

# STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE®

## APPLICATION PACKAGE AND CHECKLIST

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*The application package and checklist for the Standards for Excellence® voluntary certification program consists of this form and attachments that the organization will supply and label according to these instructions. Maryland Nonprofits may request additional documentation or information for clarification purposes.*

*Please read the Standards for Excellence® and this application package thoroughly before beginning the application process. For questions and concerns, please call Maryland Nonprofits staff at (410) 727-6367 or (800) 273-6367.*

Name of organization: \_\_\_\_\_

(Is the organization known by other names or acronyms? \_\_\_\_\_)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_ Website address: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of paid staff (full time): \_\_\_\_\_ Number of paid staff (part time): \_\_\_\_\_

Number of volunteers (not including board members): \_\_\_\_\_

Total expenditures (last fiscal year completed): \_\_\_\_\_

Organization's fiscal year runs from: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Name of individuals primarily responsible for assembling this application package and checklist:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

**We certify that the information provided in this Standards for Excellence® Application Package and Checklist is true and correct, policies outlined are followed, and all licenses, permits, insurance, and governmental approval necessary for operations have been obtained.**

Chair of Board

Chief Professional Officer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone

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**Maryland Nonprofits encourages organizations to contact Standards for Excellence® staff for assistance in implementing the policies and practices described in the Standards for Excellence® Code. Training programs and extensive written educational materials are available. Our intent is that every applicant will ultimately be successful in achieving compliance with the Standards for Excellence®.**

## APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

1. Read the *Standards for Excellence: An Ethics Code for the Nonprofit Sector*®.
  2. Read and complete the application package and checklist and assemble requested documents.
  3. Send 5 copies of the completed application package and requested attachments to Maryland Nonprofits.
  4. The current application fee schedule can be found in the Standards for Excellence® section of our website [www.marylandnonprofits.org](http://www.marylandnonprofits.org).
- We recommend that organizations interested in participating in this program appoint a Standards for Excellence® committee or task force made up of board members and key staff to work together in assembling this comprehensive application. Please see the codes in parenthesis following each question in the application for a reference to the relevant portion of the *Standards for Excellence: An Ethics Code for the Nonprofit Sector*®.
  - Applicants are invited to use this application and the accompanying documents to illustrate the organization's implementation of the 55 standards. If one or more of the standards is not appropriate for the organization, please write "n/a" in the space provided on the application package checklist and provide a detailed explanation of the special circumstances that preclude the applicant from implementing the standard. In some cases, a special written waiver request will be required.
  - All attachments should be coded with numbers provided in these instructions. Attachment codes are indicated in the left-hand column of the application. Pre-printed, self-stick tabs for labeling and organizing attachments are available upon request for a small fee. Assembling the applications in 3-ring binders is recommended.
  - If an attachment is submitted to satisfy more than one standard, provide one copy of the document with all applicable attachment codes clearly indicated.
  - For questions which request a narrative answer, please keep responses to one page or less (with the exception of the program evaluation section that may require longer responses).
  - To speed the application and peer review process, carefully check to be sure that all attachments are enclosed. See last page of application package for a complete list of requested attachments.
  - We request that you provide typewritten copies of attachments.

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## APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

Once an application package is received by Maryland Nonprofits, Standards for Excellence® staff will conduct an initial review of the materials. At that point, staff will contact the applicant organization if additional information or clarification is needed via phone, letter, and/or in-person consultation. A one to two week deadline will be in effect for applicants to respond to requests for more information. Requests for additional information or clarification at the end of the review process may require quicker turn-around deadlines. Completed application packages will be forwarded to a team of trained peer reviewers. The team will thoroughly review the application package and make a recommendation to the Ethics Standards Committee. At this time, Standards for Excellence® staff may request an in-person consultation to discuss clarification or additional information needed as a result of the peer review team meeting. An on-site meeting may occur as part of the review process. The Ethics Standards Committee makes the final decision to accept an organization's application. Applicants may request reconsideration by the Ethics Standards Committee if not satisfied with the initial decision. A formal appeal process has also been developed. **Applications will remain open up to one year from the date of submission. After one year has passed, the organization will be asked to submit an additional application fee to keep the application active for an additional year. Applicants may also withdraw their application and re-apply at a later date.**

