

**Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award
Board of Overseers Meeting
National Institute of Standards and Technology
Wednesday, June 11, 2026, 11:00 AM–4:00 PM ET, Virtual**

ATTENDEES

Overseers: Ray Floyd, Margot Hoffman, Mike Koralewski, Loyce Pailen, Janet Souter, Tom Tribone

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST): Rebecca Bayless, Robyn Decker, Robert Fangmeyer, Eric Lin, Kelly Welsh

Guests: Brian Lassiter, Stephanie Norling, Josh Racette

Start: 11:00am

WELCOME and INTRODUCTIONS

Robert Fangmeyer, Director Baldrige Performance Excellence Program

Eric Lin, Acting Associate Director for Innovation and Industry Services, National Institute of Standards and Technology

ETHICS BRIEFING

Meghan Keifer, Ethics Law and Programs Division, Office of the General Counsel, U.S. Department of Commerce, gave an overview of ethics for federal advisory bodies.

BALDRIGE PROGRAM UPDATE

Fangmeyer reviewed the disruptions and transformations that have impacted the program since 2012:

- Loss of federal funding starting in FY2012 and subsequent loss of staff
- Development of a new fee-based business model
- COVID-19 and transition to virtual offerings
- Mandated pause on the award process for FY22 and FY23
- Baldrige Reimagined initiative
- Entirely new award process starting in 2024
- Recent Executive Orders and changes in NIST/DOC priorities and strategic directions

Fangmeyer shared the rationale behind establishing a Memorandum of Agreement with the Alliance for Performance Excellence (Alliance) and the Baldrige Foundation (Foundation) to transfer to them operational responsibility for the Baldrige Award process, the Baldrige Excellence Framework, Quest for Excellence, and the Baldrige Executive Fellows, including

- Potential for a NIST reorganization that would eliminate the Baldrige Program
- Anticipated loss of federal appropriations and issuance of general RIF notices to staff
- Significant staff attrition, and
- The need to continue to meet statutory requirements and sustain the program's mission

Fangmeyer then shared the key elements of the Memorandum of Understanding, breaking down the responsibilities of the Alliance, Foundation, and NIST/DOC noting the transition status of each key activity. Special attention was given to the ongoing responsibilities for NIST and DOC that are expressly required by statute (15 USC 3711a).

Fangmeyer closed with a discussion around the status of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program at NIST and the risks and vulnerabilities inherent in this new model for mission accomplishment.

REPORT FROM THE BALDRIGE FOUNDATION

Josh Racette, President and CEO

Racette provided an update on the status of the four key areas of responsibility they have taken on under the MOU.

- The Baldrige Award Ceremony for the 2025 Award Recipients was held March 29th. Approximately 400 people attended the event which honored the two award recipients (Nor Lea Hospital District in New Mexico, and Northwell Glen Cove Hospital in New York) and for the first time, the award finalists, each of whom also received recognition for specific role-model best practices.
- The Quest for Excellence Conference kicked off three days of keynotes, breakout sessions, plenary sessions, and networking opportunities on March 30th. Approximately 500 attendees across the three days engaged with and learned from the current award recipients, former award recipients, and the 2025 award finalists.
- The Baldrige Excellence Framework is getting a major overhaul, in alignment with the Baldrige Reimagined effort and the initial draft of revisions completed by the Baldrige Program in 2025. The most significant changes are the establishment of three clearly distinct levels of maturity, called Pathways, designed to enable organizations to more easily understand what content is appropriate for them at their level of maturity and what they need to do to move to the next higher level. Other changes include a streamlined evaluation rubric that was derived from the current award process rubrics. The intent is to finalize and make available the Business/Nonprofit version of the Framework before working on the Health Care and Education versions.
- The Baldrige Executive Fellows cohort for 2026 is well underway, having kicked off at the Quest for Excellence conference. Sixteen senior executives from health care, education, business, and nonprofit are engaged in the year-long program that includes in person visits to multiple award recipient locations, where they can “see excellence in action” and learn from their executives. In addition, Fellows develop and work through a capstone project that is an opportunity of strategic importance to their own organization. The program will close out with capstone presentations and a graduation event immediately before the next Quest conference.

