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## CODE OF ETHICS (revised March 2013)

Since 1984, ASPA has promoted a commitment to high standards of ethical practice by public servants. The Code of Ethics presents the key principles that public servants should advance, and its educational and review activities support the ethical behavior of members and hold them accountable for adhering to these principles. In its current strategic plan, ASPA's first goal is to "advocate strong, effective and ethical public governance."

## ASPA CODE OF ETHICS

**The American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) advances the science, art, and practice of public administration. The Society affirms its responsibility to develop the spirit of responsible professionalism within its membership and to increase awareness and commitment to ethical principles and standards among all those who work in public service in all sectors. To this end, we, the members of the Society, commit ourselves to uphold the following principles:**

- 1. Advance the Public Interest.** Promote the interests of the public and put service to the public above service to oneself.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 6. Demonstrate personal integrity.** Adhere to the highest standards of conduct to inspire public confidence and trust in public service.
- 7. Promote Ethical Organizations:** Strive to attain the highest standards of ethics, stewardship, and public service in organizations that serve the public.
- 8. Advance Professional Excellence:** Strengthen personal capabilities to act competently and ethically and encourage the professional development of others.

A separate document contains practices that serve as a guide to behavior for members of ASPA in carrying out its principles. To view the practices, [click here](#).

Members of ASPA commit themselves to support the Code of Ethics and may be sanctioned for their failure and refusal to uphold the Code.

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## ETHICS AND STANDARDS IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE

The Ethics and Standards Implementation Committee was created by action of the National Council and a vote of the ASPA membership in 2014. The Committee is responsible for advancing awareness and commitment to ethical principles and practices in ASPA and promoting the importance of ethics in public service through educational and review activities. The Committee provides advice to members in handling ethical problems, offers assistance to members who have been sanctioned by their organization for actions to advance the Code, reviews and seeks to resolve ethics complaints, and advises the Council of appropriate action to be taken when an ASPA member is found to have violated the Code. At the request of the Executive Committee, the Committee investigates matters relating to possible unethical practices within the work of ASPA. The Committee identifies emerging issues in public service ethics and actions that ASPA can take to address serious challenges to ethical administration.

To access the full proposal establishing the Committee, click the link below:

[Ethics and Standards Implementation Committee Proposal](#)

## EARLIER VERSIONS OF THE ASPA CODE OF ETHICS

[1994 Code of Ethics](#)

[1984 Code of Ethics](#)

[1984 Code of Ethics Guidelines](#)

[1981 Principles](#)

## ASPA CODE REVISION PROCESS: 2011-2013

**March 2011** - ASPA embarked on a far reaching discussion about ethics, specifically its Code of Ethics. As a professional member association, ASPA is committed to encouraging ethics within the profession and in public service generally. The discussions organized by a Working Group led to the revision of the 1994 Code.

The documents below relate to that process and highlight the changes related to the new code.

[Principles with Revisions](#)

[Practices with Revisions](#)

[Revision Process](#)

[Implementation](#)

[Proposal for Ethics Committee](#)

[Ethics Working Group](#)

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the American Society for Public Administration

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