

Board of Directors Meeting

January 30, 2025

Zoom Meeting



ASSOCIATION OF
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
EXECUTIVES

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Board of Directors Briefing Book

January 30, 2025

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Board of Directors Governance Meeting Calendar

2025

January 29-30 (virtual)

*Finance Committee	Jan. 29	1:30-2:30 pm EST
*Executive Committee	Jan. 29	3-5:00 pm EST
Board of Directors	Jan. 30	3-5:00 pm EST

April Boston, MA

*Finance Committee	April 23 (virtual)	1-2:30 pm EDT
*Executive Committee	April 29	2:30-4:30 pm EDT
Board Reception	April 29	6/6:30 pm EDT
Board of Directors	April 30	8:00 am-3:00pm EDT

July 22 | ACCE25 Philadelphia, PA

*Finance Committee	TBD - virtual	
*Executive Committee	July 22	12:30-2:00pm EDT
Board of Directors	July 22	2:30-4:00pm EDT

October 8-9 Alexandria, VA

*Finance Committee	TBD - virtual	
*Executive Committee	Oct. 8	2:30-4:30 pm EDT
Board Reception	Oct. 8	6/6:30 pm EDT
Board of Directors	Oct. 9	8:00 am-3:00pm EDT

***Activities for select committee members only.
Additional committee meetings via conference call announced as needed.**



ACCE Board of Directors Meeting

January 30, 2025 | 3:00 p.m. EST

Virtual

AGENDA

- 3:00 pm** **Welcome**
- Preview of spring board meeting in Boston
- 3:10 pm** **President's Report**
- 3:35 pm** **Governance**
- Review and Approve Minutes – October 24, 2024 Meeting
 - Consent Agenda – New Members for Approval
 - Treasurer's Report
 - Financial Report
 - Investment Strategy Update
 - Audit Update
 - Nominations Update
- 4:00 pm** **Foundation Update**
- 4:05 pm** **Open Discussion About Changing Dynamics in the Profession**
- 5:00 pm** **Adjourn**

ACCE Board of Directors Meeting

October 24, 2024 | 8:15 a.m. EDT

ACCE HQ
Alexandria VA

MINUTES

Present: Brian Anderson, Sara Barnett, Becky Bartoszek, James Bell, Alisha Benson, Katy Brooks, Chellie Cameron, Adrienne Cole, Omar Cuevas, Kim Dahlsten, Sarah Davasher-Wisdom, Nikki Devitt, Bob Durkin, Natalie English, Ian Fletcher, Angela Franco, Barbara Jean Garza, Eric Godet, David Griggs, Jaime Henning, Pamme Jimmar, Sandra Lombana Lindquist, Belinda Matthews Stenson, Steve Millard, Derek Miller, Matt Morrow, Jodi Owczarski, Mark Owens, Brittany Quick-Warner, Ali Rauch, Joe Reardon, Rory Ring, Keitha Robson, Jim Rooney, Maria Salinas, Baiju Shah, Nancy Spivey, Cassie Stoner, Ryan Unger, Heather Valudes, Kevin Walker and Kami Welch.

Excused: Juliet Abdel, Sara Armstrong, Candace Boothby, Kati Capozzi, Joshua Gunn, Andrew Hoan, Katie Kirkpatrick, B Kyle, Nick Masino, Sherry Menor-McNamara, Tim Murray, Amanda Payne, Carlos Phillips, Sara Ray, Mary Beth Sewald, Kevin Sheilley, Amy Shuttle, Ernest Strickland, Tony Vedda and Samira Zimmerly.

Staff: Sheree Anne Kelly, Stacey Breslin, Will Burns, Jacqui Cook, Ryan Keedy, Karen Rose and Amy Shields

Chair Jim Rooney called the meeting to order and welcomed new officers and board members.

Rooney then asked the board to review the minutes from the July 16, 2024 meeting in Dallas. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Heather Valudes and seconded by Nikki Devitt. *Motion carried.*

Rooney then presented the consent agenda of new ACCE members for approval since our last meeting. A list is provided in the briefing materials. A motion to approve the new members was made by Matt Morrow and seconded by Ali Rauch. *Passed.*

Treasurer Maria Salinas provided the financial report. She noted that our cash position is strong, with total net assets at \$4.6 million. Membership revenue is currently 2% higher than budget. This year's convention exceeded budget, recognizing a net profit of \$143,000. ACCE expenses are lower than budget as a result of prudent spending controls.

