



Questions in the Standards for Excellence Accreditation Application

February 2025

Applications are submitted using the Standards for Excellence Institute's online application system found at standardsforexcellence.org. Applicants will need to complete all required fields. Applications can be saved as a draft so that a team member can return later to complete the form. Applicants are highly encouraged to save their applications frequently during the application process. As each section is completed, be sure to click save/complete. Once all six sections are completed, then applicants can submit their full application package.

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

Type the organization's mission statement. Describe how key organization leaders and representatives and community partners helped to shape the mission. Describe how your organization ensures that its mission statement accurately reflects its current priorities and activities.

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

Type the organization's vision statement. Describe how key organization leaders, representatives, and community partners helped to shape the vision. How does your organization ensure that its impact is fair, equitable, and ethical, and how much do the mission, vision, and values play a role in this?

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

Type the organization's values statement(s) and describe how it guides the work of the organization and the community it serves. Describe how your organization incorporates equity, inclusion, and diversity into its mission, vision, and values statements

Provide a list of the programs and services offered by your organization. Describe how they relate to the organization's mission. Attach a document outlining this list which may include a link to the organization's website where programs are described.

B. Planning Strategically

How does your organization engage in planning strategically? Describe the methods typically used (retreats, meetings), who is involved (board, staff, committees), and what information is consulted (impact surveys, program data). What process does your organization use to include the diverse perspectives from the community in its strategy and planning?

Attach documents demonstrating the board and staff's role in short-term planning. This could be a work plan or board/staff retreat agenda.

How does your organization distinguish between short-term operational plans that address current initiatives, and long-term plans of three years or more that develop the organization's broader aspirations for the future?

Attach documents demonstrating the board and staff's role in long-term planning, including the strategic plan.

Planning Strategically: Provide the date and page number of the minutes demonstrating the board's approval of the existing strategic plan.

If approval has not taken place in the last year, upload a copy of the minutes recording the board's approval of the existing strategic plan.

Attach additional recent documents that demonstrate how your organization conducts strategy and planning. These might include department or team strategies, a SWOT analysis, environmental surveys, business plans, forecasts, etc.

Upload any annual planning, business planning, work plans, or operational planning documents that the organization uses.

C. Organizational Evaluation

How does your organization check its activities to make sure all efforts focus on achieving the mission and supporting a culture where individuals are included and accepted. Describe what tools are used, how frequently assessments occur, and what the organization has learned or is working on as a result of its most recent evaluation. Provide a list of all programs and the

percentage of total organizational effort devoted to each program. The percentages should add up to 100%. Program 1: 25% Program 2: 25% Program 3: 25% Program 4: 25%, etc.

D. Program Evaluation

Describe the process your organization uses to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of its programs and services. This may include tools for collecting information (surveys, interviews, intake forms), methods for analyzing data (quantitative and qualitative), and software support (database).

What data (qualitative and quantitative) does your organization collect and monitor?

Describe how the evaluation methods include input from program participants.

How does your organization determine success or service satisfaction?

How does your organization evaluate the cost-effectiveness of its evaluation methods?

How does your organization make sure that when evaluating programs, the process is fair to everyone? Do you consider characteristics like age, gender, ethnicity, etc., to ensure that diverse experiences are included?

How is evaluation data shared across the organization, including board, staff, and program participants when applicable? Describe how the information is used to adjust, expand, or eliminate programs. What methods does your organization use to measure its outcomes? Describe any relevant theory of change or other methods used to examine how program outcomes support the mission.

Program Evaluation Attachments

Attach examples of program evaluation tools such as logic models, theory of change diagrams, surveys, pre- or post-tests, sample data reports, implementation planning, sample dashboards or board reports. Samples should provide evidence that all of your programs are being evaluated.

Attach samples or examples of program evaluation tools such as examples of logic models, surveys, pre- or post-tests, sample data reports, implementation planning, sample dashboards or board reports, etc. You should include enough information to provide evidence that you are practicing the processes and procedures described above.

E. Strategic Partnerships

What service-delivery or philanthropic partnerships does your organization have within your community or network? What criteria does your organization use to determine who to partner with? What process do you use to show diligence? What standards of practice between partner organizations have been established for sharing information, logos/trademarks, resources, or other items?

Attach any sample memorandum of understanding, contracts, or other similar documents to support your due diligence in strategic partnerships.

Attach board policies that apply to strategic partnerships. On each policy, write the date the policy was last reviewed and/or approved by the board.

