office holders within the last 30 days;
- that the 50-hour annual organization lobbyist threshold be reduced to 20 hours (including time spent lobbying and preparing to lobby); and
- that the exemption for in-house personnel of non-profit organizations be narrowed.

The *Lobbyists Act* needs reform, and this office would welcome amendments that would provide greater transparency around who is engaged in lobbying activities and to what extent.

## REQUESTS FOR AND PROVISION OF GUIDANCE

As part of a proactive approach to achieving compliance with the *Lobbyists Act*, the Lobbyist Registrar continued to respond regularly to requests for guidance from lobbyists, potential lobbyists, and others about the *Lobbyists Act* provisions, as well as to requests for assistance with using the Lobbyist Registry application and website.

The Registrar regularly addressed questions and provided guidance about:

- whether a particular organization or individual is subject to the *Lobbyists Act* and needs to register in the Lobbyist Registry;

- the applicable registration deadlines and requirements;
- whether certain information must be disclosed in a registration in the Lobbyist Registry and how to disclose the required information;
- whether certain activities fall within the definition of “lobby” and the scope of the *Lobbyists Act*;
- the contracting prohibitions, the prohibition on contingent payments, and the ‘prohibited gifts’ provision in the *Lobbyists Act*;
- how to set up an account in the Lobbyist Registry;
- how to change a password, account user, or account information in the Lobbyist Registry;
- how to complete, submit, update or terminate a registration in the Lobbyist Registry.

This year, the Lobbyist Registrar received and addressed at least 215 requests for information or guidance about the interpretation and application of the *Lobbyists Act* and at least 560 requests for assistance with using the Lobbyist Registry application and website. These numbers are approximate and based on internal efforts to track all requests received and answered.

In addition to responding to requests on an individual basis, the Registrar continued to send courtesy emails to all individuals with an active user account in the Lobbyist Registry to remind or notify them of important and timely *Lobbyists Act* issues where necessary.

The Registrar also continued to regularly review and enhance the resources on the Lobbyist Registry website and in the Lobbyist Registry application to give detailed and clear guidance about the *Lobbyists Act* and Lobbyist Registry on a proactive, transparent, and widespread basis. During this fiscal year, the Registrar:

- updated the FAQ on the Lobbyist Registry website;
- created and added new FAQ to the Lobbyist Registry website;
- updated the question text and help icon content in registration and request forms in the Lobbyist Registry application;
- reviewed and updated existing guidance documents on the Lobbyist Registry website;

## *INFORMATION ON FILING REGISTRATIONS*

As in previous years, the Lobbyist Registrar continued to review registrations submitted to the Lobbyist Registry to ensure compliance with the applicable registration requirements. This involved making inquiries of and following up with lobbyists with a view to having them accurately and transparently disclose all information required to be disclosed in their registrations pursuant to the *Lobbyists Act*, including lobbying activities, lobbyist information, and organization or client

information. However, lobbyists remain liable for ensuring that the information that they provide in their registrations is forthright, coherent, complete, up-to-date, and accurate.

This office also continued to issue courtesy reminders and notifications to *registered* lobbyists about their filing deadlines and to *unregistered* users (i) who had set up an account in the Registry but never created or filed any registrations or (ii) who had an account in the Registry and had created a draft registration but never completed or filed the draft. Although ultimately it remains lobbyists' responsibility to ensure that they complete and submit any necessary registrations within the timelines required by the Act, we continue to carry out those services with a view to promoting compliance, to assisting users with fulfilling their filing obligations, and to preventing or mitigating breaches of the registration requirements at the earliest opportunity.

As in past years, this office also continued to compile and post quarterly 'Lobbyist Registry Reports' on the Lobbyist Registry website, which provide basic statistics about active registrations.

## *INVESTIGATIONS AND ENFORCEMENT*

While this office continues to take a proactive approach to compliance, lobbyists remain responsible for ensuring that they are familiar and comply with their obligations under the Act.

