

The Washington Post

2012 AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT

A PROGRAM OF THE CENTER FOR NONPROFIT ADVANCEMENT

Information & Application

About the Award

The Washington Post Award for Excellence in Nonprofit Management is an annual award presented to a Washington, D.C., metropolitan area nonprofit organization for outstanding achievement in organization management. The award rewards management competence, promotes sustainable best practices, and recognizes innovation that leads to excellence in nonprofit management. The award program is administered by the Center for Nonprofit Advancement. The 2012 Award marks the eighteenth year of competition.

Eligibility

The competition is open to any 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in the Washington metropolitan area and **any Center Member**. The metropolitan area is defined as:

- **District of Columbia**
- **Maryland:** Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Frederick, Howard, Montgomery, St. Mary's and Prince George's counties.
- **Virginia:** Arlington County, City of Alexandria, City of Fairfax, Fairfax County, City of Falls Church, Fauquier County, Loudoun County, City of Manassas, Manassas Park, Prince William County, and Stafford County.

Applications are welcomed from small or large organizations and from newer or well-established organizations. In reviewing applications, the Selection Committee will take into account the management resources available to each organization in terms of funding, staff, and volunteers.

Organizations selected as the winner or honorable mention recipient must be based in the Washington metropolitan area. If the organization is based here, but serves a national or international constituency, the award dollars must be spent on programs or organizational administration in the Washington metropolitan area.

Once an organization has received the award, that organization will become ineligible to participate in the competition for the following five years (e.g., the 2012 award winner cannot participate until the 2018 award competition).

The Award

One organization will receive The Washington Post Award for Excellence in Nonprofit Management. A \$10,000 grant will be presented to the winning organization. The winning organization will also receive a full scholarship to the Georgetown University's Center for Public and Nonprofit Leadership Certificate Program (a nearly \$5,000 value). Up to four honorable mentions will also each be presented with a \$2,500 grant award.

All winners and honorable mention recipients are required to participate in the award presentation and workshop featuring management practices highlighted in the award selection process. If an organization is unable to participate in the workshop and presentation, it will sacrifice any monetary award to be presented as part of the award.

The Co-Sponsors

The award is owned and administered by the Center for Nonprofit Advancement. The Washington Post serves as the main sponsor of this award. Other support is provided by the Center for Nonprofit Advancement Benefit's Trust (www.nonprofitadvancement.org). The scholarship to the Nonprofit Management Executive Certificate Program is provided by Georgetown University's Center for Public and Nonprofit Leadership (<http://cpnl.georgetown.edu/>).

The Selection Process

The Award will be given after a three-step judging process including a two-part written application and site visit/presentation. The Award Selection Committee is an all-volunteer committee selected by the Center for Nonprofit Advancement. Although no member of the Center staff serves on the Selection Committee, the Center facilitates the award selection process. Representatives from The Washington Post may serve as non-voting observers on the Selection Committee. All information submitted for consideration will remain confidential to the Selection Committee.

Feedback

All applicants will receive brief written comments from the Selection Committee. Comments will be shared with the organization's key contact via e-mail within 60 days of notification that the organization is no longer in consideration for the Award. Finalists will receive comments after the naming of the 2012 winner.

The purpose of the feedback is to provide observations on management strengths and weaknesses and to encourage organizational growth to improve management. It is hoped that the feedback can assist with improving management practices for the organization as well as encourage greater success in future award competitions.

What Matters in this Award?



★★★

The Washington Post Award for Excellence in Nonprofit Management rewards management competence, promotes sustainable best practices, and recognizes innovation that leads to excellence in nonprofit management. Practices should be proven with demonstrated results to support any experience, claims, or impact.

★★★

Competence

Competence is the foundation for nonprofit management excellence. The Selection Committee assesses organizational competence in two ways. Competent organizations meet standards for carrying out management activities. For example, competent financial management requires meeting financial accounting standards. In almost every management activity commonly accepted, and in many activities required, standards have been established. Competent organizations make clear, well thought out, and deliberate decisions about how their management activities will be accomplished. For example, a competent organization is able to articulate how its financial management procedures are structured to continually meet required standards.

As you peel back the layers of an organization, you may discover that some new organizations get

through the “competent” phase in a minimum of time; other seasoned organizations, though they have successful programs, struggle with management competency years later.

