

TITLE 19 NYCRR PART 942

Procedure for Requesting an Exemption from Publicly Disclosing Client Information Pursuant to Questions 8(b-1), 8(b-2) or 8(c) on a Financial Disclosure Statement

942.1 Definitions.

- (a) *Commission* shall mean the New York State Joint Commission on Public Ethics.
- (b) *Covered Person* shall mean any individual who is required to file a Financial Disclosure Statement pursuant to section 73-a of the Public Officers Law and is required to disclose Client Information pursuant to questions 8(b-1), 8(b-2) or 8(c) of the Financial Disclosure Statement.
- (c) *Exemption* shall mean a waiver from publicly disclosing Client Information pursuant to questions 8(b-1), 8(b-2) or 8(c) of the Financial Disclosure Statement.
- (d) *Financial Disclosure Statement* shall mean the annual statement that must be filed pursuant to section 73-a of the Public Officers Law.
- (e) *Client Information* shall mean the identity of a person or entity required to be publicly disclosed pursuant to questions 8(b-1), 8(b-2) or 8(c) on the Financial Disclosure Statement.
- (f) *Client* shall mean the specific person or entity referenced in Section 942.1(e).
- (g) *Ministerial Matter* shall mean an administrative act carried out in a prescribed manner not allowing for substantial personal discretion.
- (h) *Title* shall mean the name of the position or job in which a Covered Person serves or, in the case of a Covered Person who is a candidate for statewide office or a member of the legislature, the name of the office for which the Covered Person is a candidate.
- (i) *State Agency* shall mean any State department, or division, board, commission, or bureau of any State department, any public benefit corporation, public authority, or commission at least one of whose members is appointed by the Governor. State Agency shall also include the State University of New York or the City University of New York, including all their constituent units except (1) community colleges of the State University of New York and (2) the independent institutions operating statutory or contract colleges on behalf of the State.

942.2 Procedure.

- (a) Pursuant to Executive Law §94(9) and questions 8(b-1), 8(b-2) and 8(c) on the Financial Disclosure Statement set forth in Public Officers Law §73-a, the Commission permits a Covered Person to request, in accordance with this Section, an Exemption from the requirement to disclose Client Information. If requesting an Exemption from the Commission, such Covered Person shall file the Exemption request with the Commission on or before the deadline to file a Financial Disclosure Statement that applies to said Covered Person pursuant to Public Officers Law section 73-a(2).

(b) The filing of an Exemption request pursuant to this Part shall not toll a deadline to file a Financial Disclosure Statement. A Financial Disclosure Statement filed during the pendency of a request for Exemption shall include all required information except the Client Information.

(c) In response to questions 8(b-1), 8(b-2) and 8(c) of the Financial Disclosure Statement, a Covered Person need not report clients or customers with respect to matters for which the Covered Person (or his or her firm) was retained prior to entering public office in accordance with §73-a(3)(8) of the Public Officers Law.

(d) The Exemption request shall be made in writing, signed by the Covered Person requesting such exemption, and sent to the Commission via email at jcope@jcope.ny.gov.

(e) The request for Exemption shall state:

“My client is not currently receiving my services or seeking my services in connection with:

- (1) A proposed bill or resolution in the senate or assembly during the reporting period;
- (2) A contract in an amount totaling \$10,000 or more from the state or any state agency for services, materials, or property;
- (3) A grant of \$10,000 or more from the state or any state agency during the reporting period;
- (4) A grant obtained through a legislative initiative during the reporting period; or
- (5) A case, proceeding, application or other matter that is not a Ministerial Matter before a state agency during the reporting period.”

(f) The request for Exemption should include but need not be limited to the following information:

- (1) the name and work address of the Covered Person;
- (2) the Title of the Covered Person;
- (3) a description of the specific duties and responsibilities of the Covered Person;
- (4) the Client Information for which the Covered Person seeks an Exemption, and with respect to each matter on which the Covered Person has provided or will provide services to the Client, a description of the services rendered or to be rendered, the actual or estimated fee amount, and the actual or estimated duration of such services;
- (5) a general description of the business activities in which the Client engages;
- (6) a description of any specific business the Client has before the state;
- (7) a description of any particularized interest the Client has in any pending legislation;
- (8) if applicable, a description of any action taken by the Covered Person relating to the Client and any interaction the Covered Person has had with the Client in the course of performing the Covered Person’s official duties;
- (9) a statement explaining why the Covered Person should receive the requested exemption rather than be required to disclose the Client Information; and
- (10) any other relevant information which may support the Exemption request.

(g) If the Commission denies the request for Exemption, such Covered Person must, within 15 days from receipt of the denial, file with the Commission an amended Financial Disclosure Statement that includes the subject Client Information.

942.3 Commission action.

(a) Upon receipt of a request for Exemption, the Commission shall review the material filed to determine whether the Exemption shall be granted. If no further information is required, the Commission shall render its decision on the material before it.

(b) In reviewing a request for an Exemption, the Commission may consult with bar or other professional associations, or the legislative ethics commission in the case of individuals subject to its jurisdiction, or with any other person or entity the Commission determines may have an interest in or possess knowledge relevant to the determination of the request, and may consider rules of professional conduct.

(c) The factors the Commission shall consider in determining a request for Exemption shall include, but not be limited to:

- (1) the nature and the size of the client;
- (2) whether the client has any business before the state; and if so, how significant the business is; and whether the client has any particularized interest in pending legislation and if so how significant the interest is;
- (3) whether disclosure may reveal trade secrets;
- (4) whether disclosure could reasonably result in retaliation against the client;
- (5) whether disclosure may cause undue harm to the client;
- (6) whether disclosure may result in undue harm to the attorney-client relationship; and
- (7) whether disclosure may result in an unnecessary invasion of privacy to the client.

(d) After considering all the information submitted in support of the request for Exemption and any other information received by the Commission, the Commission shall determine whether the totality of the circumstances support granting the request for Exemption.

(e) The determination of the Commission shall be set forth in writing and provided to the Covered Person. Any denial shall include an explanation for the determination.

(f) An Exemption, once granted, shall remain in effect in each subsequent year in which such disclosure would otherwise be required unless and until:

- (1) the Covered Person is appointed or promoted to a new Title in which such a filing is required; or
- (2) there is a material change in the duties of the Covered Person; or
- (3) there is a material change in the nature of the services the Covered Person provides to the Client; or
- (4) there is a material change in the nature of the Client's business before the State, if applicable.

(g) After an Exemption has been granted for which there has been no change as described in Section 942.3(f) of this Part, the Covered Person shall continue to disclose the Client Information to the Commission in any subsequent year for which disclosure would otherwise be required. Such information, however, shall remain confidential and the Commission shall delete such information from the copy of the Covered Person's financial disclosure statement that is made available for public inspection.

(h) The Commission may, *sua sponte*, review a prior determination by the Commission to grant such Exemption, and may determine the Exemption is no longer appropriate under the law or this rule and regulation.