The Lobbyist Registrar and Ethics Commissioner have enforcement powers available to encourage compliance with the Act, including the ability to remove a return from the Lobbyist Registry if a lobbyist does not comply with certain filing requirements under the Act, the ability to commence an investigation and/or impose an administrative penalty, and, if a lobbyist is convicted of an offence, the ability to impose a prohibition from lobbying and from filing or having a return filed for a period of up to two years.

During the fiscal year, the Registrar continued to make inquiries of and follow up with lobbyists and potential lobbyists to determine whether they have breached or are in breach of the *Lobbyists Act* and to seek explanations for any non-compliance. The main goal of these inquiries is to ensure that lobbyists and potential lobbyists are in compliance with the legislation. However, these inquiries are also carried out with a view to determining whether a warning, an administrative penalty, and/or other enforcement action was necessary to achieve compliance with the *Lobbyists Act* provisions.

The Lobbyist Registrar issued the following four administrative penalties this year totaling \$3,350.00:

- An administrative penalty of \$600.00 was issued to the designated filer of an organization lobbyist for a failure to comply with the obligation to file the organization's semi-annual renewal return by the legislative deadline. The designated filer had a history of non-compliance with the registration deadlines;
- An administrative penalty of \$500.00 was issued to a consultant lobbyist for failure to comply with the obligation to file an initial return within 10 days of entering into an undertaking to lobby on behalf of a client. The consultant lobbyist did not file an initial



return until after the undertaking to lobby had ended;

- An administrative penalty of \$1,500.00 was issued to an organization lobbyist for breaching section 6.2 'prohibited gifts' provision by giving gifts, favours or other benefits to public office holders which those public office holders were not allowed to accept; and
- An administrative penalty of \$750.00 was issued to an organization lobbyist for breaching section 6.2 'prohibited gifts' provision by promising a gift, favour or other benefit to public office holders which those public office holders were not allowed to accept.

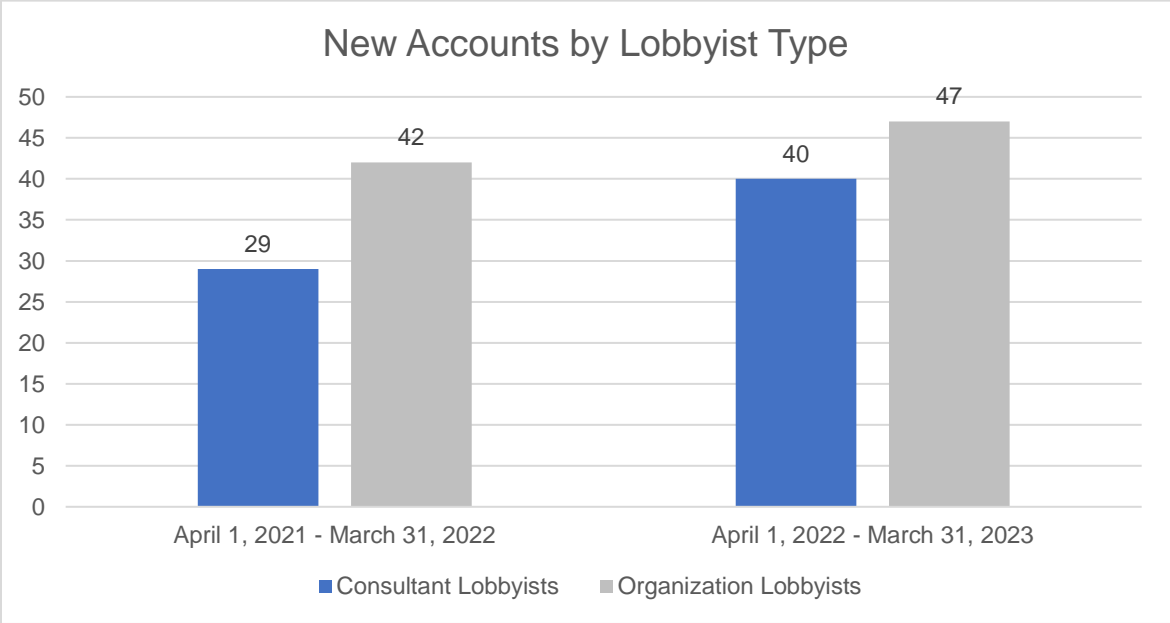
On August 22, 2022, the Ethics Commissioner submitted a report on the investigation into allegations involving Mark Kuspira, the owner/operator of a business operating as Crush Imports. The investigation was commenced to determine whether Mr. Kuspira had breached the *Lobbyists Act* by failing to be registered as an organization lobbyist in the Alberta Lobbyist Registry.