- Every effort is made to avoid conflicts of interest in the peer review process. Peer reviewers are required to disclose their interests and organizational involvement in writing annually. Applicants will be given the opportunity to identify peer reviewers who may have a conflict of interest.
- Peer reviewers and staff will adhere to a strict confidentiality policy that safeguards the confidentiality of all aspects of the application submitted and applicant organization. The identity of peer reviewers evaluating specific applications will remain anonymous to the public and applicant organizations.
- Applicants should keep a copy of the completed application and accompanying materials for future reference.

## STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE® PROGRAM

- Materials submitted will not be subject to public inspection and will be viewed only by Maryland Nonprofits Standards for Excellence® staff and individuals involved in the peer review process - unless permission is granted by the applicant organization to allow others to view documents.
- Only organizations that have successfully completed the certification process will be publicly announced.
- The Standards for Excellence® logo will be awarded for three years based on licensing guidelines governing the seal. In the years between certification and recertification, Seal Holders may be required to respond to annual requests for updated information and documentation. In addition, certified organizations will pay an annual participation fee during the licensing period. The current license fee schedule can be found in the Standards for Excellence® section of our website [www.marylandnonprofits.org](http://www.marylandnonprofits.org)

**This application requests many different policies and written descriptions of organizational procedures and practices. Some policies requested must be approved by the board of directors. For board-approved policies, the date of board approval is generally requested. Other policies requested may be management or operational policies. For these policies, applicants should**

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**note that policies have been implemented or enacted in the organization and provide documentation.**

# STANDARDS FOR EXCELLENCE®

## I. MISSION AND PROGRAM

### A. MISSION

- I-a \_\_\_\_\_ Attach the organization's written mission statement. (Standard IA1)  
Provide the board minutes documenting the board's most recent review of the mission statement.  
Date \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_ (Standard IB1).

The Standards for Excellence® code state that this review should occur every 3-5 years.

### B. ORGANIZATIONAL EVALUATION

- I-b \_\_\_\_\_ Describe the organization's current activities, indicating how activities are consistent with the organization's mission statement. (Standard IA1)

### C. PROGRAM EVALUATION

- I-c \_\_\_\_\_ Attach a list of the organization's programs. Indicate the percentage of total organizational effort that is expended on each program listed. (organizational effort is defined by the organization itself based on any combination of time, funds, and/or other resources) (Standard IC1, IC2)  
Note to applicant: Please provide a brief description of how you defined organizational effort.

- I-d \_\_\_\_\_ Describe how each of the organization's programs are evaluated. For each program, specifically describe the following:
- \_\_\_\_\_ What data is collected (qualitative and quantitative);
  - \_\_\_\_\_ How you measure outcomes in relation to costs (programmatic efficiency);
  - \_\_\_\_\_ How you evaluate outcomes for program participants (programmatic effectiveness);
  - \_\_\_\_\_ How the evaluation methods involve program participants;
  - \_\_\_\_\_ How the evaluation methods are cost effective;
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Why the evaluation methods are appropriate for your organization;
  - \_\_\_\_\_ The board's involvement in the evaluation process;
  - \_\_\_\_\_ How your evaluation system is used to strengthen and improve your organization. In other words, describe the feedback loop your organization has in place for using evaluation to measure progress toward achieving your mission. (Standard IC1, IC2)

Applicants are encouraged to attach any evaluation tools (reports, questionnaires, templates) that provide further evidence of the organization's program evaluation efforts. (Please use discretion with the number of pages submitted.) (Standard IC1, IC2)

