READ THIS SECTION FIRST

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

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

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

About the Questions
The questions below are in three forms:

- Yes/No
- Description or Narrative
- File Upload

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

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

If one or more of the Standards benchmarks is not applicable to your organization, please respond N/A along with an explanation of the special circumstances that make it not applicable to your organization. For questions which require a file upload, upload a document that includes your explanation. For questions which request a narrative answer, please try to keep responses to 1,000 words or less. The one exception may be the program evaluation section, which could require a more substantive answer, depending on the number of programs offered by the organization.
In Section 2, you will be asked to attach board minutes for the period since your last application or for the past fiscal year, along with any board minutes from previous years which document board review or approval of policies or procedures required in this application. If a given policy has not been reviewed or approved in the past two years, there is no need to attach the minutes. Simply indicate the date of approval in the space provided for each policy.

**Updating Your Previous Application Form**

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

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

**Mechanics**

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

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

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

Basic Information
This information is requested again to ease review of your application.
Legal Name
Abbreviations, Acronyms or Doing Business As
Employee Identification Number (EIN)
Website

Disclosures
Are there currently, or have there been since your last application any lawsuits or formal administrative complaints (such as Equal Employee Opportunity Commission, complaint pending before a regulatory body) brought against the organization?
- Yes
- No

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

Has your organization been the subject of any negative or unfavorable print or electronic media since your last application?
- Yes
- No

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


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

- Yes
- No

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

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**Required Attachments**

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

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List the states where the organization currently solicits donations.

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Provide the date the board approved applying for accreditation or recognition. (These minutes should be included in the application in Section 2).

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**Annual Report**
If updated since your last application, attach a copy of the organization’s most recent published annual report.

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If the annual report is available online, include the link below.
1. MISSION, STRATEGY, and EVALUATION

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

A. Mission and Impact

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

B. Planning Strategically

Describe how the organization has completed a review of critical strategic issues in its community and whether it has evaluated the continuing need for its programs or services.

Strategic Planning Documents
Optional Attachments: environmental scan, SWOT analysis, business plans, forecasts.

C. Organizational Evaluation

No benchmarks are required in this area for Basics Enhanced recognition.

D. Program Evaluation

If changes have been made to your program evaluation framework, update the responses in your Basics application. In the space below, provide an overview of the changes to the program evaluation and describe which programs are currently being evaluated. Your answer should demonstrate that at least 40% of programs are being evaluated.

Describe how the organization measures the satisfaction of program participants.
Program Evaluation Attachment

Required Attachment: Attach any related program evaluation tools such as examples of logic models, surveys, pre- or post-tests, sample data reports, implementation planning, sample dashboards or board reports, etc. These samples should provide evidence that at least 40% of programs are being evaluated.

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E. Strategic Partnerships

No benchmarks are required in this area for Basics Enhanced recognition.
2. LEADERSHIP: BOARD, STAFF, and VOLUNTEERS
This section of the application will ask you to answer questions about how the leaders of your organization contribute to its success. You will be asked to provide information about board operations, the board/staff relationship, and management functions. This section also asks you to contemplate how your leaders demonstrate cultural competency organization wide – in the organization’s culture, the policies and procedures of the organization, the management of employees and volunteers, in its programs and services, and in the way the organization interacts with its stakeholders.

A. Leadership and Governance

Governance, Fiduciary Responsibility and Board and Committee Meetings

Board Meeting Agendas
Required Attachment: Attach board meeting agendas for the past fiscal year.

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

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

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

Describe the board's role in the evaluation of the executive. Does the executive provide a self-assessment as part of this process? How does the board plan for improvement on areas of growth identified in the evaluation?

Executive Evaluation Tool

Required Attachment: Attach the tool used for evaluation of the chief executive.

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

Describe how the board supports executive functions. Provide examples of board support for executive or staff functions such as advocacy, communications, resource development, strategy implementation or evaluation efforts. Items that may be addressed include board involvement in staff committees or examples of expertise offered by the board to staff in specific areas.

Board Effectiveness

Describe how board members are oriented to their positions and to the organization. Additionally, describe what educational or leadership development opportunities are offered to board members.

Board Orientation Materials

Required Attachments: Attach the board orientation agenda or materials, presentations, etc.
Succession Planning and Leadership Development

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

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

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

B. Leadership and Operational Management

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

Supporting the Board
Describe how the executive supports the board in its functions. Provide examples of the executive’s support for board functions in areas such as governance, financial oversight, advocacy, resource development, strategy, and evaluation. This may address issues like staff involvement in board committees or examples of expertise offered by the staff to board in specific areas.

Board Support
Required Attachments: Provide examples of information or support provided by the staff to the board or board committees such as board packets, organization or program reports, and financial information.
Organizational and Financial Sustainability
No benchmarks are required in this area for Basics Enhanced recognition.

Managing Employees and Volunteers

Volunteer Policies
Required Attachment: Attach a copy of the organization's volunteer policies.