Provide the board minutes where the board's approval can be found.

List the organizations your organization is a member of or participates in (for example: membership organizations, professional associations, civic or community organizations).

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 those that you serve.

A. Leadership and Governance

Governance, Fiduciary Responsibility and Board and Committee Meetings

How does your board ensure that its members are connected to the mission, its composition is diverse, and that board members understand their fiduciary responsibilities?

What practices does your board use to exercise governance for the organization?

Include items such as:

- 1) how many members are on the board;
- 2) how often the board meets;
- 3) whether the board has delegated its authority to any committee; and
- 4) method for taking and storing minutes.

Please describe these practices that your board uses to exercise governance for the organization.

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

Board Annual Calendar Attach a copy of the board's annual board calendar.

Board Meeting Minutes Please attach a full fiscal year of board minutes.

Attach any board minutes from previous years which document board review or approval of policies or procedures required in this application. 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.

How many documents will you be uploading for Board Minutes?

Are there any additional minutes outside of the current fiscal year that contain approval of policies in this application?

Has the board designated decision-making authority to any committee?

Executive Supervision, Performance and Compensation

Describe the process the board undertook to conduct the Executive's most recent performance evaluation and the setting of compensation and benefits. Include who was involved in the process, what methods of evaluation were used, and if the job description was reviewed as part of the process.

Provide the date of the board's minutes within the last year for when the Executive's review was discussed by the board.

Describe the Executive's compensation package. List any resources used such as compensation reports.

Executive Contract

If there is a contract in place, attach a copy of the executive director's contract.

If the contract is attached, provide the minutes where the board's most recent approval can be found.

Executive Compensation Policy

Attach a copy of the Executive Compensation Policy.

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

Executive Job Description

Attach the Executive's job description.

Provide the date and page of the board minutes where the board's most recent evaluation of the Executive can be found. This is required annually.

Board Meetings

The board meeting experience is where the board's decisions and actions occur. Describe how your board conducts the four essential elements of its meetings:

- 1) How does your board determine the purpose or focus for each meeting (beyond its function as a board meeting);
- 2) What tools does it use to keep the meeting on track and on topic and who determines what focus each meeting has;
- 3) What governance practices, such as consent agendas or timed agendas, does the board use to make efficient and effective use of its time; and

4) How does the board ensure it is making the best use of board member's time and attention during meetings?

Board-Executive Partnership

Executive Evaluation Tool

Attach the tool used for the most recent evaluation of the Executive. This does not need to be a completed evaluation with data or final report, just the tool that was used.

Provide the minutes where the board's most recent evaluation of the executive can be found. This is required annually.

How does the board support the Executive without moving into managing the organization or its staff? Describe examples or processes used to create clear lines of communication, support for staff or program functions like advocacy and resource development, and support of the Executive's decisions when management decisions are made. If governing policies are in place to support the board-executive partnership, include a description of those policies.

Attach any additional documents that support the examples described above.

Executive Authority

Attach examples of the governing policies described above.

If these policies are attached, provide the minutes where the board's most recent approval of the attached policies can be found.

Board Effectiveness

Describe the board's self-evaluation process and include what methods it uses to evaluate its governance practices and how often. How is the board using the results to further improve the board's growth and development? Share examples of change made as a result of the self-evaluation.

Provide the date and page of minutes where the board's most recent review of its self-evaluation can be found.

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

How are board members oriented to their position and prepared to serve the organization? What methods are used and who is involved? Additionally, describe what educational or leadership development opportunities are offered to board members and whether Standards for Excellence principles or materials are used.

Board Recruitment and Orientation

Attach documents relevant to recruiting individuals for board service such as related governance policies or sample board member applications.

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

Board Job Description

Attach a copy of the board's job description, agreement letter, or list of expectations- ensuring that the document reflects equity and community considerations. Include responsibilities like attending meetings, helping raise money, being on committees, following the organization's values, and getting involved in the organization's programs.

Provide the date and page of minutes where the approval or review of the board's job description occurred.

Board Orientation Materials

Attach the materials used in the board's orientation, including agenda, materials, presentations, etc.

What is your average board meeting attendance? (Example: Percentage of members who attend each meeting)

Board Committee Descriptions

Describe active board committees, their purpose, how they are comprised (board members, volunteers, staff, both) and, how often they meet.

Attach any board committee descriptions or charters and current committee members list. Designate which members are board members if there are non-board members serving on the committee.

