

2026 PAID EXAMINER GENERAL TIMELINE

An overview of the responsibilities of Paid Examiners is as follows. Please note that this provides a high-level overview of the 2026 process and is subject to change.

FUNCTION

ESTIMATED TIME FRAME

ESTIMATED TIME COMMITMENT

Training

All Examiners are Required to participate in the virtual training, involving self-paced work, a few live learning sessions, team activities and trainer feedback. Details of this training and the live session times will be emailed out to selected Examiners in December.

January 6 -
February 6

10-12 hours

Paid Application Review Period

All Paid Examiners are required to complete a paid review of their assigned applications (a mutually agreed workload will be determined in the Letter of Agreement) using the instruction received during training. This review involves writing feedback comments and identifying a score for each section of the application. This work is to be done parallel to required volunteer team work.

Begins February 19

Ends May 13
(Gold)

Ends June 7
(Silver)

Depends on Examiner
- typically 10-28 hours
per application.

Judges Site Visit Determination Meeting (Virtual) (Gold only)

If the Paid Examiner has a higher-maturity application, they must present it to the Panel of Judges for Site Visit consideration virtually.

May 11-13

Various
preparation time

QUESTIONS? CONTACT US

Email: qualityaward@ahca.org

Website: [AHCANCAL Quality Award Examiner Program](#)



2026 PAID EXAMINER ROLE DESCRIPTION

REQUIRED SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

The program looks for Paid Examiners that exhibit the following characteristics:

- Ability to meet deadlines and work independently
- Passion for continuous quality improvement
- Willingness to learn and take 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

Paid Examiners are required to have considerable experience as Examiners with other Baldrige-based programs. Paid Examiners must also have served as an AHCA/NCAL Quality Award Examiner for at least 1 year prior to becoming a Paid Examiner.

PAID EXAMINER PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The AHCA/NCAL National Quality Award Program is the largest Baldrige-based program in the country, receiving over 1,000 applications per year. As with other Baldrige-based programs, the program relies on volunteer Examiners to objectively and independently evaluate applications from AHCA/NCAL member centers, including skilled nursing care centers, assisted living communities, Veteran's homes and ID/DD centers. To adequately review all applications, the Program has developed a Paid Examiner Program, where Examiners independently review these applications.

When an Examiner applicant applies to serve as a Paid Examiner that meets the requirements, Program staff will reach out to determine their workload capacity to review applications. At the Gold level, Paid Examiners are required to take on at least 1 application. At the Silver level, it is preferred that Examiners review at least 6 Silver applications.

An important note in the role of the Paid Examiner is that all Paid Examiners must also participate as volunteers in that same year. A Paid Examiner cannot forgo service as a volunteer Examiner. Please be sure to review the Volunteer Examiner Role Description as well.