



2008
Washington State
Quality Award

Washington State
Transportation Improvement Board
Full Examination Feedback Report

Washington State Transportation Improvement Board Full Examination Feedback Report

This document provides a Full Examination Feedback Report for the Washington State Transportation Improvement Board. Used in conjunction with the Criteria for Performance Excellence and Scoring Guidelines, this feedback report is the conclusion of the application process.

The Washington State Transportation Improvement Board scored in Band 2, showing that the organization demonstrates effective, systematic approaches responsive to the basic requirements of the Items, but some areas or work units are in the early stages of deployment. The organization has developed a general improvement orientation that is forward-looking. The organization obtains results stemming from its approaches, with some improvements and good performance. The use of comparative and trend data is in the early stages.

As a result of the Stage 2, Consensus Review, the Washington State Transportation Improvement Board is awarded the Washington State Quality Award at the Achievement Level. Congratulations!



March 19, 2009

Rhonda Reinke
Chief Administrative Officer
Washington State Transportation Improvement Board
P.O. Box 40901
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Ms. Reinke:

Congratulations for taking the Washington State Quality Award challenge! We commend you for applying for this award. Your application for the Award and use of the Baldrige Criteria demonstrate your organization's commitment to performance excellence.

This feedback report was prepared for your organization by members of the Washington State Quality Award Board of Examiners in response to your application for the Washington State Quality Award. It presents an outline of the scoring for your organization and describes areas identified as strengths and opportunities for possible improvement. The report contains the Examiners' observations about your organization and is not intended to prescribe a specific course of action. Please refer to "Preparing to Read Your Feedback Report" and "Considerations for Reviewing Small Organizations" for further details about how to use the information contained in your feedback report.

We are eager to ensure that the comments in the report are clear to you so that you can incorporate the feedback into your planning process to continue to improve your organization. As direct communication between Examiners and applicants is not allowed under the operating procedures for the application process, please contact me at (360) 697-2444 if you wish to clarify the meaning of any comment in your report. We will contact the Examiners for clarification and convey their intentions to you. Additionally, WSQA also offers an opportunity for you to meet with WSQA to discuss the feedback report. If you are interested, please phone the office to set up this meeting.

The feedback report is not your only source for ideas about organizational improvement. Current and previous Award recipients can be potential resources on your continuing journey to performance excellence. An Award recipients' contact list may be found at www.baldrige.nist.gov/Contacts_Profiles.htm or at www.wsqa.net. Additionally, national and state recipients will share their stories at our annual WSQA Symposium scheduled in May.

Thank you for your participation in the Washington State Quality Award process. Best wishes for continued success with your performance excellence journey.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Sprecher, Executive Director
Washington State Quality Award

Enclosures

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Preparing to Read Your Full Examination Feedback Report

Your feedback report contains Washington State Quality Award Examiners' observations that are based on their understanding of your organization. They have provided comments on your organization's strengths and opportunities for improvement relative to the Baldrige Criteria. The feedback is non-prescriptive. It will tell you where Examiners think you have strengths to celebrate and where they think improvement opportunities exist. The feedback will not say specifically how you should address these opportunities. The specifics will depend on what you decide is most important to your organization. Applicant organizations read and use feedback comments in different ways. We've gathered some tips and practices from prior applicants for you to consider.

- Take a deep breath and prepare to benefit from the feedback process. You applied to get the feedback. Read it, take time to digest it, and read it again.
- Remember that you should not view your score on a normal scoring curve. The majority of organizations overall scores for a full application are in the 0-300 point range (0-30%). Industry leaders score in the 400-600 point range (40-60%) and role model organizations are in the 700-1000 point range (70-100%). A two year study of average National applicant scores ranged from 19-49% at the item level.
- Please keep in mind that high performing organizations often spend several years within the same band. When reviewing a second feedback report we encourage you not to become discouraged if you have not increased scoring bands, but rather to focus on both your new strengths and opportunities.
- Especially note comments in **boldface type**. These comments indicate particularly important observations - those the Examiner Team felt had substantial impact on your organization's performance practices, capabilities, or results (either a strength or opportunity for improvement) and, therefore, had more influence on the team's scoring of that particular item.
- You know your organization better than the Examiners know it. There might be relevant information that was not communicated to them or that they did not fully understand. Therefore, not all of their comments may be equally accurate.
- Although we strive for "perfection," we do not achieve it in every comment. If Examiners have misread your application or misunderstood your organization on a particular point, don't discount the whole feedback report. Consider the other comments and focus on the most important ones.
- Celebrate your strengths and build on them to achieve world-class performance and a competitive advantage. You've worked hard and should congratulate yourselves.
- Use your strengths comments to understand what the Examiners observed you do well and build upon them. Continue to evaluate and improve the things you do well. Sharing those things you do well with the rest of your organization can speed organizational learning.
- Prioritize your opportunities for improvement. You can't do everything all at once. Think about what's most important for your organization at this time and decide which things to work on first.

- You may decide to address all, some, or none of the opportunities in a particular Item. It depends on how important you think that Item or comment is to your organization.
- Use the feedback as input to your strategic planning process. Focus on the strengths and opportunities for improvement that have an impact on your strategic goals and objectives.

Considerations for Reviewing Small Organizations

All applicants are reviewed in the context of their individual key factors. In the case of small organizations, size is a significant factor. While an organization's size does not affect the applicability of the Baldrige Criteria, it does need to be factored into the assessment of an applicant's responses in its Washington State Quality Award application. Therefore, Examiners with large-organization frames of reference should be careful not to apply operational and procedural requirements as they review small organization applications.

Some guidelines are given below for understanding the context for reviewing a small organization:

- Small organization applicants are defined as those with 500 or fewer employees. Also noteworthy is the significant difference in resource availability between a 450-person organization and a 50-person organization.
- Social responsibility and community involvement must be viewed in the context of the applicant's size. A large organization might have impacts on a national or international basis; a small organization will frequently focus its involvement on a local community.
- The issues of fiscal and managerial accountability, ethical behavior, and legal compliance are as pertinent to a small organization as they are to a large one, and the responses of management to these issues are equally important. A small organization, however, will necessarily address these issues in the context of its size, ownership (many are privately held or family-owned), and responsibilities. Good governance practices are still an imperative.
- While large organizations frequently have complex computer/information systems for data management, a small organization (depending upon how small) may perform data and information management with a combination of personal computer- or work station-based data management systems and manual methods.
- Due to limited workforce and funding resources, benchmarking and competitive comparison information in a small organization environment may be based largely on literature/trade association information and comparisons with best practices in the local geographic area.
- In the context a small organization, systems for workforce involvement and process management may rely more on informal verbal communication than on formal written communication and documentation. However, all applicants have the same requirements to demonstrate that their processes are repeatable, can produce the desired results, and are deployed fully and systematically throughout the organization.

- The ability of a small organization to leverage key suppliers, particularly large suppliers, has to be viewed in the context of workforce availability and the volume of business that it does with the supplier.
- The ability of a small organization to obtain customer and market knowledge through independent third-party surveys, commissioned studies, extensive interviews, or focus group techniques is limited by its resources. The important consideration for Examiners is to assess whether the applicant, given its resources, is using appropriate mechanisms to gather and use information to improve its customer and market focus and satisfaction.
- The expectation that large organizations will segment their results data with regard to various customer and workforce segments may require modification in small organizations, depending on the complexity of these groups and the level of resources needed to gather and analyze the data.

Introduction

By submitting a Washington State Quality Award (WSQA) application, you have differentiated yourself from most State of Washington organizations. We are eager to make your efforts achieve the maximum benefit possible. This feedback report was written for your consideration in accelerating your journey toward performance excellence.

The Board of Examiners has evaluated your application for the WSQA. Strict confidentiality is observed at all times and in every aspect of the application review and feedback.

This feedback report contains the Examiners' findings, including a summary of key themes of the application evaluation, a detailed listing of strengths and opportunities for improvement, and scoring information. Background information on the examination process is also provided.

We have provided you with Item-level scoring ranges in the feedback report so that you may have a better understanding regarding both your most significant areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. This should allow you to target your action plans more carefully for organizational improvement. We encourage you to use the feedback as input to your strategic planning process. As a WSQA applicant, you are already a winner in the journey toward performance improvement!

