



## **Regional Child Abuse and Child Neglect Prevention Council Conflict of Interest Policy**

### Article I: Purpose

The purpose of the conflict of interest policy is to protect each council member of an Ohio Children's Trust Fund Regional Child Abuse and Child Neglect Prevention Council from ethical and legal violations. It is the responsibility of each individual to ensure that they are in compliance with all laws governing conflicts of interest.

Specifically, this policy pertains to matters involving entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an Officer or Director, or non-director committee, subcommittee or council member of the Ohio Children's Trust Fund's Regional Child Abuse and Child Neglect Prevention Council. This policy is intended to supplement, but not replace any applicable state laws governing conflicts of interest applicable to public agencies.

### Article II: Definitions

1. **Council member** is a county prevention specialist as defined by Ohio Revised Code 3109.172.
2. **Coordinating entity** is the organization responsible for conducting the business of the regional child abuse and child neglect prevention council, as prescribed in Ohio Revised Code 3109.173.
3. **Financial interest** is established if a council member has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:
  - a. An ownership or investment in any entity with which the council is considering a transaction or arrangement,
  - b. A compensation arrangement with any entity or with any entity or individual with which the entity has a transaction or arrangement,
  - c. A compensation arrangement (contract, grant, employment, etc.) with any entity or individual which the Council has a transaction or arrangement.
  - d. A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the council is negotiating a transaction or arrangement,
  - e. A fiduciary responsibility to any entity with which the council is considering a transaction or arrangement.
4. **Improper influence** exists if a council member:

- a. Influences decisions of the council for reasons outside of the best interest of the regional council,
  - b. Reveals competitive funding processes before release of the competitive funding process or provides a competitive advantage to applicants,
  - c. Provides guidance for the completion of an application for the council's competitive funding process to the applicant(s).
5. **Compensation** includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not substantial.
  6. **Competitive funding process** refers to the process by which vendors are selected to provide services for a region.

### Article III: Procedures

1. **Duty to Disclose:** Each council member has a duty to disclose to the coordinating entity, the council, and the OCTF any financial interest in an entity with which the council is considering a financial transaction or arrangement. As an appointed council member, the individual is serving in a public capacity. When someone in public service is confronted with a conflict of interest, he or she must completely abstain from making decisions about or influencing how the matter is resolved. Such abstention or recusal should include refraining from:
  - Voting
  - Discussing
  - Reviewing
  - Recommending
  - Inspecting
  - Investigating
  - Or taking any other action on the matter

Please note that public servants may not take any action in matters that definitely and directly affect themselves, their family members or their business associates.

2. **Determining whether a conflict of interest exists:** In order to determine whether a conflict of interest exists, council members must submit a signed letter to the Ohio Ethics Commission requesting an advisory opinion by providing all relevant facts of the situation, including but not limited to: the council member's role on the council, the appointing authority of the council member, the competitive funding process used to select vendors, the council member's role and influence in creating the prevention plan and competitive funding process, the council member's financial interest with any entities that may apply or that are applying, and any unique factors relevant to the council member.

Letters requesting an advisory opinion for oneself from the Ohio Ethics Commission shall be submitted via US Mail to:

Paul M. Nick, Executive Director  
Ohio Ethics Commission  
30 West Spring Street, L-3  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Please note that council members cannot request an advisory opinion for someone else. If you have a question about the possible actions of another person, you can request general information from the Ohio Ethics Commission.

More information can be found at <http://www.ethics.ohio.gov/advice/request.html>.

3. **Procedure for addressing the conflict of interest:** If a conflict of interest has been determined to exist by the Ohio Ethics Commission, the requesting council member must follow the advice and direction of the Ohio Ethics Commission. The council member is responsible for notifying the appointing authority, the coordinating entity, and the Ohio Children's Trust Fund of any opinions received by the Ohio Ethics Commission. Once notified, the coordinating entity and OCTF will work collaboratively to address any remaining issues.
4. **Violations of the conflict of interest policy:** If council members, coordinating entities, or the Ohio Children's Trust Fund staff suspect that a council member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest or has asserted improper influence on the competitive funding process, they shall inform the council member of the basis for such belief and afford the member an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose. If, after hearing the member's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, it is still believed that the council member has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest or has asserted improper influence on the competitive funding process, the council, coordinating entity, or the Ohio Children's Trust Fund shall refer this conduct to the Ohio Ethics Commission. A person, before engaging in activity that is governed by the Ethics Law, may request an advisory opinion from the Ethics Commission to address their hypothetical or prospective activity.

#### Article IV: Affiliations/Relationships

Please include any organizations in which you or an immediate family member have a financial interest as officers, employees, consultants, or contractors. Include any other non-profit or for-

profit boards on which you (or your spouse or partner) sit. You must update this list as changes occur.

<u>Business/Organization</u>	<u>Nature of Relationship</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Article V: Annual Statements and Ethics Training

**Ethics Training:** Each council member is strongly encouraged to receive ethics training by the Ohio Ethics Commission, either online or in-person. A certificate of completion verifying ethics training completion should be retained by the Council member.

To view the one hour e-learning course, please visit:  
<http://www.ethics.ohio.gov/education/elearning/ecourses.html>

To register for an in-person ethics training, please visit:  
<https://disclosure.ethics.ohio.gov/Registration/ClassList/Index/1>

To register for a webinar, please visit: <http://www.ethics.ohio.gov/education/webinars.html>

**Annual Statements:** In addition to annual ethics training, each council member must submit a signed statement to the coordinating entity which affirms:

- a. Receipt of this conflict of interest policy,
- b. Confirmation that the policy is understood,
- c. Agreement to comply with this policy

Article VI: Acknowledgment

The undersigned certifies the following statements:

- a. I have received a copy of this conflict of interest policy;
- b. I have read and understand this policy;
- c. I agree to comply with this policy.

Copies of this policy will be provided to each council member for signature and will also be available upon request from the coordinating entity or the Ohio Children’s Trust Fund.

I have READ, UNDERSTOOD, and AGREED to the Ohio Children’s Trust Fund’s conflict of interest policy:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
County of appointment/Position on Council