

POST 1 of 2:

The National Standards team is receiving a lot of the same questions lately, so I want to address them in the Exchange as well as in individual communications. I will write two posts. The first post will answer questions about the value of accreditation and the time frame for submissions. The second will be questions related directly to the application process. You can always reach us at submissions@cfstandards.org or 703-879-0672.

QUESTIONS ABOUT NATIONAL STANDARDS VALUE

The Council on Foundations worked with the National Standards Board to create a webpage and brochure on the value of National Standards that you can share with your community. We also upgraded the National Standards toolkit. All accredited community foundations have access to these materials. If you have trouble accessing these materials, please email membership@cof.org.

Value of Accreditation: [National Standards for U.S. Community Foundations®](#)

Value of Accreditation E-Brochure: [National Standards](#)

National Standards Marketing Toolkit: <http://www.cof.org/content/national-standards-communications-toolkit>

National Standards Logo and Usage

Guidelines: http://www.cof.org/sites/default/files/documents/files/NationalStandards-Seal_Guidelines.pdf

Map of Accredited Community Foundations: [Community Foundation Locator | Community Foundations National Standards Board](#)

QUESTIONS ABOUT LENGTH OF PROCESS

National Standards Application Process Page: [Achieving National Standards Compliance | Community Foundations National Standards Board](#)

Which Month of Submissions Are in Review Now?

The National Standards program is currently reviewing December submissions as well as supplemental reviews.

How Long Does the Review Process Take:

National Standards accreditation takes between 12-18 months. Is this ideal? No. Your first review will take six months and then we will have several rounds of reviews for supplemental materials that will each take a few months. This is why we ask you to submit 12 months before your accreditation date expires. If you don't know your accreditation expiration date, please visit, [Community Foundation Locator | Community Foundations National Standards Board](#). We've upgraded the map with your accreditation date so that you don't need to email us. NOTE: If the date you see is 12/31/YEAR, you are likely in an extension period for the YEAR listed. When you are in process, we auto extend you to the end of that year, so that your community foundation does not lose accreditation while being reviewed.

Why Does the Review Take So Long:

As you know, the National Standards application is extensive. Once you submit, your application is reviewed by a legal reviewer, a peer reviewer, and the National Standards team. The National Standards team

compiles the reviewer comments and reviews any conflicts among reviewers comments to clarify them to the applicant.

Will the Time Frame Ever Change:

The National Standards program has added staff and reviewers to assist with reviews. Rather than relying solely on volunteers, we have some contracted services. We train all reviewers both at in person trainings and via their reviews. We hope to get the process under 6 months in the next two years (if not sooner).

What Can Community Foundations Do to Cut Down Review Times:

1. Recommend staff to be trained as reviewers by emailing submissions@cfstandards.org
2. Send your comments on how to improve the application to submissions@cfstandards.org. We take your recommendations seriously and we've kept the application in BETA, because we continue to receive feedback on how to improve the clarity of questions

Lara Kalwinski, Esq. | Director of National Standards and Counsel
703.879.0672 | lara.kalwinski@cof.org

