

CAN FAMILY MEMBERS AND RELATIVES BE HIRED BY PAHO?

As a general principle, PAHO needs to be circumspect when it comes to the hiring of family members and relatives due to the negative connotations associated with nepotism, which is the practice of appointing relatives to positions for which outsiders might be better qualified. As a result, PAHO places limitations on the hiring of family members and relatives and such people can only be appointed in specialized positions following a competitive selection process in which no other equally qualified candidate is available.

WHAT OPTIONS CAN PAHO TAKE TO MANAGE CONFLICTS OF INTEREST?

- PAHO might decide not to take any action because the conflict is minimal or can be eliminated by disclosure.
- PAHO might not grant you authorization to engage in an outside employment or activity if it conflicts with your official duties and responsibilities in PAHO.
- PAHO may reassign one of the two parties engaged in a romantic relationship to a different unit or department.
- PAHO will continue to offer training programs and reference materials through the Ethics Office to keep you informed.

If you have a question or concern about an actual or possible conflict of interest, please contact the Ethics Office. If you prefer, you can always use the Ethics Help Line and remain anonymous.

The Ethics Helpline

On the web at:
www.navexglobal.com. or
www.pahoethics.org

Or by telephone toll-free at:
1-888-448-4715

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST: AVOIDING EVEN THE APPEARANCE OF IMPROPRIETY



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WHAT IS A CONFLICT OF INTEREST?

A conflict of interest occurs when your personal or private interests interfere – or appear to interfere – with your official responsibilities as a PAHO staff member. A conflict of interest can arise in many situations and can impact your ability to make fair and impartial decisions regarding the work of the Organization. Because conflicts of interest can adversely impact the reputation and integrity of PAHO, it is important for you to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest. At PAHO, we are committed to maintaining public confidence in our ability to remain impartial and objective and require your cooperation to sustain this commitment.

WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF WHEN A CONFLICT OF INTEREST EXISTS OR APPEARS TO EXIST?

1. You are asked to organize a technical meeting at a local hotel and your spouse works as a manager at one of the hotels that is under consideration to host the meeting.
2. You are responsible for managing the bidding process for the renovation of a country office and your brother, who owns his own construction company, is one of the bidders.

3. You are involved in a romantic relationship with one of your subordinates.
4. You are on a selection panel and one of your best friends is a candidate for the position under consideration.
5. You have been invited to join the Board of Directors of a prominent association that has a political agenda.
6. You work in procurement and own shares in a pharmaceutical company that does business with PAHO.
7. You engage in fundraising activities for a non-governmental organization that has a similar mandate as PAHO.
8. You work in information technology and start a side business installing and servicing personal computers.
9. While in PAHO, you enter into contracts with a company and then solicit a job in that company.
10. You use information or documentation obtained during your employment in PAHO for a private business venture or for personal purposes.

HOW SHOULD YOU DISCLOSE A CONFLICT OF INTEREST?

The preferred course of action is to avoid any situation that may create a conflict of interest in the first place. As such, if you think a situation might possibly give rise to a conflict of interest, you should immediately talk to your manager or supervisor or obtain advice from PAHO's Ethics Office. When in doubt, you should always disclose and ask for guidance.

WHAT HAPPENS IF PAHO DETERMINES THERE IS A CONFLICT OF INTEREST?

If it is determined that a conflict of interest exists, you will be required to dissociate yourself from that particular interest. Thus, for example, you would need to step down from any board position whose mandate is incompatible with the work of the Organization.

ABSTAINING WHERE A CONFLICT OF INTEREST EXISTS

If you have a conflict of interest, you may not participate in any recommendation or decision that would benefit you or someone who is related to you or with whom you have a friendship or personal relationship. Thus, for example, you would not be allowed to be on a selection panel if one of your best friends is a candidate.

CAN PAHO WAIVE A CONFLICT OF INTEREST?

Yes, PAHO can waive a conflict of interest if it believes that the interests of the Organization outweigh the risks posed by the actual or potential conflict of interest.