

*Walter Lee Davis, Jr. &
Leonard H. Neiman*



**COUNCIL OF
EXCELLENCE
AWARD**

COUNCIL OF EXCELLENCE AWARD APPLICATION INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION



Created in 2014 with the first awards offered during 2015, the National Association of Estate Planners & Councils Council of Excellence Award is designed to recognize those councils affiliated with the NAEPC that are positioned toward success. The program criteria were carefully developed with all council sizes in mind by a task force of council leaders, past presidents of NAEPC, and current board members.

The Council of Excellence Award is named for two individuals who truly sought to strengthen the bond between NAEPC and its affiliated councils during their terms on the board. Walter Lee Davis, Jr. served as president of the association in 2008 and was instrumental in forming the Council Relations Committee, a group of volunteer members who are charged with being a liaison between affiliates and the national association. Leonard H. Neiman served the association as a board member for over fifteen years. He worked tirelessly to organize information about affiliated and unaffiliated councils around the country, and to make contact with their leadership to explain the benefit of membership. It is with much sadness that we acknowledge Len's passing in January 2017. He will certainly be missed by NAEPC.

AWARD

Council of Excellence Awards are offered within the following council sizes:

Extra Small/Small (1-100 members)
Medium (101 – 250 members)

Large (251 – 400 members)
Extra Large (401 members or more)

Each application will be assessed in the following seven areas: Leadership & Council Management; Membership Growth & Retention; Communications; Programming & Events; Financial Health; General & Consumer Outreach; and Involvement with NAEPC.

The award ceremony will take place at the Annual Estate Planning Strategies Conference during Council Leadership Day. Each winning council will be entitled to:

- Complimentary registration for two board members to attend the Annual Estate Planning Strategies Conference the year in which the honor is awarded
- An entire year of complimentary group webinars (one feed that can be viewed by a group of members in a single location)
- The option of utilizing the “No-charge Speaker Program” with NAEPC covering reasonable travel and lodging expenses to do so
- Mention within NAEPC newsletters and on www.NAEPC.org

At its discretion, the committee may also honor other councils that have demonstrated exemplary achievement with a “5 Star Council” award. This honor was awarded to a very small number of councils that applied in 2016. 5 Star Councils can take advantage of an entire year of complimentary group webinars (one feed that can be viewed by a group of members in a single location).



PROCESS

Councils that wish to apply for the 2017 Council of Excellence Award should complete the enclosed application and return it, along with additional requested documentation, to the NAEPC office on or before **Friday, May 5, 2017**.

Councils that applied previously and were awarded Council of Excellence status are permitted to apply again. *Please note, this policy is subject to change in future years.*

GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETING THE APPLICATION

This application is designed for simplicity and is quick and easy to complete.

The review committee prefers electronic submissions in a PDF format. Please contact the NAEPC office if your file is larger than 10MB in size to arrange for an alternative delivery address. Hard copy will also be accepted. You will receive an email confirmation that your application has been received.

The application requests several *required* attachments. They are:

- Complete programming schedule for two most recently completed fiscal or calendar years and/or a copy of an annual mailing that includes the full council schedule for the calendar or fiscal year
- Three to five recent meeting announcements

Supplemental information is also welcome. In an effort to ensure that we are able to review all applicants equally, the committee requests that supplemental information be submitted as described below. You may include a cover letter, general statement, and up to one page of narrative per each primary review category. The narrative should help us gain an understanding of the council and its style and member service, and will help the review committee in its evaluation. Please label each page clearly.

- Leadership & Council Management
- Membership Growth & Retention
- Communications
- Programming & Events
- Financial Health
- General & Consumer Outreach
- Involvement with NAEPC

We recommend including hyperlinks to specific areas of the council website or outside websites that contain information specific to your application, when applicable.

QUESTIONS

Please contact the NAEPC office at (866) 226-2224 or admin@naepc.org with questions.

**COUNCIL OF EXCELLENCE AWARD
APPLICATION**

A PowerPoint presentation, "Achieving Council Excellence, Wise Ways to Exceed Member Expectations and Score Higher on the Council of Excellence Award" can be downloaded [HERE](#) or by visiting the Council of Excellence page on www.NAEPc.org.

FOR AWARDS IN 2017

GENERAL COUNCIL INFORMATION

Application Date _____

Council Name _____

Primary Contact for Application _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Your position within the council (circle one) Administrator Board Member Officer

Current Membership Total _____

Date of Formation _____

Our council is applying in the following category:

Extra Small/Small (1-100 members) Large (251 – 400 members)
 Medium (101 – 250 members) Extra Large (401 members or more)

Please complete the remainder of this application in its entirety and return it, along with the following documents, to the NAEPC office by **Friday, May 5, 2017**.

Additional Documents:

- Complete programming schedule for two most recently completed fiscal or calendar years and/or a copy of an annual mailing that includes the full council schedule for the calendar or fiscal year
- Three to five recent meeting announcements
- Other items you feel would be helpful for the review committee that fit within the guidelines for completing the application (see "Guidelines for Completing the Application")

Electronic submissions to admin@naepc.org are *preferred*. Hard copy will also be accepted and must be postmarked by Friday, May 5, 2017.

National Association of Estate Planners & Councils
1120 Chester Ave., Ste. 470
Cleveland, OH 44114
(866) 226-2224 · admin@naepc.org

LEADERSHIP & COUNCIL MANAGEMENT

The key factor to the longevity of an estate planning council is an active and engaged board, chosen fairly from the membership at-large. Please check all of the items below that apply to your council.

