

Final Tier Application Form

READ THIS SECTION FIRST

General Instructions

This application is designed to collect information about how your organization is implementing the Standards for Excellence®: An Ethics and Accountability Code for the Nonprofit Sector.

The responses in this application and the materials submitted are considered confidential information, will not be subject to public inspection, and will be viewed only by Institute staff and individuals involved in the review process (peer reviewers, committee members). All staff, peer reviewers, and committee members are required to sign confidentiality and conflict of interest statements specific to each organization reviewed.

Only organizations that have successfully completed the review process will be publicly announced. If we find your practices particularly exemplary, we may ask your permission to share specific items on your behalf with other member organizations which are part of the Standards for Excellence network.

About the Questions

The questions below are in three forms:

- Yes/No
- Description or
- Narrative File Upload

Your answers to these questions will be judged according to the benchmarks and measures included in the self-assessment tool. The reviewers use the same measures to evaluate your responses.

You must provide a response to all questions. Your responses will be used to evaluate your organization's adherence to the Standards for Excellence code, so provide full and complete responses. Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant.

If one or more of the Standards benchmarks is not applicable to your organization, please respond N/A along with an explanation of the special circumstances that make it not applicable to your organization. For questions which require a file upload, upload a document that includes your explanation.

For questions which request a narrative answer, please try to keep responses to 1,000 words or less. The one exception may be the program evaluation section, which could require a more substantive answer, depending on the number of programs offered by the organization.

In Section 2, you will be asked to attach board minutes for the past fiscal year, along with any board minutes from previous years which document board review or approval of policies or procedures required in this application. If a given policy has not been reviewed or approved in the past two years, there is no need to attach the minutes. Simply indicate the date of approval in the space provided for each policy.

Updating Your Previous Application Forms

Because this process is one of continuous improvement, it is expected that you may have updated organization processes and procedures as a result of implementing the Standards benchmarks. As you build each of the tiers toward accreditation, you should ensure that areas that have been reviewed or updated since your prior application are updated in the relevant tiered application form to reflect current practice.

Depending on how long it has been since you submitted your Standards Basics and Basics Enhanced tiered applications, you may need to update some information in your previous application forms. You should complete a full review of your prior submissions to ensure that all information remains accurate and true at the time of this application. You may re-open your Basics or Basics Enhanced application and update the information as needed.

Mechanics

You may move freely throughout the form, because no responses are required. However, before you submit your application, ensure that you have provided a response to each question.

Each question will allow you to upload one file. We strongly encourage you to upload PDF files instead of Word, Excel, or other software which may not be accessible by our volunteer reviewers. If you do not have Adobe Acrobat, there are several free PDF creators available online to choose from.

As you're working on the application, make sure you have saved your responses before closing your browser window.

ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION

Basic Information

This information is requested again to ease review of your application.

Legal Name

Abbreviations, Acronyms or Doing Business As

Employee Identification Number (EIN)

Website

Disclosures

Are there currently, or have there been since your last application any lawsuits or formal administrative complaints (such as Equal Employee Opportunity Commission, complaint pending before a regulatory body) brought against the organization?

- Yes
- No

Lawsuit Disclosure

Please attach a description of any such lawsuits or administrative complaints (or any pending administrative complaints or lawsuits). Address the following: involvement of senior staff as subjects of lawsuit(s) board involvement responding to the lawsuit(s) finding of liability or guilt

Has your organization been the subject of any negative or unfavorable print or electronic media since your last application?

- Yes
- No

Media Disclosure

If yes, please attach a copy of the media along with a description of the organization's response.

Is there any other information that the Standards for Excellence® reviewers should know about the organization which may affect if it will continue to stay in business in the future?

Yes

No

Sustainability Disclosure

If yes, please provide a full disclosure of this information.

Required Attachments

State Charity Registration

If it has been more than a year since your last application, and if required in the states where you fundraise, attach a copy of the letter certifying your registration with the State Charities Office (e.g., Attorney General, Secretary of State) is current/in good standing.

List the states where the organization currently solicits donations.

Annual Report

If published and updated since your last application, attach a copy of the organization's most recent published annual report.

If the annual report is available online, include the link below.

Provide the date the board approved applying for accreditation or recognition. (These minutes should be included in the application).

