



**2011**

***The Sterling Performance  
Excellence Challenge  
Application Forms***



***Florida Sterling Council  
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## ***Challenge Process Overview, Timetable, and Fees***

Applications of Intent Due.....	Ongoing
Applications Due .....	30 days after Application of Intent
Consensus Meetings.....	Approximately 30 days after receipt of Application
Site Visits.....	Within 6-8 weeks after receipt of Application
Recognition Ceremony .....	June 3, 2011

The Sterling Performance Excellence Challenge, based on the *2011 Sterling Criteria for Performance Excellence*, is specifically designed as an intermediate step in an organization’s journey to performance excellence.

**THE AWARD PROMOTES:**

- Awareness of performance excellence as an increasingly important element in competitiveness; and
- Information sharing of successful performance strategies and the benefits derived from using these strategies.

**AWARD PARTICIPATION**

The award eligibility categories include:

- Manufacturing companies;
- Service companies;
- Educational institutions;
- Health care organizations;
- Nonprofit organizations, including government organizations.

There is no limit to the number of Sterling Challenge recognitions given in each category each year. To participate in the Challenge process, an organization must submit an application package that addresses the questions in the *Sterling Performance Excellence Challenge* (pages 14-20). Challenge applicants are expected to provide information and data on the organization’s key processes and results.

**APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

Applicants need to submit an application package that consists of two parts:

- A completed Application Form; and
  - An Application consisting of an Organizational Profile and responses to the Challenge questions.
- Getting started with the Sterling Challenge approach suggestions are detailed on pages 10-11

and helpful hints for writing your application are located on pages 24-25 of the *Sterling Performance Excellence Challenge* book.

**APPLICATION OF INTENT FORM**

All applicants must submit an Application of Intent Form prior to submitting a completed Application.

**APPLICATION REVIEW**

The Board of Examiners reviews and evaluates all Challenge Applications. The Board is comprised of experts selected from the service, manufacturing, health care, education, and public sectors. Those serving on the Board meet the highest standards of performance. Board appointments are for: Master Examiners, Lead Examiners, Senior Examiners, and Examiners. All Board of Examiner members are required to complete the training course based upon Examination Categories, Scoring Systems, Feedback Reports, and the Examination process. Qualified experts in the award process provide the training.

**SITE VISITS**

Site Visits are used to verify the information provided in the Application and to clarify issues and questions that have arisen during the Application review process. A Site Visit plan that includes an agenda is developed with each Challenge organization. During the Site Visit, there will be a visit to the facility or facilities, and interviews with organization officials and the workforce. Applicants will be responsible for scheduling introductory and concluding presentations. Challenge site visits normally commence on a Monday and conclude the following Friday. Fees are set as defined in the Fee Section of the Challenge book, page five.

**FEEDBACK TO APPLICANTS**

The Feedback Report, a tool for continuous improvement, is a written assessment by the members of the Board of Examiners. Each Challenge Applicant

receives a Feedback Report at the conclusion of the review process. The Feedback Report contains an Application-specific listing of strengths and opportunities for improvement based on the questions addressed under the *Sterling Performance Excellence Challenge* and *Criteria for Performance Excellence*, as appropriate. Used by manufacturing and service companies; schools, school districts, and post-secondary educational institutions; health care organizations; and nonprofits and governments as part of their strategic planning processes, the Feedback Report helps organizations focus on their customers and improve productivity. The feedback system is one of the most important components of the Sterling Award process; it provides a pathway for continuous improvement. **Strict confidentiality is observed at all times and in every aspect of the application, review, and feedback process.**

**If a Sterling Challenge site visit occurs during the Governor's Sterling Award site visit period, the feedback report for Governor's Sterling Award applicants shall be processed prior to those for Challenge applicants.**

#### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Conflict of interest rules apply to all who serve on the Board of Examiners. Compliance with the rules is carefully monitored throughout the review, Site Visit, and feedback process.

#### **FEES**

Fees will help defray expenses associated with the Sterling Challenge Process. Each eligible Applicant shall pay fees as follows:

All potential applicants shall pay a non-refundable Application of Intent Fee of \$100 that is due along with the Application of Intent Form.

