



Kentucky Award for Performance Excellence

Application Process Overview

Kentucky Center for Performance Excellence

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Introduction

The Kentucky Award for Performance Excellence program annually recognizes organizations for their progress and achievement along the journey to performance excellence. The program is designed to enable participation and recognition at four levels of maturity to allow organizations to participate at a level that is appropriate to their maturity along the journey.

The Criteria have three important roles in strengthening U.S. competitiveness:

1. to help improve performance practices, capabilities, and results,
2. to facilitate communication and sharing of best practices information among U.S. organizations of all types, and
3. to serve as a working tool for understanding and managing performance and for guiding planning and opportunities for learning.

The Kentucky Award for Performance Excellence (KAPE) utilizes the proven and internationally recognized Baldrige Excellence Framework from the National Baldrige Performance Excellence Program. KAPE is administered by the Kentucky Center for Performance Excellence, a non-profit corporation located in Lexington, KY, which seeks to fulfill the same role as the national program for Kentucky organizations and the state.

The KyCPE program is designed to provide organizations with operations in Kentucky the opportunity to share in the values and achievements associated with continuous improvement in quality, productivity, financial efficiency, effectiveness, and global competitiveness.

Award Levels

Participation and recognition are based on the demonstration of performance excellence practices at one of four levels (Level 1 - Interest, Level 2 - Commitment, Level 3 - Achievement and Level 4 – Excellence).

Organizations may apply to the KyCPE program at any one of these levels. However, as the application level increases, so does the depth and breadth of the responses required in applicant self-assessment reports (ranging from a simplified profile and 4-page self-assessment survey for level 1 applications to 50 pages that address 35 areas for level 4 applications).

Applicants should consider these factors when selecting the level that is most appropriate to their needs and current level of maturity in performance excellence, considering both processes and results. Typically, organizations start by applying at the levels sequentially and using the feedback from the examiner teams to improve organizational performance and prepare for subsequent applications. Note: Level 3 and 4 applications take considerable time to research and compose; applicants should allow ample time for these applications and should not attempt to develop them between the “notice of intent to apply” and “application date” deadlines (typically less than 60 days – See Attachment 1).

The KAPE Application and Fee Summary table (Included at the end of this document) summarizes the requirements and fees associated with each application level. The terms included within the Response to Criteria item in the table (Categories, Items and Areas) relate to levels of detail in the Baldrige Criteria. Additional information regarding these terms may be found in the Item Format diagram in the Baldrige Criteria booklet. See [Baldrige Excellence Framework | NIST](#)

Each application level involves a certain level of maturity and performance. Therefore, it is possible for an organization to make progress in performance management practices and results from year to year, and still remain at the same level of recognition. The only way to be recognized at the higher level is to meet the criteria for the higher level.

Level 1 – Interest

This is the beginning level for organizations interested in adopting and applying performance improvement principles. By applying at Level 1, an organization will learn about the Criteria and the assessment process. In addition, the organization will receive feedback that is useful for improving processes and results, and moving

toward higher levels of recognition. KyCPE offers Level 1 applicants an informal, consultative approach during this first step of the criteria-based performance improvement experience.

Level 1 applicants complete and submit a Level 1 Application Package along with the appropriate application fee. The level 1 package includes two sections: 1) Self-Assessment Application, 2) Simplified Organizational Profile. The Simplified Organizational Profile asks a series of questions that describe the organization, its environment and performance challenges, and may be up to five pages long. The Self-Assessment asks the applicant to identify the organization's maturity or performance for a series of performance criteria. The Level 1 Application package can be downloaded from the [KyCPE website](#).

Level 1 applicants host a team of two or more KyCPE examiners for two 3-hour consultation sessions. During these visits, the applicant will learn the basic requirements of each Criteria Category and receive specific suggestions from the examiners by answering questions using the Self-Assessment.

The examiners' observations and recommendations are later formalized in a brief written Feedback Report.

The Feedback Report indicates actions, processes or system improvements that the examiners believe could most benefit the organization. Organizations that complete Level 1 will receive a Certificate of Participation at the Interest Level and public recognition at the annual conference.

Level 2 - Commitment

Level 2 is the second level of the KyCPE to demonstrate serious commitment to the implementation of performance improvement principles.

Level 2 applicants must submit an Intent to Apply and an Application Package by the dates shown in Attachment 1. Fees are required when submitting both the Intent to Apply and Application Package (see table 1 at the end of this document).

The Intent to Apply submission includes the Application Form, 5-page Organizational Profile and fee. The Intent to Apply instructions and forms may be downloaded from the [KyCPE website](#) (see Level 2

Intent to Apply Instructions).

