

## Would the Founding Fathers Have Embraced Baldrige? May 29, 2014, By Dawn Bailey

A recent blog aimed at Federal government employees really caught my interest. "[A Government Program That Has Withstood the Test of Time](#)" written by Timothy J. Clark highlights how the Baldrige Criteria can be used within U.S. government agencies—with the push for their use coming not necessarily from "the top" but from American citizens themselves."

In the United States, the government's role in society continues to expand at the same time budgets are being reduced through sequestration," writes Clark. "And citizens debate the role of government but yet expect that their tax dollars be used as effectively and efficiently as possible. So, why not try a new and proven approach to assess and improve the government's organizational performance?"

Clark lists some of the ways that the Baldrige Criteria could be used to support government agencies:

- To conduct an annual assessment that government agencies are efficiently and effectively utilizing all assigned resources, as required by the Federal Managers Financial Integrity Act (FMFIA)
- To ensure effective financial management systems (i.e., write the Statement of Assurance [SoA]) that meet the objectives of FMFIA
- To meet the Government Accountability Office (GAO) requirement for conducting an entity (organizational)-level assessment
- To gain insight on whether the agency's own implementation strategies are resulting in real improvements (through Criteria assessments)

"The Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence may be among the closest things we have in the United States to a common language and proven methodology for assessing and improving organizational performance within and across industries," writes Clark. "I would like to think the U.S. Founding Fathers would have embraced the Baldrige concept as a method for helping to ensure that the political system they built would be continually improved in pursuit of their aim for a more perfect union." Clark adds, "Application of the Baldrige criteria separates the leaders from the managers," defining effective leaders as those who

- Continually improve performance
- Accept the risks associated with implementing a method that embraces more accountability as well as transparency
- Introduce a higher standard of organizational performance

To add to this case for U.S. government use, we know that nearly 100 international programs use the Baldrige Criteria in their entirety, translated, benchmarked, or adapted as their performance excellence models.

Many of these countries also tie their performance excellence models directly to their governments in terms of recognition, funding, education, and certification. Some examples that have been recently highlighted in Blogrige are Singapore and Thailand, New Zealand, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, and many others

The Baldrige Program also works closely with the Global Excellence Model (GEM) Council that consists of organizations recognized globally as the guardians of premier excellence models and award programs in their geographic regions; GEM includes the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) and the Japan Quality Award, among other members

Do you think the case has been made for U.S. government agencies to learn more about how the Baldrige Criteria can lead to more effective and efficient operations? If not, how would *you* make the case?

### **About The Author**

[Dawn Bailey](#) is a writer/editor for the Baldrige Program and involved in all aspects of communications, from leading the Baldrige Executive Fellows program to managing the direction of case studies, social media efforts, and assessment teams.