

Minutes
Meeting of the Judges Panel of the
Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award
National Institute of Standards and Technology
Tuesday, June 24, 2025 • 11:00 AM–4:00 PM

Attendees

Judges: Keith Everett, Cary Hill, Lynda Johnson, Brian Miller, Jennifer Niswonger, Rebecca Ruhl, Peter Scheuer

NIST: Rebecca Bayless, Robyn Decker, Mary Eastman, Robert Fangmeyer, Elif Karakas, Suzanne Sullivan, Kelly Welsh

Meeting start: 11:00 am

WELCOME AND MEETING OVERVIEW (Robert Fangmeyer, Cary Hill)

Cary and Bob welcomed the judges

SETTING THE CONTEXT

BPEP Purpose and Mission

To improve the quality, performance, and long-term success of businesses and other organizations by

- Recognizing role models
- Fostering the adoption of proven practices
- *[Fostering a nationwide ecosystem]*

Role of the Judges

- Identify which applicants should be advanced to a site visit
- Recommend Award recipients to NIST Director and the Secretary of Commerce
- Recommend process changes to NIST and the Board of Overseers
- Provide input into the development of the Baldrige Excellence Framework and Award Criteria
- Serve as Ambassadors

THE 2025 BALDRIGE AWARD PROCESS

Examiner Recruitment/Training

The program used a new LMS for 2025 to facilitate five weeks of examiner training (a blend of online modules and virtual meetings). 225 examiners were recruited and 161 completed training.

The program recruited and selected new examiners; however, not all of them received an assignment this year, which is not ideal. There are also returning examiners who did not participate in last year's process, so they are "new" to the redesigned process.

2025 Award Criteria

Kelly reviewed the changes that were made to the [2025 Award Criteria](#). Organizational Profile changed to Organizational Description. The questions previously listed in the Organizational Profile section were moved into their appropriate criteria sections. The nine criteria sections are:

- Organizational Description
- Leadership and Governance
- Operations
- Workforce
- Customers and Markets
- Finance
- Strategy
- Organizational Learning
- Community Relationships

The Organizational Description asks for context-setting information and is not evaluated. The remaining criteria sections include context questions that can directly inform examiner evaluations. The last three sections—Strategy, Organizational Learning, and Community Relationships—do not ask for performance results, only a description of key processes.

Key Milestones

The Baldrige examiners have now begun evaluating award applicants. Judges will meet on August 13, where they will utilize blinded, summary data from Consensus Evaluation. Judges use blind data so that all can participate; judges will not know who the organizations are until they decide which organizations will move to site visit. Judges will also not see supporting evidence at the August meeting, as it might give away the identity of the organization and BPEP wants all judges to see all data.

(Examiners) Application Evaluation (June 17 – July 30)

- Independent Analysis
- Team Consensus

➤ (Judges) Site Visit Determination (Judges – August 13)

- Blinded summary data from Consensus Review

(Examiners) Site Visit Review (August 19 – October 8)

- Applicant data call (due 9/4)
- Planning and preparation (until 9/24)
- Virtual and in-person engagement (9/25-10/2)
- Post site visit activities (until 10/8)

➤ (Judges) Award Recommendations (November 3-7)

- Review all available data and information in advance.

Application Evaluation

- Simplified rubrics used to evaluate results and processes
- Examiners will do their own Independent Analysis using standard worksheets on information provided by the applicant.
- Team consensus on ratings, evidence, and rationale

Results Rubric

Changes to results rubrics include changing evaluation factors to: Responsiveness, Levels, Trends, and Comparisons. The ratings changed to 0, Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3. The zero was added because there were some instances last year where nothing was provided in response to the question. We wanted to distinguish between nothing was provided and the result provided was low/somewhat responsive.

Process Rubric

The Process rubric is intended to ensure a baseline maturity of the processes related to the results requested in the application. The rubric is not seeking to fully assess the approach, deployment, evaluation, or integration of the applicants' processes. During site visits, the examiner teams will take a deeper dive into potential role model practices. Responses must demonstrate that processes/activities are (1) regular and repeated and (2) show evidence of improvement based on evaluation.

An evaluation workbook sample was shared.

BREAK 12:04-12:14 PM

2025 August Judges Meeting

What will the judges use?

Kelly reviewed a sample sheet for one applicant to show the judges what they would be reviewing in August to make site visit determinations.

Judges will have the following information available for site visit determination

- Award Criteria questions
- Ratings for each criteria section
- Ratings for each criteria question
- Ratings for each evaluation factor for each question (only as needed)
- Limited contextual information about the applicant (must prevent disclosure of who applicants are)

August Judging Process

1. Judges individually review rating information for each applicant, noting which applicants they think should advance
2. Chair facilitates discussion and voting for which applicants advance

After judges select applicants for a site visit, BPEP will go through a process to identify real or perceived judges' conflicts with the organizations.

Site Visit Objectives

Examiners will verify key results, assess processes/systems, and explore role-model characteristics

- Engage in dialogue with applicant leadership and others as appropriate
- Explore potential podium issues/Conduct Highest-Ranking Official (HRO) interview
- Ensure adequate information for Judges

What's different?

- Requested Process information in the application
- Less emphasis on examining and verifying role-model process maturity
- Simplified evaluation process rubric
- Need to explore and document potential role model practices

Site Visit Outputs

1. Updated evaluation of results, as appropriate.
2. Evaluation of key processes to include rating of evaluation factors and supporting evidence

3. Overall process and results rating for each criteria section based on all evidence compiled throughout the process.
4. Which key processes examiners think might be role-model practices/worthy of special recognition?
5. Any potential podium issues uncovered during the background check/vetting process and the applicant's responses to the HRO interview.

November Judging Process

For site-visited applicants for which there is no conflict:

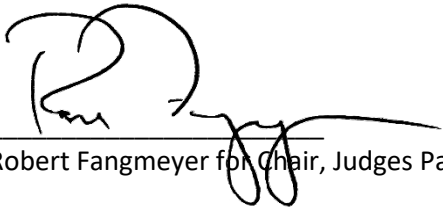
- Judges independently review worksheets from examiners.
- Judges provide insights to lead judge for each applicant.
- Lead judge prepares summary and recommendations to present at November meeting.
- Examiner team leaders will be called during meeting to clarify insights.
- Judges vote on recommending award recipients.

BREAK 1:15-1:45 PM

Remaining 2025 Meeting Dates

- August 13 (to decide organizations to receive a site visit), Virtual
- November 3-7 (to decide organizations to recommend to the NIST Director, Secretary of Commerce), Virtual

Adjourn: 2:51 PM

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert Fangmeyer', written over a horizontal line.

Robert Fangmeyer for Chair, Judges Panel