Executive Summary

Based on completion of Stage 2, Consensus Review, the Washington State Transportation Improvement Board scored in Band 2, showing that the organization demonstrates effective, systematic approaches responsive to the basic requirements of the Items, but some areas or work units are in the early stages of deployment. The organization has developed a general improvement orientation that is forward-looking. The organization obtains results stemming from its approaches, with some improvements and good performance. The use of comparative and trend data is in the early stages. For further explanation of the scoring bands please refer to Appendix – Scoring Band Descriptors.

Key Themes

a. The most important strengths or outstanding practices (of potential value to other organizations) are as follows:

- The Washington State Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) demonstrates a basic approach to management by fact principles through its systematic use of the Performance Management Dashboard system. The approach includes both financial and performance measures and displays data through TIB’s GMAP Dashboard. The Dashboard provides information for use in internal team meetings, board and legislative meetings, and particular project information to the public through TIB’s website. One portion of the Dashboard is devoted to TIB’s Balanced Scorecard, where results are color-coded to show current progress. The Dashboard has been recognized as a best practice by multiple state and national peer organizations.
- TIB leverages its core competencies of strategic planning, project management, customer service, and financial management to provide a sustainable organization focused on the future. TIB uses a systematic five-step planning process to plan and accomplish objectives and challenges that face the organization, involving stakeholders, customers, board members, and staff. The key process steps include stakeholder, customer, and board engagement; Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis; strategy maps; management review; deployment; and lessons learned. A biennial strategic planning retreat conducted with the leadership team is used to capture lessons learned and begin a new two-year planning process. The balanced scorecard is a result of the strategic planning process; results and project tracking data are updated in real time by the online performance management dashboard for easy tracking by every organization member and key stakeholders.

b. The most significant opportunities, concerns, or vulnerabilities are as follows:

- Although TIB has described the Plan Do Check Act (PDCA) process for process improvement for many areas of the organization, it is not clear that this approach is systematically deployed in all areas. For example, it is not clear that the organization has developed improvement processes for employee development and succession planning, customer outreach programs and surveys, organizational knowledge sharing, or key work process design and requirement development. Without a successful and systematic

improvement process across all areas, it may be difficult for the organization to attain the rates of improvement needed to sustain future levels of high performance.

- While the organization collects and transfers workforce knowledge to staff through meetings, training materials, and ongoing communications, it is unclear what systematic approaches are deployed to ensure organizational and personal learning. For example, it is unclear what steps TIB is taking to ensure a smooth transition of positions through succession planning, especially for leadership positions such as executive director. Furthermore, when improvements do occur, it is unclear how the information is documented and shared amongst the whole staff to be used later when needed. A lack of systematic approaches to achieve organizational and personal learning may limit TIB's ability to maintain organizational sustainability and achieve continuous improvement of existing approaches.
- Although TIB utilizes a systematic planning process to develop and deploy strategies, objectives, and goals, this process appears to be in the early stages of achieving alignment among basic organizational needs, work processes, and results. For example, while TIB states that rising fuel costs are an extreme threat to its funding levels, it is not clear how this threat is linked to any goals or objectives. Additionally, a number of key measures identified in Figure 2.2 are not clearly linked to results areas and linkages between specific Balanced Scorecard measures and outcomes are not clear. Lack of clear alignment across key strategic objectives, key processes to deliver business results, and intended outcomes may diminish TIB's ability to fully address its strategic challenges and meet its goal to align with statewide priorities.
- Although TIB provides a number of sources of best practices to keep its performance measurement system current, it is not clear that a systematic method exists to gather, assimilate, and use comparative data and information for decision making and innovation. Additionally, while targets for some key measures are provided, it is not clear what fact-based analysis of past performance or performance projections was used to determine these targets. While TIB states that it is a unique public agency with no direct competitors, lack of systematic processes to determine goals, targets, and performance projections through management by fact approaches may make it difficult for TIB to assess ongoing rates of improvement and projected levels of future performance needed to achieve its overall objectives.

c. Considering key business/organization factors, the most significant strengths, opportunities, vulnerabilities, and/or gaps (related to data, comparisons, linkages) found in its response to Results Items are as follows:

- TIB provides favorable performance levels in a few key results areas, with several figures meeting targets. For example, completed 100 projects per year, payment cycle meets target timeframes, over 90% of customer's satisfaction levels "meet", "exceed", or "greatly exceed", and average per grant dollars meet their one million dollar goal. Payment cycle results meet targets and show improvement. Regulatory and legal compliance is supported through the audit findings by the State Auditor's Office in the biennial audits. TIB has not had a finding in the past four audit cycles. No whistleblower actions have been reported to date. These favorable levels demonstrate a focus on creating value for the customer and key stakeholders.

- TIB provides segmented results for a few of the given outcomes. For example, outstanding debt and revenue forecast figures are both segmented between the Transportation Improvement Account (TIA) and Urban Arterial Trust Account (UATA). The Dashboard results for accounts payable display the information by projects or by programs. Payment cycle, workshop participation, and customer satisfaction results are segmented between small city and urban customers. The ability to display key results by segments may help the organization determine areas of focus that may need improvement or also areas of strength that can be leveraged and shared throughout the organization as opportunities for knowledge sharing.
- Comparative data is not included for any key performance measure provided, which may make it difficult for TIB to understand its performance relative to others and be able to see where priority for improvements needs to occur. For example, in Figure 7.1-2 - *Small City Arterial Program Size*, TIB does not know whether they are spending more, less, or the typical amount as compared with similar agencies in other states. TIB may also find it difficult to understand its financial performance and health relative to other organizations providing similar services. TIB has stated there is no organization that has the same purpose as they do; however, there might be other non-profit organizations funded by state or federal dollars that have a similar mission or key outcomes.
- Many of TIB's organizational performance results do not include goals or trend data and some show unexplained unfavorable trends. For example, although Figure 7.3-1(a) - *Transportation Improvement Account Five Year Overview* indicates a lower account balance from start in 2003 of about \$18 million to about \$12 million in October 2008, the graph shows many lower account balance points between the two points without any explanation as to why this occurred. Also, the data points are represented by month-to-month, which does not allow for trends over an aggregated one year period to other years. No trends are evident in workforce satisfaction since only two years of information is available. The customer and workshop satisfaction results contain no targets or trends. Since TIB provides no goals or baselines for many product or service results, it is not clear what constitutes a desirable result; therefore, it is not clear whether the reported results and trends are positive, negative, or uncontrollable. Lack of trend data may make it difficult for TIB to measure rates of improvement.
- Results are not provided for several measures that TIB has classified as key to achieving stated strategic objectives. For example, Figure 2.2 identifies cost per lane mile of roadway improved, regional distribution of funds, and percent change in revenue forecast as important results, but they are not included in the results provided. TIB has also identified several performance measures in Table 6.1-2 that contribute to the improvement of organizational effectiveness; however, these results are also not shown. Linkage between results TIB has identified as important and key outcomes might be important to TIB's ability to fully address its strategic challenges and meet its goal to align with statewide priorities.

Details of Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement

Category 1 – Leadership

1.1 Senior Leadership

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 50-65% range.
(Please refer to Appendix - Scoring Guidelines.)

STRENGTHS

- TIB’s senior leaders use SWOT analysis during Board meetings to set organizational vision and values, which they deploy to every employee through the online GMAP Dashboard. This systematic use of a vision and value may help TIB more effectively fund high-priority transportation projects.
- To communicate information and updates to staff, senior leaders, the Chief Administrative Officer and the Chief Engineer, hold a Board meeting recap and post Board minutes on the website. In addition, members of the staff are encouraged to have small informal interactions. To communicate information to customers, TIB distributes quarterly newsletters and makes some dashboard information available on their external website.
- **Senior leaders create a focus on action to improve performance by tracking much of the organization's data through the GMAP Dashboard. This provides an ongoing real-time snapshot of the organization's financial health, project status, and leadership stability.**

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- While TIB states that informed customers and stakeholders are at the top of its business model, it is unclear how stakeholders and customers provide input or how TIB uses that input. Without means to gather and use this data, TIB may find it difficult to understand and focus on customers’ and stakeholders’ actual needs.

1.2 Governance and Social Responsibilities

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 30-45% range.
(Please refer to Appendix - Scoring Guidelines.)

