



## **Certified Grants Management Specialist (CGMS) Under the Auspices of the CGMS Commission**

### **Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct**

#### **CHAPTER 1: VISION AND APPLICABILITY**

##### **1.1 Vision and Purpose**

As practitioners of grants management, we are committed to doing what is right and honorable. We set high standards for ourselves and we aspire to meet these standards in all aspects of our lives—at work, at home, and in service to our profession. We do this by establishing a profession-wide understanding of appropriate behavior. This code is relevant to all CGMS practitioners regardless of their professional functions or the settings in which they work.

This Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct describes the expectations that we hold as practitioners in the global grants management community. It articulates the ideals to which we aspire as well as the behaviors that are mandatory in our professional and volunteer roles.

The purpose of this Code is to instill confidence in the grants management profession and to help an individual become a better practitioner. We believe that the credibility and reputation of the grants management profession is shaped by the collective conduct of individual practitioners.

We believe that we can advance our profession, both individually and collectively, by embracing this Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. We also believe that this Code will assist us in making wise decisions, particularly when faced with difficult situations where we may be asked to compromise our integrity or our values.

Ethical decision making in a given situation must apply the informed judgment of the individual practitioner and should also consider how the issues would be judged in a peer review process where the ethical standards of the profession would be applied. Our hope that this Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct will serve as a catalyst for others to study, deliberate, and write about ethics and values that impact grants management. Further, we hope that this Code will ultimately be used to build upon and evolve our profession.

## 1.2 Persons to Whom the Code Applies

The Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct applies to:

- 1.2.1 All Certified Grants Management Specialists (CGMS) whether members of NGMA or not.
- 1.2.2 Individuals who meet one or more of the following criteria:
  1. NGMA members and non-members who apply to earn a CGMS certification.
  2. NGMA members and non-members who serve on the CGMS Committee in a volunteer capacity.
  3. NGMA members and non-members who assist with training and other issues in support of credentialing.
  4. NGMA members and non-member who work in the global grant management profession.

## 1.3 Structure of the Code

The Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct is divided into sections that contain standards of conduct which are aligned with the six (6) values that were identified as most important to the grants management community. Some sections of this Code include comments. Comments are not mandatory parts of the Code, but provide examples and other clarification. A glossary can be found at the end of the standard. The glossary defines words and phrases used in the Code. For convenience, those terms defined in the glossary are underlined in the text of the Code.

## 1.4 Values that Support this Code

The CGMS Committee, a part of National Grants Management Association (NGMA), determined that it is important to identify the values that form the basis of their decision making and guided their actions. The values that the global grants management community defined as most important are: responsibility, respect, fairness, and honesty. This Code affirms these four (4) values as its foundation.

## 1.5 Aspirational and Mandatory Conduct

Each section of the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct includes both aspirational standards and mandatory standards. The aspirational standards describe the conduct that we strive to uphold as practitioners. Although adherence to the aspirational standards is not easily measured, conducting ourselves in accordance with these is an expectation that we have of ourselves as professionals—it is not optional.

The mandatory standards establish firm requirements, and in some cases, limit or prohibit practitioner behavior. Practitioners who do not conduct themselves in accordance with these standards will be subject to disciplinary procedures before the CGMS Committee. One standard of discipline could be revocation of the CGMS credential.

## CHAPTER 2: RESPONSIBILITY

### 2.1 Description of Responsibility

Responsibility is our duty to take ownership for the decisions we make or fail to make, the actions we take or fail to take, and the consequences that result.

## 2.2 Responsibility: Aspirational Standards

As practitioners in the global grants management community:

2.2.1 We make decisions and take actions based on the best interests of society, independence, and fairness.

2.2.2 We accept only those assignments that are consistent with our background, experience, skills, and qualifications.

**Clarification:** *Where developmental or stretch assignments are being considered, we ensure that key stakeholders receive timely and complete information regarding the gaps in our qualifications so that they may make informed decisions regarding our suitability for a particular assignment. In the case of a contracting arrangement, we only bid on work that our organization is qualified to perform and we assign only qualified individuals to perform the work.*

2.2.3 We fulfill the commitments that we undertake – we do what we say we will do.

2.2.4 When we make errors or omissions, we take ownership and make corrections promptly. When we discover errors or omissions caused by others, we communicate them to the appropriate body as soon they are discovered. We accept accountability for any issues resulting from our errors or omissions and any resulting consequences.

