



UNITED STATES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

# ACCREDITATION

## 2025 Accreditation Application for Local Chambers

### Section 1: Governance

# 1. Governance

## Standard

An Accredited chamber defines the architecture of its governing system. There is a clearly developed purpose and mission statement that is shared by board members and staff alike. The organizational structure is defined and the board of directors and staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities.

## Minimum Qualifications

- Articles of incorporation or charter
- Mission statement: clear and feasible
- Bylaws:
  - Regulate the fundamental areas of chamber structure and operation
  - Are adequate for the laws of the state and the protection of both the organization and its members
  - Have been shared with the board
  - Have been reviewed by legal counsel
- Organizational structure
  - Organizational chart(s) are clear and appropriate to the chamber's size, structure, and goals
  - Organizational chart(s) depict proper flow of information, hierarchy, and subsidiaries.
  - Each component of the organizational structure is assigned to staff
- Functional board of directors: term limits and job descriptions in place
- Board meetings: held on a regular basis and minutes retained
- Review process exists to evaluate performance of officers and directors
- Proper committee descriptions and structure in place

## Required Attachment Checklist

- A 1.1 Current articles of incorporation or charter
- A 1.2 Bylaws
- A 1.3 Organizational chart(s) with staff assignments
- A 1.4 Sample job description for the board of directors
- A 1.5 Minutes for the three most recent board meetings
- A 1.6 Board evaluation form or board evaluation criteria
- A 1.7 List of chamber committees and a description of their purpose

## Additional Material Attachment Checklist

- A 1.8 Orientation program for the board of directors
- A 1.9 Committee support materials or orientation material

# Section 1: Governance Minimum Requirements

## A. Articles of Incorporation or Charter

1. In which government jurisdiction is the chamber's incorporation or charter filed? \_\_\_\_\_

**A 1.1 Attach a copy of the current articles of incorporation or charter.**

**Attachment :** \_\_\_\_\_

## B. Mission

1. Provide the chamber's mission statement.

2. Does it clearly state what the chamber is, what it does, for whom, and where?  Yes  No

3. How often is the mission statement reviewed by the board or other governing body? \_\_\_\_\_

## C. Bylaws

1. Do the bylaws mention the following?

a. Limitation of methods (e.g., do the bylaws follow laws of the state to protect the chamber and its members?)  Yes  No

b. Board term limits and attendance policies  Yes  No

c. Quorums required for board, executive committee, committees, and membership meetings. )  Yes  No

d. Method of board member or officer removal  Yes  No

e. Election of directors or officers, including procedures to elect and timing  Yes  No

f. Officer duties  Yes  No

g. [Indemnification](#)<sup>i</sup> of officers and directors  Yes  No

h. Membership qualifications criteria and membership categories  Yes  No

i. Dues, resignations, delinquent accounts, and expulsions  Yes  No

j. Fiscal year  Yes  No

k. Auditing procedures and audit requirements  Yes  No

l. [Bonding requirements](#)<sup>ii</sup>  Yes  No

m. Parliamentary procedures or rules of order  Yes  No

n. [Dissolution clause](#)<sup>iii</sup>  Yes  No

o. Procedures for amendments  Yes  No

2. Has each board member received a copy of the bylaws?  Yes  No

3. Has legal counsel reviewed the bylaws in the last five years?  Yes  No

**A 1.2 Attach a copy of the bylaws.** Attachment : \_\_\_\_\_

### D. Organization Structure

1. Does the chamber have a chart that depicts the organization's governance structure?  Yes  No
2. Does the organization chart have definitions of leadership, names of individuals, lines of authority, and responsibility?  Yes  No
3. Is a chamber staff member assigned to each component of the organization structure?  Yes  No

**A 1.3 Attach a copy of the organization chart<sup>iv</sup> with staff assignments.** Attachment : \_\_\_\_\_

### E. Officers and Board of Directors

1. How many officers serve on the board? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many directors serve on the board? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Are term limits for directors in place?  Yes  No
4. What are the term lengths and limits of the directors? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Are there detailed job descriptions (other than bylaws) outlining responsibilities and authority of the elected officers and directors?  Yes  No

**A 1.4 Attach a copy of a job description for the board of directors.** Attachment : \_\_\_\_\_

6. Are board minutes recorded and distributed to officers and directors on a timely basis?  Yes  No

**A 1.5 Attach the minutes from each of the three most recent board meetings.** Attachment : \_\_\_\_\_

7. Is there a documented (written) process in place to evaluate the performance of officers and directors?  Yes  No

**A 1.6 Attach a copy of the form or criteria used to evaluate the performance of officers or directors.<sup>v</sup>** Attachment : \_\_\_\_\_

### F. Committees

1. Are there job descriptions for committees showing purposes, goals, authority, accountability, and reporting procedures?  Yes  No

**A 1.7 Attach a list of the committees serving the chamber and their purposes.** Attachment : \_\_\_\_\_

## Section 1: Governance Additional Criteria

### A. Vision and Values

1. Provide the following if applicable:

a. The chamber's [vision statement](#)<sup>vi</sup>

b. The chamber's [values statement](#)<sup>vii</sup>

2. How often are the vision and values statements reviewed by the board or other governing body? \_\_\_\_\_

### B. Officers and Board of Directors

1. Is the board representative of the business community?  Yes  No

2. Is there an annual board and leadership orientation program?  Yes  No

**A 1.8 Attach a copy of the orientation program for the board of directors.** **Attachment :** \_\_\_\_\_

3. Are board members trained to consistently and clearly act as advocates of the chamber and to speak for the chamber in the public arena?  Yes  No

4. Are board members recruited according to specific needs?  Yes  No

5. How are board members recruited? (Check all that apply)

Email or mail invitations

Personal invitations

Leadership training opportunities

Website

New member orientation

Other \_\_\_\_\_

6. Are background checks performed for prospective board members?  Yes  No

7. Are references checked for prospective board members?  Yes  No

8. Is there an interview process for prospective board members?  Yes  No

9. Are there contractual agreements with board members?  Yes  No

10. Is there a process for the dismissal of an ineffective board member?  Yes  No

**Essay Question #1**

Within the past two years, what innovative ideas have board members contributed that resulted in positive change for the chamber, its members, or the community served? How does the board and its structure allow for the implementation of these ideas? In a couple of paragraphs, please use the space below to describe one to three noteworthy examples.

