

Conflict of Interest (2009)

"The testimony of integrity calls us to wholeness; it is the whole of life open to Truth. When Lives are centered in the Spirit, beliefs and actions are congruent, and words are dependable. As we achieve wholeness in ourselves, we are better able to heal the conflict and the fragmentation in our community and in the world." – Faith and Practice, Pacific Yearly Meeting

Policy Statement

In accordance with our Testimony of Integrity, and general fiduciary duties and responsibilities required by law, directors, employees and volunteers of the Canadian Friends Service Committee have an obligation to act in the best interests of the CFSC in a manner that is lawful, ethical and objective. This obligation extends to recognizing and managing conflict of interest. Friends seek to make fair, well-informed decisions that are not influenced by conflicting interests, and seek to identify and manage conflicts of interest when they exist. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to interfere with the legitimate personal concerns or leadings of directors or employees of CFSC.

Conflict of interest may be real or actual, apparent or perceived, or potential or foreseeable:

- Real or actual conflict of interest is a situation where an individual's duties are being influenced by her/his private or personal interests.
- Apparent or perceived conflict of interest is a situation where an individual's official duties appear to be influenced by private or personal interests.
- Potential or foreseeable conflict of interest is a situation where an individual's official duties may be influenced in the future by private or personal interests. Where professional or personal concerns of a director or employee of CFSC affects his or her ability to put the welfare of CFSC before personal benefit, or possibly cause a director, employee or volunteer to put personal benefit before the welfare of the CFSC as a whole, a conflict of interest exists.

All employees and directors of CFSC will make every effort to appropriately resolve conflict of interest or the appearance of conflict of interest as described below.

Procedure

- Friends serving on the board of directors of CFSC disclose real, apparent or potential conflicts of interest to the appropriate Committee of the CFSC. Committees themselves may discern an actual, apparent or potential conflict of interest. In either case, the individual involved stands aside from further discussion of the matter at hand.
- Employees and volunteers of CFSC disclose actual, apparent or potential conflicts of interest to the Executive Committee of CFSC, usually through correspondence to the Clerk of CFSC.
- If a committee cannot unite in whether a conflict of interest exists, or if an individual disputes the perception or finding that a conflict of interest exists, the Clerk of CFSC will be asked to meet with the whole committee and an impartial facilitator, acceptable to all parties, may be appointed to help reach unity. If unity is still not possible, the matter is referred to an ad-hoc committee appointed by the board of directors at a Board Meeting or the Executive Committee. Until unity is achieved, the individual involved stands aside

from further discussion of the matter but may be asked for clarifying information and will be kept informed about the ongoing process.

- The Recording Clerk of CFSC or of a Standing Committee prepares for approval a minute noting the conflict of interest and any actions taken.

Gifts and Hospitality

CFSC recognizes that in many cultures gifts and hospitality are important social conventions, and often represent goodwill and friendship. As Friends we seek to build relationships of trust and love based on reciprocity, recognition, openness and respect. Refusing gifts or hospitality might be considered impolite or insulting, yet it is important to recognize that gifts or hospitality may create real or perceived indebtedness between the giver and CFSC, and thus create a conflict of interest.

Staff or volunteers may request at any time a committee to discern the suitability of accepting a gift or hospitality.

Acceptance of gifts

Gifts and hospitality may be accepted on behalf of CFSC, or by individuals on the understanding that the gift or hospitality reflect goodwill and friendship. Significant gifts¹ and hospitality shall be reported to Standing Committee Clerks who will record the gift and expression of thanks for it in a minute. Friends serving on the board of directors of CFSC are prohibited by law from receiving honoraria for CFSC-related work.

This process is expected to provide staff and volunteers with an open and transparent process for recording, acknowledging the gifts we receive, and addressing perceived conflicts of interest.

Accountability

The Executive Committee is responsible for implementing, reviewing and updating this policy every three years, and for educating directors of the board, employees and volunteers of CFSC regarding this policy.

¹ We have chosen not to cite specific monetary value to interpreting the value of a significant gift, rather we ask, "Is the gift something that you, or the giver, would (could) normally purchase without considering its cost? If not, it's significant."