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

Indicate the pages which address the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Attachment</th>
<th>Volunteer Policies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment, Selection, and Hiring</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Screening and Background Checks (if applicable)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working Conditions</td>
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<td>Supervision and Regular Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Firing and Separation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confidentiality of Employee and Organization Information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grievance Procedures for Volunteers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whistleblower Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orientation and Education</td>
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<td>Growth and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recognition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Code of Ethics/Standards for Excellence

Do volunteers acknowledge receipt of these policies in writing?

- Yes
- No

Volunteer Orientation
Optional Attachment: Attach volunteer orientation documents such as an agenda or checklist.

Describe the process by which volunteers are evaluated (include information on who performs the evaluation).

Volunteer Evaluation
Optional attachment: Attach any tools or methodology used for volunteer evaluations.

C. Cultural Competency
Describe how the leadership of the organization assesses its capacity to effectively serve and interact with people equitably across different cultures and backgrounds.

Cultural Competency Assessment
Optional Attachment: Attach the tool the organization uses to assess its cultural competency.

Define the community that the organization serves. Include demographic information like race or gender, and any other diversity elements that may be important to your mission or to your stakeholders (e.g., profession, skills, age, income, geography, etc.)

3. LEGAL COMPLIANCE AND ETHICS

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

A. Maintaining Legal Compliance

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

B. Required Public Disclosures

Provide the name and position of the individual responsible for ensuring that the organization responds to requests for public documents, like the organization’s Form 990, Form 1023, and IRS determination letter.

C. Reporting Misconduct and Whistleblower Protection

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

D. Conflicts of Interest

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

E. Ethics

Grievance Procedure

Required Attachment: Attach a copy of the Grievance Procedure for program participants.

Describe how the organization’s program participants are made aware of the grievance procedure.
4. FINANCE AND OPERATIONS
This section of the application will ask you to answer questions about finances and operations of your organization. Areas covered include financial budgeting, reporting, and monitoring; internal controls and other financial policies, personnel policies, administrative policies, and risk management practices.

A. Financial Budgeting, Reporting, and Monitoring

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

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

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

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

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

Form 990
Required Attachment: Attach a copy of the organization’s most recent Form 990, if you have filed since your last application.
Provide the date and page of the minutes where the board’s review can be found. This is required annually.

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

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

B. Internal Controls and Financial Policies

Purchasing Practices
Required Attachment: Attach a copy of the organization's policies and procedures which address purchasing practices.

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

Investments
Required Attachment: Attach the policy which addresses investment of the organization’s assets.

Provide the date and page of the minutes where the board's approval of the policy can be found.
C. Personnel Policies
These were addressed above in Leadership section.

D. Administrative Policies

Information Technology
Required Attachment: Attach a copy of the organization's policies addressing information technology (including data security).

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

Communications and Social Media
Required Attachment: Attach a copy of the organization's policies addressing communications and social media.

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

Crisis and Disaster Planning
Required Attachment: Attach a copy of the organization's policies addressing crisis and disaster planning, including crisis communications.

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

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

Directors and Officers Liability Insurance
Required Attachment: If the declaration pages in your previous application have expired, attach a copy of the Directors and Officers Liability Insurance declaration page covering the current period. (or board minutes documenting the board’s decision to forgo insurance)
5. RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
This section of the application will ask you to answer questions about the organization’s resource development planning and stewardship. Questions will ask how the board and staff determine which sources of income they will seek, including income from fee for service activity, government contracts and grants, foundation grants, corporate partnerships, contributions or sponsorships, individual solicitations, long-term investments, social enterprise, and unrelated business income.

A. and B. Resource Plan and Sources of Income
No benchmarks are required in this area for Basics Enhanced recognition.

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

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

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

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

E. Acceptance of Gifts
No benchmarks are required in this area for Basics Enhanced recognition.
F. Fundraising on Behalf of the Organization
Has the organization hired any outside fundraising consultants since its last application?

- Yes
- No

Fundraising Consultants
If Yes, Required Attachment: Provide a list of the outside fundraising consultants hired by the organization since your last application. Provide documentation that they are registered with the state’s office that regulates charitable fundraising, if applicable.
6. PUBLIC AWARENESS, ENGAGEMENT, and ADVOCACY

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

A. Educating and Engaging the Public

Describe how the organization makes the following information available to the public: the organization's mission, program activities, board of directors, key leadership, and basic financial data (Statement of Financial Activities, Statement of Financial Position).

Describe how the public can provide input and feedback to the organization. Provide links to a website feedback form or contact information, and social media sites (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.).

B. Advancing the Mission through Public Policy and Advocacy

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

C. Engaging in Lobbying and Political Activity

Does the organization engage in lobbying?

○ Yes
○ No

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

If the organization has participated in lobbying as defined by their applicable federal, state, or local authorities in the past year or since your last application, describe whether these costs were reported.
Lobbyist Registration

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