STRENGTHS

- **TIB achieves fiscal accountability through the use of their budget formula and the GMAP Dashboard which calculates actual costs as compared with budgeted costs, as well as through real-time data in the Dashboard which enables TIB to evaluate a project's status is at any time. The ability of employees, customers, and stakeholders to view this data through the Dashboard results in fiscal transparency. For legal compliance, state auditors conduct an audit of the organization's financial records every three years.**
- TIB promotes economic development in depressed areas of the state through downtown revitalization and core area business development. As a result of these efforts, which include overlaying roadways and enhancing sidewalks, more shopkeepers have filed for permits to enhance their storefronts, resulting in economic development in smaller communities which have had few options in the past. TIB also provides ongoing education through association and organizational memberships.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- It is unclear what processes are in place to ensure accountability for the actions of the Executive Director and Board members. While the Executive Director is evaluated biennially by the Board, it is unclear how open ended questions regarding performance provide value. Since the Executive Director's salary is set by the Citizens' Commission rather than the Board, the value of this evaluation is also unclear. It is unclear that there are any accountability measures for Board members other than that they not be absent for more than three meetings. Finally, while TIB states that all employees are held accountable, there is no explanation of how this affects anyone other than the twelve staff members.
- Although project managers regularly assess, review, and implement best practices, it is unclear what types of changes have been made or how TIB has altered the organization's direction as a result of these evaluations. While TIB states that its GMAP implementation was seamless, it is unclear how they know this was the case or what they may have learned in the process. While TIB states that fiscal audits are in compliance, it is unclear what compliance actually looks like. Finally, while TIB gathers stakeholder input, it is unclear how that input is used to improve best practices.

Category 2 – Strategic Planning

2.1 Strategy Development

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 50-65% range.
(Please refer to Appendix - Scoring Guidelines.)

STRENGTHS

- **TIB uses a systematic five-step planning process for planning and accomplishing objectives and challenges that face the organization. The key process steps include stakeholder, customer, and Board engagement; SWOT analysis and strategy mapping; management review; deployment; and monitoring and lessons learned. The leadership team conducts a biennial strategic planning retreat, beginning with lessons learned, to determine strategies, review the prior year’s results, and use the Baldrige self-assessment tool to identify strengths and opportunities for improvement. The result of the strategic planning process is the Balanced Scorecard, which is updated in real time on the Performance Management Dashboard and is easily accessible by every member of the organization.**
- The organization uses its SWOT analysis and strategy mapping processes to identify potential blind spots. The Executive Leadership Team, for example, reviews and updates the SWOT every two years (Step 2a in the Strategic Planning Process). By involving Board members, customers, legislators, and staff in this process, TIB ensures that blind spots are not overlooked. In addition, TIB employs strategy mapping (Step 2b in the Strategic Planning Process) to identify blind spots by linking ultimate outcome goals and measures through the derived program.
- TIB identifies its strategic objectives (Figure 2.2) as well as its aligned goals, key activities, performance measures, and strategy enhancements. Every employee can monitor the progress of objectives and goals through linked measures that are easily accessible on the GMAP Dashboard.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- While TIB has aligned its strategic objectives and its goals, it is unclear that the organization has a timetable for accomplishing them. Without a process for determining and providing a timetable for accomplishing strategic objectives and goals, TIB may find it difficult to align and allocate the necessary resources or to implement a systematic method for measuring success.
- It is unclear how TIB’s strategic objectives address either the strategic challenges and advantages listed in Section P.2b or the difficulties due to rising construction costs and fuel prices listed in Section P.1a(5). By not addressing all challenges or clearly linking to organizational objectives, TIB may find it difficult to successfully accomplish its mission and vision.

2.2 Strategy Deployment

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 30-45% range.
(Please refer to Appendix - Scoring Guidelines.)

STRENGTHS

- TIB uses the strategic planning process to develop action plans and implements them through a variety of methods, including its Communications Policy, Personnel Development Plans (PDP), and online Performance Management Dashboard. The Communications Policy provides details for staff, such as contacts and maintenance frequency, while PDPs are used by each employee. The online Dashboard enables action plan details to be reviewed, tracked, and measured for progress.
- TIB has established and deployed a systematic four-stage process for managing project delays and ensuring that projects meet progress projections. This process includes corresponding, revising schedules, setting absolute deadlines, and holding a Board hearing when projects are not on target and require extra attention for on-time completion.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- It is unclear how TIB ensures resources are available to accomplish action plans. By not allocating finances and human resources for accomplishing action plans, TIB may find it difficult to overcome current strategic challenges and guarantee the organization's success at its mission.
- **It is unclear what key human resource plans TIB has implemented to accomplish its short and long-term strategic objectives. For example, although TIB explains how they implemented the new measure of "employee use of added skills" to track the training performance, it is unclear what human resource action plans support this or other measures or help accomplish strategic objectives and action plans. Without clearly aligning human resource action plans, TIB may find it difficult to achieve its linked strategic objectives.**
- **Although TIB has linked its strategic objectives with its performance measures and goals (Figure 2.2), it is unclear which performance projections fall under short-term and which fall under long-term planning. Furthermore, it is unclear how TIB's projected performance compares with that of similar organizations, key benchmarks, and goals. By not clearly aligning strategic objectives and performance measures to short and long-term planning horizons and by not obtaining comparative data or benchmarks, TIB may find it difficult to view its progress and performance in broad perspective. This may make it difficult to develop future strategic plans that will ensure improvement compared with key benchmarks and other organizations.**

Category 3 – Customer and Market Focus

3.1 Customer and Market Knowledge

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 30-45% range.
(Please refer to Appendix - Scoring Guidelines.)

STRENGTHS

- TIB employs several methods (Table 3.1 - *Summary of Methods*) for listening to and learning from customers, building relationships, and managing customer complaints, including customer surveys, Board meetings, and public hearings. One example of an improvement that resulted from listening to and learning from the customers was the Corridor Completion Initiative.
- TIB's engineering staff knows their customers and work in partnership with them to bring issues to the forefront, offer solutions to problems, and act as a knowledge repository for roadway issues. The Executive Director meets with customers to ensure they are familiar with the organization's services. TIB members also provide knowledge through their communities and activities which link together many state and local agencies.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Although TIB uses the Customer Relationship Management model (CRM) to acquire, retain, and extend customers, it is unclear how CRM is systematically deployed to all stakeholders. It is unclear what information is collected, how it is collected, how information and feedback is used to make improvements and identify new opportunities, and how CRM is integrated throughout the organization. Without a systematic approach for collecting information and using it to make improvements, it may be difficult for TIB to determine which market segments to acquire, retain, and extend.
- **Although TIB uses a variety of listening methods, it is unclear how information is collected and how feedback is used to determine key customer requirements, opportunities for improvement, and new opportunities for innovation. A systematic process for collecting and using customer feedback may assist TIB as it seeks to add value to its services, support its customers' needs, and ensure customer satisfaction.**
- It is unclear how information from former and current customers is used to plan work systems, identify opportunities for improvement, and improve processes. In addition, it is unclear how TIB improves customer listening and learning methods that are relevant to current business needs and to the changing marketplace. Without a systematic improvement process, TIB may find themselves reacting to immediate situations rather than refining processes and planning for the future.

3.2 Customer Relationships and Satisfaction

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 30-45% range.
(Please refer to Appendix - Scoring Guidelines.)

