

**Town of Needham
Anti-Nepotism Policy
Personnel Administration #432**

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Town of Needham is committed to a policy of employment and advancement based on qualifications and merit and does not discriminate in favor of or in opposition to the employment of relatives.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the prohibitions against nepotism contained in the conflict-of-interest law, M.G.L. c. 268A, while ensuring avoidance of favoritism, the appearance of or potential for favoritism, and conflicts of interest and loyalty often associated with nepotism. Nepotism is inconsistent with the Town's longstanding policy of making employment decisions and other operational decisions based solely on community needs and individual qualifications, skills, ability and performance.

II. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all Town of Needham employees and candidates for employment, other than those positions under the supervision and control of the School Committee.

III. DEFINITIONS

Relative: spouse or significant other, parent/stepparent, child/stepchild, grandparent, grandchild, brother/brother-in-law, sister/sister-in-law, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, first cousin, in-laws (father, mother, son, daughter)

Close Relationship Person: any individual in a romantic relationship with the employee or any non-relative living in the same household as the employee.

Significant Other: a relationship between two people, neither of whom is married, that is intended to remain indefinitely and where there is joint responsibility for each other's common welfare, there are significant shared financial obligations, and they may be living together in a shared primary residence.

IV. POLICY

To avoid potential for perceived or actual conflicts, such as favoritism or personal conflicts from outside the work environment, which can be carried into the daily working relationship, the Town may hire relatives of, or anyone with a close personal relationship to, persons currently employed only if: a) candidates for employment will not be working directly for or supervising a relative or close relationship person, and b) candidates for

employment will not occupy a position in the same line of authority in which employees can initiate or participate in decisions involving a direct benefit to the relative or person in close relationship. Such decisions include hiring, retention, transfer, promotion, wages and leave requests.

This policy does not prohibit (but does not encourage) the Town from simultaneously employing relatives or persons with a close relationship to an existing employee. Relatives and close relationship persons are permitted to work in the same Town department or division so long as they comply with the requirements outlined above (e.g., there is no direct reporting or supervisory relationship between the relatives and all employment decisions are made by others).

All candidates, regardless of their direct or indirect relationship to existing employees, must follow the standard screening and selection procedures established for all hiring of personnel.

V. EXPECTATIONS OF STAFF

All potential conflicts with the conditions outlined in this policy must be disclosed to the Director of Human Resources.

The hiring manager is responsible for ensuring policy compliance. Department managers are responsible for monitoring changes with employees reporting relations after initial hire to ensure compliance with this policy. Employees are responsible for immediately reporting any changes to their supervisor.

If any employee, after employment or change in employment, enters into one of the close personal relationships with a supervisor or an employee they directly supervise, one of the affected individuals must seek a transfer or a change in the reporting relationship. Such changes must be approved by the Town Manager/their designee.

VI. EXCEPTIONS

The Town Manager has the discretion to interpret and make exceptions to this policy in the best interest of the Town.