



*Empowering Organizations to Improve Results*

2021

Organization Level -  
Application Guidance  
Manual for the  
Performance  
Excellence Program



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# Letter from the Board of Directors

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What does the Southwest Alliance for Excellence do?

As the Southwest Alliance for Excellence (SWAE) embarks on its 31st year serving organizations we will continue to help organizations become more efficient and improve their results!

SWAE helps organizations of all sizes, sectors, and industries improve their results using the *Baldrige Excellence Framework – a systems approach to improving your organization’s performance*. The *Criteria for Performance Excellence* helps to simplify an organization’s efforts. It is designed to help identify what really matters to your organization, and focus efforts where they will count. Using the Criteria gives you a holistic assessment of where your organization is and where it needs to be. Use it to empower your organization to reach your goals, improve results, and become more competitive by aligning your strategy, processes, decisions, people, actions and results.

At first glance, the Criteria may seem a bit dense and daunting, but SWAE offers many resources to help you learn: The SWAE Performance Excellence Program, our workshops, examiner training, and our Annual Sharing of Best Practices & Awards Luncheon are all first-rate avenues toward excellence.

I also would like to talk about *why* we do it: SWAE’s mission is to empower organizations in Arizona, Nevada and Utah to pursue performance excellence, improve outcomes and contribute to the economic strength of their community and state. We are dedicated to making our states better places to live and work.

Our ultimate stakeholders are the citizens of Arizona, Nevada and Utah – you and me. When our businesses, schools, hospitals, factories and government bodies focus on results, when they function at high performing levels, we all benefit.

SWAE believes, by integrating the principles of the *Criteria for Performance Excellence*, our organizations, communities and citizens will thrive. I am delighted that you are here to take advantage of this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Tyson Heath  
Chairman, SWAE Board of Directors



## About the Southwest Alliance for Excellence

### Our Vision

*Be a recognized leader in advancing organizational excellence.*

### Our Mission

*To empower organizations to pursue performance excellence, improve outcomes and contribute to the economic strength of their community and state.*

The Southwest Alliance for Excellence was established in 1990. Our goal is to improve the economic vitality of the region by promoting the understanding and use of the Baldrige *Criteria for Performance Excellence*.

Since 1990, hundreds of organizations have applied to and benefited from the SWAE Performance Excellence Program.

We are an independent, nonprofit corporation governed by a Board of Directors drawn from manufacturing, service, healthcare, education and government sectors. We function as a non-profit that provides cost-effective support to regional businesses and organizations. Our funding comes solely from membership, sponsorship and program revenue.

### SWAE Workforce

One staff member, and more than 75 volunteers provide services to SWAE members and applicants, implementing all SWAE activities.

### Board of Directors

The SWAE Board of Directors consists of distinguished leaders from all sectors of AZ, NV & UT economies, providing policy guidance and direction. The board is responsible for SWAE's governance and finance.

### Members and Sponsors

The support of corporate and individual members and sponsors enables SWAE to deliver programs and services to companies in every industry sector. All companies, organizations and individuals involved with or interested in SWAE are welcome to apply for membership. Membership benefits include:

- Knowledge sharing on performance improvement topics through the SWAE newsletter
- Opportunities for education and learning through discounted training
- Discounted SWAE Performance Excellence Program application fees
- Demonstration of a commitment to excellence
- Acknowledgement in SWAE materials

- Networking and connecting with like-minded organizations and individuals

To become a SWAE member or sponsor, please visit the Members / Sponsors section of our website (<http://www.swae.org/mission/>) or call the SWAE office: (480)874-5815.

### Our 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

## Southwest Alliance for Excellence Performance Excellence Program

Modeled after the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program, SWAE fulfills its mission by providing in-depth, low-cost assessments of regional organizations using the *Criteria for Performance Excellence*. This process is the basis of the SWAE Performance Excellence Program.

Organizations that go through an assessment receive detailed feedback that may be used to improve processes and results. It's an effective way to energize employees, sharpen focus, look at your organization from a systems perspective and earn recognition for your business or organization.

The SWAE Performance Excellence Program is multi-tiered, offering five levels of review. An organization that is new to the Criteria can get its feet wet by starting with a Level 1 (Interest) application or a Process Level application. As the organization grows and develops, it may apply for a Level 2 (Commitment), Level 3 (Achievement) and Level 4 (Excellence) Award. Among other eligibility requirements, organizations that apply for a Baldrige National Quality Award must first receive a SWAE Pinnacle Award for Excellence.

To participate in the SWAE Performance Excellence Program, organizations submit a self-assessment to the SWAE office based on questions posed in the *Criteria for Performance Excellence*. The length and breadth of this self-assessment depends on the award level sought. Please see page 10 for more details on requirements for each level.



## About the Southwest Alliance for Excellence

A team of SWAE examiners then evaluates the self-assessment and conducts a site visit to gain a thorough understanding of the organization. Based on its findings, the team prepares a detailed Feedback Report that identifies the applicant's strengths and opportunities for improvement.

The Panel of Judges reviews the examiner team's work for integrity and completeness and determines the applicant's award level.

### Code of Ethical Standards

Integrity is one of SWAE's core values. A strict Code of Ethical Conduct and Conflict of Interest Statement binds each examiner and judge. Neither examiners nor judges may participate in any evaluation; scoring or recognition decisions where there may be, or could appear to be, any personal, potential or perceived conflict of interest.

### Applicant Eligibility

Any public or private organization located in the states of AZ, NV or UT may participate in the SWAE Performance Excellence Program.

### Organizational Units

Business/organizational units or subsidiaries are eligible to submit an application. For purposes of the evaluation process, a subsidiary means an actual subsidiary, business unit, division, or district office. Eligible organizations must be recognizable as discrete entities, and must be easily distinguishable from a parent and other sub-units. They must function as business or operational entities, not as activities assembled to write an application.

Organizations must be self-sufficient enough to be examined in all seven Criteria categories. For example, an organizational unit with its own administrative, human resources and other support functions is eligible; but a unit that is entirely dependent upon the parent organization for the majority of these functions is ineligible.

The following organizational units are expressly allowed:

- Business units or larger
- Whole manufacturing plant
- Hospitals within systems; whole health care systems
- State government office/division/department

- Stand-alone sub-units of larger organizations
- School districts
- Individual schools
- Colleges within Universities; whole universities
- **Note:** Meeting eligibility requirements for SWAE Level 4 awards does not necessarily convey eligibility as a national Baldrige Applicant.

### Future Eligibility

If an organization receives the prestigious Pinnacle Award for Excellence (Level 4), the organization is ineligible to apply for another SWAE organization level Award for a period of three years. For example, a 2014 Pinnacle Award recipient would be eligible to reapply in 2018. Recipients of the Pioneer Award may re-apply in any given year, but may not receive the Pioneer Award more than once every three years. There is no such restriction for Interest Recognition (Level 1), Commitment Awards (Level 2) or Achievement Awards (Level 3).

### Eligibility Determination

In order to ensure fairness and consistency to all award applicants, an Intent to Apply/Eligibility Form is required for Organization Levels 2, 3 and 4 applicants and Process Level applicants. This form takes into account an organizational unit's structure, functions and performance. Potential applicants are encouraged to submit the Intent to Apply/Eligibility Form as early as possible. For more information on eligibility determination, see the Intent-to-Apply and Eligibility Form on pages 29-35.

### Award Allocation

Awards are granted on the basis of fulfilling the Criteria requirements described for each level (see page 15 for a complete description of these requirements). There is no limit to the number of awards presented annually. However, if no candidate demonstrates the levels of performance excellence outlined on page 10 ("SWAE Performance Excellence Program Recognition Levels") and established by the Criteria, no award will be conveyed. In other words, there may be years when no recipients are named, particularly at the higher award levels.

### Responsibilities of Award Recipients

Applicants receiving recognition and awards are encouraged



## **About the Southwest Alliance for Excellence**

to support the development of performance improvement for others participating in the SWAE Performance Excellence Program. Excellence Award recipients are expected to share nonproprietary information from their application material and participate in the Southwest Alliance for Excellence annual Awards Banquet, so others may learn from their success. A minimum of one “Best Practice” workshop or “Benchmark Tour” is generally held at the recipient’s site.



# Additional SWAE Programming

## Education

Throughout the year, SWAE provides training opportunities to organizations that want to improve processes and results. All of these programs are available at low cost and open to the public.

For more information about any of SWAE's educational opportunities, visit the Workshops & Events page of the SWAE website: [www.swae.org](http://www.swae.org) or call the SWAE office at (480)874-5815.

### Application Workshop

Application workshops provide tips and tools for beginning an organizational self-assessment and writing a SWAE application to the Criteria. In addition, attendees learn how award levels are determined and gain insight into site visits. These workshops are a great first step for organizations that are new to using the Criteria; they also provide advanced strategies for companies more familiar with the SWAE application process and the Criteria.

### Baldrige 101 Workshop

The *Criteria for Performance Excellence* provides a seven-category framework for defining what is most important to an organization's success. This course is an introduction to the Criteria's framework, using that information; organizations can then identify and implement meaningful improvements.

### Benchmarking Tours/Workshops

When an organization receives an Excellence Award, it opens its doors to the public for a series of best practice tours and workshops. These tours highlight the systems and methods that helped the organization achieve the award.

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 learning valuable information they can take back to their own workplaces.

### Workshops

SWAE offers workshops to help organizations better understand methods of improvement through the use of the Baldrige Criteria, other quality methodologies and the Performance Excellence Program. We also host writing

Workshops to help applicants prepare to apply for the Process Level in addition to Baldrige 101 Workshops.

### Custom Training

SWAE designs and delivers custom training sessions and presentations to interested organizations. Call the SWAE office at (480) 874-5815 or e-mail [info@swae.org](mailto:info@swae.org) for details.

