

2026

 **Character.org**  
*powered by CharacterPlus®*

# GUIDE TO APPLYING FOR A **PROMISING PRACTICE**





# WELCOME

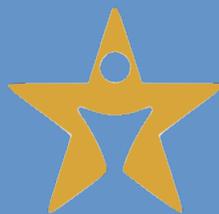
On behalf of the entire team of the newly combined Character.org and CharacterPlus, I am excited to welcome you to the Schools of Character family. We are so glad that you are interested in applying for a Promising Practice!

Promising Practices are effective and replicable practices that both inspire “goodness in action” and contribute to the field of character development. Examples can be found on the [Promising Practices page](#) of our website.

Every year we are proud to recognize creative and innovative practices, programs, and approaches that demonstrate a positive impact, promote a particular character strength (or several), engage multiple stakeholders (such as students, staff, caregivers, and community members), and align with the core values of a school or organization.

Each Promising Practice must also align with at least one of our *11 Principles*. These practices often focus on building relationships, creating a sense of belonging, encouraging service learning, improving behavior, amplifying student voice and leadership, and involving parents and the wider community.

The Character.org and CharacterPlus teams are here to support your school—wherever you are in the world—in implementing your character development initiative. Please don’t hesitate to reach out with questions. We look forward to working with you!



Diana Dodson  
Coordinator  
Promising Practices  
diana@character.org

## APPLICATION TIMELINE

- ★ [Promising Practices application](#) opens on the Character.org website on September 19, 2025.
- ★ Applications are due by March 27, 2026 (11:59 EST)
- ★ Promising Practice recipients will be announced May 15th, 2026

We invite your school, district, or organization to submit multiple applications for different practices. However, no more than **three** will be recognized each year. (This means a district can be recognized for up to three district-level practices, and each school in the district can be recognized for up to three practices, too.)



## WHO CAN APPLY?

All Pre-K through 12th grade U.S. and international schools and districts are eligible to submit Promising Practices. Organizations, sports teams, community partners, and businesses are also eligible.

## WHEN SHOULD OUR SCHOOL APPLY?

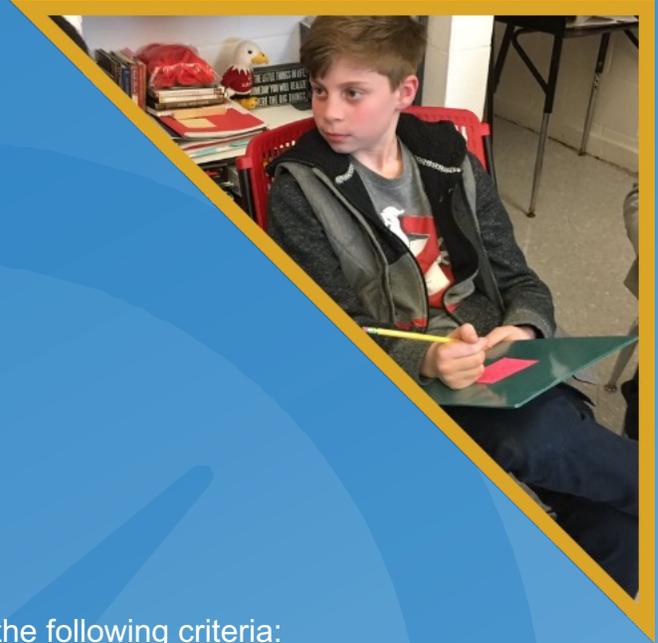
Promising Practices can serve as important first steps—or stepping stones—for schools and organizations just beginning their character journey. Recognition for a Promising Practice affirms to staff, students, families, and the community that character efforts are intentional and making a meaningful impact.

Promising Practices are also an excellent way for current Emerging, Honorable Mention, State, and National Schools of Character to maintain momentum, deepen their character initiative, and share best practices with other schools.

## WHAT IS THE COST?

The fee to apply is \$125 if you use a credit card, and \$150 if you use a purchase order. You will receive a link to pay after you submit your application if you choose to pay by credit card.





## THE EVALUATION PROCESS

Character.org evaluates each application using the following criteria:

- ★ The degree to which the practice or program is innovative, significant, and contributes to the field of character development.
- ★ The extent to which the practice aligns with one or more principles in our *11 Principles Framework for Schools*.
- ★ The clarity with which the application narrative demonstrates the impact of the practice on students, staff, parents, or community members.



## TIPS FOR WRITING AND SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION

- ☎ If you would like a free template of the Promising Practices application for your school to use, please email [diana@character.org](mailto:diana@character.org).
- ☎ Please make sure to review Character.org's *11 Principles Framework for Schools* before beginning your application. You can find a brief overview [here](#) or order a copy of the full framework [here](#).
- ☎ While we welcome applications from outside the United States, please note that we can only accept applications written in English.
- ☎ You will be asked to include one photo with your application. A great photo tells a story by capturing action or emotion. Photos should be in focus and submitted as PNG or JPG files. Please do not upload Word or PDF documents, building shots, posters, collages, or objects. Screenshots from social media should not be used. Please note: We love sharing Promising Practices on our website and social media! Follow these photo tips so we can highlight your practice if it is recognized.
- ☎ If your photo includes young people, please ensure that all relevant photo release policies are followed. Photos may appear on Character.org's website, social media, publications, and at recognition events if your practice is selected.
- ☎ You may save and return to your application as many times as needed until you click the 'Submit' button at the end. Once submitted, the application cannot be edited.
- ☎ If you have trouble submitting the application, try using a different browser (Google Chrome has worked well for most applicants). We recommend working on your application in the template or a Word or Google doc as a backup.
- ☎ If you have issues with the application, please contact [diana@character.org](mailto:diana@character.org).



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