

Conflict of Interest Policy

As approved by the Board of Directors on Feb. 16th, 2015

Purpose of the Guideline

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction to employees and board members to ensure that SERN business is conducted without actual or perceived conflict of interest. As a non-profit society, SERN depends on charitable donations and funds from other agencies and is, therefore, accountable to them. It is important that the Society be seen to be accountable and that members, funders, and regulatory agencies, feel confident that funding is spent effectively. The Society must strive to ensure that anyone conducting SERN business acts in the best interest of the society, maintaining objectivity and impartiality in performance of their duties and responsibilities.

When Does a Conflict of Interest Arise

Any director, employee, or member of a committee who could potentially directly or indirectly gain from a decision made in conducting SERN business is in a potential conflict of interest. If, for example, the person:

- has an interest in, or is affiliated with, a firm supplying goods or services to SERN.
- has family members who have an interest in, or are affiliated with, a firm supplying goods or services to SERN.
- is a tenant or a landlord of property used or owned by SERN.
- directly receive payments, grants, or gifts from SERN.

Conflicts of interest are unavoidable and should not prevent an individual from serving as a director, staff member, or committee member if it can be assured that they have no influence on any decision taken by SERN in respect of their potential conflict, and/or the conflict is considered by the Board, or a Conflict of Interest Committee, to be immaterial.

Procedures For Managing Potential Conflicts of Interest

1. Board, staff, and committee members must disclose any interest they might have, which could be directly or indirectly affected by any decision of SERN.
2. No board, staff, or committee member can be involved in any SERN decision if they might potentially derive a benefit.
3. No board, staff, or committee member can be involved in designing or managing any contract, or other form of agreement, if they could potentially be engaged to undertake the work in the agreement.
4. Any contract or other form of agreement to undertake SERN business cannot be awarded to a board or committee member unless a competitive bidding process has been used to identify the best proponent.
5. Board, staff, and committee members shall not solicit or accept transfers of economic benefit, other than incidental gifts, customary hospitality, or other benefits of nominal value, from persons or organizations having dealings with SERN unless the Board or a Conflict Interest Committee agree otherwise.
6. Negotiation of contracts for goods, services or employment should be reviewed by the Board of Directors or a Conflict of Interest Committee, to ensure that all potential conflicts are identified and dealt with in a way that reflects the best interest of the Society.
7. All board, staff, and committee members must receive a copy of this conflict of interest policy and it must also be posted on SERN website.