The Application Package includes the Application Report, supporting documentation and application fee. The Application Report includes the applicant's responses outlining how it applies the 7 criteria categories and may be up to 15 pages long. The instructions and forms for preparing the Application Package may be downloaded from the KyCPE website (see Level 2 Application Instructions). It is expected that applicants at this level clearly demonstrate that processes have been systematically improved based on evaluation and assessment of data. Level 2 applicants receive two six-hour consultations to help them get started on how to interpret the Criteria questions and respond to them. KyCPE facilitators will help record the applicant's thoughts, but the applicant must write the final responses, add figures and add results to complete the application for submission.

Recipients of Commitment Awards demonstrate progress by identifying and putting in place some key process improvements, *based on a general improvement orientation that is forward looking*. These organizations address each Category of the Criteria. At this level, results may not be evident for every Category 7 Item; *however, available results should be presented*. In addition, a measurement system should be in place to capture data and analyze results.

The year after winning the Commitment Award, organizations are expected to provide an examiner and assistance to organizations that are new to the KyCPE performance excellence process.

Level 3 - Achievement

Level 3 is a higher level of participation and is intended for organizations that have demonstrated a significant commitment to performance excellence. Level 3 requires practice of performance improvement principles, significant progress in building sound processes, and improvement in performance results .

Level 3 applicants must submit an Intent to Apply and an Application Package by the dates shown in Attachment 1. Fees are required when submitting both the Intent to Apply and Application Package (see table 1 at the end of this document).

The Intent to Apply submission includes the Application Form, 5-page Organizational Profile and fee. The Intent to Apply instructions and forms may be downloaded from the [KyCPE website](#) (see Level 3-4 Intent to Apply Instructions).

The Application Package includes the Application Report, supporting documentation and application fee. The Application Report includes the applicant's responses outlining how they apply the 7 Categories and 17 Items contained in the criteria and may be up to 35 pages long. The instructions and forms for preparing the Application Package may be downloaded from the [KyCPE website](#) (see Level 3-4 Application Package Instructions).

Level 3 applicants host a comprehensive, multi-day on-site or virtual visit conducted by a team of KyCPE examiners.

Recipients of Achievement Awards demonstrate significant progress in building systematic processes that effectively address the overall requirements of each Item. These processes are deployed and aligned throughout the organization appropriately to meet the key business needs of the organization. Results for some key processes show improvement (at least a year in most cases) that is directly attributable to the use of systematic improvement approach, a robust management system, and performance management principles. These organizations have many practices from which other organizations can learn and grow.

The year after winning the Achievement Award, organizations are expected to provide an examiner and assistance to organizations that are new to the KyCPE performance excellence process.

Level 4 - Excellence

The highest level of participation is intended for organizations that have demonstrated the highest level of performance excellence through their practices and achievements. Successful recognition at this level is typically the result of applying feedback from previous application cycles.

Level 4 applicants must submit an Intent to Apply and an Application Package by the dates shown in Attachment 1. Fees are required when submitting both the Intent to Apply and Application Package (see table 1 at the end of this document).

The Intent to Apply submission includes the Application Form, 5-page Organizational Profile and fee. The Intent to Apply instructions and forms may be downloaded from the [KyCPE website](#) (see Level 3-4 Intent to Apply Instructions).

The Application Package includes the Application Report, supporting documentation and application fee. The Application Report includes the applicants' responses outlining how they apply the 7 Categories, 17 Items, and 37 Areas to address the criteria, and may be up to 50 pages long. The instructions and forms for preparing the Application Package may be downloaded from the [KyCPE website](#) (see Level 3-4 Application Package Instructions).

Level 4 applicants host a comprehensive, multi-day on-site or virtual visit conducted by a team of KyCPE examiners. The year after winning the Excellence Award, organizations are expected to provide an examiner and assistance to organizations that are new to the KyCPE performance excellence process. Level 4 applicants are also expected to make a presentation at the annual conference following the year of the award.

Recipients of the Excellence Award are outstanding examples of high-performance organizations, exhibiting processes that serve as role models for others, with some processes being at or near "best-in-class." Organizations recognized at this highest level demonstrate management excellence with superior results over time (multiple years), which are directly attributable to a systematic, well-deployed improvement approach and a robust management system that effectively addresses the multiple requirements of each Item and demonstrates alignment throughout the organization. They continue to improve and build upon their outstanding results and excellent systems.

Award Level Determination

The KyCPE Panel of Judges determines the level of recognition that is appropriate for applicants. Applicants may receive recognition at a lower level than the

application level but cannot receive an award level higher than the application level.

Optional Follow-Up Reviews

Applicants who have received on-site or virtual visits in conjunction with the application process may request follow-up reviews with KyCPE to 1) clarify the Baldrige Excellence Framework and/or 2) clarify the application feedback responses provided by KyCPE. Since KyCPE must preserve the integrity of the examination and award process for all applicants, the follow-up review sessions are limited to these two question areas. To this end, the follow-up review process has been designed to facilitate this service while protecting the integrity of the overall program.

