**THE PARTNERSHIP FOR EXCELLENCE**

**2024 FULL APPLICATION HANDBOOK**

**Diagram, text

Description automatically generated**

***The State Baldrige-Based Program for Ohio, Indiana, West Virginia & Illinois***

[***www.thepartnershipforexcellence.org***](http://www.thepartnershipforexcellence.org)

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**Introduction to The Partnership for Excellence (TPE)’s Full (50-page) Application**

Welcome and Congratulations!

We are pleased that your organization is interested in applying to The Partnership for Excellence. Reviewing the process and requirements to apply for TPE’s Examiner Team Assessment takes you one step further toward improving your organization’s performance and contributing to its long-term sustainability.

Reviewing the ***Frequently Asked Questions*** (FAQs) will give you the information necessary to understand TPE, the Baldrige Excellence Framework and Criteria, the application process, recognition, and awards.

Once you apply, your application will undergo a rigorous review from individual examiners, the examiner team, and a panel of judges, all of whom are trained in the Baldrige Excellence Framework and Criteria. Each applicant will receive equivalent to a three-day site visit, of which a portion of the site visit may be conducted virtually. Applicants will also receive an extensive feedback report detailing their organization’s strengths and opportunities for improvement as identified by the examiner team.

The ***Timeline and Due Dates*** provide an overview of the process. The ***Application Fees*** are determined by the size and complexity of your organization. Organizations submitting applications using the online application software will receive a discount on application fees. The cycles of learning inherent in completing the application, reviewing the feedback report, and implementing changes will result in a significant return on your investment. The process itself will help you prioritize opportunities for improvement and capitalize on strengths, resulting in an acceleration of the rate at which your organization improves.

**Applying for the Examiner Team Assessment is a two-step process**:

**Step 1** – Complete and sign the ***Intent to Apply*** form. Submit with the appropriate non-refundable fee to TPE. We will then certify that the applicant has met the eligibility requirements and notify the applicant organization’s point of contact. ***Submit the Intent to Apply form by August 15th***.

**Step 2** – Following the ***Application Instructions*** and ***Checklist***, submit the completed ***Application Package*** that addresses the Baldrige Excellence Framework and Criteria using the current and relevant-sector (business/nonprofit/government, education, or health care) Framework booklet. Applicants are expected to provide information and data on the organization’s key processes and results. The information and data must be adequate to demonstrate that the applicant’s approaches are effective and yield desired outcomes. ***Submit the Application Package by December 1st.***

**TPE Application Instructions & Description**

To apply, your organization submits an Award Application Package, which provides information on your organization’s performance management system and the results of its processes. This information enables a team from the Board of Examiners to conduct a rigorous evaluation of your organization. All information provided is considered confidential.

**APPLICATION CHECKLIST**: *The Award Application Package contains the following key items:*

* Submission of your application in the online application software by December 1st.

OR

* If you are not using the online application software provide the following.
  + PDF file of the application emailed to TPE at [margot.hoffman@partnershipohio.org](mailto:margot.hoffman@partnershipohio.org) by December 1st.
  + Three paper copies of the application mailed to: The Partnership for Excellence, 829 Bethel Rd #212, Columbus, Ohio 43214.
* Two electronic photos of your organization suitable for publishing in TPE’s e-newsletter and/or website, and/or for projection during the TPE Quest for Success Conference. (These are usually pictures of the organization’s main entrance or employees).
* Appropriate fees (see fee chart on page 8).

**Submitting Application via Online Application Software**

TPE has enlisted the services of Stratex Solutions to provide its Apex online application software for organizations to submit their applications for the 2024-2025 cycle. TPE will provide organizations with information on how to log in and use the software to submit their application. Organizations may continue to submit a traditional hard copy application but will not receive the discounted application fee given for submitting the application online. Information for formatting hard copy applications is found in the Appendix.

**Application Content and Format for Applications Submitted in Online Software**

The content and formatting requirements for TPE Baldrige Award applications are based on those of the national Baldrige Performance Excellence Program. We reserve the right to return incomplete applications and those that don’t meet these requirements. If you have questions, call 614-425-7157.

**Content**

In your application, include information on all your organization’s units or subunits. Do not add links to websites. Examiners base their evaluations solely on information within your application.

The following items to be consolidated into a PDF document and uploaded to the Executive Summary page in the Apex online application software.

* Intent to Apply Form
  + *Ensure Intent to Apply is signed by the organization’s highest-ranking official. This page indicates that your organization agrees to the terms and conditions of the award process and if selected to receive a site visit, your organization agrees to pay reasonable associated costs.*
* Organization chart(s) (date-stamped)
  + *Line-and-box organization chart(s) for your organization. If your organization is a subunit, also include a line-and-box chart for the parent organization to show how the subunit fits into the organization.*
* Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations
  + *Include only terms and abbreviations used in your application with very brief definitions. Don’t include descriptions of processes, tools, methods, or techniques in the glossary, or your application will be returned to you.*

*An acceptable example of a glossary entry is:*

* SPP: strategic planning process.

