ACE Diamond Standards: Mission Best Practice

1. Welcome to the Arkansas Diamond Standards

Welcome to the AR Diamond StandardsTM Assessment Tool. Completing this assessment is a key step in building an effective and efficient nonprofit organization---one that is better prepared to provide focused community services that fulfill your mission and vision. Before you begin, let's talk about the tool and its applications.

What is the tool:

1) A starting point for organizational assessment and planning. Many tools exist that access various components of organizational effectiveness. The purpose of the AR Diamond StandardsTM Assessment Tool is to provide a broad overview of your organization's current level of functioning and provide resources to strengthen areas in need of improvement.

2) A cross-reference ACTION tool that complements the AR Diamond StandardsTM Best Practices. ACE offers a Basic Infrastructure checklist and Assessment tool for organizations' to apply the principles and show their success! This assessment tool provides you with a series of action steps that will move an organization toward excellence.

3) A non-judgmental assessment tool and resource to help you know if you are a diamond or a diamond in the rough when it comes to nonprofit management. The Diamond Standards Assessment tool is NOT a report card or a tool to compare your organization to others. It is designed to outline identified good practices and identify potential challenges for your nonprofit operations. Organizations will score differently based on many factors including their Nonprofit Life Cycle. Do not worry!

4) Brief and relatively painless. It will take about one hour to complete the tool. This is about YOUR organizational capacity. Set realistic goals and answer honestly.

What the tool is NOT:

1) The be-all, end-all of organizational assessments. Many models exist and many are effective. It is designed to be a stepping stone---allowing you to identify your current strengths and challenges. Then, assist you in identifying resources that will enhance your opportunity for success.

What is the potential application of this tool:

1) Individual: as a new executive director or lead volunteer, you may find it helpful to use this tool as a way to orient yourself to the organization. As a seasoned executive or volunteer, use the tool as a way of reflection and assessment for future planning.

2) Team/Focus Group: for a broader use of the tool, gather a focus group that includes staff and board members. Compile the responses and use the answers as a way to define where you all stand on the organization's progress and development.

3) Board Assessment: invite the Board of Directors to complete the assessment as a way to define where you all stand on the organization's progress and development.

4) Consultant: if a consultant works with your organization currently, use the tool as a method of assessment for future planning.

Once the tool is complete, use its results to generate an "action plan" to prioritize areas that need to be addressed and/or celebrated moving forward. Allow the tool to provide a working framework for organizational improvement and excellence.

ACE Diamond Standards: Mission Best Practice

The tool is set out in the following manner:
Contents

I) Introduction: Description and Purpose of Tool

II) Components of the tool: Mission, Money, Management, Governance

III) An Action Plan

IV) Template

Good luck and enjoy the process! Should you have any questions, please contact ACE at (501) 375-1223. We are here to help you and support you in celebrating nonprofits' successes and helping nonprofits in our state succeed.

* 1. Please help fill out the following information before start.

Name:

Organization:

Address:

Address 2:

City/Town:

State:

ZIP/Postal Code:

Email Address:

Phone Number:

ACE Diamond Standards: Mission Best Practice

2. Purpose: mission, vision and values

The following section of the Arkansas Diamond StandardsTM, details the purpose of the organization through a primary lens of mission, vision, values, and advocacy.

Review the following section and answer honestly how often you utilize the following components in the organization's day to day work.

1. Our organization has a clearly defined, written mission statement that guides our overall aims and activities of the organization.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

Other (please specify)

2. Our organization has adopted a statement presenting a clear, articulate,and inspiring vision of what it will achieve within a specific time frame (3 years or 5 years, depending on your strategic plan).

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree
- ☐ Unsure

3. Our organization has a clearly written value statement that guides our overall aims and activities.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

4. Our mission, vision, and value statements are periodically reviewed by the board to consider societal and community changes.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

5. Our board and staff can articulate a shared vision for the organization.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

ACE Diamond Standards: Mission Best Practice

3. Planning

This section is to evaluate the strategic planning process of your organization on how to achieve the goals set under your mission.

Review the following section and answer honestly how often you utilize the following components in the organization's day to day work.