### D. PROGRAM SERVICE

- I-e \_\_\_\_\_ For organizations serving individuals and/or families, attach a copy of the organization's policies regarding program participants and treatment of participants' confidential information. (Standard ID1)
- I-f \_\_\_\_\_ Describe how the organization measures the satisfaction of program participants. (Standard ID1)
- I-g \_\_\_\_\_ Attach a copy of the organization's grievance procedure to address complaints from program participants. Include a description of how program participants are made aware of the grievance procedure. (Standard ID1)

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## II. GOVERNING BODY

### A. BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES

II-a \_\_\_\_\_ Attach copies of board minutes from the last 12 months. Please be sure that your submission of a year's worth of minutes includes board minutes from a full fiscal year. You may need to provide board minutes for a period of time longer than a calendar year in order to include a full fiscal year. (Standard IIC5)

YES NO Has the board delegated decision making authority to a committee in any specific subject areas? If so, what areas? \_\_\_\_\_

II-b \_\_\_\_\_ Attach copies of committee minutes for committees (executive, finance, audit, HR) which have been delegated decision making authority by the board in areas that otherwise would be a board responsibility (for the last 12 months). (Standards IIA, IIC)

#### Indicate date and page of board minutes reflecting the following:

- Board's resolution indicating that the organization will apply for Maryland Nonprofits Seal of Excellence. \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ page \_\_\_\_\_
- Board's approval of the organization's most recent budget. \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ page \_\_\_\_\_ (Standard IIA3)
- Board's approval of the organization's most recent audit. \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ page \_\_\_\_\_ (If the organization has annual revenue in excess of \$500,000) (Standard IIA3)
- Board's most recent annual review of the percent of expenditures spent on program, administration, and fundraising. (Many organizations conduct this review while discussing the organization's annual Form 990 or budget.) \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ page \_\_\_\_\_ (Standard IIA3)
- Board's most recent evaluation of the executive director. \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ page \_\_\_\_\_ (Standard IIA4)
- Board's most recent approval of executive director's salary. \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ page \_\_\_\_\_ (Standard IIA4)
- Who is responsible for the board minutes? \_\_\_\_\_ (Standard IIC5)
- Where are the board minutes kept? \_\_\_\_\_ (Standard IIC5)

YES NO Are decisions made by committees with decision-making authority reported to the full board? ? (Standard IIC5)

II-c \_\_\_\_\_ Explain how the board of directors engages in long term and short term planning activities. Include copies of any documents illustrating board planning efforts (e.g. strategic plan for organization, board work plan, etc.).(Standard IIA1)

II-d \_\_\_\_\_ Attach the organization's most recently approved budget. (Standard IIA3)

II-e \_\_\_\_\_ Please indicate date (year) current executive director was hired. \_\_\_\_\_ (Standard IIA4)  
Enclose a copy of the executive director's contract (if one exists) and description of the executive director's compensation package.

- If the board hired an executive director in the last three years, describe the process.

II-f \_\_\_\_\_ Provide the organization's compensation structure. Describe how the board reviews the organization's overall compensation structure (i.e., assessing staff compensation: (1) vertically - comparing the lowest paid to the highest paid;(2) horizontally - comparing similar positions in the organization and industry; and (3) generally relative to the economy). If an organizational chart may help illustrate your review, please attach. Please provide the board minutes documenting the board's last review of the compensation structure. Date \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_ (Standard IIA5)

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Please Note: Personnel policies and financial policies covered in Standard IIA2 are requested in Section IV-Human Resources and Section V-Financial and Legal.

## B. BOARD COMPOSITION

II-g \_\_\_\_\_ Attach a list of current board members with the following information for each member: name and the date each board member's term expires. Clearly mark the board officers and any employees who serve on the board. (Standard IIB1, IIB3)

YES NO Are any board members related by blood or marriage? If so, please explain. (Standard IIB3)

YES NO Are any board members related to staff members by blood or marriage? If so, please explain. (Standard IIB3)

II-h \_\_\_\_\_ If any employees serve as voting members of the board, please describe the circumstances that insure that the employee(s) will not be in a position to exercise undue influence. (Standard IIB2)

II-i \_\_\_\_\_ Please provide an explanation of how your board reflects the diversity of the community served. In your explanation, please address the following:

(1) Define the community that the organization.