*The following example is not acceptable because it includes a description:*

* SPP: strategic planning process, which has nine steps: a review of key documents, such as the research contract with the USDA; a two-day retreat; a review of funding and mandates; a review of current organizational performance; a review of an environmental scan; appreciative inquiry; brainstorming; allocation of resources; and creation of action plans.

**Organizational Profile.** This section is limited to 2,500 words and 12 figures. It outlines your organization and states the key factors that influence its operations and future directions. Examiners use this vital part of your application throughout their review. For guidelines on preparing this section, see the appropriate Baldrige Excellence Framework booklet for your industry sector.

**Responses Addressing All Criteria Items**. In this section, respond to each item, using the category and item designations in the Baldrige Criteria. In your responses to the areas to address within the items, emphasize your organization and its performance system, maintaining the order of the areas. (See the illustration on page 2 of the Baldrige Excellence Framework for an explanation of *areas to address.*) Your response to all criteria items will be limited to 25,000 words and 160 figures. For guidelines on responding to the Criteria, see the appropriate sector Baldrige Excellence Framework booklet.

**TPE Application Timeline & Due Dates**

**August 15**

Deadline for **TPE Intent to Apply form** and **appropriate non-refundable fee.**

Mail to: The Partnership for Excellence, 829 Bethel Road, #212, Columbus, OH 43214.

Or Email to: Margot Hoffman at [margot.hoffman@partnershipohio.org](mailto:margot.hoffman@partnershipohio.org)

**December 1**

* **Application to be submitted into Apex online application software.**
  + Email Margot Hoffman at [margot.hoffman@partnershipohio.org](mailto:margot.hoffman@partnershipohio.org) no later than December 1st stating application has been submitted into the software.

OR

* **For Hard Copy Application:** The application packagemust be received in both Paper Copy (3) and Electronic Copy (PDF):
* **Electronically (in PDF format).** 
  + - Email this copy to [margot.hoffman@partnershipohio.org](mailto:margot.hoffman@partnershipohio.org) no later than December 1st.
    - The PDF file size should be limited to 8MB or less.
* **Three paper copies.**
  + - Mail to: The Partnership for Excellence, 829 Bethel Road #212, Columbus,

Ohio 43214. Postmarked no later than December 1st.

* + - Follow all instructions for formatting indicated in the Appendix.
* **Photos**: Email two electronic photos of the applicant organization suitable for publishing in an e-newsletter, and/or on the TPE website, and/or for projection during the annual TPE Quest for Success Conference (in JPG or PNG format) to [margot.hoffman@partnershipohio.org](mailto:margot.hoffman@partnershipohio.org) no later than December 1st.
* **Fees**: The remainder of the application fee, which covers expenses associated with the review of applications, development of feedback reports, and site-visit (minus examiner lodging and meals), must be postmarked by December 1st.

**December – January -** *Stage 1 -* ***Independent Review***

Each application is reviewed by a team of trained examiners working independently. Each individual examiner reads the application, writes comments about strengths and opportunities for improvement, and scores each Item against the Criteria.

**February -** *Stage 2 -* ***Consensus Review***

The team of examiners reaches consensus on key themes, the applicant’s strengths and opportunities for improvement, the resulting scores, and the issues to clarify and verify on the site visit.

**March -** *Stage 3 -* ***Site Visit***

The team of examiners, led by a team leader, completes a three-day site visit to clarify points in the application, verify that the information in the application is accurate, and gain additional information. The site visit will consist of a combination of virtual meetings/interviews and on-site meetings. The dates of the site visit are scheduled by the team leader and the applicant’s point of contact. The team completes a site visit scorebook and draft feedback report which are provided to TPE’s Panel of Judges.

**April** - *Stage 4 -* ***Judging***

The Panel of Judges reviews the applications, key factors, key themes, consensus scorebooks, site visit scorebooks, and feedback reports. A two-thirds majority vote by the Panel of Judges decides the award level for an applicant. Lastly, the Panel of Judges presents final award level decisions to the Board of Trustees for ratification.

**May**

Award levels are announced.

**June**

Feedback Reportsare sent to each applicant, synthesizing strengths and opportunities for improvement.

**September**

The TPE community celebrates and honors all award recipients and shares best practices. Applicants receive the TPE Award for Excellence (Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Platinum) at the annual Quest for Success conference.