2.2.5 We protect proprietary or confidential information that has been entrusted to us.

2.2.6 We uphold this Code and hold each other accountable to it.

## 2.3 Responsibility: Mandatory Standards

As practitioners in the global grants management community, we require the following of ourselves and our fellow practitioners:

### Regulations and Legal Requirements

2.3.1 We inform ourselves and uphold the policies, rules, regulations and laws that govern our work, professional, and volunteer activities.

2.3.2 *We do not engage in any illegal behavior, including but not limited to: theft, fraud, corruption, embezzlement, or bribery. Further, we do not take or abuse the property of others, including intellectual property, nor do we engage in slander or libel.*

2.3.3 We report unethical or illegal conduct to appropriate management and, if necessary, to those affected by the conduct.

2.3.4 We do not condone or assist others in engaging in illegal behavior.

**Clarification:** *Reporting is not easy and we recognize that it may have negative consequences. Since recent corporate scandals, many organizations have adopted policies to protect employees who reveal the truth about illegal or unethical activities. Some governments have also adopted legislation to protect employees who come forward with the truth.*

## Ethics Complaints

2.3.3 We bring violations of this Code to the attention of the appropriate bodies for resolution, including the CGMS Committee.

2.3.4 We only file ethics complaints when they are substantiated by facts.

**Clarification:** *These provisions have several implications. We cooperate with NGMA and the CGMS Committee concerning ethics violations and the collection of related information whether we are a complainant or a respondent. We also abstain from accusing others of ethical misconduct when we do not have all the facts. Further, we pursue disciplinary action against individuals who knowingly make false allegations against others.*

2.3.5 We pursue disciplinary action against an individual who retaliates against a person raising ethics concerns.

## CHAPTER 3: RESPECT

### 3.1 Description of Respect

Respect is our duty to show a high regard for ourselves, others, and the resources entrusted to us. Resources entrusted to us may include people, money, reputation, the safety of others, and natural or environmental resources. An environment of respect engenders trust, confidence, and performance excellence by fostering mutual cooperation — an environment where diverse perspectives and views are encouraged and valued.

### 3.2 Respect: Aspirational Standards

As practitioners in the global grants management community:

3.2.1 We inform ourselves about the norms and customs of others and avoid engaging in behaviors they might consider disrespectful.

3.2.2 We listen to others' points of view, seeking to understand them.

3.2.3 We approach directly those persons with whom we have a conflict or disagreement.

3.2.4 We conduct ourselves in a professional manner, even when it is not reciprocated.

**Clarification:** *An implication of these provisions is that we avoid engaging in gossip and avoid making negative remarks to undermine another person's reputation. We also have a duty under this Code to confront others who engage in these types of behaviors.*

### 3.3 Respect: Mandatory Standards

As practitioners in the global grants management community, we require the following of ourselves and our fellow practitioners:

3.3.1 We negotiate in good faith.

3.3.2 We do not exercise the power of our expertise or position to influence the decisions or actions of others in order to benefit personally at their expense.

3.3.3 We do not act in an abusive manner toward others.

3.3.4 We respect the property rights of others.

## CHAPTER 4: FAIRNESS

### 4.1 Description of Fairness

Fairness is our duty to make decisions and act impartially and objectively. Our conduct must be free from competing self-interest, prejudice, and favoritism.

### 4.2 Fairness: Aspirational Standards

As practitioners in the global grants management community:

4.2.1 We demonstrate transparency in our decision-making process.

4.2.2 We constantly reexamine our impartiality and objectivity, taking corrective action as appropriate.

**Clarification:** *Research with practitioners indicated that the subject of conflicts of interest is one of the most challenging faced by our profession. One of the biggest problems practitioners report is not recognizing when we have conflicted loyalties and recognizing when we are inadvertently placing ourselves or others in a conflict-of-interest situation. We as practitioners must proactively search for potential conflicts and help each other by highlighting each other's potential conflicts of interest and insisting that they be resolved.*

4.2.3 We provide equal access to information to those who are authorized to have that information.

4.2.4 We make opportunities equally available to qualified candidates.

**Clarification:** *An implication of these provisions is, in the case of a contracting arrangement, we provide equal access to information during the bidding process.*

### 4.3 Fairness: Mandatory Standards

As practitioners in the global grants management community, we require the following of ourselves and our fellow practitioners:

#### Conflict of Interest Situations

4.3.1 We proactively and fully disclose any real or potential conflicts of interest to the appropriate stakeholders.

4.3.2 When we realize that we have a real or potential conflict of interest, we refrain from engaging in the decision-making process or otherwise attempting to influence outcomes, unless or until: we have made full disclosure to the affected stakeholders; we have an approved mitigation plan; and we have obtained the consent of the stakeholders to proceed.