Who May Apply

Participation and recognition are intended for all organizations within the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Publicly or privately-owned, domestic, or foreign owned, joint ventures, incorporated firms, non-profits, sole proprietorships, partnership, and holding companies may participate. Subsidiaries or subunits of larger organizations may be eligible if they meet the eligibility conditions contained in the Subsidiaries and Sub-Units section.

The KyCPE program uses the Baldrige Excellence Framework. The form of the Criteria (i.e., Business, Education, Healthcare) used by an organization will be determined by the nature of the organization's operations.

Participation is available to Kentucky organizations in the following eligibility categories:

1. **Manufacturing** – Organizations or sub-units that produce or manufacture products for sale or product components that will be integrated with products for sale. Manufacturing organizations use the [business version](#) of the criteria booklet.
2. **Service** – Organizations or subunits that sell services. Proper SIC codes of organizations that perform both manufacturing and service are determined by the larger percentage of sales. Service organizations use the [business version](#) of the criteria booklet.
3. **Healthcare** – Organizations or sub-units that provide services in the Healthcare sector. Healthcare organizations use either the [business](#) or [healthcare version](#) of the criteria booklet, as appropriate to operations.
4. **Education** – Institutions or institutional sub-units that provide educational services within the State of Kentucky. Educational institutions use either the [business](#) or [education version](#) of the criteria booklet, as appropriate to their operations.
5. **Government** – Organizations of the federal government located in Kentucky, organizations of Kentucky state government, any Kentucky county, city, or other government entity or special district. Government organizations use the [business version](#) of the criteria booklet.

Repetitive Applications

Applicants at all levels may apply repetitively for the KAPE. However, after receiving a Level 4 award the applicant must wait four years before again applying for a Level 4 award. They may continue to apply at Level 4 to hone their application skills and reflect improvements in their processes and results. For example, an applicant applies during the 2022 award cycle and receives the KAPE Level 4 award; that applicant may not apply again for an award until the 2026 award cycle but may continue to submit an application.

Subsidiaries and Sub-Units

For purposes of determining eligibility for participation in the KAPE program, the terms subsidiary, sub-unit, component, business unit, division, and district office are used interchangeably.

To be eligible, a subsidiary or sub-unit must meet all of the following requirements:

1. It must produce products or provide services that are consumed or used by other organizations or business units, where the products or services provide clear, demonstrable marketable value to the customer organizations, and the customer organizations have the ability to select the products or services from other sources.
2. The applicant organization must be sufficiently independent from its parent organization. It must

have authority to establish and exercise leadership accountable for the following items:

- a) define its value proposition, and the associated products and services intended to fulfill that value proposition
 - b) develop its mission, vision, values, strategy and associated plans to deliver the value proposition,
 - c) develop and manage the processes used to produce the products or services provided to its' customers
 - d) define and manage financial plans and expenditures required to conduct operations and provide value to its customers,
 - e) plan, acquire and manage the resources (people, technology, knowledge) to conduct operations.
- 3) The application organization must be a "permanent" entity that has existed for a minimum of 3 years prior to applying.

Note: A subsidiary or sub-unit is not precluded from applying if one or more of the services covered by an assessment criterion is performed by another organization, e.g., human resources, purchasing, etc. as long as the applying organization can use such services as part of its own quality and strategic decision-making efforts. Neither is an organization ineligible if it receives policy direction and oversight from another organization. In all such cases, the evaluation will be based on consideration of all elements of the criteria

Confidentiality

Names of Applicants, individual Applications, commentary, and scoring information developed during the review of Applications are regarded as proprietary and kept confidential. Such information is available only to those individuals directly involved in the evaluation and Application distribution process.

Members of the Board of Examiners are assigned to Applicants according to strict conflict of interest rules and receive no information regarding the content or status of Applications to which they are not assigned. Information on successful strategies of Award

Recipients and other Applicants may be released only with written approval from the Applicant.

The KyCPE staff honors, to the fullest extent permitted by law, an Applicant's written request that certain information not be disclosed if the information is considered to be a trade secret or if its disclosure would damage the competitive position of the organization. It is suggested that Applicant's clearly demarcate any information included in its application that it does not want disclosed.

To Learn More

To decide if your organization is ready to submit an application, you are strongly encouraged to attend a one-day "Application Writing" Workshop. This workshop provides an overview of the Kentucky Award process and helps applicants get started in writing their application. It is recommended that multiple people from an organization attend to provide a broad perspective of the organization. See the Calendar on the website at www.KyCPE.org.

The most current Baldrige Excellence Framework can be downloaded or ordered in hard copy at: <https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/publications/baldrigeexcellenceframework>.

