



GACCE CERTIFIED CHAMBER PROGRAM

Purpose:

The GACCE Certified Chamber Program is designed to provide a peer review process of generally accepted chamber of commerce organizational benchmarks in order to assess the applying chamber's knowledge and practice of seven key organizational areas.

Implementation:

- The program is 100% voluntary. There is no requirement to participate.
- For your request for certification to be considered, you must adhere to the following deadlines:
 - **Intent to Apply** – Intent to Apply form is required by **5 PM, Friday, March 26, 2021**.
 - **Draft Application Review** - Before officially applying, a chamber may choose to submit their draft application for review in order to receive suggestions for improvement. This completely optional draft submission is required by **5 PM, Friday, June 25, 2021**.
 - **Final Submission** - Application & Fee deadline is firm. No changes may be made to your submission following the deadline of 5 PM, Friday, August 27, 2021.
- Any current paid GACCE member Chamber of Commerce existing for a minimum of three years and having a minimum of 100 paid members and 1 full-time staff member may apply.
- Any Chamber currently accredited through the U.S. Chamber of Commerce at the date of this application is exempt from all application requirements. Provide proof of accreditation, along with the appropriate application provided in this packet, to complete your GACCE Certified Chamber submission.

Review:

A committee appointed by the GACCE Board of Directors will review the applications and issue recommendations to the full Board. The recommendations would either be "Suggest Improvement" or "Approved", both of which are outlined below:

- **Suggest Improvement** recommendations will be sent specific suggestions that should be implemented prior to the next application period when they would be encouraged to reapply for their Certified Chamber status.
- **Approved** recommendations will be announced at the Annual Volunteer Leader Conference where the newly certified or recertified chambers will receive their designation. Post-conference, each chamber will be provided a suggested press release announcing their accomplishment.



GACCE CERTIFIED CHAMBER PROGRAM

One of the most prestigious programs of the Georgia Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (GACCE) is the Georgia Certified Chamber Program. The Georgia Certified Chamber Program sets standards of excellence for chambers in Georgia. It recognizes chambers that have met those standards while offering guidelines for others to improve their effectiveness.

GACCE follows the U.S. Chamber model with the designation being reapplied for every five years. Being a Certified Chamber of Commerce places you in a higher plateau of achievement, and this process confirms you have participated in a detailed analysis of who and where you are as an organization.

Why should your Chamber become a Georgia 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 GACCE.
- Confirming the Certified Chamber meets those important standards set by GACCE.
- 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 Board of Directors and your membership.
- Assisting with membership recruitment and retention.
- Differentiating your chamber from other chambers and business associations.

What does the Georgia 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 fellow chambers of commerce throughout Georgia.
- Strengthening free enterprise by protecting the business environment.
- Providing assurances to current and future members that they are investing in a not for profit corporation whose revenues are utilized for business and public good and not personal gain.



GACCE CERTIFIED CHAMBER PROGRAM CHECKLIST

A Chamber must meet the following standards to achieve the Georgia Certified Chamber designation.

Please submit one copy of the following items in a notebook (with 36 tabs) or electronically (Dropbox link).

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

ORGANIZATION

1. Articles of Incorporation
2. Bylaws
 - ✓ Board meetings must be held at least quarterly
 - ✓ If appointed board members are included, the appointed board members may not constitute a majority of voting board members
 - ✓ Must include board of directors and officer's nomination and election process
(Please note the committee will review bylaws to ensure organization's compliance.)
3. Certification Letter as an IRS 501(c)6
4. Board of Directors orientation overview, job description, conflict of interest declarations and commitment form
5. Samples minutes from two most recent Board meetings
6. Sample board meeting minutes from fiscal year 2016 (proof of record retention purposes)
(If your chamber was not in existence in 2016, provide sample minutes from the organization's first year.)
7. General Policy & Procedure Manual – Chamber Operations Manual *(not employee manual)*
 - ✓ **Initial here to affirm that your policies are reviewed every 10 years at a minimum**

MISSION FOCUS

8. 2020 Annual Report to membership
9. Mission Statement
10. Board Approved Program of Work/Business Plan
11. Description of chamber's Retention Plan
12. Description of membership cancellation process
13. Description of services available to members
 - ✓ Must demonstrate through providing examples of the organization's impact on the community:
 - Leadership Development
 - Member educational opportunities
 - Networking
 - Workforce support and development
14. Description of the process used to determine member needs