(2) Assess the board's diversity in relation to the community served.

(3) Provide the composition of the community served in terms of gender, race, and other relevant social and/or demographic characteristics such as: occupation, age, geographic area, or income status.

(4) Provide the board composition in terms of gender, race, and other social and/or demographic characteristics relevant to the organization such as: occupation, age, geographic area, income status, or program participant status.

(5) If your organization's board does not reflect the diversity of the community served, please describe the steps you are taking to achieve this diversity. (Standard IIB5)

II-j \_\_\_\_\_ If board members receive compensation for serving as board members (not including out of pocket expenses directly related to their board service), , provide details of compensation arrangement. (Standard IIB6)

## C. CONDUCT OF THE BOARD

II-k \_\_\_\_\_ Describe the process by which the organization selects new board members. (attachment may include by-laws, minutes from a nominating committee meeting, or other document, etc.) (Standard IIC1)

II-l \_\_\_\_\_ Describe organization's new board member orientation and education efforts to introduce board members to the *Standards for Excellence: An Ethics and Accountability Code for the Nonprofit Sector*®. (Standard IIC1)

II-m \_\_\_\_\_ Describe the process the board uses to evaluate its own performance. Please provide any questionnaires, forms, or surveys which may illustrate your board evaluation procedure. Provide the board minutes that document the board's discussion of its self evaluation. Date \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_ (Standard IIC1)

II-n \_\_\_\_\_ Attach a copy of the organization's by-laws. Indicate below page numbers for the following:

- Term limits for board members - page \_\_\_\_\_ (Standard IIB4)
- Attendance for board members - page \_\_\_\_\_ (Standard IIC4)
- Participation for board members - page \_\_\_\_\_ (Standard IIC4)
- Consequences for noncompliance with board policies - page \_\_\_\_\_ (Standard IIC4)

If the above items are addressed in other board-approved policies, provide these documents and indicate the date of board approval \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ .

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II-o \_\_\_\_\_ Provide any documents that outline expectations for board members. (Standard IIC2)

## III. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

### A. CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

III-a \_\_\_\_\_ Attach a copy of the organization's conflict of interest policy which covers board and staff and volunteers with significant independent decision making authority and identifies conduct or transactions that raise concerns, outlines procedures for disclosure of actual and potential conflicts and provides for transaction review by uninvolved members of the board. (Standard IIIA1)

### B. CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENTS

III-b \_\_\_\_\_ Attach a copy of the conflict of interest statements that board members, staff, and volunteers with significant independent decision making authority must complete. This statement should provide a space for disclosure of financial interest. (Standard IIIB1)

III-c \_\_\_\_\_ Describe the process that ensures that conflict of interests statements are signed annually by the board, staff, and volunteers with significant independent decision-making authority. Describe how conflict of interest statements are used in the organization and what is done with the completed statements. (Standard IIIB1)

## IV. HUMAN RESOURCES

**If organization has employees, complete the following:**

### A. PERSONNEL POLICIES

- IV-a \_\_\_\_\_ Attach a copy of the organization's personnel policies. (Standards IVA1, IIA2)
- Indicate the date these personnel policies were reviewed and approved by the board of directors. \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_. Please provide board minutes.
  - Indicate pages in personnel policies that address the following topics:
    - working conditions - page \_\_\_\_\_ (Standard IVA1)
    - employee benefits - page \_\_\_\_\_ (Standard IVA1)
    - vacation - page \_\_\_\_\_ (Standard IVA1)
    - sick leave - page \_\_\_\_\_ (Standard IVA1)
    - employee evaluation - page \_\_\_\_\_ (Standard IVA1, IVB1)
    - grievance procedures - page \_\_\_\_\_ (Standard IVA1)
    - confidentiality of employee, client and organization records and information page \_\_\_\_\_ (Standard IVA1)
    - growth and development - page \_\_\_\_\_ (Standard IVA1)

