

## Conflict of Interest Policy

### Scope of This Policy

This policy delineates the COCA's conflict of interest policy, the circumstances where it is applied, and the parties for which it is applicable.

### Definitions

A conflict of interest arises whenever an individual may be influenced, or perceived to be influenced, in his or her decision-making process due to a relationship the individual has with the entity or issue under consideration. Some examples of situations that could create conflicts of interest include:

- A business or financial relationship with an individual or program under consideration
- A direct familial relationship with an individual or an officer of an entity under consideration
- An employment, student, or consulting (current or within the last five years) relationship with an entity under consideration
- An employment, student, or other relationship with a competitor of a program under consideration

The COCA will err on the side of caution in applying this policy.

### Applicability

The COCA Conflict of Interest Policy applies to members of the Commission, staff members, members of COCA committees or task forces who may be neither staff nor commissioners, members of the Registry of site reviewers, and consultants with potential to influence decisions of the COCA. Signed and dated Conflict of Interest forms (COI) will be updated and collected annually from Commissioners and staff and, as needed, from other persons referenced in this policy.

### Review Teams

While scheduling site visits, a COM will have an opportunity to review the proposed site visit team and request a change in personnel if a conflict of interest is suspected. The COCA Secretary will determine whether to permit a change in site visit personnel. Commissioners who participate on a site visit must recuse themselves from the discussion and vote on the COM being reviewed during the Commission's deliberation.

### Recusals from Decisions

A primary responsibility under this policy is for persons to disclose a potential conflict of interest. Commission members must report a potential conflict of interest to the Chair or staff member prior to any meeting. Recusals during any decision-making session of the Commission, the Executive Committee, or any related meetings will be documented as part of the official record. In the case of uncertainty about the need for a recusal, the

Commission Chair or COCA Secretary will determine whether a conflict of interest exists and how it will be resolved. In situations where a specific COM is being discussed for action, a recusal will require the individual to exit the room or the virtual meeting event until after a formal action is taken. In situations where a collective action is being taken, such as approving a consent agenda that references a COM, persons with conflicts will note their abstention from action on that item, which will be recorded in the minutes of the event.

Related Federal Requirements:

34 C.F.R. § 602.15(a)(6)