Net income for ACCE exceeds the budget. The foundation and FBI have a positive net income. A motion to accept the financial report was made by Natalie English and seconded by Eric Godet. *Passed.*

Rooney noted that ACCE's financial advisor, Anna Behnam, attended the finance and executive committee meetings yesterday to provide an update on ACCE's investments and called on CEO Sheree Anne Kelly for a brief recap.

Audit Chair Brittany Quick-Warner shared that the Audit Committee initiated an RFP to select a new audit firm. After reviewing 5 submissions the committee selected the firm of Rogers & Company. The Finance and Executive Committees approved this decision at their respective meetings yesterday. The annual audit will kick off in November and the audit report will be provided at the April board meeting.

Rooney then *convened* the FBI Annual Stockholders Meeting, a required yearly meeting of ACCE's wholly owned, for-profit subsidiary. Chair Candace Boothby could not attend today's meeting. Stacey Breslin reported in her absence. Rooney then *adjourned* the FBI Annual Stockholders Meeting.

Foundation Chair Ian Fletcher provided an update on the foundation and its latest work.

Rooney informed the board that over the summer the personnel committee met to conduct CEO Kelly's performance evaluation. He highlighted some of the feedback from that and noted that adjustments have been made to the employment contract including an extension from 3 to 5 years. All parties are in general agreement on the terms. The contract is currently in review with legal counsel and is expected to be finalized soon. Rooney and Kelly recently met to formulate goals for the coming year.

CEO Kelly provided the president's report. This included an update on the state of ACCE, the annual convention and other focus areas.

A focus session on the next iteration of the Horizon Initiative followed, facilitated by NEXT Generation Consulting. This included a review of the initial draft along with an interactive discussion on the findings to inform practical ways to deliver this content to the chamber profession.

Rooney welcomed special guest Kirsten Hillman, Ambassador of Canada to the United States, who addressed the board to discuss strengthening cross-border ties. Q&A with board members followed.

A micro-session led by Steve Millard followed about the shared government relations model in place at the Greater Akron Chamber.

Janneke Ratcliffe with the Urban Institute presented on housing policy opportunities for chambers to support employers in their communities. She shared housing policy initiatives and answered questions from the group.

Key representatives at the Harris Poll presented the results from the public opinion poll initiative.

Public Opinion Task Force Chair Natalie English followed by leading an interactive discussion on ways to disseminate these findings among key stakeholders, and ideas around a 2025 brand awareness campaign for chambers of commerce.

Rooney made closing remarks. *Meeting adjourned.*

New Members for Approval through 1/31/2025

South Sioux City Area Chamber of Commerce

Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce

Granbury Chamber of Commerce

Kodiak Chamber of Commerce

Galesburg Area Chamber of Commerce

Lakeville Area Chamber of Commerce

Monticello Area Chamber

Violet PR

Caldwell Chamber of Commerce

Midland Institute of Entrepreneurship

Horizon Upgrade

Cobb County Chamber of Commerce

Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives
Consolidated Projects
For the Eight Months Ending November 30, 2024