## Examiner Training

Every year, SWAE trains a contingent of volunteer examiners in the *Criteria for Performance Excellence* to evaluate the businesses and organizations that apply to the SWAE Award Program. These examiners typically represent the best and brightest- professionals who want to challenge themselves while contributing to the region's economic development.

Serving on the SWAE Board of Examiners is a powerful personal and professional development experience. Starting with training and continuing through the applicant evaluation process, networking opportunities abound. In addition, examiners are exposed to the best practices of role model companies.

"I found the SWAE Examiner experience extremely valuable to my understanding and growth in Quality. The training and site visit offered me the opportunity to understand quality programs outside of my own industry." – Susie Duffy; HonorHealth

Employers have found that examiner training empowers employees to apply the Criteria at their own jobs, improving processes and results. In addition, applicants have discovered that having an examiner or two on the "inside" improves their own SWAE applications.

Every summer SWAE schedules examiner training sessions. For information about becoming an Examiner or signing up employees to serve as examiners, please visit the Examiner section on the Award Program page on SWAE's website or call the office: [www.swae.org/performance-excellence-program/](http://www.swae.org/performance-excellence-program/) (480) 874-5815.

This is a powerful learning experience and valuable professional development step for anyone. The Board of Examiners evaluates award applications, conducts site visits and prepares feedback reports.



## Additional SWAE Programming

### 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

### SWAE Performance Excellence Program Sharing of Best Practices & Awards Luncheon

The SWAE Performance Excellence Program Sharing of Best Practices & Awards Luncheon is the platform SWAE uses to recognize organizations that complete the evaluation and feedback process. During the luncheon, each SWAE applicant that has fulfilled the criteria requirements receives an award based on its level of achievement. For employees of organizations that participate in the application process, the luncheon is a great celebration, confirming the organization's commitment to improving performance results.

### SWAE Leadership Award

The Southwest Alliance for Excellence (SWAE) Leadership Award is an annual award recognizing an individual who exemplifies outstanding leadership in the pursuit of performance excellence and has furthered performance improvement beyond the boundaries of their organization. Recipients can represent any industry and any type or size organization in Arizona, Nevada, or Utah. They are dedicated to and demonstrate leadership behaviors and results consistent with the SWAE Core Values, community involvement, corporate citizenship and economic development. They must be willing to share their leadership practices as they relate to the SWAE Core Values and Leadership Behaviors.

Nominations for the SWAE Leadership Award are solicited from the public. Self-nominations are not permitted. The award recipient is selected by an outside, diverse committee.

### Best Practice Sharing

SWAE provides a venue where businesses and organizations can learn from the performance improvement strategies of their role model peers:

- Benchmarking tours and workshops are presented by SWAE Award recipients to share the strategies and processes that brought them to this level of accomplishment.
- During the annual SWAE Performance Excellence Program Sharing of Best Practices & Awards Luncheon, recipients of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award and the SWAE Excellence Award share the lessons they have learned on their journeys to performance excellence.

### SWAE Learning Events

Refer to the Events and Workshops schedule at <http://www.swae.org/events-workshops/>, or turn to the previous page to see descriptions of other learning opportunities like:

- Baldrige 101 Workshop
- Application Writing Workshop
- Benchmarking Tours/Workshops
- Lean Six Sigma
- Networking opportunities and events

Or, call SWAE to schedule a customized learning event at your site: (480) 874-5815. For more information about any of SWAE's programs, please visit our website or call the SWAE office: [www.swae.org](http://www.swae.org), (480) 874-5815.



## 2021 SWAE Performance Excellence Program

### 2021 AWARD Cycle

	<b>2021</b>
Process Level Intent to Apply	Received throughout the year
Application Deadline	60 days after Intent to Apply is received by SWAE
Examiner team conducts application assessment and scoring	Approximately 60-90 days after Application is received
Site Visit Schedule	On-going*
Panel of Judges convenes	On-going*
Feedback Reports distributed	On-going
SWAE Annual Sharing of Best Practices & Awards Luncheon	February 2022
To be included in upcoming Awards Luncheon	Submit Application by 8/16/2021



# Steps to Excellence

	Level 1 Interest	Level 2 Commitment	Level 3 Achievement	Level 4 Excellence
<b>Org. Profile</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Application Focus</b>	Org. Profiles	Basic Item Requirements	Overall Item Requirements	Multiple Item Requirements
<b>Max. Length</b>	5 Pages	5 + 15	5 + 35	5 + 50
<b>Questions to Answer</b>	37	37+ 17	37 + 106	37 + 252
<b>Site Visit</b>	N/A - Replaced with Coaching	1 - 2 Days	2 - 3 Days	3 - 5 Days
<b>Feedback Focus</b>	Seven Categories	Basic - Overall Requirements	Overall - Multiple Requirements	Multiple Requirements
<b>Award</b>	Interest Recognition	Commitment Award	Achievement or Commitment Award	Pinnacle, Pioneer, or Category Award for Excellence or Achievement



# 2021 SWAE Performance Excellence Program

In keeping with SWAE’s philosophy of encouraging involvement and participation in the process, the Board of Directors strives to maintain affordable program fees. SWAE Members receive discounts on application fees. Turn to page 2 for benefits of SWAE membership.

## Application Fee

The Application Fee is required for all award levels. For Process Level and Levels 2, 3 & 4, (50%) should be included with the Intent to Apply Form and the remaining 50% when the application is submitted to SWAE. The fee is related to workforce size and application level. SWAE Members receive a discount on this fee. For Level 1 submit the entire fee with the appropriate completed application. Use the table below to determine your Application Fee. *\*Please note there is an additional administrative fee per application for the Process level & Levels 2- 4. See Organization Level Application Guidance Manual at <http://www.swae.org/performance-excellence-program/>*

## Site Visit Cost

All applicants (with the exception of Level 1) participate in a site visit from a team of SWAE examiners (see pages 9-15 for details). The applicants will be invoiced for the actual

expenses of the Site Visit following completion of the Site Visit. A deposit may be requested prior to the Site Visit.

## Workforce Size

Workforce size is based on the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees working for the applicant. FTEs are defined as those who regularly work 40 or more hours a week and are entitled to benefits such as paid vacation, sick leave and insurance coverage. Part-time workers are counted as total part-time hours per week divided by 40. For example: 10 people at 20 hours is equal to 5 full time equivalent employees (10\*20 / 40 = 5).

Each instance of job sharing, where multiple individuals fulfill the responsibilities of a single position that requires 40 or more hours per week, is counted as a full-time equivalent employee.

## Applicant Categories

1. **Large:** any organization with more than 1500 full-time equivalent workers
3. **Medium:** any organization with 501 to 1500 full-time equivalent workers
4. **Small:** any organization with 1-500 full-time equivalent workers

## Application Fee Table

Application	Number of Employees	Application Fee (Non-member)	Application Fee (Member)
Interest (Level 1)	1-500	\$1200	\$1000
	501-1500	\$1500	\$1200
	More than 1500	\$2000	\$1600
Commitment (Level 2*)	1-500	\$2400	\$2000
	501-1500	\$3600	\$3200
	More than 1500	\$4600	\$4200
Achievement (Level 3*)	1-500	\$3600	\$3000
	501-1500	\$4800	\$4200
	More than 1500	\$5800	\$5200
Excellence (Level 4*)	1-500	\$4800	\$4000
	501-1500	\$6000	\$5200
	More than 1500	\$7000	\$6200
Process Level	N/A	\$1500	\$1200

\*Additional administration fee per application: Process Level - \$250; Level 2 - \$500 fee; Level 3 - \$1000 fee; Level 4 - \$1500 fee.

**Site Visit Fees are invoiced at actual expense amount.**



# Applying for a SWAE Award

The SWAE Performance Excellence Program recognizes organizations for progress and achievement based on four levels of organization assessment: Level 1 (Interest Recognition), Level 2 (Commitment Award), Level 3 (Achievement Award) and Level 4 (Excellence Award) and a Process Level.

Award application requirements become more involved as award levels increase. To participate, an organization must submit an application packet appropriate for the award level to which it is applying.

## Level 1 Applications

Level 1 applications are accepted year-round. For this application, the Intent to Apply/Eligibility Form is not required. The Application Fee (see details on page 9) is due when the application is submitted.

## Organization Level 2, 3 and 4 Applications

These applications consist of two parts:

**Part 1** Intent to Apply/Eligibility Form  
50% Application Fee (see table on page 9)  
**Received by:** 2021 Cycle: June 30, 2021

**Part 2** Criteria response  
Application Fee (see table on page 9)  
**Received by:** 2021 Cycle: August 16, 2021

### Level 2, 3, and 4 Criteria response

Your Criteria response depends on the award level sought. The diagram on page 2 of the Criteria booklet\* will help you determine which parts of the Criteria must be addressed in your application. **\*All questions in the Organizational Profile must be answered for all Level 2, 3 & 4 applications.**

**Level 2** Five-page Organizational Profile plus up to 15 pages addressing the seven categories of the Criteria and basic item requirements.

**Level 3** Five-page Organizational Profile plus up to 35 pages addressing the seven categories of the Criteria and overall item requirements.

**Level 4** Five-page Organizational Profile plus up to 50 pages addressing the seven categories of the Criteria and multiple item requirements.

## Process Level Application

\*\*See Process Level Application Guidance Document at <http://www.swae.org/performance-excellence-program/>

## Application Review Process

The Organization Level 2, 3 & 4 Applications are reviewed and evaluated in a five-stage process by members of the SWAE Board of Examiners. These examiners, specially trained in the Baldrige *Criteria for Performance Excellence*, adhere to strict rules regarding confidentiality and conflict of interest during each stage of the review process.

