



## **STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD CONTRACTING CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY**

### **BACKGROUND**

The following policy was established in accordance with proviso language for Specific Appropriation 2214 of the 2010 General Appropriations Act and the 2010 Appropriations Implementation Bill and continued in accordance with Specific Appropriation 2006 of the 2011 General Appropriations Act.

The proviso language for Specific Appropriation 2006 prohibited the use of state or federal funds by a regional workforce board “for any contract exceeding \$25,000 between a regional workforce board] and a member of that board that has any relationship with the contracting vendor, unless the contract has been reviewed by the Agency for Workforce Innovation and [CareerSource Florida, Inc. (CSF)]” The proviso language was incorporated into and made a part of this policy.

This policy was modified in 2011 to prohibit a contract between local workforce development boards (local) and their board members or other persons or entities that may benefit financially from a contract (as defined in paragraph I(g) below), providing four exemptions to the prohibition to allow the workforce boards to provide statutorily-mandated services.

This policy was again modified in 2012 to comply with the Legislature’s adoption of Chapter 2012-29, Laws of Florida, requiring contracts under \$25,000 to be reported to CSF and requiring that contracts with relatives of workforce board employees be approved by a two-thirds vote and go through the review and approval process.

The policy currently complies with section 445.007(1) and (11), Florida Statutes.

### **POLICY**

#### **I) Definitions**

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- a) “Board” means one of Florida’s 24 local boards or CSF.
- b) “Contract” means a written agreement funded by state or federal funds, to which a local board or CSF is one of the parties. It includes the initial contract and all amendments, renewals or extensions. For the purposes of this policy, “contract” includes the proposed contract. This term does not include:

- i) Retail purchases for which no written contract is executed;
  - ii) The purchase of utility services for use by a board;
  - iii) Staff employment contracts (other than contracts with members of a board or relatives of board members); and,
  - iv) Membership fees and sponsorships to professional organizations.
- c) "Entire board" means the complete membership of the board at the time a contract is submitted to a vote. It includes board members who have a relationship with the contracting vendor and who therefore must abstain on the vote on the contract. Membership of the board includes non-voting members.
- d) "Quorum" means that minimum number of members of the board required to be present for the board to transact business as established by the board's bylaws (or, in the absence of bylaws, as has otherwise been established by the board.)
- e) "When a quorum has been established" means the contemporaneous meeting of a sufficient number of members to constitute a quorum, in person and/or through accepted electronic means.
- f) "has any relationship with the contracting vendor" means the member is an owner or a principal of the vendor, or a principal of the vendor has retained the member, or the parent organization or subsidiary of a corporate principal of the vendor has retained the member or a member's known relative or member's business associate is an owner of the vendor. For purposes of this policy, vendor, contractor and sub recipient are the same.
- g) "benefit financially from a contract" means the special private financial gain to a member, a special private financial gain to any principal who retains the member, the special private financial gain of the parent organization or subsidiary of a corporate principal who retains the member or the special private financial gain to any member's relative or business associate or to a board employee or a board employee's relative and such benefit is not remote or speculative. "Personally benefit financially" means a special private financial gain to a member only.
- h) "Owner" means any ownership interest in a privately owned contracting entity or a majority interest in a publicly held contracting entity.
- i) "Principal of a contractor" means an owner or high-level management employee with decision-making authority.
- j) "Employee" means a person employed full-time by a local board working in a managerial or supervisory capacity or who has direct contract management or direct fiscal involvement with the contract being voted on by a board.

- k) "Relative" is defined as "father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, brother, sister, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, or daughter-in-law." Section 12.3143(1)(c), Florida Statutes.
- l) "Utility services" include telephone, cable, electricity, water, gas, waste and sewage services, and other similar services.
- m) "Federal, state or other governmental workforce programs" means Incumbent Worker Training (section.445.003(3)(a)(3), F.S.), Quick Response Training (Section 288.047, Florida Statutes), Employed Worker Training, On the Job Training, customized training and other career center training provider services.

## **II) Prohibition Against a Board Contracting with its Board Members**

No board (CSF or a local board) shall enter into a contract with its board members, with organizations represented by its board members or with entities in which its board members have a relationship with the contracting vendor.

