



## ALABAMA ACCREDITED CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

### **Purpose:**

The Alabama Chambers Accredited 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 Alabama Chambers member may apply that meets the following requirements:
  - In existence a minimum of three years.
  - Minimum of 100 paid members.
  - Minimum 1 full time staff member.
- ⇒ The deadline for applications will be **March 27, 2026**.
- ⇒ Chambers should submit the following application and required documentation via Dropbox link sent to [Paige@alabamachambers.com](mailto:Paige@alabamachambers.com). Each item should be included as a separate file upload.

### **Review:**

- ⇒ A committee of chamber executives will review the applications.
- ⇒ Each application will receive one of the following designations:
  - **Suggest Improvement**- Chambers will be sent specific suggestions that should be implemented prior to the next application period when they would be encouraged to reapply for their Accredited Chamber status.
  - **Approved**- Chambers will be announced at the Night of Champions where the newly certified or recertified chambers will receive their designation.

## ALABAMA ACCREDITED CHAMBER PROGRAM

One of the most prestigious programs of the Chamber of Commerce Association of Alabama (Alabama Chambers) is the Alabama Accredited Chamber Program. The Alabama Accredited 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 Accredited Chamber Program is valid for a period of five years. Reapplication will be required after the five-year period. Being an Accredited 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 an Alabama Accredited Chamber?**

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

#### *Accreditation will benefit your Chamber by:*

- Committing the chamber to meet important standards established collectively by Alabama Chambers members.
- Establishing that the Accredited Chamber meets those important standards by Alabama Chambers.
- Validating the Accredited 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 Accredited Chamber designation mean to the community or area where the chamber is located?**

#### *Accreditation 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.

## DOCUMENTATION: ALABAMA ACCREDITED CHAMBER PROGRAM

*Please submit one (1) copy via shared Dropbox of the following documentation.*

*Each item should be uploaded as a separate file.*

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

### ORGANIZATION

1. Articles of Incorporation
2. Certification letter as an IRS 501(c)6
3. Bylaws
  - ⇒ Board meetings must be held at least quarterly
  - ⇒ Bylaws must include board of directors and officer's nomination and election process
  - ⇒ Initial here to affirm that your bylaws are reviewed at least every 5 years.
4. Board of Directors roster
5. Description of bylaws review process and timing
6. Organizational chart
7. Board of Directors orientation overview, job description, conflict of interest declarations and commitment form
8. Sample minutes of 2 Board meetings within the last 6 months
9. Sample board meeting minutes from fiscal year 2021 (proof of record retention purposes)
10. General policy & procedure manual0 Chamber Operations Manual (not employee manual)
  - ⇒ Initial here to affirm that your policies are reviewed every 5 years at a minimum

### MISSION FOCUS

11. 2025 Annual Report to membership
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
  - ⇒ Must demonstrate through providing examples of organization's impact on the community
    - Leadership development
    - Member educational opportunities
    - Networking
    - Workforce support and development
    - Community development
16. Describe the process used to determine member needs

### PROFESSIONAL ADMINISTRATION/HUMAN RESOURCES

17. Employee/Personnel Manual
  - ⇒ Initial here to affirm that employee manual is reviewed every 5 years at minimum.
18. Job titles and descriptions for all staff members
  - ⇒ Must show alignment with organizational chart
19. Staff evaluation policy and performance evaluation
  - ⇒ Must include staff evaluation template or process description
  - ⇒ Initial here to affirm that employee evaluations are performed at least annually.
20. Staff development policy and budget
  - ⇒ Must include examples of staff development from prior two years

## **FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT**

21. Financial policies and procedures
  - ⇒ Initial here to affirm that financial policies are reviewed every 5 years at minimum.
22. Two most recently approved annual budgets
  - ⇒ Must include total budget governed by Board of Directors
  - ⇒ Must include a copy of minutes reflecting budget approval
23. Two most recently reviewed profit/loss statements
24. Most recent IRS 990 filing
25. Most recent audit report (if applicable)
  - ⇒ If an annual audit is not performed, provide policy or process on how financials are reviewed and financial integrity is upheld.
26. Proof of workers' compensation (if required), general liability insurance, and D&O insurance

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

27. 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.
28. Description of website maintenance plan along with an overview of the site's primary functions (*membership directory, event registration, resources, etc.*)
29. Sample of recent news release promoting activity
30. Two different samples of recent member communications (electronic or written)
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.

## **BRANDING**

35. Provide hi-res version of chamber logo (jpg or png format only)

**Chief Board Officer Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Chief Staff Executive Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

# APPLICATION: ALABAMA ACCREDITED CHAMBER PROGRAM

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CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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ADDRESS

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CITY STATE ZIP CODE

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TELEPHONE

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E-MAIL WEB SITE

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CONTACT TITLE

***Payment***

All fees must accompany the application. The application fee is **\$250 for Alabama Chambers members** in good standing. Application deadline is **March 27, 2026**. Application fees are nonrefundable.

Mail to: Alabama Chambers  
Paige Hutto  
PO Box 1404  
Wetumpka, AL 36092

***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: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Dues Structure: Attach copy of dues structure  
Number of paying members Companies \_\_\_\_\_ Individuals/Honorary \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of board members Voting \_\_\_\_\_ Ex Officio \_\_\_\_\_  
Does your chamber have a 501c3 foundation?  Yes  No

**Revenue Source (by percentage)**

Membership Dues \_\_\_\_\_

Non-Dues Revenue (trips, sponsorship, events, etc) \_\_\_\_\_

Public Funds \_\_\_\_\_