STRENGTHS

- **TIB’s project engineers and accountants build customer relationships from the first call through project completion and at every point of contact from the booth at a tradeshow to one-on-one technical assistance meetings. Both the staff and the Executive Director personally interact with and represent customers. TIB’s communication efforts effectively address customer satisfaction and provide prompt responses to customer issues and queries, and customer satisfaction is measured continually by the project engineers as well as through an annual survey. TIB uses ongoing analysis of customers and projects, selection criteria, ratings, and conclusions drawn from project data as a major part of the project selection process, as well as to continually improve customer relationships. One result of TIB’s strong relationships with its stakeholders was an additional investment provided by the State Legislature in 2005.**
- TIB has many key mechanisms for delivering information to clients. These include TIB’s website, a standard toll-free telephone number, an internet listserv, e-mails, and direct and open access to the staff. TIB’s website provides information about services, workshops, projects, funding cycles, and groundbreaking and ribbon cutting ceremonies. TIB uses mass e-mails to promote workshops for new initiatives, and targets mailings to those with limited website knowledge. This year, TIB completely overhauled the website, reorganizing content into clearer categories and focusing on plain text so citizens and customers can quickly find information without searching through multiple web pages. TIB integrates data from customer contacts into the strategic planning process.
- TIB employs a variety of methods to follow up with customers, primarily through either the project engineer or the accountant. Procedures require that a staff member responds to every customer e-mail or phone message within 24 hours and that a backup must be available if the responsible contact is on vacation or sick leave. TIB’s continuous communication efforts have proven effective at improving customer satisfaction and provide prompt action as necessary. While customer follow up is generally handled by the staff member directly involved with that project, the Chief Engineer or Executive Director may provide additional follow up if they believe it to be warranted.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- **It is not clear that TIB has a formal approach for managing customer complaints or that complaint data is aggregated or analyzed. It is unclear how information and feedback from complaints is used to identify opportunities for improvement, how customer dissatisfaction is identified and minimized, how the customer complaint process integrates into any other organizational processes, or how the process for handling complaints is deployed throughout the organization. The lack of a systematic process for aggregating, analyzing, managing, and resolving complaints from its**

customers may limit TIB’s ability to meet their goal to “provide highest value and greatest service benefit to our clients.”

- Although TIB states that there are no comparable agencies in the state of Washington due to the unique nature of their business, it is unclear if TIB has an approach for obtaining and utilizing outside sources for industry comparisons, benchmarks, customer satisfaction levels, and best practices. As a result, TIB may be missing opportunities to identify improvements.
- Although TIB employs a variety of methods to follow up with customers, including communication with the engineer, follow-up by the Chief Engineer or Executive Director, and the end-project survey, it is unclear how these approaches are kept current with business needs and directions or how actionable information is gathered and deployed throughout the organization and used in a systematic way to identify opportunities for improvement. As a result, TIB may overlook opportunities for the organization to improve customer satisfaction or for engineers to exchange best practices for project management.

Category 4 – Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management

4.1 Measurement, Analysis, and Improvement of Organizational Performance

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 30-45% range.
(Please refer to Appendix - Scoring Guidelines.)

STRENGTHS

- **TIB introduced performance measures as part of its 2002 Strategic Plan. Financial and performance data are combined into a color-coded balanced scorecard that collects, aligns, and integrates these measures into daily operations as well as the strategic planning process. The measures are deployed across the organization: the staff accesses them daily on the GMAP Dashboard; the Board uses them to analyze gaps, deadlines, and reviews; and the executive team reviews the measures during the annual strategic planning retreat. TIB ensures the measures are kept current with business needs and directions by performing a gap analysis as part of strategic planning and transforming any gaps into new measures. Use of a performance measurement system may contribute to TIB’s goal of using process improvement to continually enhance learning and growth.**
- TIB’s GMAP Dashboard combines data from multiple sources, including the project database, customer correspondence, and performance measures, to track and display information in real time and to make data available for use in everyday organizational decision making. For instance, the Executive Director uses live dashboard data from specific districts to persuade legislators (stakeholders) to increase grants and funding; the engineering staff uses dashboard data to monitor and act on successes and gaps in projects; and all staff members use dashboard information in team meetings and as part of their everyday jobs. The widespread use of the dashboard data results in greater transparency throughout the organization and improves data quality by increasing the likelihood that errors will be quickly noticed and addressed. TIB’s GMAP Dashboard was selected as a “best practice” by the Governing.com website.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Although TIB uses an organizational review process and the Deming PDCA model for continuous improvement, it is not clear that this or any other process is applied systematically for organizational learning and ongoing process improvement. Without a systematic approach to learning, the organization may be missing opportunities for breakthrough improvement and innovation.
- **Although TIB collects performance data from many diverse sources, it is not clear that they have the information necessary to assess the effectiveness of their data. For example, TIB mentions “payment turnaround time” as a performance indicator, but without comparative data it is not clear how they determine that their results are favorable. Lacking a comparative baseline, TIB may not actually be using results to “manage by fact” and drive organizational performance.**

4.2 Management of Information, Information Technology, and Knowledge

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 30-45% range.
(Please refer to Appendix - Scoring Guidelines.)

STRENGTHS

- **To make needed data and information more easily available, in 2001 TIB migrated and merged 12 years of data from multiple sources into the Project Tracking System, a SQL database that is used to collect and combine correspondence, audit paperwork, and project data. This database feeds the GMAP Dashboard, a web-based tool used to communicate project information amongst the staff, as well as the public website, which customers use for online billing and to search for project data. Having a consolidated and accessible source of data improves TIB's transparency, staff involvement, and project efficiency.**
- TIB collects and transfers workforce knowledge amongst staff through meetings, training materials, and ongoing communications; transfers relevant external knowledge to customers, collaborators, and partners through annual workshops, onsite meetings, e-mail, and the e-newsletter; and transfers knowledge to stakeholders through one-on-one meetings and annual reports. TIB demonstrates learning by using the collected knowledge to identify weak areas that will be addressed in next cycle and demonstrates alignment by synthesizing collected knowledge into the strategic plan for the next biennium.
- TIB identifies and implements best practices through project delivery and value engineering studies, as well as by evaluating the level of need from other state agencies during engineering meetings. These best practices are shared with customers on the website Performance Page, and the Executive Director frequently presents them to outside agencies. Several of TIB's best practices have been recognized in the Government Finance Review and on the DashboardSpy.com website.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Although TIB collects and transfers workforce knowledge amongst staff through a variety of methods, it is not clear that TIB has a systematic process for collecting and using workforce knowledge. In particular, it is unclear how knowledge is transferred from employees who are leaving the workforce to those who remain, nor is it clear how the effectiveness of any knowledge transfer process is measured. Lacking a robust and effective knowledge transfer process, TIB may risk not having access to or even permanently losing critical knowledge assets when experienced employees are unavailable or eventually leave the organization.
- While TIB states that they are concerned about reaching out to customers without internet access, there is no mention of a plan or process for addressing this issue nor is it clear that this has been included as part of any strategic plan. Without a plan for reaching the more rural customers, TIB may not be fully serving their requirement of placing customers at the top of their Balanced Scorecard and business model.

- While TIB mentions the existence of an emergency/business resumption plan, it is not clear what this plan actually entails or how it ensures business continuity in the event of a disaster. Furthermore, it is not clear who is responsible in an emergency or how communication will be established and maintained. Finally, it is unclear how TIB measures the effectiveness of the business resumption plan. In the absence of a proven and effective business resumption plan, TIB may risk their ability to deliver and satisfy customer requirements during a disaster or emergency.
- Although TIB is audited by the State Department of Information Services every two years, it is not clear if or how TIB uses or learns from the audit results. By not incorporating external feedback into the organization's processes, TIB may be missing an opportunity to improve and be innovative in their business practices.

Category 5 – Workforce Focus

5.1 Workforce Engagement

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 30-45% range.
(Please refer to Appendix - Scoring Guidelines.)

STRENGTHS

- TIB fosters a high performance culture and a motivated workforce by encouraging communications, individual goal setting, and diverse thinking. Project data is accessible to all employees, and e-mail and the GMAP Dashboard provide for two-way communication. Performance reviews are used as an opportunity to set individual goals which are considered a contract between employee and supervisor for the upcoming year. In addition, every employee is cross trained for customer service.
- TIB addresses workforce development and learning by requiring all employees to attend workforce development and learning systems compliance training; by encouraging employees to attend additional training relative to their jobs; and by paying for professional memberships and tuition when additional development opportunities arise. In addition, the Plain Talk Team prepares flowcharts of processes and formal operating procedures have been implemented to bring new personnel up to speed quickly.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Although TIB deploys an annual survey to assess employee engagement and satisfaction, it is not clear how the survey information is analyzed and integrated into the organization or what systematic process is in place that enables the leadership team to use the survey for organizational improvement. A systematic method of analysis, integration and response to survey data may assist TIB in fostering a culture conducive to a motivated workforce.
- It is unclear how employees' individual core competencies are aligned with the organization's core values and integrated into the workforce performance management system or that there is a systematic approach to measuring and improving the employee performance process. Other than self-evaluation, it is unclear how TIB trains and develops its leadership or how it measures the effectiveness of its leadership training process.
- **It is unclear how TIB deals with succession planning or how TIB applies organizational learning to ensure that skill and knowledge are passed on to other employees. Because TIB is a small organization with little employee turnover, lack of succession planning may result in loss of skill and knowledge as experienced members of the workforce retire.**

5.2 Workforce Environment

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 30-45% range.
(Please refer to Appendix - Scoring Guidelines.)

