

ALA CODE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

The legal profession and business must adhere to high ethical standards to maintain public trust. This ALA Code of Professional Ethics sets forth guidelines or standards for the ethical administration of legal practices - private firms, legal clinics, corporate legal departments, governmental agencies and the courts.

Legal administrators at all levels must become familiar with these standards and incorporate them into their everyday performance. They should also study and comply with all ethical guidelines of bar associations and law societies which apply in their own jurisdictions. Furthermore, they must take the lead in communicating relevant standards to staff personnel who may be less familiar than lawyers with the ethical guidelines of bar associations and law societies, and in communicating appropriate policies and procedures to lawyers.

Principles and Rules of Conduct

Honesty

The professional legal administrator shall:

- Be open and honest in all relationships with attorneys, employees and others.
- Never compromise the reputation or good of the legal practice by dishonest or illegal behavior. Integrity The professional legal administrator shall:
- Avoid actual or apparent conflicts of interest. Advise all appropriate parties of any potential conflicts.
- Never engage in activities that would prejudice the ethical performance of job responsibilities.
- Refuse any gift, favor or hospitality that would influence or appear to influence actions, unless such item is fully disclosed to and approved by management.
- Never solicit or accept any personal or family fee, commission, gift, gratuity, discount or loan for performing job duties or providing services to existing or potential clients.
- Pursue and promote fair and equitable employment practices and oppose discrimination which is based upon gender, age, race, religious creed, national origin, sexual orientation, physical disability, marital, parental or veteran status.
- Endeavor to foster a work environment founded on respect and dignity and free of sexual harassment.

Objectivity

The professional legal administrator shall:

- Communicate all information fairly and objectively.
- Fully disclose all known information that would be material to a particular management or financial decision.

- Fully disclose all relevant information required for an intended user to understand management reports, employee communications, business recommendations and comments.

Competence

The professional legal administrator shall:

- Maintain an appropriate level of professional competence and enhance existing skills through ongoing professional education programs, peer group associations and self-training.
- Recognize and communicate professional limitations or other constraints that would preclude responsible judgment or successful performance of an activity.
- Ensure that delegated tasks are responsibly assigned and competently performed.
- Make every effort to ensure that subordinates have necessary skills and levels of competence. Independence The professional legal administrator shall:
- Ensure that all personal political activities are separated from the legal practice.
- Never make investments which would benefit from inside knowledge of the legal practice or its clients.
- Exercise prudence and restraint in personal financial affairs, including speculative investment and margin accounts, in order to avoid debts and other financial obligations which could compromise independence and professional judgment. Professional Responsibility The professional legal administrator shall:
- Promulgate a positive image of the legal practice to its clients and potential clients; attorneys and staff personnel; bankers, consultants and vendors; the press; governmental agencies; the legal community; and all other relevant audiences.
- Exercise reasonable diligence in gathering business data and information from internal and external sources and in reporting that information in a manner which facilitates informed decision-making.

Confidentiality

The professional legal administrator shall:

- Never disclose confidential information acquired in the course of employment, whether or not still employed by that legal practice, except when legally obligated to do so.
- Inform subordinates that confidentiality of information acquired in the course of their work is essential, and monitor their activities to ensure that confidentiality is maintained.
- Ensure that all confidential and proprietary information acquired in the course of duty is used solely for legal practice purposes, is not provided to unauthorized persons, and is not used for the purpose of furthering a private interest or making a personal profit. 21 Service The professional legal administrator shall:
- Perform business duties in good faith in a manner believed to be in the best interests of the legal practice.
- Perform duties only within assigned authority. Accomplish assigned tasks in a timely manner.

- Promote and monitor guidelines for practice development and marketing activities to ensure that those activities are appropriate for the legal practice and conform with applicable professional guidelines.

Service

The professional legal administrator shall:

- Perform business duties in good faith in a manner believed to be in the best interests of the legal practice.
- Perform duties only within assigned authority. Accomplish assigned tasks in a timely manner.
- Promote and monitor guidelines for practice development and marketing activities to ensure that those activities are appropriate for the legal practice and conform with applicable professional guidelines.