



## Introducing the New Tiered Approach to the Standards for Excellence®

Choose the Strategy That Fits Your Organization's Needs and Resources:  
*Complete One, Two or Three Tiers to Improve Operations and Empower Your  
Board and Staff to More Effectively Achieve Your Mission*

### The Standards for Excellence

PANO is proud to offer the Standards for Excellence, an ethics and accountability program for the nonprofit sector. The Standards for Excellence program offers tools and resources to empower Community Benefit Organizations to meet the highest standards of nonprofit governance, management and operations, including expert training and structured implementation and certification programs.

#### WANT TO PUT THE STANDARDS INTO PRACTICE IN YOUR ORGANIZATION?

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#### Quick Facts:

- Provides organizations of all types, sizes and resources with structured, manageable options for putting the Standards for Excellence into practice
- Allows completion of one or more tiers to improve operations and empower boards and staff to more effectively achieve their mission
- Provides funders with a blueprint for well managed and responsibly governed nonprofit organizations
- Provides the option to complete Tier Three to earn certification and display the Seal of Excellence
- Allows organizations to complete the level or levels that meet their needs and resources—progression to Tier Three/Certification not required
- Offers affordable fee structure—sliding scale based on annual budget (PANO member discounts apply)

"The tiered approach lets organizations choose their level of participation. That's just perfect!"\*

**Tier Three:**  
Excellence in Nonprofit Governance and Management

**Tier Two:**  
Enhanced: Building on the Essentials of Nonprofit Governance and Management

**Tier One:**  
Essentials: Adherence to Basic Legal, Regulatory and Governance Practices

## Commit to the Standards for Excellence®

Nonprofit organizations must comply with applicable local, state and federal laws. The Standards for Excellence build on that foundation and go a step further.

Based on fundamental values – such as honesty, integrity, fairness, respect, trust, responsibility and accountability – these Standards describe how nonprofits should act to be ethical and accountable in their program operations, governance, human resources, financial management and fundraising.

“Donors need to make hard decisions about who to support. This may be another aspect for donors to use in making their decisions.”

## Tier One—Essentials

### **Benefits:**

- Ease your way into the Standards for Excellence program.
- Lower Cost.
- Responsive to limited time and resources .
- Formally recognizes achievement of Essentials Tier and your organization’s progression towards full Standards for Excellence code implementation, if that is your goal.
- Informal recommendations from program staff for future improvement and application to next tier.

### **What’s Included (Examples):**

- Basic data collection strategies in place for all programs.
- Board approved financial

policy governing internal controls.

- All employees have position descriptions, if applicable.
- Template solicitation and acknowledgement documents, including all required disclosure documents.
- Conflict of interest policy approved by board.

### **Application Process:**

- [Recommended training](#).
- Submission of the Tier One self-study application package/checklist and application fee,

### **Review Process**

- Program staff will complete

the formal review of the application.

### **Terms:**

- Organizations can remain at this tier for a term of three years at which point they can resubmit certain documentation and remain at this tier for additional terms (fee applies). There is no limit to the amount of time an organization may remain in the first tier of the program.

### **Fees:**

- Fees are established on a sliding scale based on organizational budget. Please see [fee schedule](#).

## Tier Two—Enhanced

### **Benefits**

- Continue to build best practices into your organization’s operations.
- Discounts for quickly moving through the tiers.
- Ability to state completion of the Standards for Excellence Enhanced Tier.
- Additional informal recommendations from program staff for future improvement and application to next tier.

### **What’s included (Examples):**

- Comprehensive program evaluation in place for one program or at least 40% of total organization effort, whichever is greater.
- Board approved financial

policies governing internal controls and purchasing.

- Orientation process for all staff, volunteers, and board members.
- Annual Report, on website and/or in print, with all required information.

### **Application Process:**

- [Recommended training](#).
- Prior completion of Tier One.
- Submission of the Tier Two self-study application package and checklist and application fee.

### **Review Process:**

- Program staff will com-

plete the formal review of the application.