REPORT FROM THE ALLIANCE FOR PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE

Brian Lassiter, President and CEO, Alliance for Performance Excellence

Lassiter provided background on the Alliance and its role in the larger Baldrige Enterprise, which consists of the Alliance, the Baldrige Program, the Foundation, and Communities of Resilience and Excellence (CORE).

The Alliance has the purpose to inspire individuals, organizations, and communities across the US and the world to learn, implement, and achieve higher levels of performance. The Alliance oversees 25 Baldrige-based programs serving all 50 states and U.S. Territories, and in accordance with the new MOU, is now managing the Baldrige Award process.

Lassiter shared the goals related to the 2026 award process

- Maintain historical strengths (while strengthening the brand)
- Enhance the experience for applicants and examiners
- Increase alignment & integration within full Baldrige Enterprise
- Streamline and simplify the Award process
- Grow the pipeline (applicants and finalists, potentially recipients)

Key changes to the award process for 2026 include

- Modifications to the eligibility requirements in support of stronger integration between Alliance-based assessment and recognition and the Baldrige Award process.
- Modifications to the evaluation rubrics to enable common rubrics in the framework and during the award process
- Modification to the award criteria to include greater emphasis on evaluating key processes in response to applicant preferences and their desire to understand opportunities for improvement related to those processes.
- Opened eligibility for the Community award category, which was authorized by congress in FY2022.
- Development and use of an online application and evaluation platform called Apex

Lassiter shared details of the changes to the criteria, rubrics, and eligibility requirements, along with a new, and reduced, fee structure for applicants. He also shared the changes to the evaluation process overall, with particular emphasis on the decision that any organization that clears eligibility, submits an application, and is evaluated will receive a site visit and be deemed an award finalist.

REPORT FROM COMMUNITIES OF RESILIENCE AND EXCELLENCE (CORE)

Stephanie Norling, Executive Director, CORE

Norling shared the official name change from Communities of Excellence 2026 to CORE along with restatements of their mission, vision, and values.

Vision: A network of thriving, resilient communities where every resident can live well and feel they belong.

Mission: Partnering with communities to align people around shared purpose, collaborate across sectors, and improve the conditions that shape quality of life for all.

Values: Collaboration; Continuous Learning; Impact; Inclusion; Transparency

Norling also shared the key revisions made to the CORE Guide (formerly the Communities of Excellence Framework) which clarifies the roles, requirements, and expectations of the community leadership “Core Group” and the community itself; their Seven Core Quality of Life Aspects; and includes a new graphical representation of the concepts and principles found in the guide.

Norling shared changes being made to their Learning Collaborative, which is now called “Impact Pathway” and is organized around helping communities achieve five distinct milestones that will enable them to positively impact the quality of life in their communities.

- Collaborative Leadership
- Resident Voice

- Data Alignment and Shared Management
- Process Improvement
- Continuous Learning
- System Thinking

Finally, Norling shared an update on the 2025 Assessment and Recognition Program which resulted in one Bronze (Maximize Northwest Missouri), two Silver (Coral Springs, FL and West Kendall, FL), and one Gold level (Coral Gables, FL) recipients

DISCUSSION AND COMMENTARY

Throughout the meeting and in the closing session, the individual Overseers shared the following remarks. While there was some expression of agreement around these comments, no official recommendations were made at this time.

- We must not lose focus on continuing efforts to re-engage with globally competitive businesses
- It is important to ensure there is clarity around the distinct roles and responsibilities of the various parties, but also important to create a seamless experience across partners for our customers and users
- It is vital that NIST ensures that staff will continue to be assigned to, and supported in, the performance of necessary Baldrige responsibilities
- Appreciation and support for the integrated approach between Alliance programs and the Baldrige award processes
- Continued support for the previously discussed and approved “Fast Track” concept to enable pre-vetted high performing organizations to enter into the Baldrige Award process without having to go through the full application and evaluation process.
- We should consider engaging with consultancies and other orgs with high performing business members

NEW BUSINESS/PUBLIC COMMENT

None

Next Board of Overseers Meetings

December 10, 2026, virtual

End: 2:46 PM ET



 Robert Fangmeyer, on behalf of chair

07/10/2026

 Date