**The Partnership for Excellence**

**2024 Full Application Fees**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Application due date** | **Intent to Apply due Aug. 15** *(with one-half of the application fee)*;  **Full Application due Dec. 1** *(with remaining half of application fee)* | |
| **Application & page requirements** | 50-page Full Application based on the entirety of the Baldrige Excellence Framework.  *5-page Organizational Profile plus 50-page application addressing all of the framework including the multiple item requirements (Questions 1.1a - 7.5a(2)).* | |
| **TPE Assessment Team** | 7-10 Member Team from Board of Examiners | |
| **TPE Feedback** | Full Feedback Report | |
| **Site Visits** | Three-day site visit by Examiner Team\*\* | |
| **Recognition** | *Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Platinum* Award at The Partnership for Excellence Conference in September | |
| **Organization’s Size** |  | **Intent to Apply & Application Fees** *(All fees are non-refundable)* |
| 99 or Fewer Employees |  | $3,100.00 *Intent to Apply Fee (15 AUG)*  $3,100.00 *Application Fee (1 DEC)*  ***Total = $6,200.00\****  ***This fee does not include examiner lodging\*\**** |
| 100 to 499 Employees |  | $4,090.00 *Intent to Apply Fee (15 AUG)*  $4,090.00 *Application Fee (1 DEC)*  ***Total = $8,180.00\****  ***This fee does not include examiner lodging\*\**** |
| 500 to 10,000 Employees |  | $5,050.00 *Intent to Apply Fee (15 AUG)*  $5,050.00 *Application Fee (1 DEC)*  ***Total = $10,100.00\****  ***This fee does not include examiner lodging\*\**** |
| 10,001 or more Employees |  | $7,500.00 *Intent to Apply Fee (15 AUG)*  $7,500.00 *Application Fee (1 DEC)*  ***Total = $15,000.00\****  ***This fee does not include examiner lodging\*\**** |

**\* $250 Discount given for using online application software. Discount to be given on 2nd installment.**

**IMPORTANT NOTE ON LODGING EXPENSES ASSOCIATED WITH SITE VISIT:**

\*\*In addition to the Intent to Apply & Application fees, full applicants are required to provide lunch for the examination team during the site visit. Additionally, TPE makes every effort to assign examiners who are geographically close to the applicant’s site visit location. Where TPE cannot find local examiners, applicants are required to pay for examiner lodging. This will be identified and communicated in writing prior to the site visit. All lodging will remain within the federal government per diem rates.

**The Partnership for Excellence/Awards for Excellence**

**Intent to Apply:** Instructions, Eligibility Requirements, and Form

**Instructions**

Organizations interested in completing The Partnership for Excellence’s examiner team assessment must complete the four-page Intent to Apply (*form attached below*). The deadline for submission to TPE is August 15 along with the non-refundable Intent to Apply fee. The Intent to Apply fee is half of the full application fee.

**Intent to Apply Fees:**

Size Intent to Apply Fee

Small Organization $ 3,100.00

Medium Organization $ 4,090.00

Large Organization $ 5,050.00

XL Organization $ 7,500.00

The full (50-page) application responding to the questions of the Baldrige Excellence Criteria and remaining fees are due to TPE on December 1.

**Eligibility Requirements**

It is the responsibility of the applicant to meet the following general eligibility requirements:

* All subunits of the applicant must be included in the application.
* Subunits (business unit, division) of the same organization may apply individually.
* Units of the same organization at different geographic locations are eligible, if they are stand-alone facilities capable of answering each category of the Framework.
* Organizations which may potentially qualify under the definition of more than one sector may apply in the sector of their choosing.
* Subunits of a larger organization must be self-sufficient enough to be examined in all seven Criteria categories.
* Ownership location does *not* restrict eligibility.
* Submission of a national Baldrige or similar application in the same year does *not* restrict eligibility.
* Organizations that have been awarded TPE's Platinum-level, *Governor's Award for Excellence* may re-apply to TPE the following year. There is NO period of ineligibility between awards.

Any questions concerning the full application process may be discussed at any time with the TPE President/CEO. Phone 614-425-7157 or email [margot.hoffman@partnershipohio.org](mailto:margot.hoffman@partnershipohio.org).

**Intent to Apply form**

**The Partnership for Excellence - Awards for Excellence Program**

**Important:** *To be considered for the upcoming application process, organizations must submit this form and non-refundable fee by August 15. The full application package - and remaining fees - must be submitted by December 1.*

**1. Your Organization**

Official Organization Name:

Mailing address:

Website URL:

Total Number of Full-time Employees:

Percent of Assets in OH/IN/WV/IL:

Is your headquarters located in OH/IN/WV/IL? yes\_\_ no\_\_ If not, where is it located?

Is there a parent organization? yes\_\_ no\_\_ If yes, where is it located? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Total number of employees of parent: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Applicant organization is what percent of your parent’s total sales/budget? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_%

**2. Organization Sector Type** and **Framework/Criteria Used**

a. Organization Sector Type *(Check one.)*

* Business
* Education
* Health Care
* Nonprofit
* Government

b. Baldrige Excellence Framework/Criteria used *(Check one.)*

 Business/Nonprofit/Government

 Education

 Health Care

**3. Official Point of Contact**

Designate one person with in-depth knowledge of the organization and a good understanding of the application as the authority to answer inquiries and arrange a site visit. He/she/they will be the contact person for TPE and the Examining Team Leader. Contact between TPE and your organization is limited to this individual. Please inform TPE if the Official Point of Contact changes during the application process.

