

American Institute of Certified Planners

CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

The American Institute of Certified Planners is the American Planning Association's professional institute and provides the only nationwide, independent verification of planners' qualifications.

Certified planners pledge to uphold high standards of practice, ethics, and professional conduct, and to keep their skills sharp and up to date by continuously pursuing advanced professional education.

The AICP's Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct is divided into five sections:

Section A contains a statement of aspirational principles that constitute the ideals to which we are committed.

Section B contains rules of conduct to which we are held accountable.

Section C contains the procedural provisions of the Code that describe how one may obtain either a formal or informal advisory ruling, as well as the requirements for an annual report.

Section D contains the procedural provisions that detail how a complaint of misconduct can be filed, as well as how these complaints are investigated and adjudicated.

Section E contains procedural provisions regarding the forms of disciplinary actions against a planner, including those situations where a planner is convicted of a serious crime or other conduct inconsistent with the responsibilities of a certified planner.

A: Principles to Which We Aspire

1. Our Overall Responsibility to the Public

Our primary obligation is to serve the public interest and we, therefore, owe our allegiance to a conscientiously attained concept of the public interest that is formulated through continuous and open debate. We shall achieve high standards of professional integrity, proficiency, and knowledge. To comply with our obligation to the public, we aspire to the following principles:

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1. Our Overall Responsibility to the Public

- a) We shall always be conscious of the rights of others.
- b) We shall have special concern for the long-range consequences of present actions.
- c) We shall pay special attention to the interrelatedness of decisions.
- d) We shall provide timely, adequate, clear, and accurate information on planning issues to all affected persons and to governmental decision makers.
- e) We shall give people the opportunity to have a meaningful impact on the development of plans and programs that may affect them. Participation should be broad enough to include those who lack formal organization or influence.

A: Principles to Which We Aspire

1. Our Overall Responsibility to the Public

- f) We shall seek social justice by working to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a special responsibility to plan for the needs of the disadvantaged and to promote racial and economic integration. We shall urge the alteration of policies, institutions, and decisions that oppose such needs.
- g) We shall promote excellence of design and endeavor to conserve and preserve the integrity and heritage of the natural and built environment.
- h) We shall deal fairly with all participants in the planning process. Those of us who are public officials or employees shall also deal evenhandedly with all planning process participants.

A: Principles to Which We Aspire

2. Our Responsibility to Our Clients and Employers

We owe diligent, creative, and competent performance of the work we do in pursuit of our client or employer's interest. Such performance, however, shall always be consistent with our faithful service to the public interest.

- a) We shall exercise independent professional judgment on behalf of our clients and employers.
- b) We shall accept the decisions of our client or employer concerning the objectives and nature of the professional services we perform unless the course of action is illegal or plainly inconsistent with our primary obligation to the public interest.
- c) We shall avoid a conflict of interest or even the appearance of a conflict of interest in accepting assignments from clients or employers.

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3. Our Responsibility to Our Profession and Colleagues

We shall contribute to the development of, and respect for, our profession by improving knowledge and techniques, making work relevant to solutions of community problems, and increasing public understanding of planning activities.

- a) We shall protect and enhance the integrity of our profession.
- b) We shall educate the public about planning issues and their relevance to our everyday lives.
- c) We shall describe and comment on the work and views of other professionals in a fair and professional manner.
- d) We shall share the results of experience and research that contribute to the body of planning knowledge.
- e) We shall examine the applicability of planning theories, methods, research and practice and standards to the facts and analysis of each particular situation and shall not accept the applicability of a customary solution without first establishing its appropriateness to the situation.

A: Principles to Which We Aspire

3. Our Responsibility to Our Profession and Colleagues

- f) We shall contribute time and resources to the professional development of students, interns, beginning professionals, and other colleagues.
- g) We shall increase the opportunities for members of underrepresented groups to become professional planners and help them advance in the profession.
- h) We shall continue to enhance our professional education and training.
- i) We shall systematically and critically analyze ethical issues in the practice of planning.
- j) We shall contribute time and effort to groups lacking in adequate planning resources and to voluntary professional activities.

B: Our Rules of Conduct

We adhere to the following Rules of Conduct, and we understand that our Institute will enforce compliance with them. If we fail to adhere to these Rules, we could receive sanctions, the ultimate being the loss of our certification:

- 1) We shall not deliberately or with reckless indifference fail to provide adequate, timely, clear and accurate information on planning issues.
- 2) **We shall not accept an assignment from a client or employer when the services to be performed involve conduct that we know to be illegal or in violation of these rules.**
- 3) We shall not accept an assignment from a client or employer to publicly advocate a position on a planning issue that is indistinguishably adverse to a position we publicly advocated for a previous client or employer within the past three years unless (1) we determine in good faith after consultation with other qualified professionals that our change of position will not cause present detriment to our previous client or employer, and (2) we make full written disclosure of the conflict to our current client or employer and receive written permission to proceed with the assignment.