The Lobbyist Registrar concluded that Mr. Kuspira was not required to register in the Alberta Lobbyist Registry and was therefore not in breach of the *Lobbyists Act*. However, the Lobbyist Registrar commented in the report that the investigation highlighted that the current 50-hour organization lobbyist registration threshold is too high and fails to promote public transparency of lobbying activities in Alberta. The full report is available on the Alberta Lobbyist Registry website.

# STATISTICAL YEAR IN REVIEW

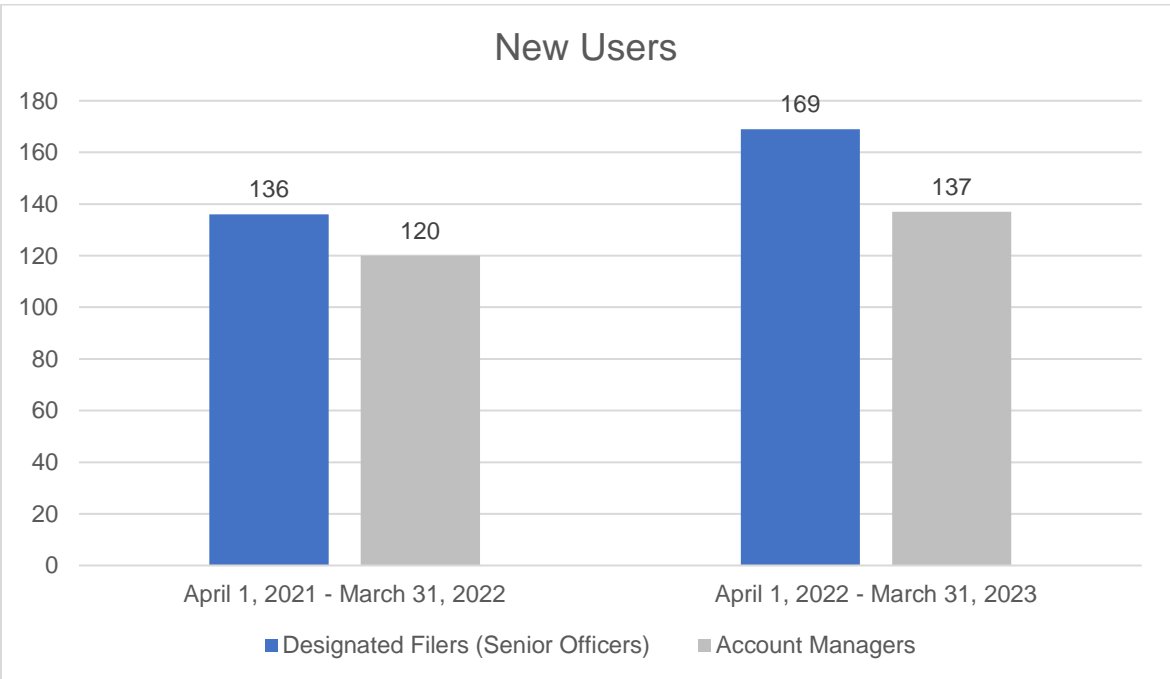
## New Accounts by Lobbyist Type between April 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023

Provides a count of all new organization accounts in the Registry by lobbyist type. There are two types of lobbyists: consultant lobbyists and organization lobbyists.



