

Southwest Alliance for Excellence



Who we are

The Southwest Alliance for Excellence (SWAE) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation that advances improvement and excellence in organizations, communities and individuals throughout Arizona, Nevada and Utah. SWAE is administered by a professional staff under the leadership and guidance of its members and elected Board of Directors. We are also a member of the Alliance for Performance Excellence, a national network of state programs that advance improvement in organizations by using the Baldrige Criteria.

Mission

Empower organizations in Arizona, Nevada and Utah to pursue performance excellence, improve outcomes and contribute to the economic strength of their community and state

Vision

Be a recognized leader in advancing organizational excellence

Core Values

- ✓ Act with Integrity and Transparency
- ✓ Add Value to Stakeholders
- ✓ Commit to Excellence and Making a Difference
- ✓ Execute business in a Respectful and Ethical Manner
- ✓ Work Collaboratively with a Passion for Continuous Improvement

Why we do it

As part of an alliance of diverse organizations and individuals committed to excellence and continuous improvement, we encourage the exchange of skills, ideas, and learning. The aim is to grow as individuals, improve organizational performance, and contribute to the well-being of our work systems, communities and states.

How we do it

1. Administer the Performance Excellence Program based on the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria and annually recognize and showcase outstanding achievement in performance excellence.
2. Train individuals to become experts at assessing and evaluating entire organizations or individual processes using the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence.
3. Facilitate programs so organizations can share and learn proven best practices to achieve a competitive advantage.
4. Provide organizations with a comprehensive, cost-effective performance evaluation with extensive feedback based on the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria.
5. Create and deliver relevant workshops, benchmarking tours and seminars that will develop the skills and knowledge of performance excellence professionals.
6. Provide a dynamic environment for professional networking and knowledge sharing.

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Karen Shepard
Executive Director

Our Programs

Aligned with the Performance Excellence Program, Southwest Alliance for Excellence (SWAE) annually recognizes organizations for their performance excellence. The program currently has two levels of applications and four types of awards:



Organization Level Awards

The Performance Excellence Program is modeled after the National Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award and based on the Baldrige criteria. We believe that this is one of the best methodologies available to develop a higher level of organizational performance.

The **Governor's Award for Quality** recognizes organizations that have mature and fully-deployed quality systems within their operations, that demonstrate a commitment to continuous improvement and have a sustained significant record of performance.

The **Pioneer Award for Quality** recognizes organizations that have begun to establish and deploy fundamental quality systems within their operations, attaining commendable levels of performance excellence process implementation. It means an organization has a solid approach for implementing quality in place, yet not necessarily that it has achieved sustained excellence.

The **Category Award for Excellence** recognizes organizations in one or more of the six categories: Leadership; Strategic Planning, Customer Focus; Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management; Workforce Focus; and Operations Focus. In each case, the organization will achieve recognition based on its performance in that category and the results related to that performance.



Process Level Award

We realized the need to complement our *Organization Level Awards* (holistic look at an organization) with an award that focuses more on specific organizational processes.

The **Showcase in Excellence Award** recognizes organizations for specific processes that meet or exceed the Showcase in Excellence Criteria for process and results. For example, processes that are innovative, cutting edge or performed in an extraordinary manner.



SWAE/Intel Mentoring Program

Through the SWAE/Intel Mentoring and Planning Services (MAPS) Program, organizations submit proposals for assistance with specific projects. Using their "Skills-based Volunteering" Program, Intel connects Quality employees with the approved projects based upon experience, skill sets, passion and certifications. Volunteers mentor and assist organizations with skills-training and accomplishing quality objectives.

Other Opportunities

Examiner Training: A powerful learning experience & valuable professional development step for anyone. The Board of Examiners evaluates award applications, conducts site visits, and prepares feedback reports.

Benefits of participation include:

- Strong understanding of a global set of guidelines for running an effective organization
- Insider look at innovative approaches utilized by leading organizations
- Improved assessment, analytical, interviewing, and writing skills
- Networking with colleagues and other professionals throughout the region
- Opportunity to attend Performance Excellence Award Banquet compliments of SWAE

Workshops: SWAE offers workshops to help members of the community or interested applicants better understand our organization and the Performance Excellence Program. Those interested in improving the performance of their organization, applying for one of our awards or becoming an examiner should definitely attend. We also host writing workshops to help applicants prepare to apply for the Showcase in Excellence Award.

Benchmarking Tours: Throughout the year, we offer opportunities to get a sneak peek inside industry-leading companies and organizations that share their best practices with participants. Attendees tour the host organization while soaking up valuable information they can take back to their own workplaces.