JC-09CONSBS
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	ACCE	FBI	Foundation	Eliminations	CONS
Consolidated Balance Sheet					
ASSETS					
Cash and Cash Equivalents	2,071,501.37	258,130.79	1,095,209.91		3,424,842.07
Investments	1,773,681.27	61,212.91	-		1,834,894.18
Investments - 457B	392,786.37	-	-		392,786.37
Investment in Subsidiary	461,049.64	-	-		461,049.64
Accounts Receivable - General (net)	57,618.37	170,796.76	-		228,415.13
Accounts Receivable - Trust	-	172,916.72	-		172,916.72
Grant Receivable	-	-	-	-	-
Due from Related Entities	415,976.72	-	-	(415,976.72)	-
Prepaid Expenses	57,535.45	5,847.55	2,436.00		65,819.00
Prepaid Expenses - Convention	50,967.16	-	-		50,967.16
Deposits	2,950.00	2,950.00	-		5,900.00
Fixed Assets, Net	57,620.84	28,948.42	-		86,569.26
Right of Use Asset	-	-	-		-
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 5,341,687.19	\$ 700,803.15	\$ 1,097,645.91	\$ (415,976.72)	\$ 6,724,159.53
LIABILITIES					
Accounts Payable & Accrued Expenses	54,080.84	(2,918.22)	-		51,162.62
Accounts Payable - Trust	-	103,750.00	-		103,750.00
457B Liability	392,786.37	-	-		392,786.37
Due to Related Entities	-	33,288.96	382,687.76	(415,976.72)	-
Deferred Dues	830,684.37	-	-		830,684.37
Deferred Other	7,640.00	184.55	434,345.29		442,169.84
Lease liability	-	-	-		-
Deferred Convention	-	-	-		-
Deferred Revenue - National Sponsors	14,368.32	-	-		14,368.32
Capital Lease Obligations	2,367.00	-	-		2,367.00
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$ 1,301,926.90	\$ 134,305.29	\$ 817,033.05	\$ (415,976.72)	\$ 1,837,288.52
NET ASSETS					
Net Assets - Unrestricted	3,353,167.37	461,174.39	276,133.43		4,090,475.19
Net Assets - Temporarily Restricted	-	-	-		-
YTD Change in Net Assets	686,592.92	105,323.47	4,479.43		796,395.82
TOTAL NET ASSETS	4,039,760.29	566,497.86	280,612.86	-	4,886,871.01
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	\$ 5,341,687.19	\$ 700,803.15	\$ 1,097,645.91	\$ (415,976.72)	\$ 6,724,159.53

Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives
Consolidated Statement of Activity
For the Year to Date Period Ending November 30, 2024

	November 24 YTD ACTUAL	November 24 YTD BUDGET	2024-25 Annual Budget	November 24 Actual vs. Budget YTD \$\$ Variance	November 24 Actual vs. Budget YTD % Variance
FBI					
Total FBI Revenue	803,299.46	787,333.33	1,181,000.00	15,966.13	2%
Total FBI Expense	697,975.99	778,455.67	1,167,683.50	(80,479.68)	(10%)
FBI Net Income	\$ 105,323.47	\$ 8,877.67	\$ 13,316.50	\$ 96,445.80	1,086%
Foundation					
Total Revenue	901,766.66	890,850.67	1,336,276.00	10,915.99	1%
Total Expense	897,287.23	864,938.67	1,297,408.00	32,348.56	4%
Foundation Net Income	\$ 4,479.43	\$ 25,912.00	\$ 38,868.00	\$ (21,432.57)	(83%)
ACCE					
Revenue					
Annual Convention	1,005,554.80	1,178,400.00	1,178,400.00	(172,845.20)	(15%)
Awards/COY Revenue	13,600.00	15,000.00	30,000.00	(1,400.00)	(9%)
Certification	5,427.33	5,500.00	11,000.00	(72.67)	(1%)
Chamber Education	77,747.25	77,100.00	184,000.00	647.25	1%