Stage 1 – Independent review and evaluation by the individual members of the examiner team

Stage 2 – Consensus review and evaluation by the examiner team

Stage 3 – Site visits for the applicant by the examiner team

Stage 4 – Review of application and examiner team input (findings and recommendations for awards) by the Panel of Judges

Stage 5 – Final due diligence conducted for recommended recipient organizations

## Site Visit

The Organization Level 2, 3 & 4 SWAE evaluation includes a site visit. A team of examiners will spend one to five days at the applicant’s worksite to gain a better understanding of operations and processes. The site visit is not an audit; its purpose is to provide the applicant a further opportunity to tell its story and to verify and clarify information in the application.

Applicants will receive a site visit agenda at least two weeks in advance of the site visit. The agenda may include a schedule of planned visits to facilities and operating units, a



# Applying for a SWAE Award

list of officials to be interviewed and the names of examiners scheduled to participate.

\*See page 22 on how to order Criteria booklets

Site visit length depends on award level sought:

Process Application: 4 hours

Level 2: 1 - 1.5 days

Level 3: 2 - 2.5 days

Level 4: 3 - 5 days depending on the size of the organization

(See more information regarding site visits on pages 17-18)

## Feedback to Applicants

At the conclusion of the evaluation, every applicant receives a written assessment by the examiner team called a Feedback Report. Providing a pathway for improvement, the Feedback Report is one of the most valuable features of the SWAE Performance Excellence Program process.

Each Feedback Report contains applicant-specific strengths and opportunities for improvement based on the *Criteria for Performance Excellence*. Used by applicants as an input to the strategic planning process, Feedback Reports help organizations focus on their customers, improving processes and overall performance.

Feedback Reports are emailed to applicants after the site visit, judging and editorial process are complete. Strict confidentiality is observed at all times.

## Supplying Volunteer Examiners

As a non-profit organization, SWAE's volunteer workforce – the Board of Examiners- is the engine that drives us. In order to maintain a robust and active workforce, we rely on all applicants to provide at least one examiner.

The Board of Examiners work best when there is a balance of new and experienced examiners, so we encourage organizations to send us examiners who have served in the past, as well as those who are new to the program. Many examiners return year after year, because they find their

service to SWAE an unparalleled professional development experience, as well as an opportunity to benchmark and network.

The added benefits of supplying examiners are significant: Examiners receive valuable training and insight, which they bring back to their organization. The organizations that have SWAE examiners on staff are better able to integrate the Criteria's improvement framework and engage in a successful quest for excellence. Visit the SWAE website for more information about the Board of Examiners.

<http://www.swae.org/examiners/>

## Promoting Excellence

Regardless of award level, all SWAE applicants demonstrate a commitment to excellence. We encourage all organizations that receive an award to promote their achievements and the benefits of the *Criteria for Performance Excellence*.

SWAE urges award recipients to publicize their awards, and to share non-competitive information about their successful performance strategies with other organizations.

Excellence Award recipients are asked to participate in the annual Awards Banquet, and host a Benchmarking Tour/Workshop the year following their achievement.



# SWAE Performance Excellence Program Recognition Levels

SWAE Award recognition is based on the demonstration of performance excellence and best practices at one of four organization levels: Level 1: Interest, Level 2: Commitment, Level 3: Achievement and Level 4: Excellence.

Organizations apply to the SWAE Performance Excellence Program at one of these levels. As the award levels increase, so does the depth of the Criteria response. In other words, applicants must submit a longer, more detailed self-assessment, answering more questions posed by the Criteria.

For details, the table “Award Application Requirements by Level of Review” on page 12 describes the application requirements by level. And the diagram “Criteria for Performance Excellence Structure” in the Criteria booklet (page 2) shows which parts of the Criteria must be addressed, depending on your application level.

Each level is a continuum with lower, middle and upper limits. Improvement alone does not ensure that an organization will move from one level to the next- often, organizations will show progress from year to year, yet continue to receive recognition within the same level. The only way organizations can move up a level is to meet the standards for the next level.

When reading about the levels, particular emphasis should be placed on the information in boldface type. The *Criteria for Performance Excellence* is updated every two years, and these refinements may result in movement between award levels.

## Level 1 – Interest Recognition

This is the beginning level for organizations interested in adopting and applying performance improvement principles. By applying for a Level 1 Recognition, an organization will learn about the Criteria and the assessment process. In addition, the organization will receive feedback that will help improve processes and propel it toward higher award levels. SWAE offers Level 1 applicants a hands-on, coaching approach during this first step of the performance improvement journey.

Level 1 Applicants will have their Leadership Team participate in a SWAE “Baldrige 101” Workshop. The applicant team will

then meet with their Coach who is a SWAE Senior Examiner to discuss the common vocabulary of the Baldrige Criteria, define key business factors, and learn how to answer questions in the organizational profile. The Applicant will then write and submit their own 5-page organizational profile and receive a written Feedback Report. The Feedback Report indicates actions, processes or system improvements that would most benefit the organization. Finally, the applicant will meet with their Coach to review the Feedback Report and determine the next steps for the organization.

**Organizations that complete Level 1 will receive a Certificate of Recognition for participation and public recognition.**

## Level 2 – Commitment Award

Level 2 is the intermediate level of the SWAE Program. It recognizes organizations that are beginning to demonstrate serious commitment to, and implementation of, performance improvement principles. To apply at this level, organizations must submit the **Organizational Profile answering all questions** described in the Criteria booklet (pages 4-6).

Applications also include the signature of the highest ranking official, indicating his or her commitment. In addition, the organizations complete a self-assessment (up to 15 pages long), detailing how they apply the **Basic Item Requirements** of the seven categories outlined in the Criteria booklet. It is important that applicants at this level clearly note processes that have been systematically improved based on data and assessment. Level 2 applicants host a 1 - 1.5 day site visit conducted by a team of SWAE examiners.

**Recipients of Commitment Awards have demonstrated progress by identifying and putting in place some key process improvements, which are directly attributable to a fact-based improvement process. The organization has addressed the Basic Item Requirements within each category of the Criteria. At this level, results may or may not be evident; however, a measurement system should be in place to capture data and analyze results.**

## Level 3 – Achievement Award

Level 3 is an advanced level of participation. It recognizes organizations that have demonstrated, through their



# SWAE Performance Excellence Program Recognition Levels

commitment to and practice of performance improvement principles, significant progress and results in building sound processes. Level 3 applicants must submit the **Organizational Profile answering all questions** described in the Criteria booklet (pages 4-6) and the signature of the highest ranking official, indicating his or her commitment. The application also includes a self-assessment (up to 35 pages long), detailing how the organization applies the **Overall Item Requirements** of the seven categories outlined in the Criteria booklet.

Level 3 applicants host a comprehensive 2 – 2.5 day site visit conducted by a team of SWAE examiners. The year after receiving the Achievement Award, organizations are expected to provide voluntary assistance to organizations that are new to the SWAE performance excellence process.

**Recipients of Achievement Awards have demonstrated significant progress in building systematic processes that effectively address the overall requirements of each item. These processes are deployed and aligned throughout the organization appropriately to meet the key needs of the organization. Results for some key processes show improvement (at least a year in most cases) that is directly attributable to a systematic improvement approach. These organizations have many practices from which other organizations can learn and grow.**

## Level 4 – Excellence Award

The highest level of recognition is presented to organizations that have demonstrated, through their practices and achievements, the highest level of performance excellence. Only 6 organizations have attained the Pinnacle Award for Excellence (formerly called the Governor’s Award for Quality). Their success is typically the result of applying feedback from previous SWAE applications. There have been 35 recipients of the Pioneer Award for Excellence and 1 recipient of the Category Award for Excellence.

**The Pinnacle Award for Excellence 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. Organizational learning, including innovation and sharing of best practices, is a key**

**management tool. Current performance results have been evaluated against relevant comparisons or benchmarks and show areas of favorable performance for most key customer, process and market requirements.**

**The Pioneer Award for Excellence recognizes organizations that demonstrate effective, systematic approaches that are aligned with the organizational needs. Deployment may vary in some areas. Results show good performance and comparative and trend data are available for some important results areas. Some beneficial trends are evident but sustained excellence has not been achieved.**

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

An application at this level requires submission of the **Organizational Profile answering all questions** described in the Criteria booklet (pages 4-6) and the signature of the highest ranking official, indicating his or her commitment. The application also includes a self-assessment (up to 50 pages long) detailing how the organization applies the **Multiple Item Requirements** of the seven categories outlined in the Criteria booklet.

Level 4 applicants host a comprehensive 3 - 5 day site visit conducted by a team of SWAE examiners. The year after receiving the Excellence Award, organizations are expected to provide voluntary assistance to organizations that are new to the SWAE performance excellence process. Additionally, Excellence Award recipients are asked to participate in the annual Awards Banquet, and host a Benchmarking Tour/Workshop the year following their achievement.



# SWAE Performance Excellence Program Recognition Levels

## Process Level Award (Team 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 Process Level Application provides an opportunity for receiving feedback and recognition on specific organizational processes.

**The Showcase in Excellence Award recognizes a team for one specific process that could be innovative or a cutting-edge approach. It may be used as a role model or result in exceptional performance. It could also be a routine process performed in an extraordinary manner.**

For additional information on the Process Level Award go to <http://www.swae.org/performance-excellence-program/>

## Applying for an Award

If your organization is interested in applying for a SWAE Award, please turn to pages 16-21, and 27-35 for details and forms.

## Important Dates

### Examiner training:

A great way to learn the Criteria and develop leadership skills is to serve on the **SWAE Board of Examiners (BOE)**. You can learn more about examiner duties and fill out an application form on the Award Program page on the SWAE website (<http://www.swae.org/performance-excellence-program/>).

