

SUPPORTING STATEMENT
U.S. Department of Commerce
National Institute of Standards and Technology
Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA)
OMB Control No. 0693-0006
SUPPORTING STATEMENT PART A

Abstract

The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Improvement Act of 1987, Public Law 100-107, established U.S. national quality award, the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA). This data collection request allows the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program to run the MBNQA.

The purposes and benefits of the MBNQA are to

1. promote competitiveness and quality awareness,
2. recognize the performance achievements of U.S. companies, and
3. share successful strategies and practices.

The law explicitly requires a written application and states that “an organization may qualify for an award only if it permits a rigorous evaluation of the way in which its business and other operations have contributed to improvements in quality.” This rigorous evaluation starts with a thorough review by volunteer Baldrige examiners of application packages submitted by organizations wishing to be considered for the MBNQA. The law also states that the Director of NIST “...shall rely upon an intensive evaluation by a competent board of examiners.... The examination should encompass all aspects of the organization’s current practice of quality management.”

The MBNQA is a voluntary award open to any U.S. organization across the sectors of manufacturing, service, small business, education, health care, and nonprofit.

Applicants for MBNQA—those that have received the award and those that haven’t—say the Baldrige evaluation process is one of the best, most cost-effective, most comprehensive performance assessments an organization can find.

Justification

1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.

In accordance with The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Improvement Act of 1987, Public Law 100-107, the applicant organizations that voluntarily participate in the award process submit information to prove its eligibility to apply for the award by meeting these eligibility requirements: (1) It must be headquartered in the United States. (U.S. subunits of foreign organizations may apply for the award if the subunit is headquartered in the United States. For eligibility purposes, overseas U.S. military installations and embassies don't constitute U.S. territories.) (2) It has existed for at least one year. (3) The operational practices associated with all its major organizational functions are available for examination in the United States or its territories. (4) It can share information on all Baldrige Award Criteria sections at its organization's U.S. facilities and at The Quest for Excellence® Conference.

If the organization is deemed eligible based on meeting the eligibility requirements above, they are invited to submit an Award Application online for the MBNQA. The applicants must provide detailed information in response to the award criteria sections. These sections are: (1) Leadership and Governance; (2) Strategy; (3) Customers and Markets; (4) Workforce; (5) Operations; (6) Finance; (7) Organizational Learning; (8) Community Relationships.

In parallel, highly qualified experts from across the nation apply and submit their applications through a secure online application platform to become members of the MBNQA Board of Examiners. The selection process ensures that outstanding individuals from each of the sectors in which the MBNQA is given are chosen. The members of the Board of Examiners are appointed for a one-year period and must reapply if they wish to serve again.

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.

MBNQA Organizational Applicants

Once per year, from the business, education, nonprofit, and health care sectors of the economy, including government, voluntarily apply for the MBNQA. The applications contain detailed information and quantitative data to be used as the basis for a rigorous evaluation by Baldrige examiners. These evaluations determine each applicant's maturity and performance in each of the Award Criteria sections, and which, if any, organizations will receive the MBNQA. The President of the United States or their delegate presents the MBNQA.

Because proprietary information may be included in MBNQA applications, access, use, and disposition are carefully controlled. Only those who have a need to know have access to the applications and must sign an agreement to adhere to those policies and prevent unauthorized disclosure. Application information is housed inside of NIST's secure network, access rights are carefully managed, and access requires approved two-factor authentication. Absolutely no information from the applications, including the names of the organizational applicants, may be emailed, unless using a secure file-sharing system (such as DOC Kiteworks system).

If an applicant organization becomes an Award recipient, an application summary will be prepared by the recipient organization and disseminated to the public by posting on the Baldrige

website. It is made available to the public because Section 1, b(2) of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Act of 1987 (Public Law 100-107) requires “information [to be] disseminated about the successful strategies and programs” of Baldrige Award recipients. Many organizations from the United States and around the globe use the award application summaries of Baldrige Award recipients as documents to find best practices and benchmarks.

No information about the non-recipients, not even their names, is revealed unless the organization chooses to do so.

Examiner Applicants

The information collected by the Examiner Application is used by the Baldrige Program to select highly qualified applicants for seats on the Board of Examiners.

All information provided through online applications is protected within NIST’s secure IT environment. Access to applicant data is restricted and available only through multi-factor authentication.

3. Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.