Chamber Executive Magazine Rev	52,615.00	82,060.00	116,080.00	(29,445.00)	(36%)
Executive Search	1,500.00	6,666.67	10,000.00	(5,166.67)	(78%)
Executive Speaking Engagement	16,900.00	16,666.67	25,000.00	233.33	1.4%
Membership Revenue	1,070,991.92	1,046,666.67	1,570,000.00	24,325.25	2%
Metro Cities Revenue	36,830.00	43,460.00	81,500.00	(6,630.00)	(15%)
Misc Income	9,506.02	666.67	1,000.00	8,839.35	1,326%
National Corporate Sponsors Revenue	147,688.26	192,840.00	226,007.00	(45,151.74)	(23%)
Publications & Research Revenue	6,974.19	13,666.67	20,500.00	(6,692.48)	(49%)
Total ACCE Revenue from Operations	\$ 2,445,334.77	\$ 2,678,693.33	\$ 3,453,487.00	\$ (233,358.56)	(9%)
Expense					
Admin (Operations, Occupancy, Governance)	227,508.71	286,533.33	429,800.00	(59,024.62)	(21%)
Admin Personnel Costs	332,541.00	396,863.33	655,295.00	(64,322.33)	(16%)
Annual Convention	863,607.13	1,147,299.00	1,147,299.00	(283,691.87)	(25%)
Awards/COY Expense	43,409.19	43,500.00	46,064.00	(90.81)	(0.2%)
Certifications Expense	18,806.72	17,070.38	30,111.00	1,736.34	10%
Chamber Education Expense	128,264.19	128,220.00	217,761.00	44.19	0.03%
Chamber Executive Magazine Expense	33,393.12	41,896.00	52,528.00	(8,502.88)	(20%)
AskACCE	19,869.16	29,959.33	44,939.00	(10,090.17)	(34%)
Membership Expense	247,187.95	311,478.00	467,217.00	(64,290.05)	(21%)
Metro Cities Expense	23,501.56	29,307.95	45,267.00	(5,806.39)	(20%)
National Corporate Sponsors Expense	49,483.28	115,068.00	172,602.00	(65,584.72)	(57%)
Publications & Research Expense	47,399.42	50,198.67	75,298.00	(2,799.25)	(6%)
Web Expense	27,840.55	32,756.00	49,134.00	(4,915.45)	(15%)
Total ACCE Expense from Operations	\$ 2,062,811.98	\$ 2,630,149.99	\$ 3,433,315.00	\$ (567,338.01)	(22%)
ACCE Net Income from Operations	\$ 382,522.79	\$ 48,543.34	\$ 20,172.00	\$ 333,979.45	688%
Total ACCE & Affiliates Revenue	4,150,400.89	4,356,877.33	5,970,763.00	(206,476.44)	(5%)
Total ACCE & Affiliates Expenses	3,658,075.20	4,273,544.33	5,898,406.50	(615,469.13)	(14%)
Total ACCE & Affiliates Net Income	\$ 492,325.69	\$ 83,333.01	\$ 72,356.50	\$ 408,992.68	491%
Realized & Unrealized Gain/Loss from Invest	\$ 70,195.35				
Employee Retention Credit Revenue	333,364.57				
Employee Retention Credit Expenses - (102)	5,250.00				
Balance for ERC	\$ 328,114.57				
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>			
Original Opportunity Fund Allocation	600,000.00	600,000.00			
Board approved adding \$150,000 (Apr 24) to rec	150,000.00	150,000.00			
Accrued Interest	8,034.06				
Opportunity Fund Allocation	\$ 758,034.06	\$ 750,000.00			
Immigration Initiative Expense		400,000.00			
Horizon 2.0 Expense- d571	49,944.37	87,750.00			
Public Opinion Poll Expense- d572	37,000.00	45,000.00			
Finance/ Accounting System (Sage Intacct)	7,295.42	50,000.00			
Total Budgeted Expenses from Investments	\$ 94,239.79	\$ 582,750.00			
Balance Remaining in Opportunity Fund	\$ 663,794.27	\$ 167,250.00			
ACCE Total Change in Net Assets	\$ 686,592.92				