Board Successions and Transitions

Attach a list of current board members with term-end dates for each board member. Clearly indicate which board members are officers, and what position they hold.

How does the board plan for its succession and transition of the board's leadership? Describe key items of any succession plans or procedures the board has for determining its next class of leaders. Describe any processes that may surround board transitions such as board exit interviews, acknowledgments or celebrations of service, and cross-training or mentoring between board members, especially officers.

Board Succession Policy

Attach the succession plan/policy for the board, officers, and/or its committees.

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

Executive Successions and Transitions

Describe the board's role in planning for succession and transition of the Executive. If there has been a transition in the last 5 years, what methods or processes were used to transition leadership?

Has there been an Executive transition in the past five (5) years?

Executive Transition

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

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

Describe the executive's role in planning for leadership development and transition of the organization's key staff and volunteers. (Refer to Executive Job Description if applicable)

Do all employees and volunteers have a position description outlining their work and responsibilities?

Board Member Independence

Are board members compensated/provided modest stipends as part of their service on the board? (This does not include reimbursement for expenses or payment for services outside of their board role.)

Do any employees currently serve as voting members of the board?

Are any board members related by blood or marriage?

Are any board members related to staff members by blood or marriage?

If any employees currently serve as voting members of the board, how does the board monitor the employee's conflicts of interest? In addition, please describe how your board strives to maintain board member independence? Include language from relevant policies, such as conflict of interest policies, that inform the board's practices.

B. Leadership and Operational Management

Executive Functions

Describe the management policies the executive has implemented to ensure the proper functioning of the organization's operations.

Describe how the Executive ensures the proper functioning of the organization's operations. Such actions could include employee handbooks reviewed regularly, regular communications/meetings with staff members, program procedure updates, facility management, etc. In addition, provide a list of any administrative policies the organization uses to oversee its activities. How do you determine which administrative policies are needed due to your organization's work, mission and values.

Supporting the Board

How do the Executive and senior staff support the board's functions? Provide examples of the Executive's support for the board's functions such as governance, advocacy, and financial oversight, and where relevant, include how other staff may support the role of the board in areas such as resource development, program evaluation, data/data dashboards, or strategy-setting.

Where relevant, describe how committees and staff work together to support the overall governance-as-leadership for the organization.

Board Support

Attach examples of information that demonstrate support provided by staff to the board or board committees. This could include board packets, staff or committee reports, data dashboards, and financial information.

How does the organization set compensation for its employees? Include such items as whether comparative salary information is used as part of the process and any references to a board-approved compensation philosophy or salary structure.

Compensation Structure

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

Compensation Policy

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

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

Organizational and Financial Sustainability

Describe how the Executive assists the board in planning for the organization's future and considers what human and financial resources are necessary for organizational sustainability and mission fulfillment. Demonstrate that the organization has a sustainability plan in place or that it has considered organizational sustainability in its planning activities (program, strategic, financial).

Sustainability Plan

Attach a copy of the organization's sustainability plan.

Managing Employees and Volunteers

Personnel Policies

Attach a copy of all personnel policies including, but not limited to: employee handbook, recruitment/selection/hiring policies, screening and background checks (if applicable), working conditions, supervision and regular evaluation, firing and separation, Paid Time Off (PTO) and leave, benefits, confidentiality, grievance procedures, whistleblower policy, orientation and education, and growth and development.

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

Volunteer Policies

Does the organization utilize volunteers?

Attach a copy of volunteer policies, including but not limited to: recruitment/selection/hiring policies, screening and background checks (if applicable), working conditions, supervision and regular evaluation, firing and separation, confidentiality, grievance procedures, whistleblower policy, orientation and education, growth and development, and recognition.

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:

- Personnel Policies
- Recruitment, Selection, and Hiring
- Screening and Background Checks (if applicable)
- Working Conditions
- Supervision and Regular Evaluation
- Firing and Separation
- PTO and Leave
- Benefits
- Confidentiality of Employee and Organization Information
- Grievance Procedures for Employees
- Whistleblower Policy
- Orientation and Education
- Growth and Development
- Evaluation
- Recognition (Volunteers only)
- Volunteer Policies
- Recruitment, Selection, and Hiring
- Screening and Background Checks (if applicable)
- Working Conditions
- Supervision and Regular Evaluation
- Firing and Separation
- PTO and Leave (Employees Only)
- Benefits (Employees Only)
- Confidentiality of Employee and Organization Information
- Grievance Procedures for Employees and Volunteers
- Whistleblower Policy
- Orientation and Education
- Growth and Development
- Evaluation
- Recognition (Volunteers only)

Do employees and volunteers acknowledge receipt of these policies in writing?