**2021 Cycle - BOE Application Deadline: May 27, 2021**

### Intent to Apply/Eligibility Form:

If you are applying for an Organization Level 2, 3 or 4 Award you must submit the Intent to Apply/Eligibility Form (located on pages 30-36), and 50% of the Application Fee to the SWAE office (mailing address below). *Level 1 Applicants do not need to fill out the Intent to Apply/Eligibility Form.*

**2021 Intent to Apply/Eligibility Form - Received by:  
June 30, 2021**

### Organization Level 2, 3, 4 Application:

Level 2, 3 & 4 Applicants must submit a completed application package (described on pages 16-21) and the

Application Fee. (Fees are described on page 9). Mailing address below.

**2021 Organization Level Application - Received by:  
August 16, 2021**

### Level 1 Application:

Level 1 applications are accepted year-round, so there is not an application deadline. To apply for Level 1 recognition, applicants must submit the completed Level 1 Application Form (located on pages 27-28), and the Application Fee (see page 9 for details). Level 1 Applicants are not required to fill out an Intent to Apply/Eligibility Form.

### Contact SWAE

**3961 E. Chandler Blvd. Suite 111-334 (mailing address only)  
Phoenix, AZ 85048  
(480)874-5815  
[www.swae.org](http://www.swae.org)  
[info@swae.org](mailto:info@swae.org)**



# Award Application Requirements by Level of Review

This table shows the Southwest Alliance for Excellence (SWAE) application requirements and review process for each application level (as described on the previous pages). The diagram on page 2 of the Criteria booklet may help Level 2, 3 and 4 applicants determine which parts of the Criteria must be addressed in their application.

	Org. Level 1 Interest	Org. Level 2 Commitment	Org. Level 3 Achievement	Org. Level 4 Excellence
<b>Intent to Apply/ Eligibility Form with 50% Application fee &amp; 100% admin fee</b>	<b>Not</b> required	Required  *Received by June 30, 2021	Required  *Received by June 30, 2021	Required  *Received by June 30, 2021
<b>Organizational Profile</b>	<b>Required: 5 pages maximum</b>  <b>Levels 2, 3 and 4:</b> Applicants must answer <b>all the Organizational Profile questions</b> and must accompany the Response to the Criteria. Received by – August 16, 2021			
<b>Application Form and Fee</b>	<b>Level 1:</b> Applicants must use the Application Form on pages 27-28. (No due date, Level 1 applications are accepted throughout the year.)100% application fee due with application. There is no administrative fee.			
<b>Response to Criteria (using the 2021-22 Criteria Booklet for Levels 1-4 for 2021 program cycle).</b>	<b>Not Required</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 categories,</li> <li>• Basic item requirements (15 pages max.)</li> <li>• Org Profile + 17 Criteria Questions <i>*submitted with remaining application fee by August 16, 2021.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 categories,</li> <li>• Overall item requirements. (35 pages max.)</li> <li>• Org Profile + 106 Criteria Questions <i>*submitted with remaining application fee by August 16, 2021.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 categories,</li> <li>• Multiple item requirements. (50 pages max.)</li> <li>• Org Profile + 252 Criteria Questions <i>*submitted with remaining application fee by August 16, 2021.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Site Visit</b>	N/A – Replaced with coaching	1 - 1.5 Days	2 - 2.5 Days	3 - 5 Days (depending on size of organization)
<b>Recognition Eligibility</b>	Interest Recognition	Commitment Award	Achievement or Commitment Award	Pinnacle, Pioneer or Category Award for Excellence or Achievement Award
<b>Applicant Responsibilities</b>	N/A	Provide at least one SWAE examiner	Provide at least one SWAE examiner  Assistance to other organizations	*Provide at least one SWAE examiner *Assistance to other organizations *Participation in annual Sharing of Best Practices & Award Luncheon *Benchmarking Tour / Best Practices Workshop



# Preparing Your Award Application

## How to Apply:

- Contact SWAE if you have questions determining whether your organization is eligible to submit an application.
  - File the Intent to Apply and Eligibility Agreement form (by stated deadline) for Organization Level 2, 3, 4 with 50% of the appropriate application fee. (All fees are non-refundable but can be used in the following year.)
  - Submit an electronic application that meets the enclosed guidelines (no paper copies of applications will be accepted). The applicant will provide this electronic copy in a Portable Document Format (PDF) to allow for appropriate printing where necessary. *(Keep in mind that font size and formatting is to match the criteria stipulated in the application, even after figures and graphs have been inserted and saved as a PDF file. The final copy will be tested for format requirements.)* Mail the remaining 50% of the application fee to the SWAE address.
  - Host a site visit per the Performance Excellence Program guidelines and reimburse SWAE for the team's expenses (this item is optional if the organization is submitting for feedback only).
  - An organization that submits a Feedback only application may choose not to receive a site visit. There is no reduction in the Application Fees, but no site visit or site visit expenses will be included in the assessment. The feedback report will then be based on the consensus score of the examiner team. Note: The Site Visit is a vital part of the assessment process. Although an organization may choose not to host the Site Visit, the value of the feedback report will be reduced by this choice. If an organization declares that its application is for Feedback only, this declaration cannot be changed after the application is submitted to the Southwest Alliance for Excellence.
- Table of Contents (page #'s of each Category Item)
  - Organization Chart
  - Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations
  - (Levels 2, 3 & 4) - Organization Profile (not to exceed 5 pages)
  - The Responses to the Criteria Items (not to exceed specified # pages per Level).
- Organizations must submit an electronic application that meets the enclosed guidelines. (No paper copies of applications will be accepted) The applicant will provide this electronic copy in a (PDF).
  - Levels 2, 3 & 4 updated electronic copy of the completed "Intent to Apply and Eligibility Form," pages 4 & 5 only, submitted in a separate document (ONLY if any information has changed).
  - Full payment of the application fee (a minimum of 50% is paid with Intent to Apply and Eligibility submission). The admin fee is paid in full with the Intent.
  - Checks or electronic transfers are preferred. A 5% service charge will be applied for credit card payments.

## Formatting the Application

- Consider each of the questions listed in the criteria in the Level you are applying..
- Use the same Category and Item numerical designations as in the Criteria.
- The application should be formatted:
  - Page size: 8 ½ by 11 inch size
  - Page orientation: Portrait / Pages with graphs; figures & tables: portrait or landscape
  - Lines per page: 60 (includes headings and blank lines separating paragraphs; does not include headers/footers with recurring info, i.e. org. name, page #, etc.)
  - Leading: 2 points between lines (1 point of leading equals 1/72 or 0.0138 inch)
  - Margins: Left = ¼ inch minimum; Right = ½ inch minimum
  - Text Columns: 2 preferred with ¼ inch between columns
  - Numbering: pages that respond to all criteria items should be numbered as such, i.e. Org. Level 4 (1 - 50), Org. Level 3 (1 – 35) or Org. Level 2 (1 – 15); don't number blank pages, or use small Roman numerals, i.e. iii, iv, etc..
  - Figure Numbers: Figures within Organizational Profile and Item sections should be in sequence; use numbers corresponding to the section (e.g., Figure P.1-1, Figure 2.1-2)

## Application Package

- The Application Package consists of:
  - Title Page



# Preparing Your Award Application

## **Formatting the Application** (continued)

- Font and type size:
  - Running text: 10 points minimum; Times New Roman or Arial
  - Do not use narrow, compressed, or condensed fonts
  - The font and type size need not be uniform as long as they meet the requirements
  - If you shrink graphics to fit the space available, ensure that text in the reduced figure meets the requirements
  - Tables filled mainly with text: 8 points minimum; Times New Roman or Arial
  - Other graphics (charts, graphs, data tables, and other figures), including titles and captions: 8 points minimum; any font
- Clearly label each figure using descriptive text. For example, the title of the third figure for results Item 2.1 might read “Figure 2.1-3 Reliability of Service: Carrier-Dropped Calls.”
- Clearly label all axis and units of measure
- All components of the application must be in ONE document; i.e. the title page, table of contents, organization chart, glossary, organization or profile, and the responses to the criteria items.

## **Page Limits and Exclusions**

- Criteria response page limits must include all pictures, graphs, figures, tables, and appendices. These pages must be consecutively numbered. Page limits do NOT include Organizational Profile or Process Profile or Context, glossary, title pages, organization chart, or table of contents.
- Examiners must base their evaluations solely on information contained within the application report. Do not add links to information on internet or websites. Examiners are instructed to rely solely on the content in the application and are not allowed to follow any such links.
- Do not submit copies of video, audiotape or other information aids.

**An application that does not comply with all of the requirements, including the permitted page limit, font size, and margins will not be accepted by SWAE.**

*(Keep in mind that font size and formatting is to match criteria stipulated in the application, even after figures and graphs have been inserted and saved as a PDF file. The final copy will be tested for format requirements.)*

It is suggested that you submit your final application before the due date to avoid potential issues. You may set up an appointment with the SWAE staff to review and ensure your application meets the above requirements.

## **Site Visits**

***(All applicants that wish to be considered for an award will receive a site visit)***

The primary objectives of a Site Visit are to verify the information provided in the Application and to clarify issues and questions raised during review of the application. A general Site Visit schedule is developed by the examiner team, and is provided to the organization in advance of the Site Visit dates. This initial schedule is tentative and may be revised by the team as the Site Visit proceeds. The schedule includes an estimate of the total time for the visit. Site Visits consist of interviews by examiner teams, team reviews of pertinent records and data, including data and information that has been generated since the formal submission of the application, and other appropriate methods for verifying the application content. Every effort will be made by the SWAE and the examiner team to minimize the disruption caused by the Site Visit. Applicants may make an introductory presentation, usually not exceeding 10-15 minutes in length depending on the Level of application. Depending upon the applicant’s size, the examiner team may request a tour of the facility. During and after site visit the examiner team develops a Feedback Report for the Panel of Judges. For Level 4 applications, a mentor will be assigned to the Site Visit. The mentor will ensure that the team and applicant are kept informed of the status of the visit and act as a way for the team to be contacted in the event of unforeseen circumstances. The mentor does not act as a member of the team in evaluating the applicant.