Best Practices

Nonprofit “best practices” are techniques, methods, activities or processes in the nonprofit sector that have been proven to achieve a desired result or performance level within nonprofit organizations. For example, activities to acknowledge volunteer contributions are a best practice for organizations that use volunteers because the acknowledgment will increase volunteer commitment. Best practices typically help organizations to address issues related to management competency.

This Award honors those organizations that are able to identify the best practices that guide their management activities and decision-making.

Examples of “best practices” come in many forms; we consider the following points to be good indicators:

Organization structure that supports the organization’s mission.

- A governance structure that moves the organization forward.
- Organizational leadership that creates, fosters, and sustains organizational learning and adaptability.
- A solid grasp of major management challenges confronting the organization and evidence of concerted action to deal with the challenges.
- Systematic, regularly conducted organization-wide strategic planning process with input from all stakeholders and levels of the organization.
- Fiscal responsibility in day-to-day activities, as well as broader vision for sustainability and moving the organization forward.
- Effective use of board members and volunteers, including recognition of the changing expectations and availability of volunteers.
- Leadership, partnership and cooperation with other nonprofits, governments, businesses and/or private organizations.
- Creative or entrepreneurial manner in approaching management challenges.
- Inclusiveness and diversity integrated into the organizational structure, decision making, leadership and governance.
- An understanding of and commitment to sound management practices present throughout all levels of the organization – from senior management to entry-level positions.
- Systematic ways of evaluating how well the organization is serving its various constituencies, responding to changes in client need, and addressing environmental/external changes in which the organization operates; this covers not only outcomes and achievements of the organization’s programs and services, but its reflection on management achievements.
- Overall management improvement and achievement over a sustained period. In cases where principal achievements are over a period of years, the Selection Committee will look for more recent developments that substantiate ongoing progress. In cases where progress is recent, the committee will look for the achieved results; the potential for achieving and sustaining success is not as strong of an indicator of best practices as actual results.

Innovation

“Innovation” is approaching the management of a competent organization in a whole new way in order to bring stronger, faster, or more effective results. Sometimes it is taking a practice and recognizing new ways to better use data, information, and/or resources for greater impact. This may mean that instead of passively accepting the status quo, intentional decisions are made so that specific actions or results can be achieved. The Selection Committee looks for innovative management practices that have been in place for an extended period of time, demonstrating sustainability and impact. Innovative management can challenge conventional thinking about a “best practice.”

The Award recognizes that “innovative” ideas can change over time. As more organizations adopt an innovative practice, the practice becomes an expected competency or best practice for most organizations. This ever-changing shift is taken into consideration in the application. A good example is “strategic planning.” Perhaps a decade ago having a strategic planning process was viewed as innovative; now it is expected of all nonprofits. Is there still an opportunity for an innovative strategic planning practice? Of course!

Implementation & Sustainability

Organizations know that effective implementation of management practices is difficult to accomplish and sustain. Many times there are no “one size fits all” methods for successful implementation and sustainability because organizations, especially nonprofit organizations, are different. But, then sometimes there is “only one way” and organizations must figure out how they are going to make this “one way” work.

The Selection Committee is interested in learning how your organization has sustained a successful management practice over time, not about your intent or plan to implement a practice.

Putting it All Together: Achieving Excellence in Nonprofit Management

In the review process, the Selection Committee looks for:

- Competency in management areas
- Established management practices with documented accomplishments, **not plans, hopes, or dreams**
- Intentional integration of best practices
- Innovative practices that can be shared with other organizations
- Evidence of sustainability

But this guidance does not tell the whole story. There is no single example of nonprofit management excellence. As the Selection Committee reads through each application, expectations for competency, best practice, and innovation are always challenged. In reviewing the application materials for this Award, the Selection Committee considers competency, best practices, and innovation in the management areas listed below. Each area is defined and the accompanying examples are management practices from previous Award finalists.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT & MANAGEMENT: The actions necessary to govern the organization through effective fiscal, legal and mission oversight, as well as ensuring public trust and stakeholder representation. *(Example: N Street Village assessing individual board members; NPower Greater DC Region’s 6-month preparation for*

board leadership transition, Washington Tennis and Education Foundation's reliance on a well defined subcommittee approach to managing a 50+ member board.)

