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ABOUT THE EXAMINER HANDBOOK

Purpose

The Examiner Handbook provides a summary of basic information about the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence (TNCPE) Award Program and how TNCPE evaluates applicant organizations. This handbook will summarize your role in the TNCPE evaluation process and your responsibilities as an examiner.

Please read this handbook carefully before committing to serve on the Board of Examiners.

Use the handbook to prepare for examiner training and as a reference throughout the evaluation process. Keep in mind, this is just an overview. Detailed process instructions will be provided during the three-day training course.

Contact TNCPE

(800) 453-6474
(615) 889-8323
www.TNCPE.org
contact@tncpe.org

2525 Perimeter Place Dr., Ste. 122
Nashville, Tenn. 37214-3773

Contents and Format

The handbook contains the following sections:

- About the Examiner Handbook
- The Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence Award Program
- TNCPE Board of Examiners
- Evaluation Process Map
- Evaluation Process Overview
- Glossary
- Appendix

Request for Comments and Suggestions

TNCPE revises the Examiner Handbook annually, or as needed. Please contact TNCPE with revision suggestions.

THE TENNESSEE CENTER FOR PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE AWARD PROGRAM

Background

The Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence (TNCPE) was established in 1993 through the cooperative efforts of the Tennessee governor's office, the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development and the business community. TNCPE's goal is to improve the economic vitality of the region by promoting the understanding and use of the *Criteria for Performance Excellence*. TNCPE is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) corporation governed by an independent Board of Directors.

The TNCPE Award Program is modeled after the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program. Public Law 100-107, the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Improvement Act of 1987, was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan on August 20, 1987. For the first ten years, the Malcolm Baldrige Quality Award was limited to three eligibility categories: service, manufacturing and small business. On October 30, 1998, President Bill Clinton signed legislation establishing two additional eligibility categories: health care and education. On October 5, 2004, President George W. Bush signed legislation establishing an additional category for nonprofit organizations, including government.

The Baldrige Award is managed by the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), U.S. Department of Commerce.

Purpose

The Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence encourages improvement of performance in all sectors of the economy by establishing guidelines that can be used by

organizations to evaluate their own performance. In doing so, organizations may apply for an award. TNCPE also shares information detailing how role model organizations are able to achieve outstanding performance and improve competitiveness. The concept of performance excellence applies to organizations of all types and sizes.

The **Vision** of TNCPE is to drive organizational excellence in Tennessee.

The **Mission** of TNCPE is to lead organizations in the pursuit of performance excellence, improving results and contributing to the economic vitality of their region.

The Mission is accomplished through TNCPE's application and feedback process, education and training, the sharing of best practices and the recognition of achievements.

The **Values** of TNCPE are:

- Customer Focus
- Continuous Improvement
- Leadership
- Excellence
- Integrity
- Respect
- Collaboration

Eligibility

The award program provides opportunities for organizations that want to measure their progress as they strive to improve performance. The program applies to all types of organizations including manufacturing, service, health care, schools, government, for-profit, not-for-profit, small, large, growing and mature. In short, the TNCPE Award Program is an effective tool for any organization interested in improving quality, productivity, profits and competitiveness.

The Criteria for Performance Excellence

The *Criteria for Performance Excellence* is a document that describes the characteristics of world-class organizations. It is the foundation of the TNCPE Award Program. Organizations apply to the TNCPE Award Program by answering a series of questions outlined in the Criteria. These questions help the organization look deep inside its systems and processes.

The Criteria may be used by organizations as a form of self-analysis, but organizations that apply to the TNCPE Award Program benefit from the additional value of an external review by a team of TNCPE examiners.

As an examiner, your job is to evaluate the applicant's responses to the Criteria questions to determine where there is alignment and where there are gaps. Through this evaluation, you will identify an applicant's strengths, as well as its opportunities for improvement.

At the end of the evaluation, your team's findings will be assembled into a Feedback Report. This report is a key tool the organization will use to improve its performance.

Criteria Formats

Every February, TNCPE publishes a booklet that includes the *Criteria for Performance Excellence*. This is TNCPE's primary assessment tool. The TNCPE booklet also includes information about the award program and application forms.

The Baldrige Performance Excellence Program publishes three versions of the *Criteria for Performance Excellence*: Business, Education and Health Care. TNCPE's Criteria booklet includes the Baldrige Business Criteria.

The Criteria are continuously being updated and improved. TNCPE applicants may use any of the current year's Criteria offered by TNCPE or the Baldrige program.

Before you begin an evaluation, be sure to note which version of the Criteria is used (this information will be on the organization's application form), so you assess the organization's application against its chosen Criteria. TNCPE will provide you with a copy of the appropriate Criteria book.

Criteria Categories

Every version of the Criteria is divided into eight parts: an Organizational Profile and seven Categories.

The Organizational Profile asks general questions about the organization and sets the context for how the organization operates. The seven Categories focus on the basic elements of organizational operations. The seven Criteria Categories are:

- Leadership
- Strategic Planning
- Customer Focus
- Measurement, Analysis and Knowledge Management
- Workforce Focus
- Operations Focus
- Results.

Emphasis is placed on performance results as demonstrated through systematic processes and results data furnished by applicants.

Criteria Items and Areas to Address

Criteria categories are further broken down into 17 items and 40 areas to address. These category components deepen the level of analysis with more in-depth questions based on different aspects of each category.

TNCPE Award Levels

Organizations participating in the TNCPE Award Program may choose to apply at one of four award levels, listed below from lowest level of recognition (Interest) to highest (Excellence):

- Level 1, Interest Recognition
- Level 2, Commitment Award
- Level 3, Achievement Award
- Level 4, Excellence Award

As award levels increase, applicants must respond to increasingly detailed questions within the Criteria. Here are the Criteria requirements for each application level:

Level 1

Organizational Profile

Level 2

Organizational Profile

Response to the basic item requirements

Level 3

Organizational Profile

Response to the overall item requirements

Level 4

Organizational Profile

Response to the multiple item requirements

Award Recognition

Every organization that applies to the TNCPE Award program and hosts a Site Visit will receive an award recognizing its level of performance.

The level of recognition may be lower than the level for which the organization applies. For example, an organization that applies for a Level 3 Award may receive a Level 2 Award or Level 1 Recognition if the Panel of Judges determines that the applicant does not meet the Level 3 Criteria requirements.

Awards are presented at the annual Excellence

in Tennessee Awards Banquet, traditionally held in February.

Award recipients are encouraged to publicize and advertise their awards. Excellence Award winners are expected to share information about their successful performance and quality strategies with other organizations.