 Mr.  Mrs.  Ms.  Dr.  Other\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name:

Title/Position:

Telephone:

Fax:

E-mail:

**4. Highest Ranking Official of the Applicant Organization**

 Mr.  Mrs.  Ms.  Dr.  Other\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Name:

Title/Position:

Mailing address:

 Same as above

Telephone:

Email:

**Assistant to Highest Ranking Official**

Name:

Phone:

Email:

**Applicant Responsibility**

I understand that this application will be reviewed by members of The Partnership for Excellence Board of Examiners. I agree that my organization will

* host the site visit and participate in virtual interviews/meetings, as needed,
* provide a secure meeting room *with printer*,
* facilitate an open and unbiased examination,
* pay reasonable costs associated with the site visit (i.e. lunch and snacks for examining team members on three-day site visit, to include lodging for those non-local examiners not sponsored by their employer), and
* share nonproprietary information on its successful performance excellence strategies with other organizations.

**Ethics Statement and Signature of the Highest-Ranking Official**

I state and attest that

(1) I have reviewed the information provided by my organization in this Intent to Apply.

(2) To the best of my knowledge, the application

* will contain no untrue statement of a material fact, and,
* will omit no material fact that I am legally permitted to disclose and that affects my organization’s ethical and legal practices. This includes but is not limited to sanctions and ethical breaches.

**Online Scorebook Program**

The Partnership for Excellence employs an online software program to improve the productivity of its examiners. This program is provided to TPE by an external organization, which owns the software.

Applicants to TPE waive the right to bring suit against the software provider and release the software provider from any claims, action, or losses arising from use of the software in conjunction with evaluating the document submitted by the Applicant.

By submitting this Intent-to-Apply, the applicant waives its right to bring suit as defined in the paragraph above.

**Name of Highest Ranking Official \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Signature of Highest Ranking Official \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Signature Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**5. Organization Description**

If your organization has more sites than the primary or headquarters location, list each site below and indicate:

1. address: street, city, state, zip code
2. number of fulltime employees at that site
3. percent of sales or services delivered at that site
4. description of the major products or services delivered at that site

For example, a) 123 Main Street, Any City, Ohio, 44000; b) 12; c) 23%; d) customer service center

**6. Examiner Nominees -** Each Applicant is required to nominate two (2) individuals to the TPE Board of Examiners:

Name

Title/Position

Address

Phone number

Email Address

Name

Title/Position

Address

Phone number

Email Address

**7. Fees –The appropriate non-refundable Intent to Apply fee to accompany this completed Intent to Apply form.**

* Check here if you have included a check or money order with this application *(payable to The Partnership for Excellence)*
* Check here if you are paying by credit card. TPE will email you a link to make a secure payment online. Clearly indicate below the name, phone, and email address of the person to whom the electronic invoice should be sent.
  + Name
  + Phone
  + Email address

**8. Submission**

To be considered for the upcoming award cycle, submit this Intent to Apply by **August 15**. Submit the Full Application Package on or before **December 1** via the online application software orto: The Partnership for Excellence, 829 Bethel Road #212, Columbus, Ohio 43214, ***and***email a PDF version to Margot Hoffman, President/CEO, at [margot.hoffman@partnershipohio.org](mailto:margot.hoffman@partnershipohio.org)

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

1. **The Partnership for Excellence – Organization**

**What is The Partnership for Excellence?**

The Partnership for Excellence (TPE) is an accredited, Baldrige-based state program consisting of volunteers dedicated to performance excellence. TPE is a nonprofit 501 (c) 3 organization that:

* raises awareness about the importance of performance excellence in driving our economy,
* provides organizational assessment tools and framework,
* educates leaders in businesses, schools, health care organizations, government, and nonprofit agencies about the practices of best-in-class organizations, and,
* recognizes, and honors, state role models with the only state awards for performance excellence.

**What is TPE’s mission?**

TPE’s mission is: To cultivate organizational performance excellence and continuous improvement in Ohio, Indiana, West Virginia, and Illinois.

**What does TPE do?**

TPE educates organizations in performance excellence management and administers the state awards and recognition program for performance excellence.

We partner with organizations dedicated to improving their performance. Our main areas of focus are;

* helping organizations achieve best-in-class levels of performance,
* identifying and recognizing role-model organizations, and,
* identifying and sharing best management practices, principles, and strategies.

To accomplish this, TPE conducts third party assessments for applicant organizations. The assessments are conducted by examiner teams and provide detailed feedback by evaluating 1) organizational approaches (processes); 2) the extent to which the approaches are deployed, evaluated/improved, aligned and integrated throughout the organization; and 3) their effectiveness at driving organizational results.

**When was TPE founded?**

TPE was established in 1998 and was then known as the Ohio Award for Excellence (OAE). It later became the Ohio Partnership for Excellence (OPE). In 2011, OPE expanded to provide programs in Indiana and West Virginia and changed its name to The Partnership for Excellence (TPE) which presents awards for organizational achievement each year at its Quest for Success Conference. In 2023, TPE added Illinois to its organization.

**How is The Partnership for Excellence funded?**

TPE is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization. TPE relies on application fees, donations, corporate and individual membership fees, training fees, and conference sponsorships. Contributions to TPE are tax deductible. TPE receives no funding from the state or federal government. TPE is not a state agency.