**If organization has volunteers, complete the following:**

- IV-b \_\_\_\_\_ Attach a copy of policies covering volunteers. Indicate pages in volunteer policies that address the following topics:
- initial assessment and screening - page \_\_\_\_\_ (Standard IVA2)
  - assignment to and training for appropriate work responsibilities - page \_\_\_\_\_ (Standard IVA2)
  - ongoing supervision and evaluation - page \_\_\_\_\_ (Standard IVA2)
  - opportunities for advancement – page \_\_\_\_\_ (Standard IVA2)

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## B. EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

IV-c \_\_\_\_\_ Describe organization's method for regular evaluation of employees. (If performance evaluations are addressed in personnel policies or other requested documents, label document IV-c and indicate page \_\_\_\_\_.) Applicants are encouraged to attach forms or questionnaires used in annual employee evaluation. (Standard IVB1)

YES NO Are all annual performance reviews up to date for the organization?

## C. EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION

IV-d \_\_\_\_\_ Describe the organization's orientation for new employees. Describe how new employees acknowledge the receipt of the organization's personnel policies, a written position description, and the *Standards for Excellence: An Ethics and Accountability Code for the Nonprofit Sector®* in writing. (If employee orientation is addressed in personnel policies or other requested documents, mark document IV-d and indicate page \_\_\_\_\_). (Standard IVC1)

IV-e YES NO Do all employees have position descriptions outlining their work and responsibilities?

## V. FINANCIAL AND LEGAL

### A. FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The organization's most recent annual budget was requested in the Governing Board section. (Standard IIA3, VA1)

V-a \_\_\_\_\_ Attach a copy of the organization's Form 990 Internal Revenue Service filing for the past year.

V-b \_\_\_\_\_ If the organization has annual revenue in excess of \$500,000, provide a copy of the organization's audit for the past year (including management letter, if any) conducted by a Certified Public Accountant. (Standard VA3). Describe management's response to any recommendations offered in the most recent management letter.

V-c \_\_\_\_\_ Attach the four most recent internal financial statements or reports. Include documents which reflect that the reporting of material variation between actual and budgeting expenditures and reviewers is reported to the board. (Standard VA4)

V-d \_\_\_\_\_ Describe how the organization provides employees, board members and volunteers with a confidential means to report known or suspected financial improprieties or misuse of organization funds. (If this is included in the personnel, board, or volunteer policies, label the document(s) V-d and indicate page \_\_\_\_\_.) (Standard VA5)

V-e \_\_\_\_\_ Attach board-approved financial policies. Indicate pages on which the following board approved topics are addressed: (Standard VA6)

- investment of the organization's assets - page \_\_\_\_\_
- internal controls procedures - page \_\_\_\_\_
- organization's reserves (unrestricted net assets) - page \_\_\_\_\_
- purchasing practices – page \_\_\_\_\_

Financial policies should be adequate for the size and complexity of the organization's operations. If financial policies are addressed in by-laws or other requested documents, mark document V-e and indicate page \_\_\_\_\_.)

## B. LEGAL COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

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V-f \_\_\_\_\_ Describe how the organization monitors changes in legal and regulatory requirements.

V-g \_\_\_\_\_ YES NO Does the organization have general liability insurance? (Standard VB2) If so, provide a copy of the declaration page.

V-h \_\_\_\_\_ YES NO Does the organization have directors and officers liability insurance? (Standard VB2) If so, provide a copy of the declaration page.

If the organization does not have general liability or directors and officers liability insurance, provide a copy of board minutes indicating that the board specifically considered and elected not to obtain such coverage.

V-i \_\_\_\_\_ Describe how the organization internally reviews its compliance with existing legal, regulatory, and financial requirements.

V-j \_\_\_\_\_ Please provide a copy of the organization's document destruction/retention policy.

