

# APRA Statement of Ethics

In 2008 the APRA board charged the Ethics Committee to prepare an updated revision of APRA's Statement of Ethics, focusing on the broad essentials of ethics rather than the details of our day-to-day work. In response, the committee reviewed the code of ethics of many fundraising associations and research organizations and drafted a new statement that focused on what committee members considered to be the four essentials of ethical conduct: personal integrity, accountability, practice, and conflict of interest. The board approved the statement in December 2008.

Any reproduction of the APRA Ethics Statement must include recognition of APRA.

APRA members shall support and further the individual's fundamental right to privacy and protect the confidential information of their institutions. APRA members are committed to the ethical collection and use of information. Members shall follow all applicable national, state, and local laws, as well as institutional policies, governing the collection, use, maintenance, and dissemination of information in the pursuit of the missions of their institutions.

## Code of Ethics

Advancement researchers must balance an individual's right to privacy with the needs of their institutions to collect, analyze, record, maintain, use, and disseminate information. This balance is not always easy to maintain. To guide researchers, the following ethical principles apply:

### **Preamble**

Establishing and maintaining ethical and professional standards is a primary goal of the mission of the Association of Professional Researchers for Advancement (APRA). All APRA members shall support and further an individual's fundamental right to privacy and protect the confidential information of their institutions. All members agree to abide by this Statement of Ethics in the daily conduct of all professional activity encompassing the gathering, dissemination, and use of information for the purposes of fundraising or other institutional advancement activity.

Four fundamental principles provide the foundation for the ethical conduct of fundraising research, relationship management, and analytics: integrity, accountability, practice, and conflict of interest.

### **Integrity**

Members shall be truthful with respect to their identities and purpose and the identity of their institutions during the course of their work. They shall continually strive to increase the recognition and respect of the profession.

### **Accountability**

Members shall respect the privacy of donors and prospects and conduct their work with the highest level of discretion. They shall adhere to the spirit as well as the letter of all applicable laws and all policies of their organization. They shall conduct themselves in the utmost professional manner in accordance with the standards of their organization.

### **Practice**

Members shall take the necessary care to ensure that their work is as accurate as possible. They shall only record data that is appropriate to the fundraising process and protect the confidentiality of all personal information at all times.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

Members shall avoid competing professional or personal interests and shall disclose such interests to their institutions at the first instance. A conflict of interest can create an appearance of impropriety that can undermine confidence in the member, their organization, and the profession.

Copyright © 2009 by the Association of Professional Researchers for Advancement.

*Revised December 2009*

# APRA Social Media Ethics Statement

## **Preamble**

In the conduct of their work, APRA members must balance an individual's right to privacy with the needs of the institution to collect, analyze, record, maintain, use, and disseminate information. Social media outlets create extraordinary opportunities for the practice of prospect research. However, because members are not passive participants in social media, but engage and participate in it both personally and professionally, the use of social media presents unique challenges to the ethical conduct of research. These guidelines have been created to assist APRA members in making ethical choices about the use of social media in their fundraising research activities.

## **Integrity**

Members shall exercise transparency with respect to their identities, the identity of their institution and their relation to it, and to the purpose of their online presence and communication. Members shall be authorized by their institution to conduct business on its behalf on social media sites. They shall keep all information truthful, and respect all laws governing copyright, trademarks, and other third-party rights in online space. Members shall be mindful of cultural differences globally that might lead to misunderstanding or offence. Content shared must be respectful of all individuals, races, religions, gender and sexual orientation, and avoid derogatory or libelous statements. Members shall remember that content is public and permanent.

## **Accountability**

Members shall respect the privacy of individuals and conduct their work with the highest level of professionalism and discretion. They shall maintain appropriate boundaries when gathering and sharing information, taking care to distinguish between professional and personal addresses, communications, uses, and behavior. Information gathered from social media sites shall remain confidential and be shared only with authorized organizational staff as part of standard business operations. No private or confidential institutional or individual information should be posted, shared, or disclosed to the public without specific authorization. Members shall comply with all organizational guidelines for computer use and social media behavior.

## **Practice**

When gathering, communicating, storing, and protecting information, members shall take all necessary precautions, and comply with federal, state, and institutional regulations. Members shall record and disclose only information appropriate to fundraising activities which is legally available to be maintained in a secure database of record. They shall insure information gathered via social media is further confirmed by other sources to guarantee that it is as accurate as possible. Members shall make certain that they understand the privacy policies of their institution and of the social media channels they use. In the absence of internal policies, members shall adhere to this statement of ethics and social media policies.

## **Conduct**

Because social media is highly relational and public, member's conduct shall adhere to the highest standards of professional communication. Members shall conduct themselves in a manner that encourages a positive relationship to the institution which they represent and assists in achieving its goals. They should not "friend" or be "friended" or enter into personal relations with prospects or donors in the conduct of their work. Members should be mindful that information posted in one context may be publicized in another. Should information obtained on social media sites jeopardize the reputation of the prospect or have a negative impact on the organization, the member should ensure its review before use to protect both the individual and institution. Members should always conduct themselves with the awareness they are accountable for all online behavior, and adhere to all standards of professional conduct and business practices.

*\*Approved August 2013*