Organization of TNCPE

While a permanent team of executive and support staff handles day-to-day operations from our office in Nashville, TNCPE relies on the efforts of diverse and talented experts from across the state to realize our mission.

Board of Directors

TNCPE's Board of Directors is composed of distinguished professionals from all sectors of Tennessee's economy. These leaders provide policy guidance and direction. They are responsible for governing and funding TNCPE, which is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation.

Board of Examiners

Examiners evaluate award applications using the *Criteria for Performance Excellence*. They participate in independent review and consensus evaluation, conduct site visits and help prepare final Feedback Reports.

The Board of Examiners is composed of leading business, health care, education and government experts. TNCPE selects board members through a competitive application process. Currently, the board consists of approximately 150 members. All members of the board must have time available from June to November to complete pre-work, attend the training course, conduct application reviews and prepare Final Scorebooks (the main component of Final Feedback Reports).

In addition to reviewing applications, examiners support TNCPE through outreach and educational activities. Through their membership in professional, trade, community and state organizations, they help disseminate

information about the benefits of the TNCPE program.

Panel of Judges

The Panel of Judges, part of the Board of Examiners, reviews the work and recommendations of examiner teams, determines each applicant's level of recognition and validates the integrity of the evaluation process.

Judges have served as examiners and team leaders for TNCPE and for the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program. The panel's expertise and experience represent all sectors of the economy.

TNCPE Award Recipients

Award recipients also play a vital role in the TNCPE organization. Many have generously helped other organizations pursue performance excellence by sharing information and encouraging performance improvement efforts. This often takes place during the annual Excellence in Tennessee Conference.

Excellence Award winners are required to share their successful performance and quality strategies with other organizations by hosting "best practice" tours in the spring. (Award recipients are *not* required to share proprietary information, even if the information was part of an award application.)

Members

Through dues and in-kind support, corporate and individual members provide a significant portion of TNCPE's funding.

TNCPE membership benefits include:

- Up-to-date information on performance improvement topics through the monthly TNCPE Members Newsletter and member bulletins,
- Opportunities for education and learning through discounted training and complimentary conference registrations (amount of discount

depends on membership level),

- Discounted TNCPE Award Program application and site visit fees,
- Access to custom training from experts who can speak on a variety of performance improvement topics (call for details),
- Ability to participate in the Level 2, 3 or 4 evaluation and feedback process at any time during the year (Level 1 applications are accepted year-round). *Members who want to participate in the awards part of the process must comply with TNCPE deadlines.*
- Demonstration of a commitment to the TNCPE mission,
- Acknowledgement in the *Criteria for Performance Excellence*, which is distributed to more than 5,000 business leaders each year,
- Recognition in publications and link on the TNCPE website.

For additional membership information, please visit our website at www.TNCPE.org.

Staff

A team of executive and support staff runs day-to-day TNCPE business from an office in Nashville. The staff's role is to manage all program activities and coordinate the various groups of people integral to fulfilling TNCPE's mission. Staff members include:

Katie Rawls
President and CEO

Sue Alexander
Manager of Administration

Jim Ford
Program Manager

Jennifer Frazier
Communications Manager

TNCPE BOARD OF EXAMINERS

Role of the Board of Examiners

The Board of Examiners is composed of leading business, health care, education and government experts, as well as representatives of various industries, professional and trade associations, government agencies, not-for-profit entities and retired professionals. As a member of the Board of Examiners, the duties you perform provide the foundation for the TNCPE Award Program. The importance of your contribution cannot be overstated.

Accordingly, much is expected of you. As a member of the Board of Examiners, you agree to:

- Serve for one award cycle: this lasts from completion of examiner training until the next year's examiner training begins,
- Attend a one-day New Examiner Orientation (mandatory for first-year examiners, optional for all others),
- Attend the full three-day examiner training course, preceded by about 20 to 25 hours of pre-work,
- Understand and fulfill your responsibilities as an examiner and serve on your assigned team,
- Adhere to the Rules of Conduct and Code of Ethical Standards,
- Meet all requirements for a fair and competent evaluation, including adherence to the *Criteria for Performance Excellence*, the scoring system, consensus and site visit requirements,
- Maintain thorough documentation and reasonable records, honor time commitments and adhere to due dates,
- Serve as an ambassador of the TNCPE

program.

If upon completion of training you are unable to fulfill your responsibilities as a contributing member of an examiner team, you agree to reimburse TNCPE \$595 to cover the cost of examiner training.

Selection of Examiners

Members of the Board of Examiners are selected based on individual merit and program needs. The program seeks to assemble a board of professionals capable of evaluating applicant organizations and able to serve as representatives of the TNCPE program. Criteria used in the selection of board members include breadth and diversity of experience; leadership, communication and interpersonal skills; knowledge of business and knowledge of improvement strategies.

Board members are selected and appointed by TNCPE for one award cycle. Examiners may reapply in subsequent years if they wish to serve again.

We encourage examiners to return, as each year's experience builds upon the previous year. In fact, everything seems to come together when an examiner has served three years. We often hear third-year examiners exclaim, "Wow, it really clicked this time!"

Baldrige Examiners

In an effort to encourage Baldrige examiners from the region to serve on the TNCPE Board of Examiners, TNCPE has developed an abbreviated training program for eligible individuals. Current Baldrige examiners who have served on the TNCPE Board of Examiners in the past may reapply to the TNCPE examiner program by submitting an application and attending one day of examiner training only.

For more information, please contact Sue Alexander: (800) 453-6474.

Alumni Examiners

TNCPE examiners who have served on the Board of Examiners for three of the last five years may attend a one-day Alumni Examiner training course instead of the traditional three-day examiner training course.

Examiners who attend alumni training will be assigned only to Level 1 teams. Eligible examiners may serve as alumni examiners for a maximum of three years before returning to the three-day examiner training course. Please call Sue Alexander for details: (800) 453-6474.