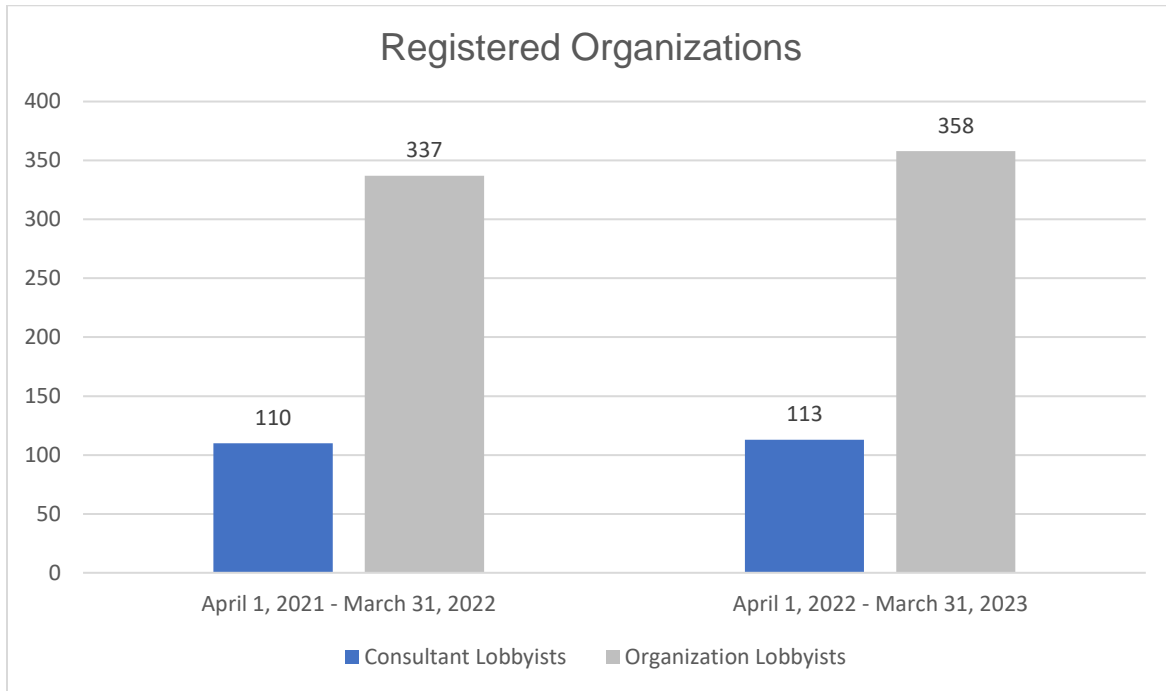
## New Users between April 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023

Provides a count of all new users in the Registry by user account type. There are two types of user accounts: designated filers and account managers.