1. MISSION, STRATEGY, and EVALUATION

This section of the application is designed to collect information about the core purpose of your organization, your organization's programs, and how you evaluate your effectiveness and efficiency in meeting your mission. We will ask what you do with the data you collect from your evaluations and how this information is utilized in decision-making, in short-term planning, and in planning for the organization's future strategy and direction.

A. Mission and Impact

Provide the date and page of the minutes where the board's most recent review of the mission statement can be found. This should take place every three to five years.

Type your vision statement.

Provide the date and page of the minutes where the board's most recent review of the vision statement can be found.

B. Planning Strategically

Describe the board and staff's involvement in short-term planning (annual planning, business planning).

Strategic Planning Documents

Required Attachment: Attach a copy of documents demonstrating the board and staff's role in short-term planning (annual work plans, implementation planning, etc.)

Describe the board and staff's involvement in long-term planning (strategy, forecasting, organizational sustainability planning).

Strategic Planning Documents

Required Attachment: Attach a copy of documents demonstrating the board and staff's role in long-term planning, including financial forecasting, sustainability planning, and the strategic plan if available.

Provide the date and page of the minutes where the board's approval of the strategic plan can be found.

C. Organizational Evaluation

Describe how the organization measures organizational effort (financial and human resources utilized in meeting the mission) along with the percentage of the total organizational effort devoted to each of the programs offered by the organization. The second part of your answer should include all programs listed in the Mission and Impact area and should be presented in list format.

Program 1: 25%

Program 2: 25%

Program 3: 25%

Program 4: 25%, etc.

D. Program Evaluation

If changes have been made to your program evaluation framework, update the responses in your Basics or Basics Enhanced application. In the space below, provide an overview of the changes to the program evaluation and describe which programs are currently being evaluated. Your response should demonstrate that 100% of programs are being evaluated.

Program Evaluation Attachment

Required Attachment: Attach examples or samples of program evaluation tools such as examples of logic models, surveys, pre- or post-tests, sample data reports, implementation planning, sample dashboards or board reports, etc. These samples should provide evidence that 100% of programs are being evaluated.

1. MISSION, STRATEGY, and EVALUATION (continued)

E. Strategic Partnerships

Describe any partnerships you are engaged in with organizations in your community or industry. Describe how your organization decides who to partner with and on what programs or issues, including the due diligence completed. Describe how the partnerships your organization has entered into support the organization efforts to achieve its mission.

Strategic Partnerships Attachments

Required Attachment: Attach any sample memorandum of understanding or similar documentation.

Strategic Partnerships Attachments

Optional Attachment: Board policy governing strategic partnerships.

If you have attached the optional policy above, provide the date and page of the minutes where the board's approval can be found.

List any memberships in industry or sector-wide associations or organizations of which your organization is a member or participant.

2. LEADERSHIP: BOARD, STAFF, and VOLUNTEERS

This section of the application will ask you to answer questions about how the leaders of your organization contribute to its success. You will be asked to provide information about board operations, the board/staff relationship, and management functions. This section also asks you to contemplate how your leaders demonstrate cultural competency organization wide – in the organization’s culture, the policies and procedures of the organization, the management of employees and volunteers, in its programs and services, and in the way the organization interacts with its stakeholders.

A. Leadership and Governance

Governance, Fiduciary Responsibility and Board and Committee Meetings

Board Meeting Attachments

Required attachment: Attach board meeting agendas for the past fiscal year or the period since your last application.

Board Meeting Attachments

Required Attachment: Attach board minutes for the period between this application and your previous application, or for the past fiscal year (at least four board meetings), along with any board minutes from previous years which document board review or approval of policies or procedures required in this application. If a given policy has not been reviewed or approved in the past two years, simply indicate the date of approval. Each required decision or action should be clearly documented in the minutes. Attach the minutes in chronological order with the oldest minutes first and the most recent minutes last.

Committee Minutes

Required Attachment: If the board has delegated decision making authority to any committee, attach committee minutes for the period between this application and your previous application, or for the past fiscal year plus any minutes demonstrating committee review or approval of Standards for Excellence code required elements. (e.g. Executive committee, Finance committee, Audit committee, etc.).