STRENGTHS

- TIB assesses workforce capability needs by matching the workload against employee capabilities and through the classification and compensation system administered by the State Department of Personnel. Managers are responsible for pushing decisions to the lowest appropriate level, while engineers are responsible for roadway design, pavement condition rating skills, traffic capacity analysis, costing components, and project management.
- TIB manages and organizes the workforce and jobs into administration and engineering functional units. Both units focus on the organization's core competencies: customer service specific to each discipline; sustainable financial management; business practices; and strong project controls. The management team meets with the Executive Director every other month to discuss how to achieve action plans, to examine the horizon for upcoming quarters, and to add new initiatives to the work plan. Initiatives are updated on the Dashboard and managers are expected to review action plans and add new initiatives to the work plan to address changing business needs.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Although the management team collaborates with the Executive Director to assess workforce capability and capacity needs, it is unclear that TIB has any method for learning from or adapting to changing capability and capacity needs. Without a systematic approach to planning for capability and capacity changes, TIB may be unable to adapt to changing business environments and needs.
- Although TIB identifies staff input as part of hiring and recruitment, it is unclear how or if TIB uses this input to learn from and improve the hiring process or how the hiring process integrates into the rest of the organization, particularly strategic planning for capability and capacity. It is unclear how TIB uses the classification and compensation system administered by the State Department of Personnel to assess and adapt to the organization's capacity and capability needs.
- It is unclear how new initiatives and revisions to initiatives are deployed to work units or how feedback and data is gathered after work plans are entered into the Dashboard. Without a systematic method for collecting and analyzing feedback, TIB may miss opportunities to identify opportunities to improve workforce effectiveness.
- Although TIB mentions that they ensure health, safety, and security in the workplace, it is unclear how processes related to health, safety, and security are measured or determined to be effective or how the organization systematically learns from and improves such processes. It is unclear how TIB determines employee satisfaction with the available benefits and services. For example, it is unclear how TIB determines that services such as the wellness program are effective. It is unclear how TIB learns from and systematically improves employee services and benefits.

Category 6 – Process Management

6.1 Work Systems Design

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 50-65% range.
(Please refer to Appendix - Scoring Guidelines.)

STRENGTHS

- **TIB establishes and evaluates their core competencies as part of their biennial strategic planning meeting. The competencies are determined using SWOT analysis, strategic planning, and management and customer surveys. These core competencies are project management, customer service, sustainable financial management, and strategic planning and deployment through use of a balanced scorecard. Each core competency clearly aligns with requirements and performance measures as shown in Table 6.1-2.**
- TIB uses a modified PDCA model to improve and innovate its work system design which is based on the organization's four core competencies (Section 6.1). TIB has added accountability, innovation, and results to the PDCA model and applies the process to all new initiatives. A cross-section of agency representatives reviews each new project, analyzing key components and performing a step-by-step mapping of its initiation, application, and administration. Prior to full implementation, TIB tests, revises processes, and performs cost-benefit analysis.
- TIB clearly aligns work processes with performance measures as demonstrated in Table 6.1-2. Each key work process is directly linked to a performance measure and contains a list of requirements for success. While many of TIB's key work processes are determined by the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) and the Priority of Government budgeting initiative, TIB has successfully aligned these processes with its core competencies, mission, and vision.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Although TIB states that all processes are evaluated using the PDCA model, testing, and piloting before deployment, it is not clear the TIB has applied these processes to their Emergency Resumption or Continuity of Operations Plans. It is also unclear how the plans address business continuity or operational recovery. Although TIB states that the Emergency Resumption Plan was tested during the 2001 Nisqually Earthquake and the 2006 and 2007 floods, it is unclear how they applied what they learned from these events to further improve their plan. It is also not clear what process was used to create the plans or how TIB determines that the plans are working, are effective, and align with the organization's values.
- Although TIB states they use customer surveys in the development of their core values, the exact process is unclear. It is also unclear how or if TIB uses input from suppliers, partners, and non-management staff to develop these values. By not involving customers, suppliers, partners, and staff in the development of core competencies, TIB may not be focusing their greatest expertise on the areas that are most important to them.

6.2 Work Process Management and Improvement

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 30-45% range.
(Please refer to Appendix - Scoring Guidelines.)

STRENGTHS

- TIB aligns work processes with requirements and performance measures as show in Table 6.1-2 and displayed on the Performance Management Dashboard. These measures are based on process requirements and are the principle way TIB performs day-to-day operations. New work processes are tested with a pilot program, as the Low Energy Lighting Pilot Project with the City of Buckley demonstrates. TIB manages its work processes through periodic checks with the customer, primarily using direct feedback to the managing engineer and customer surveys.
- TIB generally implements each work process as a pilot project, soliciting feedback before rolling it out full scale. For example, as part of the Low Energy Lighting Pilot Project with the City of Buckley, TIB contracted with CH2M Hill, Inc. for a feasibility study of the use of low energy street lights. TIB is implementing this as a pilot project which may eventually be deployed to other communities.
- Before introducing new technology into a process, TIB maps the necessary steps through the Business Process Improvement and PDCA processes. Engineers, administrative staff, and the Executive Director share improvements and lessons through direct interaction and analyze previous deficiencies to ensure that potential environmental, scheduling, funding, and coordination problems are addressed.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- It is not clear how TIB minimizes costs associated with inspections and audits. By not planning ahead for inspection and audit costs, TIB may be spending extra time and money reacting to each instance.
- It is unclear how TIB uses customer, supplier, partner, and collaborator input to manage and improve processes. By not using external input to manage processes, TIB may be missing opportunities to focus their performance on processes that are of particular importance to their customer, suppliers, and collaborators.

Category 7 – Results

7.1 Product and Service Outcomes

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 10-25% range. (Please refer to Appendix - Scoring Guidelines.)

STRENGTHS

- Results relating to program funding amounts (Figures 7.1-2 through 7.1-8) are solidly aligned with TIB's value of "tracking dollars in the bank" as well as with TIB's primary services. These results are segmented by program size and type which enables TIB to compare and understand the various markets for their services. While there are some decreases in the past year due to reduced consumer spending on gasoline, the prior trends were generally positive. Figure 7.1-2 - *Small City Arterial Program Size*, for instance, has shown a significant increase between 2006 and 2008.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- TIB provides no comparative data for any product or service results. Lacking comparisons with other similar agencies or with agencies that provide similar services, TIB has no baseline for understanding the quality of their own results. In Figure 7.1-2 for example, TIB does not know whether they are spending more, less, or the typical amount as compared with similar agencies in other states. TIB may not know how effectively they are fulfilling their vision of fully funded and completed local transportation projects and will be unable to determine if they are setting the standard for other states.
- TIB provides no goals or baselines for any product or service results. In many cases, it is not clear what constitutes a desirable result so it is not clear whether the reported results and trends are positive, negative, or uncontrollable. Lacking measurable goals, TIB may find they react to results as they occur rather than planning for how to attain them.
- A number of service outcome results are missing that are referenced from TIB's Figure 2.2. For example, no results are provided for percent of projects that achieve their intended improvements, percent increase in roads that exceed a pavement condition rating of 70, and number of delayed projects reported to Board. Without these and other missing measures being reported, it may be difficult for TIB to track performance of service outcomes that integrate with high priority objectives and goals of the organization.

7.2 Customer-Focused Outcomes

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 10-25% range.
(Please refer to Appendix - Scoring Guidelines.)