Are any staff related to other staff members by blood or marriage or living in the same household?

Employee Orientation

Attach a copy of your organization's employee evaluation tool and staff orientation plan/checklist.

How does the Executive oversee the functions of staff and volunteer selection and ensure that new staff members and or volunteers are treated fairly? How often are employees given feedback through a formal evaluation process and given an opportunity to develop and grow in their position? How are the principles of the Standards for Excellence incorporated into orientation, training, evaluation, and management of staff and volunteers?

Describe the process by which volunteers are evaluated, and include information on who performs the evaluation.

Employee Evaluation

Attach any tools or methodology used for employee and volunteer evaluations.

Are all employee evaluations completed and up to date?

C. Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

How does your organization create a culture where all people are served equally well, and is inclusive of people from different backgrounds, experiences, ethnicities, genders, ages, and other protected classes? How does it strive to be inclusive at every level of the organization, including volunteers, staff, and board?

Assessment Tools and Planning

Attach the diversity, equity, and inclusion assessment tool or the results/report from the last assessment.

What methods of evaluation and assessment are used to review the organization's mission, programs, policies, and leadership (board and employee) practices with a focus on determined and new goals determined as a result of the assessment?

Attach a chart or table that provides the demographic composition of your community served compared to the demographic of your board, staff, and volunteers. Use the same demographic terms/criteria to describe each group.

Provide the board-approved justice, diversity, equity and inclusion plan for the organization based on findings of the evaluation and assessment.

Please provide the minutes where the board's approval of this plan can be found.

3. ETHICS AND LEGAL

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

Describe how the organization stays current with information on laws and regulations that affect the organization? What methods are used and who is involved? How often are policies (including but not limited to: bylaws, financial, advocacy/lobbying, and employee policies) reviewed for legal compliance?

Describe the process the organization follows to complete an internal compliance review. Who is involved? What steps were taken and what is the result? Describe how the organization stays compliant with your state's regulations that govern nonprofit organizations. Describe how the organization ensures that its facilities and programs are accessible to the community they serve. Describe any steps taken and reference the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or other requirements.

Internal Compliance Review

Attach a copy of all documents related to the organization's compliance review.

Document Destruction and Retention

Attach a copy of all administrative policies related to compliance, including: document retention and destruction, joint venture (if applicable), and filing 990s.

Does the organization hold all up to date licenses required to perform its programs and services?

Is the organization registered, as required, with all applicable federal, state, and local authorities?

B. Required Public Disclosures

How does the organization ensure that the organization responds to requests for public documents, like the form 990, form 1023, and IRS determination letter. Which person(s) within the organization are responsible?

C. Reporting Misconduct and Whistleblower Protection

Whistleblower Policy

Attach a copy of the organization's whistleblower policy.

Describe how board members, staff, and volunteers are informed about the organization's whistleblower policy and processes. How does the organization protect those who "blow the whistle" and retain confidentiality of those who report improprieties?

D. Conflicts of Interest

Attach a copy of the organization's conflict of interest policy and disclosure form.

Describe how board members, staff and key volunteers are informed of the conflict of interest policy. Who signs an annual disclosure form? Which groups, such as the governance committee, review the conflicts of interest disclosures and monitor the potential conflicts in decision-making processes? Please provide the date and page of the minutes where the board approved the conflict of interest policy.

Attach a copy of the organization's annual conflict of interest disclosure statements signed by board, staff, and volunteers with significant decision-making authority.

When a conflict of interest situation arises, what steps are taken by the organization? Describe how this process might be different for conflicts involving staff or board, depending on their role, and what methods are used to monitor the conflict of interest (such as recusing for a decision in meetings).

E. Ethics

Ethics Code

Attach a copy of the organization's Code of Ethics, Code of Conduct, Values Statement, and/or proof you have adopted the Standards for Excellence: An Ethics and Accountability Code for the Nonprofit Sector.

Describe the organization's Code of Ethics, values, or other ethical standards that guide how the organization acts and provides a foundation for its culture. How are board members, staff, volunteers, and program participants informed of these items and held accountable for supporting these standards in their role?

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

Describe how the organization ensures that its board, staff, and volunteers treat individuals involved with its programs fairly and with respect.

Grievance Procedure

Attach a copy of the grievance policy and procedure (or the equivalent) for program participants.