1. Our organization is responsive to community needs and solicits input from a variety of sources such as staff, volunteers, donors, clients and other stakeholders when planning for its activities.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

2. Our organization consults with counterparts in the field in order to maximize opportunities for collaboration, avoid duplication of services and best use community resources.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

3. Our organization has a written strategic plan.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

4. Our strategic plan includes clearly defined goals and objectives and includes the necessary staffing and resources to ensure the goals will be met.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

5. Our strategic plan reflects the results of an environmental scan that includes information on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and perceived threats.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

6. Our strategic plan has clearly defined specific activities and individual/group responsibility for their implementation.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

7. Our strategic plan helps us measure activities and outcomes and is tied to our organizational budget.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

8. My organization has identified a way to track progress in implementing plans and achieving goals

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

9. Our strategic plan provides a framework for regular progress reports and is reviewed and updated every three to five years.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

10. Our strategic plan is a useful management tool for measuring activities and outcomes.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

11. Our organization has a formal risk management plan that is monitored by a dedicated committee of the board.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

12. Our organization has a disaster management plan that protects the organization's assets including its property, financial and human resources, and programmatic content and material.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

13. Programs and services are driven by the mission and vision of the organization.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

14. Programs are operated and delivered in a manner consistent with the values of the organization.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

15. My organization creates an environment conducive to lifelong learning for its employees and has a process for developing ideas for new programs to serve its clients better or to generate new sources of revenue.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

ACE Diamond Standards: Mission Best Practice

4. Public Policy and Advocacy

You are in part of the public voice in shaping public policy on matters to affect a healthy growth of the sector as a whole. Do you want to know about your performance?

Review the following section and answer honestly how often you utilize the following components in the organization's day to day work.

1. Our nonprofit advocates publicly on behalf of its mission and organizational values.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

2. Our nonprofit advocates for the sector with regard to tax exemption and nonprofit status.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

3. Our nonprofit ensures that the activities of the organization are nonpartisan. *US

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

4. We promote nonpartisan efforts to encourage voting and other participation in federal, state and local policy making.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

5. If our constituencies are affected by government actions, we provide public forums for discussion and information about the effects of all the various policy choices.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

6. We take appropriate public positions on relevant issues while working and communicating with other organizations to inform the public about these issues.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

7. We maintain a sound understanding of the current public policy environment in our activity area and the resulting impacts on the communities we serve.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

8. If engaged in public policy and advocacy activities, we have adopted a written policy that clarifies the scope of the work as well as the time and resources to be allocated to those activities.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

9. We file accurate and timely reports on our lobbying activities with Arkansas Ethics Commission and comply with all laws governing politics and elections. *AR/US (http://www.arkansasethics.com)

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

10. If we are federally funded, we do not use federal funds to pay for lobbying activities. *US

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

11. We join together with other nonprofits around policy issues to strengthen their impact on public policy.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

12. We ensure that the information provided to policy makers, the media and the general public is timely and accurate, and that the social and political context of the information is clear.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

13. We assist our constituencies in developing skills and learning about opportunities for public and civic engagement.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

ACE Diamond Standards: Mission Best Practice

5. Strategic Alliances

As a charitable organization, giving is as much important as sharing. This section helps you know your partnership with others benefiting to you and your future in the sector.

Review the following section and answer honestly how often you utilize the following components in the organization's day to day work.

1. We are open to strategic alliances as a means to help achieve goals, improve effectiveness and efficiency and/or strengthen community connections with clients and others.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

2. We carefully consider how entering into strategic alliances will affect all parties involved.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

3. If we undertake responsibility of fiscal sponsorship of another organization, we have full knowledge of the legal obligations and have full board approval.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

4. We are aware of and coordinate with other organizations providing similar or complementary services in our communities.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

5. We work to establish communication channels, mutual understanding and natural alliances among government, non profit and for-profit sectors.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

6. We openly communicate with other nonprofits to share and gather information on lessons learned and best practices to avoid duplication of services and efforts.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

7. When making decisions regarding alliances, our organization ensures that they are in line with the strategic goals of the organization and will impact the brand and image of the organization positively.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

8. We do not create strategic alliances purely to meet funding challenges.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

9. We only create alliances with competent and functioning organizations.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

10. We get assistance from larger, more experienced nonprofits through alliances and resource sharing.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

11. We assist smaller and less experienced nonprofits through alliances and resource sharing.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

12. The organization establishes relationships with appropriate public agencies to pursue mutual policy goals and to promote reasonable regulatory practices.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A

13. The organization also pursues strategic relationships with compatible businesses which may provide contributions, in-kind gifts, new volunteers, and income generated from service contracts and cause related marketing.

- ◯ Strongly Agree
- ◯ Agree
- ◯ Disagree
- ◯ Strongly Disagree
- ◯ Unsure or N/A