

## AICP Code of Ethics Notes

### General notes about the AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct

- The AICP offers codes, rulings, and procedures to help certified planners (members of the American Institute of Certified Planners) negotiate the ethical dilemmas they sometimes face.
- The AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct is a guide to the ethical conduct required of members of the American Institute of Certified Planners. The Code also aims at informing the public of the principles to which professional planners are committed.
- All communications regarding specific situations should occur in letters, emails, or phone conversations with the Ethics Officer, who is appointed by the AICP Commission.
- Note that the current AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct:
  - Became effective on June 1, 2005.
  - Was revised on October 3, 2009 and on April, 1, 2016, including major revisions to sections C, D, and E.

### Highlights of Section A: Statement of Aspirational Principles

- The primary obligation of the planner is to serve the public interest.
- Responsibility to the Public
  - Consider how the public interest is determined through continuous and open debate.
  - Consider the rights of others, long-range consequences, the interrelatedness of decisions, as well as preservation of natural and built environment.
  - Provide accurate information.
  - Provide opportunities for participation.
  - Work to expand choice and be fair.
- Responsibility to Clients and Employers
  - Use professional judgment.
  - Accept decisions of client/employer (unless illegal or contrary to public interest).
  - Avoid actual conflicts of interest and even the appearance of a conflict.
- Responsibility to Profession and Colleagues
  - Educate others about the planning profession and share results of experience and research.
  - Show respect for planning colleagues.
  - Contribute to development of the planning profession.
  - Help others in the planning profession.
  - Continue professional education.
  - Voluntarily help groups that lack resources to plan.

### Highlights of Section B: Rules of Conduct

- Do provide adequate, timely, clear, accurate information.
- Do disclose potential conflicts in position to client, employers.
- Do obtain written permission to moonlight.
- Do cooperate with AICP Ethics Officer.
- Do avoid all real and perceived conflicts of interest.
- Do not mislead, misstate situations, lie, plagiarize, or otherwise conceal the truth.

- Do not discriminate.
- Do not violate the law or the Code.
- Do not use privileged information for personal advantage.
- Do not retaliate against someone who files an ethics charge.
- Do not threaten to file an ethics charge.
- Do not file a frivolous ethics charge.
- Communications with any entity or person should not compromise the planning process or the public's perception of the process.

### **Highlights of Section C: Advisory Opinions**

- Procedures to obtain informal advice from the AICP Ethics Officer.
- Procedures to obtain a formal advisory opinion from the AICP Ethics Committee
- Requirement for the Ethics Officer to provide an annual report to the AICP Commission, the Ethics Committee, and the membership.

### **Highlights of Section D: Adjudication of Complaints of Misconduct .**

- Anyone may file a charge of misconduct against a certified planner by completing a misconduct form and sending it to the Ethics Officer.
- A planner charged with misconduct may have legal representation.
- The provisions explain time frames and procedures for responding to a charge, conducting an investigation, dismissing a charge, appealing a dismissal, exploring potential settlements, dropping charges, and resigning during an investigation, conducting a hearing.

### **Highlights of Section E: Discipline of Members**

- The forms of discipline include: a letter of admonition, a letter of censure, suspension of AICP membership, or revocation of AICP membership.
- Planners convicted of serious crimes have their AICP memberships revoked automatically; this applies to all convictions and pleas of no contest, regardless of the pendency of any appeal.
- Serious crimes involve false swearing, misrepresentation, fraud, willful failure to file income tax returns or to pay the tax, deceit, bribery, extortion, misappropriation, theft, or physical harm to another. The Ethics Officer must be notified both by receipted Certified and Regular First Class Mail if a planner is convicted of a "serious crime."
- Planners whose membership is revoked can petition the Ethics Committee for reinstatement after the periods defined in the code.
- Discipline also may be imposed if a planner is convicted of a crime not included within the definition of "serious crime," if the action is determined by the AICP Ethics Committee or Ethics Office to be inconsistent with the professional responsibilities of a certified planner—or if a state or other governmental-issued professional license has been revoked or suspended.
- The Ethics Committee can publish the name of the planner who had the disciplinary action imposed and to state the nature of the discipline in a publication of AICP and of the American Planning Association.