

Standards Basics Application Form

READ THIS SECTION FIRST

General Instructions

This application is designed to collect information about how your organization is implementing the Standards for Excellence: An Ethics and Accountability Code for the Nonprofit Sector. The responses in this application and the materials submitted are considered confidential information, will not be subject to public inspection, and will be viewed only by PANO staff and individuals involved in the review process (peer reviewers, committee members). All staff, peer reviewers, and committee members are required to sign confidentiality and conflict of interest statements specific to each organization reviewed. Only organizations that have successfully completed the review process will be publicly announced. If we find your practices particularly exemplary, we may ask your permission to share specific items on your behalf with other member organizations which are part of the Standards for Excellence network.

About the Questions

The questions below are in three forms: Yes/No Description or Narrative File Upload Your answers to these questions will be judged according to the benchmarks and measures included in the self-assessment tool. The reviewers use the same measures to evaluate your responses. You must provide a response to all questions. Your responses will be used to evaluate your organization's adherence to the Standards, so provide full and complete responses. Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant. If one or more of the Standards benchmarks is not applicable to your organization, please respond N/A along with an explanation of the special circumstances that make it not applicable to your organization. For questions which require a file upload, upload a document that includes your explanation. For questions which request a narrative answer, please try to keep responses to 1,000 words or less. The one exception may be the program evaluation section, which could require a more substantive answer, depending on the number of programs offered by the organization. In Section 2, you will be asked to attach board minutes for the past fiscal year, along with any board minutes from previous years which document board review or approval of certain policies or procedures required in this application.

Mechanics

You may move freely throughout the form, because no responses are marked required. Save your responses on each page before moving to another page. Before you submit your application, ensure that you have provided a response to each question. Each question will allow you to upload one

file. We strongly encourage you to upload PDF files instead of Word, Excel, or other files saved with proprietary software. If you do not have Adobe Acrobat, there are several free PDF creators available online to choose from.

ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION

Basic Information

Legal Name

Doing Business As, Abbreviations or Acronyms

EIN

Website

Street Address

City

State

Zip

Phone

Total Operating Budget (round to the nearest dollar)

Number of full time paid staff

Number of part time paid staff

Number of volunteers (not including board members)

Fiscal Year

Name and title of person submitting this application

Disclosures

Are there currently, or has there been in the last five years, any lawsuits or formal administrative complaints (such as Equal Employee Opportunity Commission or a complaint pending before a regulatory body) brought against the organization?

- Yes
- No

Lawsuit Disclosure

If so, attach a description of any such lawsuits or administrative complaints (or any pending administrative complaints or lawsuits). Address the following: involvement of senior staff as subjects of lawsuit(s) board involvement responding to the lawsuit(s) finding of liability or guilt

Has your organization been the subject of any negative or unfavorable print or electronic media in the last year?

- Yes
- No

Media Disclosure

If so, please attach a copy of the media along with a description of the organization's response.

Is there any other information that the Standards for Excellence® reviewers should know about the organization which may affect if it will continue to stay in business in the future (e.g., financial or other?)

- Yes
- No

Operational Sustainability Disclosure

If so, please attach a description.

Required Attachments

Articles of Incorporation

Attach the organization's Articles of Incorporation along with any associated Articles of Amendment.

IRS Determination Letter

Attach a copy of the organization's IRS determination letter.

State Charity Registration

If required in your state, attach a copy of the letter certifying your registration with the State Charities Office (e.g., e.g., for PA, the Bureau of Corporations and Charitable Organizations).

Bylaws

Attach the organization's bylaws.

Annual Report

If published, attach a copy of the organization's most recent published annual report.

If the annual report is available online, include the link below.

Provide the date the board approved applying for accreditation or recognition. (These minutes should be included in the application).

