

Plan Ahead

Successful applications take time to write and finalize. This Roadmap is intended to help in planning your application journey and breaking it down to month-by-month steps.



Key Dates

Note the following key dates to stay on track:

- July 2026 - Application Launch
- August 2026 - Portal Opens
- ★ **November 12, 2026 - Intent to Apply Deadline**
- ★ **January 21, 2027 - Application Deadline**
- Summer 2027 - Gold Notifications



2027 Gold Roadmap

Membership

The Quality Award Program is only open to AHCA/NCAL members. Ensure your membership is up to date and reflects the category you intend to apply for (ie. SNF, AL, or SNFAL).



Resources

Along with the Application Packets, applicants are encouraged to use Gold level resources available on the [Quality Award Website](#), including the Gold Criteria Series.

Also, check out the [Gold Self-Assessment](#) and determine your centers readiness to apply for Gold.



Gold Quality Award Workshops

Check with your local State Affiliate to see if they will be offering a Gold Quality Award Workshop, if so, register!



2027 Gold Roadmap



Begin your application journey here:

JUNE



1. Create an application writing team, include members from center leadership and staff.
2. Ensure members of your team are connected to [ahcancaLED](#), the [Quality Award Portal](#), and [LTC Trend Tracker](#).

JULY



1. Download the [Gold Application Packet](#), read in full, and the [Gold Criteria Submission Template](#) to record your responses in.
2. Purchase the [2023-2024 Baldrige Excellence Framework \(Health Care\) Criteria](#)
3. Attend the [2027 Quality Award Program Kick-Off Webinar](#) to learn more about the application process.

July 30, 2026 at 3pm EST

AUGUST



Using the [Gold Criteria Series](#), complete your responses to the Organizational Profile - Category 1. Prepare your Category 1 results.

SEPTEMBER



Using the [Gold Criteria Series](#), complete your responses to Category 2-3 and prepare your results for these categories.

OCTOBER



Using the [Gold Criteria Series](#), complete your responses to Category 4-5 and prepare the results for these categories.



Attend the Gold Award How-to Intensive Session at [AHCA/NCAL's Delivering Solutions 26](#) in Boston, Massachusetts. **Sunday, October 11, 2026**

NOVEMBER



Submit the Intent to Apply by **November 12, 2026, 8pm EST**



Review the Intent to Apply Email Series sent by the Quality Award Program for reminders, tips, and best practices.



Using the [Gold Criteria Series](#), complete Category 6 responses and prepare your Category 6 results.

DECEMBER



Using the [Gold Criteria Series](#), complete Category 7 responses by compiling all the results you've gathered from each prior Category.

JANUARY



- Review your draft application one last time to finalize.
- Submit your application and payment in the Quality Award Portal.

January 21, 2027, 8pm EST

Questions? The Quality Award Team is here to help. Please contact us at qualityaward@ahca.org

2027 Gold Roadmap



Post-Application Submission



FEBRUARY 2027

Congratulate your team on completing the Gold application! Plan to discuss any opportunities for improvement identified while completing the application.



MAY 2027

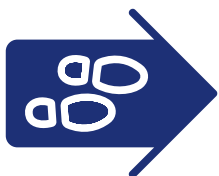
If your application is not recommended for a Site Visit, a feedback report will be forthcoming for your review.

If your application is recommended for a Site Visit, prepare for the Site Visit and review the [Site Visit Recipient Requirements](#).

Resources and next steps to prepare for the Site Visit will be communicated via your notifications letter.

JUNE-JULY 2027

Site Visit period where your center will be visited.



FEEDBACK REPORTS

Review your Feedback Report, paying close attention to the executive summary, action steps, strengths, and opportunities for improvement to develop an action plan and determine the next steps in your performance excellence and Quality Award journey.



OCTOBER 2027

Attend Delivering Solutions 27, the AHCA/NCAL Convention & Expo and the Celebration of Excellence in October 2027.