ACCE Finance Report

November 30, 2024 Financial Statements (8 months into the FY)

Balance Sheet

Included in the Cash and Cash Equivalents line item on the Balance Sheet are two separate accounts:

- **Operating Checking Account** – This account is used to pay regular operating expenses. The operating account should have a minimum of 5 months of essential operating capital. As of November, the current balance in this account is \$1.4 million, which exceeds that target goal.
- **Cash Reserve Fund** – Created in April 2023 with \$600,000 of seed money, this fund is in a liquid interest-bearing money market account. This account is to be accessed for short-term unplanned expenses or investment opportunities and is not managed or monitored by our investment advisor(s). In April 2024, the Finance Committee added an additional \$150k to this account.

In addition, we currently have \$1.7 million in short-term/long-term investments. Accounts Payable/Accrued Expenses has a balance of \$54k, which is related to expenses for a Metro Cities meeting held in November and accrued vacation leave. Total net assets stand at \$4.8 million.

Consolidated Statement of Activity

Membership Revenue – This line item is 2% higher than the budget. This is primarily due to aggressive work on collections and sales efforts.

Miscellaneous Income – Included in this line item is interest from ACCE’s bank accounts and revenue from consulting fees for speaking engagements and board strategic planning retreats.

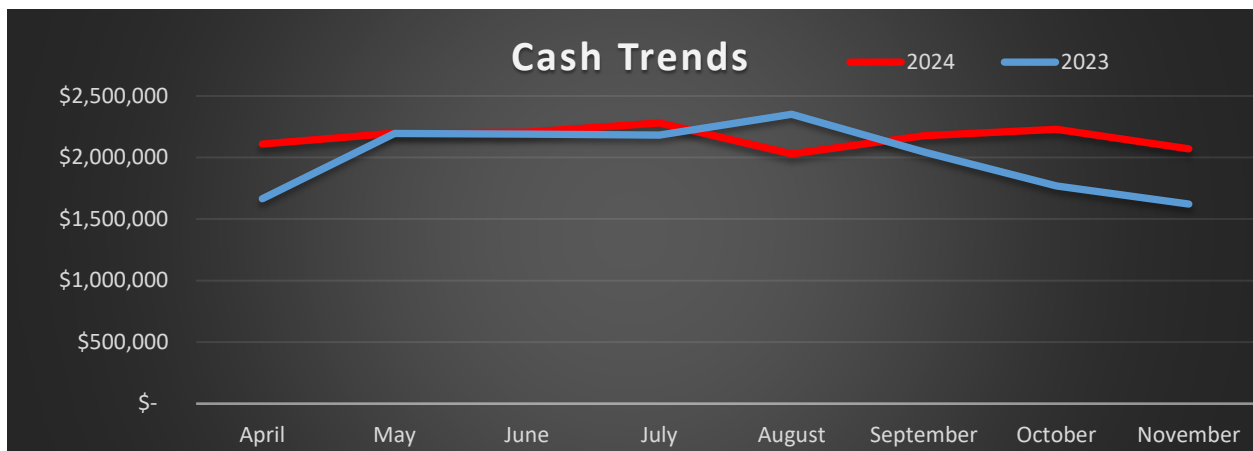
National Corporate Sponsors Revenue – This line item is below budget. In addition to the loss of a major partner, META, we had a vacancy in our VP, Partnership position for the first 5 months of our fiscal year. We have since brought on a new senior team member in this role who has revamped our process and is growing our both our prospect pipeline and expanding partner packages. While we anticipate falling short of our budget in this line item, we expect that both the sponsorship and magazine revenue will increase during the course of the year. Likewise, the team will make up any revenue shortfall in this area through other segments of the organization.

Convention – We recognized a net profit of approximately \$141K, more than four times the budgeted net revenue. We were able to recognize cost savings, which resulted in a strong net income for the conference.

ACCE Expenses from Operations – Expenses for the first eight months of the fiscal year are lower than the budget. This is primarily due to an effort to control spending.

Net Income – Eight months into the year, the ACCE’s net income exceeds budget. The Foundation and FBI (both of which have their own governing boards) also have a positive net income.

Cash Flow – The cash flow as of November 2024 is provided below:



Professional Development Programs

Amy Shields, Vice President Programs

January 2025

Division Updates

Communications Division: The December call consisted of numerous topics, including a general overview of the Public Opinion Poll data and access to assets, using internal staff as social media influencers, and printed vs. online publications. The next [division call](#) is February 13.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Division (DEI): The division meets every other month on the third Tuesday. Recent discussion topics covered staff competencies, 2025 priorities, adapting DEI language to meet members where they are and funding. Future programs will highlight how to embed DEI into departments and there will be a joint call with the Finance and Operations Division.

Education and Talent Development Division (ETD): In Q4, the division met to review workforce legislation trends, skills training opportunities for incumbent workers and barriers to higher education. Future programming will cover strategies for rural economic mobility and supporting apprenticeships.

Economic and Community Development Division (ECD): The division met in Q4 to review workforce legislation trends and chamber-to-chamber mergers. Future programs will highlight retail incubators, building community consensus and working with public health departments. ACCE staff will be conducting focus groups with economic and community development practitioners to understand needs and tailor programming moving forward.

Events Division: On November 7, the division hosted a call on capacity and collaboration in event planning. On October 23, the division resumed hosting quarterly calls for professionals who run young professional programming. There will be a [joint call](#) with the Education and Talent Development Division on January 28 highlighting the connection between Young Professionals programs and talent retention goals.

Finance and Operations Division: The November call featured a guest speaker from the U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division to review updates to the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act and how to best prepare for the changes. The division will have an open discussion call in January, followed by a joint meeting in March with the DEI division.

Government Relations Division: The division continues to hold calls on the fourth Thursday of the month. The December call featured a discussion on legislator scorecards and the criteria chambers use when taking a position on ballot measures. In January, we were joined by Tim Monahan, the U.S. Chamber's Vice President and Managing Director of Government Affairs, to discuss the top business issues in 2025 and how the U.S. Chamber plans to adapt to the new administration.

Membership Development Division (MDD): On November 14, the division hosted a roundtable discussion call on member meeting insights. In January, the division hosted a Sales Manager Roundtable catered towards sales professional who lead teams.

