

Inclusive Excellence

Implementing the New ASPA Code of Ethics with Special Emphasis on Social Equity

Friday 8:00 am; Panel 2

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Abstract: After a two-year review, the ASPA Code of Ethics has been revised for the first time since 1994. Three major kinds of revisions have been made. First, three principles dealing with social equity, participation in governance, and the obligation to provide full information and advice have been added to the current five principles. Second, the code has been shortened to focus on these eight principles. A set of “practices” that guide how the principles are carried out are contained in a separate document. Third, the principles are stated in aspirational language that calls for the highest level of ethical conduct and expresses the social responsibilities of public administrators. A major breakthrough is the explicit commitment in the code to strengthen social equity. In addition to the equity principle and its support for affirmative action, the code also commits to expand citizen engagement and specific practices address expanding inclusion and increasing cultural competence in public organizations. The forum will invite suggestions about how to make these ethical commitments real. What do they mean in terms of specific actions? How does ASPA effectively communicate the new code to its members and to the wider public administration community? If ASPA adopts an enforcement process—an issue not yet resolved—, how a review process assess the compliance with the code with regard to social equity? Finally, how are other provisions in the code supported along with the social equity commitment? For example, how do public administrators work to advance social equity when the courts disallow certain kinds of practices based on preferences for underserved groups or when states preclude “affirmative action” measures? The discussion will contribute to the work of the Ethics Implementation Committee that is chaired by Jim Svara.