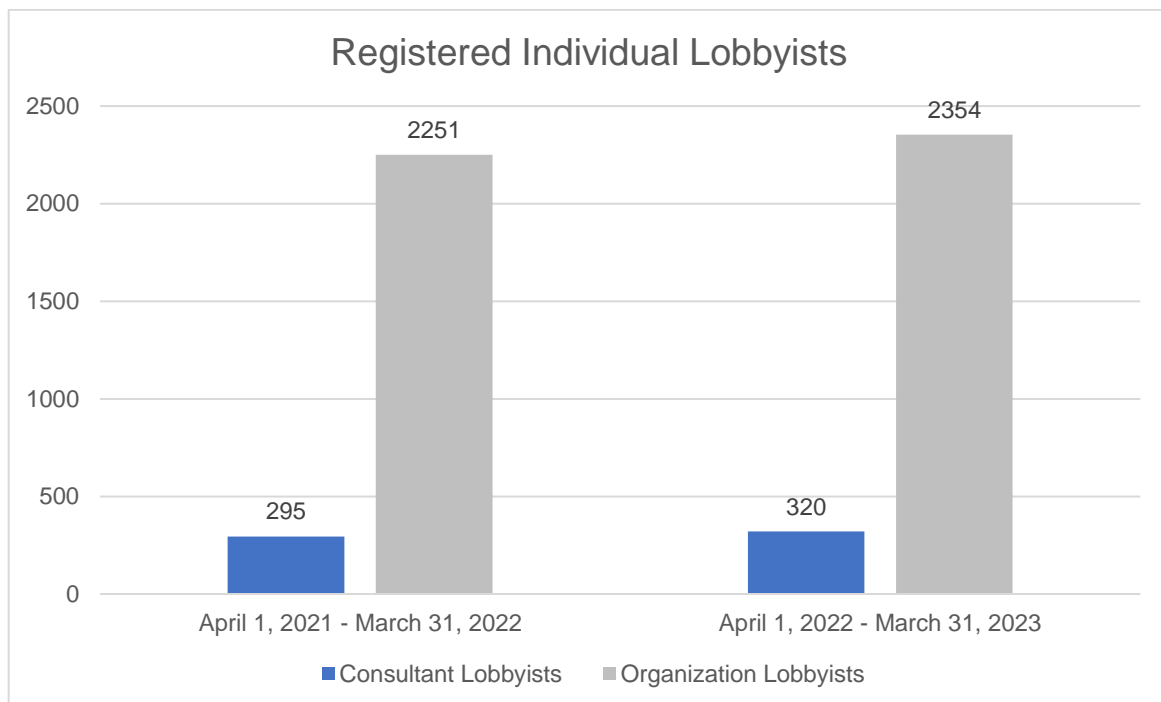
### Registered Organizations by Lobbyist Type as of March 31, 2023

Provides a count of all organizations that have one or more active registrations by lobbyist type. There are two types of lobbyists: consultant lobbyists and organization lobbyists.



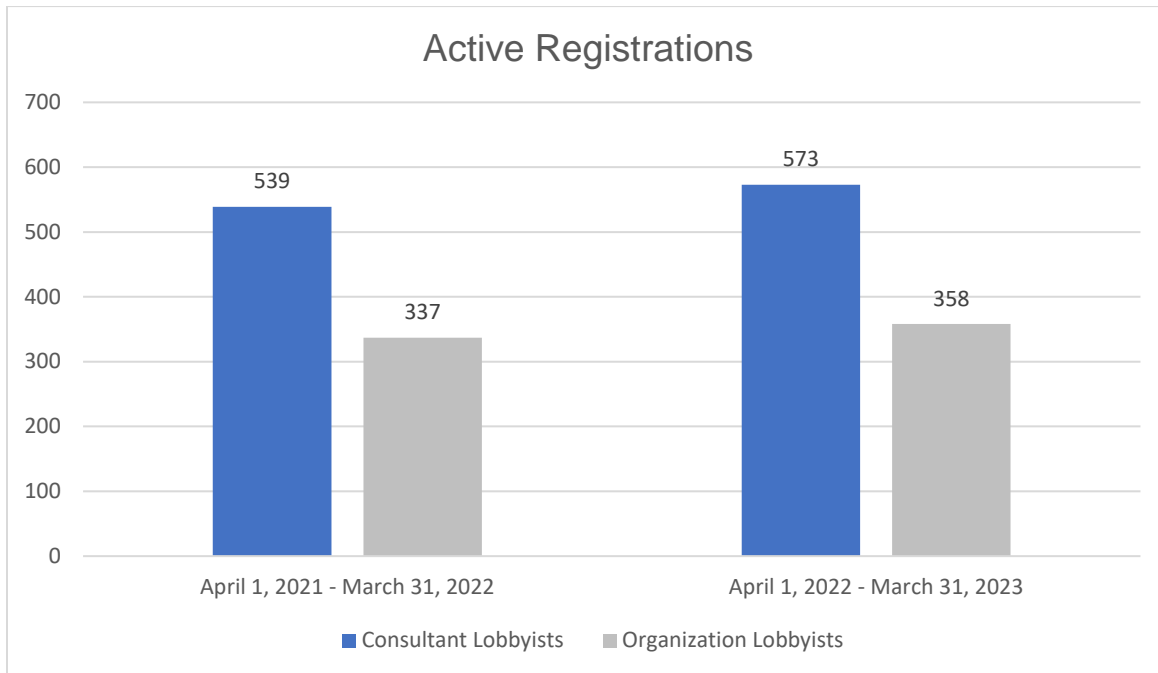
### Registered Individual Lobbyists by Lobbyist Type as of March 31, 2023

Provides a count of all individuals registered as lobbyists by lobbyist type. There are two types of lobbyists: consultant lobbyists and organization lobbyists.