# Preparing Your Award Application

## ***Site Visit Expenses and Protocol***

Site Visit costs may be estimated and partially paid by the applicant prior to the scheduling of the Site Visit. After the Site Visit is completed and expenses have been tabulated, applicants will be invoiced by SWAE for the actual amount of the examiner team expense. This may include lodging, food, meeting room costs for the examiner team at their place of lodging, and travel and/or roundtrip mileage to the applicant's location. Examiner teams endeavor to keep the costs of the Site Visits as low as possible. Expenses of the Site Visit mentor, if any, will be included with the costs of the other team members.

The examiner team will request that the applicant provide a common meeting area on site for the team for the duration of the Site Visit. This area should be secure during the periods of the team's on-site activities and should be kept secured when the team is not on-site. All documentation requested by the team for examination will be reviewed in the team's meeting area – these materials will not be taken off-site by the examiners. If the applicant has restrictions or requirements on the possession or use of personal computer devices, citizenship, security clearances, etc., they should notify SWAE of these constraints prior to submittal of their application.

To avoid any appearances of impropriety or perceptions of undue influence on the examiners by the applicant, examiners are not permitted to accept gifts, tokens of appreciation, or other items as part of the Site Visit. The team will arrange for their accommodations and travel, and may not accept lodging or other services from the applicant. Even if it is available as part of the applicant's normal business or provided at market rates, the team will not accept accommodations from the applicant. SWAE may ask the applicant for contact information on convenient accommodations as they prepare for the Site Visit.

## ***Feedback to Applicants***

The feedback report, a tool for continuous improvement, is a written evaluation by an evaluation team from the Board of Examiners. Each applicant organization will receive a full feedback report at the conclusion of the review process. The feedback report contains an applicant-specific listing of

strengths and opportunities for improvement based on the Criteria. When used by organizations as part of their strategic planning processes, the feedback report can help them focus on their customers and improve productivity. The feedback system is one of the most important components of the Performance Excellence Program process; it provides a pathway for continuous improvement. Strict confidentiality is observed at all times and in every aspect of application review and feedback.

## ***Judges' Final Review***

A final review of all applications is conducted by the Panel of Judges. The Panel of Judges review the examiner team's work for integrity and completeness then develops a recommendation for each applicant. This recommendation is forwarded to SWAE and includes the determination of the level of award for each recipient.

## ***Final Award Determination***

Due diligence is performed for all recommended recipients to determine if there are any other outstanding issues that may affect their selection as a Performance Excellence Program Recipient. The purpose of this final review is to ensure that the integrity of the Program and Awards is maintained.

## ***Feedback Report Review Meetings***

As a value-add to all applicants, whether or not an award is received, SWAE offers each applicant the opportunity to meet with the Lead Examiner and Lead Judge on their application in addition to the SWAE Executive Director to review their final feedback report. These have been very positive and helpful to each applicant.



# Preparing Your Award Application

## **Notes for Public Sector and Not-for-Profit Organizations**

The SWAE Performance Excellence Program is patterned after the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (BPEP). This allows organizations to follow the same criteria, standards, and procedures while making meaningful comparisons with any of the many organizations that apply for the Baldrige Award, state programs based on BPEP, or use BPEP criteria in self-assessments. Unfortunately, a common language across sectors does not exist. Some interpretation and translation of terms is necessary for some of the organizations covered by the Performance Excellence Program. These guidelines should assist in that process.

*Special Note: It is very important that applicants in the public sector or not-for-profit arena describe their unique circumstances in their Organizational Profile. The details provided are critical for examiners to understand the organizational context and learn of the elements of the organization's environment that are significant to improving its performance, including relationships and limitations.*

### **Customers, Stakeholders, Markets, and Sales**

Application of quality principles to organizations relies on a 'customer focus' to drive many policies. Public sector organizations are rapidly adapting quality principles and are beginning to adopt the term 'customer' to mean any stakeholder, client, constituent, or user of the service. In the public sector, however, some differences exist in customers and markets compared to the typical private sector organization. For example, the customers of a police department would include all citizens within the jurisdiction as well as those visiting or passing through the area. 'Market share growth' may be interpreted by the police department to mean such things as crime prosecution rates. 'Sales' by a public sector organization means constituents served or services rendered.

### **Financial Analysis**

Financial analysis and measures of success for private sector organizations often rely on revenue and profits. In the public sector, organizations should use costs, budget performance, fees charged, and any other appropriate financial information to indicate effectiveness of service delivery.

### **Competition and Benchmarking**

Private sector organizations operate in a competitive environment, and quality is one of the major factors that will determine their competitiveness. With the movement toward

competitive government, organizations should indicate how quality relates to their continued survival and success. They may benchmark against comparable organizations in the public or private sectors. For example, an agency within city government could compare its results with like agencies in cities of the same size and demographic characteristics.

### **Laws, Regulations, and Restrictions**

Public sector organizations may be mandated by law to provide services and serve customers while their private sector counterparts may have more freedom to choose products, services, markets, and customers.

### **Support Services**

"Support Services" refers to those functions that provide support in the form of information, training, accounting, or other services to the primary core processes and outcomes of the organization. In a private sector organization, these support functions are areas such as accounting, human resources, purchasing, customer support, supplier services and information systems. In the public sector at least some of these services may be centralized in a separate agency that provides support to other agencies.



# Preparing Your Award Application

## **Notes for Health Care Organizations**

The SWAE Performance Excellence Program is patterned after the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (BPEP). This allows organizations to follow the same criteria, standards, and procedures while making meaningful comparisons with any of the many organizations that apply for the Baldrige Award, state programs based on BPEP, or use BPEP criteria in self-assessments. Unfortunately, a common language across sectors does not exist. Some interpretation and translation of terms is necessary by some of the organizations covered by the Performance Excellence Program. These guidelines should assist in that process.

*Special Note: It is very important that applicants in the healthcare arena describe their unique circumstances in their Organizational Profile. The details provided in these areas are critical for examiners to understand the organizational content and learn of the elements of the organization's environment that are significant to improving its performance, including relationships and limitations.*

### **Customers, Stakeholders, Markets, and Sales**

Application of quality principles relies on a 'customer focus' to drive many policies. Within the Healthcare field, the term "customer" refers to actual and potential users of your organization's services or programs. Patients are the primary customers of health care organizations, but also include: current or future patients, competitor's patients, customers of like or similar organizations, services or programs. Stakeholders refer to groups that are or might be affected by an organization's services, actions, and success. These might include patient families, the community, insurers or other third-party payors, employers, Departments of Health, health care providers, or regulatory bodies. Markets refer to the defined market(s) or area(s) served by your organization. Sales will include health care services, but it may also refer to services provided to the community, especially in not for profit health care organizations.

### **Workforce**

"Workforce" refers to all people actively involved in accomplishing the work of your organization. These may include paid employees, contract staff, independent practitioners, volunteers, and health care students. "Workforce" applies to all workers, including team leaders, directors, and managers at all levels.

### **Financial Analysis**

Financial analysis and measures of success for private sector organizations often rely on revenue and profits. For those in health care this typically will refer to measures of cost, revenue, market position, asset utilization, asset growth and market share. Examples may include returns on investment, value added per staff member, performance to budget, operating margin, or other profitability and liquidity measures.

### **Competition, Comparative Data and Benchmarking**

Private sector organizations operate in a competitive environment: quality is one major factor that will help determine their competitiveness. Likewise, health care organizations should indicate how quality relates to their continued survival and success. Benchmarks are one source of comparative data. Health care organizations, based on selection criteria, may also consider including information obtained from other organizations through sharing, information obtained via contribution to external databases, open literature research, data gathering and evaluation by independent organizations (e.g., CMS, accrediting) on industry data (frequently averages), data on competitor's performance, and other appropriate comparisons from within and outside the health care industry and your markets.

### **Laws, Regulations, Accreditations, and Restrictions**

Health care organizations may be mandated by law to provide services and serve customers while their private sector counterparts may have more freedom to choose products, services, markets, and customers. For healthcare these include HIPAA and JCAHO requirements.

### **Support Services**

"Support Services" refers to those functions that provide support in the form of information, training, accounting, or other services to the primary core processes and outcomes of the organization. In a private sector organization, these support functions are. To a health care organization it may include areas such as accounting, human resources, purchasing, patient support, supplier services and information systems.



# Preparing Your Award Application

## Notes for Educational Organizations

The SWAE Performance Excellence Program is patterned after the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (BPEP). This allows organizations can follow the same criteria, standards, and procedures while making meaningful comparisons with any of the many organizations that apply for the Baldrige Award, state programs based on BPEP, or use BPEP criteria in self-assessments. Unfortunately, a common language across sectors does not exist. Some interpretation and translation of terms is necessary by some of the organizations covered by the Performance Excellence Program. These guidelines should assist in that process.

*Special Note: It is very important that applicants in the educational arena describe their unique circumstances in their Organizational Profile. The details provided are critical for examiners to understand the organizational context and learn of the elements of the organization's environment that are significant to improving its performance, including relationships and limitations.*

### Customers, Stakeholders, Markets, and Sales

Application of quality principles to organizations relies on a 'customer focus' to drive many policies. In education, this refers to students and other stakeholders who are either actual or potential users of your educational programs, offerings or services. Key customers for education are students and others who directly use your programs, offering and services. Stakeholders include others or groups that are or might be affected by your success or actions. Examples of these may include parents, parent organizations, the workforce, governing boards, alumni, other schools, regulatory bodies, taxpayers, policy makers, and communities. Market refers to the defined market or area serviced by your organization. Sales for an educational organization may also represent customers served or services rendered.

### Workforce

The term "workforce" refers to all people actively involved in accomplishing the work of your organization. These include paid employees, contract workers, non-instructional employees, and volunteers. "Workforce" applies to all workers, including administrators and supervisors at all levels.