1. MISSION, STRATEGY, and EVALUATION

This section of the application is designed to collect information about the core purpose of your organization, your organization's programs, and how you evaluate your effectiveness and efficiency in meeting your mission. We will ask what you do with the data you collect from your evaluations and how this information is utilized in decision-making, in short-term planning, and in planning for the organization's future strategy and direction.

A. Mission and Impact

Type your mission statement.

Provide the date and page of the minutes where the board's most recent review can be found. (These minutes should be included in Section 2 of the application)

List the programs and services that the organization provides and describe how they relate to the organization's mission. Feel free to attach a document or a link to your website.

Program Description

Optional Attachment: Attach a description of your programs.

B. Planning Strategically

No benchmarks are required in this area for Basics recognition.

C. Organizational Evaluation

No benchmarks are required in this area for Basics recognition.

1. MISSION, STRATEGY, and EVALUATION (continued)

D. Program Evaluation

For each of the programs listed previously in the application, describe the framework for how each program is evaluated, including how cost-effective the evaluation procedures are for the

organization. Note: For Basics recognition, the organization should provide a response to each of the questions below regarding its plans to evaluate each of its programs. The organization should demonstrate that data collection has begun.

Describe what quantitative and qualitative data is collected.

Describe how the evaluation methods include input from program participants.

Describe how the organization measures outcomes related to efficiency and cost effectiveness (related to the organization's mission and strategic goals).

Describe how the organization measures outcomes for program participants (related to the organization's mission and strategic goals).

Describe how the evaluation information is used by the board and staff in organizational decision-making about improving, expanding, or discontinuing programs and services offered

Program Evaluation Attachment

Required Attachment: Reviewers find it helpful if applicants complete the Program Evaluation Matrix. This allows them to navigate your program evaluation information. Download the document, complete the form and include it in the attachment to the next question. Also, attach any related program evaluation tools such as examples of logic models, surveys, pre- or post-tests, sample data reports, implementation planning, sample dashboards or board reports, etc.

E. Strategic Partnerships

No benchmarks are required in this area for Basics recognition.

2. LEADERSHIP: BOARD, STAFF, and VOLUNTEERS

This section of the application will ask you to answer questions about how the leaders of your organization contribute to its success. You will be asked to provide information about board operations, the board/staff relationship, and management functions. This section also asks you to contemplate how your leaders demonstrate cultural competency organization wide – in the organization’s culture, the policies and procedures of the organization, the management of employees and volunteers, in its programs and services, and in the way the organization interacts with its stakeholders.

A. Leadership and Governance

Governance, Fiduciary Responsibility and Board and Committee Meetings

How often does the board meet?

Who is responsible for board minutes? Describe how board and committee minutes are distributed to board/committee members and describe how board and committee minutes are stored.

Board Annual Calendar

Optional attachment: Attach a copy of the board's annual board calendar.

Board Meeting Minutes

Required Attachment: Attach board minutes for the past fiscal year (at least four board meetings), along with any board minutes from previous years which document board review or approval of policies or procedures required in this application. Each required decision or action should be clearly documented in the minutes. Attach the minutes in chronological order with the oldest minutes first and the most recent minutes last.

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

- Yes
- No

If yes, to which committees has the board designated decision-making authority?

Committee Minutes

If yes, Required Attachment: If the board has delegated decision making authority to any committee, attach the committee minutes for the past fiscal year, plus any demonstrating committee review or approval of Standards required elements. (e.g. Executive committee, Finance committee, Audit committee, etc.).

2. LEADERSHIP: BOARD, STAFF, and VOLUNTEERS (continued)

Executive Supervision, Performance and Compensation

Describe the board's role in setting the executive's compensation.

Provide the date and page of the minutes where the board's most recent review can be found. This should take place annually. (These minutes should be included in Section 2 of the application).

Describe the executive's compensation package.

Executive Contract

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

Executive Compensation Policy

Optional attachment: Attach a copy of the Executive Compensation Policy.

Executive Authority

Optional attachments: Attach any board policies which grant authority to management in specific areas. This is sometimes found in the bylaws. If not included bylaws, there needs to be a policy or document that define what authority the Executive Director has.