1. **The Baldrige Excellence Framework**

**What is the Baldrige Excellence Framework?**

The Baldrige Excellence Framework is an internationally recognized, comprehensive framework for leading and managing an organization and an assessment tool for understanding organizational strengths and opportunities for improvement. The Framework consists of approximately 100 “systems” questions grouped into an Organizational Profile and seven Categories. These challenging systems questions are used by organizations to assess and measure performance through the key business indicators most important to the organization.

**What is *performance excellence*?**

Performance excellence refers to an **integrated approach** to organizational performance management that **results** in;

* delivery of ever-improving value to customers and stakeholders, contributing to organizational sustainability,
* improvement of overall organizational effectiveness and capabilities, and,
* organizational and personal learning.

**Why use the Baldrige Excellence Framework?**

Whether you are an executive, a manager, or an employee committed to improving your organization, using the Baldrige Excellence Framework can help you prepare for the challenges of today’s global marketplace. Every organization is seeking to improve its results and competitive position. For more than thirty years, the Baldrige Excellence Framework has been a significant tool for thousands of U.S. business, education, government, health care and nonprofit organizations to assess and systematically improve performance that drives overall success.

**The Baldrige Excellence Framework …**

* *provides a framework for improvement without being prescriptive.*

Organizations are encouraged to develop creative and flexible approaches aligned with organizational needs and to demonstrate cause-effect linkages between these approaches and their results.

* *is comprehensive and inclusive.*

While other approaches focus on a single aspect, such as leadership, strategic planning, or process management, the Framework describes an integrated management approach that addresses all the factors that define the organization, its operations, and its results.

* *focuses on common requirements, rather than procedures, tools, or techniques.*

Other improvement efforts (e.g., ISO, Six Sigma,Lean Manufacturing, Balanced Scorecard, Strategy Maps or accreditation) are often integrated into anorganization’s performance management system and may be included as part of aresponse to the Baldrige Excellence Framework requirements.

* *is adaptable.*

It can be used by large or small organizations, by businesses, education and health care, and by organizations with one site or with worldwide locations.

* *is continually revised to stay on the leading edge of validated management practices.*

The Framework is regularly improved to enhance coverage of strategy-driven performance, address the needs of all stakeholders, and accommodate important organizational needs and practices.

* *aligns resources; improves communications and increases productivity and effectiveness.*

Both Baldrige and TPE award recipients report and share many outstanding results.

**What are the seven categories of the Baldrige Excellence Framework?**

1. Leadership

2. Strategy

3. Customers

4. Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management

5. Workforce

6. Operations

7. Results

The Framework questions in Categories 1 through 6 ask for information on key processes and how they work, or for key plans, objectives, goals, measures, and findings. Category 7 asks for the organization’s performance over time in key areas, for comparisons with competitors, and for projections into the future.

**What is the basis for the Framework?**

The Baldrige Excellence Framework is the tool for understanding an organization’s strengths and opportunities for improvement. It is a set of expectations or requirements that define the critical factors that drive organizational success. The Framework was developed and revised from the learning of private- and public-sector organizations working to achieve performance excellence. The Framework reflects validated, leading-edge practices and is reviewed, and may be revised, every two years.

**How do the Frameworks for Education, Health Care, and Business differ?**

The Baldrige Excellence Framework is written for several sectors:

* Business Framework (including Business, Government and Nonprofit sectors)
* Education Framework
* Health Care Framework

The Framework for Education and Health Care are similar to those for Business, but use language appropriate to the Education and Health Care sectors.

**How can I obtain a copy of the Baldrige Excellence Framework booklets?**

Copies may be ordered from the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program located in Gaithersburg, MD or may be downloaded from: https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/products-services/baldrige-excellence-framework

1. **TPE’s Levels of Application**

**How can my organization get started?**

You can begin using the Framework at any time and can apply to TPE at one of two levels:

(1) Advising & Partnering or

(2) Examining/Examiner Team Assessment.

The entrance level will be assessed by TPE, in collaboration with your organization. The decision is based primarily on knowledge of the Baldrige Excellence Framework, whether an Organizational Profile has been written, whether an employee survey has been conducted, organizational results, and other factors. The intent of TPE is to “meet you where you are” in your performance excellence journey, and help you progress as effectively and efficiently as possible. TPE assists organizations in understanding the Baldrige Excellence Framework and guides leadership teams in beginning their journey to performance excellence and a long-term commitment to continuous improvement.

**What is the Advising & Partnering application level?** TPE added this *optional* Advising & Partnering application level to introduce organizations *with little or no prior experience* to the Baldrige Excellence Framework and TPE. The Advising & Partnering level application is *not* mandatory, and organizations can bypass this level, if they wish.

