



Certified Chamber Program

Purpose:

The Oklahoma Chamber of Commerce Executives' Certified Chamber Program is designed to establish standard organizational competencies as well as an objective set of criteria for assessment. An examining committee will be established annually to award accreditation credentials.

About the Program:

- This program is voluntary and is open to any organization that is a member of Oklahoma Chamber of Commerce Executives.
- Any chamber currently accredited through the US Chamber of Commerce's accreditation process is exempt from all application requirements except the application fee. Chambers requesting the application waiver shall submit proof of accreditation to the committee for review.
- The program shall be reviewed annually to evaluate the appropriateness of the criteria and effectiveness of the program.

Why should a chamber become accredited?

Accreditation demonstrates the organization's commitment to industry standards and best practices as established by the state's only professional development organization for chambers of commerce.

Accreditation will benefit a chamber by:

- Committing the chamber to meet standards established by the best collective wisdom of OCCE members
- Increasing the organization's credibility in the community and the industry
- Helping differentiate between organizational excellence standards met by accredited chambers and those that have not
- Establishing industry best practices and providing goals and metrics for an organization to meet

Chambers that apply for accreditation will receive feedback from the committee, regardless of accreditation status, that can be used to improve the organization.

After Application

- Approved chambers will be recognized at the OCCE Annual Conference and will be provided a certificate and a press release.
- Chambers deemed "Suggested Improvement" will be issued a letter with specific suggestions that, if implemented, may result in an approved designation
- Chambers that are not approved are encouraged to apply again. However, the application fee will be assessed again.

2021 Program Application Timelines:

- **May 2021**.....Want to Know More about the Program? (Zoom meeting)
- **June 30, 2021**....Deadline of Notification of Intent to Apply (by email)
- **Aug 31, 2021**.....Deadline for application and supporting documents
- **Sep 6-10, 2021**...Committee reviews applications and makes contact for clarifications
- **Oct 28, 2021**.....Recognition at 2021 OCCE Annual Awards Banquet



Certified Chamber Program Criteria

Organization

- Chamber has received 501(c)(6) or 501(c)(3) designation from the IRS
- Chamber has Articles of Incorporation filed with appropriate state entity
- Chamber has an established and sound governing structure
- Chamber's board of directors and volunteer leaders are an accurate representation of the chamber's membership and service area

Service Intent and Capacity

- Chamber has a mission statement that is consistent with the goals and objectives of a chamber of commerce
- Chamber has a program of work that reflects its mission and guides its daily activities
- Chamber implements programs and services that meet the current needs of its members and the community at-large

Professional Administration

- Chamber employs sufficient staff to achieve its program of work
- Chamber has developed and implemented a personnel and procedures manual(s)
- Chamber promotes quality work performance and encourages excellence through appropriate job descriptions
- Chamber has established criteria for and conducts performance evaluations
- Chamber provides for the ongoing professional development of staff

Financial Management

- Chamber develops and implements an annual budget that demonstrates sound fiscal management
- Chamber generates and maintains financial reports on at least a quarterly basis
- Chamber submits annual filings to the IRS (if applicable)
- Chamber protects the fiduciary interest of the chamber, members and staff through an insurance program

Communications

- Chamber has a media relations/communications program
- Chamber markets its products, services and benefits to its members
- Chamber utilizes a quality mass email distribution program
- Chamber has a style or branding guide for the organization



Certified Chamber Program Documentation

**Note that all submitted data is considered confidential and will be reviewed only by the Accreditation Committee.

Organization

Enclosed

- _____ Articles of Incorporation
- _____ Certification letter as an IRS 501(c)(6) or 501(c)3
- _____ Mission Statement
- _____ Bylaws and description of review process
- _____ Board of Directors roster (include company, terms, and industry type)
- _____ Organizational Chart(s)
- _____ Board of Directors Orientation process
- _____ Description of process used to evaluate board member performance
- _____ Sample board minutes
- _____ Copy of dues structure
- _____ List and describe other entities that are part of the Chamber
- _____ Copy of Non-Profit Directors & Officers Liability Insurance

Mission Focus

Enclosed

- _____ Most recent annual report
- _____ Description of service area
- _____ Program of Work/Business Plan
- _____ Retention Plan
- _____ Description of services available to members (incl. programs, products)
- _____ Description of process used to determine member needs

Professional Administration

Enclosed

- _____ Staff organization chart
- _____ List of all staff members, titles, and job descriptions
- _____ Employee handbook
- _____ Staff evaluation process
- _____ Staff development policy and budget (how organization handles professional development)
- _____ List any professional development attended and achieved by staff over the past three years, including certifications

Financial Management

Enclosed

- _____ Copy of current annual budget
- _____ Copy of previous year ending financial statements (Statement of Activity & Statement of Financial Position)
- _____ Copy of most recent IRS 990 filing
- _____ Copy or description of financial policies (may incl. annual reviews/audits)
- _____ Proof of workers' compensation and general liability insurance coverage
- _____ Copy of most recent financial audit, if applicable

Communications

Enclosed

- _____ Sample of recent press releases
- _____ Two recent samples of member newsletters
- _____ Two recent samples of social media communications
- _____ Link to or copy of membership directory
- _____ Description of member database software (CRM)
- _____ Copy of communications plan
- _____ Copy of chamber style guide
- _____ Link to chamber website

Advocacy

Enclosed

- _____ Description of process or policy used to advocate for local, state and national issues that affect members
- _____ Description of advocacy activities (including forums, etc.)

Note: The applicant may be required to meet via conference call with the committee or answer/clarify questions.

To Submit:

Send completed packet (.pdf format) or dropbox link to Ruth Littlefield at:
ruth@littlefieldmanagement.com

or by mail:
Oklahoma Chamber of Commerce Executives
Ruth Littlefield
P.O. Box 1729
Broken Arrow, OK 74013-7429