2011 Award Cycle

New Examiner Orientation

Nashville	May 24
Knoxville.....	May 26
Nashville	June 2

Examiner Training

Nashville I	June 21-23
Knoxville.....	June 28-30
Memphis.....	July 12-14
Nashville II.....	July 19-21

Award Intent to Apply Deadline	July 1
Award Application Deadline.....	Aug. 1

*** Independent Review & Scoring – Stage 1:**
August 10-September 9

*** Consensus Meetings – Stage 2:**
Level 1.....7-10 days before site visit
Level 2..... Complete by Sept. 16
Level 3..... Complete by Sept. 23
Level 4..... Complete by Sept. 30

*** Site Visit Schedule – Stage 3:**
Level 1..... Ongoing
Level 2..... Sept. 26-30
Level 3..... Oct. 3-7
Level 4..... Oct. 10-14

*** Final Scorebooks due – Stage 4:**
Two weeks after site visit
**Exact due dates will be determined by your team.*

Other Dates

- The TNCPE Panel of Judges convenes in mid-November
- Feedback Report distribution is ongoing. The goal is to deliver Feedback Reports to applicants within ten weeks of site visit.
- Presentation of Awards: Feb. 22, 2012

Team Assignment, Duties of Examiners

The TNCPE office assigns an examiner team to read, evaluate and score each application. The process TNCPE uses to assign examiner teams is designed to provide the fairest, most competent evaluation of each application.

Applicant organizations should receive significant value from applying to the TNCPE Award Program. Accordingly, examiner teams are developed to correspond with applicant organizations based on individual examiner knowledge and experience, consistent with conflict of interest requirements. TNCPE strives to spread the workload equitably among examiner teams.

Examiner Team Leaders

Each team is assigned a team leader – an experienced examiner who is responsible for guiding the team through the evaluation process.

Time Commitments

It is critical that examiners adhere to agreed-upon due dates and complete their evaluations on schedule. **Failure to meet due dates can significantly hamper the TNCPE Award Program.**

Stage 1 – Independent review: Duties require a time commitment of approximately 15 to 30 hours per application.

Stage 2 – Consensus: The consensus meeting requires a time commitment of 4 to 8 hours.

Stage 3 – Site visit: Duties require a time commitment of 1 to 4 days, plus travel and preparation time.

Stage 4 – Final Scorebook preparation: Additional time is required to fine-tune the Final Scorebook (the main component of the applicant's Feedback Report).

Duties of Judges

Judges review all Level 2, 3 and 4 applications, as well as consensus reports (Stage 2), site visit findings, and Final Scorebooks (Stage 4) to determine the level of recognition and to validate the integrity of the award program. The decisions of the Panel of Judges are final.

Service Recognition

After completing the examiner training course you will:

- Receive a Certificate of Appointment and a lapel pin designating your position on the Board of Examiners,
- Be provided with a personalized press release from TNCPE to submit to hometown newspapers, alumni and professional association newsletters and similar publications,
- In addition, all examiners are invited to attend the annual Excellence in Tennessee Awards Banquet as guests of TNCPE on February 22, 2012.

The Examiner's Role as Ambassador of the Program

In addition to your responsibilities reviewing applications, examiners help further TNCPE's vision and mission by serving as representatives of the program. As ambassadors, examiners participate on panels, give presentations, write articles, distribute program materials and encourage others to submit applications for the award program and Board of Examiners. Many of these activities involve professional and trade associations to which examiners already belong.

It is important that all presentations reflect

knowledge of the current Criteria and TNCPE Award Program. Up-to-date information and educational materials are available upon request from TNCPE. These materials are described in the Appendix.

When representing TNCPE, please follow these guidelines:

- Focus on TNCPE as a continuous improvement program that helps achieve performance excellence.
- Provide background on the creation of the TNCPE Award Program and its relationship to the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program.
- Encourage submission of examiner and award applications.
- Use TNCPE materials, such as speakers' notes, power point slides, publications and handouts. (Contact the TNCPE office for updated materials).
- Distribute program materials at meetings.
- Uphold the Code of Ethical Standards and Rules of Conduct to protect the integrity of the TNCPE Award Program.
- Communicate to TNCPE any significant issues, controversies or changes that could impact the Criteria or the award program.
- Share suggestions for improvements, new ideas or developing trends with TNCPE.
- Publish articles about the program and share reprints with the TNCPE office.
- Participate in conferences and engagements that focus on overall performance improvement, rather than winning an award.

Rules of Conduct

The following Rules of Conduct are established to maintain the confidentiality of TNCPE Award Program application information, including the identity of applicants. In addition, these rules preserve fairness in the examination process. The rules pertain to the entire Board of Examiners, including judges, team leaders, and alumni examiners.

1. All information about the applicant and the applicant's organization gained through the evaluation process shall be treated as confidential. The following precautions will be taken:
 - Applicant information shall not be discussed with anyone, including other examiners, with the exception of designated team members, judges and TNCPE staff. This includes information from the written application, as well as information obtained during the site visit.
 - Names of applicants shall not be disclosed during or after the application review process.
 - No copies of application material shall be made or retained.
 - No notes pertaining to the application shall be maintained.
 - No applicant information may be adapted and used subsequent to the review process, unless the information is publicly released by the applicant (for example, during the annual Excellence in Tennessee Conference or Best Practices Tour).
2. Each examiner is responsible for personally and independently assessing and scoring all assigned applications.
3. Except during site visit, examiners shall not communicate with applicant organizations or seek additional documentation, information or clarification. This includes Internet searches. If questions arise, contact the TNCPE office.
4. Examiners shall not at any time (during or after the evaluation cycle) independently give feedback to applicants regarding overall performance or scoring.
5. Examiners advising or participating with an organization that is preparing a TNCPE Award application shall not reveal or discuss that participation with other examiners, either during training or throughout the application review.
6. Upon completing the examiner training course, members of the Board of Examiners may use the following designation: Board of Examiners, Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence (TNCPE), and year(s) served. Examiners may *not* use the TNCPE logo in any advertisement or promotion unless sanctioned by TNCPE, nor may business cards include the TNCPE logo.
7. Examiners shall refrain from approaching an organization they have evaluated for their personal gain, including establishing an employment or consulting relationship for a period of two years after the evaluation.
8. If approached by an organization they have evaluated, examiners shall not accept employment from that organization for a period of two years after the evaluation.
9. During the consensus and site visit processes, examiners will encourage and maintain a professional environment that promotes respect for award program applicants, their employees and all members of the examiner team.
10. When participating in a site visit, examiners will respect the climate, culture and values of the organization being evaluated.

Code of Ethical Standards

Declaration of Principles

Members of the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence Board of Examiners pledge to uphold their professional principles in the fulfillment of their responsibilities.

