



2019-2020

NCAfE Award Program FAQ's

North Carolina Awards For Excellence Program



North Carolina Awards for Excellence Program

What is the NCAfE Program?

The NCAfE program is the top state-level recognition presented to an organization that has demonstrated, through its practices and achievements, the highest level of performance excellence by applying the principles of the Baldrige Excellence Framework - the Criteria for Performance Excellence.

Why would I participate?

The Baldrige Excellence Framework is the key to assessing if your organization is doing as well as it could. The management framework enables leaders at businesses, hospitals, factories, schools and government bodies to examine every layer of the organization and devise strategies to reach goals, improve results, and become more competitive by aligning people, plans and processes.

Recipients of the NCAfE state-level recognition are outstanding examples of high-performance organizations. They exhibit role model processes, with some being at or near “best-in-class.”

The NCAfE award also satisfies a preliminary requirement for an organization that is interested in seeking recognition from the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.

What type of organizations are eligible to participate?

Any business/organizational unit or subsidiary is eligible to apply for the NCAfE award. 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 operating entities, not as activities assembled to write an award application. The business/organizational unit must be located in North Carolina.

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
- A whole manufacturing plant
- Hospitals within systems; whole health care systems
- State government division/department/agency
- Stand-alone sub-units of larger organizations
- School districts
- Individual schools
- Colleges within universities; whole universities

Is there a cost to participate in NCAfE?

When an organization is ready to apply for the State Excellence Award, there is a fee that is due with the Intent to Apply/Eligibility Form to cover costs associated with initial processing and eligibility determination. There is also an Application Fee that should be included when the application is submitted to NCAfE. Both the Application Fee and the Site Visit Fee are determined based on the applicant’s number of employees, as shown below.

Number of Employees	Intent Fee	Application Fee	Site Visit Fee	Total Fee
Less than 100	\$250	\$1,800	\$3,400	\$5,450
100-500	\$250	\$3,600	\$4,600	\$8,450
501-1,500	\$250	\$6,000	\$7,000	\$13,250
More than 1,500	\$250	\$9,000	\$8,200	\$17,450

How do I apply?

NCAfE accepts applications once a year. In order to be considered in the 2019-2020 award cycle, your application documents must be postmarked by the dates below.

Step 1: Intent to Apply

April 15 Complete the [Intent to Apply/Eligibility Form](#).

Mail one printed copy to NCAfE along with the appropriate Intent fee.

North Carolina Awards for Excellence
c/o Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence
2525 Perimeter Place Drive, Suite 122
Nashville, TN 37214-3773
(800) 453-5474

Step 2: Application Packet

July 15 Complete the [Application Form](#).

Complete an Organizational Profile as described in the Baldrige Excellence Framework materials.

Mail one printed copy and one electronic copy of the Application Form, Organizational Profile, and Criteria response to NCAfE along with the appropriate application fee.

North Carolina Awards for Excellence
c/o Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence
2525 Perimeter Place Drive, Suite 122
Nashville, TN 37214-3773
(800) 453-5474
(contact@tncpe.org)

Step 3: Prepare for Site Visit

The team of examiners assigned to your organization will begin their evaluation a few weeks after you submit your application packet. Shortly after, the team leader will contact you to schedule a site visit. During the two-to-three day visit, the examiner team will tour your facilities and interview your leadership team and employees to gain a greater understanding of your organization.

Site visits typically occur during September and October. A site visit fee applies to this step of the process. You will receive an invoice for this fee after the examiner team has completed its site visit. Please see the fee schedule for details.

Step 4: Award Notification and Feedback Report

In December, a Panel of Judges will review the examiner team's work and confirm your award. Following this meeting, NCAfE will call with your results. You will receive your Feedback Report by the first of January.

Step 5: Recognition

NCAfE will work with your organization to determine an appropriate event where your organization will officially receive its award and be recognized for your pursuit of performance excellence.

In addition, after you have been notified of your award, NCAfE will publicize your accomplishments via press release, email blast to our database and posting on our website.

Application Timeframe

The awards process begins in January and continues throughout the calendar year.

Intent to Apply deadline	Postmarked by April 15
Application deadline	Postmarked by July 15
Examiner team conducts application assessment and scoring	TBD
Site visit schedule	TBD
Panel of judges convenes	TBD
Feedback Reports distributed	December
Awards are distributed	TBD

Application Evaluation

Applications are reviewed and evaluated in a five-stage process by members of a Board of Examiners. Those examiners, specially trained in the Baldrige Excellence Framework, adhere to strict rules regarding confidentiality and conflict of interest during each stage of the review process.

Stage 1 - Independent review and evaluation by a team of examiners

Stage 2 - Consensus review and evaluation by a team of examiners

Stage 3 - Site visit review by a team of examiners

Stage 4 - Final Feedback Report preparation by a team of examiners

Stage 5 - Panel of Judges reviews and determines award

How long does it take to move through the Program?

May through December.

Are there any deadlines specific to the NCAfE Program?

See the awards cycle timeframe above.

Who are the examiners?

Examiners are volunteers from all industry sectors who have completed extensive training in the Baldrige Excellence Framework. An examiner team of quality-driven professionals is created for each application. This team comprises both new and experienced examiners.

Who are the judges?

An independent Panel of Judges is selected on a clear, standardized basis. There is representation from the following industry sectors: service, manufacturing, education, government and health care. The judges are familiar with the quality improvement operations of for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, small businesses and large organizations. Judges will be familiar with the Criteria of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award and the processes of the state-level performance excellence award.

