



Conflict of Interest Policy

Purpose

To define the nature of conflicts of interest and the procedures to be taken to handle those conflicts

Scope

This policy applies to all members of the CITE Board and contract/staff resources

Policy

Members of the CITE board of directors and contract/staff resources are expected to operate according to high ethical standards. This includes recognizing that conflicts of interest exist, have the potential to inhibit the wisdom of particular decisions, and possibly damage the organization's reputation.

Conflicts of interest exist where a person:

1. Has, or is perceived to have, a personal, family or business interests that might benefit from a decision in which he/she is involved in making, or is able to influence those making it
2. Is involved with a competing or sister organization that may result in a divided loyalty in the context of making a decision

Voting for or against, or arguing for or against, a particular outcome may influence a decision. Limiting the options being considered may also influence it. We recognize that not all conflicts of interest are rooted in financial benefit. Examples of possible conflict of interest situations with respect to our corporation include:

- A board member has a personal or business relationship with the CITE as a supplier of goods or services or as a landlord or tenant
- A board member or contract staff resource has a personal or financial relationship outside of the workplace with a client or supplier who he/she deals with directly as a representative of CITE
- CITE is employing or contracting to someone who is directly related to a board member or other contract/staff member
- A major funder or sponsor has a position on the board even if it is a non-voting one.



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Conflicts of interest are unavoidable and should not prevent an individual from serving as a director or as a contract resource/staff member unless the extent of the interest is so significant that the potential for undue influence is present in a large number of situations.

Procedure for Handling a Conflict of Interest

Disclosure: Members of the board and contract/staff members have a duty to disclose any personal, family, or business interests or other community involvements, that may, in the eyes of another person, influence their judgment. Directors shall disclose conflicts of interest to the board; contract/staff resources to the Chair of the Executive Committee.

Board members are expected to disclose potential conflicts, if anticipated, prior to their nomination or election. Otherwise they are obliged to disclose them when the circumstances arise. They should be disclosed to the board chair or to the whole board.

The board itself may want to disclose specific director conflicts of interest to members, contract resources/staff members, funders and external stakeholders where that interest may, in their judgement, affect the reputation or credibility of the organization. Such disclosure may be made in a formal and confidential communication.

Determination of Conflict: The board or Chair of the Executive Committee should assess the presence of a conflict of interest, or the perception of one, and determine what actions, if any, are appropriate to address the situation.

Stepping Out: Board members and contract resources/staff members have a duty to exempt themselves from participating in any discussion and voting on matters where they have, or may be perceived as having, a conflict of interest. In some circumstances they may be asked to step out.

Minutes of board or meetings should reflect when a board member discloses that they have a conflict of interest and how the conflict was managed. Normally this will involve a discussion on the matter without the board member in the room, which should be minuted, and a vote, where the interested board member, if they have returned, abstaining. Contract resources/staff conflicts should be similarly managed.