* **Advising** – This is the level for organizations that are new to the Baldrige program and just getting started. A professional coach will work with your team to further explain the Baldrige Excellence Framework and help you draft a five-page Organizational Profile. Upon completion of the Organizational Profile, one or two examiners from the TPE Board of Examiners assess the Organizational Profile and provide a written feedback report to the applicant. Successful completion of the Advising level results in the “Spirit” award and recognition at TPE’s annual Quest for Success Conference.
* **Partnering** – This is Part II of the Advising & Partnering program. Your professional coach will review the feedback for your Organizational Profile and assist you in interpreting the feedback including linking your Organizational Profile to the process categories and aligning to the Baldrige Criteria, and developing a timeline to get you started on developing a 25-page abbreviated application addressing the Baldrige Excellence Builder criteria. The Partnering phase focuses on processes, systems, and associated results. Once the 25-page application is completed (there is no time limit), examiners will provide a written feedback report. Successful completion of the Partnering level results in the “Pioneer” award recognition at TPE’s *Quest for Success* Conference. Some organizations which have already developed an Organizational Profile may choose to begin their journey with TPE at this level.
* For more information on Advising & Partnering, please visit <http://www.thepartnershipforexcellence.org/get_going_start_the_journey.html>

**What is Examining?**

This is the Examiner Team Assessment – the traditional full application process mirroring the national Baldrige Performance Excellence Program’s assessment cycle. Teams of trained examiners are formed around each application. First, each TPE examiner evaluates the application independently, and then together, the team of examiners builds consensus around the applicant’s strengths and opportunities for improvement. A three-day site visit is completed to verify and clarify the information in the application. The applicant receives a feedback report with strengths and opportunities for improvement. Judges make award level recommendations to the TPE Board of Trustees and applicants are notified of their award. Applicant organizations are recognized with a Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Platinum Award at TPE’s Quest for Success Conference in September.

*Stage 1 -* ***Independent Review (December-January)***

Each application is reviewed by a team of trained examiners working independently. Each individual examiner reads the application, writes comments about strengths and opportunities for improvement, and scores each Item against the Criteria.

*Stage 2 -* ***Consensus Review (February)***

The team of examiners reaches consensus on key themes, the applicant’s strengths and opportunities for improvement, the resulting scores, and the issues to clarify and verify on the site visit.

*Stage 3 -* ***Site Visit (March)***

The team of examiners, led by a team leader, completes a site visit to clarify uncertain points in the application, verify that the information reported in the application is accurate, and gain additional information. The dates of the site visit are scheduled by the team leader and the applicant’s point of contact. The team completes a site visit scorebook and draft feedback report which are provided to the TPE Panel of Judges. Portions or all of the site visit may be conducted virtually.

*Stage 4 -* ***Judging (April)***

The Panel of Judges reviews the application, key factors, key themes, consensus scorebook, site visit scorebook, and feedback reports. A two-thirds majority vote by the Panel of Judges decides the award level for an applicant. Lastly, the judges present final decisions on award levels to the TPE Board of Trustees for ratification.

**Who is involved in TPE and the Examiner Team Assessment?**

* **Board of Examiners**

Each year, individuals apply to serve as TPE examiners. All examiners selected are trained and complete a case study. Examiners contribute hundreds of hours of time, energy and dedication to the mission of promoting performance excellence. Teams from the TPE Board of Examiners evaluate applications, visit applicant sites, and prepare feedback reports to submit to the Panel of Judges. Examiners are experienced professionals from all sectors.

* **Panel of Judges**

This panel of senior level examiners, from in-state and out-of-state, reviews applications, site visit documents, and feedback reports prepared by examiner teams and determines award recipient levels to be ratified by the TPE Board of Trustees.

* **Board of Trustees**

The TPE Board of Trustees, composed of individuals from all sectors - business, education, government, health care and nonprofits - has first-hand experience using the Baldrige Excellence Framework to transform an organization. The Board meets three times per year to govern TPE.

* **Volunteers**

The cadre of dedicated volunteers are the heart of TPE. In addition to their contributions as examiners, judges, and trustees, volunteers also facilitate learning sessions, plan, and facilitate the annual conference, and serve on standing committees to advance TPE and its mission.

**Is my application confidential?**

Yes. Examiner teams are made up of a cross-section of examiner expertise and experience. Examiner assignments are made in accordance with strict conflict of interest and code of ethics policies. The name of the applicant, individual application, commentary and scoring information developed during the review process are kept in strictest confidence by TPE. Such information is available only to those individuals directly involved in the assessment and evaluation process. TPE destroys all written and electronic copies of applications and feedback reports 90 days after feedback reports are issued to the applicant organization.

**How can my organization apply?**

* Advising & Partnering applications are accepted at any time throughout the year. Complete and submit the application at

<http://www.thepartnershipforexcellence.org/get_going_start_the_journey.html>

* FULL Applications (50 pages):
  + First, complete the **Intent to Apply Form** and send with non-refundable deposit to TPE by August 15.
  + Second, prepare and complete the application using guidance and instructions from this Full Application Handbook and send to TPE with the appropriate fee by December 1st.

**Which organizations are eligible to apply?**

All organizations - business, education, government, health care and nonprofits - may apply. Subunits and internal suppliers of organizations may also apply.

**Which Framework applies to my organization?**

* Business, manufacturing, service, government, and nonprofit organizations use the Business Framework.
* Health care organizations use the Health Care Framework and are **not** considered nonprofits.
* Educational organizations use the Education Framework.

