

Ethics and Conflicts of Interest

As of July 1, 2019, every municipality in Vermont was required to adopt a conflicts of interest prohibition (policy) that must contain at least the following elements, which are found in [24 V.S.A. § 1984](#):

- a definition of "conflict of interest";
- a list of the elected and appointed officials covered by such prohibition;
- a method to determine whether a conflict of interest exists;
- actions that must be taken if a conflict of interest is determined to exist; and
- a method of enforcement against individuals violating such prohibition.

In general terms, a conflict of interest is an incompatibility between the private and public interests of a public official. It is up to each municipality to specifically articulate the types of conduct that constitute a conflict of interest. A municipality may also set certain behavioral standards for its public officials by broadening a conflicts of interest prohibition to address ethical behavior. 24 V.S.A. § 2291(20).

Our Model Policy Regarding Conflicts of Interest and Ethical Conduct can help municipalities comply with requirements set out in [24 V.S.A. § 1984](#) and take advantage of the authority granted in [24 V.S.A. § 2291](#) to regulate ethical conduct by public officials. It is up to each municipal legislative body to modify and adopt this model policy to suit local preferences.

Federal regulations require that real or apparent conflicts of interest that may arise in the context of municipal purchases and contracting are addressed. If the municipality does not already have a separate conflict of interest policy to address this concern, it is important to address it in the body of a purchasing policy, which is why our model purchasing policy is also located on this page

While every effort is made to provide members with the most accurate information possible, these resources do not constitute legal advice.

If you have questions about this or any of our other municipal law topics, resources, and services, click here:

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