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## Ethics and Conflict of Interest

Every municipality in Vermont is required to adopt a conflict of interest prohibition by July 1, 2019. Such prohibition 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 conflict of interest prohibition to address ethical behavior. 24 V.S.A. § 2291(20).

MAC's [Model Policy Regarding Conflicts of Interest and Ethical Conduct](#) <sup>[1]</sup> was issued in 2018 to help municipalities comply with the conflict of interest mandate 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.

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### Links

[1] <https://www.vlct.org/resource/conflict-interest-and-ethical-conduct-model-policy>