DIVERSITY: The inclusion of diverse perspectives and stakeholders in the leadership and operation of the organization including: planning, decision making, evaluation, and the people you engage as staff, board and volunteers.. *(Example: Higher Achievement Program's board includes parents and students; Community Ministry of Montgomery County's commitment to having its front-line staff demographically reflect the community it serves, and providing diversity training for its staff).*

EVALUATION: Activities taken to determine how well an organization is achieving its intended goals, serving its clients, and improving program success. *(Example: Community Ministry of Montgomery County's board holding program evaluation responsibilities, Higher Achievement Program's collection and use of data in shaping its programs, Latin American Youth Center's monthly award for staff member who inputs the most evaluation data.)*

FISCAL MANAGEMENT: The appropriate allocation, expenditure, control and accounting of financial resources. *(Example: Miriam's House's defining financial accountability roles and responsibilities among board and staff, Washington Tennis and Education Foundation managing budget through 6-month cash-flow projections; Washington Office on Latin America shifting timing of annual budget development to face possible financial challenges: the PHILLIPS Programs for Children and Families forecasting the budget at various reduced levels as part of a thoughtful "what-if" exercise.)*

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION: The processes by which an organization's purpose, goals and objectives are passed to its various constituencies -- staff, board, members, clients, the general public -- to facilitate cooperation, coordination, and/or knowledge. *(Example: Bread for the City's weekly employee newsletter; Urban Alliance tapping into its youth audience through social networking and blog sites.)*

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT: The actions necessary to structure the organization's internal management and system of accountability to achieve its purpose. *(Example: Phillips Program's commitment to preparing for a healthy executive transition for its long-time executive director, Urban Alliance's use of a Partnership Checklist to engage new partners while keeping mission-focused).*

PEOPLE DEVELOPMENT & MANAGEMENT: The methods by which you ensure that employees and volunteers reflect the communities the organization serves, and that their knowledge and skills are developed or enhanced. *(Example: New Hope Housing has a set "Code of Ethics" and established a "Quality of Worklife" committee, Latin American Youth Center hires 30% of staff from program participants, Tahirih's sensitivity to workload/burnout issues, MVLE's "face of quality" award for employees, Washington Tennis and Education Foundation's tapping into the retiree population to serve as volunteers)*

PLANNING: The decision-making process concerned with the selection of actions, based on systematic reasoning, to achieve desired ends. *(Example: Doorways for Women and Families' policy plans developed to ensure consistency among multiple sites, Miriam's House development of an "excellence committee", MVLE holds a monthly strategic visioning session, Tahirih Justice Center's one page strategic plan.)*

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT: The methods through which an organization seeks, obtains and sustains the financial and material resources necessary to achieve its purposes. *(Example: Doorways for Women and Families' work to upgrade single event donors to year-long ambassadors; Calvary Women's Services' Individual Board Member Fundraising Development Plans, Urban Alliance's written donor policy/stewardship policies, Washington Office on Latin America and Wolf Trap providing fundraising training for all employees)*

RISK MANAGEMENT: Activities relating to the protection of an organization's clients, employees, volunteers and systems from harm including innovative programs to ensure standards of prudent care are implemented. *(Example: Carpenter's Shelter's Emergency Plan for Residents, Roundhouse Theatre's meeting with local*

police department to understand neighborhood safety and security issues, Home Care's annual risk management assessment.)

TECHNOLOGY: Effective use and leveraging of technology in accomplishing your mission, including incorporating effective use of hardware, software, technical resources and social media. (*Example: Washington Office on Latin America established an internal "WOLApedia" as a way to catalog and access internal organization information and documents; Miriam's Kitchen providing a web-based secured area to host board business, Higher Achievement Program's data collection program.*)

HOW TO APPLY

Part One

An organization interested in applying for the award should access the application via the online tool. The application can be accessed at www.nonprofitadvancement.org. The form is designed to give considerable flexibility for all organizations in telling their management stories. In formulating responses, applicants should bear in mind that the award competition focuses on management as opposed to programs. Any discussion of programs should be minimal, and mentioned only in support of excellent management practices.

Please submit only one copy of the nomination form. Other than the requested supporting documents (see page 11), **do not send books, videotapes, manuscripts or other unrequested materials.** These will not be reviewed or returned.

