AHCA | NCAL

AMERICAN HEALTH CARE ASSOCIATION | NATIONAL CENTER FOR ASSISTED LIVING

NATIONAL QUALITY AWARD EXAMINERS



2027version

THE AHCA/NCAL NATIONAL QUALITY AWARD PROGRAM

The AHCA/NCAL National Quality Award Program recognizes long term and post-acute care centers across the nation that strive to improve quality care. The program, based on the Baldrige Performance Excellence criteria, sets high standards for quality and encourages centers to commit to excelling in quality performance.

The mission of the Quality Award program is to promote and support the application of continuous quality improvement in AHCA/NCAL member organizations. The vision is to be AHCA/NCAL members' pathway of choice for quality improvement resources and recognition.

APPLICATION LEVELS

Applicants may apply to one of three progressive levels of awards; each level has its own distinct rigors and requirements for quality and performance excellence.

Bronze – Commitment to Quality: The goal of this award level is to provide applicants with the tools and resources they need for continuous performance improvement.

Silver – Achievement in Quality: At this level, applicants continue to learn and develop effective approaches that help improve performance and health care outcomes.

Gold – Excellence in Quality: At this level, applicants must show superior performance in areas of the criteria including leadership, strategic planning, and customer and staff satisfaction.

NATIONAL QUALITY AWARD EXAMINERS

Silver and Gold applications are reviewed by volunteer Silver Examiners and Gold Examiners.

Silver and Gold Examiners work on teams to evaluate applications, using a formal process established by AHCA/NCAL. The teams are tasked with completing a feedback report identifying strengths as well as opportunities for improvement, and determining whether the application meets the award standards.

Gold applications must receive a Site Visit in order to receive the award, and Gold Examiners may also be asked to participate on a Site Visit. In addition, a Panel of Judges is engaged to make all final Site Visit and Award decisions for Gold applications.

Please note that recruitment is not open for Bronze Examiners. Bronze applications are reviewed by a small number of highly trained Examiners who are selected by AHCA/NCAL.

CANDIDATE EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS

The AHCA/NCAL welcomes Silver and Gold Examiner applicants with experience in the application of systematic quality improvement and/or in the Baldrige Performance Excellence criteria from both within and outside of the long term care profession.

Candidates with prior experience as an Examiner with a Baldrige-based program should apply to serve as a Gold Examiner, while individuals new to the Baldrige criteria or without Examiner experience should apply as Silver Examiners. Examiners are not required to be recipients from any of the award levels.

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Additional questions? Please contact us at qualityaward@ahca.org.

In particular, the program looks for individuals that exhibit the following characteristics:

- Passion for continuous quality improvement
- Willingness to learn and apply feedback
- Adaptability
- Ability to work effectively in a team environment
- Strong analytical skills
- Attention to detail
- Strong verbal and written communication skills
- Time management skills
- Ability to meet deadlines and work independently

EXAMINER RESPONSIBILITIES AND TIME COMMITMENT

The review process requires a significant time investment once the Examiner is selected. Applicants must secure support from the leadership of their organization before applying to become an Examiner. Examiners will be held accountable to performing the following tasks:

- Team Members and Team Leaders: complete a virtual, self-paced training assignment, including teamwork, estimated to take 10-12 hours.
- Team Leaders and 1 Returning Examiner per team: invited to attend the in-person training session in February at a location TBA.
- Participate in weekly conference calls with assigned Examiner team during the review period, typically late February through late May.
- Complete assigned review work on each application during the review period; on average Examiners report spending 40-60 hours on review work, in total.
    - This may be longer for new Examiners unfamiliar with the process.

TRAVEL EXPENSES

AHCA/NCAL will cover most costs associated with travel to the in person training for all Examiners required to attend. This includes airfare and hotel accommodations. Breakfast and lunch are served during the meetings.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Returning Examiners are selected based on previous service. The evaluation process for returning Examiners relies on the results of the peer review process. Examiners are chosen based on competence, ability to work as a team member, ability to meet deadlines, quality of feedback reports, and overall commitment to the program.

New Silver Examiners are chosen based on expertise in the Baldrige criteria, quality discipline, success in leadership of award-recipient organizations, interest in systematic quality improvement, and other salient factors.

> **"Participation in the Quality Award Program, both as an applicant and Examiner has been of immeasurable benefit to me personally and professionally. Not only have I been able to develop a marketable skillset, but I have created a knowledge base, a peer network, and a best practice resource that has been of great value to me as an individual and to what I contribute to my own organization. Serving as a Gold Examiner has been one of the most significant accomplishments of my career and one that I am proudest of. In terms of importance and pride, the knowledge and benefit that I have gained as a result of participation in the Quality Award Program is second only to the differences I may have made at the bedside."**
>
> Alana Wolfe

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