At a board's discretion, the following may be exempted from the above paragraph:

- a) A contract with an agency (as defined in section 112.312(2), Florida Statutes, including, but not limited to, those statutorily required to be board members) when said agency is represented by a board member and said member does not personally benefit financially from such contracts.
- b) A contract with a board member or a vendor (when a board member has any relationship with the contracting vendor) in which the contract relates to that member's appointment to the board under section 107(a)(2), Public Law 113-128, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA).
- c) A contract with a board member receiving a grant for workforce services under federal, state or other governmental workforce programs.
- d) A contract between a board and a board member which is not exempted under paragraphs II(a), II(b) or II(c) in which the board documents exceptional circumstances and/or need and the board member does not personally benefit financially from the contract. Based upon criteria developed by CSF, DEO shall review the board's documentation and assure compliance.
- e) Each contract that is exempted from the general prohibition in paragraph II must meet the requirements set forth in paragraph III below, including, but not limited to, the requirements of the criteria established in the "conflict of interest" provisions under section 101(f), Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014. However, since section 445.007(11), FS requires CSF to perform the review and approval process pertaining to local board contracts, CSF contracts shall not be subject those provisions of this policy pertaining to review and approval processes.

### **III) Requirements of Section 445.007, Florida Statutes**

A board must comply with all requirements of section 445.007, Florida Statutes, prior to contracting with a board member or other person or entity who could benefit financially from a contract (as defined in paragraph I(g) above). These requirements are:

- a) All contracts between a board and a board member or other person or entity who may benefit financially from a contract (as defined in paragraph I(g) above) must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the board when a quorum has been established and the approval of such contracts shall not be delegated to staff or committees.
- b) The fact that a board member or other person or entity could benefit financially from a contract (as defined in paragraph I(g) above) must be disclosed in a board meeting and must be recorded in the minutes of said meeting before a vote is taken. The board member's absence from the meeting does not relieve the board from the disclosure and two-thirds vote requirements. All other known conflicts must be disclosed before a vote can take place. If a board member or employee discovers a conflict of interest after the vote, then the conflict must be disclosed in a procedure consistent with section 112.3143(4)(b), Florida Statutes. Board members who could benefit financially from the contract or who have any relationship with the contracting vendor (as defined in paragraph I(f) above) must abstain from voting on the contract. A board member's designee cannot vote in the place of a board member who is required to abstain.
- c) Board contracts equal to or greater than \$25,000 shall not be executed prior to the written approval of CSF.
- d) A board must submit all contracts equal to or greater than \$25,000 with board members or other persons or entities who could benefit financially from the contract to DEO along with documentation, as specified by this policy, demonstrating compliance with section 445.007, Florida Statutes.
- e) A contract of less than \$25,000 between a local board and a member of that board or between a relative of a board member or of an employee of the board is not required to have the prior approval of CSF, but must be approved by a two-thirds vote of the board, once a quorum is established and after full disclosure, with the member's abstention and must be reported to DEO and CSF within 30 days after approval.
- f) Contracts with a board member or other persons or entities who could benefit financially from the contract (as defined in paragraph I(g) above) in which the board will receive monies or other compensation (such as a board member paying rent to the board or paying for board services) are exempt from this policy.
- g) The term "contract" includes the initial contract and all amendments, renewals, or extensions. Renewals or extensions of contracts with a board member or persons or entities who could benefit financially from said contract must be approved under the

same procedure as original contracts. Any amendments to a contract that could benefit financially a board member or another person or entity (as defined in paragraph I(g) above) must be approved under the same procedure as if the amendment were an original contract. Any amendments that do not benefit financially a board member or other person or entity (as defined in paragraph I(g) above) may be approved by a regular majority vote when there is a quorum according to board rules and/or bylaws.

- h) All other requirements of section 445.007, Florida Statutes, must be met. For example, a board member must continue to disclose any conflict of interest in a manner that is consistent with the procedures outlined in section [112.3143, Florida Statutes](#).
- i) To comply with the requirements of section 445.007, Florida Statutes, a board's policy shall advise and require board employees to disclose known conflicts of interest and notify the board of any contracts which may benefit them personally or their relatives. To comply with the requirements of section 445.007, Florida Statutes, a board's policy shall advise and require all parties to a contract to disclose all known conflicts of interest and notify the board of all board members or other persons or entities known to benefit financially from the contract (as defined in paragraph I(g) above).
- j) A contract that is initially subject to the requirements of section 445.007, Florida Statutes, due to a board member's, an employee's, an employee's relative's, or another person's or an entity's conflicts of interest at the time of approving the contract is not subject to these procedures after the departure of the member from the board membership, the departure of the employee from the board's employment or other actions have removed the conflicts of interest.
- k) The above requirements do not eliminate or diminish a board's obligations to comply with the "conflict of interest" provisions under section 101(f), Public Law 113-128, (WIOA).