### **Terms:**

- Organizations can remain at this tier for a term of three years at which point they can re-submit documentation and remain at this tier for additional terms (fee applies). There is no limit to the amount of time an organization may remain in this tier of the program.

### **Fees:**

- Fees established on a sliding scale based on organizational budget—please see [fee schedule](#).

The Standards for Excellence® are intended to describe how the most well managed and responsibly governed organizations should, and do, operate. They provide benchmarks to determine how well an organization is fulfilling its obligations to those who benefit from its programs, to contributors, and to the public.



## Tier Three—Certification

### **Benefits:**

- Earn Certification and display the Seal of Excellence.
- State that their organization is “Certified Under PANO’s Standards for Excellence,” “Awarded PANO’s Standards for Excellence Seal,” “Approved Under PANO’s Standards for Excellence” or “is a Standards for Excellence® Accredited Organization.”

### **What’s Included:**

- All 55 Standards for Excellence are included in the third tier.

### **Application Process:**

- [Required training](#).
- Prior completion of Tiers One and Two or apply directly for Tier Three/ Certification after completing Tier One (please contact us for more information on this option).
- Submission of the self-study application package and checklist & application fee.

### **Review Process:**

- Program staff will first review the application.
- Anonymous peer reviewers will

evaluate the application after staff review is completed.

- The Standards Committee must approve the staff and peer reviewers’ recommendation for certification.

### **Terms:**

- The Standards for Excellence seal will be awarded for three years. After the first three-year period, the organization must apply for re-certification. Once the first re-certification is awarded, the organization must re-apply every five years.

### **Fees:**

- Fees are established on a sliding scale based on organizational budget. 20% discount if submitted within 1 year of Tier Two approval. Please see [fee schedule](#).

fairness  
honesty  
trust integrity  
accountability  
responsibility  
respect

## Standards for Excellence Eight Guiding Principles

Eight (8) Guiding Principles are provided, along with fifty-five (55) Standards – more detailed performance

benchmarks which will enable your nonprofit to strengthen your operations.

### **Guiding Principles**

#### **Focus Areas:**

- I. Mission & Program
- II. Governing Board
- III. Conflict of Interest
- IV. Human Resources
- V. Financial and Legal
- VI. Openness
- VII. Fundraising
- VIII. Public Affairs and Public Policy

“I think [the Tiered Approach] is a great way to make the benefits of Standards more accessible.”

"We believe in doing things right and the Tiered Approach benefits all."

"I think the Tiered Approach gives agencies an opportunity to work on areas at their own pace and see measurable outcomes and success throughout the process."

"It provides a good model for organizations to gauge their effectiveness, strengths and benchmarks."

## Upcoming Events

Coming July 13 - FREE Webinar!

Learn how the Tiered Approach can help your organization put essential best practices in place

Go to [www.pano.org](http://www.pano.org) for registration and our complete training offerings

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

### **Why should my organization join PANO?**

PANO is the statewide membership organization serving and advancing the charitable nonprofit sector through leadership, advocacy, education and other services in order to improve the overall quality of life in Pennsylvania. PANO helps charities become more efficient and effective through collaboration, cooperation and the sharing of resources and information.

- **Member Services:** PANO offers a number of exclusive member services and benefits, such as insur-

ance products, discounted software and technology, payroll and tax services, discounted office supplies, and access to educational seminars throughout the state. You will also receive our quarterly newsletter "Keynotes" and PANO E-news, along with access to our member help desk.

- **Standards for Excellence:** This ethics and accountability code, educational resources, training, and voluntary certification program strengthens your organization by establish-

ing ways to assess and improve financial systems, governance, personnel practices, mission/program, fundraising, and more. Your organization can also experience increased credibility with current and potential donors, as well as the general public.

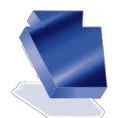
- **Public Policy:** PANO is a statewide leader on public policy issues that broadly impact Pennsylvania's charitable nonprofit sector. We monitor changes in Federal and State legislation and regulations that impact the sector.

**Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations**  
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