

TNCPE AWARD PROGRAM RECOGNITION LEVELS

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

Organizations apply to the TNCPE Award 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 73 describes application requirements by level. And the diagram “Item Format” on page 30 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 annually, and these refinements may result in movement between award levels from year to year.

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 Award, 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. TNCPE offers Level 1 applicants a hands-on, consultative approach during this first step of the performance improvement journey.

Level 1 applicants must complete an Organizational Profile, answering a series of questions in the first section of the Criteria. Once complete, the profile may be up to five pages long. Level 1 applicants may opt to fill out the simplified Organizational Profile questionnaire found on page 85, rather than the standard Organizational Profile questionnaire on pages 4-6.

Level 1 applicants host a team of two or more TNCPE examiners for a half-day site visit. During this visit, the applicant will learn the basic requirements of each Criteria Category and receive specific suggestions for improvement.

The examiners’ observations and recommendations are later formalized in a written Feedback Report. The Feedback Report indicates actions, processes or system improvements that would most benefit the organization. Organizations that complete Level 1 will receive a Certificate of Participation and public recognition.

Level 2 - Commitment Award

Level 2 is the intermediate level of the TNCPE 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 described on pages 4-6.

Applications also include the signature of the highest ranking official, indicating his or her commitment. In addition, organizations complete a self-assessment (up to 15 pages long), detailing how they apply the seven Categories and *basic* Item requirements of the Criteria outlined on pages 7 through 26. 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 one-day site visit conducted by a team of TNCPE 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 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 commitment to and practice of performance improvement principles, significant progress and results in building sound processes. Level 3 applicants must submit the Organizational Profile described on 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 seven Categories and *overall* Item requirements of the Criteria, outlined on pages 7 through 26.

Level 3 applicants host a comprehensive site visit conducted by a team of TNCPE examiners. The year after winning the Achievement Award, organizations are expected to provide an examiner trainee and voluntary assistance to organizations that are new to the TNCPE 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 business 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, a robust management system, and performance management principles. 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. Of the more than 1,100 participants in the award program, only 20* have attained this level of recognition. Their success is typically the result of applying feedback from previous TNCPE applications. Application at this level requires submission of the Organizational Profile described on 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 seven Categories and *multiple* Item requirements of in the Criteria, outlined on pages 7 through 26.

Level 4 applicants host a comprehensive site visit conducted by a team of TNCPE examiners. The year after winning the Excellence Award, organizations are expected to provide examiner trainees and voluntary assistance to organizations that are new to the TNCPE performance excellence process.

Recipients of Excellence Awards are outstanding examples of high-performance organizations, exhibiting processes that serve as role models for others, with some processes being at or near “best-in-class.” Organizations recognized at this highest level have demonstrated management excellence with superior results over time (multiple years), which are directly attributable to a systematic, well-deployed improvement approach and a robust management system that effectively addresses the multiple requirements of each Item and demonstrates alignment throughout the organization. They continue to improve and build upon their outstanding results and excellent systems.

*22 Excellence Awards have been presented. Pal’s Sudden Service and Mountain States Health Alliance have attained this level of recognition twice.

Applying for an Award

If your organization is interested in applying for a TNCPE Award, please turn to the “Applying for a TNCPE Award” section on page 71 for application forms and further details about the application process.

Important Dates

Examiner training. A great way to learn the Criteria and develop leadership skills is to serve on the TNCPE Board of Examiners. You can learn more about examiner duties and fill out an application form on the Board of Examiners page of the TNCPE Web site (www.TNCPE.org/examiners).

BOE Application Deadline: Friday, April 23, 2010.

Intent to Apply/Eligibility Form. If you are applying for a Level 2, 3 or 4 Award, you must mail 15 copies of the Intent to Apply/Eligibility Form (located on page 79), 15 copies of your Organizational Profile and a non-refundable, \$150 Intent Fee to the TNCPE office. Mailing address below.

Level 1 applicants do not need to fill out the Intent to Apply/Eligibility Form.

Postmarked by: Friday, July 9, 2010.

Level 2, 3 and 4 Award Application. Level 2, 3 and 4 applicants must mail a full award application package that includes 15 copies of the Level 2, 3 and 4 Application Form (located on page 81), 15 copies of the Criteria response and the Application Fee (fees are described on the application form and page 74). Mailing address below.

Postmarked by: Friday, Aug. 6, 2010.

Level 1 Application. Level 1 applications are accepted year-round, so there is no application deadline. To apply for Level 1 Recognition, applicants must send 15 copies of the completed Level 1 Application Form (located on page 83), 15 copies of their Organizational Profile (Level 1 applicants may complete the simplified Organizational Profile on page 85 or the standard questionnaire on pages 4-6) and the Application Fee (see page 74 for details). Level 1 applicants are not required to fill out an Intent to Apply/Eligibility Form.

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