**Clarification:** *A conflict of interest occurs when we are in a position to influence decisions or other outcomes on behalf of one party when such decisions or outcomes could affect one or more other parties with which we have competing loyalties. For example, when we are acting as an employee, we have a duty of loyalty to our employer. When we are acting as a NGMA or CGMS Committee volunteer, we have a duty of loyalty to the Grants Management Community and uphold our credential. We must recognize these divergent interests and refrain from influencing decisions when we have a conflict of interest.*

*Further, even if we believe that we can set aside our divided loyalties and make decisions impartially, we treat the appearance of a conflict of interest as a conflict of interest and follow the provisions described in the Code.*

## Favoritism and Discrimination

- 4.3.3 We do not hire or fire, reward or punish, or award or deny contracts based on personal considerations, including but not limited to, favoritism, nepotism, or bribery.
- 4.3.4 We do not discriminate against others based on, but not limited to, gender, race, age, religion, disability, nationality, or sexual orientation.
- 4.3.5 We apply the rules of the organization (employer, NGMA, or other group) without favoritism or prejudice.

## CHAPTER 5: HONESTY

### 5.1 Description of Honesty

Honesty is our duty to understand the truth and act in a truthful manner both in our communications and in our conduct.

### 5.2 Honesty: Aspirational Standards

As practitioners in the global grants management community:

- 5.2.1 We earnestly seek to understand the truth.
- 5.2.2 We are truthful in our communications and in our conduct.
- 5.2.3 We provide accurate information in a timely manner.

**Clarification:** *An implication of these provisions is that we take appropriate steps to ensure that the information we are basing our decisions upon or providing to others is accurate, reliable, and timely.*

*This includes having the courage to share bad news even when it may be poorly received. Also, when outcomes are negative, we avoid burying information or shifting blame to others. When outcomes are positive, we avoid taking credit for the achievements of others. These provisions reinforce our commitment to be both honest and responsible.*

- 5.2.4 We make commitments and promises, implied or explicit, in good faith.
- 5.2.5 We strive to create an environment in which others feel safe to tell the truth.

### 5.3 Honesty: Mandatory Standards

As practitioners in the global grants management community, we require the following of ourselves and our fellow practitioners:

- 5.3.1 We do not engage in or condone behavior that is designed to deceive others, including but not limited to, making misleading or false statements, stating half-truths, providing information out of context or withholding information that, if known, would render our statements as misleading or incomplete.
- 5.3.2 We do not engage in dishonest behavior with the intention of personal gain or at the expense of another.

**Clarification:** *The aspirational standards exhort us to be truthful. Half-truths and non-disclosures intended to mislead stakeholders are as unprofessional as affirmatively making misrepresentations. We develop credibility by providing complete and accurate information.*

## APPENDIX A

### **A.1 Process Used to Create This Standard**

To develop this Code of Ethics, the CGMS Commission (prior to the CGMS Committee) consulted other organizations and reviewed their ethical standards. The Commission felt it addressed the key issues related to conduct and ethical professional work in the field of grants management. The Code of Conduct was sent out to the Ethics Commission members and voted on by the CGMS Commission in 2012.



## APPENDIX B

### B.1 Glossary

**Abusive Manner** - Conduct that results in physical harm or creates intense feelings of fear, humiliation, manipulation, or exploitation in another person.

**Conflict of Interest** - A situation that arises when a practitioner of grants management is faced with making a decision or doing some act that will benefit the practitioner or another person or organization to which the practitioner owes a duty of loyalty and at the same time will harm another person or organization to which the practitioner owes a similar duty of loyalty. The only way practitioners can resolve conflicting duties is to disclose the conflict to those affected and allow them to make the decision about how the practitioner should proceed.

**Duty of Loyalty** - A person's responsibility, legal or moral, to promote the best interest of an organization or other person with whom they are affiliated.

**National Grants Management Association (NGMA)** - The totality of NGMA including its committees, groups, and chartered components such as chapters, colleges, and specific interest groups.

**NGMA Member** - A person who has joined the National Grants Management Association and is a member in good standing.

**NGMA Sponsored Activities** - Activities that include, but are not limited to, participation on an NGMA member group, standard development team, or another NGMA or CGMS Committee working group or committee. This also includes activities engaged in under the auspices of a chartered NGMA or CGMS Committee component organization, whether it is in a leadership role in the component or another type of component educational activity or event.

**Practitioner** - A person engaged in an activity that contributes to the management of grants, a grants portfolio, or program, as part of the grants management profession.

**Grants NGMA Volunteer** - A person who participates in grants sponsored activities, whether a member of the Grants Management Association or not.