

US Olympic & Paralympic Committee Policy



Policy Name: Conflict of Interest Policy

Date of Issuance: December 7, 2023

Policy Owner: Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer

Applies to: All USOPC Board Members, Committee Members, Staff, and Select Volunteers

Purpose:

To support a culture of strong ethical conduct, protect the integrity of the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC), and ensure that decisions made by individuals affiliated with the USOPC are made in the USOPC's best interests, the Conflict of Interest Policy defines conflicts of interest and the process by which conflicts of interest are disclosed, reviewed, and ultimately managed.

Policy Statement:

The USOPC believes in sustaining a culture of strong governance, ethics, and compliance throughout the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic community. To support this culture, the USOPC requires that all Covered Individuals recognize and avoid any activity that constitutes or might appear to constitute a conflict of interest. For the purposes of this policy, the term "Covered Individual" includes all USOPC Team Members (employees and temporary employees engaged through a staffing service), board members, officers, committee members, task force members, hearing panel members, and other volunteers with substantial decision-making authority.¹

1. Definitions

A conflict of interest exists when a Covered Individual's activities, interests, or relationships interfere with, influence, or may be perceived to interfere with or influence their ability to be impartial and make decisions in the best interest of the USOPC. The interests of a Covered Individual's relatives and close associates must also be considered when evaluating whether a conflict of interest exists. Relatives and close associates (RCAs) include spouses/domestic partners, children, siblings, parents, in-laws, close friends, and business partners.

As defined below, a conflict of interest may be actual, potential, or perceived:

A. Actual Conflict of Interest

An actual conflict of interest exists when a Covered Individual has an active relationship with a person or organization that may influence their decision making in their role with the USOPC.

B. Potential Conflict of Interest

A potential conflict of interest exists when an actual conflict of interest has not yet been established, but there is reasonable cause to believe that a future event may create a conflict of interest. An example of a potential conflict of interest is a Covered Individual that has an active relationship with a person or organization that is under consideration for a vendor contract with the USOPC. By contrast, if the vendor relationship is established, the Covered Individual would have an actual conflict of interest related to this vendor.

¹ Substantial decision-making authority means decisions that may have an organization-wide effect or that may significantly impact athletes.

US Olympic & Paralympic Committee Policy

C. Perceived Conflict of Interest

A perceived conflict of interest exists when a Covered Individual does not have an active relationship with a person or organization, but it may appear to another individual that a connection between the two exists and has influenced a decision made by the Covered Individual. A perceived conflict of interest may also exist if a Covered Individual has disclosed a conflict of interest and has recused themselves from decision making but takes actions that make it appear that they were involved in the decision (e.g., the conflicted person recused themselves from a discussion about a particular decision but remained in the room while the discussion was ongoing). It is important to remember that perceived conflicts of interest are often seen by others as actual conflicts of interests.

2. Recognizing Conflicts of Interest

Conflicts of interest often arise in the following key areas.

A. Outside employment or other activities

- i. A Covered Individual or their RCA is employed by, provides services for, or receives payments or other financial or non-financial benefits from a NGB, vendor, or another partner with whom the Team Member actively works with in their role with the USOPC.

B. Financial interests

- i. A Covered Individual or their RCA has a substantial investment or other financial interest in a business partner, and the Covered Individual has an active working relationship with that business partner in their role at the USOPC.

C. Personal relationships at work

- i. A Covered Individual supervises or is supervised by an RCA.
- ii. A Covered Individual hires, directly or indirectly, an RCA in a role reporting to them.
- iii. A Covered Individual contracts, directly or indirectly, an RCA as a supplier to the USOPC.
- iv. A Covered Individual is involved in a selection decision that involves or impacts an athlete with whom the Team Member or an RCA has a relationship.

D. Corporate opportunities

- i. A Covered Individual takes advantage of a business opportunity that the USOPC may also have an interest in.

While this list captures the most common areas where conflicts of interest arise, it is not comprehensive. Team Members must recognize that all situations where their personal interests intersect with the USOPC's interests can lead to conflicts of interest. If a Covered Individual is unsure if a specific activity, interest, or relationship constitutes a conflict of interest, the Covered Individual should reach out to a member of the Ethics team who can help determine if a conflict exists.

3. Disclosure

A. Annual Disclosures

US Olympic & Paralympic Committee Policy

The USOPC requires that all Covered Individuals complete an annual disclosure and self-identify any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest.

All new USOPC employees are required to complete a conflict of interest disclosure upon hiring, and will also be included in the next annual cycle.

All annual disclosures will be distributed by the USOPC Ethics and Compliance team using the disclosure management system.

B. Ongoing Disclosure

In addition to the annual disclosure, all Covered Individuals have an ongoing obligation to disclose any change in their personal activities, interests, or relationships that creates a potential new conflict of interest—whether actual, apparent, or perceived—or changes the nature of a previously disclosed conflict of interest.

Covered Individuals can complete an ongoing disclosure through the disclosure management system at any time by amending their annual disclosure form.

C. Election and Service-Related Disclosures

For Covered Individuals who have disclosure requirements related to vetting before standing for Board or Committee election or selection to serve on a USOPC task force or in another decision-making panel or role, disclosure requirements will be fulfilled on a rolling basis. The USOPC committee or department (e.g., the Nominating and Governance Committee or Dispute Resolution Unit) overseeing the election/selection of these individuals should consult the Ethics team to determine the appropriate disclosure requirements.