STRENGTHS

- TIB has a goal of 100 completed projects per year and has exceeded that goal from 2005-2007 as displayed in Figure 7.2-1 - *Completed Projects*. Results in Figure 7.2-4 - *Average Payment Cycle for Small City* meet or exceed the 20 day target and results in Figure 7.2-5 - *Average Payment Cycle for Urban Customers* meet or exceed the 38 day target since October 2006. Between November 2006 and October 2008, the latter rates decreased from 38 days to 18. Customer satisfaction results currently average 3.8 out of 5.0 in Figure 7.2-6 - *Small City Customer Satisfaction* and 3.6 out of 5.0 in Figure 7.2-7 - *Urban Customer Satisfaction*. According to these two graphs, over 90% of respondents state that TIB's administration process meets, exceeds, or greatly exceeds their expectations. According to Figure 7.2-11 - *Average Grant per Project*, TIB has met or exceeded their target of an average one million dollars per grant for each of the past five consecutive years.
- According to Figure 7.2-3 - *Increase in Project Cost from Application to Completion*, TIB's actual project costs have decreased from over 180 million in 2005 to 81 million in 2008. Costs for 2009 are projected at under ten million.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Although TIB measures customer and workshop satisfaction, they have provided no goals or targets. Without goals, comparisons, or trends, it is unclear how TIB can use the data to measure improvement. It is also unclear if customers that do not have projects are satisfied with TIB's services.

7.3 Financial and Market Outcomes

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 30-45% range.
(Please refer to Appendix - Scoring Guidelines.)

STRENGTHS

- Results for Figure 7.3-3 - *Revenue Forecast* indicate a consistently favorable trend from \$200,000 in 2007-2009 to more than \$240,000 in 2015-2017. In addition, results for Figure 7.3-4 - *Outstanding Debt* demonstrate a favorable decreasing trend from \$130M in 2007-2009 to \$61.4M in 2017-2019. These positive financial outcomes may suggest achievement of the organization's core value of "dollars in the ground not in the bank."
- TIB provides segmented financial results for several outcomes. For example, Figures 7.3-3 - *Revenue Forecast* and 7.3-4 - *Outstanding Debt* are both segmented between the Transportation Improvement Account (TIA) and Urban Arterial Trust Account (UATA). Also, Figure 7.3-6 - *Financial Health* displays accounts payable for the organization segmented by Small City Preservation Program (SCPP), UATA, and TIA. The ability to segment and analyze financial results may help the organization determine areas of focus that need improvement as well as areas of strength that can be leveraged.
- TIB's key account balance levels as shown in Figures 7.3-1a – *Transportation Improvement Account Five Year Overview* and 7.3-1b – *Urban Arterial Trust Account Five Year Overview* have improved significantly prior to the 2001 time frame and when TIB was near bankruptcy. These levels of improvement have contributed to the continued organizational sustainability and improved transparency.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- **TIB does not provide any results comparing their performance to other benchmarks, such as competitors, industry averages, industry leaders, or world-class examples of financial and market outcomes. Without external comparisons, it may be difficult for TIB to understand its financial performance and health relative to other similar organizations.**
- **TIB has not provided results for many financial measures mentioned as key to achieving their strategic objectives. Measures of cost per lane mile of roadway improved, regional distribution of funds, and percent change in revenue forecast are listed in Figure 2.2, for instance, but are not included as part of the financial results. The lack of these financial measures may hinder the organization's ability to attain their strategic objectives and determine whether they are closer to achieving their goals.**

7.4 Workforce-Focused Outcomes

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 10-25% range.
(Please refer to Appendix - Scoring Guidelines.)

STRENGTHS

- After a decrease of two FTEs in 2002-2003, staff retention has remained unchanged for the past three years. TIB's stated working capacity of 100 projects per engineer appears acceptable to the staff given the job satisfaction levels reported in Figure 7.4-4 – *TIB Employee Survey Results*.
- Figure 5.1-1 (page 24) indicates that employee satisfaction for 2007 exceeded the state average in ten of the twelve measured areas.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Although TIB has provided a limited set of survey results, there is insufficient data to establish a trend in workforce satisfaction and no comparative data. In addition, it is unclear how the results in Figure 7.4-2 - *Total Active Project Level* align with TIB's progress.
- Although TIB reports that there have been no reported worker's compensation claims since 2003, it not clear that this is the result of a process to improve the safety and health program. TIB has provided no comparative data or data relating the number of accidents reported to a mechanism for measuring safety program efforts.

7.5 Process Effectiveness Outcomes

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 10-25% range.
(Please refer to Appendix - Scoring Guidelines.)

STRENGTHS

- Figure 7.5-9 - *Payment Turnaround* is segmented by customer type and shows a positive decreasing trend in days for payment to be processed. In October 2005, TIB required 37 days to process urban city payments. By October 2008 this number had decreased down to around 15 days. Small city payments turnaround drop from 22 days in October 2005 to around 11 days in October 2008. Trends are provided for a three year period broken down by quarters. In addition, results exceed stated goals in both Figure 7.2-4 - *Average Payment Cycle for Small City* (21 days) and Figure 7.2-5 - *Average Payment Cycle for Urban Customers* (39 days).

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Figures 7.5-1 through 7.5-13 show no comparative data. Comparative data may help the organization measure its position and performance relative to competitors or similar organizations.
- Although the results in Figure 7.5-1 - *Urban Arterial Program Accident Reduction* indicate a decrease of 30% for injuries and 16.2% for vehicle damage, TIB only provides one-time information. Without ongoing data, TIB may not be able to determine how successful the program actually is.
- Although TIB has identified several performance measures that contribute to the improvement of organizational effectiveness in Table 6.1-2, these results are not provided. By not providing results for key performance measures, TIB may not be able to measure their own success.

7.6 Leadership Outcomes

Your score in this Criteria Item for the Consensus Stage is in the 0-5% range.
(Please refer to Appendix - Scoring Guidelines.)

STRENGTHS

- TIB has not had a negative audit finding in any of the past three regulatory and legal compliance audits performed by the State Auditor's Office. In addition, TIB has not received an ethics complaint since records have been posted on the website.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

- **TIB has not provided results for many leadership outcomes mentioned in Figure 2.2 as key to achieving their four strategic objectives. The lack of these results may hinder the organization's ability to attain their strategic objectives and determine whether they are closer to achieving their goals.**
- **TIB provides no comparative data for any product or service results. Lacking comparisons with other similar agencies or with agencies that provide similar services, TIB has no baseline for understanding the quality of their own results. Lacking comparative data, TIB may not know how effectively they are fulfilling their vision of fully funded and completed local transportation projects and will be unable to determine if they are setting the standard for other states.**

Your Next WSQA Application

The timing for reapplication to WSQA is an individual organizational decision that is based on how quickly the organization is able to act on their feedback and then gather results from their actions. Many organizations find that a period of 18-24 months is appropriate. Typical considerations for determining the time to reapply include:

- Ability to address a substantial amount of the key findings of the report.
- Ability to demonstrate the results that have occurred from addressing the key findings. Please remember that 45% of the total score is in the results.
- Ability to demonstrate at least one cycle of learning/ improvement within key process changes.

Closing Thoughts on Writing a Better Application

Improvement is the driving force behind the submission of a WSQA application. Examiners are trained to focus on content and ignore editorial issues. By focusing on the creation of feedback that reflects the applicant content versus editorial issues, examiners provide comments that are valuable in helping an organization improve. However, WSQA recognizes that many organizations intend to reapply at some point in the future as a critical component of their improvement process. Additionally, many organizations use all or portions of their applications to communicate with their internal and external stakeholders through numerous mechanisms including web, mailings, meetings, and presentations. For this reason, the examiners have assembled a few suggestions that may help your organization in writing a stronger application. We hope that these suggestions may be of some assistance in the future.

- Clear indication of the direction of positive results on a graph as well as indicated goals or targets.
- Inclusion of comparative data and the methodology used to identify comparable data.
- Clear process of analysis, prioritization and action plan resulting from input data.
- Provision of evidence of learning from various processes.

Maintaining the Improvement Momentum

WSQA has seen many strong approaches to maintaining the improvement momentum including:

- Prioritizing the feedback of this report, creating action plans to address the feedback, and holding follow up progression meetings on the action plans. WSQA offers a follow up workshop entitled Turning Feedback into Action to facilitate this process.
- Conducting internal reviews with internal examiners.
- Conducting on-line self-assessment surveys during the non-application years. WSQA offers two types of these surveys.
- Participating in an Improvement Collaborative with other organizations.
- Joining a Round Table group of past WSQA recipients.