In promoting high standards of public service and ethical conduct, examiners:

- Shall conduct themselves professionally, with truth, accuracy, fairness, respect and responsibility,
- Shall not represent conflicting or competing interests, nor place themselves in such a position where their interest may be in conflict – or appear to be in conflict – with the purposes and administration of the TNCPE Award Program,
- Shall safeguard the confidences of all parties involved in the judging or examination of present or former applicants,
- Shall protect confidential information and avoid disclosures that may in any way influence the Award's integrity or process, now or in the future,
- Shall not serve any private or special interest in their fulfillment of the duties of a judge or examiner, thereby excluding, by definition, the examination of any organization or subunit of an organization that employs them or has a consulting arrangement in effect or anticipated with them,
- Shall not serve as an examiner of a primary competitor, customer or supplier of any organization (or subunit of an organization) that employs them, or that they have a financial interest in, anticipate a consulting arrangement with or are otherwise involved,
- Shall not intentionally communicate

false or misleading information that may compromise the integrity of the Award process or decisions therein,

- For a period of two years after the evaluation, shall not approach an organization they have evaluated for their personal gain, including the establishment of an employment or consulting relationship,
- If approached by an organization they have evaluated, shall not accept employment from that organization for a period of two years after the evaluation.

Furthermore, it is pledged that as a member in good standing of the Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence Board of Examiners, each examiner shall strive to enhance and advance TNCPE as it serves to stimulate companies and organizations to improve quality, productivity and overall performance.

Disclosure of Conflict of Interest

Those selected to serve on the Board of Examiners must sign and agree to adhere to TNCPE's Conflict of Interest and Non-Disclosure Agreement immediately upon receiving their application assignment(s). Conflict of Interest takes into account employers, significant ownership, client relationships and affiliations that may present or seem to present a conflict of interest to the examiner's ability to impartially fulfill their TNCPE duties. Such information will be kept confidential. A Conflict of Interest/Non-Disclosure Agreement must be completed for each application assigned.

Computer Practices and Confidentiality Considerations

Computer Use

When using personal computers (including laptops), examiners should use appropriate precautions and safeguards regarding hardware, confidential information and viruses.

Due to confidentiality considerations, an examiner is not permitted to have someone else transcribe written documents relating to the TNCPE Award application evaluation.

Level 1 Scorebook

Examiners reviewing Level 1 applications will conduct Independent Reviews and prepare the Final Scorebook using the Microsoft Word Level 1 Scorebook available on the examiner resources page of the TNCPE website at <http://www.tncpe.org/examiners/resources.php>

Level 2, 3 and 4 Scorebooks: *Scorebook Navigator*TM Software

Examiners reviewing Level 2, 3, and 4 applications will use the *Scorebook Navigator*TM software to complete Independent Reviews, Consensus Reviews and Final Scorebooks.

Independent Review (Stage 1) – Each examiner will complete his/her independent assessment and notify his/her team leader upon completion.

Consensus (Stage 2) – The team will collectively complete one Consensus Scorebook and the team leader will notify the TNCPE office upon completion.

Site Visit (Stage 3) – Each Examiner will use Site Visit Issue Worksheets to track how comments from the Consensus Scorebook were clarified or verified. These worksheets are turned in to the team leader and included in materials submitted to the Panel of Judges.

Final Scorebook Preparation (Stage 4) – Upon completion of Site Visit and a wrap-up meeting, the team will complete the Final Scorebook. The team leader will notify the TNCPE office upon completion.

Security and Confidentiality Requirements

The *Scorebook Navigator*TM software can be accessed by visiting:
https://scorebook.baldrigepe.org/user_login.aspx

Each examiner participating on a Level 2, 3, or 4 evaluation team will receive from the TNCPE office a username and ID for initial access to the software. Upon first use of the software, the examiner is required to change his/her password to ensure security.

Confidentiality of the award program requires that software-generated scorebooks, reports, etc. be treated with the same level of security as paper copies of Award application materials. When not in use, examiners are to remain logged off of the *Scorebook Navigator*TM software and written application materials should be stored in a secure location, such as a locked file or file cabinet.

With the exception of the final Feedback Report, applicants are referred to only by number (not name). When the review process is complete and the Feedback Report has been delivered to the applicant, the TNCPE office will send a message to examiners asking them to destroy or delete all application-related materials, including papers, electronic documents, and backup files. Usernames and passwords will also be deactivated at this time.

Reimbursement of Expenses

As a nonprofit organization, TNCPE strives to keep application fees and expenses to a minimum. Where individual needs exist, the program provides examiner expense Per Diem policy as described below.

TNCPE Per Diem Policy

Per Diem will be paid upon written request from examiners whose application assignments require out-of-town travel for which their employers will not cover the expense. Per Diem is paid for site visit days only. Per Diem is not paid for training or consensus meetings.

Site visit Per Diem by application level

Level	Per Diem	Length	Total
1	\$125	1 day	\$125
2	\$125	2 days	\$250
3	\$125	3 days	\$375
4	\$125	4 days	\$500

Please note, the site visit length described in the table above includes the additional time, directly following the site visit, that your team will meet to document your site visit findings. For a Level 1 application, you will spend half a day on site, followed by a half-day wrap-up meeting. Level 2, 3 and 4 applications require a full day wrap-up meeting.



BOARD OF EXAMINERS PER DIEM REQUEST

Please review the Examiner Per Diem policy: *Per Diem will be paid upon written request from examiners whose application assignments require out-of-town travel for which their employers will not cover the expense. Per Diem is paid for site visit days only. Per Diem is **not** paid for training or consensus meetings.*

If the Per Diem policy applies to you, complete this form and email it to contact@tncpe.org. Per Diem checks will be processed within 5 business days.

Examiner Name: _____

Applicant #: _____ Applicant Level: _____

Dates of Site Visit: _____

Date of Post-Site Visit Meeting: _____

Note: per diem does not apply to the post-site visit meeting if it was held by conference call

I have confirmed that my employer will not cover travel expenses for examiner site visit and I am requesting per diem.

I request reimbursement for the following amount (receipts attached): \$ _____
Note: Only select this option if you would like to claim less than the allotted per diem. See allotted per diem table.