B: Our Rules of Conduct

- 4) We shall not, as salaried employees, undertake other employment in planning or a related profession, whether or not for pay, without having made full written disclosure to the employer who furnishes our salary and having received subsequent written permission to undertake additional employment, unless our employer has a written policy which expressly dispenses with a need to obtain such consent.
- 5) **We shall not, as public officials or employees, accept from anyone other than our public employer any compensation, commission, rebate, or other advantage that may be perceived as related to our public office or employment.**
- 6) We shall not perform work on a project for a client or employer if, in addition to the agreed upon compensation from our client or employer, there is a possibility for direct personal or financial gain to us, our family members, or persons living in our household, unless our client or employer, after full written disclosure from us, consents in writing to the arrangement.

B: Our Rules of Conduct

- 7) We shall not use to our personal advantage, nor that of a subsequent client or employer, information gained in a professional relationship that the client or employer has requested be held inviolate or that we should recognize as confidential because its disclosure could result in embarrassment or other detriment to the client or employer. Nor shall we disclose such confidential information except when (1) required by process of law, or (2) required to prevent a clear violation of law, or (3) required to prevent a substantial injury to the public. Disclosure pursuant to (2) and (3) shall not be made until after we have verified the facts and issues involved and, when practicable, exhausted efforts to obtain reconsideration of the matter and have sought separate opinions on the issue from other qualified professionals employed by our client or employer.
- 8) **We shall not, as public officials or employees, engage in private communications with planning process participants if the discussions relate to a matter over which we have authority to make a binding, final determination if such private communications are prohibited by law or by agency rules, procedures, or custom.**

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B: Our Rules of Conduct

- 9) **We shall not engage in private discussions with decision makers in the planning process in any manner prohibited by law or by agency rules, procedures, or custom.**
- 10) We shall neither deliberately, nor with reckless indifference, misrepresent the qualifications, views and findings of other professionals.
- 11) We shall not solicit prospective clients or employment through use of false or misleading claims, harassment, or duress.
- 12) We shall not misstate our education, experience, training, or any other facts which are relevant to our professional qualifications.
- 13) We shall not sell, or offer to sell, services by stating or implying an ability to influence decisions by improper means.

B: Our Rules of Conduct

- 14) We shall not use the power of any office to seek or obtain a special advantage that is not a matter of public knowledge or is not in the public interest.
- 15) **We shall not accept work beyond our professional competence unless the client or employer understands and agrees that such work will be performed by another professional competent to perform the work and acceptable to the client or employer.**
- 16) We shall not accept work for a fee, or pro bono, that we know cannot be performed with the promptness required by the prospective client, or that is required by the circumstances of the assignment.
- 17) We shall not use the product of others' efforts to seek professional recognition or acclaim intended for producers of original work.
- 18) We shall not direct or coerce other professionals to make analyses or reach findings not supported by available evidence.

B: Our Rules of Conduct

- 19) We shall not fail to disclose the interests of our client or employer when participating in the planning process. Nor shall we participate in an effort to conceal the true interests of our client or employer.
- 20) We shall not unlawfully discriminate against another person.
- 21) We shall not withhold cooperation or information from the AICP Ethics Officer or the AICP Ethics Committee if a charge of ethical misconduct has been filed against us.
- 22) We shall not retaliate or threaten retaliation against a person who has filed a charge of ethical misconduct against us or another planner, or who is cooperating in the Ethics Officer's investigation of an ethics charge.
- 23) We shall not use the threat of filing an ethics charge in order to gain, or attempt to gain, an advantage in dealings with another planner.

B: Our Rules of Conduct

- 24) We shall not file a frivolous charge of ethical misconduct against another planner.
- 25) We shall neither deliberately, nor with reckless indifference, commit any wrongful act, whether or not specified in the Rules of Conduct, that reflects adversely on our professional fitness.
- 26) We shall not fail to immediately notify the Ethics Officer by both receipted Certified and Regular First Class Mail if we are convicted of a "serious crime" as defined in Section E of the Code; nor immediately following such conviction shall we represent ourselves as Certified Planners or Members of AICP until our membership is reinstated by the AICP Ethics Committee pursuant to the procedures in Section E of the Code.

Questions
