



CCAA CERTIFIED CHAMBER PROGRAM

Purpose:

The CCAA Certified Chamber Program is designed to promote public awareness of the intent of the chamber of commerce brand as a not-for-profit community development- based business membership organization by providing a peer review process of generally accepted chamber of commerce organizational benchmarks.

Implementation:

- The program is 100% voluntary. There is no requirement to participate.
- Any Chamber that is currently accredited through the U.S. Chamber of Commerce at the date of this application is exempt from the full application requirements with proof of accreditation and basic supplemental documentation.
- Any current CCAA member Chamber of Commerce may apply.
- The deadline for applications will be **Wednesday June 24, 2020**.

A committee appointed by the CCAA Board of Directors will review the applications and issue recommendations to the full CCAA Board of Directors. The recommendations would either be “Approved” or “Suggest Improvement” and would require CCAA Board of Directors action.

Approved recommendations would be issued a letter of approval from the CCAA Board of Directors along with a suggested press release for its announcement to the local community.

Suggested Improvement recommendations would be issued a letter from the CCAA Board of Directors to the local chamber with specific suggestions that if implemented may result in an approved designation.

Each year, CCAA will publicly acknowledge those chambers that receive the Alabama Certified Chamber designation at the Annual Summer Conference, including the presentation of a Alabama Certified Chamber plaque.

Chambers should submit the following application and required documentation to:

CCAA

Jeremy L. Arthur, President & CEO
2 N. Jackson St, Ste 607
Montgomery, AL 36104

CCAA CERTIFIED CHAMBER PROGRAM

One of the most prestigious programs of the Chamber of Commerce Association of Alabama (CCAA) is the Alabama Certified Chamber Program. The Alabama Certified Chamber Program sets standards of excellence for chambers in the State of Alabama. It recognizes chambers that have achieved those standards while offering guidelines for those to improve their effectiveness.

Once achieved, the Alabama Certified Chamber Program is valid for a period of five years. Reapplication will be required after the five year period. Being a Certified Chamber of Commerce places you in a higher plateau of achievement. It shows you have gone through a detailed analysis of who and where you are as an organization.

Why should your Chamber become a Alabama Certified Chamber?

The benefits are numerous. Certification demonstrates your commitment to improvements in your operations that makes you a more valuable and competent organization.

Certification will benefit your Chamber by:

- Committing the chamber to meet important standards established collectively by members of CCAA.
- Establishing that the Certified Chamber meets those important standards by CCAA.
- Validating the Certified Chamber as existing for the purpose inherent in the time-honored tradition of a “Chamber of Commerce.”
- Increasing your credibility with your Boards of Directors and your membership.
- Helping with membership recruitment and retention.
- Helping differentiate your chamber from other chambers and business associations.

What does the Alabama Certified Chamber designation mean to the community or area where the chamber is located?

Certification benefits the community by:

- Setting high standards, which their chamber of commerce voluntarily ascribes to and meets.
- Providing the assurance that their local chamber of commerce aspires to excellence in a manner consistent with chambers of commerce across the State of Alabama.
- Strengthening free enterprise by protecting the business environment.
- Providing assurances to the businesses joining the chamber that they are investing in a not-for-profit corporation whose revenues are utilized for business and public good and not personal gain.

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A Chamber must meet the following standards to achieve the Alabama Certified Chamber designation:

Organization

- Chamber has received 501 (c) (6) designation from the IRS.
- Chamber has Articles of Incorporation filed with the State of Alabama.
- Chamber maintains legal documents and documents all instituted policies, bylaws, etc.
- 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 promotes inclusiveness vs. exclusiveness, ensuring that the membership is an accurate representation of the community.
- Chamber has a mission statement that is consistent with the goals and objectives of a chamber of commerce; i.e. to advance the commercial, financial, industrial and civic interests of a community.
- Chamber has a printed 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.

Professional Administration

- Chamber employs sufficient staff to achieve its program of work.
- Chamber has developed and implemented a personnel and policies/procedures manual.
- Chamber promotes quality work performance and encourages professional excellence through job descriptions.
- Chamber has established criteria for and conducts regular/timely 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 (as required).
- Chamber protects the fiduciary interest of the Chamber, members and staff through an insurance program.

Marketing/Public Relations

- Chamber has a media relations/communications program.
- Chamber markets its products and services and benefits to its members.
- Chamber has an information gathering and management system that establishes the chamber as an information resource center.
- Chamber utilizes communication technology to enhance its effectiveness.

DOCUMENTATION: ALABAMA CERTIFIED CHAMBER PROGRAM

Please submit one (1) copy via hard copy notebook or via electronic format of the following documentation.