## VI. OPENNESS

### A. ANNUAL REPORT

VI-a \_\_\_\_\_ Attach a copy of the most recent annual report available to the public. (Standard VIA1) (If organization does not produce a single annual report document, attach documents which are available for public inspection and which satisfy the Standards for Excellence® for an annual report: mission, program activities, summary statement of activities, summary statement of financial position, names of organization's board members, and names of management staff.)

- If the annual report is available on the Internet, provide the web-address:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Note: If the organization produces a web-based annual report, all of the required information must appear on one page or links to the required information must appear on one page).

- In addition to the annual reports provided in the application, please provide 10 additional copies of your annual report for use in the application review process.

### B. PUBLIC ACCESS

VI-b \_\_\_\_\_ List the individual in the organization who is responsible for assuring that the organization complies with the letter and the spirit of state and federal nonprofit disclosure laws. (Standard VIB2)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

## VII. FUNDRAISING

### A. FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

VII-a \_\_\_\_\_ For the last five years, provide the total amount of revenues from fundraising and other development activities and the total amount of funds spent on conducting them. Calculate the ratio of Fundraising Revenue to Fundraising Expense. Exclude from both the fundraising revenue and fundraising expense, any dollars connected to a capital campaign. (Standard VIIA1)

- For 990 year 2006-2007, fundraising revenue is lines 1a+1b+1c+9a
- For 990 year 2006-2007, fundraising expense is lines 9b+15

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- For 990 year 2008 and forward, fundraising revenue is section VIII lines 1h + 8c + 9c
- For 990 year 2008 and forward, fundraising expense is section IX lines 25d

If your organization is not required to file a Form 990 or files a Form 990-EZ, calculate the ratio of fundraising revenues to fundraising expense according to your organization's methodology for tracking and recording expenses and revenues. Include an explanation of the categories of revenues (contributions from individuals, corporations, foundation grants, etc.) and expenses (salaries, professional fees, occupational expenses, printing, etc.) used in these calculations.

Year (Period)	Total Raised from Fundraising	Total Spent on Fundraising	Ratio
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

If the amount raised from fundraising and development activities is not at least three times as large as the amount of money spent on conducting them over a five year period, either demonstrate that the organization is making steady progress toward achieving this goal or justify why a 3:1 ratio is not appropriate for the organization. (Standard VIIA1)

- YES NO Does the organization solicit funds in states other than Maryland?  
 YES NO If so, is the organization properly registered in all required jurisdictions?

The following requested fundraising attachments will be judged for compliance with the fundraising section of the Standards for Excellence®, the Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act, and the Internal Revenue Service disclosure requirements.

- VII-b \_\_\_\_\_ Attach copies of the organization's last three solicitation materials. (i.e., fundraising letters, grant applications, scripts developed for paid solicitors or volunteers) (Standards VIIA2, VIIA3)
- VII-c \_\_\_\_\_ Attach copies of three fundraising receipts or acknowledgments provided for the following types of gifts: (1) charitable gift of cash; (2) charitable gifts given in which the donor receives something in return for his/her contribution; and (3) in-kind charitable gifts.

## **B. DONOR RELATIONSHIPS AND PRIVACY**

- VII-d \_\_\_\_\_ Provide copies of the organization's fundraising policies or describe the organization's fundraising procedures that address the following topics (policies may be management policies rather than board-approved policies):
- privacy of donors (Standard VIIB1)
  - confidentiality of information donors reasonably would expect to be private (Standard VIIB1)
  - provision for donors to state that they prefer to remain anonymous and that their name, the amount of their gift, or other information not be publicly released (Standard VIIB2)
  - provision for donors to have their names removed from any mailing lists other than the organization's (Standard VIIB3)
  - honor requests by a donor to curtail repeated mailings or telephone solicitations generated from in-house lists (Standard VIIB4)
  - ensure that personal solicitations are free from undue influence or excessive pressure, and are respectful of the needs and interests of the donor or potential donor (Standard VIIB5)  
(If found other requested document, label document VII-f.)

