



Application Process

Overview



Welcome!

Applying for BBB's Torch Awards for Ethics

Better Business Bureau® is a community based resource, a trusted advisor, and a partner in business. The BBB Torch Awards for Ethics embodies BBB's mission of advancing business trust and honors organizations whose leaders focus on the four C's measuring the **Character** of the organization's leadership; if and how an authentic **Culture** is being fostered; the company's transparent relationship with its **Customers**; and the impact the organization is making in the local **Community**.



Applicant Eligibility

- BBB Accreditation is not required
- For-profit and 501(c)(6) applicants must have a “B” or better rating with BBB
- 501(c)(3) non-profit applicants must be a BBB Accredited Charity prior to applying
- Organizations must have been in business for three years
- Applicants are not eligible if they have received the BBB Torch Awards for Ethics in the past five years
- All financial obligations must be met
- Government agencies are not eligible to submit an application
- There is no cost to apply



Application Criteria

Character

Strong ethical leadership starts with character. For this section, we want to understand how your organization's leaders set the tone for doing business the right way, especially when decisions are difficult, mistakes happen, or there is an opportunity to learn and improve.

Culture

A strong ethical culture is built through the everyday ways people work together. For this section, we want to understand how your organization creates a workplace where employees know what is expected, feel respected, and are encouraged to take part in doing business the right way.

Customers

Strong customer relationships are built through trust, care, and follow-through. For this section, we want to understand how your organization serves customers well, responds to concerns, and makes decisions that protect the customer's interests, even when doing so may not be the easiest or most convenient option.

Community

Trusted organizations understand that they are part of something larger than themselves. For this section, we want to understand how your organization contributes to the community around it through service, partnership, generosity, leadership, or support that reflects the organization's values.

Acceptable Use of AI

Applicants may use artificial intelligence tools to assist with brainstorming, organization, grammar, or drafting support. However, responses must ultimately reflect your organization’s own voice, experiences, examples, and values. Submissions should be authentic, truthful, and representative of your organization.

Submission Guidelines

As you prepare each response, please keep BBB’s Torch Awards application criteria at the center of your answers to reflect, demonstrate, and prove how trust shows up in decisions, systems, relationships, and outcomes through **character, culture, customers, and community**.



Character Show how leadership sets the ethical tone through intentional behavior, accountability, feedback, and support for ethical business practices.	Culture Demonstrate how the organization builds trust internally through shared purpose, employee empowerment, clear expectations, and opportunities for growth.
Customers Explain how the organization builds better customer relationships through proactive service, transparency, honesty, and ethical decision-making.	Community Describe how the organization returns value to the community through programs, service, contributions, and activities connected to its values.



The Judging Process

Entries are evaluated by an independent, voluntary panel of judges comprised of business and community leaders.

Your responses should provide a clear and authentic picture of how trust is practiced within your organization. Strong applications include specific examples, stories, decisions, practices, outcomes, and supporting materials that give judges a meaningful understanding of your organization's character, culture, customer relationships, and community impact.

The most compelling responses show not only what your organization values, but how those values are demonstrated through daily operations, leadership decisions, employee relationships, customer experiences, and community engagement.

Strong responses may include authentic stories, leadership decisions, employee examples, customer experiences, internal tools or training, policies, community partnerships, photos, handbooks, communications, recognition practices, or other supporting documents.

**Applicants will be notified in December*



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**TORCH
AWARDS
FOR ETHICS**

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Apply Now