Please contact WSQA for more information on these and other methods of maintaining the improvement momentum within your organization.



Final Note

Thank you for taking the quality challenge to pursue the Washington State Quality Award. It is our sincere hope that the feedback provided in this Full Examination Feedback Report is both reaffirming to your strengths as well as insightful into your operation's opportunities for improvement. Excellence is a journey. We wish you well on your journey to performance excellence. Congratulations!

Sincerely,
WSQA Application Review Team
WSQA Board of Examiners

Appendix

By submitting a Washington State Quality Award Full application, you have differentiated yourself from most organizations. The Board of Examiners has evaluated your application for the Washington State Quality Award. Strict confidentiality is observed at all times and in every aspect of the application review and feedback.

This feedback report contains the Examiner's findings, including a summary of key themes of the application evaluation, a detailed listing of strengths and opportunities for improvement, and scoring information. Background information on the examination process is provided on the following pages.

Full Application Review Process

Stage 1: Independent Review

The Full Examination application evaluation process (shown in Figure 1) begins with Stage 1, the independent review, in which members of the Board of Examiners are assigned to each of the applications. Assignments are made according to the Examiners' areas of expertise and to avoid potential conflicts of interest. Each application is evaluated independently by Examiners. The Examiners write comments relating to the applicant's strengths and opportunities for improvement and the scoring system developed for the Award Program. All applicants in all categories (manufacturing, service, small business, education, and health care) go through the Stage 1 evaluation process.

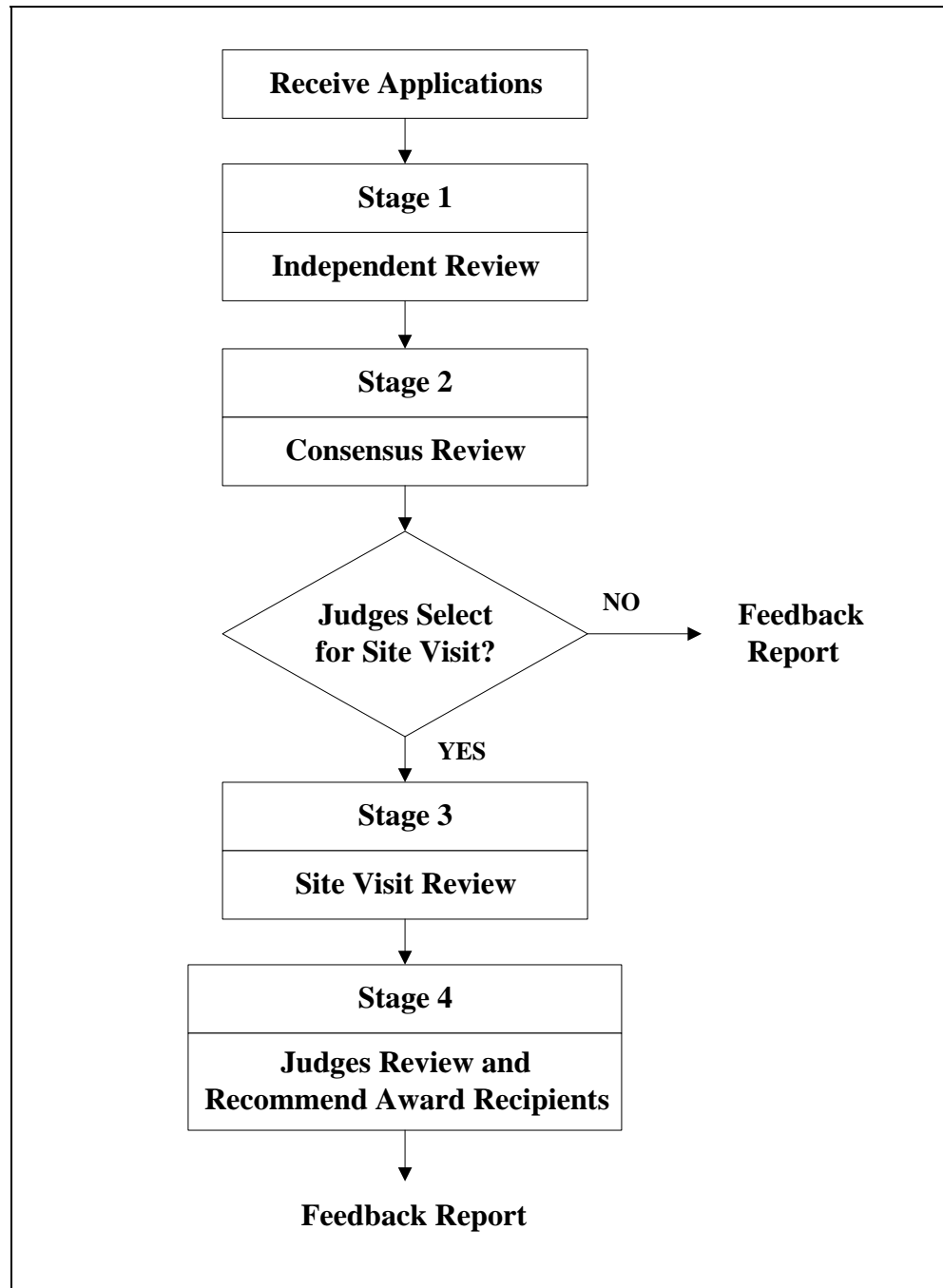


Figure 1—Application Evaluation Process

Stage 2: Consensus Review

In the Washington State Quality Award application evaluation process all applicants move forward to consensus review. During Stage 2, a team of Examiners, led by a Senior Examiner, conducts a series of conference calls and meetings to reach consensus on comments that capture the team’s collective view of the applicant’s strengths and opportunities for improvement; the score for each Item; and the issues to clarify and verify if the applicant is selected for site visit. The team documents its comments, scores, and site visit issues in a consensus scorebook. The consensus process is shown in Figure 2.

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Consensus Planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify the timeline for the team to complete its work • Assign Category/Item discussion leaders • Discuss key business/organization factors 	Virtual Consensus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review all independent review evaluations - draft consensus comments and propose scores • Post consensus review worksheets for the team to review • Address feedback, incorporate inputs, and propose a resolution of differences on each worksheet • Review updated comments and scores 	Consensus Calls: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss a limited number of issues related to specific comments or scores, and discuss all Key Themes • Achieve consensus on comments and scores 	Post Consensus Call Planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise comments and scores to reflect consensus decisions • Prepare final consensus scorebook • Prepare feedback report

Figure 2—Consensus Review Process

Stage 3: Site Visit Review

Following their review, the Judges select applicants to receive a site visit based upon the scoring profiles, strengths and opportunities and key themes of all consensus review applicants and the availability of WSQA resources. If an applicant is not selected for site visit review, one of the Examiners on the Consensus Team edits the final consensus report that becomes the feedback report.

Site visits are typically conducted for the highest-scoring applicants to clarify any uncertainty or confusion the Examiners have regarding the written application and to verify that the information in the application is correct. After the site visit is completed, the team of Examiners prepares a final site visit scorebook. The site visit review process is shown in Figure 3.

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
Team Preparation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review consensus findings • Develop site visit issues • Plan site visit 	Site Visit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make/receive presentations • Conduct interviews • Record observations • Review records 	Site Visit Scorebook: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolve issues • Summarize findings • Finalize comments • Prepare final site visit scorebook • Prepare feedback report

Figure 3—Site Visit Review Process

Application reports, consensus scorebooks, and site visit scorebooks for all applicants receiving a site visit are forwarded to the Panel of Judges, which makes final recommendations on the applicants appropriate recognition level. The Judges’ review process is shown in Figure 4.

Step 1	Step 2
Panel of Judges’ Review: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application reports • Consensus scorebooks • Site visit scorebooks • Feedback reports 	Assessment of Top Organizations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall strengths/ opportunities for improvement • Appropriateness of recognition level: Commitment, Achievement, Leadership, or Excellence

Figure 4—Judges’ Review Process

Judges do not participate in discussions or vote on applications in which they have a competing or conflicting interest or in which they have a private or special interest such as an employment or a client relationship, a financial interest, or a personal or family relationship. All conflicts are reviewed and discussed so that Judges are aware of their own and others’ limitations on access to information and participation in discussions and voting. Following the Judges’ review and recommendation of Award recipient, one of the Examiners on the Site Visit Team along with the WSQA office edits the final site visit scorebook that becomes the feedback report.