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## C. ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

VII-e \_\_\_\_\_ Attach a copy of the organization's board-approved fundraising policy governing acceptance of gifts which includes: procedures that determine limits on individuals or entities from which the organization will accept a gift, purposes for which donations will be accepted, type of property accepted, and whether to accept an unusual or unanticipated gift in light of mission and organizational capacity. (Standard VIIC1)

## D. FUNDRAISERS

YES NO Are the organization's fundraising personnel, either employees or independent consultants, compensated based on a percentage of the amount raised or other commission formula? (Standard VIID1)

VII-f \_\_\_\_\_ If you have engaged fundraising consultants or professional solicitors, other than grant writers, in the past 3 years, please provide their names and a description of the task provided (with the exception of grant writers who are not required to register as a counsel or solicitor). (Standard VIID2)

VII-g \_\_\_\_\_ Describe how the organization monitors any parties (staff, volunteers, consultants, contractors, other organizations, businesses) who are soliciting contributions on behalf of the organization, if applicable. (Standard VIID3)

## VIII. PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC POLICY

### A. PUBLIC POLICY ADVOCACY

YES NO Does the organization engage in advocacy? Keep in consideration that advocacy is defined as "active support...(for)...a cause, idea, or policy." (American Heritage Dictionary) while lobbying is considered a special type of advocacy. Lobbying is specifically defined by federal, state, and local laws and generally consists of communications that are intended to influence specific legislation (Please consult applicable laws and regulations for details).

YES NO Does the organization have a paid lobbyist? Please provide an explanation of their lobbying activities for the past fiscal year.

YES NO Does the organization's executive director, senior staff, or board members, lobby on behalf of the organization? Please provide an explanation of their lobbying activities for the past fiscal year.

YES NO Are all the lobbyists for the organization registered with applicable federal, state, local lobbyist registration agencies? Please provide documentation/proof of registration.

Please note: The State Ethics Commission in Maryland regulates three types of lobbyists: legislative action lobbyists, executive action lobbyists, and those who engage in grassroots lobbying. Thresholds for expenses incurred and thresholds for compensation received while lobbying define whether or not individuals must register with the State Ethics Commission.

VIII-a \_\_\_\_\_ Attach the board-approved advocacy policy which defines the process by which the organization determines positions on specific issues. (Standard VIIIA1)

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## B. PUBLIC EDUCATION

VIII-b \_\_\_\_\_ Describe the process by which any educational information provided to the media or distributed to the public is reviewed for (1) factual accuracy and (2) sufficiency of contextual information. (Standard VIII B1)

VIII-c \_\_\_\_\_ Attach the three most recent public education/advocacy documents the organization has released or indicate that such documents have not been produced (example: letters to members of organization, letter to the editor, letters to legislators, newsletters, etc.). (Standard VIII B1)

## C. PROMOTING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

VIII-d \_\_\_\_\_ If the organization engages in promoting participation in community affairs, describe how the organization assures that its activities are strictly nonpartisan. (Standard VIII C1)

## IX. OTHER DISCLOSURES

IX-a    YES    NO    Are there currently, or has there been in the last five years, any lawsuits or formal administrative complaints (such as Equal Employee Opportunity Commission, complaint pending before a regulatory body) brought against the organization? Please describe such lawsuits or administrative complaints (or any pending administrative complaints or lawsuits). Address the following: (1) involvement of senior staff as subjects of lawsuit(s); (2) board involvement responding to the lawsuit(s); and (3) finding of liability or guilt.

IX-b \_\_\_\_\_ Has your organization been the subject of any negative or unfavorable print or electronic media in the last year? If so, please attach.

IX-c    YES    NO    Is there any other information that the Standards for Excellence® reviewers should know about the organization which may affect if it will continue to stay in business in the future? If so, please describe.

IX-d \_\_\_\_\_ Please enclose a copy of the organization's IRS determination letter.

IX-e \_\_\_\_\_ Please enclose a copy of the organization's Articles of Incorporation.

IX-f \_\_\_\_\_ Please provide documentation the organization is in compliance with registration with the Maryland Secretary of State's office that regulates nonprofits.