If these optional policies are attached, provide the date and page of the minutes where the board's most recent approval of the attached policies can be found. (These minutes should be included in Section 2 of the application).

2. LEADERSHIP: BOARD, STAFF, and VOLUNTEERS (continued)

A. Leadership and Governance (continued)

Board Effectiveness

Board Job Description

Required Attachments: Attach a copy of the board's job description or list of expectations.

Board Orientation Materials

Required Attachments: Attach the orientation agenda or materials, presentations, etc.

What is your average board meeting attendance?

Describe any active board committees and their purpose, how often they meet, and which board members are involved in which committees.

Succession Planning and Leadership Development

Board List

Required Attachment: Attach a list of current board members that includes employer, occupation and skills. Clearly list all officers and provide the term-end dates for each board member.

Describe the board's role in planning for succession and transition of the executive. If there has been an executive transition in the past five years, describe the organization's most recent executive search and hire process.

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

- Yes
- No

Board Member Independence

Are board members compensated?

- Yes
- No

If so, describe how compensation was set. (This does not include reimbursement for reasonable expenses).

Do any employees have a voting seat on the board?

- Yes
- No

If so, describe how the board ensures that the employee is not in a position to exercise undue influence.

Are any board members related by blood or marriage or living in the same household?

- Yes
- No

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

- Yes
- No

If any board members are related to each other or to staff members, disclose the nature of the relationship here.

Board Meetings

These requirements are covered in the Governance section above.

2. LEADERSHIP: BOARD, STAFF, and VOLUNTEERS (continued)

B. Leadership and Operational Management

Executive Functions

Describe what management policies the executive has implemented to ensure the proper functioning of the organization's operations. (Many of these will be asked for later in the application, e.g., personnel, financial, fundraising, administrative, etc.).

Supporting the Board

No benchmarks are required in this area for Basics recognition.

Organizational and Financial Sustainability

No benchmarks are required in this area for Basics recognition.

Managing Employees and Volunteers

Indicate the pages which address the following:

	Employee Policies
Recruitment, Selection, and Hiring	<input type="text"/>
Screening and Background Checks (if applicable)	<input type="text"/>
Working Conditions	<input type="text"/>
Supervision and Regular Evaluation	<input type="text"/>
Firing and Separation	<input type="text"/>
PTO and Leave	<input type="text"/>

Benefits

Confidentiality of Employee and Organization Information

Problem Solving/Grievance Procedures for Employees

Whistleblower Policy

Orientation and Education

Growth and Development

Evaluation

Code of Ethics/Standards for Excellence

Provide the date and page where the board's approval can be found. (These minutes should be included in Section 2 of the application).

Do employees acknowledge receipt of these policies in writing, or live in the same household?

- Yes
- No

Are any staff related by blood or marriage?

- Yes
- No

If so, explain how your organization ensures that no supervisory relationship exists between related staff members.

Employee Orientation

Required attachment: Attach employee orientation documents such as an agenda or checklist

Describe the executive's role in the evaluation of employees.

Employee Evaluation

Required attachment: Attach any tools or methodology used for employee evaluations

Are all employee evaluations up to date?

- Yes
- No

C. Cultural Competency

No benchmarks are required in this area for Basics recognition.

3. LEGAL COMPLIANCE AND ETHICS

This section of the application will ask you to answer questions about how your organization ensures its compliance with the laws and regulations that govern nonprofits, including public disclosure laws and whistleblower requirements. You will be asked to describe how your organization addresses conflicts of interest issues and maintains ethical practices in its governance, operations, and service to program participants.

A. Maintaining Legal Compliance

Describe how the organization monitors and keeps up with current information on laws and regulations that are applicable to its nonprofit status and mission area.

