

## ORANGE COUNTY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY AND ORANGE COUNTY FUNDING CORPORATION CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY<sup>12</sup>

All Board Members and employees *and others to whom this Policy applies*, should be provided with this Conflict of Interest Policy upon commencement of employment or appointment and required to acknowledge that they have read, understand and are in compliance with the terms of the policy. Board members and employees should review on an ongoing basis circumstances that constitute a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest, abide by this policy and seek guidance when necessary and appropriate. *This policy is binding on members of the Board of the Orange County Industrial Development Agency (IDA) and Orange County Funding Corporation (OCFC). The IDA and OCFC are referred to collectively as "Agencies" herein. This policy is also binding upon employees of either entity as well as Employees of Orange County who are otherwise performing duties for the IDA or OCFC. All such persons are required to sign this policy agreeing thereby to be bound by it as soon as possible upon the adoption of the same but in any even within thirty days of the same's being adopted or such person shall have been deemed to cease their position with the IDA and/or OCFC.*

This policy is intended to supplement, but not replace, any applicable state and federal laws governing conflicts of interest applicable to public authorities.

**Conflicts of Interest:** A conflict of interest is a situation in which the financial, familial, or personal interests of a director or employee *or other persons to whom this policy applies*<sup>3</sup> come into actual or perceived conflict with their duties and responsibilities with the *Agencies* [Authority<sup>4</sup>]. Perceived conflicts of interest are situations where there is the appearance that a board member and/or employee can personally benefit from actions or decisions made in their official capacity, or where a board member or employee may be influenced to act in a manner that does not represent the best interests of the *Agency* [authority]. The perception of a conflict may occur if circumstances would suggest to a reasonable person that a board member may have a conflict. The appearance of a conflict and an actual conflict should be treated in the same manner for the purposes of this Policy.

Board members and employees *or other persons to who this policy applies*, must conduct themselves at all times in a manner that avoids any appearance that they can be improperly or unduly influenced, that they could be affected by the position of or relationship with any other party, or that they are acting in violation of their public trust. While it is not possible to describe

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<sup>1</sup> This document is adopted largely from the NYS Authorities Budget Office (ABO) Model Conflicts of Interest Policy as shown on the State ABO website on May 28, 2021 at 3:46 PM. Differences are described in footnote 2.

<sup>2</sup> Language in italics within this document is not from the ABO Model Conflicts of Interest Policy but is intended to be made more specific for Orange County. Likewise, language in brackets [ ] is not part of this policy but is part of the State Model Conflicts of Interest Policy and is intended to show deletions. Deletions will be footnoted as well.

<sup>3</sup> This policy also applies to consulting staff who are employed by the County but who are doing work for the IDA/OCFC via resolution of the IDA/OCFC in addition to actual Board Members and employees of the IDA/OCFC.

<sup>4</sup> As this applies to both the IDA and OCFC, the word "Authority" is being replaced with Agencies or a derivative thereof.

or anticipate all the circumstances that might involve a conflict of interest, a conflict of interest typically arises whenever a director or employee has or will have:

- \* A financial or personal interest in any person, firm, corporation or association which has or will have a transaction, agreement or any other arrangement in which the *Agency* [authority] participates.
- \* The ability to use his or her position, confidential information or the assets of the *Agency* [authority], to his or her personal advantage.
- \* Solicited or accepted a gift of any amount under circumstances in which it could reasonably be inferred that the gift was intended to influence him/her, or could reasonably be expected to influence him/her, in the performance of his/her official duties or was intended as a reward for any action on his/her part.
- \* Any other circumstance that may or appear to make it difficult for the board member or employee to exercise independent judgment and properly exercise his or her official duties.

**Outside Employment of *Agency* [Authority's] Employees:** No employee may engage in outside employment if such employment interferes with his/her ability to properly exercise his or her official duties with the *Agency* [authority].

## PROCEDURES

**Duty to Disclose:** All material facts related to the conflicts of interest (including the nature of the interest and information about the conflicting transaction) shall be disclosed in good faith and in writing to the Governance Committee, *the Clerk of the Orange County Legislature* and/or any designated [the] Ethics Officer<sup>5</sup> of the *IDA* and/or *OCFC*. Such written disclosure shall be made part of the official record of the proceedings of the *Agency* [authority].

**Determining Whether a Conflict of Interest Exists:** The Governance Committee and/or Ethics Officer shall advise the individual who appears to have a conflict of interest how to proceed. The Governance Committee and/or Ethics Officer should seek guidance from counsel or New York State agencies, such as the Authorities Budget Office, State Inspector General or the Joint Commission on Public Ethics (JCOPE), or *the Counsel to the Orange County Board of Ethics* or *the Orange County Board of Ethics* when dealing with cases where they are unsure of what to do.

**Recusal and Abstention:** No board member or employee may participate in any decision or take any official action with respect to any matter requiring the exercise of discretion, including discussing the matter and voting, when he or she knows or has reason to know that the action could confer a direct or indirect financial or material benefit on himself or herself, a relative, or any organization in which he or she is deemed to have an interest. Board members and

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<sup>5</sup> As of this writing, an Ethics Officer has not been designated, but is anticipated to be designated. Accordingly, the word "the" is not appropriate as it implies an existing Ethics Officer. The language as provided would include an Ethics Officer once designated.

employees must recuse themselves from deliberations, votes, or internal discussion on matters relating to any organization, entity or individual where their impartiality in the deliberation or vote might be reasonably questioned, and are prohibited from attempting to influence other board members or employees in the deliberation and voting on the matter.

**Records of Conflicts of Interest:** The minutes of the *Agencies* [authority's] meetings during which a perceived or actual conflict of interest is disclosed or discussed shall reflect the name of the interested person, the nature of the conflict, and a description of how the conflict was resolved.

**Reporting of Violations:** Board members and employees should promptly report any violations of this policy to his or her supervisor, or to the *Agencies* [public authority's] ethics officer, general counsel or human resources representative in accordance with the *Agencies* [authority's] Whistleblower Policy and Procedures. *No negative action may be taken under any circumstance to a reporting individual as a result of such report being made.*

**Penalties:** Any director or employee that fails to comply with this policy may be penalized in the manner provided for in law, rules or regulations.

**SIGNATURE BLOCK:**



Signature

SUSAN WATSKI

Board member

Name and Position

Feb 24, 2022

Date