



UNITED STATES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ACCREDITATION

2024 Accreditation Application for Local Chambers

Section 4: Government Affairs

4. Government Affairs

Standard

An Accredited chamber has a systematic procedure to develop public policy positions and participates in public policy decision making affecting economic and business issues. A grassroots network is one of the chamber's most effective advocacy tools.

Minimum Qualifications

- Has a systematic procedure in place to identify government affairs issues critical to the business community
- Compiles the chamber's policy positions and course of action in a legislative agenda published annually.
- Shares the chamber's legislative agenda with members
- Communicates positions on priority issues to elected officials
- Actively monitors and shares local, regional, state, and U.S. Chamber legislative and political affairs with membership
- Has established a grassroots network

Minimum Requirements Attachments Checklist

- A 4.1 Legislative or public policy agenda
- A 4.2 Communications samples with elected officials

Additional Criteria Attachments Checklist

- A 4.3 Documentation of the chamber's involvement in local, state, or federal elections
- A 4.4 Political action committee (PAC) disclosure report

Section 4: Government Affairs Minimum Requirements

A. Governmental Issues

1. Which of the following does the chamber use to develop its legislative or public policy issues agenda? (Check all that apply)
- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Government affairs committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Executive committee or board |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Task forces | <input type="checkbox"/> Grassroots network |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Focus groups | <input type="checkbox"/> Member surveys |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forums | <input type="checkbox"/> Round tables |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |
2. To whom does the chamber distribute the legislative or public policy issues agenda? (Check all that apply)
- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Board members | <input type="checkbox"/> Elected officials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Government Affairs committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General membership | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
- A 4.1 Attach a copy of the chamber's legislative or public policy agenda¹.**

Attachment : _____

Essay Question #1

Describe the systematic process that the chamber uses to determine and develop its legislative or public policy agenda? If helpful, include a flow chart. Does the chamber have a system to quickly address high priority issues that are not mentioned in the legislative or public policy issues agenda?

- 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 : _____

3. Does the chamber conduct regular governmental issue update meetings, legislative breakfasts, or state of the chamber events to notify members of the chamber's legislative or public policy issues agenda? Yes No
4. Does the chamber conduct public forums or policy debates to share the chamber's legislative or public policy issues agenda with members and nonmembers? Yes No
5. Which of the following does the chamber use to communicate its positions on priority issues to elected officials? (Check all that apply)
- E-mail
 - Direct mail
 - Social Media
 - Group meetings with several elected officials
 - Private meetings between chamber staff, volunteers, and elected officials
 - Site tours with elected officials to chamber members' place of business
 - Town hall meetings
 - Other _____

A 4.2 Attach sample communications made to elected officials for each of the boxes checked in question 5.

Attachment (E-mail) : _____

Attachment (Direct mail) : _____

Attachment (Social Media) : _____

Attachment (Group meetings) : _____

Attachment (Private meetings) : _____

Attachment (Site tours) : _____

Attachment (Town hall meetings) : _____

Attachment (Other) : _____

6. Is the chamber membership informed about policy decisions that the chamber, the state chamber, and the U.S. Chamber have taken? Yes No
7. Does the chamber interact with U.S. Chamber of Commerce regional staff regarding U.S. Chamber issues and events? Yes No
8. What other sources does the chamber use to stay current on public policy? Please include local, state, and federal sources.

B. Grassroots

1. Does the chamber have a [grassroots network](#)ⁱⁱ? (A grassroots network is defined as the capability of a chamber to blast email or text the board, the legislative committee, or even the entire membership list prior to key action being taken by elected officials.) Yes No
2. What percentage of the chamber's total membership is part of the grassroots network? _____ %
3. How does the chamber primarily communicate priority issues with the general membership and with the grassroots network? (Check all that apply)
- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail | <input type="checkbox"/> Text Message |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media | <input type="checkbox"/> Website listing of priority positions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Direct mail | <input type="checkbox"/> Web-based communication tool |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Meetings or briefings | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Phone | <input type="checkbox"/> Other chamber publications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other | |
-
4. How often has the chamber activated its grassroots network over the course of the past year?
- 0 times per year
 - 1-3 times time per year
 - 4-6 times per year
 - More than 7 times per year

Section 4: Government Affairs Additional Criteria

A. Governmental Issues

1. Does the chamber have a Legislative or Government Affairs Committee that functions separately from the board? Yes No
2. Does the chamber have additional subcommittees that focus on key issues (e.g. transportation, work force development)? Yes No
3. Does the chamber have a [dedicated government affairs staff](#)ⁱⁱⁱ? Yes No

(Note: The chamber president/CEO does not constitute a dedicated staff member for the purpose of determining compliance with this standard.)

a. If yes, please list their titles and (if possible) a link to their profile on the chamber's website.

4. Does the chamber have a designated government affairs budget? Yes No
 - a. If yes, what percentage of the total budget is devoted to government affairs? _____ %
5. Is there a chamber-sponsored trip with members to:
 - State Capitol Yes No
 - Washington, DC Yes No
6. How often does the chamber sponsor a trip to:
 - State Capitol _____
 - Washington, DC _____
7. Has the chamber ever been recognized for its involvement with government affairs? Yes No
 - a. If yes, what was this recognition?

