



UNITED STATES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ACCREDITATION

2025 Accreditation Application for Local Chambers

Section 5: Program Development

5. Program Development

Standard

An Accredited chamber has a formal system in place to plan, document, and exercise short- and long-term goals or plans. The chamber has developed methods to monitor and evaluate progress on goals that are used throughout the year.

Minimum Qualifications

- Has an understanding of the issues and needs important to segments of the membership
- Collects member feedback at least annually
- Provides an annual report to the members
- Has a strategic or business plan for the current year
- Understands and is prepared for the impending factors that will affect the chamber

Minimum Requirements Attachment Checklist

- A 5.1 Most recent annual report
- A 5.2 Strategic or business plan for the current year

Additional Criteria Attachment Checklist

- A 5.3 Most recent environmental scan
- A 5.4 Listing of all current chamber programs, products, and services

Section 5: Program Development Minimum Requirements

A. Members

1. What are the three largest business sectors represented in the chamber's membership?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 2. Is membership truly representative of the local business community? Yes No
 - a. If no, what segments are missing? _____
 3. Are issues within the major industries that members represent addressed? Yes No
 4. How does the chamber collect member feedback? (Check all that apply)
 Questionnaires Interviews
 Surveys Focus groups
 Other _____
 5. How often does the chamber conduct a member needs and satisfaction survey of all members?
 Multiple times per year Every three to five years
 Annually Other _____
 Every other year
 6. In the chamber's last member needs analysis, what percentage of members surveyed responded? _____ %
 7. Is an annual report produced? Yes No
 8. Is an annual report shared with members? Yes No
 9. What format does the chamber use for its annual report? (Check all that apply)
 Printed PowerPoint Video (online)
 Verbal report – state of the chamber Email update
 Website Other _____
- A 5.1 Attach a copy of the chamber's last annual report.**

Attachment : _____

B. Strategic Planning and Chamber Goals

1. Does the chamber have a strategic or business plan with specific goals and assignments for the current year? Yes No
2. Does the chamber have a strategic or business plan with specific goals and assignments for the next three to five years? Yes No

A 5.2 Attach a copy of the [strategic or business plan](#)¹.

Attachment : _____

3. Summarize the chamber's top five short-term goals from the chamber's annual business plan.
- a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.
4. Summarize the chamber's top five long-term goals from the chambers 3-5 year strategic plan.
- a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.
 - e.

Essay Question #1

What impending factors will seriously affect the chamber and community in the next three to five years (e.g., energy availability, environmental concerns, work force)? How is the chamber preparing for these factors?

- 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 : _____

Section 5: Program Development Additional Criteria

A. Members

1. Does the chamber measure and monitor its market penetration rate? _____
2. How does the chamber measure its estimated **market penetration**ⁱⁱ? rate and how often is this evaluated? _____
3. What three benefits do members use and value most?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.

B. Internal Environment – Chamber Goals

1. Who was involved in developing the strategic or business plan? (check all that apply)?
 Board Other volunteers
 Staff Consultant
2. How often does the chamber hold a strategic planning retreat?
 Annually Every other year Every 3 to 5 years
3. Was there board consensus regarding the strategic or business plan? Yes No
4. How often are goals reviewed and revised? _____

C. External Environment

1. Has the chamber conducted, contracted for, or participated in the development of an external environmental scan of its service area in the last two years? Yes No
 - a. If yes, what did the environmental scan include? (check all that apply)
 - Demographic characteristics
 - Economic factors
 - Competition (who, what, types of programs, members, etc.)
 - Social factors (community attitudes, language, etc.)
 - Political factors (friendliness of the local government, etc.)
 - Infrastructure (highways, roads, cable, fiber optics, phone systems, etc.)
 - Strength, weakness, opportunity and threat (SWOT) analysis
- A 5.3 Attach a copy of the chamber's most recent **environmental scan**ⁱⁱⁱ.**

Attachment : _____

D. Programs, Products, and Services

1. How many **programs**^{iv} does the chamber offer its members? _____
2. How many **products**^v does the chamber offer its members? _____
3. How many **services**^{vi} does the chamber offer its members? _____

A 5.4 Attach a list of all current programs, including those that are being developed. Be sure to include a short description of each program.

Attachment : _____

4. Are current programs, products, and services integrated with the strategic or business plan? Yes No
5. Are chamber programs, products, and services evaluated annually? Yes No
6. Can successes of these programs, products, and services be quantified by available data? Yes No
7. Does the chamber systematically cut programs, products, and services that are no longer meeting long-term goals? Yes No

Essay Question #2

Describe the one chamber program, product, or service that provides the most value to the membership or earns the most revenue and exposure for the chamber. How does the chamber determine this designation? What is being done to ensure that this program stays relevant?

- 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 : _____

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 **Strategic or business plan:** The Accrediting board requires that an Accredited chamber have a strategic or business plan with set goals for the current year as well as a long term plan for the next three to five years. The strategic or business plan will state the chamber's goals and map out how it will reach these goals. For sample strategic or business plans, refer to the best practices Web page at http://www.uschamber.com/chambers/accreditation/best_practices.htm [Return to Page 12](#)

ⁱⁱ **Market penetration:** Measurement to evaluate the range of the chamber in the business community. Market penetration is found by dividing chamber membership by the total number of potential members in the chamber's operating area. [Return to Page 13](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ **Environmental scan:** A study of the surrounding community conducted by the chamber or contracted with a partnering organization that includes demographic characteristics, economic factors, sources of competition for the chamber, social factors, political factors, infrastructure statistics, or a SWOT analysis. For sample environmental scans, refer to the best practices Web page at http://www.uschamber.com/chambers/accreditation/best_practices.htm [Return to Page 13](#)

^{iv} **Programs:** Event-based activities such as workshops, seminars, annual meetings, etc. [Return to Page 14](#)

^v **Products:** Physical entities such as books and magazines or member benefits like credit cards, sales promotion kits, recognition-week materials, etc. [Return to Page 14](#)

^{vi} **Services:** The vast range of activities that are not considered a program or product of the chamber. Services can be listservs, chat rooms, career centers, employment hotlines, legislative advisories, grassroots networks, etc. [Return to Page 14](#)