The Board of Examiner Application is completed and submitted entirely electronically over a secure site called the Baldrige Examiner Application. Also, the Baldrige award eligibility and award applications are submitted electronically by an online application called the Baldrige Award Application.

Both online applications collect information through secure, web-based systems that operate within a secure NIST IT environment compliant with federal security standards. These applications are available online for limited periods throughout the year and utilize role-based access controls to manage user permissions. Access to applicant data is protected by approved multi-factor authentication, ensuring that only authorized users can view or manage sensitive information.

Electronic collection was adopted to reduce administrative burden, improve data quality, and streamline the user experience. By allowing examiner applicants and award applicants to submit information online at their convenience, the system minimizes delays and reduces the need for paper-based processes. User-friendly built-in features such as real-time validation and dropdown options simplify the process, helping to reduce user error and improve completeness. Overall, the use of information technology significantly enhances efficiency while maintaining strong privacy and security protections.

The Baldrige Program continually reviews and refines its application procedures and requirements to ensure they remain efficient and effective. The program is committed to minimizing the amount of information and data requested, requiring only what is necessary for examiners and the Baldrige Panel of Judges to conduct a thorough evaluation. This approach supports the integrity of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award selection process and ensures that informed and equitable recommendations for award recipients can be made.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Item 2 above.

There is no duplication or repetitive information requested of applicants for the MBNQA or to become a member of the Board of Examiners since the information required in both cases is unique to the Baldrige Program. Additionally, the information provided is specific to the applicant organization and therefore unlikely to be available from any other source. The information required is sufficiently detailed to allow an in-depth evaluation of the applicant by experts selected to serve on the MBNQA Board of Examiners.

As with the MBNQA application, the information requested of examiners is unique to the Board of Examiners. Award applications are purged from the system each year to uphold data security and to ensure that applicants provide the most current data, graphs, charts, and tables. This approach supports the inclusion of fresh, relevant information in each application cycle. While award application data is not retained in the system, applicants have the ability to download a PDF copy of their submission for their own records and future reference. This allows them to reuse and adapt content for future applications if desired. While award application data is not retained, members of the Board of Examiners may access and modify their previous examiner applications, allowing them to efficiently update and resubmit their materials when applying to serve on the Board.

The Baldrige Award Criteria was developed with extensive input and review by private- and public-sector experts. The criteria and application process are evaluated and updated on an as-needed basis to eliminate burdensome requirements.

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.

All award applicants must respond to the eligibility and award criteria questions in order to ensure an appropriate and effective evaluation. The collection instrument is carried out on an online application platform eliminating the burden of crafting, printing, and shipping multiple hard copies of an application. As a part of this online application, there are limits on how much information can be provided in response to each of the questions, ensuring that small organizations are not disadvantaged in any way by allowing larger, well-resourced organizations to provide significantly more information. Most importantly, the application for the MBNQA is strictly voluntary, as is the application to become a member of the MBNQA Board of Examiners. Therefore, the burden falls only on those individuals and organizations who choose to submit

applications.

For the examiner application, to save applicants' time and effort, returning examiners are provided with the information submitted in prior years and need only amend the facts as needed.

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

The consequences to the Federal program of not collecting the voluntary information are that (1) we would violate our statutory responsibilities; (2) the Baldrige Program would be unable to provide useful, objective, comprehensive written feedback to applicants; (3) organizations could not compete for the MBNQA, thus losing the constructive benefits of the review by a team of outside Baldrige examiners and the motivational and self-discovery aspects of the application report-writing process; (4) the President would be unable to present any Awards and therefore not confer the status of a world-class organization on any American organizations; and (5) ultimately the progress made in building the competitiveness of U.S. industrial, educational, health care, and nonprofit organizations would suffer.

Also, it should be noted that the consequences to the Federal program of not collecting the voluntary information requested in the application to become a member of the MBNQA Board of Examiners are identical. Without the Board of Examiners, an evaluation of the applications for the MBNQA cannot be conducted.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner: requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly; requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it; requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document; requiring respondents to retain records, other than health, medical, government contract; grant-in-aid, or tax records, for more than three years; in connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study; requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by OMB; that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use; or requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secrets, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.

No special circumstances exist.

8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publication in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8(d), soliciting comments

on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every 3 years - even if the collection of information activity is the same as in prior periods. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances should be explained.