To submit your application online: Visit www.nonprofitadvancement.org to access the online tool. *We encourage use of this online tool.* Each organization will register, allowing you confidential access to your application prior to submission. Each organization should register once. Multiple people can access the online application document. However, only one name and password per organization is permitted. The tool has been built so that you may begin work and save your responses to continue work at a later time. Responses to the application questions can also be written offline (Microsoft Word format) and then uploaded to the online tool by copying and pasting into the online application. The supporting documents (see page 11 for specifics) can either be uploaded to the application or submitted separately on paper. Supporting documents can be uploaded or mailed. The uploaded documents need to be submitted by January 6, 2012. If mailed, they need to be postmarked by January 6, 2012.

Part One online applications are to be submitted by 11:59 pm on January 6, 2012.

To submit your application on paper: To facilitate the review process, charts must be completed and responses to narrative questions must be typed single-spaced with no less than **1/2 inch margins**. The text must be a minimum 12-point size in Arial, Helvetica, Palatino or Times-Roman font. Applications not meeting these margin and font size requirements will **not** be forwarded to the Selection Committee for consideration. An electronic version (diskette or CD) of your Part One narrative questions must also be submitted with your completed paper application.

Your Part One responses to questions 1-8 should not exceed eight (8) pages. It must be accompanied by the supporting documents described on page 14. The supporting documents are not to be

factored into the 8-page limit.

Applications must be submitted or postmarked on or before January 6, 2012.

Send the completed cover application, completed questions and supporting documents to:

**The Washington Post Award Selection Committee Center for Nonprofit Advancement
1666 K Street, NW, Suite 440, Washington, DC 20006**

After a review of all information, the Selection Committee will select up to ten semi-finalists. The semi-finalists will be asked to complete the Part Two application.

Part Two

After an initial screening, The Washington Post Award Selection Committee will narrow the list of applicants based on responses to the Part One application. Semifinalists will be notified no later than February 10, 2012. These selected candidates will be asked to complete Part Two of the application.

To submit your application online: Visit www.nonprofitadvancement.org to access your **Part Two application**. *We encourage use of this online tool.* Each organization selected to move to this stage of the competition will be able to access the Part Two Questions online. Each organization will use the same name and password as Part One. As in Part One, the tool has been developed so that you may begin work and save your responses to continue work at a later time. Responses to the application questions can also be written offline (Microsoft Word format) and then uploaded to the online tool by copying and pasting into the online application. Others wishing to access the Part Two online application document must use the same name and password.

Online applications are to be submitted by 11:59 pm on March 9, 2012.

To submit your paper application: The Part Two application covering questions 1 through 8 should be no more than a total of eight (8) pages. As in your Part One application, information must be typed single-spaced with no less than **1/2 inch margins**. The text must be a minimum 12-point size of either Arial, Helvetica, Palatino or Times-Roman font. Applications not meeting these margin and font size requirements will not be forwarded to the Selection Committee for consideration. An electronic version (diskette or CD) of your Part Two application must also be submitted with your completed paper application.

Paper applications must be submitted or postmarked on or before March 9, 2012.

Send the completed questions to:

**The Washington Post Award Selection Committee Center for Nonprofit Advancement
1666 K Street, NW, Suite 440, Washington, DC 20006**

After a review of all the information, the applicant pool will be reduced to a maximum of five finalists.

Part Three

Up to five organizations will be asked to participate in the presentations/site visits phase. These final five will make a presentation to members of the Selection Committee. Site visits will be conducted in April-May 2012. The committee will select the 2012 winner after the completion of all site visits. The winner will be announced at a presentation following a Best Practices Workshop in May 2012.

Program Timetable

Applications Available	November 1, 2011	
Application Workshop	Tuesday, November 8, 2011	9:00-11:00am
Part 1 Application Deadline	Friday, January 6, 2012	*By Midnight*
Semi-Finalists Notified by	Friday, February 10, 2012	
Part II Application Deadline	Friday, March 9, 2012	*By Midnight*
Finalists Notified by	Friday, April 13, 2012	
Site-Visits	April 23-May 11, 2012	
Best Practices Workshop/ Award Presentation	May/June	

Questions about The Washington Post Award for Excellence in Nonprofit Management

Questions can be directed to:
Taylor Pohekailo, Center for Nonprofit Advancement
1666 K Street, NW, Suite 440, Washington, D.C. 20006
Telephone - 202/457-0540;
E-mail – taylorp@nonprofitadvancement.org



