

LEADERS in
the **ESTATE**
PLANNING
COMMUNITY.

2024
COUNCIL OF EXCELLENCE
APPLICATION

COUNCIL OF EXCELLENCE AWARD APPLICATION

SUBMISSION CHECKLIST

- Optional one-page cover letter
- Optional one-page general statement
- The application
- Complete programming schedule for two most recently completed fiscal or calendar years
- The three most recent meeting announcements (a copy and paste from your council's website or printed and scanned pages works well for this purpose)

NAEPC will communicate with the primary contact for any questions during application review and to inform the council of the outcome of the application. Follow up email for Council of Excellence, 5 Star Council, and Emerging Council awardees will be sent to all board members currently on record with NAEPC. If you feel that the data on record may be outdated, please submit a [board update](#) to NAEPC.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Application Date _____

Council Name _____

Primary Contact for Application* _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Your position within the council (indicate one) Council Executive Board Member Officer

Date of Formation _____ Fiscal or Calendar Year? _____

Current Membership # _____ Final Membership # / Most Recently Closed Year _____

Discipline Representation/Most Recently Closed Fiscal or Calendar Yr (percent of total membership)

___% Attorney	___% Financial Planning	___% Philanthropy
___% Accountant	___% Insurance/Financial Planning (if combined)	___% Trust
___% Insurance		___% Other (explain)

Explanation for Other Disciplines

Number and Percent of [Accredited Estate Planner®](#) (AEP®) Designees within Membership

___ Total Number ___ Total Percent

Who was your council's favorite speaker last year? _____

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MEMBERSHIP, PROGRAMMING & COMMUNICATION

Approximate Percent of Total Score: 45%

Please check all of the items below that apply to your council and its activities from May 1, 2023 through April 30, 2024, making sure to include additional information where requested. **The narrative requested with certain checkboxes must be complete or points may be deducted.**

The core value of NAEPC and its affiliated councils is a belief in the team concept of estate planning. As a result, membership should be reflective of the team. Please tell us more about your council's membership here:

- Our board sets a specific goal for the number of new members each year.
- We have an active membership committee that is an entirely separate body from the board of directors.
- Members serve on committees and/or participate in task force work.
- Our council permits non-member attendance at our events.
- Guests are approached by board members or other volunteers tasked with welcoming duties at every meeting and encouraged to explore membership.
- Our council recognizes guests at all meetings.
- We have conducted a general membership survey in the last twelve months and are responsive to the feedback provided.
- We have an annual member-to-member recruitment campaign.
- Our council has hosted a joint event with another Estate Planning Council.

Questions with Required Narrative

- What were your council's retention and growth goals for the most recently closed year and what reports do you provide to the board as these goals are monitored?

- We have joint meetings with allied professional organizations. Please describe these events and share which organization(s) your council is cooperating with here:

- Our board has a process by which we regularly review the disciplines accepted for membership and make changes when indicated. Please explain your review process here:

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- We have alternative membership categories (junior, student, associate, etc.). Please describe each:

- We have a young member initiative. Please share a description of the initiative here:

- We recognize new members. Please share how here:

- We acknowledge member milestones. Please explain how here:

Estate planning councils are often praised for two of their strongest qualities - providing an excellent networking opportunity that allows members to cultivate a network of professionals and offering outstanding professional education. Please tell us more about your council's programming here:

- Throughout our programming year or season, we diversify the schedule so that all disciplines invited to membership are represented by topics within.
- We host non-educational events (socials, meet ups, volunteering events) to appeal to a larger cross-section of members and prospective members.

Questions with Required Narrative

- We offer relevant and timely programs and events that support the multi-disciplinary concept of estate planning and are responsive to current issues in the estate planning profession. Please describe how your programming calendar is created here:

- 25% of our members attend one or more program(s) each year. How is this monitored?

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Communication with members and within the larger professional community is important to membership growth and retention. Please tell us more about your council's communication plan here:

- Our website is reviewed and updated in its entirety at least once per year.
- Meetings and events are scheduled to avoid overlap with related professional organizations and are observant of all holidays.
- Our announcements are thorough and include all the following items: speaker and their biography, session title, creative write-up/description, topic, location, how to register.
- Meeting and event announcements are sent a minimum of one month in advance and at least one reminder is sent before the event takes place.
- Electronic payments are accepted for dues and/or meetings.
- A membership directory is accessible to consumers and other professionals who may be looking for a referral (examples: online member listing, electronic or hard copy directory, etc.)