A 60-day Federal Register Notice soliciting public comment was published on June 20, 2025 (Vol. 90, Number 117, pages 26273-26274). No comments were received.

A 30-day Federal Register Notice soliciting public comment was published on September 22, 2025 (Vol. 90, Number 181, page 45376).

In addition to the Federal Register Notice process which enables both the public and Baldrige Participants to comment on the Program, there are other avenues for comments and feedback to be submitted.

- Each Baldrige Award applicant organization representative and Examiner Applicant (both selected and non-selected) is given the contact information of the Baldrige Program Director. Feedback is encouraged at all times.
- Each Baldrige Applicant is assigned a Baldrige Program Staff Member. Through a scheduled phone call or site visit, the staff member is trained to seek feedback from the applicant organization representative about the process.
- Examiners, during the MBNQA process, have direct access to a Baldrige Program staff member who is assigned to each application. Feedback and comments are encouraged during this point of the process.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

No payments or gifts are given to respondents.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy. If the collection requires a system of records notice (SORN) or privacy impact assessment (PIA), those should be cited and described here.

Information collected is maintained in a Privacy Act System of Records (as defined by the provisions of The Privacy Act of 1974, amended 5 U.S.C. § 552a). Disclosure of the information will be subject to all the published routine uses as identified in the Privacy Act System of Records Notices:

- [DEPT-18, Employees Personnel Files Not Covered by Notices of Other Agencies](#)
- [DEPT-23, Information Collected Electronically in Connection with Department of Commerce Activities, Events, and Programs](#)

Additionally, in accordance with the privacy provisions of the E-Government Act of 2002, a Privacy Impact Assessment is required for this information system. The information is maintained in NIST's PIA for system, 450-01, **Baldrige Performance Excellence Program (BPEP) System**. A copy of the PIA is attached as a supplementary document.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

This information collection does not include questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior and attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. However, the Secretary of Commerce and the Director of NIST are responsible for determining that an organizational applicant would be an appropriate U.S. role model and therefore should be approved as a Baldrige Award recipient. For role-model determination, NIST conducts record checks on potential Award recipients to ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information.

- 20 Award applicants x 40 hours for MBNQA application = 800 hours
- 200 Examiner applicants x 30 minutes for Board of Examiner application = 100 hours

TOTAL: 220 Applicants and 900 burden hours

13. Provide an estimate for the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden already reflected on the burden worksheet).

Our estimate of the total annual cost burden resulting from the collections is as follows:

Applicant Size (employees): 500 or less

Eligibility Determination: No Charge

Application*

\$10,000

Site Visit**

\$25,500

Applicant Size (employees): 501 or more

Eligibility Determination: No Charge

Application*
\$19,000

Site Visit**
\$40,800

14. Provide estimates of annualized costs to the Federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information. Agencies may also aggregate cost estimates from Items 12, 13, and 14 in a single table.

The cost of the online applications includes website administration fees charged by NIST and support from a dedicated IT staff member responsible for the development and maintenance of the system.

	Examiner Applicati on	Award Applicati on	Totals
Labor (hours)	50	100	
Labor (cost)	\$4,625	\$9,250	\$13,875
Server License	\$11,400		\$11,400
Server			
Maintenance	\$2,596	\$2,596	\$5,192
SSL Certificates	\$630	\$630	\$1,260
IT Security			
Support	\$1,650	\$1,650	\$3,300
Totals	\$20,901	\$14,126	\$35,027

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported on the burden worksheet.

With this submission a decrease in burden hours due to adjustment to the number of award applicants and the number of examiners needed to evaluate an award application.

Previous burden

Award	30 applicants	40 hours per response	1,200 burden hours
Examiner	550 applicants	30 min. per response	275 burden hours
TOTAL	580		1,475 burden hours

New burden

Award	20 applicants	40 hours per response	800 burden hours
Examiner	200 applicants	30 min. per response	100 burden hours
TOTAL	220		900 burden hours

There are no changes to the collection instrument since the last OMB approval.

16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

There are no plans for publishing the results of the collected information.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

No such approval is requested.

18. Explain each exception to the topics of the certification statement identified in “Certification or Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions.”

No exception to the certification statement is requested.

B. COLLECTIONS OF INFORMATION EMPLOYING STATISTICAL METHODS

This collection of information does not employ statistical methods.