

communities of excellence 2026

NATIONAL LEARNING COLLABORATIVE



**A Systematic Approach to Excellence in
Communities**
*Using a Baldrige-based Framework to Lead
Transformation*

2018-2019 Participation Information

***A twelve month learning opportunity to
accelerate the results of your community's
efforts to improve the health, safety,
educational attainment and economic vitality of
residents.***

Developed and led by Communities of Excellence 2026, in partnership with
the National Baldrige Performance Excellence Program.

For America to sustain its vitality, promote opportunity and create a more equitable society during its second 250 years of existence, we must improve the performance of communities and the people who lead and live in them.

The **Communities of Excellence Framework** is a systematic approach for community leaders, residents, and collaborative partners to **strengthen the effectiveness** of their efforts towards healthy and thriving residents and safe communities. Using this framework, communities can achieve **better results, faster, in the areas that really matter:** educational attainment, economic vitality (jobs), health status, and safety.

“Communities of Excellence 2026 is a gift; it’s given us direction and focus.”

Michelle Mejia
West Kendall
Florida

“With the proven value of Baldrige across educational, healthcare, and civic communities, it only makes sense to go to the next level: thinking of improvement and performance excellence as a collaborative community endeavor.”

Rich Umbdenstock
Former President,
American Hospital
Association and
Communities of
Excellence 2026 Board
Member

Participants in this Learning Collaborative Will:

- Gain in-depth knowledge of this innovative approach to community performance while learning from and networking with other communities on their performance excellence journeys.
- Collaborate with sector leaders and Baldrige experts; sharing approaches, innovations, best practices, successes, and challenges to accelerate their community’s collective efforts.
- Learn how to apply Continuous Quality Improvement strategies to build, sustain and spread prioritized action plans to advance your community’s mission.
- Engage with community leaders and Baldrige experts in facilitated sessions designed to accelerate your systems thinking knowledge.

Collaborative Activities

All activities are patterned on best practices in online collaborative learning. The collaborative includes a kick-off meeting in October 2018, pre-work and assignments, twice monthly web-based sessions, and one-on-one expert progress reviews. The curriculum is designed for communities at varying levels of readiness to advance their community's current efforts, learn from and share best practices with each other and includes access to our online communications platform.

By the End of Year One Communities will:

Develop a Baldrige-based **Community Profile**, and use it to identify the next steps towards your community of excellence journey.

Identify desired community outcomes and develop a **Community Strategic Plan** focused on these outcomes.

Establish a **diverse, values-driven leadership team** comprised of residents from the community's key sectors, generations, social and economic groups.

“There are many different approaches to community improvement- Collective Impact, etc., but regardless of what approach you use, this is what will help you get through the last mile.”

Nick Macchione
Director, County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency



Five communities received the first-ever formal recognition for their commitment to the health and wellbeing of residents and pursuit of community performance excellence. The “Commitment to Community Excellence” Certificates were presented during a luncheon at the 2017 National Baldrige Fall Conference.

Our communities range from a small rural community of 5,000 residents to a large urban region of 500,000. **What they have in common are cross-sector, inter-generational groups of formal and informal community leaders who are committed to applying the principles of community performance excellence with a backbone organization to support them.**

This Learning Collaborative is designed for communities of any size or complexity who are committed on the journey to community performance excellence. **They must recognize that meaningful, lasting change does not happen overnight, but takes all sectors and all generations of the community working towards a shared community vision with shared community values.**

We seek to work with communities that:

- Have a pre-existing community leadership team representing all sectors and generations. This could take many forms including regional coalitions or a pre-existing collaborative, or have commitments from members of key sectors - health, education, business, government, social services and safety, and generations to participate.
- Have an identified backbone organization that provides the ongoing support required to sustain the effort and serve as the key contact.
- Are willing to share generously and commit the time and resources required to meaningfully engage in implementing the Communities of Excellence Framework.
- Have individuals engaged that possess a knowledge of Baldrige Performance Excellence Principles or a strong desire to learn.

The fee to participate in year one of this collaborative is \$20,000.

*Includes hotel/airfare/ registration for two community members to attend Oct 24/25 Conference

For More Information Contact:

Stephanie Norling, Director

Communities of Excellence 2026

info@communitiesofexcellence2026.org

Or visit our website: www.coe2026.org