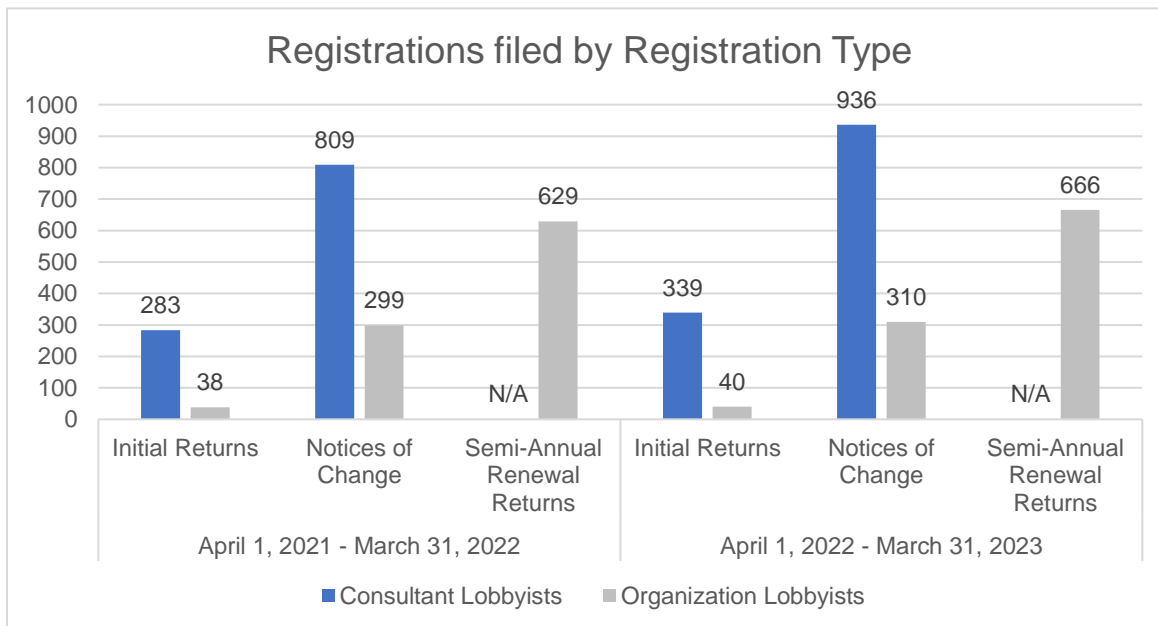
### Active Registrations by Lobbyist Type as of March 31, 2023

Provides a count of all active registrations for each lobbyist type. Since an initial return must be filed for each undertaking to lobby on behalf of a client, many consultant lobbyists have multiple registrations in the Registry at the same time. An organization lobbyist only has one registration in the Registry at any given time.