What's included in the Feedback Report?

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 NCAfE Award process. Each Feedback Report contains applicant-specific strengths and opportunities for improvement based on Baldrige Excellence Framework. This input is extremely helpful for strategic planning and overall performance improvement. Confidential Feedback

Reports are mailed to applicants after the awards process is completed.

Why do I send my application to the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence (TNCPE)?

NCAfE has contracted with TNCPE to manage the evaluation/award process of the awards program.

Is there a limit to how many State Excellence Awards are presented annually?

No.

Do State Excellence Award winners have any additional responsibilities?

Part of our mission is to inspire and influence organizations across the state, and one way we do this is by showcasing the world-class processes of our award winners. Leaders from Excellence Award winners may be asked to speak or participate in NCAfE programs throughout the year.

We also ask applicant organizations to send us new and experienced examiners. This helps us to maintain a robust and active volunteer workforce of examiners. This helps you integrate the Baldrige Excellence Framework more quickly within the organization, accelerating your quest for excellence.

Who do I speak with if I have additional questions about the Program or the awards process?

Contact Mary Tillery at mary_tillery@ncsu.edu, (910) 622-5849.



Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award

What is the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award?

The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) is a presidential award that is presented annually to organizations that demonstrate the highest levels of quality and performance excellence. Awards may be presented in six different categories:

- Manufacturing
- Service company
- Small business
- Education
- Healthcare
- Nonprofit and Government

The Baldrige Award, established by Congress in 1987, was designed to raise awareness of quality management and recognize US companies that have implemented successful quality management systems. The US Commerce Department's National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) manages the award.

How does the national Baldrige program relate to a state-level program?

NCAfE is a member of the Alliance for Performance Excellence, a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the growth and sustainability of Baldrige-focused programs by serving its members. Key stakeholders include Baldrige—focused programs, organizations wanting to improve, and key partners including the Baldrige Foundation and the National Baldrige Performance Excellence Program. The Baldrige Program administers the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.

How do we apply for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award?

Organizations that receive the top performance excellence award from NCAfE are eligible to apply for the national Baldrige Award during the following year's awards cycle. <https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/baldrige-award>

What are the Baldrige Criteria?

The Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence includes:

- 1. Leadership:** How upper management leads the organization, and how the organization leads within the community.
- 2. Strategy:** How the organization establishes and implements its strategy.

- 3. Customers:** How the organization builds and maintains strong, lasting relationships with customers.

- 4. Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management:** How the organization uses data to support key processes and manage performance.

- 5. Workforce:** How the organization supports and engages its workforce.

- 6. Operations:** How the organization designs, manages and improves key work processes to deliver value to customers.

- 7. Results:** How the organization performs in terms of customer satisfaction with products and services, workforce engagement, leadership and governance, finances, and how the organization compares to its competitors.

How are Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award recipients selected?

The process for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award is very similar to the NCAfE state excellence award. Steps include:

Independent and Consensus Review

A team from the Board of Examiners is assigned to your award application.

Independent Review: Members of the team individually review your application against the Criteria for Performance Excellence to identify and document strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Consensus Review: Led by a senior examiner, the team conducts a series of reviews, first virtually through a secure website and then through focused conference calls. Through these reviews, the team reaches consensus on feedback and scores.

Based on these reviews, the Judges' Panel determines which organizations receive site visits.

Site Visit Review

Organizations receiving site visits provide updates for all results in the application. Led by a senior examiner, a team of examiners visits the organization to verify and clarify the information in the application. Site visits consist primarily of a review of pertinent records and data, as well as interviews.

The team submits a report to the Panel of Judges.

Judges' Review

The Panel of Judges conducts final reviews and recommends award recipients to the director of NIST, who conveys the recommendations to the Secretary of Commerce. The Commerce Secretary and the NIST Director determine whether recommended award recipients are appropriate role models and should receive the award. The purpose of this determination is to help preserve the award's integrity. The Panel of Judges also recommends non-award recipient organizations that will be recognized for having one or more category best practices. In determining role models, NIST checks records on site-visited applicants and their highest-ranking officials to verify compliance with legal and various regulatory requirements. The Commerce Secretary then selects the award recipients.

Feedback Reports

Members of the Board of Examiners prepare Feedback Reports detailing organization-specific strengths and opportunities for improvement based on the organization's responses to the Criteria for Performance Excellence. Each organization receives a Feedback Report when it exits the process: after Consensus Review, after Site Visit Review, or when it is selected as an award recipient.

Award Ceremony

The President of the United States traditionally presents the awards.

Who are some of the past North Carolina winners?

Iredell-Statesville Schools	2008
Premier Inc.	2006

May an organization hire a consultant or advisor to help prepare answers for the Baldrige application?

NCAfE does not make any recommendations about the use of third-party advisors or award application consultants. However, we are aware that some organizations find it beneficial to work with consultants to understand and apply the Baldrige framework to their own operations.

Beyond NCAfE

Supplying Volunteer Examiners

The Board of Examiners works best when there is a healthy balance of new and experienced examiners, so we encourage organizations to send us examiners who have served in the past, in addition to those who are new to the program. Many examiners return year after year, because they find their service to the Baldrige Awards Program an unparalleled professional development experience, as well as an opportunity to benchmark and network. To help maintain a robust and active workforce, we rely on award applicants to provide examiners for the next award cycle. Employers find that having examiners on staff enables them to integrate the Criteria's improvement framework more quickly and accelerate the quest for excellence.

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