How are employees, board members, key volunteers, and program participants made aware of the grievance procedure? What methods are used for each group?

Confidentiality Policy

Attach a copy of the organization's Confidentiality or Privacy Policy that protects the privacy of participant information.

How is confidentiality or privacy enforced throughout the organization? Provide examples based on roles within the organization, and policies and practices followed. Describe what methods are in place to hold employees and key volunteers (including board members) accountable for following the policy.

4. FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

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

A. Financial Budgeting, Reporting, and Monitoring

Budget

Describe the process for developing and approving the budget. How does the budget reflect mission, values, goals, and objectives and ensures there is enough revenue to cover expenses? Who is involved and what steps are taken?

Attach a copy of the most recently approved organizational budget. Include a capital budget, if applicable.

Provide the date and page of the minutes where the board's annual review of the budget can be found.

Internal Financial Statements

Attach copies of the four most recent quarterly internal financial statements (budget-to-actual reports and other financial information) reviewed by the board. 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.

How does the board and staff work together to determine good financial stewardship? How does the board and staff work together to ensure the organization has enough income to pay for its expenses? What methods are used to demonstrate what percentage of the organization's resources are devoted to the activities of programs, administration, and fundraising? (for example: functional reporting, 990)

Provide the date and page of the minutes where the board reviewed the percentages. This is required annually.

Form 990

Attach a copy of the organization's most recent Form 990.

Provide the date and page of the minutes where the board's annual review of the 990 can be found.

Audit and Management Letter

Is the organization's operating budget over \$500,000/\$300,000?

For organizations with operating revenue of \$500,000 or more, attach the most recent audit and management letter, along with management's response (if applicable). *

B. Financial Policies

Attach a copy of the organization's policies that address internal financial controls.

Provide the date and page of the minutes where the board's approval of the policy(ies) governing internal controls can be found.

Purchasing Practices

Attach a copy of the organization's policies which address procurement (purchasing) practices.

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

Investments and Reserves

Attach the policy which addresses investments of the organization's assets.

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

Attach the policy which addresses the organization's unrestricted net assets (reserves).

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

C. Administrative Policies

Information Technology

Attach a copy of the organization's policies addressing information technology including but not limited to: data security, data storage, and technology use.

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

Communications and Social Media

Attach a copy of the organization's policies which address communications and social media.

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

Crisis and Disaster Planning

Attach a copy of the organization's policies which address crisis and disaster planning, including crisis communications.

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

D. Risk Management and Insurance

How does the organization assess and manage risk? Who is involved and what processes does it follow? Does the organization have a formally adopted risk management plan? How does it determine which risks to mitigate through policy and which to mitigate through insurance? How often does the board review the organization's insurance coverage?

General Liability Insurance

Attach a copy of the General Liability Insurance declaration page covering the current period. If the board has opted to forgo insurance, attach the board minutes documenting the board's decision.

Attach a copy of the Directors and Officers Insurance declaration page covering the current period. If the board has opted to forgo insurance, attach the board minutes documenting the board's decision.

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. Resource Plan and Sources of Income

How does the organization determine its plan and strategy for raising funds? Who is involved in the activities? What research is conducted? What sources for funds are considered? How are approaches to donors and sponsors handled? How is the board and/or staff involved in ensuring that fundraising expenses remain cost effective?

Attach the organization's fundraising plan/strategy, and any other policy that guides fundraising such as:

- case for support
- marketing or branding policies
- sponsorship solicitations
- giving circle policies

- grant writing policies
- cryptocurrency or stock policies
- contract compliance
- fee for service or social enterprise activities
- or unrelated business income policies

Provide the minutes where the board's approval of the plan/processes can be found.

Resource Development Policies

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

If any polices are attached above, provide the minutes where the board's approval can be found.

Complete the chart below (see online application for chart) by calculating the organization's fundraising ratio by adding all the fundraising revenue (found on the form 990 or your financial records) and dividing by the total amount of funds spent on fundraising activities (also found on form 990 or financial records). Provide this calculation for each of the last 5 years. (Fundraising revenue is section VIII lines 1h + 8c + 9c Fundraising expense is section IX lines 25d If your organization files a Form 990-EZ, calculate the ratio of fundraising revenues to fundraising expense according to your organization’s methodology for tracking and recording expenses and revenues). Exclude from the calculation any capital campaigns. Present the calculated number as a ratio (i.e. 5:1), and, include a description for what revenue sources were included in the income (such as direct solicitations, sponsorships, individual donations, foundation grants, etc.) and what categories were involved in the expenses (such as staff salaries, professional fees, marketing, event venues, etc.).