Training Support Available

- 1) Orientation Workshops – a two-hour high-level overview of the benefits of applying the Baldrige criteria in your organization.
- 2) Application Workshops – a three-day workshop that explains the foundation principles behind the Baldrige framework and criteria and provides practical guidance for preparing your application. First day is for organizations new to the Criteria for Performance Excellence, days 2-3 are for returning applicants and new applicants wanting to learn more than the Day 1 introduction.
- 3) Examiner Training – a three-day training conducted as a split session. New examiners are required to complete 8 hours of online training as an independent study, followed by a one-day introduction to service as an examiner. At a later date, a two-day workshop trains examiner candidates in the application evaluation and feedback process. Many applicants participate in the examiner process to develop a

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deeper understanding of the criteria in support of the application process.

Additional information regarding training offerings and scheduling is available on the KyCPE website.

Attachment 1

Important Dates

Examiners

10/31/21: Examiner training application deadline

12/16/21: New Examiner training – BCTC,
Lexington, KY (may be changed to Virtual if necessary)

01/18/22 AND 01/19/22: All examiner training –
conducted virtually

For Level 1 Applicants

Can submit anytime

03/25/2022 Application Package submission
deadline (for recognition at the 2022
Annual Awards Banquet) No Intent to
Apply Required

For Level 2 - 4 Applicants

10/29/2021 Intent to Apply package submission
deadline

01/07/2022 Application Package receipt deadline

Conference & Awards Banquet

TBD/2022 Best Practice Sharing Conference &
Awards Banquet

KENTUCKY AWARD FOR PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE APPLICATION PROCESS OVERVIEW

KAPE Application and Fee Summary Table (Table 1)								
	Level 1 Interest		Level 2 Commitment		Level 3 Achievement		Level 4 Excellence	
Intent to Apply								
Intent Fee		NA		\$150		\$150		\$150
Intent Due		NA		10/29/2021		10/29/2021		10/29/2021
Application Due		Anytime		01/07/2022		01/07/2022		01/07/2022
Application Fees								
<i>Up to 99 Employees</i>	Member *	\$250	Member*	\$300	Member*	\$1,000	Member*	\$2,000
	Non-Member	\$250	Non-Member	\$375	Non-Member	\$1,500	Non-Member	\$3,000
<i>100 – 249 Employees</i>	Member *	\$350	Member*	\$1,000	Member*	\$1,500	Member*	\$2,500
	Non-Member	\$420	Non-Member	\$1,500	Non-Member	\$2,250	Non-Member	\$3,750
<i>250 – 499 Employees</i>	Member *	\$400	Member*	\$1,500	Member*	\$2,000	Member*	\$3,000
	Non-Member	\$550	Non-Member	\$2,250	Non-Member	\$3,000	Non-Member	\$4,500
<i>500 + Employees</i>	Member *	\$450	Member*	\$2,000	Member*	\$2,500	Member*	\$3,500
	Non-Member	\$625	Non-Member	\$3,000	Non-Member	\$3,750	Non-Member	\$5,250

See the [KyCPE Membership Benefits web page](#) for membership levels and costs

	Summary of Application Requirements			
	Level 1 Interest	Level 2 Commitment	Level 3 Achievement	Level 4 Excellence
Organizational Profile	Level 1 Organizational Profile form	Required – 5 page Maximum	Required – 5 page Maximum	Required – 5 page Maximum
Response to Criteria	None	7 Categories 15 page maximum	7 Categories 17 Items 35 page maximum	7 Categories 17 Items 35 Areas 50 page maximum
Consultation Visits	2 3-hour consultations May be virtual or in-person depending upon needs and conditions. Travel expenses are reimbursed at actual incurred cost. This is optional and available upon request	Two six-hour pre-submission support sessions. This is optional and available upon request May be virtual or in-person depending upon needs and conditions Travel expenses are reimbursed at actual incurred cost.		
On-Site or Virtual Visit	None	Required Post feedback visit, if requested, is billed on actual cost basis. Travel expenses are reimbursed at actual incurred cost.	Required Applicant pays \$3000 for 2-day multi-member team visit (4,5, or 6 people) dependent upon breadth and complexity In person visits are preferable but organization may opt for virtual depending upon needs and conditions Travel expenses are reimbursed at actual incurred cost.	Required Applicant pays \$3000 for 2-day multi-member team visit (4,5, or 6 people) dependent upon breadth and complexity In person visits are preferable but organization may opt for virtual depending upon needs and conditions Travel expenses are reimbursed at actual incurred cost.
Recognition Eligibility	Interest	Interest or Commitment	Interest, Commitment, or Achievement	Interest, Commitment, Achievement, or Excellence
Applicant Commitment to KyCPE	None	Examiner for current or next year	Examiner for current year Assistance to other organizations	Examiner for current and next year Assistance to other organizations Presentation at next annual conference