



Code of Ethics

Since 1984, ASPA has promoted a commitment to high standards of ethical practice by public servants. The Code of Ethics was revised in 2013 and the Ethics and Standards Implementation Committee (Ethics Committee) was established in 2014. 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."

The full Code of Ethics appears below, along with [our ethics complaint process](#). Here are some additional helpful links.

- [Contacting Ethics Committee](#)
- [About the Ethics Committee](#)
- [Implementing the Code: Workbook and Assessment Guide](#)
- [Earlier Versions of the Code](#)

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.

ASPA Code of Ethics Review Process:

As part of its commitment to advance and implement the Code of Ethics, ASPA provides a review process with four elements:

1. Responding to inquiries from members about ethical standards and handling ethical dilemmas

2. Reviewing requests for help from members who have been penalized for upholding the Code and providing support to them
3. Recognizing members whose actions exemplify the code
4. Reviewing and seeking to resolve complaints about a member whose actions may have violated the Code of Ethics

The complaints process covers only ASPA members and is confidential. Neither the person named in a complaint nor the person making the complaint are publicly identified at any time. The Ethics Committee will defer its own review of a complaint until any other bodies reviewing the actions (courts of law, legislative bodies, agencies or other organizations involved) have completed their work, and will then determine if future evaluation is required.

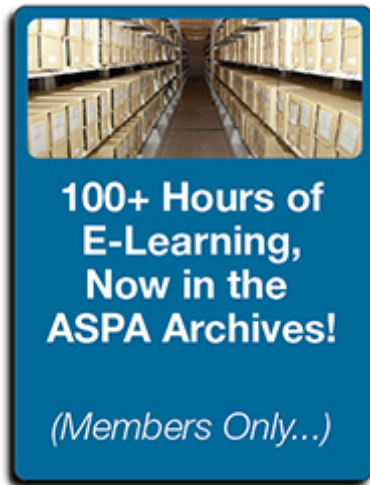
The review of a complaint goes through the following stages:

- A complaint about an ASPA member can be submitted by a member or non-member through ethics@aspanet.org or by mail to the address listed at the end of this page. Complaints must be related to actions occurring after May 1, 2016—the date the current process was initiated. Complaints must specifically reference the tenet of the Code the complainant feels has been violated.
- The Ethics and Standards Implementation Committee (Ethics Committee) will assess the complaint to determine whether the action is a violation of the code. If it is deemed not to be a violation, the complaint will be dismissed with explanations to the complainant.
- If it is judged that the action, if verified, is a violation of the Code, the Ethics Committee will then work with the ASPA Executive Committee to determine if further steps should be taken.
- Should the Executive Committee authorize the Ethics Committee to get involved in the issue, the Ethics Committee will discuss the complaint with the member and encourage voluntary corrective action. At no point are the names of those involved disclosed to members.

This is intended to be a constructive process that helps members understand how the Code is applied to specific situations. Issues identified in complaints may be used—in generic terms—in the Ethics Committee's educational activities to help raise awareness of ethical challenges and expectations.

Question about the review process can be sent to ethics@aspanet.org or to:

ASPA Ethics Review Questions
1730 Rhode Island Ave., NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20036



Need Resources?

**Click here to download the
Ethics Workbook &
Assessment Guide**



A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS:

Stay Connected:

[Contact Us!](#) [Advertising with ASPA](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Terms of use](#)

© Copyright 2017 The American Society for Public Administration

1730 Rhode Island Ave., NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20036 • Telephone: 202-393-7878 • Fax:
202-638-4952 • E-mail: info@aspanet.org