

# AFP Code of Ethical Principles and Standards of Professional Practice

## STATEMENT OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

Adopted 1964; Amended October 2004



The Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) exists to foster the development and growth of fundraising professionals and the profession, to promote high ethical standards in the fundraising profession and to preserve and enhance philanthropy and volunteerism. Members of AFP are motivated by an inner drive to improve the quality of life through the causes they serve. They serve the ideal of philanthropy; are committed to the preservation and enhancement of volunteerism; and hold stewardship of these concepts as the overriding principle of their professional life. They recognize their responsibility to ensure that needed resources are vigorously and ethically sought and that the intent of the donor is honestly fulfilled. To these ends, AFP members embrace certain values that they strive to uphold in performing their responsibilities for generating philanthropic support.

### AFP members aspire to:

- ◆ practice their profession with integrity, honesty, truthfulness and adherence to the absolute obligation to safeguard the public trust;
- ◆ act according to the highest standards and visions of their organization, profession and conscience;
- ◆ put philanthropic mission above personal gain;
- ◆ inspire others through their own sense of dedication and high purpose;
- ◆ improve their professional knowledge and skills so that their performance will better serve others;
- ◆ demonstrate concern for the interests and well-being of individuals affected by their actions;
- ◆ value the privacy, freedom of choice and interests of all those affected by their actions;
- ◆ foster cultural diversity and pluralistic values, and treat all people with dignity and respect;
- ◆ affirm, through personal giving, a commitment to philanthropy and its role in society;
- ◆ adhere to the spirit as well as the letter of all applicable laws and regulations;
- ◆ advocate within their organizations, adherence to all applicable laws and regulations;
- ◆ avoid even the appearance of any criminal offense or professional misconduct;
- ◆ bring credit to the fundraising profession by their public demeanor;
- ◆ encourage colleagues to embrace and practice these ethical principles and standards of professional practice; and
- ◆ be aware of the codes of ethics promulgated by other professional organizations that serve philanthropy.

### STANDARDS OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Furthermore, while striving to act according to the above values, AFP members agree to abide by the *AFP Standards of Professional Practice*, which are adopted and incorporated into the *AFP Code of Ethical Principles*. Violation of the *Standards* may subject the member to disciplinary sanctions, including expulsion, as provided in the AFP Ethics Enforcement Procedures.

### Professional Obligations

1. Members shall not engage in activities that harm the members' organization, clients, or profession.
2. Members shall not engage in activities that conflict with their fiduciary, ethical and legal obligations to their organizations and their clients.
3. Members shall effectively disclose all potential and actual conflicts of interest; such disclosure does not preclude or imply ethical impropriety.
4. Members shall not exploit any relationship with a donor, prospect, volunteer or employee for the benefit of the member or the members' organizations.

5. Members shall comply with all applicable local, state, provincial, federal, civil and criminal laws.
6. Members recognize their individual boundaries of competence and are forthcoming and truthful about their professional experience and qualifications.

### Solicitation and Use of Philanthropic Funds

7. Members shall take care to ensure that all solicitation materials are accurate and correctly reflect their organization's mission and use of solicited funds.
8. Members shall take care to ensure that donors receive informed, accurate and ethical advice about the value and tax implications of contributions.
9. Members shall take care to ensure that contributions are used in accordance with donors' intentions.
10. Members shall take care to ensure proper stewardship of philanthropic contributions, including timely reports on the use and management of such funds.
11. Members shall obtain explicit consent by donors before altering the conditions of contributions.

### Presentation of Information

12. Members shall not disclose privileged or confidential information to unauthorized parties.
13. Members shall adhere to the principle that all donor and prospect information created by, or on behalf of, an organization is the property of that organization and shall not be transferred or utilized except on behalf of that organization.
14. Members shall give donors the opportunity to have their names removed from lists that are sold to, rented to, or exchanged with other organizations.
15. Members shall, when stating fundraising results, use accurate and consistent accounting methods that conform to the appropriate guidelines adopted by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA)\* for the type of organization involved. (\* In countries outside of the United States, comparable authority should be utilized.)

### Compensation

16. Members shall not accept compensation that is based on a percentage of contributions; nor shall they accept finder's fees.
17. Members may accept performance-based compensation, such as bonuses, provided such bonuses are in accord with prevailing practices within the members' own organizations, and are not based on a percentage of contributions.
18. Members shall not pay finder's fees, or commissions or percentage compensation based on contributions, and shall take care to discourage their organizations from making such payments.