

Conflict of Interest Policy for Green Mountain Self-Advocates Officers and Board Members

Background Information

Officers and Board Members commit to make decisions that are the best for Green Mountain Self-Advocates. Our decisions must support the work that GMSA does.



It is not about doing something that is good for me. It is about doing what is best for GMSA.

Officers and Board Members also have strong commitments to their family, friends, and jobs. A conflict of interest happens when your family, friends, a boss or yourself want something different from what is best for GMSA. A person feels they are “pulled in two directions.”

The Purpose of this Policy

GMSA wants to avoid any conflict of interest between

what is good for GMSA on the one hand and



what is good for family, a friend, a boss or yourself on the other.

We must also avoid situations that look like there might be a conflict of interest. This policy aims to protect GMSA when making decisions that pay money or do favors for others.

Definitions

A person has a **financial interest** if they

- a. Own or invest in a business that GMSA is doing business with.
- b. Have a contract to provide services for GMSA
- c. Or are considering owning or investing in a business that GMSA might do business with.

Compensation includes money, gifts, or favors.

An Example of a Conflict of Interest

Bill is a board member. Bill's uncle owns a t-shirt company. Bill wants GMSA to buy t-shirts from his uncle.

Procedures or Action Steps

#1 A **board member or officer** with a conflict of interest should tell the board. A person must say something even if they only think they might have a conflict of interest. Always tell the board before voting.

Bill tells the board his uncle owns the company that made t-shirts for GMSA in the past.

#2 After someone says they have a conflict of interest; they will leave the meeting. Then the rest of the board members will discuss and decide if a conflict of interest exists.

Bill leaves the meeting. The board agrees that Bill has a conflict of interest.

#3 A person with a **financial interest** or connection to a decision being made is not allowed to vote.

Bill does not vote on buying t-shirts

#4 The GMSA board must discuss and evaluate other options. Sometimes doing business with someone who has a conflict of interest might be the best deal for GMSA. The board must agree that it is okay to do business with someone who has a conflict of interest. Make a decision that is in GMSA's best interest. It must benefit GMSA and be fair and reasonable.

The board looks at sample t-shirts from 3 local companies. They compare prices and quality. The board votes on which company to pay to make GMSA t-shirts.

#5 Minutes of GMSA board meetings should include when a board member says they have a conflict of interest. Describe what was done to deal with the conflict. For example:

The minutes described what the board did when Bill said he had a conflict of interest.

- Was there a discussion without the board member in the room?
- Did the person abstain or not vote on the matter?

Annual Review

GMSA encourages free and open discussion about conflicts of interest. At least once a year the board will review our policy. We will discuss the types of situations that could result in a conflict of interest. We will review how the board would manage potential conflicts. Therefore, when a real conflict arises the GMSA board will be ready to address it.

Other Examples of Conflicts of Interest

1. April is a board member. Her sister works for GMSA. April did not vote when the board decided to give staff a raise.
2. An ally of a local group has a catering business. She wants to use money from GMSA to buy party food for the local group. The board asked the ally to leave the room when they discussed and voted on where to buy food.
3. Sue's brother was nominated for the Theresa Wood award. Sue left the room when the Board was deciding who should get the award. Sue did not vote.

This policy was updated and approved by the GMSA Board on December 18, 2023.