

# National Standards for U.S. Community Foundations

## OVERVIEW

Developed in the spirit of **accountability, transparency** and continuous **self-improvement**, and updated to meet the evolving realities of community foundations, National Standards for U.S. Community Foundations are evidence that as community foundations, we are committed to excellence for our communities and our donors.

Since 2000, more than 450 community foundations have been confirmed in compliance with the most rigorous standards in philanthropy and are displaying the National Standards Seal that denotes the achievement. Intended both as a blueprint for internal organizational development and as a tangible set of benchmarks for external assessment of performance, the 41 National Standards address six key areas of community foundation operations:

- Mission, structure and governance
- Resource development
- Stewardship and accountability
- Grantmaking and community leadership
- Donor relations
- Communications

### **Updated Standards. Updated Process.**

National Standards and key elements have been updated to eliminate redundancy, create less work, and reflect new legislation, such as the Pension Protection Act. National Standards also cover new areas, including geographic component funds (affiliates), human resources, whistleblower policies, and others.

Compliance with National Standards is valid for five years. 2010 marks the first year that a community foundation can be reconfirmed in compliance with Standards. The **reconfirmation process** has been streamlined so community foundations need only:

- Satisfy all **new National Standards**
- Show evidence of meeting **Pension Protection Act** requirements
- Include **all required core materials** (such as IRS Form 990 and Annual Report)
- Submit **materials reflecting changes** since first being confirmed in compliance
- Submit a **board resolution** confirming that all other items of the original Standards book remain accurate

### **Technical Assistance Partnership**

A series of **field-wide webinars** is being offered in partnership with regional and community foundation associations to assist organizations seeking confirmation or reconfirmation with National Standards.

In addition, a robust **National Standards website** will provide tab-by-tab support—sample documents, FAQs, tips, glossary terms, sample language, and more.

### **Cost of Accreditation**

Fees for National Standards help defray the cost of confirmation and reconfirmation while payment options allow expenses to be spread out over three years. The **annual commitment** amortized over the five years of compliance is \$400 to \$420 per year for confirmation and \$360 to \$380 per year for reconfirmation.