### Financial Analysis

Financial analysis and measures of success for private sector organizations often rely on revenue and profits. In the public sector, organizations should use costs, budget performance, fees charged, and any other appropriate financial information to indicate effectiveness of service delivery. Specifically for education this would also include measures of cost containment, budget utilization and market share. Areas such as instructional or administration expenditures per student as a percentage of budget, grants and award dollars, program expenditures as a percentage of budget, resources applied to applied to education or redirected to education, grant growth, scholarship growth, and reserves.

### Competition and Benchmarking

Private sector organizations operate in a competitive environment: quality is one major factor that will determine their competitiveness. As competition intensifies for educational organizations at all levels, organizations should indicate how quality relates to their continued survival and success. Benchmarks are one form of comparative data. Others may include data collected by a competent third-party (frequently in averages), performance data from other educational organizations and competitors, similar organizations in the same geography or those offering similar programs, offerings or services in other geographic areas.

### Laws, Regulations, Accreditations, and Restrictions

Public sector organizations may be mandated by law to provide services and serve customers. For educational organization these may include No Child Left Behind or accreditation organizations.

### Support Services

"Support Services" refers to those functions that provide support in the form of information, training, accounting, or other services to the primary core processes and outcomes of the organization. In a private sector organization, these support functions are areas such as accounting, human resources, purchasing, customer support, supplier services and information systems. To an educational organization it may include these or be more student-focused. Areas such as counseling or job placement may be examples.



# Criteria for Performance Excellence Booklets

There are three versions of the *Criteria for Performance Excellence*:

- The [Business/Nonprofit](#) *Criteria for Performance Excellence* are used by the manufacturing, service, small business, nonprofit or government sectors.
- The [Health Care](#) *Criteria for Performance Excellence* are used by health care organizations.
- The [Education](#) *Criteria for Performance Excellence* are used by educational organizations.
  
- [About the Baldrige Criteria](#): Introduction to the Criteria
- [Sample pages from the Criteria Booklet](#) (PDF) (including the Organizational Profile and Item 3.2, Customer Engagement)
- [Organizational Profile](#): A snapshot of your organization, the key influences on how it operates, and the key challenges it faces
- [Criteria Category and Item Commentary](#): Additional guidance on the Criteria
- [Self-Analysis Worksheet](#): A self-assessment tool to use with the Criteria (MS-word) \*link on right column under Resources
- [From Fighting Fires to Innovation: An Analogy for Learning](#): See how organizational learning- a Baldrige core value- moves your organization from reacting to problems to preventing them (JPEG, EPS)
- [Steps toward Mature Processes](#): Locate your organization on this continuum from reactive activities to mature processes aligned with your key strategic and operational goals (JPEG, EPS)
- [The Role of Core Values and Concepts](#): Values and concepts that underlie the Baldrige Criteria categories. (JPEG, EPS)

## How to Purchase the 2021-2022 Criteria

[Purchase](#) your copy today.

[Purchase/Download PDFs](#) (\$12) from NIST

[Purchase Printed Booklets](#) (\$30 plus shipping)

These fees help recover the cost of developing and producing the Criteria.

### Volume Discounts

Volume discounts are available for both electronic and printed formats:

- 5-24 copies: 5% discount
- 25-99 copies: 10% discount
- 100 or more copies: 15% discount



# Criteria for Performance Excellence Overview:

The requirements of the Criteria for Performance Excellence are embodied in seven categories, as follows:

- 1 Leadership
- 2 Strategy
- 3 Customers
- 4 Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management
- 5 Workforce
- 6 Operations
- 7 Results

The figure on page 1 of the Criteria Booklet provides the framework connecting and integrating the categories.

From top to bottom, the framework on the following page has these basic elements.

## Organizational Profile

Your Organizational Profile (top of figure) sets the context for the way your organization operates. Your organization's environment, key working relationships, and strategic situation—including competitive environment, strategic challenges and advantages, and performance improvement system—serve as the background for all you do.

## Performance System

The performance system is composed of the six Baldrige categories in the center of the figure that define your processes and the results you achieve.

Leadership (category 1), Strategy (category 2), and Customers (category 3) represent the leadership triad. These categories are placed together to emphasize the importance of a leadership focus on strategy and customers.

Workforce (Category 5), Operations (Category 6), and Results (Category 7) represents the Results Triad. Your organization's workforce and key operational processes accomplish the work of the organization that yields your overall performance results.

All actions lead to results- a composite of product and process, customer-focused, workforce-focused, leadership and governance and financial and market results.

The arrows in the center of the framework show that all the elements of the system are interrelated.

## System Foundation

Measurement, Analysis and Knowledge Management (Category 4) are critical to effective management and to fact-based, knowledge-driven, agile system for improving performance and competitiveness.

## Criteria Structure

The Seven Criteria categories shown in the figure are subdivided into items and areas to address.

## Items

There are 17 Criteria Items (plus 2 in the Organizational Profile), each with a particular focus. Item titles and point values are given on page 3 of the Criteria booklet. The item format is shown on page 2 of the Criteria booklet.

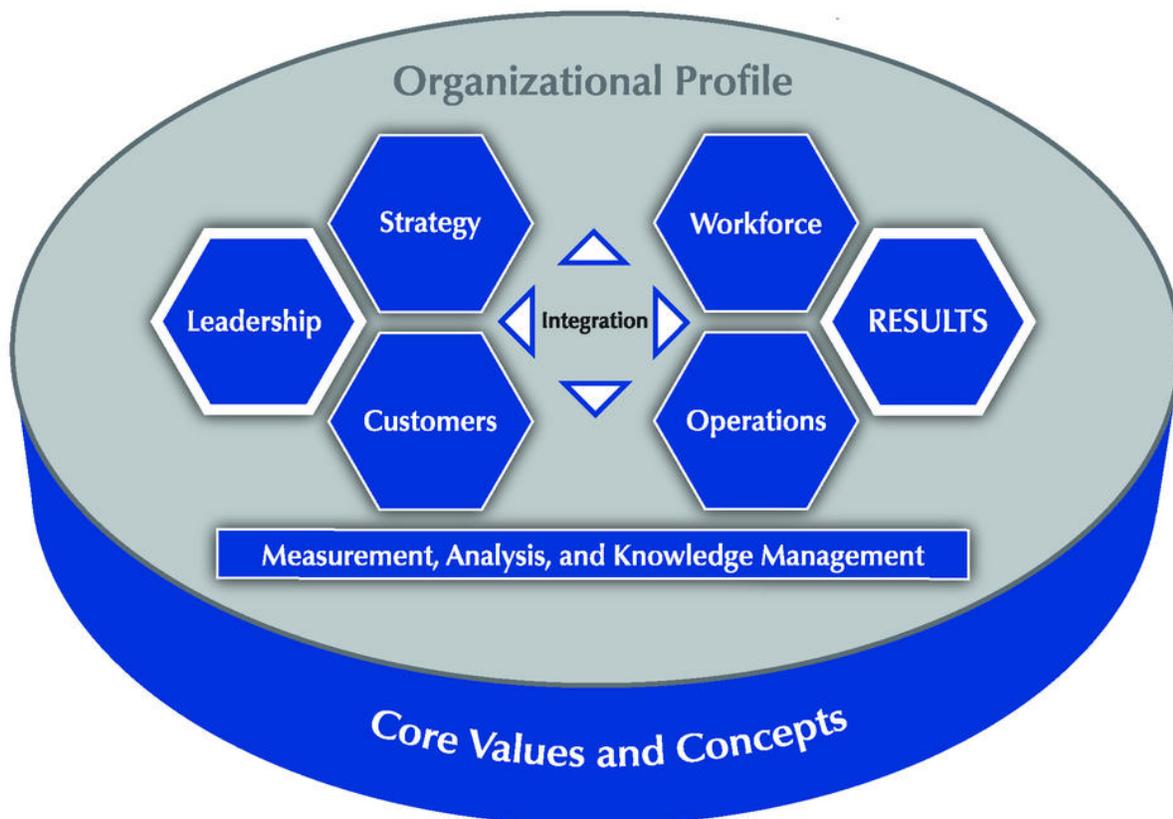
Items are divided into 3 groups according to the kinds of information they ask for:

- The Organizational Profile asks you to define your organizational environment.
- Process Items (Categories 1-6) ask you to define your organizational processes.
- Results Items (Category 7) asks you to report results for your organizational processes.



## Criteria for Performance Excellence Overview:

### A Systems Perspective:



From Baldrige Performance Excellence Program. 2017. *2017–2018 Baldrige Excellence Framework: A Systems Approach to Improving Your Organization's Performance*. Gaithersburg, MD: U.S. Department of Commerce, National Institute of Standards and Technology. <https://www.nist.gov/baldrige>.



# SWAE Award Recipients

## Excellence Award Recipients

### Governor's Award

#### *(currently the Pinnacle Award)*

- 2005 Sonora Quest Laboratories
- 2001 Arizona Department of Transportation
- 1999 56th Medical Group of the 56th Fighter Wing at Luke Air Force Base
- 1997 Raytheon Missile Systems (formerly Hughes Missile Systems Company)
- 1995 Honeywell Satellite Systems
- 1994 Avnet Electronic Marketing Group

### Pioneer Award

- 2019 City of Henderson, NV
- 2018 Yuma Regional Medical Center, AZ
- 2014 City of Henderson, NV
- 2012 Southern Arizona VA Health Care System
- 2010 Scottsdale Healthcare
- 2008 John C. Lincoln Deer Valley Hospital
- 2006 Maricopa County Library District
- 2005 Arizona Game and Fish Department  
Maricopa County Parks & Recreation Department
- 2004 BRGA Division, Honeywell
- 2003 Sonora Quest Laboratories
- 2002 Boeing - Military Aerospace Support – Mesa
- 1999 Interface Data Systems
- 1998 Arizona Department of Economic Security  
Phelps Dodge Miami, Inc. (acquired by Freeport McMoRan Copper & Gold, Inc. in 2007)  
University of Phoenix - Phoenix Campus
- 1997 J.B. Rodgers Mechanical Contractors
- 1996 The Boeing Company (formerly McDonnell Douglas Helicopter Systems)  
Holsum Bakery  
IKON Office Solutions, Technology Services (now Ricoh USA, Inc. as of 2012)  
MicroAge Inc.