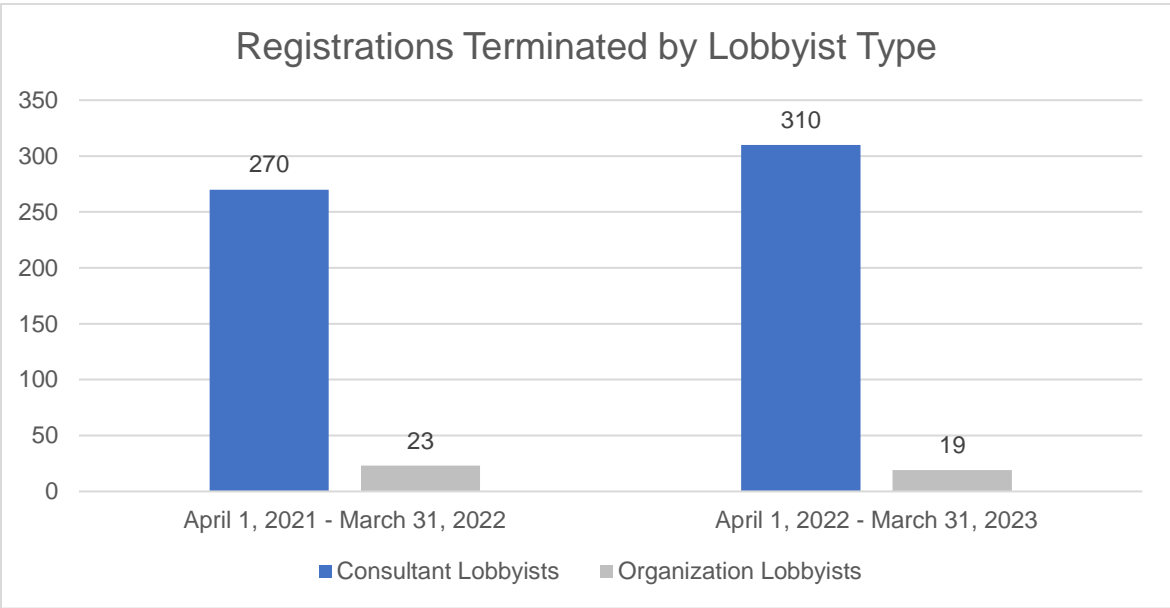
### Registrations Filed between April 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023

Provides a count of all registrations filed by registration type. There are three registration types: Initial Returns, Notices of Change and Semi-Annual Renewal Returns.



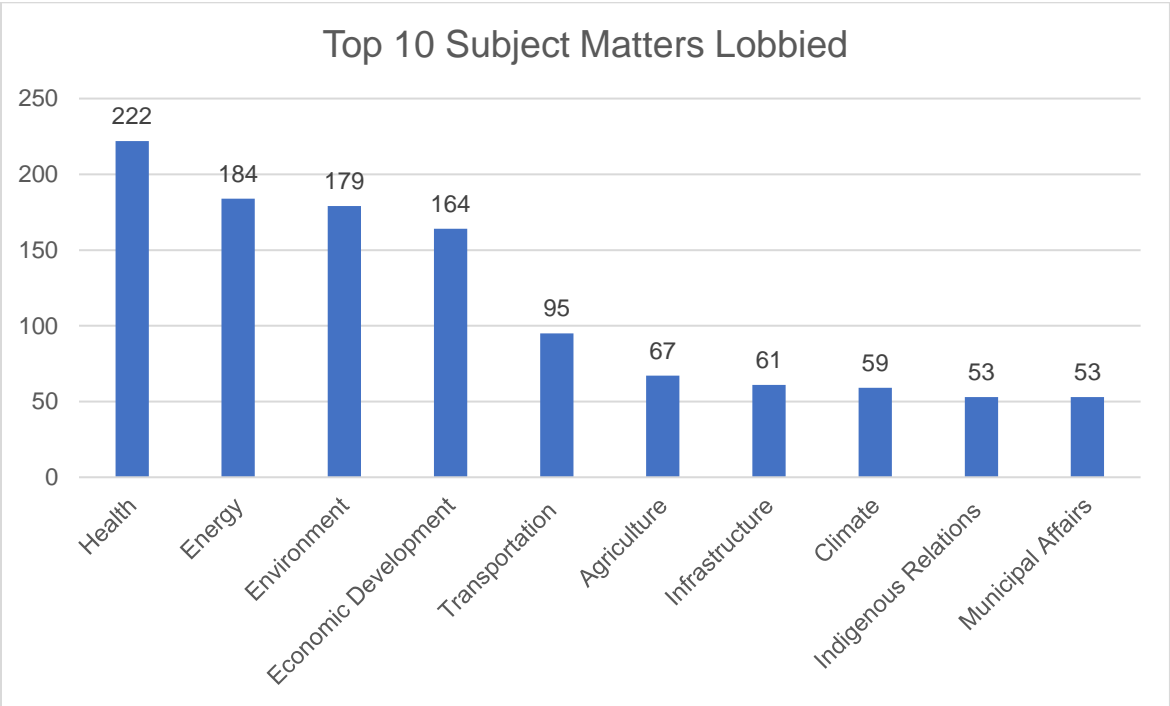
*Registrations Terminated between April 1, 2022 – March 31, 2023*