Chamber must have each of the following to qualify for accreditation:

Enclosed

ORGANIZATION

1. Articles of Incorporation _____
2. Certification letter as an IRS 501(c)6 _____
3. Bylaws and description of review process _____
4. Board of Directors roster _____
5. Organizational chart/s _____
6. Board of Directors orientation process _____
7. Describe the process used to evaluate Board Member performance (attendance, participation, etc.) _____
8. Describe ways Board expectations are communicated to members _____
9. Sample minutes of a Board meeting _____

MISSION FOCUS

10. Most Recent Annual Report _____
11. Description of service area _____
12. Mission Statement _____
13. A Board approved Program of Work/Business Plan _____
14. Description of chamber's retention plan _____
15. Description of all services available to members, including programs, products, and services _____
16. Describe the process used to determine member needs _____

PROFESSIONAL ADMINISTRATION

17. List of all staff members/titles and status _____
18. Written personnel policies _____
19. Job descriptions for all staff members _____
20. Staff evaluation policy or performance evaluation _____
21. Staff development policy and budget _____
22. List of any certifications received by staff _____

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

23. Copy of current annual budget _____
24. Copy of latest financial statement _____
25. Copy of IRS 990 filing _____
26. Describe the financial policies of the Chamber which ensure the organization's financial integrity (may include annual reviews and/or audits) _____
27. Proof of workers' compensation and general liability insurance coverage _____

COMMUNICATIONS

- 28. Sample of recent news release promoting activity _____
- 29. Two different samples of recent member mailings
(hard copy or electronic format) _____
- 30. Copy of latest membership directory _____
- 31. Describe the use of database software program(s) to
maintain member information _____
- 32. Include a copy of communications plan which
demonstrates regular communication with members _____
- 33. Describe the strategic use of the Chamber web site to
communicate with members _____

ADVOCACY

- 34. Describe the process used to advocate for local, state,
& national issues that affect members _____

Supporting Information

Paid Full-time Executive: ___ Yes ___ No

Number of Employees on Staff: ___ Full Time ___ Part Time

Office Space: ___ Own ___ Rent ___ Approx. Sq. Footage

Population of area served: _____

Geographic description of area served:

Total Annual Operating Budget: \$ _____

Average dues per member \$ _____

Dues Schedule: \$ _____ Min \$ _____ Max (attach copy)

Number of paying members Companies _____ Other _____

Chief Board Officer Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Chief Staff Executive Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

APPLICATION: ALABAMA CERTIFIED CHAMBER PROGRAM

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP CODE

TELEPHONE

FAX

E-MAIL

WEB SITE

CONTACT

TITLE

Payment

All fees must accompany the application. The application fee is **\$250 for CCAA members** in good standing. Application deadline is **June 24, 2020**.

____ Check enclosed for \$250. Please make payable to CCAA.

Mail to: CCAA
Jeremy L. Arthur, President & CEO
2 N. Jackson St., Suite 607
Montgomery, AL 36104

____ Credit Card: # _____ Expiration _____ CCV _____

DOCUMENTATION: ALABAMA CERTIFIED CHAMBER PROGRAM

(For US Chamber of Commerce Accredited Chambers Only)

Please submit one (1) copy via hard copy notebook or via electronic format of the following documentation.

Chamber must have each of the following to qualify for accreditation:

ORGANIZATION

1. Bylaws and description of review process _____
2. Board of Directors roster _____

MISSION FOCUS

3. Most Recent Annual Report _____
4. Description of service area _____
5. Mission Statement _____
6. A Board approved Program of Work/Business Plan _____

PROFESSIONAL ADMINISTRATION

7. List of all staff members/titles and status _____
8. List of any certifications received by staff _____

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

9. Copy of IRS 990 filing _____

COMMUNICATIONS

10. Copy of latest membership directory _____

ADVOCACY

11. Copy of local, state and national issues/governmental affairs advocacy items _____

Supporting Information

Paid Full-time Executive: ___ Yes ___ No

Number of Employees on Staff: ___ Full Time ___ Part Time

Office Space: ___ Own ___ Rent ___ Approx. Sq. Footage

Population of area served: _____

Geographic description of area served: _____

Total Annual Operating Budget: \$ _____

Average dues per member \$ _____

Dues Schedule: \$ _____ Min \$ _____ Max (attach copy)

Number of paying members Companies _____ Other _____

Chief Board Officer Signature: _____ Date: _____

Chief Staff Executive Signature: _____ Date: _____

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(For US Chamber of Commerce Accredited Chambers Only)

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP CODE

TELEPHONE

FAX

E-MAIL

WEB SITE

CONTACT

TITLE

Payment

All fees must accompany the application. The application fee for accredited chambers is **\$100 for CCAA members** in good standing. Please include documentation of your U.S. Chamber accreditation with this application. Application deadline is **June 24, 2020**.

____ Check enclosed for \$100. Please make payable to CCAA.

Mail to: CCAA
Jeremy L. Arthur, President & CEO
2 N. Jackson St., Suite 607
Montgomery, AL 36104

____ Credit Card: # _____ Expiration _____ CCV _____