All large organizations of more than 250 employees will pay a \$3,500 application fee. All other organizations will pay a \$1,500 application fee. The Application Fee is due at the time of application submission to the Sterling office.

The Site Visit fee for all organizations is \$2,000, plus Examiner Team expenses. **Examiner expenses include travel and living expenses computed at the current state rate and are billed after the site visit.**

Awards Staff will coordinate directly with the Site Visit candidate for resolution of actual cost.

**Note:** The site visit fee is due 30 days before the site visit and is non-refundable.

#### **PAYMENT OF FEES**

Payment will be by check, credit card, or money order. Checks should be made payable to *The Florida Sterling Council*

#### **BASIC ELIGIBILITY**

The Sterling Performance Excellence Challenge is available for Florida organizations engaged in any of the five sectors. These sectors are: manufacturing, service, education, health care, and nonprofits / governments. All organizations, whether for profit or not-for-profit, are eligible to apply.

### ***Challenge Eligibility Categories***

#### **MANUFACTURING**

Organizations or subsidiaries that produce and sell manufactured products or manufacturing processes, and those organizations that produce agricultural, construction, or mining products.

#### **SERVICE**

Organizations or subsidiaries that sell service. The proper classification of organizations that perform both manufacturing and service is determined by the largest number of sales.

#### **EDUCATION**

Organizations or subsidiaries that deliver educational services to residents of the State of Florida. The services provided must be in the category of education and/or training. Higher education, school districts, and individual schools within school districts are eligible to apply. Both public and private schools are eligible.

#### **HEALTH CARE**

Organizations or subsidiaries that provide health care services to the residents of the State of Florida. These services must be delivered within the State of Florida, and the organization must have been active for a minimum of one year.

#### **NONPROFIT**

Eligible organizations in this category include:

- Local, state, or federal governmental agencies;
- Any other public corporation, agency, or unit of government which exercises governmental powers under the laws of the state for at least one year; or
- Trade associations, charitable organizations, social service agencies, credit unions, professional societies, and other organizations that function as nonprofits and serve the people of Florida.

## **SUBSIDIARIES**

For the purposes of the Florida Sterling Council awards process, a subsidiary means an actual subsidiary, organizational unit, division, or district office. The subsidiary must have a clear definition of organization and function relatively independently but may receive policy level direction and oversight from the parent organization. Any organizational unit that is dependent

on the parent organization for a majority of its support functions must describe the relationship in terms of effectiveness and its communication links. Subsidiaries of eligible organizations may apply separately if they primarily serve either the public or organizations other than the parent organization and if they meet certain size and activity level requirements.

### ***Confidentiality***

Strict conflict of interest rules apply throughout all Sterling processes. Names of applicants, individual applications, commentary, and scoring information developed during the review of the application are regarded as proprietary and are kept confidential. Such information is available only to those individuals directly involved in the evaluation and application distribution process. Board of Examiner members are assigned to applications following strict conflict of interest rules and receive no information regarding the contents or status of applications to which they are not assigned. Information on successful strategies of Award recipients and other applicants may be released only with written approval of the applicant.

# The 2011 Sterling Performance Excellence Challenge

## Application of Intent

(Please type and make a copy for your records)

- 1) **Applicant Organization (including Division Name) as you would want listed on the Feedback Report and recognition, as appropriate.**

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

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

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

- 2) **Highest Ranking Official**

Name (Mr. Ms. Dr.): \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

**Official Representative for Correspondence:**

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

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

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

- 3) **For Profit Designation**

Is the Applicant a for-profit business?

(Check one)  Yes  No

- 4) **Sector Category (please check one)**

Manufacturing  Service  Education  Health Care  Nonprofit

- 5) **Size and Location of Applicant**

Number of sites included in the application:

Total of Full-Time employees for the application:

Can the Applicant make available sufficient personnel, documentation, and facilities to allow a full examination of its operational practices with all major organizational functions of its statewide operations?