Describe the process the organization follows to complete an internal compliance review. This may include, but is not limited to complying with laws and regulations related to IRS filing requirements, board governance, human resources, licensing, financial accountability, taxation, valuation of in-kind gifts, unrelated business income, document retention and destruction, related entities, data security, accessibility, fundraising, lobbying, and advocacy.

Internal Compliance Review

Required Attachment: Attach a copy of any documents, policies, or procedures utilized to facilitate the organization's internal compliance review.

Provide the date when a board member or members reviewed the document

Document Destruction and Retention

Required Attachment: Attach a copy of the document retention and destruction policy and schedule.

The organization holds all licenses it needs to perform its programs and services.

- Yes
- No

The organization is registered as required with all applicable federal, state, and local authorities.

- Yes
- No

If required, the organization's facilities are ADA compliant.

- Yes
- No

If the applicant has answered no to any of the above three questions, please provide an explanation.

B. Required Public Disclosures

Describe how the organization ensures that it responds to requests for public documents, like the organization's Form 990, Form 1023, and IRS determination letter.

3. LEGAL COMPLIANCE AND ETHICS (continued)

C. Reporting Misconduct and Whistleblower Protection

Describe how board members, staff, and volunteers are made aware of the organization's whistleblower policy.

Whistleblower Policy

Required Attachment: Attach a copy of the organization's whistleblower policy.

D. Conflicts of Interest

Describe how the organization ensures that its board, staff and volunteers with significant independent decision-making authority are made aware of the conflict of interest policy.

Conflict of Interest Policy

Required Attachment: Attach a copy of the organization's conflict of interest policy

Describe how the organization ensures that the policies are followed and annual disclosures are signed.

Conflict of Interest Statement

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

E. Ethics

Describe how the organization encourages professional behavior on the part of its board, staff, and volunteers and how it ensures that its program participants are treated with respect.

Confidentiality Policy

Required Attachment: Confidentiality or Privacy Policy that protects the privacy of participant information

4. FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

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

A. Financial Budgeting, Reporting, and Monitoring

Describe the process for developing the budget.

Budget

Attach a copy of the organization's most recent board-approved budget. Attach the capital budget if applicable.

Provide the date and page where the board's approval can be found This is required annually.

Describe how the board and executive monitor the organization's finances.

Internal Financial Statements

Required Attachment: Attach copies of the four most recent quarterly budget-to-actual reports and other financial information reviewed by the board of directors. The documents attached should illustrate that the board monitors actual income and expenses in relation to the budget and reviews the Statement of Position (Balance Sheet) on a quarterly basis.

Describe how the board reviews the percentages of the organization's resources spent on program, administration, and fundraising.

Provide the date and page where the board's approval can be found This is required annually. (These minutes should be included in Section 2 of the application).

Form 990

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

Provide the date and page where the board's approval can be found This is required annually. (These minutes should be included in Section 2 of the application).

Audit and Management Letter

For organizations with operating budgets over \$500,000, attach the most recent Audit and Management Letter, along with management's response (if applicable). For organizations with budgets over \$300,000 and less than \$500,000, attach the most recent review. For organizations with budgets over \$100,000 and less than \$300,000, attach the most receive compilation.

Provide the date and page where the board's approval can be found This is required annually. (These minutes should be included in Section 2 of the application).

4. FINANCE AND OPERATIONS (continued)

B. Internal Controls and Financial Policies

Internal Control Procedures

Required Attachment: Attach a copy of the organization's policies and procedures which address internal financial controls

C. Personnel Policies

These were addressed above in Leadership section.

D. Administrative Policies

No benchmarks are required in this area for Basics recognition.

E. Risk Management and Insurance

Describe how the organization assesses and manages risk.

General Liability Insurance

Required Attachment: Attach a copy of the General Liability Insurance declaration page covering the current period. (or board minutes documenting the board's decision to forgo insurance)

Directors and Officers Liability Insurance

Required Attachment: Attach a copy of the Directors and Officers Liability Insurance covering the current period. (or board minutes documenting the board's decision to forgo insurance).

5. RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

This section of the application will ask you to answer questions about the organization's resource development planning and stewardship. Questions will ask how the board and staff determine which sources of income they will seek, including income from fee for service activity, government contracts and grants, foundation grants, corporate partnerships, contributions or sponsorships, individual solicitations, long-term investments, social enterprise, and unrelated business income.

A. and B. Resource Plan and Sources of Income

No benchmarks are required in this area for Basics recognition.

C. Fundraising Activities

Describe how the organization ensures that any solicitations of individuals or corporations clearly outline the organization's mission, the use of the funds solicited, and all required IRS disclosures and state disclosures for solicitations (if applicable). The requested attachments will be judged for compliance with the Standards for Excellence code, the Internal Revenue Service regulations and disclosure requirements and applicable state charitable solicitation regulations.

If the organization raises money online, provide a link to any web pages where donations are being solicited.

Solicitations

Required Attachment: For each of the different sources of income pursued, attach a sample of the solicitation, marketing piece, or proposal, include individual solicitations, private or government grant proposals, sponsorships, cause marketing promotional pieces. Provide at least one sample.

Receipts

For individual solicitations and corporate contributions, provide a copy of three sample receipts sent to donors for each of the following: cash gifts, in-kind gifts, and gifts where the donor received something of substantial value in return.

D. Donor Relationships and Privacy

Donor Relations

Required attachment: Attach a copy of the policy which covers donor relationships and privacy.

E. Acceptance of Gifts

No benchmarks are required in this area for Basics recognition.

F. Fundraising on Behalf of the Organization

Does the organization compensate employees or outside fundraising consultants based on a percentage of the amount raised or other commission formula?

- Yes
- No

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

- Yes
- No

Fundraising Consultants

If Yes, Required Attachment: Provide a list of the outside fundraising consultants hired by the organization in the last three years. Provide documentation that they are registered with the state's office that regulates charitable fundraising, if applicable.

6. PUBLIC AWARENESS, ENGAGEMENT, and ADVOCACY

This section of the application will ask you to answer questions about the organization's interactions with the public and lawmakers, including keeping the public informed about the organization's activities, public education and advocacy efforts, engagement in community affairs, and lobbying.

A. Educating and Engaging the Public

No benchmarks are required in this area for Basics recognition.

B. Advancing the Mission through Public Policy and Advocacy

Describe the organization's education and advocacy activities. If not addressed above under strategic partnerships, provide the details of any partnerships the organization engages in around public policy issues.

C. Engaging in Lobbying and Political Activity

Describe how the organization ensures its activities are non-partisan.

Does the organization engage in lobbying?

- Yes
- No

If yes, describe the organization's lobbying activities.

If the organization has participated in lobbying as defined by their applicable federal, state, or local authorities regulations in the past year, describe whether these costs or activities were reported on the Form 990. Note that lobbying activities on the state and/or local level must also be reported if they follow the federal definition of lobbying.

Does the organization meet the threshold for lobbyist registration at the federal, state or local levels?

- Yes
- No

Lobbyist Registration

If Yes, Required Attachment: If the organization's board, staff, volunteers or an external consultant has lobbied on behalf of the organization, provide evidence that they are registered with the appropriate local, state, or federal officials. Please note: Pennsylvania's Lobbying Registration and Disclosure Act requires organizations and individuals that spend more than \$2,500 per calendar quarter on lobbying or advocacy communications to influence state government decisions to register as lobbyists with the PA Department of State, track their communications activities and disclose their expenses quarterly. Failure to comply could result in civil or criminal penalties. [Act 134 of 2006: 65 Pa.C.S. §1301-A, et seq.] [Regulations: 51 Pa. Code §51.1 et seq.] See PANO Legal

Checklist for more details. Organizations lobbying at the federal level must follow registration requirements with the Clerk of the US House of Representatives and with the Secretary of the US Senate.