Executive Supervision, Performance and Compensation

Provide the date and page of the minutes where the board's most recent review of the executive's compensation can be found, if this has taken place since your last application. This is required annually.

Executive Job Description

Required Attachment: Attach the executive's job description.

Provide the date and page of the minutes where the board's most evaluation of the executive's performance can be found, if this has taken place since your last application. This is required annually.

2. LEADERSHIP: BOARD, STAFF, and VOLUNTEERS (continued)

Board Effectiveness

Describe the board's self-evaluation process. How does the board plan for improvement on areas of growth identified in the evaluation?

Board Evaluation

Required Attachment: Attach the tool used for the board's self-evaluation.

Provide the date and page of the minutes where the board's most recent evaluation can be found. This is required at least once every two years.

Describe how board members are recruited and selected. Address how the board ensures that the board has an appropriate mix of talent, connections to the community, and diversity inclusive of the community served.

Board Recruitment

Optional Attachments: Attach any documents relevant to board recruitment such as: bylaws clause referencing nominations, recruitment documents, board member applications, governance or nominating committee descriptions, etc.

Board Committee Descriptions

Optional Attachments: Attach any board committee descriptions or charters.

Succession Planning and Leadership Development

Board List

Required Attachment: Attach a list of current board members. Clearly list all officers and provide the term-end dates for each board member.

Describe the board's role in planning for succession and transition for the board's leadership.

Board Succession Policy

Optional Attachment: Attach the Board Officer and Committee Leadership Succession Policy.

If you have attached the optional policy above, provide the date and page of the minutes where the board's approval of the policy can be found.

Executive Transition

Required Attachment: Attach a copy of the organization's executive leadership succession policy or policies.

Provide the date and page of the minutes where the board's approval of the policy can be found.

Describe the executive's role in planning for leadership development and transition of the organization's key staff and volunteers.

Board Member Independence

No benchmarks are required in this area for Basics Enhanced recognition. Review your Basics application to ensure that you have updated any information or attachments.

Board Meetings

These requirements are covered in the Governance and Fiduciary Responsibility section above.

B. Leadership and Operational Management

Executive Functions

No benchmarks are in this area for accreditation. Please review your previous applications to ensure that you have updated any information or attachments.

Supporting the Board

Describe how the organization sets compensation for its employees, including what comparative information is reviewed. (Vertically within the organization, horizontally within your industry, and generally, in relation to the economy).

Compensation Structure

Required Attachment: Attach a copy of the organizational chart and the organization's compensation structure (a chart outlining pay ranges and comparisons for each position or type of position at the organization).

Provide the date and page of the minutes the board's most recent review of the organization's compensation structure.

Compensation Policy

Optional Attachment: Attach a copy of the organization's compensation policy that is applicable to employees other than the executive.

Describe how the organization articulates the importance of volunteer contributions to the organization. Attach any calculations utilized in grant writing or reporting, in evaluations of program efficiency, etc.

Organizational and Financial Sustainability

Describe how the executive assists the board in planning for the organization's future and considers what human and financial resources are necessary for organizational sustainability and mission fulfillment. The organization should demonstrate that it has a sustainability plan in place or that it has considered organizational sustainability in its other planning activities.

Sustainability Plan

Optional Attachment: Attach the sustainability plan.

Managing Employees and Volunteers

No benchmarks are in this area for accreditation. Please review your previous applications to ensure that you have updated any information or attachments.

C. Cultural Competency

Describe the composition of your board, staff, and volunteers in terms of race, gender, and any other diversity elements that may be important to your mission or to your stakeholders (e.g., profession, skills, age, income, geography, etc.)

Inclusiveness

Required Attachment: Attach a chart or table which outlines the demographic of your community and the demographic composition of your board, staff, and volunteers. The categories on the chart should reflect the areas of diversity your defined as important to your mission or stakeholders.

Describe how the organization considers cultural competency and inclusiveness across the organization's planning activities.

Cultural Competency Plan

Optional Attachment: Attach a copy of the organization's cultural competency or diversity policies or plan.

Provide the date and page of the minutes where the board's approval can be found (if there is a separate policy).

3. LEGAL COMPLIANCE AND ETHICS

This section of the application will ask you to answer questions about how your organization ensures its compliance with the laws and regulations that govern nonprofits, including public disclosure laws and whistleblower requirements. You will be asked to describe how your organization addresses conflicts of interest issues and maintains ethical practices in its governance, operations, and service to program participants.