Allotted Per Diem

Level	Per Diem	Site visit length	Max
1	\$125	1 day	\$125
2	\$125	2 days	\$250
3	\$125	3 days	\$375
4	\$125	4 days	\$500

Initials: _____ **Date:** _____

Please remit payment to

Name: _____

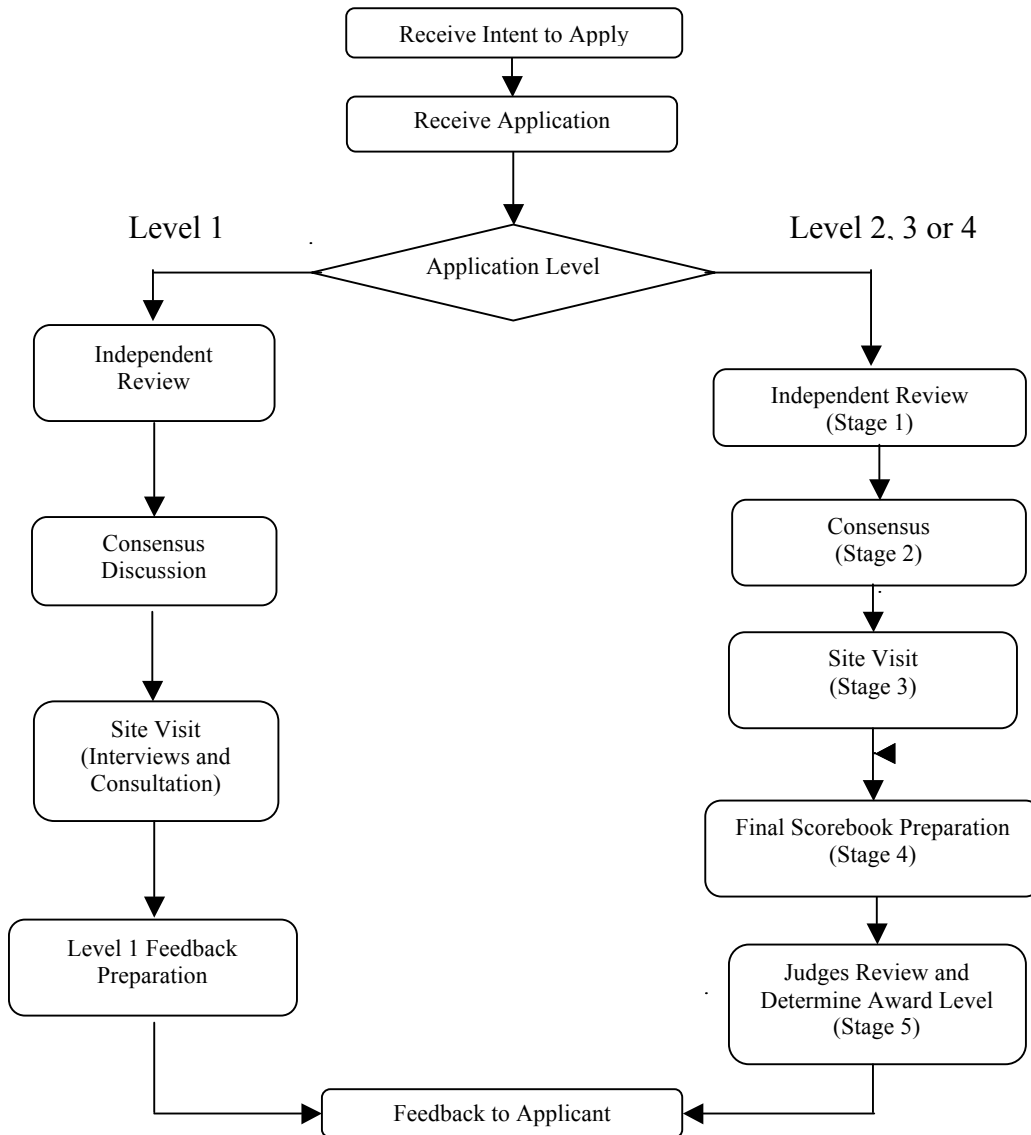
Mailing address: _____

EVALUATION PROCESS MAP

A team selected from the Board of Examiners evaluates each written application. Every applicant organization receives a Feedback Report detailing its strengths and opportunities for improvement (OFIs).

Key Process Steps

As illustrated in the chart below, there are five steps in the evaluation process for Level 2, 3 and 4 applicants: (1) independent review; (2) consensus; (3) site visit; (4) Final Scorebook preparation and (5) judges' review and determination of award level.



EVALUATION PROCESS OVERVIEW

The next few sections will give an overview of the evaluation process for both Level 1 and Level 2, 3 and 4 applicants, respectively. For Levels 2, 3 and 4 applicants, the scoring system that you will apply to your assigned applicant is also described. Remember, this is only an overview; the process details will be introduced during training.

Level 1

Independent Review

A Level 1 application consists solely of a five-page Organizational Profile. Each team member independently reviews the profile, noting information that is related to each Criteria category.

Consensus and Site Visit

A Level 1 consensus meeting may take place by telephone or in person just prior to the site visit. The site visit has a two-fold purpose: in addition to learning more about the applicant, examiners educate the applicant about performance excellence, quality tools and TNCPE.

Level 1 Feedback

The Level 1 Feedback Report contains comments on the applicant's strengths and OFIs in the seven Categories of the Criteria. In addition, examiners on Level 1 teams are permitted to provide observations and recommendations related to each category.

Levels 2, 3 and 4

Independent Review (Stage 1)

Independent review is the first stage of the application evaluation process. During this stage, examiners review an assigned application, independent of their examiner team members. Each examiner reads the application and compares the applicant's responses to the Criteria requirements. Strengths and gaps are noted and recorded using the *Scorebook Navigator*TM software.

Throughout this process, examiners will note potential site visit issues as well. Then, using the scoring guidelines, examiners will score the applicant's response against the Criteria. The outcome of the independent review provides a basis for the team's consensus meeting.

Independent reviews will be shared among team members only after every team member's independent review has been completed.

Evaluation and Scoring Dimensions

The evaluation and scoring of responses to Criteria items and award applicant feedback is based on two dimensions: (1) process and (2) results.

In process items, Approach–Deployment–Learning–Integration (A–D–L–I) are linked to emphasize that descriptions of approach should always indicate the deployment – consistent with the *specific requirements* of the item. As processes mature, their descriptions also should indicate how cycles of learning occur, as well as integration with other processes and work units. Although the approach–deployment–learning–integration factors are linked, feedback to Award applicants may reflect strengths and opportunities for improvement in any or all of these factors.

Results items call for data showing performance Levels, Trends, and relevant Comparisons for key measures and indicators of organizational performance. Results items are also evaluated on the extent to which they address important performance requirements (Integration).

This is directly related to deployment and organizational learning: If improvement processes are widely shared and deployed, there should be corresponding results. A score for a results item is a composite based upon

overall performance, taking into account the four factors (Le-T-C-I).

“Importance” as a Scoring Consideration

The process and results evaluation dimensions are critical to evaluation and feedback.

Another critical consideration is the *importance* of reported processes and results to the applicant’s key business factors. Areas of greatest importance should be identified in the Organizational Profile and in process

items. Key customer requirements, strategic challenges and advantages, competitive environment, and key strategic objectives are particularly important.

