

ALA Code of Professional Responsibility

In 1991, ALA adopted a Code of Professional Ethics to outline professional ethics standards for legal administrators. During the past year, the ALA Board of Directors appointed a task force, chaired by Past President Wendy Rice-Isaacs, to review the existing Code of Professional Ethics and recommend necessary updates to best reflect the current state of the profession and administrators' responsibilities. In addition, the Board appointed a group to review the Member Performance Objectives. As a result of these efforts, the Association has adopted the following newly revised Code of Professional Responsibility that encompasses the spirit of the previous code and performance objectives, and reflects our professional responsibilities in today's profession.

As legal management professionals, members of ALA shall abide by high ethical standards. This ALA Code of Professional Responsibility sets forth standards for the administration of legal management practices. Legal administrators at all levels have a responsibility to uphold and incorporate these standards into their everyday performance. This Code applies to the administration of legal organizations including private firms, corporate legal departments, legal clinics, government agencies and courts.

I. Responsibilities to the Profession of Legal Management:

- A. Uphold the ALA Code of Professional Responsibility and the mission of the Association of Legal Administrators;
- B. Conduct oneself with integrity and project a positive image of the legal management profession;
- C. Pursue continuing education to maintain a high level of proficiency in management procedures and issues;
- D. Promote initiatives for civic, economic and social well-being within our communities; and
- E. Advocate increased diversity in the legal management community and in all legal service organizations.

II. Responsibilities to the Legal Employer and its Employees:

- A. Foster an environment that promotes the use and improvement of sound business practices where all employees can develop, contribute and prosper;
- B. Be truthful and forthright in all forms of professional and organizational communication;
- C. Report financial information promptly, completely and accurately, and in a manner that facilitates informed decision making;
- D. Implement policies and procedures to address professional responsibility, business ethics and conduct;
- E. Establish an appropriate grievance and appeals process tailored to the legal organization's size and structure; and
- F. Promote a work environment that does not discriminate, intimidate or allow harassment based on race, color, ethnicity, national origin, gender, age, religion, disability, veteran's status, marital status, sexual orientation or other legally protected characteristics.

III. Responsibilities to those Outside the Legal Organization:

- A. Respect the customs and practices of clients, prospective clients, business partners and the community at large;
- B. Avoid actual or apparent conflicts of interest and advise all appropriate parties of potential conflicts;

C. Refrain from soliciting or accepting any fee, commission, gift, gratuity, discount or loan on behalf of oneself, family or friends, that may influence business decisions;

D. Ensure the existence of policies and procedures to provide quality client service;

E. Utilize confidential and proprietary information solely for legal practice or management purposes and not to further private interest or personal profit; and

F. Support outreach activities that cultivate pro bono assistance and law related public education to meet community needs.