**What are the Eligibility Requirements?**

It is the resp**o**nsibility of the applicant to meet the following general eligibility requirements:

* Applicants must have employees in Ohio, Indiana, West Virginia, or Illinois.
* Applicants must be located in Ohio, Indiana, West Virginia, or Illinois for at least one year.
* All subordinate elements of the applicant must be included in the application.
* Subunits (business unit, division, etc.) of the same organization may apply individually.
* Units of the same organization at different geographic locations are eligible if they are stand-alone facilities capable of responding to each category of the Framework.
* Organizations which may potentially qualify under the definition of more than one sector may apply in the sector of their choosing.
* Subunits of a larger organization must be self-sufficient enough to be examined in all seven Framework categories.
* Ownership location does *not* restrict eligibility.
* Submission of a Baldrige or similar application in same year does *not* restrict eligibility.

**4. Recognition**

**What recognition or award is given to an organization applying for the Examiner Team Assessment?**

Organizations entering this long-term quality journey are recognized with an award at one of the four following levels:

* Platinum – Governor’s Award for Excellence (Applicant's Respective Governor)
* Gold – Achievement of Excellence
* Silver – Commitment to Excellence
* Bronze – Pledge to Excellence

All recipients are honored at the annual Quest for Success Conference. Award recipients may publicize and advertise their awards. There is no limit on the number of awards that may be presented at any level.

**Is the identity of applicants made available to the public?**

The identity of applicants remains confidential until applicant is selected as an award recipient.

**What is expected of award recipients?**

Award recipients are expected to share information about their exceptional performance practices with other organizations; however, recipients are not required to share proprietary information, even if such information was a part of their award application. The principal mechanisms for sharing information are best practice presentations at the annual Quest for Success conference. Sharing beyond these opportunities is on a voluntary basis.

**5. General FAQ’s**

**How can I learn more about the Framework?**

* Read, study and review the Baldrige Excellence Framework booklet.
* Apply to become an examiner for TPE and use the Framework to work with team members to examine a TPE applicant organization.
* Attend the annual Quest for Success conference.
* Volunteer **-** The cadre of dedicated volunteers are the heart of TPE. In addition to their contributions as examiners, judges, and trustees, volunteers also facilitate learning sessions, plan and facilitate the annual conference, and serve on standing committees to advance TPE and its mission.

**How can my organization get involved with TPE?**

* Contact TPE for initial phone consultation and find out about opportunities to get involved.
* Identify & support employees interested in becoming examiners for TPE.
* Support employees interested in volunteering for TPE.
* Attend the Quest for Success conference.
* Become an **Individual** Member.
* Become an **Organizational** Member.
* Become a **Conference Sponsor** at various levels

**Do you have additional questions?**

Contact The Partnership for Excellence at [margot.hoffman@partnershipohio.org](mailto:margot.hoffman@partnershipohio.org) or phone TPE at (614) 425-7157.

**APPENDIX**

**Application Content and Format for Hard Copy Applications**

The content and formatting requirements for TPE Baldrige Award applications are based on those of the national Baldrige Performance Excellence Program. We reserve the right to return incomplete applications and those that don’t meet these requirements. If you have questions, call 614-425-7157.

**Content**

In your application, include information on all of your organization’s units or subunits. Don’t add links to websites. Examiners base their evaluations solely on information within your application.

Your award application must contain the items listed in the order given below:

**Blank front cover**

To help ensure confidentiality, don’t include text or illustrations on the front cover. In addition, for paper applications, we strongly recommend using dark-colored card stock for the front cover to ensure that it conceals the information on the title page.

**Title page**

Give the name of your organization. You may also include the address and logo, illustrations, the date, a statement indicating that this is an application for the TPE Award for Excellence, and/or a statement regarding the confidentiality of the content. Don’t include additional information, text, or links to websites.

**Labeled tabs or divider pages**

Use tabs or divider pages to separate the sections listed below. On each, include only the section title. If you include additional text or illustrations, the pages will count toward the 50-page limit for the Responses Addressing All Criteria Items.

**Table of contents**. Indicate the page numbers for the …

* Intent to Apply Form
* Organization chart(s) (date-stamped) *Line-and-box organization chart(s) for your organization. If your organization is a subunit, also include a line-and-box chart for the parent organization, to show how the subunit fits into the organization.*
* Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations
* Organizational Profile – limit of five pages
* Individual category and item sections – limit of 50 pages

*Note: You do not need to indicate the page numbers for areas to address, tables, and figures in the Table of Contents.*

**Intent to Apply Form.** In each of the three paper copies and in the PDF file, ensure that the Intent to Apply is signed by your organization’s highest-ranking official. This page indicates that your organization agrees to the terms and conditions of the award process and that, if selected to receive a site visit, your organization agrees to pay reasonable associated costs.

**Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations.** In the glossary, include only terms and abbreviations used in your application, with very brief definitions. *Don’t include descriptions* of processes, tools, methods, or techniques in the glossary, or your application will be returned to you.