8. Have chamber staff or volunteers provided testimony to a legislative body at the local, state, or federal level in the past two years? Yes No
 - a. If yes, what was the outcome of the issue?

9. Does the chamber use media advocacy to communicate policy positions (e.g. editorials, op-eds, issue advocacy advertising)? Yes No

10. List the coalitions, committees, and working groups that chamber staff has been a member of, or has been active in during the past year. Describe the chamber's role in each coalition (member or steering committee member or manager).

11. If the chamber takes positions on ballot propositions and referendums, list the ballot issue, chamber position, and outcome.

B. Grassroots

1. Does the chamber have a grassroots database? Yes No
2. Is the chamber's [grassroots database segmented by issue interest^{iv}](#)? Yes No
3. Does the chamber have the ability to track the activities of the grassroots network via an online platform? Yes No
- a. If yes, what percentage of the network usually participates? _____ %

Essay Question #2

Provide two examples of how the chamber activated its grassroots network in the last two years and discuss the outcomes of these efforts.

- 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. Elections and Political Affairs

1. Does the chamber keep a legislative scorecard (voting record) of elected officials or does it utilize the state chamber's scorecard? Yes No
- a. If yes, to whom is the scorecard distributed? (Check all that apply)
- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Board members | <input type="checkbox"/> Elected officials |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legislative committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Media |
| <input type="checkbox"/> General membership | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |
2. Does the chamber have a political action committee (PAC)? Yes No
- a. If yes, please indicate at which levels (check all that apply):
- | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Federal | <input type="checkbox"/> State | <input type="checkbox"/> Local |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
- b. If no, please explain discussions the board has had concerning the decision not to endorse candidates, possible state law requirements, and other potential restraints.
-
3. In which ways does the chamber or political action committee (PAC) participate in the election process? Check all that apply.
- a. Activates a Get Out The Vote program
 - b. Provides updates on candidate races and positions to membership
 - c. Endorses candidates for public office, including hosting or co-sponsoring candidate fundraisers prior to elections
 - d. Uses PAC funds to donate to candidate campaigns
 - e. Hosts speeches and candidate debates
 - f. Promotes the U.S. Chamber's endorsements among chamber members
 - g. Promotes state chamber's endorsements among chamber members
 - h. Hosts a press conference for candidate endorsements
 - i. Recommends candidates for appointment to public office or politically appointed committees
 - j. Recruits (business) candidates to run for elective office
 - k. Purchases radio or TV advertisements
 - l. Hosts a candidate school or boot camp for endorsed candidates
 - m. Participates in an online candidate informational tool such as VoteForBusiness.com
 - n. Other _____

A 4.3 Provide one sample of the chamber's involvement in the election process for each of the items checked in question 3.

Attachment (Activates a Get Out The Vote program) : _____

Attachment (Provides updates on candidate races and positions to membership) : _____

Attachment (Endorses candidates for public office, including hosting or co-sponsoring candidate fundraisers prior to elections) : _____

Attachment (Uses PAC funds to donate to candidate campaigns) : _____

Attachment (Hosts speeches and candidate debates) : _____

Attachment (Promotes the U.S. Chamber's endorsements among chamber members) : _____

Attachment (Promotes state chamber's endorsements among chamber members) : _____

Attachment (Hosts a press conference for candidate endorsements) : _____

Attach (Rec. candidates for appointment to public office or politically appointed committees) : _____

Attachment (Recruits (business) candidates to run for elective office) : _____

Attachment (Purchases radio or TV advertisements) : _____

Attachment (Hosts a candidate school or boot camp for endorsed candidates) : _____

Attach (Participates in an online candidate informational tool) : _____

Attachment (Other) : _____

A 4.4 If the chamber has a political action committee (PAC), include a copy of the latest disclosure report.

Attachment : _____

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 : _____

ⁱ **Legislative or public policy issues agenda:** A formal document outlining the chamber's major legislative or public policy issues for the current year. This document will address public policy issues for the local, state, or federal level. For sample legislative or public policy agenda, refer to the best practices Web page at http://www.uschamber.com/chambers/accreditation/best_practices.htm

[Return to Page 11](#)

ⁱⁱ **Grassroots network:** An active network of chamber members and supporters that the chamber engages in the discussion and action of public policy. The chamber has the capability to blast e-mail or text this network policy issues updates and calls to action. The network can consist of volunteers, the board, the legislative committee, or even the entire membership list.

[Return to Page 13](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ **Dedicated government affairs staff:** A dedicated government affairs staff is someone whose primary duties are devoted to working with elected officials to promote the chamber's legislative or public policy agenda. The chamber president/CEO does not constitute a dedicated staff member for the purpose of determining compliance with this standard. However, hiring an outside lobbying firm will constitute compliance with this standard.

[Return to Page 14](#)

^{iv} **Grassroots database segmented by issue interest:** This standard goes beyond using the chamber's member list as the basis of its grassroots database. The chamber should have a separate database that segments the chamber's grassroots network by issues and interests so that the chamber's grassroots activists only receive updates on the issues and policies they specifically ask for.

[Return to Page 15](#)