



Standards for excellence

An Ethics & Accountability Program for the Nonprofit Sector

Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations' STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE® Impact Evaluation Report

March 2011

Written by:

Bobbi Watt Geer, Ph.D.

Rebecca Hartmann, MPH, Ph.D. (c)



PANO's Executive Summary

STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE® Impact Evaluation Report

Certification. In the latter part of 2010, the Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations (PANO) undertook an Impact Evaluation study of its *Standards for Excellence: An Ethics and Accountability Code for the Nonprofit Sector*. The *Standards for Excellence*, which was developed by the Maryland Association of Nonprofit Organizations, was launched by PANO in September, 2002 as the first ethics and accountability education and certification program in Pennsylvania. By early 2011, 5,500 nonprofit leaders had participated in the *Standards for Excellence* educational programs and 55 nonprofit organizations have achieved *Standards for Excellence* certification.

Methodology. An evaluation sub-committee developed a qualitative methodology to investigate the program's impact. Committee members constructed an interview protocol that probed four domains of the Balanced Scorecard, a tested framework employed in the nonprofit sector that focuses on Learning and Growth, Operations and Processes, Customer and Financial elements. Ten nonprofit executives representing organizations of different sizes (based on budget categories) from across the state were randomly selected to participate in telephone interviews. While the study is limited in the organizational and leadership variables it addresses, it nevertheless provides PANO with valuable information about the impact of its program.

Evaluation Results. Overall, the evaluation provides evidence that the *Standards for Excellence* has resulted in a number of positive impacts and offers directions for areas in which the program can improve.

Positive impacts. The nonprofit executives described an array of learning and growth opportunities that resulted from achieving accreditation. These included the level of engagement and empowerment of the board and how the board conducts its business, an increase in demonstrating best practices and improved evaluation approaches. Executives reported the following impact in the area of operations and processes: improved fiscal oversight by the board and strengthened management, financial and human

resources practices. Smaller organizations improved their policies and practices while larger organizations refined and institutionalized their practices.

In regard to serving customers (or clients, as they are more commonly called), executives reported a stronger clarity of mission as well as an ability to focus on client needs. In the financial operations domain, they experienced a demonstrable impact; a deeper understanding of issues of compliance, legal and financial requirements; and improved reporting and communication of financial information.

Areas for improvement. The evaluation identified three areas for improvement. First, there was no consensus that accreditation had a specific impact on organizations' program and service delivery. Second, although accreditation enabled organizations to structure and focus their fundraising operations more effectively, there was little clarity of its impact on fundraising outcomes. Third, it was noted that all levels of staff were not fully engaged in the accreditation process.

Additional learnings. Executives indicated that organizations were motivated to pursue accreditation out of a desire for accountability and excellence. Some of the most important changes that resulted from accreditation included greater confidence of the board, staff, and community served, a stronger focus on strategic planning, the institutionalization of best practices and a more forward-thinking orientation. The executives' responses also clarified that the impact of obtaining accreditation varied by organizational context, with factors such as the following acting as influences: organizational life cycle, budget size, leadership experience and length of the certification process.

The impact. As with all good research, the first *Standards for Excellence* evaluation surfaced ideas and questions for future study. However, its results indicate that there has been significant impact on the operations of the nonprofits that have pursued accreditation, and that PANO is building the credibility and effectiveness of the nonprofit sector through the *Standards for Excellence* program.

STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE®

Impact Evaluation Report

Background on the STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE®

From providing human services, to education, conservation and access to the arts, nonprofit organizations have played a critical role in our communities since the founding of our country. During the past two decades, the size and scope of the nonprofit sector has grown significantly, and with that growth, the need to formalize nonprofit best practices and ethics has also emerged.

The *Standards for Excellence®: An Ethics and Accountability Code for the Nonprofit Sector* (referred to as “The Standards” or “The Standards for Excellence” throughout this report) is the first statewide ethics and accountability program for the nonprofit sector. The program, developed by the Maryland Association of Nonprofit Organizations, was launched in the late 1990s as an educational and certification program. The Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations (PANO) became a licensed replication partner for The Standards for Excellence, and since September 2002 PANO has been offering a variety of educational programs and formal certification.

As of early 2011, over 5,500 nonprofit leaders have participated in Standards educational clinics and sessions, and 55 Pennsylvania nonprofits have achieved certification, which involves a rigorous volunteer peer review of adherence to the 55 standards outlined in the program. A statewide Standards for Excellence Committee monitors program policy and implementation across Pennsylvania.

The Standards for Excellence program outlines nonprofit best practices across all areas of operation, including mission and program, finance and legal, fundraising, governance, openness, conflict of interest, public affairs and public policy and human resources. While all standards are important,

demonstrating program outcomes through appropriate evaluation processes is emphasized and is a particularly challenging standard to meet. During the past several years, The Standards for Excellence Committee has explored how it can apply its own program evaluation criteria to assess the impact of achieving certification status through The Standards for Excellence in Pennsylvania.

The STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE® Evaluation Methodology

The Standards for Excellence Committee appointed an evaluation subcommittee in mid-2010 to develop an evaluation plan for the program (see Appendix A for a list of members). This committee considered a variety of quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods and consulted with other nonprofit and research experts. The committee consensus was that it was difficult to quantitatively measure changes across all areas that the Standards for Excellence encompasses and attribute those changes to having achieved certification—that there are many variables that may impact changes, such as leadership and shifts in the overall funding environment unrelated to the best practices. Further, the challenge of measuring governing board or public policy effectiveness, among other standards, was difficult to overcome.

Therefore, the evaluation committee decided to develop a qualitative methodology that explores the potential impact of Standards for Excellence certification. The committee developed an interview protocol for certified agency executives that probed impact across the four domains of the Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 1996): Learning and Growth, Operations and Process, Customer and Financial. The Balanced Scorecard framework has been regularly utilized in the nonprofit sector to assist with strategic and

Impact Evaluation Report

business planning and evaluation. It provides a useful lens through which to assess impact. The interview protocol (see Appendix B) included two or three questions within each domain.

Because the nonprofit executive is typically deeply involved in the decision to pursue certification through the Standards for Excellence and is the conduit through which information flows to both the governing board and staff, the committee chose to interview agency executives of certified organizations. Ten executives were randomly selected to participate from across three budget categories so that a mix of small (less than \$1 million), medium (\$1-\$5 million) and large (\$5 million+) budget size organizations were represented in the evaluation. While organizations were not selected to ensure geographic representation across the state, geographic representation was also achieved (see Appendix C for a general description of participating organizations and geographic locations). All ten agency executives agreed to participate in the evaluation via telephone interviews. The interviews were conducted in November and December 2010 and were transcribed and coded.

The Standards for Excellence Committee acknowledges that there are inherent limitations in this methodology. Only 10 of the 55 agencies were interviewed. Board and staff members were not interviewed to compare intra-agency experiences with the Standards. Organizations interviewed were of varying budget and staff sizes and in various organizational life cycle stages. These organizational and leader variables likely affect the extent to which The Standards for Excellence have impacted their organizations. Evidence of this surfaces in the data. This methodology does not explore differences based on these variables. However, the Standards for Excellence evaluation provides rich text data that demonstrates how certification has impacted participating nonprofit organizations in Pennsylvania.

Evaluation Results

Motivation for pursuing accreditation

Prior to exploring the ways in which nonprofit executives felt that the Standards for Excellence program impacted their agency's learning, clients, processes and financial operations, organizational leaders were asked why they pursued this accreditation, which requires a deep commitment of resources and approximately 12-18 months to complete. In several cases, executives learned about and sought accreditation on the recommendation of local funding sources, such as a United Way, community foundation or other foundation. Several attended introductory educational sessions sponsored by PANO, and others were introduced to the program through prior organizational leaders.

“It [The Standards] really helped us put in place a framework in which to grow the organization.”

Younger nonprofit organizations note that their participation in the accreditation process has allowed them to learn how to operate a nonprofit organization. One executive, who was new to the nonprofit sector, said, *“I began to realize that there were some real unique components to operating a nonprofit that were far beyond my understanding. I was learning quickly from the board and former director, but I still felt that there was something that needed to be wrapped around this whole process.”* Another executive of a new nonprofit commented, *“...we were probably only three years old when we started the process...it really helped us put in place a framework in which to grow the organization.”* Leaders of more established nonprofit organizations, however, view their decision or motivation to pursue accreditation as a test or validation of their systems already in place. A leader of a large, well-established agency said, *“We tout*

Impact Evaluation Report

ourselves as a transparent, accountable organization. How else would we know if we don't go through this process? We put ourselves to the test." Other organizational leaders echoed this notion of *"testing our infrastructure and operations"* through the accreditation process.

One leader shared that his organization's prior executive had been convicted of embezzling funds from the agency. The motivation for this organization was to repair its reputation and continue services in the community. In this case, pursuing accreditation was not viewed as optional but as a necessary step to restore confidence, which was successfully achieved.

The motivating factors to pursue accreditation vary somewhat based on organizational context, particularly whether or not the organization and leader are new or well-established. However, regardless of age or experience, executives speak to their desire and their board's desire to operate their agencies with accountability and excellence, and that a primary motivation for pursuing accreditation is to demonstrate this level of operational excellence.

The Balanced Scorecard Domains

The nonprofit executives were asked a number of questions related to how they believe the Standards for Excellence accreditation has impacted various aspects of their organizations. It should be noted that these domains are not distinct and overlap, so there is an artificial nature to dividing them into discrete sections. However, for purposes of summarizing and reporting findings, the responses will be divided into the four

Balanced Scorecard sections.

Learning and Growth

Nonprofit executives described a wide variety of learning and growth opportunities as a result of achieving accreditation. One executive summarized her learning experience as, *"[The Standards] really made us able to ensure that we were credible."* Several other leaders commented that they were not aware of some of the best practices and that they had to put a lot in place to meet the requirements of The Standards for Excellence. One executive noted that The Standards for Excellence has taught his organization (himself, the board and staff) in a comprehensive way. He said, *"It changed our DNA in terms of how we approached areas, anything from the bylaws to the financials to the board and how they interacted with staff."*

"The biggest impact was how we conduct business on the board."

One of the primary learning and growth opportunities noted by those interviewed was the impact on the governing board. Several leaders talked about how their participation in The Standards for Excellence accreditation has better engaged and empowered the board, that the board has become more involved in evaluating the performance of the organization as well as their own performance. Commenting on the increased level of board engagement, one executive said, *"We raised their level of consciousness and put it into perspective."* Another said, *"The biggest impact was how we conduct business on the board."*

"It [The Standards] changed our DNA in terms of how we approached areas, anything from the bylaws to the financials to the board and how they interacted with staff."

Impact Evaluation Report

“We really started doing a better job of asking in better ways how we are helping you, how we are affecting you.”

When asked about what new learning needed to take place as a result of the accreditation process, several leaders discussed program evaluation and how going through the Standards for Excellence accreditation has helped them improve their evaluations. Leaders often mentioned that their evaluations were not regular or rigorous and that the Standards for Excellence program helped them improve program evaluation practices.

One executive described the change as, *“We really started doing a better job of asking in better ways how we are helping you, how we are affecting you.”* This same executive described an evaluation of a program that was using audio tape recordings. Two-thirds of the evaluation respondents said that they did not have access to tape players; the organization subsequently updated the program to use DVDs, but they didn’t realize that they were using outdated technology until they expanded their program evaluation.

The nonprofit leaders highlighted learning and growth related to human resources and financial operations as well, especially when the organization has grown significantly or has experienced key staff and board turnover, noting that The Standards for Excellence accreditation process has provided a framework or infrastructure that carries across such transitions. They summarize their learning and growth by emphasizing how their organizational culture has changed as a result of accreditation.

Operations and Processes

Given that The Standards for Excellence program provides clear guidance on best practices, operations and processes, it is not surprising that

almost all executives who were interviewed described a number of operations and processes that have been impacted by their agency’s accreditation. Executives commented that the accreditation process encouraged them to review existing policies and develop new policies and procedures. One executive said, *“I can’t tell you how long it had been since our personnel policies had been reviewed.”*

Another leader talked about how financial practices and processes were impacted. She said, *“[The Standards] prepared us for the new 990. The board was really impressed with themselves.”* And yet another leader reported that her organization’s management practices and processes have grown. She said, *“Accreditation has made it in some ways harder because there is so much to remember to have done...it has made operations more complex. It is worth it.”*

The differences between smaller and larger nonprofits processes is perhaps more notable in this area than in others. Larger organization leaders reported that they did not experience a lot of operations and process changes as a result of accreditation as they already had solid processes in place. At most, these leaders talked about tweaking the practices or institutionalizing them, rather than creating new ones. They also reference validation of their practices or processes. However, smaller organizations reported putting new policies and practices in place. Said one executive of a small-budget and younger nonprofit, *“Since we are so small, we need to have even more checks and balances and have many kinds of transparency practices in place.”*

STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE®

Impact Evaluation Report

“...Our whole continuous improvement approach came out of PANO.”

The organizational leaders were also asked if certification changed the way they deliver programs and services. Some leaders again highlighted how the accreditation process has helped their organizations keep focused on program evaluation, the feedback from which impacts how programs are delivered. One said, *“We had a program that was just one of those programs that had been here forever...the program wasn’t delivering anything value-added to the community...we ended up shutting it down. I don’t think we would have done that if it wouldn’t have been for the Standards process.”*

A few larger agency executives did not attribute any specific changes to program service delivery as a result of accreditation. *“I really thought about that and what really changed for us was at a senior management and board level...not the program service level”* one noted.

These responses suggest an indirect impact rather than a direct, conscious connection between accreditation and program service delivery.

Customer

Nonprofits are in the business of providing programs and services to a wide range of customers, more commonly referred to as “clients.” Nonprofit leaders were asked what impact The Standards for Excellence accreditation has had on the agency’s programs and services and whether or not certification has affected how the organization achieves its mission.

There was not a consensus when leaders were asked about specific impacts on programs and services. Several leaders could not draw a direct

connection between accreditation and impact on programs and services. One said, *“I don’t believe that there has been any impact on programs and services as a result of going through accreditation. We certainly are better at what we are doing as an organization and that translates to quality at a program level. But that is more of an indirect impact than a direct, conscious connection between what we are doing and the program services.”*

Another leader said, *“I think our whole continuous improvement approach came out of PANO, but I don’t know that our actual clients could trace it to PANO or have any idea what PANO is.”* This same leader, however, also noted that people in her community have higher expectations of her organization and its programs because it is certified. Others said that the process has made their programs stronger by helping them focus more on client needs and program evaluation.

“We measure absolutely everything we do against [The Standards] mission.”

Summarizing the impact of the accreditation process on his organization’s programs and services, one agency executive said, *“It matched our efforts to our outcomes.”* This sentiment was supported and described by other interviewees as deeper focus or clarity of mission. Said another leader, *“I think we are more mission-focused because of [The Standards]. We measure absolutely everything we do against the mission.”*

Although some leaders do not see a direct connection between the accreditation process and the effectiveness

Impact Evaluation Report

of program and services, they do make a connection between having accreditation and greater mission achievement. *“It has raised our consciousness about how we conduct business, and I think that enables us in the long run to achieve our mission more effectively.”*

“It [The Standards] enables us in the long run to achieve our mission more effectively.”

Financial

Organizational leaders were asked two key questions regarding any potential impact of The Standards for Excellence accreditation on finances: Has there been any impact on financial operations, and has there been any impact on fundraising? Based on responses, there seems to be a strong, demonstrable impact on financial operations and mixed impact on fundraising.

“There’s no doubt in my mind,” was the response from one executive director when asked if the accreditation process impacted her financial operations. A few directors note that they were not certain that they were following all of the legal and financial requirements for nonprofits and that the accreditation process brought them in compliance. *“How it was done before, I don’t think we realized we weren’t following the law as we should have,”* said an executive.

Other executives noted that they are now much clearer about what financial information is shared with the board of directors and at what intervals. *“Depth of reporting to the board has significantly increased, and we have through the process brought online a couple of new policies that had not been in place before.”* Another executive said, *“We have looked at our financial statements through a different lens.”* This

executive carefully described a more thoughtful staff and board process of considering agency financial information, including use of an audit committee, comparative financial data and including the board and other constituents in the discussion of organization finances. This executive says that she feels *“very supported”* by The Standards for Excellence program as it relates to financial operations.

When asked if being accredited through The Standards for Excellence has impacted their fund raising programs, executives were less clear. Perhaps the most apt overall description about the impact of accreditation on fundraising impact was, *“It certainly doesn’t hurt.”* Some agency directors could make direct connections between accreditation and funding, but most were unsure or felt that it was too early in their accreditation to know.

According to one organization, *“We just got a Department of Health grant, and it helped that we had The Standards because it is a recognized model throughout the state.”* Another executive reported receiving an important grant because of The Standards, and, yet another executive ties her increased United Way allocations to Standards certification. At the same time, many executives could not be that clear in the connection of accreditation and increased funding.

However, most executives did highlight how accreditation has helped them structure and focus their fundraising operations more effectively, which may result in increased donations over the longer term. For example, an executive described how she was able to fashion and implement many fund raising policies, such as gift acceptance and donor bill of rights. Another executive highlighted how the accreditation process helped his

Impact Evaluation Report

organization become more accountable to donors. He said, *“When we communicate with [donors], we are much better at our messaging, more specific on a message, which from a regulatory standpoint we have to do and from a mission statement, letting people know what our results are.”* This focus on donor relationships will likely reap long-term benefits, but it is impossible to know at this juncture.

Most Important Change

Prior to concluding the executive director interviews, participants were asked to reflect on the most important change in their organizations as a result of achieving The Standards for Excellence accreditation. There was a central theme to the executive director answers: *“Without question, credibility.”*

“I feel very confident that we are running a really good operation.”

There were variations on this theme, which also brought out the concepts of validation, legitimacy and confidence for both staff and board. *“For me as the CEO, I feel very confident after going through the process since it is so rigorous, and it looks so closely at our internal operations from policies to board composition to staff. I feel very confident that we are running a really good operation.”*

Other executives built on the issue of confidence, both internally for staff and board and externally for the community served. One executive said that because nonprofits are under such scrutiny, the accreditation process is an important way to

demonstrate that organizations are doing things right. Others also mentioned that the process has helped them be more forward-thinking and focus efforts on strategic planning.

The nonprofit leaders also discussed how the accreditation process has helped them engage their boards and institutionalize best practices over time. The accreditation process has helped this group of leaders raise issues for discussion, put them into practice and institutionalize them. *“...a very important change was that move to standardize how we see things, discuss things, report things, record things...”*

Another executive talked about how The Standards for Excellence has helped her organization remain focused on its core values and work in the community. It was also described as being able to put the policies into daily practice, which was harder than expected. The executive whose organization was working to restore its reputation following a scandal with its former executive summarized the most important impact of The Standards for Excellence accreditation in his organization as, *“It changed the mentality of the organization from top to bottom.”* He went on to say, *“[Our organization] went from being prosecuted by the US attorney’s office to having them believe so much in the organization that they are funding [our program].”*

In summarizing the executives’ overall interview and impact responses, it also seems appropriate to note the investment of time and energy in the accreditation process. An executive described it accordingly, *“I think the process is difficult and cumbersome. It’s like having a child—worth it in the end. Forget about the pain.”*

“It [The Standards] changed the mentality of [our] organization from top to bottom.”

Impact Evaluation Report

Initial Conclusions and Implications

Conclusions and Potential Response

There are some conclusions that can be drawn from The Standards for Excellence impact evaluation and some issues that should be considered for future program growth and implementation. The evaluation surfaced several key themes:

- The Standards for Excellence accreditation process requires that staff leadership and board learn and engage at deeper levels than pre-accreditation. Greater board engagement in all aspects of organization operations was most often mentioned as a positive by-product of accreditation. At the same time, it was less obvious that the accreditation process reached down through all levels of staff—to line or program staff. While the engagement of all staff was mentioned by a few of the executives interviewed, organizations and PANO should consider how to better engage all levels of staff in the accreditation process.
- Nearly all executives interviewed commented on how The Standards for Excellence accreditation process has changed their organizational policies, procedures and processes. The policies are more complete, complex and better following the accreditation. The challenge to organizations and to PANO is how to ensure that the practices are lived outside of the policy manual and between accreditation reviews.
- Several interviewees commented on how the accreditation process has helped their organizations improve their program evaluation and feedback functions. They noted that they are more focused on collecting data and making program improvements (and discontinuing ineffective programs) as a result of the accreditation process. The ongoing challenge for program evaluation is to develop outcomes measures that can be implemented and used to create program changes within the capacity (human and financial resources) of the organization.
- Although interviewees often noted that their program evaluation function has been improved through The Standards for Excellence accreditation, there seems to be a weak link between program evaluation and impact on program and service delivery and quality improvement. In other words, respondents said that the accreditation process improved program evaluation, but not program service delivery or reported effectiveness. This may suggest that program evaluation is the short-term outcome and actual program delivery and improvement may be an intermediate or long-term outcome. However, PANO and certified organizations should be aware of this disconnect and look for ways to improve the linkage. Otherwise, it could appear that The Standards for Excellence program is more of an administrative, leadership and governance program and not a program excellence process as well.
- There is strong support that the accreditation process improves financial policies and operations. Of particular note, this area of The Standards seems especially helpful for facilitating staff and board transitions and turnover.
- The connection between The Standards and fund-raising results is not especially strong at the moment. A few interviewees mentioned that the accreditation has helped them

Impact Evaluation Report

leverage additional funding, but there is not a lot of evidence of this connection yet. Accredited organizations and PANO should look for ways to better leverage accreditation with potential funders and evaluate impact in future evaluations.

Other Considerations

The impact of accreditation through The Standards for Excellence also varies based on organizational context. These key contextual factors that need to be highlighted include:

1. The life cycle of the organization matters.
 - a. Organizations in the start up or early phases rely on the accreditation process for infrastructure and initial policies.
 - b. Mature organizations seek accreditation for validation of present systems, for recognition of excellence.
2. Budget size of the organization matters. (Capacity to comply with The Standards is certainly impacted by resources available.)
3. Leadership changes/stability matters. (If the leader who initiated The Standards process leaves, how transferable are the gains? Is the accreditation still valued?)
4. Leadership experience matters. (New and inexperienced leaders find different value in the process than experienced leaders.)
5. Length of certification matters. (Some certification impact may take longer to achieve.)

All of these factors likely influenced the interview responses and evaluation, but they were not individually considered. These issues should be included in future evaluations.

The Impact of The Standards for Excellence in Pennsylvania

The results of this first Standards for Excellence evaluation indicate that there has been significant impact on the operations and governance of the Pennsylvania nonprofits who have sought accreditation. As with most evaluation projects, many more questions and ideas for future evaluations also surfaced. However, it can be concluded that the accreditation process has in many ways improved the core operations of nonprofits by strengthening the engagement and learning of staff and board leadership, improving operational policies and processes, growing the customer/client experience and commitment to mission and enhancing financial operations and fund raising efforts. By doing so, The Standards for Excellence continues to build the credibility and effectiveness of the nonprofit sector in Pennsylvania and throughout our nation.

Work Cited:

Robert S. Kaplan and David P. Norton, (January-February 1996). "Using the Balanced Scorecard as a Strategic Management System," *Harvard Business Review*.

Appendices:

- A: List of Evaluation Committee Members
- B: Interview Protocol
- C: General Description of Interviewees

STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE®

Impact Evaluation Task Force

Task Force:

Bobbi Watt Geer, Ph.D.

President & CEO,

United Way of Westmoreland County

Greensburg, PA

Tom Gervais

Data De-Identification Service

(DDS, Tech Team Lead / Lead Developer,

The Hartford Insurance Group)

Hartford, CN

Betsy Keefer

Nonprofit Consultant &

Retired Girl Scout Executive

York, PA

Tish Mogan

Standards for Excellence Officer, PANO

Harrisburg, PA

Robert Wooler

Director, The Nonprofit Partnership

Erie, PA

Interviewers:

Bobbi Watt Geer, Ph.D.

Rebecca Hartmann, MPH, Ph.D. (c)

Robert Wooler

Transcriber:

Carol LaRegina

Editorial Support:

Judie Donaldson

Donaldson Consulting

Impact Evaluation Certified Organization Interview Protocol

Learning and Growth:

What did the organization learn about itself in going through the certification process?

What new learning needed to take place during the certification process? For the staff? And for the board? How has this learning affected staff and board as they carry out their work?

