



## **Government Relations Section**

### **Association Lobbyist Professional Guidelines**

In order to promote and achieve effective, responsible government, ASAE: The Center for Association Leadership advocates the greatest possible participation of those being governed. At the federal, state and local level, such participation focuses on the legislative and executive branches where association and citizen activists drawn from every major discipline represent literally every segment of society and every sector of the economy.

ASAE further believes that the association lobbyist professional has a special responsibility, not only to their members and themselves, but also to the public welfare in general, which requires standards of ethical behavior even beyond those considered appropriate by an open and democratic society.

ASAE, therefore, offers the following guidelines which it strongly encourages all its members to observe but especially those whose professional objectives are to influence national, state and local public policy decisions:

1. The association lobbyist professional both respects and embraces the system of representative government. It is through this honored system that the practice of lobbying is made possible. While it is incumbent upon the lobbyist professional to keep the interests of the association member in a position of primacy, the professional will commit to temper the advocacy role with proper consideration for the general public interest.
2. The association lobbyist professional and all associations will comply with the laws and regulations governing lobbying as well as the ethical standards of conduct applying to lobbyists' interactions with officials, staff of the Congress, the Executive Branch, and individual states. In addition, they will strive to not only consider, but go beyond these official enactments and promulgations, always adhering to the highest standards of ethical behavior.
3. The association lobbyist professional will always deal in accurate, current and factual information, whether it is being reported to the employer or client, government officials, the media or professional colleagues. Truthfulness and honesty are guiding principles in the presentation of information to others and the association lobbyist professional will not engage in misrepresentation of any nature.
4. The association lobbyist professional will acquire appropriate knowledge of all points of view on relevant public policy issues. The lobbyist will take that information back to the appropriate policy-making committee in the association. The committee, made up of representative members of the association, will set policies in the best interest of the members and the general public. These positions will then be approved by the association's governing board. The positions should be public and will be the basis for all advocacy by any representatives of the association. They should be reviewed and updated by the association on a regular basis.
5. An association lobbyist professional, whether employed directly by the association or hired from outside the organization, represents the views of that association in any meeting on behalf of the association. The association lobbyist professional will avoid all conflicts of interest in order to ensure that the views presented are unequivocally those of the association. Where conflict is unavoidable, the professional will clearly and fully communicate the facts to those affected.
6. The goal of the association and its lobbyist should be to increase the understanding of the public policy process and the important role of the association in legislative and advocacy activities.
7. Association lobbyist professionals should consistently strive to enhance their knowledge and professional skills by every means available, through continuing formal education, attendance at meetings and seminars, and participation in groups with both like-minded and diverse colleagues.

Approved by the ASAE Board of Directors, August, 2012.