*An acceptable example of a glossary entry is:*

* SPP: strategic planning process.

*The following example is not acceptable because it includes a description:*

* SPP: strategic planning process, which has nine steps: a review of key documents, such as the research contract with the USDA; a two-day retreat; a review of funding and mandates; a review of current organizational performance; a review of an environmental scan; appreciative inquiry; brainstorming; allocation of resources; and creation of action plans.

**Organizational Profile.** This section is limited to five pages and outlines your organization and states the key factors that influence its operations and future directions. Examiners use this vital part of your application throughout their review. For guidelines on preparing this section, see the appropriate Baldrige Excellence Framework booklet for your industry sector.

**Responses Addressing All Criteria Items**. In this section, respond to each item as a whole, using the category and item designations in the Baldrige Criteria. In your responses to the areas to address within the items, emphasize your organization and its performance system, maintaining the order of the areas. (See the illustration on page 2 of the Baldrige Excellence Framework for an explanation of *areas to address.*)

Label the areas to address as indicated in the Criteria (e.g., 4.2a). You may group responses for multiple areas (e.g., 4.2a, b). If an area to address does not pertain to your organization or its performance system, explain why in one or two sentences.

Discussion of results and the results themselves should be close together in Category 7. Trends that show a significant beneficial or adverse change should be explained.

In all categories, use figure numbers that correspond to items. For example, the third figure for item 7.1 would be Figure 7.1-3.

For guidelines on responding to the Criteria, see the appropriate sector Baldrige Excellence Framework booklet.

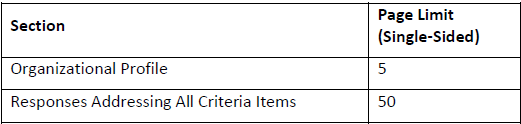
**Format**

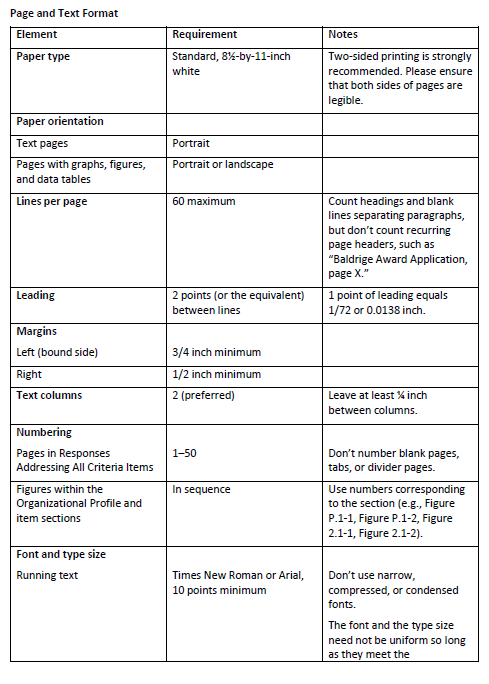
Format your application according to the following requirements. If your submission does not meet these requirements, we will notify you that your application has been rejected. You will have 72 hours or until the original due date, whichever is later, to resubmit your application in the required format. Resubmitted applications must be postmarked within that timeframe and shipped via an overnight delivery service. For an example of the required format, see the 2018 Green Gateway Case Study (downloadable PDF) at <http://thepartnershipforexcellence.org/ELRC/2018_Green_Gateway_Case_Study.pdf>

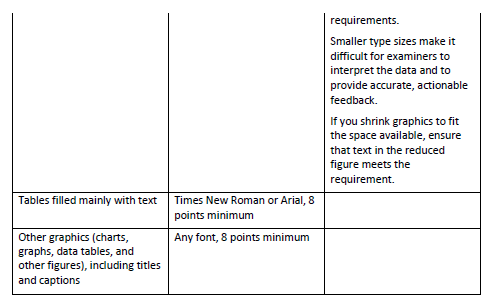
**Page Limits**

The limits given below include all illustrations, figures, tables, and appendices. Covers, labeled tabs, divider pages that contain only titles, organization charts, and glossary pages do not count toward the page limits; however, if these pages contain additional material, such as process descriptions, quotations, figures, tables, or illustrations, they will count toward the total page allotment.

If any section exceeds the page limit, TPE will ask your official contact point to identify which pages to remove.







**Graphics**

* + See the font and type-size requirements in the table above.
  + Clearly label each figure using descriptive text. For example, the title of the third figure for item 7.1 might read … Reliability of Service: Carrier-Dropped Calls (Figure 7.1-3)
  + Clearly label all axes and units of measure.
  + For information on using graphics in category 7 (Results), see “Responding to Results Items” in the appropriate Baldrige Excellence Framework booklet.

**Application Assembly**

Assemble paper copies of your application following all the guidelines listed below:

**Paper Copies**

 Securely fasten all components of your application to prevent separation during handling. We strongly recommend that you bind each application with either comb or coil binding.

 Don’t use pressure-sensitive clips, binders with such clips, or bulky ring binders or similar heavy covers.

 Don’t include video or audio material or other information aids.