

## American Society for Public Administration Code of Ethics, 1984

The American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) exists to advance the science, process, and art of public administration. ASPA encourages professionalism and improved quality of service at all levels of government, education, and the not-for-profit private sector. ASPA contributes to the analysis, understanding, and resolution of public issues by providing programs, services, policy studies, conferences, and publications.

ASPA members share with their neighbors all of the responsibilities and rights of citizenship in a democratic society. However, the mission and goals of ASPA call every member to additional dedication and commitment. Certain principles and moral standards must guide the conduct of ASPA members not merely in preventing wrong, in pursuing right through timely and energetic execution of responsibilities. To this end, we, the members of the Society, recognizing the critical role of conscience in choosing among courses of action and taking into account the moral ambiguities of life, commit ourselves to:

1. Demonstrate the highest standards of personal integrity, truthfulness, honesty and fortitude in all our public activities in order to inspire public confidence and trust in public institutions.
2. Serve the public with respect, concern, courtesy, and responsiveness, recognizing that service to the public is beyond service to oneself.
3. Strive for personal professional excellence and encourage the professional development of our associates and those seeking to enter the field of public administration.
4. Approach our organization and operational duties with a positive attitude and constructively support open communication, creativity, dedication, and compassion.
5. Serve in such a way that we do not realize undue personal gain from the performance of our official duties.
6. Avoid any interest or activity which is in conflict with the conduct of our official duties.
7. Respect and protect the privileged information to which we have access in the course of official duties.
8. Exercise whatever discretionary authority we have under law to promote the public interest.
9. Accept as a personal duty the responsibility to keep up to date on emerging issues and to administer the public's business with professional competence, fairness, impartiality, efficiency, and effectiveness.
10. Support, implement, and promote merit employment and programs of affirmative action to assure equal employment opportunity by our recruitment, selection, and advancement of qualified persons from all elements of society.
11. Eliminate all forms of illegal discrimination, fraud, and mismanagement of public funds, and support colleagues if they are in difficulty because of responsible efforts to correct such discrimination, fraud, mismanagement or abuse.
12. Respect, support, study, and when necessary, work to improve federal and state constitutions and other laws which define the relationships among public agencies, employees, clients, and all citizens.

*ASPA's first Code of Ethics was approved by ASPA's National Council April 8, 1984. The Implementation Guidelines (not presented here) were adopted by ASPA National Council March 27, 1985.*

Source: Darryl L. Pugh in Bowman, "The Origins of Ethical Frameworks in Public Administration." In *Ethical Frontiers in Public Management*, edited by James S. Bowman (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass), 20.