

# communities<sup>of</sup>excellence<sup>2026</sup> Assessment & Recognition



## COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION PANEL INFORMATION

We invite you to join this just cause by being a member of the Communities of Excellence Assessment and Recognition Panel. Serving as a Communities of Excellence Reviewer provides an opportunity to become familiar with the Communities of Excellence Framework, and key community development concepts. It also offers access to a network of quality professionals across a wide range of industries. Through a teamwork approach, you'll gain experience in assessing the performance of a community excellence group's collaborative community work and provide valuable feedback to encourage improvement and innovation. The experience and knowledge you acquire can be valuable as you apply it in your own community or organization. We encourage you to take advantage of this hands-on experience and opportunity.

### THE BENEFITS

- Increase your understanding of community collaboration through a systems approach
- Strengthen your understanding of the Communities of Excellence Framework
- Develop analytical, teamwork, and consensus-building skills
- Gain experience in community assessment by reviewing community applications from across the country
- Provide community feedback to encourage continuous improvement and innovation
- Network with community leaders and industry experts and enhance personal growth
- Receive recognition on the Communities of Excellence website and at our yearly conference

### WHO SHOULD SERVE

- Community, community sector, formal, informal and organizational leaders
- Health, education, business, government, faith-based, and non-profit industry experts
- Quality, performance excellence, and community development professionals
- Community Excellence Group members

### REVIEWER REQUIREMENTS

All who would like to serve as a COE Reviewer for the current year must complete and submit the Community Assessment and Recognition Panel Application. Reviewers are appointed to serve for one year. A new application must be submitted each year even if you have participated as a Reviewer in the past.

Communities of Excellence seeks to establish a diverse panel with a wide range of experience across all community sectors. Reviewers represent this organization and serve as volunteers for the Communities of Excellence Assessment and Recognition Program. Therefore, candidates must have a reputation for ethical conduct and integrity. They must demonstrate a willingness and commitment to high work standards, meet team deadlines, maintain confidentiality, and display political acumen.

Applications are evaluated using the criteria below:

- 1. Experience: Demonstrated experience with cross-sector community collaboration and leadership in either organizational or community settings.
- 2. Knowledge: Familiarity with the Baldrige and/or Communities of Excellence Framework.
- 3. Analytical Skills: Ability to critically analyze and evaluate complex documents and initiatives.
- 4. Communication Skills: Strong written and verbal communication skills to articulate feedback and recommendations effectively.
- 5. Collaboration: Ability to work collaboratively and effectively within teams.

Reviewers must complete the following registration tasks each year:

- 1. Submit the [Community Assessment and Recognition Panel Application](#) by May 15<sup>th</sup>.
- 2. If you are a first-time Reviewer, attend the Assessment and Recognition Panel Training before serving on an assessment team. It is highly recommended that all returning Reviewers also attend.
- 3. Once selected, attend the assessment orientation before serving on an assessment team. This is held shortly before an application is assigned to the assessment team.
- 4. Sign and submit the Code of Ethical Standards and Disclosure of Conflict-of-Interest forms by the deadline.
- 5. Adhere to the application assessment and award process. Reviewers are expected to meet all requirements associated with a fair and competent evaluation, including use of the COE Framework criteria and scoring system, adherence to the evaluation process, use of specified templates, communicate clearly, and avoidance of conflicts of interest.

**COE REVIEWER ROLE & TIME COMMITMENT**

Reviewers are assigned to award applications with the goal of providing insightful and valuable feedback to support community continuous improvement. If you are selected to participate on the Assessment and Recognition Panel, you'll be assigned to review and assess a community application based on your knowledge and experience and on the need to avoid conflicts of interest. This is a voluntary position, and no monetary compensation is offered.

**Roles within Assessment Teams**

<b>COE Facilitator</b>	Provides guidance and support to the assessment teams. The facilitator will provide the orientation, will ensure the team has all the required tools and resources to conduct their assessment, and will communicate with the team lead as needed.
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<b>Team Lead</b>	Leads the team through the community application assessment process. The team lead ensures adherence to the evaluation process, timely completion of deliverables, a fair and competent assessment of the evaluation, a quality feedback report, and promotes confidentiality and ethical behavior within the team. Team Leads are experienced Reviewers.
<b>Reviewer</b>	Assesses the community application, determining key factors and developing strengths and opportunities for improvement. Reviewers work as a team to develop the highest quality feedback report that will support communities in their progress towards excellence. Experienced Reviewers will be paired with less experienced Reviewers.

### Time Commitment

Assignments	Estimated Time Commitment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 1 – Commitment to Community Excellence Applications</li> <li>Can be assigned at any time throughout the year</li> </ul>	10-20 hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 2 – Journey to Community Excellence</li> </ul>	20 – 30 hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 3 – Community of Excellence Application</li> <li>Experienced Reviewers may be asked to participate in training and coaching sessions, and serve as judges</li> </ul>	40-60 hours

### ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION PROGRAM AWARD CATEGORIES

See the [COE Community Application Instructions](#) for more detailed information.

Recognition	Description
<b>Level 1 - Commitment to Community Excellence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communities respond to the Community Profile questions of the Communities of Excellence Framework.</li> <li>Communities will also respond to question 7.1.1 by providing results from their COE Common Community Scorecard or their own measures that show community results.</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2 - Journey to Community Excellence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In addition to responding to the questions in the Community Profile, communities answer all the questions in Categories 1, 2, and 3.</li> <li>Communities also respond to the basic questions only in Categories 4, 5, 6, and 7.</li> </ul> <p><i>A requirement of this level of the program is to receive Commitment to Community Excellence Recognition before applying.</i></p>
<b>Level 3 - Community of Excellence Recognition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 3 applications provide answers to all levels of questions in all categories and are able to show the results of their work in category 7.</li> <li>Level 3 participants may choose to be judged using Baldrige standards and be evaluated for Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Platinum recognition.</li> </ul> <p><i>Communities are required to receive Commitment and Journey Level recognition before applying.</i></p>

## COE REVIEWER RECRUITMENT PROCESS OVERVIEW AND TIMELINE

Reviewer Selection and Training	
April 21	Request for Reviewers is made - Request for community assessment begins
May 15	Reviewer applications due - Request for community assessment ends
May 31	All Reviewer selections and team assignments are made and communicated to Reviewer
Week of June 2	Complete self-paced online trainings (2 modules)
Week of June 9	The online virtual Reviewer training on 6.9.25 3-5pm EST
Week of June 23	Assessment team assignments are made and communicated
Reviewer Assessment Team	
Week of July 7	COE facilitator meets with team leads
Week of July 14	Assessment team orientation
Week of July 21	Independent analysis
Aug 1 – Aug 10	Level 2,3 community presentation for assessment team
Week of Aug 11	Level 2,3 feedback formulation   Level 1 consensus video conference
Week of Aug 25	Level 2,3 consensus video conference   Level 1 finalize feedback report

\*Level 1 applications may also be submitted at any time during the year. Current Reviewers may be asked to participate in the assessment process for those applications.

## TRAINING

All individuals who wish to serve as Communities of Excellence (COE) volunteer Reviewers for the first time are required to attend the COE Assessment and Recognition Panel Training before participating on the Assessment and Recognition Panel.

While returning Reviewers are encouraged to attend the training as a refresher, it is not mandatory. A “new” Reviewer is defined as someone who has never served before or has not participated in the past two consecutive years.

The training is comprised of two self-paced online modules and one live virtual webinar on June 9, 2025, 3-5pm EST.

The cost of the training is \$75. Payment is due prior to the start of training.