Part One Due January 6, 2012

**The Washington Post
2012 Award for Excellence in Nonprofit Management
APPLICATION FACT SHEET**

Name of Organization _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Telephone _____

FAX _____

E-Mail _____

Web Page Address _____

Contact Person's Name & Title _____

Chair of the Board of Directors _____

Number of Paid Staff Members: Full-time # _____

Part-time # _____

Number of Volunteers (excluding board members) _____

Number Serving on Your Board of Directors _____

Organization Began Operations In (year) _____

Most Recent Fiscal Year Ended (date) _____

Total Revenues for That Year _____

**Excess (deficit) of support and revenue over expense
during the most recent fiscal year** _____

How did you hear about the Award? _____

*(This page should be submitted with responses to Part One questions 1- 10; see pages 7 and 11 for details.
The document is also available through the online application at www.nonprofitadvancement.org.)*

PART ONE QUESTIONS



On separate paper (or via the online application at www.nonprofitadvancement.org), answer the following questions. Your answers should address the competency of your organization's practices in each area as well as highlight any innovative practices. Questions can be answered with a combination of narrative and bullet points. If you are completing this as a paper application, your answers should be limited to no more than 8 pages total; also refer to page 8 for specific margin and font size requirements. Paper applications that do not conform to the font and margin limitations will not be considered.

1. **Please provide your organization's mission statement.**
2. **Please describe the geographic region you serve:**
 - a local Washington, DC, area constituency?
 - a national constituency?
 - an international constituency?
 - other: _____
3. **What types of planning does your organization undertake?** Who is involved and what are the processes? How do you include diverse perspectives and stakeholders in the process? What have been the results of the organization's planning efforts? Describe any particularly innovative practices in this area from which others might learn?
4. **What systems or practices has your organization put in place to ensure effective financial stewardship?** Please address practices in the areas of internal controls, budgeting, financial planning and reporting. Describe any particularly innovative practices in this area from which others might learn. If you had a deficit during the most recent year, please explain why.
5. **How does your organization approach fundraising/resource development?** Address your fundraising strategy as well as the roles of your board, staff and others in resource development activities. Describe any particularly innovative practices in this area from which others might learn?
6. **How does your organization benefit from and incorporate diverse populations in the individuals you engage as staff, board and volunteers?** Describe any particularly innovative practices in this area from which others might learn.
7. **What does your board of directors do to contribute to the management of your organization?** How do you ensure diverse perspectives and representation in the governance of your organization? Describe any particularly innovative practices in this area from which others might learn.

8. **Provide an example of a mistake or a poor decision your organization has made in the past.** What did you learn from this experience and what management practices/lessons learned have you put in place as a result? What advice would you give other nonprofits faced with a similar situation?
9. **Please highlight up to three additional management practices or innovations that serve as specific examples of excellence.** Use examples that demonstrated results over the past three years. How are these practices supported and sustained in your organization? What can others learn from these practices?

IMPORTANT: supporting document information.

Please submit the following materials with your application:

(This material is not included in the eight page maximum covering questions 1- 10)

- Copy of the IRS letter stating that your organization is a tax-exempt 501(c) nonprofit organization.
- Your latest audited financial statements (including any management letter or other recommendations). **Please send in an unbound form.** If the audit for the most recent fiscal year is not complete by the January 6, 2012, deadline, applicants may use the previous fiscal year's data. In addition, you should include interim financial statements covering the time that has elapsed since the last audit. If your organization does not have an audited statement, please provide the most recent financial statements.
- Copy of the most recent Form 990, including all schedules, filed with the Internal Revenue Service.
- Copy of your budget for the current fiscal year.

IMPORTANT: Applications lacking any of the supporting documents described above will not be forwarded to the Selection Committee for consideration

This completes Part One of the application for
The Washington Post 2012 Award for Excellence in Nonprofit Management.

Checklist for Part One Award Participants:

- Application Fact Sheet: Complete online or see page 9**
- Answers to Part One Questions: Complete online or see page 10**
- Supporting Documents: Upload online or mail documents described on page 11**

Please complete the online tool at www.nonprofitadvancement.org or mail your responses

postmarked **no later than January 6, 2012**, to:

The Washington Post Award Selection Committee, Center for Nonprofit Advancement, 1666 K Street, NW, Suite 440, Washington, DC 20006.

Thank you for your participation in The Washington Post 2012 Award for Excellence in Nonprofit Management.