If the essay already exists in a file, you can attach the file in the space provided and check the box to the left.

**Attachment :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Essay Question #2**

How are volunteers recognized and rewarded? Please use the space below to list and describe three ideas that the chamber uses to reward these volunteers.

If the essay already exists in a file, you can attach the file in the space provided and check the box to the left.

**Attachment :** \_\_\_\_\_

## C. Committees

1. Is there a method to select committee chairpersons, vice chairs, and members?  Yes  No
2. Is there an orientation program for committee chairs?  Yes  No
3. Is there an orientation program for committee members?  Yes  No

**A 1.9 Attach a copy of the committee support materials or committee orientation program only if the documents are significantly different from board orientation.** Attachment : \_\_\_\_\_

4. Are minutes of all committee meetings maintained?  Yes  No
5. How often does the chamber evaluate committee performance? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How does the chamber evaluate committee performance?

7. Do committees have the option to conduct their work electronically on cloud-based or shared electronic files, etc.?  Yes  No
8. Have any committees been disbanded in the last three years?  Yes  No
9. Describe the process used to determine committee dissolution.

## D. Affiliates

This section relates to [affiliates](#)<sup>viii</sup>. If the chamber does not have affiliates, you may skip this section.

The term “affiliate” describes a purposeful, relatively formal relationship between the chamber and other entities performing a wide variety of functions.

The following are examples:

- Convention and visitors bureaus
- Downtown development associations
- Group benefit trusts
- Industrial development foundations
- Manufacturers’ councils
- Private economic development councils
- Purchasing agents associations
- Research groups
- Retail promotion groups

1. Does the chamber have affiliates?  Yes  No  
If yes, answer the following:
  - a. Does the affiliate staff answer to chamber staff leadership?  Yes  No
  - b. Are affiliates included in all financial audits conducted by the chamber?  Yes  No
  - c. Is the chamber board of directors the ultimate authority for decision making regarding the affiliates?  Yes  No

## Supplementary Information

Applicants can use this page to enter or attach supplementary information not required by the application.

Please note that the U.S. Chamber of Commerce will review the material, but does not score supplementary information either as a part of the application process or as a basis for designating the chamber as Accredited, Accredited with 3 Stars, Accredited with 4 Stars, or Accredited with 5 Stars.

Supplementary information may be awarded up to five discretionary points as deemed by the Accreditation consultant for exceptional policies or best practices.

Comments can be entered in the space below.

Additional documents can be attached here : 

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<sup>i</sup> **Indemnification:** The Accrediting Board requires the indemnification of officers and directors be stated in the bylaws. Indemnification is a financial protection provided by a chamber to its directors, officers, and employees against expenses and liabilities incurred by them in lawsuits alleging that they breached some duty in their service on behalf of the chamber. For sample bylaws including an indemnification clause, refer to the best practices Web page at [http://www.uschamber.com/chambers/accreditation/best\\_practices.htm](http://www.uschamber.com/chambers/accreditation/best_practices.htm) [Return to Page 11](#)

<sup>ii</sup> **Bonding requirements:** The Accrediting board recommends that the chamber have bonding requirements to further protect the chamber from financial crimes. Employee and/or board dishonesty insurance may substitute for bonding requirements, but it is at the discretion of the Accrediting board as to whether the policy meets this requirement. [Return to Page 11](#)

<sup>iii</sup> **Dissolution clause:** The Accrediting Board requires that a dissolution clause be included in the bylaws. A dissolution clause makes provisions as to what should happen if the chamber is dissolved. For sample bylaws including a dissolution clause, refer to the best practices Web page at [http://www.uschamber.com/chambers/accreditation/best\\_practices.htm](http://www.uschamber.com/chambers/accreditation/best_practices.htm) [Return to Page 11](#)

<sup>iv</sup> **Organization chart:** An organization chart is a chart which depicts the chamber's governance structure. The organization chart should have definitions of leadership, names of staff, lines of authority, and a listing of staff responsibilities. For sample organization charts, refer to the best practices Web page at [http://www.uschamber.com/chambers/accreditation/best\\_practices.htm](http://www.uschamber.com/chambers/accreditation/best_practices.htm) [Return to Page 12](#)

<sup>v</sup> **Board evaluation form or criteria:** The Accrediting Board requires the applicant to develop written criteria or evaluation forms that are used to evaluate the board of directors. For sample board evaluation materials, refer to the best practices Web page at [http://www.uschamber.com/chambers/accreditation/best\\_practices.htm](http://www.uschamber.com/chambers/accreditation/best_practices.htm) [Return to Page 12](#)

<sup>vi</sup> **Vision statement:** Outlines what a chamber is looking to be. It concentrates on future and provides clear decision-making criteria. [Return to Page 13](#)

<sup>vii</sup> **Values statement:** Main values protected by the organization and reflected in the organization's culture and priorities [Return to Page 13](#)

<sup>viii</sup> **Affiliate:** An entity that is related to the chamber, but not completely controlled by the chamber. [Return to Page 15](#)