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, press release, and web banner.
- 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.

2024 Program Application Timelines:

➢ **July 30, 2024**……..……..Want to Know More about the Program? (Zoom meeting)

➢ **August 9, 2024**……...... Deadline of Notification of Intent to Apply (by email)

➢ **Sept. 27, 2024**……..…….Deadline for application and supporting documents

➢ **Sept. 30-Oct 11, 2024**…Committee reviews applications and makes contact for

clarifications

➢ **October 22, 2024**……......Recognition at 2023 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

Certified Chamber Program Application

2024 Application Deadline: Friday, September 27, 2024

Chamber Name

Person responsible for this application (name, title)

Address (Physical and Mailing)

City   State   ZIP Code

Telephone   Email (applicant)

Website address

Payment
There is a non-refundable $300 application fee that must accompany this application in order for evaluation to occur. Checks should be made out to Oklahoma Chamber of Commerce Executives (or OCCE).

Supporting Information
Paid full-time executive: Yes   -or-   No (circle one)

Number of employees on staff: _____ full-time   _____ part-time

Total Operating Budget: $_____   Total Dues Budget: $_____

Number of members: _____

Previous 12 months' retention rate: _____
(total of members at beginning, subtract total drops; DO NOT ADD NEW MEMBERS)

Certified Chamber Program Application
(For Chambers Currently Accredited by US Chamber)

2024 Application Deadline: Friday, September 27, 2024

_____

Chamber Name

_____

Person responsible for this application (name, title)

_____

Address (Physical and Mailing)

_____

City   State   ZIP Code

_____

Telephone   Email (applicant)

_____

Website address

Payment
There is a non-refundable $150 application fee that must accompany this application in order for evaluation to occur. Checks should be made out to Oklahoma Chamber of Commerce Executives (or OCCE).

Supporting Information
Paid full-time executive: Yes   -or-   No (circle one)

Number of employees on staff: _____ full-time   _____ part-time

Total Operating Budget: $_____   Total Dues Budget: $_____

Number of members: _____

Previous 12 months' retention rate: _____
(total of members at beginning, subtract total drops; DO NOT ADD NEW MEMBERS)

Include documentation of your current accreditation with the US Chamber. No other documentation is required.