A. Maintaining Legal Compliance

There are no benchmarks are in this area for accreditation beyond what was submitted in previous tiers. Please review your previous applications to ensure that you have updated any information or attachments.

B. Required Public Disclosures

There are no benchmarks are in this area for accreditation beyond what was submitted in previous tiers. Please review your previous applications to ensure that you have updated any information or attachments.

C. Reporting Misconduct and Whistleblower Protection

There are no benchmarks are in this area for accreditation beyond what was submitted in previous tiers. Please review your previous applications to ensure that you have updated any information or attachments.

D. Conflicts of Interest

There are no benchmarks are in this area for accreditation beyond what was submitted in previous tiers. Please review your previous applications to ensure that you have updated any information or attachments.

E. Ethics

Ethics Code

Required Attachment: Attach a copy of the organization's Code of Ethics, Code of Conduct, Values Statement, or adoption of the Standards for Excellence code.

Provide the date and page of the minutes where the board's approval of the ethics code can be found.

Describe how board, staff, and volunteers are made aware of the organization's Code of Ethics or similar document.

4. FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

This section of the application will ask you to answer questions about finances and operations of your organization. Areas covered include financial budgeting, reporting, and monitoring; internal controls and other financial policies, personnel policies, administrative policies, and risk management practices.

A. Financial Budgeting, Reporting, and Monitoring

Budget

Attach a copy of the most recently approved organizational budget, if it has been updated since your last application. Include a capital budget, if applicable.

Provide the date and page of the minutes where the board's approval can be found. This is required annually.

Internal Financial Statements

Required Attachment: Attach copies of the four most recent quarterly internal financial statements (budget-to-actual reports and other financial information) reviewed by the board of directors. The documents attached should illustrate that the board monitors actual income and expenses in relation to the budget. Board minutes provided in the application should demonstrate this review on at least a quarterly basis.

Describe how the board reviews the percentages of the organization's resources spent on program, administration, and fundraising.

Provide the date and page of the minutes where the board's review can be found. This is required annually.

Form 990

Required Attachment: Attach a copy of the organization's most recent Form 990, if you have filed since your last application.

Provide the date and page of the minutes where the board's review can be found. This is required annually.

Audit and Management Letter

Required Attachment: For organizations with operating budgets over \$500,000, attach the most recent audit (if you have completed an audit since your last application) and management letter, along with management's response (if applicable). If the organization has an operating budget under \$500,000, you may optionally provide a copy of the most recent compilation or review completed by an independent reviewer.

Provide the date and page of the minutes where the board's approval can be found. This is required annually.

B. Internal Controls and Financial Policies

Reserves

Required Attachment: Attach the policy which addresses unrestricted net assets (reserves).

Provide the date and page of the minutes where the board's approval can be found.

C. Personnel Policies

These were addressed above in Leadership section.

D. Administrative Policies

There are no benchmarks are in this area for accreditation beyond what was submitted in previous tiers. Please review your previous applications to ensure that you have updated any information or attachments.

E. Risk Management and Insurance

General Liability Insurance

Required Attachment: If the declaration pages in your previous application have expired, attach a copy of the General Liability Insurance declaration page covering the current period. (or board minutes documenting the board's decision to forgo insurance)

Directors and Officers Liability Insurance

Required Attachment: If the declaration pages in your previous application have expired, attach a copy of the Directors and Officers Liability Insurance declaration page covering the current period. (or board minutes documenting the board's decision to forgo insurance).

5. RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

This section of the application will ask you to answer questions about the organization's resource development planning and stewardship. Questions will ask how the board and staff determine which sources of income they will seek, including income from fee for service activity, government contracts and grants, foundation grants, corporate partnerships, contributions or sponsorships, individual solicitations, long-term investments, social enterprise, and unrelated business income.

A. and B. Resource Plan and Sources of Income

Describe the board's role in monitoring the organization's resource development activities and the process for evaluating the cost-effectiveness of their resource development activities.

Resource Plan

Required Attachment: Attach a copy of the organization's resource development plan or strategy which includes all sources of income upon which the organization relies.

Provide the date and page of the minutes where the board's approval of the policy can be found.

