

PRACTICES TO PROMOTE THE ASPA CODE OF ETHICS¹

The ASPA Code of Ethics is a statement of the aspirations and high expectations of public servants. These practices serve as a guide to behavior for members of ASPA in carrying out its principles. The Code and these practices are intended to be used as a whole and in conjunction with one another. An ethical public servant will consider the full range of standards and values that are relevant to handling a specific matter and be committed to upholding both the spirit and the letter of this code.

ASPA members are committed to—

- 1. Advance the Public Interest.** *Promote the interests of the public and put service to the public above service to oneself.*
 - a. Seek to advance the good of the public as a whole, taking into account current and long-term interests of the society.*
 - b. Exercise discretionary authority to promote the public interest.
 - c. Be prepared to make decisions that may not be popular but that are in the public's best interest.
 - d. Subordinate *personal interests and* institutional loyalties to the public good.
 - e. Serve all persons with courtesy, respect, and dedication to high standards.*

- 2. Uphold the Constitution and the Law.** *Respect and support government constitutions and laws, while seeking to improve laws and policies to promote the public good.*
 - a. Recognize and understand the constitutional, legislative and regulatory framework in which you work and fully discharge your professional roles and responsibilities.*
 - b. Promote constitutional principles of equality, fairness, representativeness, responsiveness and due process in protecting citizens' rights and promoting the public good.
 - c. Develop proposals for sound laws and policies and for improving or eliminating laws and policies that are unethical, counterproductive, or obsolete.*
 - d. Respect and safeguard protected and confidential information.*

- 3. Promote democratic participation.** *Inform the public and encourage active engagement in governance. Be open, transparent and responsive, and respect and assist all persons in their dealings with public organizations.*
 - a. Be open and transparent while protecting privacy rights and security.*
 - b. Recognize and support the public's right to know the public's business.

¹ Changes from the 1994 Code are *italicized*.

- c. *Involve the community in the development, implementation, and assessment of policies and public programs, and seek to empower citizens in the democratic process, including special assistance to those who lack resources or influence.*
- d. Assist members of the public in their dealings with government and respond to the public in ways that are complete, clear, and easy to understand.
- e. Promote timely and continuing dissemination of information about government activities to the community, ensuring a fair and transparent process and educating citizens to make effective contributions.

4. Strengthen social equity. *Treat all persons with fairness, justice, and equality and respect individual differences, rights, and freedoms. Promote affirmative action and other initiatives to reduce unfairness, injustice, and inequality in society.*

- b. a. *Provide services to the public with impartiality and consistency tempered by recognition of differences. Ensure that all persons have access to programs and services to which they are entitled under the law and maintain equitable standards of quality for all who receive the programs and services.*
- c. *Provide equal treatment, protection, and due process to all persons.*
- d. *Oppose all forms of discrimination and harassment and promote affirmative action, cultural competence, and other efforts to reduce disparities in outcomes and increase the inclusion of underrepresented groups.*

5. Fully Inform and Advise. *Provide accurate, honest, comprehensive, and timely information and advice to elected and appointed officials and governing board members, and to staff members in your organization.*

- a. *Provide information and advice based on a complete and impartial review of circumstances and needs of the public and the goals and objectives of the organization.*
- b. *Be prepared to provide information and recommendations that may not be popular or preferred by superiors or colleagues.*

6. Demonstrate personal integrity. *Adhere to the highest standards of conduct to inspire public confidence and trust in public service.*

- a. *Exercise integrity, courage, compassion, benevolence, and optimism.*
- b. *Maintain truthfulness and honesty and do not compromise them for advancement, honor, or personal gain.*
- c. *Resist political, organizational, and personal pressures to compromise ethical integrity and principles and support others who are subject to these pressures.*
- d. *Accept individual responsibility for your actions and the consequences of your actions.*
- e. *Guard against using public position for personal gain or to advance personal or private interests.*
- f. *Zealously guard against conflict of interest or its appearance. Disclose any interests that*

may affect objectivity in making decisions and recuse oneself from participation in those decisions.

- g. Conduct official acts without partisanship *or favoritism*.
- h. Ensure that others receive credit for their work and contributions.

7. Promote Ethical Organizations: *Strive to attain the highest standards of ethics, stewardship, and public service in organizations that serve the public.*

- a. Work to establish procedures that hold individuals and the organization accountable for their conduct *and support these procedures with clear reporting of activities and accomplishments.*
- b. *Act as stewards of public funds by the strategic, effective, and efficient use of resources; by regularly reexamining the efficacy of policies, programs, and services; and by seeking to prevent all forms of mismanagement or waste.*
- c. Encourage *open expression of views by staff members within the organization* and provide administrative *channels* for dissent. Protect the whistleblowing rights of public employees, provide assurance of due process and safeguards against reprisal, and give support to colleagues who are victims of retribution.
- d. *Seek to correct instances of wrongdoing or report them to superiors. If remedies cannot be assured by reporting wrongdoing internally, seek external sources or agencies for review and action.*
- e. Support merit principles that *promote excellence, competence, and professionalism in the selection and promotion of public officials and employees and protect against biased, arbitrary, and capricious actions.*
- f. *Promote proactive efforts to increase the representativeness of the public workforce and the full inclusion of persons with diverse characteristics.*
- g. Encourage organizations to adopt, distribute, and periodically review a code of ethics as a living document *that applies principles of this code and other relevant codes to the specific mission and conditions of the organization.*

8. Advance Professional Excellence: *Strengthen personal capabilities to act competently and ethically and encourage the professional development of others.*

- a. Keep up-to-date on emerging issues, practices, and potential problems *that could affect your performance and accomplishing the mission of your organization.*
- b. Provide support and encouragement to others to upgrade competence *and* participate in professional activities and associations.
- c. Allocate time *and resources to the professional development* of students, interns, beginning professionals, and other colleagues.