Provides a count of all terminated registrations by lobbyist type. There are two types of lobbyists: consultant lobbyists and organization lobbyists.



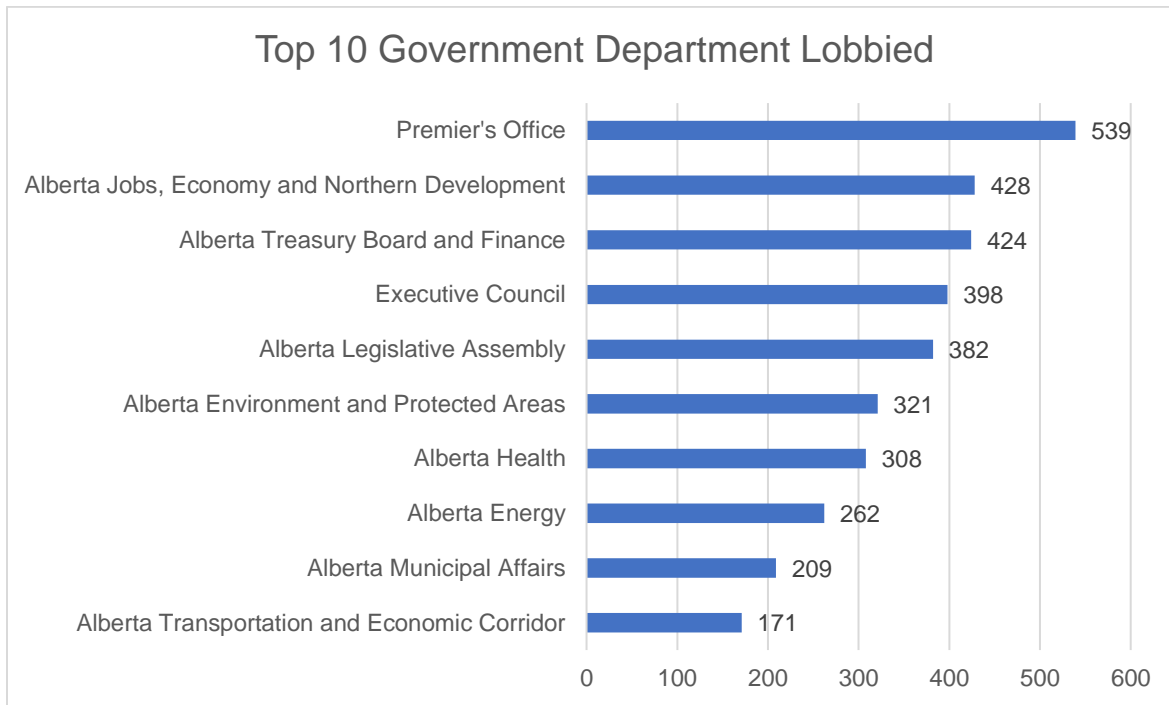
*Active Registrations by Subject Matter as of March 31, 2023*

Provides a count of all active registrations that indicate the subject matter.



### Active Registrations by Government Departments Lobbied as of March 31, 2023

Provides a count of all active registrations that indicate the Government department.



### Active Registrations by Prescribed Provincial Entities Lobbied as of March 31, 2023

Provides a count of all active registrations that indicate the prescribed Provincial entity.