Other Professional Development Programming

Sales Contest and Lifetime Sales Achievement Awards: Sales Contest submissions for Q4 were due on January 10, and the leaderboard is available on the [program's webpage](#). Winners of the 2024 Sales Contest will be celebrated at the 2025 Membership and Revenue Development Conference in March.

CCE Program: Currently there are 59 people who have submitted an intent to apply form for 2025 or 2026. Interest continues to be strong for those who were previously ineligible to apply because of the audit requirement. [Applications](#) are due on February 7 for the 2025 class.

Webinars and E-Learning: Recent webinars covered the Chamber Public Opinion poll, the CCE process, workforce legislation trends, skills training for incumbent workers and identifying barriers to higher education. All are recorded and available in our LMS.

Chamber of the Year: The 2025 Chamber of the Year award application process has been streamlined following feedback from applicants and judges. The Chamber of the Year [Interest Webinar](#) will take place on February 6. Award applications are due May 8.

Sales Coach Program: Eight coach-mentee pairs completed this year's Sales Coach Program on November 15. [Registration](#) for the 2025 cohort is open for both mentors and mentees. Registration for the program closes on March 31, 2025.

Certificate in Chamber Management: In 2024, chamber professionals purchased 170 courses. Ten people have completed all seven CCM courses this year, receiving a Certificate in Chamber Management. *One individual who completed the full program stated that it ought to be a standard for training in every chamber.* ACCE staff are working on 2.0 courses to add to the CCM program offerings.

Workforce Development Fundamentals Certificate: The second iteration ended on Dec. 16 with 59 graduates. [Review the announcement here.](#) We will hold one more live training in 2025 with exact dates to be announced. We are exploring additional opportunities for future webinars and certificate courses with IEDC.

ACCE Convention: [Registration is open](#) for the 2025 Convention (July 22 – 25, 2025 in Philadelphia, PA). Planning for programming is underway, and the sponsorship team has distributed the prospectus for interested sponsors and exhibitors. Stay tuned for more details on breakout sessions and keynotes.

ACCE Next Generation Leadership Program: The team is currently developing a program to prepare the next generation of chamber professionals for future leadership opportunities within the industry. The program will launch in early 2025 and will help participants build their personal leadership skills, gain industry subject matter expertise and provide opportunities for mentoring and coaching.

Virtual Resources on Chamber Board Management: Staff are building out resources for chamber boards and training on how chamber leaders can work more effectively with their boards. The on-demand resources will be housed on the [Board Management](#) resources page. Current resources in development include an onboarding video to orient new board members to the chamber industry and short trainings on aligning governance with organizational goals.

Regional Conferences and Topical Convenings

Registration is currently open for these upcoming conferences:

- [Education and Talent Convening](#): March 5 – 7 in Detroit, MI.
- [Membership and Revenue Development Conference](#): March 19 – 21, 2025 in Cobb County, GA

Save the date for these conference in Fall 2025:

- Events and Communications Conference: October 15 – 17, 2025 in Huntsville, AL
- Government Relations Meeting: November 9 – 11, 2025 in Cleveland, OH

2024 Government Relations Roundtable Meeting: ACCE's 2024 Government Relations Roundtable meeting was held November 10-12 in Phoenix. The meeting covered a variety of issues, including workforce, childcare policy, data privacy legislation and political engagement. The group also toured Arizona State University's downtown Phoenix campus and was joined by Waymo's head of state political strategy Aidan Ali-Sullivan to learn more about the autonomous vehicle policy landscape.



Communications & Networks Report

Will Burns, Vice President – Communications & Networks

ACCE Communications

Chamber Executive: The Fall 2024 edition of *Chamber Executive* is [online](#). The issue showcases ACCE’s public opinion poll on the positive perception and impact of chambers. It also includes articles highlighting several chambers experimenting with freemium membership models and examples of different approaches chambers take to support entrepreneurship and small business.

- **ACCE 40 Under 40:** This issue also recognized our annual [40 Under 40](#). This annual recognition program showcases 40 of the industry’s top emerging leaders who have demonstrated success in their careers and made significant contributions to the communities they serve. The list includes CEOs and staff professionals from a wide variety of roles and chamber sizes.
- **The Winter 2025 issue** will be published in February. It will feature articles on succession planning, tips for new chamber CEOs, advice for progressing your chamber career and a Q&A with chamber government relations professionals.