(Check one)  Yes  No

**Statement of Authorization**

We understand that this Application of Intent Form and subsequent Sterling Performance Excellence Challenge Application will be reviewed by members of the Board of Examiners. We agree to host the Site Visit to verify and clarify information provided in the Application.

Authorized Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (Printed): \_\_\_\_\_

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Check List**

\_\_\_\_\_ Application of Intent filled in completely and signed.

\_\_\_\_\_ Application processing fee of \$100 attached (*non-refundable*) payable to **The Florida Sterling Council**

Is a line and box organizational chart included which shows all components of the Applicant organization?

Yes       No

Is the Application of Intent covered by a letter on the organization's stationery and signed by the Authorizing Official or designee?

Yes       No

*If the Applicant is a sub-unit of a larger organization:*

Is a line and box organizational chart included which shows the relationship of the Applicant organization to the highest management level of the parent organization, including all intervening levels?     Yes       No

# *2011 Sterling Challenge Application Instructions and Form*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Because the Sterling Challenge focuses on the Applicant's organizational performance excellence system, it is important that the Examiners have a good understanding of the size, structure, and function of the different organization units. In addition, sufficient information must be provided on the programs or services developed at each location to be examined.

### **Note:**

**Summaries of Multiple Sites** – *In cases where the Applicant has many sites performing the same functions, these sites may be aggregated under one listing. Instead of the address for each, a summary statement about the locations may be made. When Site Visits are conducted, a more detailed listing will be requested when the visits are planned.*

## **NON-DISCLOSURE**

All information related to the Award process, including names of Applicants, individual applications, feedback, notes, and scoring information, is regarded as proprietary and kept confidential. Such information is available only to those individuals directly involved in the evaluation and application distribution process. Board of Examiner members are assigned to Applicants following strict conflict of interest rules and receive no information regarding the content or status of applications to which they are not assigned. Information on successful strategies of Award recipients and other Applicants may be released only with written approval.

The Award Staff will honor to the fullest extent permitted by law an Applicant's written request that certain information not be disclosed if the information is considered to be a trade secret or of such a nature that its disclosure would injure the competitive position of the organization. Trade secrets are exempt from disclosure.

## **OBJECTIVE**

The objective of the Application is to allow applicants to provide information on management of products, programs, and services and on results of performance excellence improvement processes to permit a rigorous evaluation by the Board of Examiners.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

Each Applicant must submit an Application consisting of the elements outlined here. A total of twelve (12) complete Applications are required.

## **PREPARATION OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL PROFILE**

The Organizational Profile is a summary that describes significant factors to be considered in the evaluation of an Application. It can be up to five pages in length and is intended to "set the stage" for the Examiners. (See pages 14-16 in the *Sterling Performance Excellence Challenge* book for a description of the Profile.) This is not counted in the overall Application page limit.

## **FORMAT FOR THE APPLICATION**

Typing instructions: The Application should meet the following requirements:

Use the same Category numerical designations as in the *Sterling Performance Excellence Challenge* book.

Include a Table of Contents with the page number of each Category.

Use standard 8½ by 11 inch paper. Type should be in a font of 11 to 12 pitch (we recommend Times New Roman or Arial). There should be no more than 60 lines of type per page. A two-column format is preferred. Pages may be printed on both sides. **Print on pages, including pictures, graphs, figures, data tables, and appendices, must also meet these requirements for size and spacing.**

# ***Requirements for the Sterling Performance Excellence Challenge Award Application***

Each copy of the Application must contain:

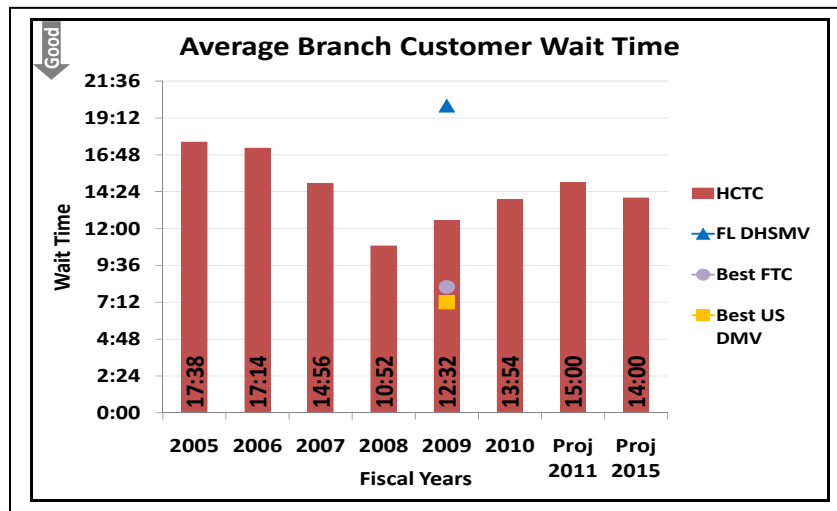
- A. Title Page with the name of the Applicant and, optionally, the Applicant's address, pictures, logo, the date, a statement indicating that it is an application for the Sterling Award and/or an organization statement regarding confidentiality of the content.
- B. Labeled tabs or dividers separating the sections of the report and containing only the title of the section.
- C. Table of Contents indicating the page number of the following: the Sterling Challenge Application form; the Organizational Chart(s); the Organizational Profile; the Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations; and each Category. Table and figures need not be included in the Table of Contents.
- D. Copy of the completed and signed Application form indicating that the Applicant agrees to the terms and conditions of the examination process, agrees to host a site visit, to facilitate an open and unbiased examination, and to pay reasonable costs associated with the site visit.
- E. Organizational Chart(s).
- F. Organizational Profile outlining the Applicant organization, addressing what is most important to the organization and the key factors that influence how it operates and where it is headed. The Organizational Profile is a vital part of the overall application. It is used by the Examiners in all stages of the application review, and is limited to five pages.
- G. Glossary of Terms and Abbreviations used in the application.
- H. Response addressing the Criteria Categories, responding separately to each of the Category's questions. The response is limited to 30 pages.  
  
Respond to each Category as a whole. Address each area with an emphasis that reflects the applicant organization and its performance system. To facilitate review by the Board of Examiners, respond to the areas for each Category in the order given.  
If a question within a Category does not pertain to the Applicant organization or its performance system, provide a statement of one or two sentences explaining why the area is not applicable.
- J. Back Cover – blank.

## *Requirements for Responding to Results Questions in Category 7*

Results for Category 7 Item should:

- A. Respond to the individual Category questions with appropriate numeric results that include a narrative description of the result along with a chart or table that provides, as much as possible, current performance levels; trend data, at least three years are preferred, if not available, at least three data points; and appropriate comparative data with proper designation. Narratives for results should be in a font of 11 to 12 pitch, and table and/or chart data should be in a font of at least eight pitch. As much as possible, charts and tables should include the actual numeric result. See below for an example showing a table and a chart done in the appropriate manner.

**EXAMPLE:** *Figure 7.1-3 Branch Customer Wait Time for Services* Since these services are not mandated by the state, they are not offered in many counties, especially those most similar to us. Wait time is a key factor that drives branch customer satisfaction.



**EXAMPLE:** *Figure 7.4-2 Factors of Employee Engagement* Results compared to Sterling Recipient\* and/or 100 Best Places to Work Winner\*\*, County best, and FTC best.

Top Factors of Employee Engagement	2007	2008	2009	2009 Comparisons		
	TC			Best State	Best in County	Best FTC
I have the tools and equipment to perform my job well.	97%	95%	95%	94%*	96%	95%
The equipment in my area is kept in good working order.	90%	92%	93%	88%	85%	89%
I know what is expected of me at work.	97%	97%	98%	76%**	95%	91%
I am satisfied with the work performance of my team members.	90%	82%	86%	n/a	90%	78%

- B. Each Challenge applicant will be asked to provide any updated Category 7 results at least 30 days prior to the site visit. Updated results may be provided in a larger font than in the Challenge Application if desired. In most cases, updated results are not accepted less than two weeks prior to site visit or during the site visit unless agreed upon by the Sterling Office and the Team Leader.
- C. Each Challenge applicant will be asked to participate in one or more one-hour conference calls to review the Category 7 results presented to ensure that the team has a full understanding of their significance to the organization. Any additional results requested by the team leader must be provided no less than two weeks prior to the beginning of the site visit. The Team Leader may ask for a few additional, important results on site.

