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MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES NEW LOBBYIST DATA THAT PROVIDES CLEAR CONNECTION FROM EMPLOYER TO LOBBYISTS TO CITY HALL

Improved lobbyist payment datasets show clear connection between lobbyist activity and the client paying them to make the connections with City Hall

Today, Mayor Emanuel announced the release of new data with unprecedented details linking City lobbyists' activities, their compensation, and expenses with each of their clients.

"Today I am delivering on a promise to make more lobbyist data available as part of my administration's commitment to transparency. For the first time ever, we are making city lobbyist data available online that isn't just numbers on a spreadsheet," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "This new data ties information together in a way that shows the connection between client, lobbyist and city hall."

The decision to provide data linking lobbyist activity to individual clients is part of the Mayor's efforts to create the most comprehensive lobbyist disclosure database in the nation, following the ethics ordinance he introduced to the City Council on July 6. This decision was made in collaboration with the input of a group of developers who created ChicagoLobbyists.org, a website that visualizes and organizes information about efforts to lobby the City of Chicago, its Departments, and the City Council.

"The additional lobbying information released today will lead to the development of powerful tools that increase city government transparency," said Paul Baker, an open data advocate and member of the ChicagoLobbyists.org team.

Prior to this summer, lobbyist filings could only be obtained from the Board of Ethics through FOIA request. Also previously, the data did not have client information tied to the compensation. Lobbying data for the year 2010 was posted in machine-readable format online in June.

The City of Chicago's data portal, data.cityofchicago.org, currently hosts 207 datasets with over 17 million rows of data. Of the 207 datasets, the "Current Employee Names, Salaries and Position Titles" has been viewed the most, followed by "Police and Fire Stations." Since Mayor Emanuel took office on May 16, 2011, the portal has been viewed over 370,000 times and over 30 million rows of data have been accessed.

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