- 1995 Arizona Department of Transportation  
CIGNA Healthcare of Arizona Inc.  
Lucent Technologies (now Alcatel-Lucent as of 2006 merger)
- 1994 Cyprus Miami Mining (became Phelps Dodge Miami, Inc., then acquired by Freeport McMoRan Copper & Gold, Inc. in 2007)  
Raytheon Missile Systems (formerly Hughes Missile Systems Company)  
Shea Homes  
SmartPractice
- 1993 Avnet Electronic Marketing Group  
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Arizona  
Boise Cascade Office Products  
CartridgeCare Inc. (acquired by Loffler Companies, Inc.)  
Childress Buick  
Rio Salado Community College  
Sonic Air  
Varian Tempe Electronics Center (acquired by Jabil Circuit Inc. in 2005)

### Category Award *(initiated in 2012)*

- 2020 Yuma Regional Medical Ctr. – Category 6
- 2019 Yuma Regional Medical Ctr. – Category 5
- 2017 City of Henderson Nevada – Category 1 and Category 5
- 2017 Nathan Adelson Hospice – Category 5
- 2015 Student Development Center of the LDS Business College, UT – Category 5
- 2012 Arrowhead Hospital – Category 4

### Achievement Award *(initiated in 2015)*

- 2020 South Davis Community Hospital, UT
- 2019 Nathan Adelson Hospice, NV
- 2017 Yuma Regional Medical Center
- 2016 Nathan Adelson Hospice, NV



# SWAE Award Recipients

## Commitment Award (*initiated in 2015*)

- 2019 R.E. Darling, Inc.
- 2016 Bristol Global Mobility  
Montevista Hospital, NV  
Phoenix Convention Center & Venues  
Scottsdale Medical Imaging  
Yuma Regional Medical Center
- 2015 Deer Valley Unified School District

## Leadership Award (*initiated in 2015*)

- 2021 Richard Derrick – City of Henderson
- 2021 Gary Darling – R.E. Darling Co., Inc.
- 2020 Susan Leonardo – MSS Business Transformation
- 2020 Dr. Robert Trenchel, DO – Yuma Regional Medical Center
- 2019 Lucas Kavlie – Western Governors University
- 2018 Amanda Goodson – Raytheon Missile Systems
- 2017 Jane Dobbs – Canyon State Credit Union
- 2016 Jonathan Gardner – Southern Arizona VA Health Center
- 2015 Dave Dexter – Sonora Quest Laboratories / Laboratory Sciences of Arizona

## Process Award Recipients

### Showcase in Excellence Award (*initiated in 2002*)

- 2015 University of Phoenix (2)  
Yuma Regional Medical Center
- 2014 Arizona State Retirement System (2)  
Deer Valley Unified School District, AZ  
University of Phoenix  
Yuma Regional Medical Center, AZ
- 2013 Deer Valley Unified School District  
Laboratory Sciences of Arizona/Banner Health  
Scottsdale Healthcare  
Town of Gilbert Fire Department  
University of Phoenix (2)
- 2012 Banner Health  
Maricopa County Department of Transportation

- Rio Salado College  
Scottsdale Healthcare (2)  
University of Phoenix (3)
- 2011 Avnet Global Solutions Center  
Deer Valley Unified School District  
Laboratory Sciences of Arizona / Banner  
Boswell Medical Center Laboratory  
Maricopa County Adult Probation Department  
Maricopa County Department of Transportation  
Rio Salado College  
University of Phoenix
- 2010 Banner Desert Medical Center  
The Boeing Company - Rotorcraft Division – Mesa (2)  
The Council on Chiropractic Education  
Deer Valley Unified School District  
Laboratory Sciences of Arizona/Banner  
Del Webb Medical Center Laboratory  
Maricopa County Animal Care and Control  
Maricopa County Correctional Health Services  
Maricopa County Public Works Facilities Management Division  
TriWest Healthcare Alliance  
University of Phoenix
- 2009 Arizona Game and Fish Department  
Laboratory Sciences of Arizona / Banner  
Baywood Medical Center Laboratory  
Laboratory Sciences of Arizona / Banner  
Estrella Medical Center Laboratory  
Scottsdale Healthcare (2)  
University of Phoenix
- 2008 Arizona Game & Fish  
Maricopa County Adult Probation Department  
Maricopa County Planning & Development Department  
Verde Valley Medical Center

(2003 – 2007 Showcase in Excellence Award Recipients can be viewed at: [www.swae.org](http://www.swae.org))



# Level 1 Application Form

**This form is to be used by Level 1 applicants only. Level 2, 3, 4 & Process Level applicants, please use the Intent-to-Apply form.**

Submit your Level 1 Application form and application fee to:

[info@swae.org](mailto:info@swae.org).

Southwest Alliance for Excellence  
3961 E. Chandler Blvd. Suite 111-334 (mailing address only)  
Phoenix AZ, 85048

### 1. Applicant

Organization Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Total # of employees (full time equivalent): \_\_\_\_\_

\*Part-time workers are counted as total part-time hours per week divided by 40. For example: 10 people at 20 hours is equal to 5 full time equivalent employees (10\*20 / 40 = 5).

### 2. Industry Sector

Please check the sectors that best describes your organization

- |  |                                      |   |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing | <input type="checkbox"/> Government  | <input type="checkbox"/> For Profit     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education     | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Care |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Service       | <input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit   | <input type="checkbox"/> Not-for-Profit |

### 3. Official Contact

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address (no PO Box): \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Percent of physical assets in the state from which the organization is applying: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Has the organization existed for at least one year?  Yes  No
6. Is the organization headquartered in the same state from which the organization is applying?  
 Yes  No
7. Is the organization a subsidiary of a larger organization?  
 Yes  No
8. If the applicant answered "Yes" to being a subsidiary, complete the following:
- a. Parent Organization: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Address: \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Highest Official of Parent Organization: \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Title: \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Does the Applicant comprise over 50% of the parent organization?  Yes  No

**9. Fees**

An Application Fee is required with this Application Form. (Refer to the fee schedule in the Application Guidance Manual, page 9).

Total Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

10. One-Sentence Description of your organization: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**I state and attest that:** To the best of my knowledge, no untrue statement or omission of a material fact has been made in this application package. Based on the information herein and the current eligibility requirements for the Southwest Alliance for Excellence Performance Excellence Program, my organization is eligible to apply. I understand if information is found not to support eligibility at any time during the Award Process cycle, my organization will no longer receive consideration for recognition and will only receive a Feedback Report.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date



## 2021 Intent to Apply & Eligibility Agreement Form – Organization Level

Intent to Apply submitted to SWAE by.....June 30, 2021  
 Applications submitted to SWAE by.....August 16, 2021  
 Site Visit ..... Nov 1-5 or Nov 8-12, 2021  
 Award Recipient(s) Announcement.....Dec 13-17, 2021  
 Feedback Report sent to applicant by.....January 3-7, 2021

Congratulations! By applying to the Performance Excellence Program, you are taking a major step to improve your organization’s performance and growth. Because of the learning inherent in completing the application and in the feedback you will receive, the effort that goes into applying to the Program should result in a significant return on your investment. The process will help you prioritize opportunities for improvement and identify strengths to celebrate. As a result, the rate at which your organization improves should accelerate.

### Base Application Costs:

- At least 50% of the application fee and 100% of the admin fee is due (**Org. Level 2, 3 & 4 only**) with the submission of the Intent to Apply and Eligibility Form; remainder is due with submission of the application.
- If the applicant, for any reason, chooses not to submit the application, the portion of the fee submitted with the Intent to Apply and Eligibility Form may be applied towards the next year’s application fee. It is not refundable.

### Application Fee Table

Application	Number of Employees	Application Fee (Non-member)	Application Fee (Member)
<b>Commitment (Level 2*)</b>	1-500	\$2400	\$2000
	501-1500	\$3600	\$3200
	More than 1500	\$4600	\$4200
<b>Achievement (Level 3*)</b>	1-500	\$3600	\$3000
	501-1500	\$4800	\$4200
	More than 1500	\$5800	\$5200
<b>Excellence (Level 4*)</b>	1-500	\$4800	\$4000
	501-1500	\$6000	\$5200
	More than 1500	\$7000	\$6200

\*Additional administration fee per application: Level 2 - \$500 fee; Level 3 - \$750 fee; Level 4 - \$1000 fee

**Site Visit Fees are invoiced at actual expense amount. (Refer to pages 9-10 and 29-30 of the Application Guidance Document.)**

#### **Additional Costs:**

- Site visit costs to reimburse travel and lodging for the examiner team: These costs may be estimated and a portion paid by the applicant prior to the scheduling of a site visit. The remainder will be paid after the site visit.
  - Site visit costs include examiner team's hotel accommodations, food, transportation, etc.
  - Select dates for site visit on the Intent to Apply and Eligibility Form attached (page 31).
  - The length of a site visit is determined by the type of application and size of the organization. Refer to the Application Guidance Manual (page 9).