Social Media Highlights: ACCE achieved growth on our social media channels [during the last quarter](#).

- LinkedIn: Follower count grew by 183 | Engagement remains strong at 15.47% with a click-through rate of 10.47%. | Comparing 2024 to 2023, ACCE saw a 152% increase in impressions, 82% increase in page engagement and follower growth of 7%
- Facebook: Follower count grew by 100 | Engagement rate dropped from 23% to 12% | Comparing 2024 to 2023, ACCE saw a 57% increase in impressions, 113% increase in page engagement and follower growth of 6%
- Instagram: Follower count grew by 64 | Engagement rate dropped from 9.6% to 5.5% | Comparing 2024 to 2023, ACCE saw a 105% increase in impressions and subscriber growth of 210%


Top Performing Posts - Facebook


 2024 40 Under 40 Announced

 Chamber of Commerce Day

 Public Opinion Poll Results

Top Performing Posts - LinkedIn

 Chamber of Commerce Day

 2024 40 Under 40

 ACCE25 Registration Open

Research & Benchmarking

Public Opinion Poll: ACCE released the results of its landmark research on U.S. adults’ perceptions of chambers of commerce on November 14 via a live briefing call. More than 400 chamber leaders registered to attend the call. The results of the study, conducted in partnership with The Harris Poll, and accompanying resources include an infographic, a press release template and a fact sheet are available online at acce.org/poll. ACCE staff is also available for custom presentations for \$250, which can be tailored to your region or another subgroup of interest.

Chamber Pulse Surveys: ACCE pulse surveys uncover and monitor industry trends. This quarter, we’ll release surveys on policy and political engagement, artificial intelligence and a second survey on software solutions ([previously run in April 2023](#)). You can find the results of all our surveys on our [website here](#).

AskACCE: The team continues to provide Q&A and in-depth research services. From October - December 2024, we responded to 83 [AskACCE requests](#). Satisfaction ratings averaged 5.0/5.0. Inquiry trends:

- **Benchmarking:** Data on membership dues amounts, dues increases and retention percentages; interest in the annual salary and benefits survey report for membership staff
- **HR and Governance Documents:** Bonus structures, staff retention agreements, job descriptions, bylaws samples
- **Membership Development:** Recruitment, renewal and communication strategies

Dynamic Chamber Benchmarking: The FY2024 surveys in Dynamic Chamber Benchmarking officially launched on January 14. The deadline to complete the operations survey is **March 14** so that results can be released in April. The salary survey will be promoted later this spring with results to follow in the summer.



All board members are expected to complete both the operations and salary surveys. More information, including our new [playlist of instructional videos](#) can be found [online here](#).

Customized Research & Special Publications: ACCE can conduct customized projects to elicit data and feedback from select chambers on quantitative (and even qualitative) questions to benchmark how your peers manage operations, fundraising, employee engagement and more. For a reasonable fee, our team can conduct:

- CEO executive compensation reports
- More detailed benchmarking to compare your chamber to your most relevant peers
- Programmatic audits to compare your program of work to similar sized chambers
- Membership dues model comparisons

Contact [Will Burns](#) for more information.

Community Peer Groups

Metro Cities Council: ACCE's Metro Cities Council's November call featured a discussion on ACCE's new public opinion poll and a recap of chamber candidate support, issue advocacy and ballot initiatives. The group will meet in person February 19-21 in Orlando, hosted by the Orlando Economic Partnership.

Major Cities Council: ACCE's Major Cities Council's November call featured a discussion with Asheville Area Chamber President & CEO Kit Cramer, CCE about economic recovery efforts and public policy priorities in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. The group will meet in person on March 2-4 in Wilmington, North Carolina, hosted by the Wilmington Chamber.

Emerging Cities Council: Emerging Cities Council continues to meet quarterly. Its November call focused on ACCE's public opinion poll and a discussion on innovative ways to wrap up the year. The council's Google Group remains a valuable resource for ideas and information-sharing. Topics of recent discussions include chamber foundation job descriptions, automatic membership renewals and financial policies.