- The council has a succession plan in place with regard to officers and maintains an eye to diversity with regard to the board structure.
 - We conduct a yearly self-assessment, whether using this application or other methods as a guide, and plan meetings and council activities based on the results.
 - We have current bylaws, follow them, and review them regularly.
 - We have an administrator or paid staff member.
- Our council has secured:
- (a) general liability insurance.
 - (b) directors & officers insurance.

__ See the attached narrative for more information about this section.

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH & RETENTION

The core value of NAEPC and its affiliated councils is support of the team concept of estate planning. As a result, membership should be reflective of the team. Please check all of the items below that apply to your council.

- Each year, we create a retention and growth goal and systematically monitor the progress of both, along with our total membership number.
- We have an active membership committee or our board of directors serves in this capacity.
- Our board has a process by which we regularly review the disciplines accepted for membership and make changes when indicated.
- Our council is warm and welcoming to guests, especially those from other Estate Planning Councils.
- We have alternative membership categories (junior, student, associate, etc.)
- We survey our membership periodically and are responsive to the feedback provided.
- We have a young member initiative.
- We recognize new members.
- We have a member to member recruitment campaign on an annual basis.
- We celebrate member milestones.

__ See the attached narrative for more information about this section.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communication with members as well as within the larger professional community is important to membership growth and retention. Please check all of the items below that apply to your council.

- Meeting and event announcements are sent well in advance and reminders are sent regularly until it takes place.
- Our announcements are thorough and include all pertinent information: speaker, topic, creative write-up/description, topic, location, how to register, etc.
- Our website is actively updated to keep it current, promote our activities, and be a resource for members and visitors.
- Payments for dues and/or meetings are accepted in a manner that is convenient to our members and/or guests.
- Meetings and events are scheduled to avoid overlap with our related professional organizations and are observant of all holidays.

___ See the attached narrative for more information about this section.

PROGRAMMING & EVENTS

Estate planning councils are often praised for two of their strongest qualities – providing an excellent networking opportunity and offering outstanding professional education. Please check all of the items below that apply to your council.

- We offer relevant, timely, and interesting programs and events.
- Throughout our programming year or season, all of the disciplines are represented within the programming schedule.
- We focus on ensuring that a reasonable number of our members attend one or more programs each year.
- We have implemented special, non-educational events in an effort to appeal to a larger cross-section of members and potential members.
- Our council offers multi-disciplinary continuing education credit, to the extent that CEs are required or available.

___ See the attached narrative for more information about this section.

FINANCIAL HEALTH

A financially healthy council is a strong council. Please check all of the items below that apply to your council.

- A budget is prepared yearly and monitored, our board hears a financial report from the treasurer on a regular schedule, and adjustments are implemented when necessary.
- We accept sponsors for meetings, our website, or other purposes.
- Non-dues revenue is a focus of our board discussion.
- We operated under budget during the most recently closed calendar or fiscal year and expect to do so again for the current calendar or fiscal year.
- Our board has a plan to maintain at least six months of operating expenses in reserve.

___ See the attached narrative for more information about this section.

GENERAL & CONSUMER OUTREACH

NAEPC encourages councils to engage in public outreach and recommends doing so in conjunction with National Estate Planning Awareness Week. In addition, some councils choose to team up with allied professional associations in their home community for the benefit of their members. Please check all of the items below that apply to your council.

- A membership directory accessible to consumers and other professionals who may be looking for a referral (examples: online member listing, electronic or hard copy directory, etc)
- Plans are in place for a future outreach program.
- We host/co-host an Estate Planning Day in our community and/or provide one-on-one pro-bono outreach assistance programs
- To the extent that they are available, we have joint meetings with our allied professional organizations.
- We offer college outreach and/or award scholarship grants.

___ Our council is not involved in public outreach programs/events.

___ See the attached narrative for more information about this section.

INVOLVEMENT WITH NAEPC

NAEPC offers a variety of programs and services to benefit the council and its membership. Please check all of the items below that apply to your council.

- Our board contains a position that serves as a liaison to NAEPC and this person reports regularly at our board meetings.
- We have a website hosted through NAEPC or have a website hosted by another vendor that contains ample links to the NAEPC national website and the information contained within regarding member benefits, etc.
- We participate in the Every Council Campaign or use a substitute method to distribute the information contained within *NAEPC News*, including benefits available to our members.
- Accredited Estate Planner® designees within our membership are recognized regularly.
- We have participated in the Council Nominated Accredited Estate Planner® designation program.
- Our council sends a leader and/or administrator to Council Leadership Day at the Annual Estate Planning Strategies Conference every year.
- We provide information about the Annual Estate Planning Strategies Conference to our membership and encourage attendance.
- We use the LISI service offered through NAEPC.
- We have used a webinar hosted by NAEPC as an educational event in the past.
- We forward information provided by NAEPC about the webinars to our membership.
- Our membership is encouraged to volunteer with NAEPC.
- Someone within our board is currently volunteering for NAEPC.
- Someone within our membership is currently volunteering for NAEPC.
- We offer mention of the *NAEPC Journal of Estate & Tax Planning* to our membership.
- Our council has used the "No-Charge Speaker Program" or online speaker library in the past.

___ See the attached narrative for more information about this section.

SUCCESES, CHALLENGES & WHAT MAKES US UNIQUE

Each of the 260+ councils affiliated with NAEPC experiences success, encounters challenges, and has programs or services in place that make them distinctive. Please take a moment to share your story: