



CAPE Prospector Recognition Application Instructions

Administered by California Council for Excellence

Prospector Recognition Overview

The Prospector Recognition is for organizations that plan to apply for the Eureka Award but want to practice application writing. The Prospector uses the criteria of the [Baldrige Excellence Builder](#), which is an abbreviated version of the full Baldrige Framework for Performance Excellence. The focus of the Prospector is on organizational performance in the following categories of the Baldrige Framework:

1. Leadership
2. Strategy
3. Customers
4. Measurement, Analysis, Review, and Knowledge Management
5. Workforce
6. Operations
7. Results

What is the CAPE Prospector Recognition?

The Prospector is not given for specific products or services. To receive the Prospector Recognition, an organization must have a system that ensures continuous improvement in overall performance in the delivery of products and/or services and that provides an approach for satisfying and responding to customers and stakeholders. Instead of responding to the full Baldrige Criteria (which includes 7 Categories, 17 Items, and almost 300 questions), the Prospector Recognition process allows organizations to respond at the overall question level instead of the multiple levels that are expected for the Eureka Award. It provides the opportunity for organizations to take a less comprehensive approach for those not quite ready to take on the traditional 50-page Baldrige application.

Who can apply for the Prospector Recognition?

Any organization may apply for the Prospector Recognition. The 2023-2024 Baldrige Excellence Builder can be [downloaded here](#).

What are the benefits of applying?

Prospector Recognition applications are reviewed by trained CAPE Examiners. Once the Examiners have completed their review, the applicant will receive a Feedback Report identifying the Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement identified in relation to the seven category items. The Feedback Report is non-prescriptive and is based on the Criteria and responses provided in the application your organization completes. Feedback reports are often used by organizations as part of a strategic planning process as an input in environmental scans, they are also used as a source to drive process improvement within organizations.

Once you have received your Feedback Report, your organization will have an opportunity to participate in an Executive Briefing (for an additional fee) to engage with one or both Examiners who reviewed your application. This conversation will allow your organization to candidly discuss the findings in the Feedback Report.

In addition to the Feedback Report and Executive Briefing (optional), Prospector Recognition recipients also receive a trophy bearing the CAPE logo. This trophy is presented to the recipient at CCE's Annual Spring Best Practices and Awards Conference.

Is the identity of applicants and the information submitted made public?

The identity of all applicants remains confidential until the examination cycle is complete, and the applicant is announced as a Prospector Recognition recipient. All information submitted by applicants is also treated as confidential. All Examiners are required to follow confidentiality procedures when handling applicant information. However, please note that they may transfer information via email, mail, web-based software, and telephone when confidentiality procedures are followed.

How do organizations apply?

The application process consists of (1) completing and submitting an Intent to Apply form and fee, and (2) preparing and completing a Prospector Recognition application, including a completed Application Form, a 5-page Organizational Profile and up to 25-pages response to Category items, including the associated results.



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Award Application Submission:

Applicants must submit the final application in PDF format to California Council for Excellence by the cycle deadline (see below).

Application Cycles:

CCE offers three assessment cycles for the Prospector Recognition will have three assessment cycles for the Prospector Recognition. The assessment cycle is as follows:

	Cycle 1: Spring/ Summer	Cycle 2: Summer/ Fall	Cycle 3: Fall/ Winter
Intent to Apply Due	February 1	May 1	August 1
Application Due	April 1	July 1	October 1
Examination Team Review	April-May	July-August	October-November
Feedback Report Sent to Applicant	June	September	December
Executive Briefing (optional)	July/ August	October/ November	January/ February

Fees:

The 2023 fee schedule is as follows:

- **Intent to Apply:** \$500 (non-refundable)
- **Application Fee:** \$6,000

Upon receipt of the Intent to Apply, California Council for Excellence will send an invoice for the application fee which can be paid by credit card, ACH, or check. The application fee must be received by the application due date.

Prospector Recognition Application Instructions

The purpose of this section is to provide applicants with instructions for preparing the Prospector Recognition application. These instructions describe content, format, assembly, and submission requirements.

Objective

The objective of the CAPE Prospector Recognition application is for the applicant to provide sufficient information to enable the Examination team to conduct a rigorous evaluation. All information provided in the application is considered and treated as confidential.