Scoring Guidelines

For your reference, the scoring guidelines for the process items can be found below, while the scoring guidelines for the results items can be found on the next page.

Process Scoring Guidelines

SCORE	PROCESS (for use with categories 1–6)
0% or 5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No SYSTEMATIC APPROACH to item requirements is evident; information is ANECDOTAL. (A) ■ Little or no DEPLOYMENT of any SYSTEMATIC APPROACH is evident. (D) ■ An improvement orientation is not evident; improvement is achieved through reacting to problems. (L) ■ No organizational ALIGNMENT is evident; individual areas or work units operate independently. (I)
10%, 15%, 20%, or 25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The beginning of a SYSTEMATIC APPROACH to the BASIC REQUIREMENTS of the item is evident. (A) ■ The APPROACH is in the early stages of DEPLOYMENT in most areas or work units, inhibiting progress in achieving the BASIC REQUIREMENTS of the item. (D) ■ Early stages of a transition from reacting to problems to a general improvement orientation are evident. (L) ■ The APPROACH is ALIGNED with other areas or work units largely through joint problem solving. (I)
30%, 35%, 40%, or 45%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ An EFFECTIVE, SYSTEMATIC APPROACH, responsive to the BASIC REQUIREMENTS of the item, is evident. (A) ■ The APPROACH is DEPLOYED, although some areas or work units are in early stages of DEPLOYMENT. (D) ■ The beginning of a SYSTEMATIC APPROACH to evaluation and improvement of KEY PROCESSES is evident. (L) ■ The APPROACH is in the early stages of ALIGNMENT with your basic organizational needs identified in response to the Organizational Profile and other process items. (I)
50%, 55%, 60%, or 65%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ An EFFECTIVE, SYSTEMATIC APPROACH, responsive to the OVERALL REQUIREMENTS of the item, is evident. (A) ■ The APPROACH is well DEPLOYED, although DEPLOYMENT may vary in some areas or work units. (D) ■ A fact-based, SYSTEMATIC evaluation and improvement PROCESS and some organizational LEARNING, including INNOVATION, are in place for improving the efficiency and EFFECTIVENESS of KEY PROCESSES. (L) ■ The APPROACH is ALIGNED with your overall organizational needs identified in response to the Organizational Profile and other process items. (I)
70%, 75%, 80%, or 85%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ An EFFECTIVE, SYSTEMATIC APPROACH, responsive to the MULTIPLE REQUIREMENTS of the item, is evident. (A) ■ The APPROACH is well DEPLOYED, with no significant gaps. (D) ■ Fact-based, SYSTEMATIC evaluation and improvement and organizational LEARNING, including INNOVATION, are KEY management tools; there is clear evidence of refinement as a result of organizational-level ANALYSIS and sharing. (L) ■ The APPROACH is INTEGRATED with your current and future organizational needs identified in response to the Organizational Profile and other process items. (I)
90%, 95%, or 100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ An EFFECTIVE, SYSTEMATIC APPROACH, fully responsive to the MULTIPLE REQUIREMENTS of the item, is evident. (A) ■ The APPROACH is fully DEPLOYED without significant weaknesses or gaps in any areas or work units. (D) ■ Fact-based, SYSTEMATIC evaluation and improvement and organizational LEARNING through INNOVATION are KEY organization-wide tools; refinement and INNOVATION, backed by ANALYSIS and sharing, are evident throughout the organization. (L) ■ The APPROACH is well INTEGRATED with your current and future organizational needs identified in response to the Organizational Profile and other process items. (I)

Results Scoring Guidelines

SCORE	RESULTS (for use with category 7)
0% or 5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There are no organizational PERFORMANCE RESULTS and/or poor RESULTS in areas reported. (Le) ■ TREND data either are not reported or show mainly adverse TRENDS. (T) ■ Comparative information is not reported. (C) ■ RESULTS are not reported for any areas of importance to the accomplishment of your organization's MISSION. (I)
10%, 15%, 20%, or 25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A few organizational PERFORMANCE RESULTS are reported, responsive to the BASIC REQUIREMENTS of the item, and early good PERFORMANCE LEVELS are evident. (Le) ■ Some TREND data are reported, with some adverse TRENDS evident. (T) ■ Little or no comparative information is reported. (C) ■ RESULTS are reported for a few areas of importance to the accomplishment of your organization's MISSION. (I)
30%, 35%, 40%, or 45%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Good organizational PERFORMANCE LEVELS are reported, responsive to the BASIC REQUIREMENTS of the item. (Le) ■ Some TREND data are reported, and a majority of the TRENDS presented are beneficial. (T) ■ Early stages of obtaining comparative information are evident. (C) ■ RESULTS are reported for many areas of importance to the accomplishment of your organization's MISSION. (I)
50%, 55%, 60%, or 65%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Good organizational PERFORMANCE LEVELS are reported, responsive to the OVERALL REQUIREMENTS of the item. (Le) ■ Beneficial TRENDS are evident in areas of importance to the accomplishment of your organization's MISSION. (T) ■ Some CURRENT PERFORMANCE LEVELS have been evaluated against relevant comparisons and/or BENCHMARKS and show areas of good relative PERFORMANCE. (C) ■ Organizational PERFORMANCE RESULTS are reported for most KEY CUSTOMER, market, and PROCESS requirements. (I)
70%, 75%, 80%, or 85%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Good to excellent organizational PERFORMANCE LEVELS are reported, responsive to the MULTIPLE REQUIREMENTS of the item. (Le) ■ Beneficial TRENDS have been sustained over time in most areas of importance to the accomplishment of your organization's MISSION. (T) ■ Many to most TRENDS and CURRENT PERFORMANCE LEVELS have been evaluated against relevant comparisons and/or BENCHMARKS and show areas of leadership and very good relative PERFORMANCE. (C) ■ Organizational PERFORMANCE RESULTS are reported for most KEY CUSTOMER, market, PROCESS, and ACTION PLAN requirements. (I)
90%, 95%, or 100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Excellent organizational PERFORMANCE LEVELS are reported that are fully responsive to the MULTIPLE REQUIREMENTS of the item. (Le) ■ Beneficial TRENDS have been sustained over time in all areas of importance to the accomplishment of your organization's MISSION. (T) ■ Evidence of industry and BENCHMARK leadership is demonstrated in many areas. (C) ■ Organizational PERFORMANCE RESULTS and PROJECTIONS are reported for most KEY CUSTOMER, market, PROCESS, and ACTION PLAN requirements. (I)

Consensus (Stage 2)

The purpose of consensus is to clarify and resolve differences in individual examiners' observations and scoring during their independent reviews (Stage 1). During this stage the team reaches consensus on scorebook comments, key factors, site visit issues and numerical scores, based upon the contributions of all team members. The team uses the *Scorebook Navigator*[™] software to prepare one Consensus Scorebook, which serves as the basis for site visit (Stage 3).