# 2011 Performance Excellence Challenge Application Form

## GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Please update any information that has changed since the Application of Intent and type or very clearly print all information requested. The Application Form may be duplicated and single-sided pages submitted. Applicants must submit a copy of the Application Form with each copy of the Application. **A total of twelve (12) complete Applications are required to be submitted.**

## ITEM INSTRUCTIONS

Item 1 – Applicant — Provide the official name and mailing address of the organization applying for the Sterling Performance Excellence Challenge.

### 1. Applicant

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

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

Item 2 – Official Inquiry Point — As the Challenge examination proceeds, the Administrator may need to contact the Applicant for additional information.

Give the name, address, and telephone number of the official with authority to provide additional information or to arrange a Site Visit.

If this official contact point changes during the course of the Application process, please inform the Florida Sterling Council.

### 2. Official Inquiry Point

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

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_

Overnight Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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

### Item 3 – Fees —

Application of Intent fee	\$100
Small/Med. Org Application fee	\$1,500 (Submit with Application)
Large Organization Application fee	\$3,500 (Submit with Application)
Site Visit fee	\$2,000 (Submit 30 days prior to site visit)
Plus Examiner's Expenses	TBD (Billed after the site visit)

### 3. Fee (see instructions)

Enclosed is \$\_\_\_\_\_ to cover the Application Fee. Make check or money order payable to:

### THE FLORIDA STERLING COUNCIL

Item 4 – Release Statement — Please read this section carefully. A signed Challenge Application indicates that the Applicant agrees to the terms and conditions stated therein.

### 4. Release Statement

We understand this application will be reviewed by members of the Board of Examiners. We agree to host the Site Visit and facilitate an open and unbiased examination. We understand that Site Visit expenses will be determined in accordance with the section: Sterling Challenge Cost (page 5, *The Sterling Performance Excellence Challenge* book).

Item 5 – Authorizing Official — The signature of the Applicant's highest ranking management official or designee is required and indicates the Applicant will comply with the terms and conditions stated in the document.

### 5. Signature, Authorizing Official \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

# 2011 Application Package Checklist

*A complete Application package for the 2011 Sterling Challenge contains two parts:*

PART I – TWO DOCUMENTS

- 1) Application of Intent Form
- 2) Check for \$100.00

PART II – WRITTEN REPORT

- 1) Organizational Profile – up to five pages
- 2) Application – up to 30 pages
- 3) Check for the Application Fee: \$1,500 for small/medium organizations or \$3,500 for large organizations. See page 5 of *The Sterling Performance Excellence Challenge* book for details.
- 4) The site visit fee in the amount of \$2,000 is due 30 days before the site visit and is non refundable.

NOTE: Please submit twelve (12) copies of the Application.

All components of the Application should be securely fastened together to prevent separation during handling. **Do NOT use three-ring bulky binders or similar heavy covers.** Their use decreases the ease of handling in all phases of the evaluation process. Copies of video or audiotapes or other information aids are not allowed. Applications should be accompanied by a transmittal letter on the organization's official stationery.

**ALL SUBMISSIONS SHOULD BE MAILED TO:**

FLORIDA STERLING COUNCIL, INC.  
Post Office Box 13907  
Tallahassee, Florida 32317-3907

*For Overnight Delivery:*

FLORIDA STERLING COUNCIL, INC.  
501 South Calhoun Street  
Carlton Building Room 313  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

For Additional Information Concerning the Award, contact:

FLORIDA STERLING COUNCIL, INC.  
Post Office Box 13907  
Tallahassee, Florida 32317-3907  
Phone: (850) 922-5316  
John A. Pieno, Jr.  
Chairman  
or visit

**[www.floridasterling.com](http://www.floridasterling.com)**