

# AFP Code of Ethical Principles and Standards of Professional Practice



## STATEMENT OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES Adopted November 1991

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 in order 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

Adopted and incorporated into the AFP Code of Ethical Principles  
November 1992

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 member's 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 to the benefit of the member or the member's organization.

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 Charitable Funds:

7. Members shall take care to ensure that all solicitation materials are accurate and correctly reflect the organizations' 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 potential gifts.
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 charitable contributions, including timely reports on the use and management of funds.
11. Members shall obtain explicit consent by the donor before altering the conditions of a gift.

#### 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 (AICAP)\* 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 charitable 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 charitable contributions.
18. Members shall not pay finder's fees, commissions or percentage compensation based on charitable contributions and shall take care to discourage their organizations from making such payments.

# A Donor Bill of Rights

**PHILANTHROPY** is based on voluntary action for the common good. It is a tradition of giving and sharing that is primary to the quality of life. To assure that philanthropy merits the respect and trust of the general public, and that donors and prospective donors can have full confidence in the not-for-profit organizations and causes they are asked to support, we declare that all donors have these rights:

## I.

*To be informed of the organization's mission, of the way the organization intends to use donated resources, and of its capacity to use donations effectively for their intended purposes.*

## II.

*To be informed of the identity of those serving on the organization's governing board, and to expect the board to exercise prudent judgement in its stewardship responsibilities.*

## III.

*To have access to the organization's most recent financial statements.*

## IV.

*To be assured their gifts will be used for the purposes for which they were given.*

## V.

*To receive appropriate acknowledgement and recognition.*

## VI.

*To be assured that information about their donations is handled with respect and with confidentiality to the extent provided by law.*

## VII.

*To expect that all relationships with individuals representing organizations of interest to the donor will be professional in nature.*

## VIII.

*To be informed whether those seeking donations are volunteers, employees of the organization or hired solicitors.*

## IX.

*To have the opportunity for their names to be deleted from mailing lists that an organization may intend to share.*

## X.

*To feel free to ask questions when making a donation and to receive prompt, truthful and forthright answers.*

### DEVELOPED BY

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF FUND RAISING COUNSEL (AAFRC)  
ASSOCIATION FOR HEALTHCARE PHILANTHROPY (AHP)  
COUNCIL FOR ADVANCEMENT AND SUPPORT OF EDUCATION (CASE)  
ASSOCIATION OF FUNDRAISING PROFESSIONALS (AFP)

### ENDORSED BY

(INFORMATION)  
INDEPENDENT SECTOR  
NATIONAL CATHOLIC DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE (NCDC)  
NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON PLANNED GIVING (NCPG)  
COUNCIL FOR RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (CRD)  
UNITED WAY OF AMERICA