Use this space to provide a description if your ratios do not average 3:1 over the five-year period. You may also use this space to provide a description if your organization files a Form 990-EZ, complete the table above by calculating the ratio of fundraising revenues to fundraising expense according to your organization’s methodology for tracking and recording expenses and revenues. Include an explanation below of the categories of revenues (contributions from individuals, corporations, foundation grants, etc.) and expenses (salaries, professional fees, occupational expenses, printing, etc.) used in these calculations.

B. Fundraising Activities

How does the organization structure adherence to ethical fundraising practices concerning staff, volunteers, consultants, contractors, or collaborating organizations involved in fundraising activities? What policies and procedures guarantee compliance with relevant laws, including the proper registration of consultants with state authorities where required?

How does the organization ensure that fundraising materials are accurate, honest, respectful, and clearly represent the mission? List which states you must comply with fundraising disclosures. List the websites and social media accounts which the organization uses to solicit donations online.

Solicitations

Provide an example of solicitation materials such as: individual donor or sponsor letter, grant proposal, cause marketing promotional piece, fundraiser event materials, or promotional pieces.

Attach four examples of receipts recognizing a contribution of the following type:

- A cash gift under \$250;
- A cash gift over \$250;
- An in-kind donation; and
- A gift where the donor received something of value in return.

C. Donor Relationships and Privacy

Donor Relations

Attach a copy of the organization's donor relationships and privacy policy.

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

D. Acceptance of Gifts

Gift Acceptance

Attach a copy of the policy which covers gift acceptance. (Policy should address: How the organization determines what gifts it will, or will not, receive, and who within the organization may receive a gift or negotiate a donation from a donor. Policy should elaborate on the organization's criteria for determining whether to accept gifts from specific individuals, the procedural aspects of receiving gifts, the property deemed acceptable to receive, and considerations in accepting special or unexpected gifts.)

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

E. Fundraising on Behalf of the Organization

How does the organization structure adherence to ethical fundraising practices concerning staff, volunteers, consultants, contractors, or collaborating organizations involved in fundraising activities? What policies and procedures guarantee compliance with relevant laws, including the proper registration of consultants with state authorities where required?

What criteria and processes does the organization use to evaluate potential philanthropic partnerships to assess the compatibility of corporations, foundations, or donors? Specifically, how does your organization consider values, policies, expectations, and other relevant aspects in

determining the suitability of a philanthropic partnership? Additionally, what strategies and safeguards are in place to address the power dynamic inherent in significant financial contributions, ensuring that donations neither unduly influence the organization nor compromise its core values?

Detail the organization's commitment to fair and ethical compensation practices during fundraising efforts by elaborating how the organization prevents the use of percentage-based or commission-based payment structures for staff and consultants involved in fundraising. How does the organization maintain alignment with its mission, ensure equitable compensation, and avoid practices that could be considered ethically questionable?

Has the organization hired any outside fundraising consultants in the last three years?

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

How do you assess the needs of your community in order to inform your methods for interacting with community members? When referencing the community, describe how you address the perspectives of those most impacted by the organization's mission and programs. Also, describe the organization's efforts to provide culturally relevant information with references to issues such as adjustments to reading levels, language and visual accessibility, and making materials available to individuals with differing abilities.

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 such as Statement of Financial Activities, Statement of Financial Position, or Audited Financials.

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

Publicly Available Information

Share examples of documents your organization offers to the public for education or advocacy. Attach three documents or provide web addresses. (Examples: brochures, factsheets, website, blogs, op eds, articles)

Include links for online resources below.

B. Advancing the Mission through Public Policy and Advocacy

How does the board confirm the organization's advocacy efforts operate within a written advocacy policy? Elaborate on the criteria used to determine what positions the organization may take, and how it seeks to keep the public informed, and when to take action on issues. How often does the board review the criteria to ensure that the policy is in harmony with its values and mission?

Advocacy Policy

Attach the policies related to advocacy and lobbying.

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

C. Engaging in Lobbying and Political Activity

If your organization is a 501(c)3, what methods does the organization use to assure that its activities related to campaigning candidates are non-partisan? Describe your methods for oversight relevant to your organization's tax-exempt status.

Does the organization engage in lobbying?

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

Does your organization use outside lobbyists?

State Charity Registration:

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 for PA, the Bureau of Corporations and Charitable Organizations) is current/in good standing.