Content

In your application, include information on all your organization's units and subunits, as appropriate. Do not include links to websites. Examiners base their evaluations solely on information within your application. Your award application must contain the items listed in the order given below:

1. **Blank front cover.** To help ensure confidentiality, do not include text or illustrations.
2. **Title page.** Give the name of your organization. You may also include the address and logo, illustrations, the date, a statement indicating that this is an application for the CAPE Prospector Recognition, and/or a statement regarding the confidentiality of the content. Do not include additional information, text, or links to websites.
3. **Divider pages.** Use divider pages to separate the sections listed below. On each, include only the section title. If you include additional text or illustrations, the pages will count toward the page limit for the responses addressing Category Items. Dividers should include:
 - Table of Contents
 - Application Form
 - Organization Chart(s)
 - Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations
 - Organizational Profile (5 pages or less)
 - Responses Addressing All Criteria Items (25-pages or less)
4. **Table of Contents.** Indicate the page numbers for:
 - Application Form
 - Organization Chart(s)
 - Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations
 - Organizational Profile
 - Responses Addressing Categories 1-7



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5. Application form. The completed form must be signed by the highest-ranking official, indicating that the applicant agrees to the terms and conditions of the Prospector Recognition process. You can download the Application form here: <https://www.caexcellence.org/awardprogram>.

6. Organization chart(s). Applicant should provide organization chart(s) with sufficient detail for Examiners to understand the relationships among the applicant's subunits.

7. Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations. In the glossary, include only terms and abbreviations used in your application, with very brief definitions. Do not include descriptions of processes, tools, methods, or techniques in the glossary, or your application will be returned.

- An acceptable example of a glossary entry is:
 - **SPP**: strategic planning process
- The following example is not acceptable because it indicates a description:
 - **SPP**: strategic planning process, which has nine steps: a review of key documents, such as the research contract with the USDA; a two-day retreat; a review of funding and mandates; a review of current organizational performance; a review of an environmental scan; appreciative inquiry; brainstorming; allocation of resources; and creation of action plans.

8. Organizational Profile. This up to 5-page section outlines your organization and states the key factors that influence its operations and future directions. Examiners use this vital part of your application throughout their review.

9. Responses Addressing All Criteria Items. In this section, respond to each item, using the category and item designations in the Criteria within the Baldrige Excellence Builder. In your responses to the areas to address within the items, emphasize your organization and its performance systems, maintaining the order of the areas.

10. Electronic Application Assembly:

- Create **one** PDF file that contains the following items:
 - Completed Application Form
 - Organizational Chart(s)
 - Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations
 - Organizational Profile
 - Criteria Response
- Proof the PDF file to verify the contents and number of pages.
- Submit your application in PDF format to the California Council for Excellence at hello@caexcellence.org.

Page and Text Format

Element	Requirement
Page Size	Standard, 8½-by-11-inch white
Page Orientation	Text Pages: Portrait Pages with graphs, figures, and data tables: Portrait or Landscape
Page Limit	Organization Profile: 5 pages Response Addressing Categories 1-7: 25 pages
Margins	Left - 3/4 inch minimum. Right - 1/2 inch minimum.
Text columns	2 (preferred) Leave at least ¼ inch between columns.
Numbering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational Profile: Use roman numerals (five page maximum) • Responses Addressing Criteria Items: For example, label 1–25 (25-page maximum applicants may present fewer pages) • Figures within the Organizational Profile and Items Sections: Number in sequence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use numbers corresponding to the section (e.g., Figure P.1-1, Figure P.1-2, Figure 2.1-1, Figure 2.1-2). • Do not number blank pages or divider pages.
Font Size	Use a standard font (Times New Roman or Arial recommended), 10 point minimum. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not use narrow, compressed, or condensed fonts. • Smaller type sizes make it difficult for examiners to interpret the data and to provide accurate and actionable feedback.
Tables filled mainly with text	Use a standard font (Times New Roman or Arial recommended), 8 points minimum
Graphics	Standard font, 8 points minimum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This may include charts, graphs, data tables, and other figures. • If you shrink graphics to fit the space available, ensure that text in the reduced figure meets the requirements. • Clearly label each figure using descriptive text. For example, the title of the third figure for item 7.1 might read “Figure 7.1-3: Reliability of Service: Carrier-Dropped Calls.” • Clearly label all axes and units of measure.