

# A Continuous Improvement Pathway

An overview of resources for high performance



Leap of Reason AMBASSADORS COMMUNITY

The Performance Imperative and the Performance Practice—our [continuous improvement resources](#)—provide a succinct, focused approach to help organizations discover and act on ways to improve.

## The Performance Imperative

The [Performance Imperative](#) (published 2015, revised in 2018) helps nonprofits and public agencies (and their stakeholders) continuously improve by **defining** high performance and providing a framework of seven organizational **disciplines** (or pillars) it takes to achieve it.

To make these seven organizational disciplines actionable and not just aspirational, the [Leap Ambassadors](#) flesh them out with principles, or tenets, that underlie and support each discipline.

## The Performance Practice

The [Performance Practice](#) (published 2016, revised in 2019) enables organizations to delve deeper into the Performance Imperative and use it as the basis for ongoing reflection, learning, and continuous improvement. It provides:

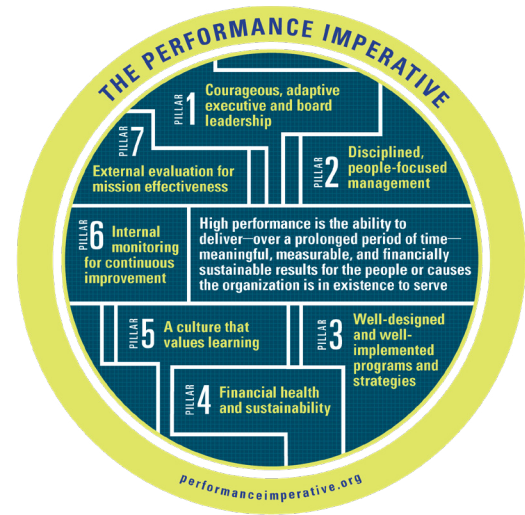
- A series of proof points (concrete **behaviors** and specific practices) that flesh out each of the Performance Imperative principles. They allow an extensive, in-depth look into the organization and a broad lens to identify areas for improvement.
- A modular structure that provides different paths into organizational improvement with proof points organized and presented for each of the framework's seven organizational disciplines. Leaders can select one module (or several at a time) and work through each discipline in their own way and at their own pace.

## How the Resources Help Organizations Improve

Leaders using the Performance Imperative and the Performance Practice come to master the critical disciplines they need to ensure that they're achieving net impact (results beyond what would have happened anyway) and avoiding inadvertent harm. The result is building a high-performing organization delivering—over a prolonged period of time—meaningful, measurable, and financially sustainable results for the people or causes the organization is in existence to serve.

Users of these resources will:

- **Benefit from the collective expertise of 60+ creators from the Leap Ambassadors Community:** nonprofit practitioners, researchers, funders, and consultants who represent a diversity of experiences, locations, ages, and races.
- **Uncover “hidden” strengths and opportunities** by involving multiple stakeholders in your organization in a process of reflecting, learning, and developing shared understanding of challenges, positions, and plans.
- **Disrupt complacency** and nurture a culture of learning by stepping back to reflect, acknowledge problems, and take action to solve them.



*The definition of high performance and the seven organizational disciplines that support it*



- **Engage in an improvement initiative** on their own terms by using these flexible resources in whatever way aligns best with their needs, availability, and workload.
- **Learn and improve, no matter their budget** by accessing the resources of the Leap Ambassadors Community at no charge.

## Who Can Use the Resources?

The Leap Ambassadors built these resources to support [social-sector leaders](#) in their continuous improvement efforts. [Funders](#) may use them to better support their grantees and contractors to improve. [Consultants](#), advisors, and others involved in organizational and talent development can use them to better advise and support their nonprofit, public agency, and funder clients.

## FAQs

### 1. How have other organizations used and benefited from the resources?

Two organizations—the Lawrence School and Southview Community Church—share experiences and tips in the [Performance Practice playlist](#) on the Leap Ambassadors Community YouTube channel. Additionally, see these Performance in Action stories:

- [Springboard to High Performance](#) for new leaders
- Friends of the Children’s [Year of Leadership Development](#)
- The former head of Lawrence School’s [First-Person POV: A Kick in our Behinds](#)
- Southview Community Church’s [Aha Moment, “Gut Check,” and Plan to Keep Learning](#)
- [Forging a Path to Educational Equity](#) at Tri-County Cradle to Career

### 2. Do you help organizations use the resources?

The Leap Ambassadors Community does not provide consulting services, but the support team is happy to answer questions. Email us at [PerformancePractice@leapambassadors.org](mailto:PerformancePractice@leapambassadors.org). We can put organizations in touch with individual ambassadors who provide consulting services related to the continuous improvement resources, but we cannot endorse any individual consultant’s services.

### 3. Do we need a consultant?

Many use the resources successfully on their own, while others choose to hire a consultant. The need for a consultant is dependent on organizational context and purpose for using the resources.

### 4. Why are the resources free?

The resources are complimentary in an effort to advance the Leap Ambassadors’ mission. The Leap Ambassadors Community and its support team are staffed and funded by [Morino Ventures/Institute](#).

### 5. Can we modify the resources to suit our needs?

The resources are licensed under the Creative Commons, which allows for unmodified use with appropriate attribution. We also allow adaptations or derivatives under certain conditions. Please [refer to our licensing terms](#).

Learn more at <https://leapambassadors.org/continuous-improvement/>

The Leap of Reason Ambassadors Community is a private community built around nonprofit leaders and funders and augmented by others with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. Our mission is to convince social-sector leaders to invest in continuous improvement so nonprofits can achieve more meaningful, measurable, and financially sustainable results.