Scoring

The scoring system used to score each Item is designed to differentiate applicants in the Stage 1 and Stage 2 reviews and to facilitate feedback. The Scoring Guidelines for Business, Education, or Health Care (shown in Figure 5) are based on (1) evidence that a performance excellence system is in place, (2) the depth and breadth of its deployment, and (3) the results it is achieving.

In the feedback report, the applicant receives a percentage range based on the Scoring Guidelines, which describe the characteristics typically associated with specific percentage ranges. An application’s total score fall into one of eight scoring bands (Figure 6). The site visit team may find that the applicant’s scoring may rise, fall or stay the same, after all interviews and data analyses are completed.

Scoring Guidelines

Criteria for Performance Excellence 2008

Score	Process (For Use With Categories 1-6)
0% or 5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No systematic approach to Item requirements is evident; information is anecdotal. (A) • Little or no deployment of any systematic approach is evident. (D) • An improvement orientation is not evident; improvement is achieved through reacting to problems.(L) • No organizational alignment is evident; individual areas or work units operate independently. (I)
10%, 15%, 20%, or 25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The beginning of a systematic approach to the basic requirements of the Item is evident. (A) • The approach is in the early stages of deployment in most areas or work units, inhibiting progress in achieving the basic requirements of the Item. (D) • Early stages of a transition from reacting to problems to a general improvement orientation are evident. (L) • The approach is aligned with other areas or work units largely through joint problem solving. (I)
30%, 35%, 40%, or 45%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An effective, systematic approach, responsive to the basic requirements of the Item, is evident. (A) • The approach is deployed, although some areas or work units are in early stages of deployment. (D) • The beginning of a systematic approach to evaluation and improvement of key processes is evident. (L) • The approach is in early stages of alignment with your basic organizational needs identified in response to the Organizational Profile and other Process Items. (I)
50%, 55%, 60%, or 65%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An effective, systematic approach, responsive to the overall requirements of the Item, is evident. (A) • The approach is well deployed, although deployment may vary in some areas or work units. (D) • A fact-based, systematic evaluation and improvement process and some organizational learning, including innovation, are in place for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of key processes. (L) • The approach is aligned with your organizational needs identified in response to the Organizational Profile and other Process Items. (I)
70%, 75%, 80%, or 85%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An effective, systematic approach, responsive to the multiple requirements of the Item, is evident. (A) • The approach is well deployed, with no significant gaps. (D) • Fact-based, systematic evaluation and improvement and organizational learning, including innovation, are key management tools; there is clear evidence of refinement as a result of organizational-level analysis and sharing. (L) • The approach is integrated with your organizational needs identified in response to the Organizational Profile and other Process Items. (I)
90%, 95%, or 100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An effective, systematic approach, fully responsive to the multiple requirements of the Item, is evident. (A) • The approach is fully deployed without significant weaknesses or gaps in any areas or work units. (D) • Fact-based, systematic evaluation and improvement and organizational learning through innovation are key organization-wide tools; refinement and innovation, backed by analysis and sharing, are evident throughout the organization. (L) • The approach is well integrated with your organizational needs identified in response to the Organizational Profile and other Process Items. (I)

Figure 5 – Scoring Guidelines

Score	Results (For Use With Category 7)
0% or 5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no organizational performance results or poor results or poor results in areas reported. • Trend data are either not reported or show mainly adverse trends. • Comparative information is not reported. • Results are not reported for any areas of importance to the accomplishment of your organization's mission.
10%, 15%, 20%, or 25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few organizational performance results are reported; and early good performance levels are evident in a few areas. • Some trend data are reported, with some adverse trends evident. • Little or no comparative information is reported. • Results are reported for a few areas of importance to the accomplishment of your organization's mission.
30%, 35%, 40%, or 45%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good organizational performance levels are reported for some areas of importance to the Item requirements. • Some trend data are reported, and a majority of the trends presented are beneficial. • Early stages of obtaining comparative information are evident. • Results are reported for many areas of importance to the accomplishment of your organization's mission.
50%, 55%, 60%, or 65%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good organizational performance levels are reported for most areas of importance to the Item requirements. • Beneficial trends are evident in areas of importance to the accomplishment of your organization's mission. • Some current performance levels have been evaluated against relevant comparisons and/or benchmarks and show areas of good relative performance. • Organizational performance results are reported for most key customer, market, and process requirements.
70%, 75%, 80%, or 85%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good to excellent organizational performance levels are reported for most areas of importance to the Item requirements. • Beneficial trends have been sustained over time in most areas of importance to the accomplishment of your organization's mission. • Many to most trends and current performance levels have been evaluated against relevant comparisons and/or benchmarks and show areas of leadership and very good relative performance. • Organizational performance results are reported for most key customer, market, process, and action plan requirements, and they include some projections of your future performance.
90%, 95%, or 100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent organizational performance levels are reported for most areas of importance to the Item requirements. • Beneficial trends have been sustained over time in all areas of importance to the accomplishment of your organization's mission. • Evidence of industry and benchmark leadership is demonstrated in many areas. • Organizational performance results fully address key customer, market, process, and action plan requirements, and they include projections of your future performance.

Figure 5 – Scoring Guidelines continued

Scoring Band Descriptors 2008

Band	#	Descriptors
0–275	1	The organization demonstrates the early stages of developing and implementing approaches to Item requirements, with deployment lagging and inhibiting progress. Improvement efforts focus on problem solving. A few important results are reported, but they generally lack trend and comparative data.
276–375	2	The organization demonstrates effective, systematic approaches responsive to the basic requirements of the Items, but some areas or work units are in the early stages of deployment. The organization has developed a general improvement orientation that is forward-looking. The organization obtains results stemming from its approaches, with some improvements and good performance. The use of comparative and trend data is in the early stages.
376–475	3	The organization demonstrates effective, systematic approaches responsive to the basic requirements of most Items, although there are still areas or work units in the early stages of deployment. Key processes are beginning to be systematically evaluated and improved. Results address many areas of importance to the organization’s key requirements, with improvements and/or good performance being achieved. Comparative and trend data are available for some of these important results areas.
476–575	4	The organization demonstrates effective, systematic approaches responsive to the overall requirements of the Items, but deployment may vary in some areas or work units. Key processes benefit from fact-based evaluation and improvement, and approaches are being aligned with organizational needs. Results address key customer/stakeholder, market, and process requirements, and they demonstrate some areas of strength and/or good performance against relevant comparisons. There are no patterns of adverse trends or poor performance in areas of importance to the organization’s key requirements.
576–675	5	The organization demonstrates effective, systematic, well-deployed approaches responsive to the overall requirements of the Items. The organization demonstrates a fact-based, systematic evaluation and improvement process and organizational learning that result in improving the effectiveness and efficiency of key processes. Results address most key customer/stakeholder, market, and process requirements, and they demonstrate areas of strength against relevant comparisons and/or benchmarks. Improvement trends and/or good performance are reported for most areas of importance to the organization’s key requirements.
676–775	6	The organization demonstrates refined approaches responsive to the multiple requirements of the Items. These approaches are characterized by the use of key measures, good deployment, evidence of innovation, and very good results in most areas. Organizational integration, learning, and sharing are key management tools. Results address many customer/stakeholder, market, process, and action plan requirements. The organization is an industry* leader in some results areas.
776–875	7	The organization demonstrates refined approaches responsive to the multiple requirements of the Items. It also demonstrates innovation, excellent deployment, and good-to-excellent performance levels in most areas. Good-to-excellent integration is evident, with organizational analysis, learning, and sharing of best practices as key management strategies. Industry* leadership and some benchmark leadership are demonstrated in results that address most key customer/stakeholder, market, process, and action plan requirements.
876–1000	8	The organization demonstrates outstanding approaches focused on innovation, full deployment, and excellent, sustained performance results. There is excellent integration of approaches with organizational needs. Organizational analysis, learning, and sharing of best practices are pervasive. National and world leadership is demonstrated in results that fully address key customer/ stakeholder, market, process, and action plan requirements.

Figure 6—Scoring Band Descriptors

* Industry refers to other organizations performing substantially the same functions, thereby facilitating direct comparisons.