The team leader will assign each team member the responsibility of preparing one or more items for the Consensus meeting. As you prepare for consensus, you will write complete comments, which will eventually become key components of your team's Final Scorebook.

Site Visit (Stage 3)

During the site visit, examiner teams spend time at the applicant's facilities to better understand the organization by clarifying uncertain points in the application and verifying their understanding of the information presented by the applicant. The ultimate purpose of this visit is to add value to the Feedback Report.

The team leader will plan the site visit in conjunction with team members and the applicant. Before the trip, the team leader will provide examiners with site visit logistics, travel arrangements and agendas.

Prior to site visit, each examiner will develop site visit issue worksheets on the item(s) that they were assigned responsibility for during consensus preparation. These worksheets along with the Final Scorebook will provide the judges with a paper trail of the results of the site visit for use in determining award levels.

Computer Use

Team members may use laptop computers to

prepare the Final Scorebook. During the site visit, examiners may use their computers in their hotel rooms or in a secure team conference room on site. Examiners may not use the applicant's computers to prepare the Final Scorebook or to extract or retrieve data.

Final Scorebook Preparation (Stage 4)

Upon completion of the site visit, the team will prepare a Final Scorebook, which ultimately becomes the applicant's Feedback Report. The Final Scorebook is your team's final entry in the *Scorebook Navigator*[™] software. ***Remember, as an examiner you will know the applicant best. Although the Final Scorebook will go through a final review in the TNCPE office, the content of the Final Scorebook is the responsibility of your team.***

Each TNCPE Award Program applicant receives a written Feedback Report. This report is one of the most important components of the evaluation process because it provides the applicant a pathway for continuous improvement.

Applicants use the Feedback Report to learn about their strengths and OFIs, relative to the requirements of the Criteria. Comments provided in the scorebooks are vital to producing the Feedback Report to the ultimate customer – the applicant. As a result, every examiner is critical in providing effective feedback.

Effective feedback requires:

- A thorough evaluation of the application relative to the *Criteria for Performance Excellence*,
- Targeting key strengths and OFIs for each item in the Criteria,
- Effective communication of those strengths and OFIs to the applicant via comments in the Feedback Report.

Feedback Report Format

The supplementary material and components of the Final Scorebook that are the basis for the Feedback Report include:

Cover Letter. This letter congratulates the applicant for participating in the program. It provides details about the evaluation process, including the number of hours the examiner team spent assessing the application.

“Preparing to Read Your Feedback Report.”

This one-page instruction sheet offers tips on how best to review the information contained in the Feedback Report and how to apply the information to continuous improvement processes within the organization.

Award Level and Scoring Band information.

This section tells the applicant which scoring bands it achieved during consensus and which bands it achieved after the site visit was complete. It also describes the TNCPE Award level the applicant earned and provides characteristics of that level.

Key themes. Prepared by the team leader or assigned team member, this section is two to three pages in length and summarizes the key points of the evaluation of the applicant. It is an assessment of the most important strengths, significant OFIs and key results.

Item Evaluation. Prepared by the category leaders, this section contains comments on each item of the Criteria. Comments cite the applicant’s specific strengths and OFIs relative to the Criteria requirements.

Appendix. This section describes various aspects of the TNCPE program including information about award levels, scoring and the evaluation process.

Judges Review and Determine Award Level (Stage 5)

Recommendation of Award Level by Team

Upon the completion of Site Visit and as the Final Scorebook is completed (Stage 4), the team recommends to the Panel of Judges the recognition level they believe the applicant should receive.

Panel of Judges & Judging Procedure

Judges come to the “Judgment Day” meeting having reviewed the scorebooks and site visit findings of all Level 2, 3 and 4 applicants.

All conflicts are reviewed and discussed so that judges are aware of the limitations on information that will be used to determine award levels.

A lead judge is assigned to each applicant. (Level 4 applicants are assigned two lead judges.) The lead judge has reviewed the application, Consensus Scorebook, the Site Visit Issue Worksheets, their resolution and the findings of the Final Scorebook. The other judges have reviewed the applicant’s organization profile and the Final Scorebook.

Applications in each of the three Award levels are discussed separately.

The lead judge facilitates discussion of each assigned application. If necessary, questions are developed and a conference call with the team leader is conducted. Discussion of the application continues until all participating judges conclude that the review has been adequate.

The judges reach consensus on the level of recognition.

After discussion of all applicants is complete, judges review the applications at each award level to verify the integrity of the process.

Decisions of the judges are final.

Basic Judging Principles

- Achieve maximum benefits of discussion and consensus.
- Strive for the maximum number of Judges participating in as many applicant decisions as is consistent with conflict of interest rules.
- Eliminate conflict of interest and appearance of conflict of interest.
- A Judge will vote on an applicant only if he or she has been present during the discussion of the applicant.
- All necessary steps will be taken to preserve applicant confidentiality.
- At all times Judges and the TNCPE president will strive to maintain a positive learning environment.

Award Presentation

Applicants' awards are presented at the annual Awards Banquet held in conjunction with the Excellence in Tennessee Conference. The 2012 Conference will be held in the Nashville area, Feb. 21-22, with the Awards Banquet scheduled for Feb. 22.

As a member of the 2011 Board of Examiners, you will be invited to attend the Awards Banquet as a guest of TNCPE (no charge).

applications should respond to the basic item requirements.

GLOSSARY

A-D-L-I. Acronym for “approach, deployment, learning, integration.” These are the four factors used to evaluate an organization’s processes.

applicant. An organization that applies for feedback and recognition through the TNCPE Award Program.

area to address. Criteria items are broken down into 40 areas to address. The areas to address provide an in-depth look at an organization’s systems.

assessment process. See “evaluation process.”

award levels. TNCPE offers applicant organizations recognition at four different award levels. From lowest to highest, TNCPE award levels are: Level 1, Interest Recognition; Level 2, Commitment Award; Level 3, Achievement Award; Level 4, Excellence Award. As award levels increase, applicants must respond to increasingly detailed questions within the Criteria.