HUMAN RESOURCES

15. Chamber's Organizational Chart
16. Chamber's Employee/Personnel Manual
 - ✓ _____ Initial here to affirm the Employee/Personnel Manual is reviewed every 10 years at minimum
17. Job titles and descriptions for all staff members
 - ✓ Must show alignment with Organizational Chart
18. Staff evaluation policy and performance evaluation
 - ✓ Must include staff evaluation form template
 - ✓ _____ Initial here to affirm that employee evaluations are performed at least annually.
19. Staff development policy and budget
 - ✓ Must include examples of staff development from prior two years

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

20. Financial Policies and Procedures to include reserve and contingency fund balance goals
21. Two most recently approved annual budgets
 - ✓ Must include total budget governed by Board of Directors
 - ✓ Must include a copy of minutes reflecting budget approval
22. Two most recently reviewed profit/loss statements
 - ✓ Must include proof that the Board and/or Executive Committee reviews profit/loss statements at least 6 times per year
23. Most recent audit report
 - ✓ Must show that a full audit is conducted every 3 years at minimum and when a new executive begins
 - ✓ If revenue exceeds \$500,000, Chamber must conduct a review in non-audit years
24. Most recent 990 report
25. Provide copies of General Liability, Directors & Officers, and Workers Compensation insurance policies
 - ✓ Must show proof of being listed as an additional insured if chamber does not own building

COMMUNICATIONS

26. Member Communications Plan including the use and frequency of email, social and print communications
 - ✓ Minimum requirement that members are contacted at least twice per month
27. Description of website maintenance plan along with an overview of the site's primary functions (*membership directory, event registration, resources, etc.*)
 - ✓ Website is required to at least provide an updated membership directory
28. Sample of recent press release promoting Chamber activity
29. Two different samples of recent member communications (*written or electronic*)
30. Description of membership directory timeline and process (Is it mailed? How is it updated?)
31. Provide proof of database member management
32. Social media usage
 - ✓ At least one social media platform is required that is updated weekly
 - ✓ Provide direct links to all social media platforms maintained by the Chamber

ADVOCACY

- 33. Description of your organization’s engagement with local, state or federal elected officials
- 34. Provide an example of how your chamber was the leader on educating your members and/or community on an issue impacting business within the last three years

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- 35. Description of organization’s data backup plan
- 36. Antivirus Software
 - ✓ _____ Initial here to affirm that your chamber’s antivirus software is up to date

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

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



INTENT TO APPLY

CHAMBER

ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP CODE

TELEPHONE E-MAIL

WEB SITE

CONTACT TITLE

If applicable, please provide previous years of certification: _____

Any current paid GACCE member Chamber of Commerce existing for a minimum of three years and having a minimum of 100 paid members and 1 full-time staff member may apply.

✓ _____ **Initial here to affirm that your chamber adheres to the above criteria.**

Deadline: 5 PM, Friday, March 26, 2021

Questions? Contact:
Tiffany Fulmer Ott, GACCE Executive Director
tfulmer@tlfexecutiveservices.com

Submit form to email address above.



APPLICATION: GEORGIA CERTIFIED CHAMBER PROGRAM

CHAMBER

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP CODE

TELEPHONE

E-MAIL

WEB SITE

CONTACT

TITLE

If applicable, please provide previous years of certification: _____

Deadline: 5 PM, Friday, August 27, 2021

(No changes may be made to your submission following the deadline.)

All fees must accompany the application. The application fee is \$250 for GACCE member organizations who are applying for certification for the first time or are applying for recertification and there has been a lapse in certification years. For those applying for recertification without a lapse, the application fee is \$100.

_____ Check enclosed. Please make payable to GACCE.

_____ Checklist provided accompanied by notebook (36 tabs) or electronically (Dropbox link).

Questions? Contact:

Tiffany Fulmer Ott, GACCE Executive Director, tfulmer@tlfexecutiveservices.com

Submit application, program checklist, required documentation & application fee to:

**GACCE, ATTN: Tiffany Fulmer Ott
1622 Tarklin Valley Road, Knoxville, TN 37920**



APPLICATION: GEORGIA CERTIFIED CHAMBER PROGRAM
(For US Chamber Accredited Chambers Only)

CHAMBER

ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP CODE

TELEPHONE E-MAIL

WEB SITE

CONTACT TITLE

Deadline: 5 PM, Friday, August 27, 2021

All fees must accompany the application. The application fee for accredited chambers is \$100.

- Check enclosed. Please make payable to GACCE.
- Copy of your U.S. Chamber accreditation certificate is enclosed.

Questions? Contact:
Tiffany Fulmer Ott, GACCE Executive Director, fulmer@tlfexecutiveservices.com

Submit application, required documentation & application fee to:
GACCE, ATTN: Tiffany Fulmer Ott
1622 Tarklin Valley Road
Knoxville, TN 37920