#### **Additional Requirements:**

Because having internal knowledge of the Criteria framework is critical to advancing excellence within your organization, and to support the Performance Excellence Program, it is necessary that each applicant provide or sponsor at least one examiner per application submitted or increase each application fee by \$1,000. **(NOTE - Please contact SWAE if you have questions or concerns, or if you are unable to provide an examiner.)**

- SWAE encourages applicant organizations to provide more than the necessary volunteer examiner to serve in the current award application cycle. An examiner fee of \$500 or \$1,000 will depend on examiner previously serving 2 of the past 3 years, will be assessed as a deposit. *(Refer to Examiner Application for details.)*
- Upon successful completion of training **and** successful completion of service on an evaluation team, the examiner/organization may receive a refund of a portion of the examiner fee.
- Examiners can be any staff member within the organization, but are typically senior leaders, quality / improvement professionals, and/or other functional leaders. We seek a variety of expertise on our Board of Examiners – those representing different sectors (manufacturing, service, non-profit, healthcare, education, and government), those possessing different functional expertise (quality, finance/accounting, human resources, operations, IT, etc.), and those at different levels of leadership.

#### **Award Level Descriptions:**

- Organization Level Applications - Refer to page 9 of the Application Guidance Manual.

#### **By completing and submitting the Intent to Apply, the applicant agrees to:**

- Follow the guidelines provided in the Application Guidance Manual, criteria and materials.
- Provide an electronic application (no paper copies of applications will be accepted). Allow SWAE to upload the application, and the Board of Examiners and Judges to download the application, or it can be copied temporarily as a file onto a thumb drive or printed. The applicant will provide this electronic copy in Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format to allow for appropriate printing where necessary. *(Keep in mind that font size and formatting are to match criteria stipulated in the application and guidance document, even after figures and graphs have been inserted and saved as a PDF file. The final copy will be tested for format requirements.)*
- Provide to SWAE an electronic copy of the original application edited for general public consumption.
- Give permission for SWAE to use the organization's recipient status and edited application (see above) for marketing and promotional materials for the Performance Excellence Program and SWAE.
- Share with other organizations, should the applicant become a recipient of an award, non-proprietary information on successful performance strategies. Such sharing may take place through a variety of methods including making presentations at SWAE workshops and events.
- Supply information requested by SWAE (or other designated representatives) concerning the applicant's organization in the event issues are identified that could affect the credibility and valuation of the Performance Excellence Program.

**SWAE agrees to the following items:**

- Unless the applicant is selected as a recipient or the applicant requests such, SWAE will not disclose its identity to anyone other than members of the Board of Examiners or the Panel of Judges.
- A training session on the application and site visit preparation may be conducted by SWAE at the applicant’s choice of location and time prior to application submittal. Any charges for this session will be the responsibility of the applicant.
- SWAE will coordinate the application process and ensure the examiner team is properly constituted.
- SWAE will deliver an electronic copy of the Feedback Report to the applicant’s contact person at the conclusion of the application process.
- SWAE will take all prudent measures to protect the integrity of the applicant’s electronic application so that only the appropriate examiner team and judges can view the application.

**Organization Eligibility and Restrictions**

<p><b>Specific to All Award applicants</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An organization with at least 50% of its assets, revenues or workforce based in Arizona, Nevada or Utah, as appropriate, OR any organization with its headquarters located in those states.</li> <li>• An organization that is part of a larger entity must have sufficient autonomy and authority to make decisions, initiate actions, implement programs, and allocate resources free from the direct control of the larger entity. For example, a college within a university is eligible if it can demonstrate sufficient independent control over the factors that affect the quality of its processes and services.</li> <li>• All sectors are eligible – manufacturing, service, healthcare, education, profit, not-for-profit, private, public, local, state or federal government. NOTE: Organizations whose purposes are primarily social are not eligible.</li> <li>• Must have existed at least one year prior to submitting an application.</li> <li>• Is a permanent organization; i.e., it must not be an organizational unit with a defined limited life or an ad-hoc committee, board, or other such unit.</li> <li>• Must have more than two full-time workers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional specific to applicants for Organization Levels 2, 3 &amp; 4</b></p> <p>Level 2 – Commitment Award  Level 3 – Achievement Award  Level 4 – Pinnacle, Pioneer or Category in Excellence Award</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All major operations of the applicant may be inspected as part of the Award Program. This means that the organization’s operations, activities, and results can be assessed and visited by a team of examiners.</li> <li>• A subsidiary and its parent organization may not apply for the award in the same year -Different subsidiaries of the same parent organization may apply concurrently.</li> </ul>
<p><b>If you have questions about your organization’s eligibility, please call SWAE (480) 874-5815.</b></p>	



# 2021 Intent to Apply and Eligibility Form

1. The applicant is applying for:

**Organization Level**

- Level 4 (Excellence)       Level 3 (Achievement)       Level 2 (Commitment)

**Workforce Size**

- Large Organization (More than 1500 paid workers)  
 Medium Organization (501-1500 paid workers)  
 Small Organization (Less than 500 paid workers)

2. Please check which of the following weeks the applicant's preferred week for site visit is. If both weeks are acceptable, please check both weeks. *Site visits for Organization Level applicants will not exceed 5 days; actual duration will depend on initial review of the application and size of the organization. (Refer to the Application Guidance Document, page 9.)*

- Week of November 1 – 5, 2021** (Your "preferred" week is not guaranteed.)  
 **Week of November 8 – 12, 2021**

3. Organization name *(include parent & subsidiary names if applicable)*:

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Organization address [city, state, zip] *(headquarters address or location applying to the program)*:

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Contact person *(to be the liaison with SWAE)*:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Contact person's telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax number: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Contact person's email address: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Name of CEO or President *(provide name of person with closest approximate position, if different)*:

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Quality/Performance Excellence Director *(person with closest approximate responsibilities)*:

\_\_\_\_\_

<p>10. Industry</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Computers/Technology</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Education</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Energy/Utilities</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Finance or Insurance</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Government or Nonprofit</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Professional/Commercial Services</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate/Construction</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Retail</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Telecommunications</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Wholesale Distribution</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>please specify</i>)</p>	<p>11. Type of organization</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> For Profit</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not for Profit (non-government)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Government</p> <p>12. Number of full-time paid workers</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2-19    <input type="checkbox"/> 20-49    <input type="checkbox"/> 50-99</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 100-249    <input type="checkbox"/> 250-499    <input type="checkbox"/> 500+</p> <p>13. Number of part-time paid workers</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Zero    <input type="checkbox"/> 1-19    <input type="checkbox"/> 20-49</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 50-99    <input type="checkbox"/> 100-249    <input type="checkbox"/> 250-499</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 500+</p> <p>14. Percent of workforce in applicant's state ____%</p> <p>15. Number of Volunteers _____</p>
--	---

16. Percent of physical assets in the state from which the organization is applying. \_\_\_\_\_%

17. Has the organization existed for at least one year?     Yes     No

18. Is the organization headquartered in the same state from which the organization is applying?  
 Yes     No

19. Is the organization a subsidiary of a larger organization?     Yes     No

20. If applicant answered "Yes" to being a subsidiary, complete the following:

- a. Parent Organization \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Address \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Highest Official of Parent Organization \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Title \_\_\_\_\_
- e. Does Applicant comprise over 50% of parent organization?     Yes     No

21. Confidentiality Considerations:

- a. Applicant waives the right to bring suit against the Southwest Alliance for Excellence, from any claims, actions, or losses arising from the Performance Excellence Program process.  
 Accept     Decline

**Confidentiality Note:** Strict conflict of interest rules apply throughout the processes. Names of applicants, individual applications, commentary, and scoring information developed during the review of the application are regarded as proprietary and are kept confidential. Such information is available only to those individuals directly involved in the evaluation and application distribution process. Information on successful strategies of award recipients and other applicants may be released only with written approval of the applicant.

22. The applicant submits the following required and potential, additional Examiner candidates:

**(Please contact the SWAE if you have questions or concerns, or if you are unable to provide an examiner.)**

**Necessary** Examiner: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Potential Examiner: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Potential Examiner: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Potential Examiner: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** (Examiner Applications can be found at [www.swae.org](http://www.swae.org) go to [What We Do](#) on the top Navigation bar of the home page then click on [Examiners](#), or you can request one from the SWAE at [info@swae.org](mailto:info@swae.org).)

## Release Statement

We agree to all terms stated above and attest to the validity and truth of all information we have provided. We understand that by applying for the Performance Excellence Program, we accept all the requirements of the Performance Excellence Program process. The application fee is non-refundable. We agree to host a site visit and to facilitate an open and unbiased examination. We understand that our organization must reimburse the Southwest Alliance for Excellence (SWAE) for reasonable costs and expenses associated with a site visit and the team of examiners. Additionally, we understand that our organization must provide one examiner per application, to support the program.

The SWAE may request additional information concerning our organization if issues are identified that could affect the credibility and valuation of the Performance Excellence Program. This information must be supplied, if requested, to the SWAE. We agree to make SWAE aware upon inquiry of any current or pending regulatory, criminal, or civil action that could damage the reputation of the Performance Excellence Program process.

If our organization is selected to receive an Award, we agree to share non-proprietary information on our successful performance and quality strategies with other organizations. This includes participation in conferences, workshops or other events sponsored by SWAE.

By applying to the Performance Excellence Program, the applicant agrees to provide an electronic application and allow SWAE to upload the application, and the Board of Examiners and Judges to download the application, so it can be copied temporarily as a file onto a thumb drive or printed.

By applying to the Performance Excellence Program, the applicant agrees to provide to SWAE an electronic copy of the original application edited for general public consumption. The applicant also agrees to allow SWAE to use this edited application as well as the organization's name as a recipient of an award in educational, marketing and promotional materials for the Performance Excellence Program and the SWAE. However, our organization will continue to own the information.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, Contact Person of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature, CEO or Other Official)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Please sign where indicated, email pages 32-34 of this document to [info@swae.org](mailto:info@swae.org)  
and provide a minimum of 50% of the application fee and 100% of the admin fee to SWAE.

**via Credit Card (+ 5% service fee), electronic payment or check to:**

Southwest Alliance for Excellence  
3961 E. Chandler Blvd., Suite 111-334 (*mailing address only*)  
Phoenix, Arizona 85048-0303  
(480) 874-5815