Baldrige National Quality Award. An award presented by the President of the United States to businesses (manufacturing and service, small and large), education, health care, government and nonprofit organizations that apply and are judged to be outstanding according to the *Criteria for Performance Excellence*. The TNCPE program is based on the Baldrige program. Many applicants use the TNCPE program as a stepping stone to the Baldrige award program.

basic item requirements. Refer to the topic Criteria users need to address when responding to the most central concept of the item. It can be identified as the bold question directly following the item title. Level 2

Board of Examiners. The body of individuals that serve as TNCPE examiners. The service commitment for members of the Board of Examiners is one year.

category. The Criteria for Performance Excellence is divided into seven categories that focus on the basic elements of organizational operations. The seven Criteria categories are: Leadership; Strategic Planning; Customer Focus; Measurement, Analysis and Knowledge Management; Workforce Focus; Operations Focus, and Results.

comment. A written assessment of how well the applicant meets the Criteria. It’s the primary means for the examiner to communicate with other examiners, judges and the applicant.

consensus. The second stage of the TNCPE Award evaluation process. During the consensus meeting, team members contribute and consolidate their independent review findings, eventually coming to an agreement on scorebook comments, key factors, site visit issues and numerical scores.

Criteria. Short for *Criteria for Performance Excellence*.

Criteria for Performance Excellence. A set of guidelines developed by the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program and used by TNCPE that describe the characteristics of world-class organizations. Organizations respond to a series of questions presented by the Criteria to look deep inside their systems and processes. The responses help the organization identify strengths and opportunities for improvement.

evaluation process. When an organization applies for feedback and recognition through the TNCPE program, its application goes

through a rigorous evaluation process conducted by members of the TNCPE Board of Examiners. The *Criteria for Performance Excellence* is the foundation of this evaluation. Also known as the “assessment process.”

examiner. An individual selected to participate in the TNCPE evaluation process by assessing an organization that applies for recognition through TNCPE. The examiner uses the *Criteria for Performance Excellence* as the framework for his or her evaluation.

Feedback Report. The report delivered to each applicant at the end of the evaluation process that describes the examiners’ assessment of the applicant’s strengths and OFIs. Comments are gleaned from the Final Scorebook and incorporated into the Feedback Report.

Final Scorebook. The compilation of the examiner team’s Item Worksheets, Score Summary Worksheet, signed Award Recommendation Form, and Site Visit Issue Worksheets. It also includes the Key Factors and Key Themes that the team has developed. This scorebook is used by the Panel of Judges to determine the applicant’s award level and it is the basis for the Feedback Report that the applicant will receive after judging.

independent review. The first stage of the TNCPE evaluation process. During this stage, examiners read the application, identify strengths and gaps related to the requirements of the Criteria, begin to identify site visit issues and score the applicant’s responses against the Criteria based on the application level.

Item. Criteria categories are broken down into 17 items. The items take the Criteria questions a step further, deepening the level of analysis.

key factor. A significant attribute of an organization that influences the way the organization operates. Examiners use key factors to focus their assessments on what is

important to the applicant.

key theme. A perception or observation that recurs and is expanded upon throughout the scorebook.

Le-T-C-I. Acronym for “levels, trends, comparisons, integration.” These are the four factors used to evaluate an organization’s results.

multiple item requirements. The individual questions Level 4 applicants should respond to within each Area to Address.

OFI. Acronym for “opportunity for improvement.” It identifies a gap in an application.

opportunity for improvement (OFI). An OFI describes anything called for in the Criteria that an organization lacks or has neglected to address, for example an approach or results that do not support the organization’s vision, mission, values or customer requirements, or that do not respond to the organization’s strategic challenges.

Organizational Profile. The Organizational Profile is the section of the Criteria that describes how the organization operates and the key challenges it faces. All TNCPE applicants must submit an organizational profile.

overall item requirements. The topics applicants need to address when responding to the central theme of an item. In the Criteria, the overall requirements are presented in bold print under the item title. Level 3 applications should respond to the overall item requirements.

process. The methods an organization uses and improves to address the item requirements in Categories 1 through 6.

process items. The Criteria items that address an organization’s processes. Many process

item questions begin with the word “how.” They are contained in categories 1-6.

results. An organization’s outputs and outcomes for its key processes.

results items. The Criteria items that address an organization’s results. Results item questions often begin with the word “what.” They are contained in category 7.

scorebook editor. Designated member of the examiner team responsible for coaching team members to refine comments prior to the Consensus meeting; works with team leader to edit the final Feedback Report to ensure it is clear, insightful, and reads as if it were written by one person.

Scorebook Navigator™. The software program examiners use to record comments, scores and findings during the independent review, consensus and site visit stages of the evaluation process. The software program can be accessed by visiting https://scorebook.baldrigepe.org/user_login.aspx

site visit. The third stage of the evaluation process. A visit by an examiner team to an applicant’s facility to clarify uncertain points in the application and verify strengths that have been identified.

strength. Strengths describe anything that the organization is doing that is called for in the Criteria.

synthesis. The development of consensus comments drawn from team members’ independent reviews.

team leader. Experienced examiner designated by TNCPE as the leader and key point of contact for an examining team. Ultimately responsible for contact with applicant; setting team calendar and deadlines; coaching team members to ensure high performance; and delivering value-added feedback to the applicant.

APPENDIX

TNCPE Contact Information

Tennessee Center for
Performance Excellence
2525 Perimeter Place Dr., Suite 122
Nashville, TN 37214-3773

Telephone: (800) 453-6474
(615) 889-8323 (Nashville)

Fax: (615) 889-8325
E-mail: contact@tncpe.org
Website: www.TNCPE.org

Examiner Resources

The Tennessee Center for Performance Excellence exists because of the work done by the Board of Examiners. As an examiner, you provide immeasurable help in achieving our mission and vision. The following list describes materials and resources available to you during your service.

Presentation Materials

Presentation materials with accompanying speaker's notes on the award program, the *Criteria for Performance Excellence* and TNCPE are available in MS PowerPoint format.

Portable Exhibit

The TNCPE office can make available a portable tabletop exhibit related to TNCPE and the award program for use at conferences and workshops. To reserve the tabletop exhibit and request materials, please contact the TNCPE office.

Material for Reference or Distribution

Available materials include copies of the Criteria, brochures, fact sheets, examiner recruitment brochures and award recipient information.

Examiner Newsletter

An examiner newsletter is issued at least once a month to keep examiners apprised of TNCPE programming. It also provides information on issues relating to your work as an examiner: independent review, consensus, site visit, writing feedback comments and other processes.

TNCPE Website

An online examiner resource section contains materials used in the evaluation process, along with other information about the TNCPE program. To access: www.tncpe.org.

For more information about these resources, contact the TNCPE office by phone at (800) 453-6474 or by e-mail at contact@TNCPE.org.