Other volunteers with substantial decision-making authority on behalf of the USOPC will be made aware of their obligations under this policy in their volunteer agreement. If the volunteer has a conflict requiring disclosure, they will be directed to contact the Ethics team to complete a disclosure. The disclosure process for athlete volunteers who sit on an Internally Managed Sport selection committee is outlined in the USOPC's Ethics Procedure.

D. Additional Board and Committee Member Disclosure Requirements

To avoid misperceptions about improper influences or relationships between board and committee members, board and committee members must disclose contributions made to and business relationships with any charitable or commercial organizations in which another Board or committee member plays a management or governance role. Board and committee members must also review meeting agendas before each meeting to determine if, for any discussion item, they have any potential conflicts of interest that should be disclosed under this policy. At the beginning of each meeting, each board or committee member should state the agenda items for which he or she has such a potential conflict of interest. When those agenda items are addressed by the board or committee, the conflicted board or committee member may need to recuse themselves for discussions and/or board votes. Recusal means the board or committee member must leave the room or the teleconference entirely and return only when the discussion or vote on the agenda item is completed. The minutes should reflect each disclosure and recusal.

4. Review

The Ethics team collects and reviews conflict of interest disclosures, documents any actual or potential conflicts of interest, and determines any actions required to manage the conflict of interest. Any complex or sensitive disclosures may also be escalated to the USOPC's Ethics and Compliance Committee for further review and input.

US Olympic & Paralympic Committee Policy

All actual or potential conflicts disclosed by USOPC board, committee, and senior staff members' (Director-level and above) will be provided to the Ethics and Compliance Committee so its members have an opportunity to review them. Additionally, the Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer will provide to the Committee any additional significant conflicts disclosed by individuals outside of those categories .

5. Managing Conflicts of Interest

The disclosure of an actual or potential conflict of interest will not necessarily prohibit involvement in the disclosed activity or with the USOPC. Rather, each disclosure will be reviewed individually and actions may be recommended to protect the individual, the USOPC, and the integrity of the decisions made by those individuals and the USOPC from actual, potential, and perceived conflicts of interests. These actions may include limitation of involvement, separation from certain USOPC activities, or requests to cease the activity in question. All follow-up will be discussed with the individual board member, employee, or volunteer directly. If necessary, managers will also be included in the discussion.

6. Violations

If the Ethics team or the Ethics and Compliance Committee has cause to believe a Covered Individual has failed to disclose an actual or potential conflict of interest or is not complying with the measures imposed for a previously disclosed conflict of interest, the matter will be investigated. While any violation is under investigation, the Covered Individual will be precluded from engaging in further decisions related to the conflict that is the subject of the investigation.

Following the investigation, if the Ethics team or the Ethics and Compliance Committee determines the Covered Individual has failed to disclose the actual or potential conflict of interest, the Ethics and Compliance Committee will take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action. The Ethics and Compliance Committee's decision will be final and is not appealable.

7. Speak Up Policy and Reporting Violations

The [USOPC Code of Conduct](#) requires Covered Individuals to report violations of USOPC policies, including this policy, and the process to report violations is outlined in the [Speak Up Policy](#). Individuals wishing to report a conflict of interest concern may also report the matter through the USOPC Integrity Hotline at 1-877-404-9935 or through the USOPC [Integrity Portal](#).

By reporting, an individual does not need to, and should not, investigate the matter or feel that they must provide a full narrative. Instead, the reporter should report only the facts that they know and allow the Ethics team and/or the Ethics and Compliance Committee to investigate the matter.

The USOPC has zero tolerance for retaliation against people who make good faith reports of potential ethical, policy, or legal violations, or who cooperate with investigations of those reports. That means no USOPC staff, board or committee member, or volunteer may threaten, harass, discriminate against, or take any negative employment related action (e.g., discharge, demotion, suspension, negative review) on the basis of the individual reporting a concern. Additional details about the USOPC's anti-retaliation measures can be found in the Speak Up Policy.

US Olympic & Paralympic Committee Policy

8. Resources

Any individual with questions about this policy, any activity which they are unsure about disclosing, or any other matters related to conflicts of interest is encouraged to contact the Senior Director for Compliance Investigations and Ethics, the Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer, or report the matter using the [USOPC Integrity Portal](#).

Senior Director for Compliance Investigations and Ethics: Amanda Vaughn (amanda.vaughn@usopc.org)

Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer: Holly Shick (holly.shick@usopc.org)

US Olympic & Paralympic Committee Policy

Revision History (from December 16, 2021)

Publication Type	Policy Approver	Enabling Action	Publication Date	Next Scheduled Review	Revision Summary
Policy Update	Board of Directors	Board Vote; December 16, 2021	December 16, 2021	N/A	Initial publication of revised policy that aligns with NGB Compliance Standards requirements for conflicts of interest policies, and guidance for board and committee contributions to and business relationships with fellow board and committee members' charitable or commercial organizations; also included reference to USOPC Integrity Portal
Policy Update	Board of Directors	Board Vote; June 22, 2022	June 22, 2022	June 2023	Revised to update disclosure language to reflect new automated process
Policy Update	Board of Directors	Board Vote; December 7, 2023	December 7, 2023	December 2024	Revised to update applicability to certain volunteers, disclosure requirements for election and selection candidates, and escalation to the Ethics and Compliance Committee