

Revised Ethical Principles (April 2019)

PREAMBLE

~~When individuals have ready access to legal information, they can participate fully in the affairs of their government. By collecting, organizing, preserving, and retrieving legal information, the members of the American Association of Law Libraries enable people to make this ideal of democracy a reality.~~

~~Legal information professionals have an obligation to satisfy the needs, to promote the interests and to respect the values of their clientele. Law firms, corporations, academic and governmental institutions and the general public have legal information needs that are best addressed by professionals committed to the belief that serving these information needs is a noble calling and that fostering the equal participation of diverse people in library services underscores one of our basic tenets, open access to information for all individuals.~~

~~Members of the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL or Association) possess expert knowledge of sources of law, legal research methods, and the use of information technologies. They apply their expertise to select, collect, organize, and preserve sources of legal information and guide researchers in using that information in an effective, efficient and discerning manner. Association members advance democracy by connecting people and organizations with information needed to uphold their legal rights and responsibilities and participate meaningfully in government. By doing so, they serve a unique and vital role in an information-driven society that is grounded in the rule of law.~~

~~Association members are committed to meeting the information needs and supporting the interests of their employers and patrons. They strive to provide the highest level of professional service and adapt their skills and knowledge as legal, societal, and technological systems evolve. They support equal justice by advocating for open and universal access to legal information. Furthermore, they maximize the value and impact of their collections and services by fostering diversity among providers and users of law library and legal information services.~~

~~The following Ethical Principles are informed by longstanding best practices and in consideration of emerging ethical issues. They are not enforceable by AALL and they are not meant to govern specific situations. They are aspirational, constructive, and generally achievable principles meant to guide Association members in ethical reflection concerning their professional activities.~~

SERVICE

~~We promote open and effective access to legal and related information. Further we recognize the need to establish methods of preserving, maintaining and retrieving legal information in many different forms.~~

~~1. We promote open, equitable, and effective access to legal and related information. We devise, implement, and improve methods for its access, preservation, discovery, and retrieval.~~

~~We uphold a duty to our clientele to develop service policies that respect confidentiality and privacy.~~

2. We create and implement service policies for the protection of patron confidentiality, privacy, and personal data.

~~We provide zealous service using the most appropriate resources and implementing programs consistent with our institution's mission and goals.~~

~~We acknowledge the limits on service imposed by our institutions and by the duty to avoid the unauthorized practice of law.~~

3. We provide comprehensive information services using appropriate available resources and implement programs consistent with our employer's mission and goals. We recognize the duty to avoid the unauthorized practice of law.

~~*BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS*~~

~~We promote fair and ethical trade practices.~~

4. We promote fair and ethical trade practices in accordance with AALL's Vendor Relations Policy.

~~We have a duty to avoid situations in which personal interests might be served or significant benefits gained at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.~~

5. We avoid putting our personal interests before those of our patrons, colleagues, and employers.

~~We strive to obtain the maximum value for our institution's fiscal resources, while at the same time making judicious, analytical and rational use of our institution's information resources.~~

6. We use sound analytical methods and best professional practices to maximize the value and utility of our employer's resources.

~~*PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES*~~

~~We relate to our colleagues with respect and in a spirit of cooperation.~~

7. We treat colleagues with courtesy, respect, and good faith. We recognize the importance of collaboration for organizational success.

~~We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with the service we provide.~~

8. -We do not allow our personal convictions to lead us to provide inequitable service or hinder the performance of our professional duties.

~~We recognize and respect the rights of the owner and the user of intellectual property.~~

9. We acknowledge and respect the rights of intellectual property owners and users.

~~We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession.~~

10. We strive for excellence in the profession by continually enhancing our own knowledge and skills, encouraging diversity and inclusion, and advocating for the advancement of our profession and its principles. We support the professional development of colleagues and foster the aspirations of potential members of the profession.

11. We oppose discrimination based on immutable and personal characteristics, including but not limited to race, color, religion, ancestry, age, sex, gender, gender transition status, immigration status, marital status, protected veteran status, military service, national origin, physical or mental ability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status.

12. We value diversity. We strive to diversify our membership by creating environments and services that promote inclusion of historically underrepresented people as colleagues and patrons.