Resource Development Policies

Optional Attachment: Any documents or policies that address cause marketing, sponsorship, grant writing or grant management, contract compliance, fee for service or social enterprise activities, or unrelated business income.

If any policies which require board approval are attached above, provide the date and page of the minutes where the board's approval can be found .

For the last five years, provide the total amount of revenues from fundraising and other development activities and the total amount of funds spent on conducting them. Include regular fundraising as opposed to fundraising in capital campaigns. This information can be found on your form 990 as follows: For 990 year 2006-2007, fundraising revenue is lines 1a+1b+1c+9a For 990 year 2006-2007, fundraising expense is lines 9b+15 For 990 year 2008 and forward, fundraising revenue is section VIII lines 1h + 8c + 9c For 990 year 2008 and forward, fundraising expense is section IX lines 25d If your organization files a Form 990-EZ, calculate the ratio of fundraising

revenues to fundraising expense according to your organization’s methodology for tracking and recording expenses and revenues. Include an explanation of the categories of revenues (contributions from individuals, corporations, foundation grants, etc.) and expenses (salaries, professional fees, occupational expenses, printing, etc.) used in these calculations.

Year	Fundraising Revenues	Fundraising Costs
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

C. Fundraising Activities

If the organization raises money online, provide a link to web pages where donations are being solicited.

Solicitations

Required Attachment: For each of the different sources of income pursued, attach one sample of the solicitation, marketing piece, or proposal, include individual solicitations, private or government grant proposals, sponsorships, cause marketing promotional pieces. Provide at least three recent samples.

Receipts

Required Attachment: If it has been more than a year since your previous application, Provide a copy of three recent sample receipts sent to individual or corporate donors. Include one of each of the following: cash gifts, in-kind gifts, and gifts where the donor received something of value in return.

D. Donor Relationships and Privacy

There are no benchmarks in this area for accreditation beyond what was submitted in previous tiers. Please review your previous applications to ensure that you have updated any information or attachments.

E. Acceptance of Gifts

Gift Acceptance

Required attachment: Attach a copy of the policy which covers gift acceptance.

Provide the date and page of the minutes where the board's approval can be found.

F. Fundraising on Behalf of the Organization

If not addressed in the organization's fundraising policies, describe how the organization monitors and provides support to those fundraising on the organization's behalf, including staff, volunteers, consultants, contractors, other organizations, or businesses that are known to be soliciting contributions on behalf of the organization.

Does the organization compensate employees or outside fundraising consultants based on a percentage of the amount raised or other commission formula?

- Yes
- No

Has the organization hired any outside fundraising consultants since its last application?

- Yes
- No

Fundraising Consultants

If Yes, Required Attachment: Provide a list of the outside fundraising consultants hired by the organization since your previous application. Provide documentation that they are registered with the state's office that regulates charitable fundraising, if applicable.

6. PUBLIC AWARENESS, ENGAGEMENT, and ADVOCACY

This section of the application will ask you to answer questions about the organization's interactions with the public and lawmakers, including keeping the public informed about the organization's activities, public education and advocacy efforts, engagement in community affairs, and lobbying.

A. Educating and Engaging the Public

Describe how advocacy or educational information presented to the public, media, and policy makers is reviewed to ensure factual accuracy and the inclusion of sufficient contextual information to be understood.

Publicly Available Information

Required Attachment: Attach copies or refer below to the web addresses of three recent public education or advocacy documents.

Include links to online resources below.

B. Advancing the Mission through Public Policy and Advocacy

Advocacy Policy

Required Attachment: Attach a copy of the organization's policy which addresses advocacy and lobbying. The policy should define the process by which the organization determines whether it will take a position on an issue related to its mission and what position it will take.

Provide the date and page of the minutes where the board's approval can be found.

C. Engaging in Lobbying and Political Activity

Does the organization engage in lobbying?

Yes

No

If yes, describe the organization's lobbying activities since its last application.

If the organization has participated in lobbying as defined by their applicable federal, state, or local authorities in the past year, describe whether these costs or activities were reported.

Lobbyist Registration

If Yes, Required Attachment: If the organization's board, staff, volunteers or an external consultant has lobbied on behalf of the organization, provide evidence that they are registered with the appropriate local, state, or federal officials.