



The Diocese of Ottawa

Conflict of Interest Policy

This policy applies to clergy, staff and volunteers at all levels of governance, including members of Diocesan Council, committees, subcommittees, working groups, task forces, advisory panels, and boards.

PURPOSES

The purposes of this policy are to assist clergy, staff and volunteers in recognizing and managing potential conflicts between their personal interests and their diocesan duties, to facilitate ethical decision making in the Diocese and to promote confidence in the integrity of diocesan-decision making bodies.

All clergy, staff and volunteers are required to perform their duties conscientiously, honestly and with a view to the best interests of the Diocese. Such persons must avoid any situation in which there is or may be perceived to be a conflict or potential conflict between the interests of the Diocese and their personal interests or duties to a third party.

DEFINITION

A conflict of interest exists wherever an individual could benefit or might reasonably be perceived to benefit disproportionately to others in financial remuneration or benefits from access to information or from a decision over which they might have influence. Examples of conflicts of interest include the following:

- A Diocesan Council or committee member has part ownership in a company with which a present or pending business agreement with the Diocese is being decided.
- A staff member has a personal or familial relationship with an outside contractor and is involved in discussions that deal with hiring, remunerating or evaluating the job performance of that contractor.
- A committee member is a part of a parish that has a request for funds, support or consideration of any kind before a committee or Diocesan Council, and that member is in a position to influence the discussion of that request beyond providing background information.

It is not a conflict of interest for staff or volunteers to participate freely in diocesan matters, where the effect of their decisions or actions taken is of a general nature, or where they may be beneficiaries along with others similarly situated.

PROCEDURE

The Diocese requires full disclosure of all circumstances that are or could reasonably be construed as creating conflict of interest prior to decisions being made on the matters concerned. At a meeting such disclosures and subsequent procedures are to be minuted. As a rule, after disclosing the potential conflict of interest, one shall recuse oneself from the process and leave the room while the relevant discussion, activity, decision or vote is undertaken.

All clergy, staff and volunteers

- a) will refrain from accepting benefits, advantages or favours that affect the objective performance of their duties or that could be construed as resulting from the exercise of those duties;
- b) should exercise care and good judgement in the management of their personal affairs so as not to benefit or appear to benefit from the use of information acquired during the course of their official duties that is not generally available to the public; and
- c) should not place themselves, their family members or their friends in a position to derive direct or indirect benefit from decisions or actions taken in the course of their employment or participation in the Diocese.

All clergy, staff and volunteers are required to read, understand this policy, and agree to its terms and conditions as a condition of their employment or participation in the various levels of diocesan governance.

The Bishop reserves the right to resolve any questions of interpretation and application of this policy and to take appropriate action required to resolve any real or perceived conflicts of interest.

Adopted by Diocesan Council in March 2014