

Career Information

Because there is no prerequisite degree or training to become a lobbyist, many people believe that anyone can be a lobbyist. Technically, that is correct. There is no "entrance exam" one must pass before beginning to work in government relations. But, in some ways, that creates more of a barrier; because an individual cannot produce credentials on his or her qualifications, potential employers or clients must rely on the applicant's performance record. If a lobbyist has no record of lobbying experience, there is little to commend him or her for the work.

Most lobbyists are college graduates, and many have advanced degrees. Of these advanced degrees, the most prevalent is legal training, with other common backgrounds being communications, teaching, public relations and journalism. Lobbyists must be able to understand their clients' interests as well as the laws and policies they hope to influence. They must be able to communicate effectively with their audience, both orally and in writing. It is also necessary for them to understand the legislative and political process.

Possibly the best training for lobbying is experience in a legislative or congressional office. Even the most menial position in the NC General Assembly or on Capitol Hill helps provide an understanding of the process unlike anything in a classroom, and competence quickly leads to increased responsibility. Professional staffers — either in personal or committee offices — develop not only an understanding of legislative and congressional issues but also a valuable network of congressional contacts.

Important Note: Unfortunately, we do not have additional information available for people trying to get into the lobbying profession. The Association is a membership organization dedicated to helping lobbyists perform their jobs better, rather than an employment service of any kind. The best suggestion we can make is for individuals to use the contacts they have through previous work or studies, seeking informational interviews and networking as much as possible. As indicated in the paragraph above, political or government contacts are particularly helpful in entering the field.

Adapted from The American League of Lobbyists website
<http://www.alldc.org/publicresources/career.cfm>