Operations and Processes:

Has becoming certified in the Standards for Excellence program altered your organizational practices, e.g., management of board, daily operations, human resources, etc.? If so, how has it impacted your processes?

Has the certification changed the way you deliver your programs and services? If so, how?

Customer:

What impact, if any, has the certification process had on your agency's program and services?

Have your clients, customers or other constituents reported any changes in program effectiveness or efficiency since certification?

Has certification affected how your organization achieves its mission? If so, how?

Financial:

Has the certification process had any bearing on your financial operations? If so, how?

Has the certification process changed your fundraising program? If so, how?

Wrap Up:

What do you think is the single most important change that occurred due to going through this process?

General Description of Participating Organizations

Ten nonprofit executives participated in The Standards for Excellence Impact Evaluation interviews. Interviewees participated anonymously, so a direct organizational listing will not be provided. Most were human service agencies that provide a range of services such as education, child care, victim services and social services. Budget size and geographic diversity were achieved through random selection among the certified agencies. The organizations can generally be described as follows:

Organizational Budget Size

- Three organizations have budgets of less than \$1 million
- Four organizations have budgets of between \$1 - \$5 million
- Three organizations have budgets of \$5 million or greater

Organization location within Pennsylvania

- One organization located in southeastern PA
- One organization located in northeastern PA
- Three organizations located in central PA
- Two organizations located in northwestern PA
- Three organizations located in southwestern PA

STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE® Impact Evaluation

Report Peer Reviewers and Committee

The Standards for Excellence® Certification program would not be possible without the tremendous support of the professional volunteers who serve as Peer Reviewers and the statewide Standards for Excellence Committee. PANO acknowledges the dedication of these individuals. Their contributed services are making an impact in improving the effectiveness and accountability of 501(c)(3) organizations in Pennsylvania.

A complete list of current Peer Reviewers can be found at www.pano.org.

The following are the members of the Standards for Excellence Committee. This committee is responsible for oversight of the statewide Standards for Excellence program and the final approval of certified organizations.

Don Ames
Vice President, PNC Financial Services

Janice Anderson, Esq.
Attorney at Law

Bruce Bickel, Ph.D.
Senior Vice President & Manager, PNC
Advisors

Gary Dubas, CPA
Partner, McKonly & Asbury, LLP

Doris Fee, CAE
President, Blue Ridge Business Consultants

Karen Hosler-Kispert
Nonprofit Organization & Leadership
Development, Research, Program Evaluation

Betsy Keefer
Retired CEO, Penn Laurel Girl Scout Council

Angela M. Liddle, MPA
Executive Director, PA Family Support
Alliance

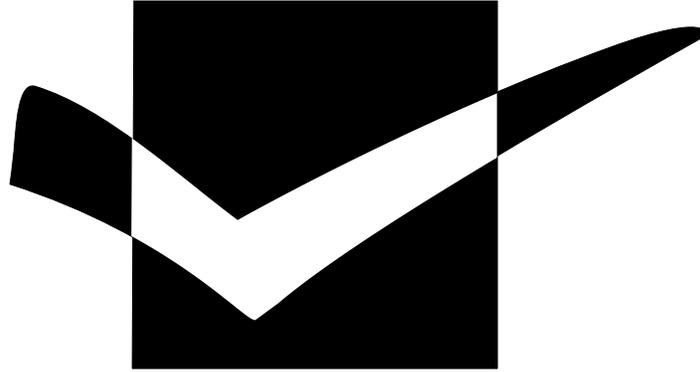
Jane Mack, MS-ODL, *Chair*
Executive Director, Friends Services for the
Aging

Jack Owen, Esq.
Rhoades & Wodarczyk, LLC

Charles Reynolds
Adjunct Faculty, Eastern University; Senior
Consultant, Capital Ventures

Bobbi Watt Geer, Ph.D.
President and CEO, United Way of
Westmoreland County

Robert Wooler
Director, The Nonprofit Partnership



STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

*The Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations (PANO)
is certified under the Standards for Excellence Institute.*

PANO's Mission:

*PANO leads Pennsylvania's Community
Benefit Sector to achieve its fullest potential.*

PANO's Vision:

*We envision a vibrant, thriving community
where people realize their highest aspirations.*

PANO thanks Jane and Charles Mack for generously underwriting the cost of printing this report.