#### **IV) Review Criteria**

Contracts equal to or greater than \$25,000 with a board member or other person or entity who could benefit financially from the contract (as defined in paragraph I(g) above) must be reviewed by DEO to ensure that these requirements have been met:

- a) The contract met one or more of the exemptions to the prohibition under paragraph II;
- b) The board approved the contract with a two-thirds vote when a quorum was established;
- c) Board members who could benefit financially from the contract or board members who have any relationship with the contracting vendor disclosed any such conflicts prior to the board vote on the contract; and,

- d) Board members who could benefit financially from the contract or board members who have any relationship with the contracting vendor abstained from voting.

**V) Required Documentation**

For each contract equal to or greater than \$25,000, a board must electronically submit, after the board's approval of the contract, a completed contract information form certified by the board chair or vice chair as correct and true to [WorkforceContract.Review@deo.myflorida.com](mailto:WorkforceContract.Review@deo.myflorida.com) containing the following information:

- a) Identification of all parties to the contract;
- b) Description of goods and services to be procured;
- c) Value of the contract, contract renewal or contract extension;
- d) Contract term including starting date and ending date;
- e) Contract number or identifying information, if any;
- f) Identification of board member or employee whose conflict of interest required the board's approval of the contract by a two-thirds vote;
- g) The nature of the conflict of interest in the contract;
- h) A certified board membership roster listing all members on the board at the time of the vote on the approval of the contract with a vote tally indicating attendance or absence at the meeting and, for those in attendance, the affirmative and negative votes and abstentions for each member;
- i) Dated and executed conflict of interest forms, which are consistent with the procedures outlined in section 112.3143, Florida Statutes, submitted at or before the board meeting in which the vote took place, for board members who have any relationship with the contracting vendor (as defined in paragraph I(f) above); and,
- j) Other information as specified on the contract information form.

DEO and CSF will review this documentation to ensure compliance with the statutory requirements listed in paragraph III above. Failure to timely provide all required documentation or failure to complete the form shall result in immediate disapproval of the contract and require resubmission of documentation and form. DEO will electronically submit in writing to CSF, within five (5) business days of receiving all of the required documentation, its recommendation of whether the statutory requirements were met. CSF will then electronically transmit in writing within three (3) business days after receipt of DEO's written recommendation its approval or disapproval.

The board may not execute the contract until CSF approves the contract. However, the contract must be executed and performance begun within a reasonable time following approval. Seeking “blanket” approval for potential future contracts with board members is not within the spirit of the policy and all such attempts shall be denied.

#### **VI) Request for Review When Contract Approval Is Denied**

A party to the contract may request a review of CSF’s disapproval of a contract. Strict compliance with the following procedures is required:

- a) The request for review must be in writing, must state specific grounds for review and must provide all information required for review of the stated grounds. Failure to state specific grounds may be cause for denial of the request without further review.
- b) The request for review must be received by CSF not later than ten (10) calendar days from the date of CSF’s denial. The request may be submitted electronically to CSF’s administrative entity for contract review, the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), through the email address [WorkforceContract.Review@deo.myflorida.com](mailto:WorkforceContract.Review@deo.myflorida.com) or directly to CSF by any other means of delivery, i.e. mail service, hand delivery, facsimile. etc.. Any request for review that is not received by CSF or DEO within this timeframe will be rejected without further consideration.
- c) Within seven (7) calendar days of receipt, the CSF President or designee will issue a final decision on the request for review. The Chair of the CSF Board of Directors or its Board of Directors may direct the President to present such reviews to the Executive Committee. No review under this policy will be presented to the CSF Board of Directors unless, at the discretion of the Chair, such full board review is deemed to be necessary.

#### **VII) Effective Dates of Policy**

- a) These modifications shall be in effect upon CSF’s adoption at its May 17, 2017, Board of Directors meeting.