Questions with Required Narrative

- A full and complete schedule of events is disseminated early in the year at the beginning of our fiscal or calendar year so members can reserve the dates on their calendars. Please tell us when your council distributes its calendar in relation to your programming calendar here:

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Leadership, Council Operations & Financial Health

Approximate Percent of Total Score: 40%

Please check all of the items below that apply to your council and its activities from May 1, 2023 through April 30, 2024, making sure to include additional information where requested. **The narrative requested with certain checkboxes must be complete or points may be deducted.**

The key determinant in assuring the longevity of an estate planning council is an active and engaged board, chosen fairly from the membership at-large. Please share information about your council's leadership here:

- The council has a succession plan in place with regard to officers.
- We conduct a yearly self-assessment, whether using this application or other methods as a guide, and plan meetings and council activities based on the results.
- We have a copy of the council's most current bylaws, follow them, and review them regularly.
- We have a council executive / paid staff member or the local community foundation serves in the staff role.
- Our council has the following insurance policies currently in place:
 - o (a) general liability insurance.
 - o (b) directors & officers insurance.

Questions with Required Narrative

- Our council prioritizes diversity within the board structure. Describe your efforts here:

We keep prior officers and directors engaged after their term is over. Please share how here:

A financially healthy council is a strong council. Please share more about your council's financial health here:

- A budget is prepared yearly, approved by the board, and adjustments are implemented when necessary.
- Our board receives complete financial statements from the treasurer no less than quarterly.
- We accept sponsors for meetings, our website, or other purposes.
- Our council had a positive net income during the most recently closed calendar or fiscal year.
- Our board maintains at least six months of operating expenses in reserve.

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GENERAL NARRATIVE

Approximate Percent of Total Score: 10%

Please use this section of the application to share information about your council that has *not been included in other areas of the document or addressed in the prior narrative questions.*

Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- how your council's work supports our shared value of "Collaboration · Education · Cultivation"
- consumer outreach
- efforts related to diversity, equity & inclusion
- scholarship programs
- what makes the council unique, different, or special
- recruitment campaigns
- awards bestowed upon your membership
- social media
- statistics on member engagement
- innovative programs
- stories of reinvention or reinvigoration
- non-dues revenue
- growth of financial reserves

Please consider and report only on the council's activities from May 1, 2023 through April 30, 2024. You may add an additional page to this narrative if necessary.

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Involvement with NAEPC

Approximate Percent of Total Score: 5%

Please check all of the items below that apply to your council and its activities from May 1, 2023 through April 30, 2024, making sure to include additional information where requested. **The narrative requested with certain checkboxes must be complete or points may be deducted.**

- Our board contains an NAEPC Liaison position, and this person reports at every board meeting and is in charge of communicating with our Council Relations Committee Territory Representative.
- We have a website hosted through NAEPC or by another vendor that contains ample accurate and updated links to the NAEPC national website and the information contained within regarding member benefits, etc.
- We participate in the Every Council Campaign or distribute *NAEPC News* or contents from within via email and/or in print to our members.
- We have participated in the Council Nominated Accredited Estate Planner® designation program by nominating one or more members within the last twelve months.
- One or more council leaders participated in at least one event offered as part of the [Council Leader Education Series](#) within the last twelve months.
- Our staff member has participated in at least one event offered as part of the [Council Leader Education Series](#) within the last twelve months.
- We forward information provided by NAEPC about the webinars to our membership.
- We inform our council's members via email when a new issue of the [NAEPC Journal of Estate & Tax Planning](#) is available and encourage them to subscribe or have subscribed our members to receive the publication directly from NAEPC.

Questions with Required Narrative

- Accredited Estate Planner® designees within our membership are recognized regularly. Please explain how here:

- We distribute information about the Annual Estate Planning Strategies Conference to our membership at meetings and via email and encourage council members to attend while together at meetings and when other opportunities allow. Please tell us how you share these details here:

- Our estate planning council leadership explains the relationship between our council and NAEPC, ensuring that our members understand what the council's membership in NAEPC provides by way of benefits. When and how is this relationship explained?

Please complete the entire application and return it in a single PDF file, along with the above-referenced required documents, to admin@naepc.org by May 17, 2024.