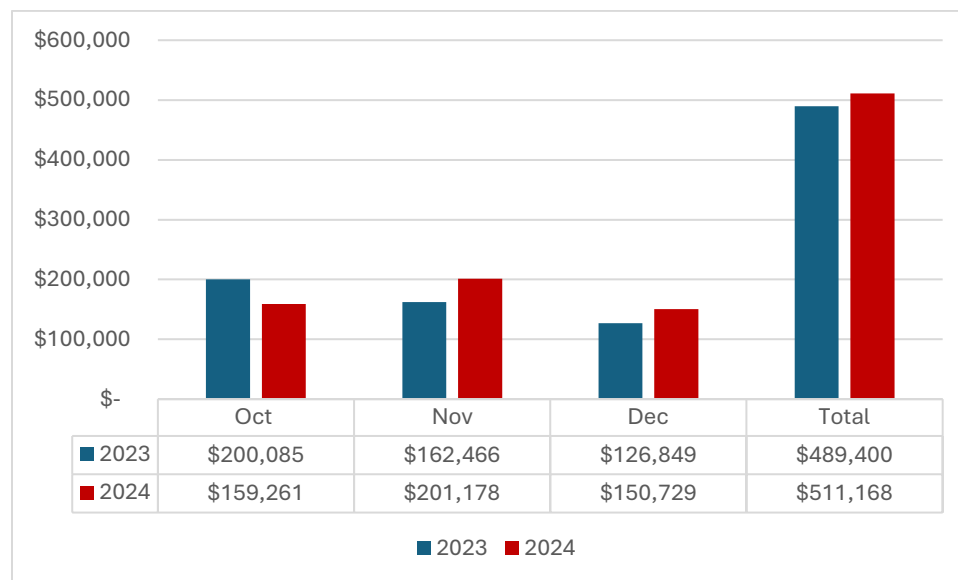
Hometown Chamber Council: The Hometown Chamber Council's January call featured a presentation from ACCE President & CEO on the Horizon Initiative and our public opinion poll. The council's Google Group also remains an active resource among members. Recent threads focused on executive committee meeting frequency and employee appearance and dress policies.

Member Engagement & Partnerships

Ryan Keedy, VP Member Experience & Partnerships
January 2025

Membership Retention & New Sales:

- Retention revenue collected for the quarter was \$511,168. We are currently in our largest collections period with about \$700,000 in renewals invoiced between October – March.
- Between October – December we welcomed 9 new members representing \$8,320 in new revenue.
- We are currently at 104% to goal for new member revenue.
- We are preparing for an April 1, 2025 launch of our new membership model, which includes our new Pathfinder membership option that's online only, specifically targeted towards small and underserved chamber communities for \$100.



Partner, Convention and Regional Sponsorship Sales:

- An ACCE Partner review has been completed, with revised benefits, pricing and collateral.
 - We have already recognized an increase in revenue with our current Partners that have come up for renewal (with no attrition to date).
- Regional Events Update
 - Education & Talent Convening: Gold Sponsor secured; two Silver Sponsorships remain.
 - Membership & Revenue: Two Silver Sponsorships confirmed; one Gold & one Silver Sponsorships remain.
- Convention outreach has begun to potential sponsors and exhibitors.

Q1 Technology Update

Emma Griffin, Sr. Manager, Technology Projects

Cybersecurity Risk Assessment

We conducted a comprehensive cybersecurity risk assessment in collaboration with Hartman Executive Advisors. This assessment identified potential vulnerabilities within our systems and evaluated our security posture. This assessment allows us to prioritize necessary security improvements and take proactive steps to protect sensitive information. We will focus on addressing any action items identified from this risk assessment during Q1 2025 to further strengthen our defenses and mitigate risks.

Third-Party Penetration Test

We performed a third-party penetration test on our Microsoft environment. This test simulates real-world cyberattacks to identify weaknesses in our systems that could be exploited by malicious actors. By identifying and addressing these vulnerabilities, we are better prepared to defend against potential cyber threats. We will also focus on addressing any action items from this test in Q1 2025 to enhance the security of our IT infrastructure.

Sales Contest Data Collection

We completed development of a custom workflow within Salesforce to streamline the collection and storage of data for our Sales Contest. Previously, this data was stored in multiple locations, leading to inefficiencies and potential inconsistencies. By consolidating the data into Salesforce, we now have a single source of truth that ensures better data integrity, simplifies reporting, and enhances decision-making. This new process promotes data accuracy and transparency while reducing manual work and the risk of errors.

IRS 990 Data Collection and Storage

We developed an automated script that pulls the relevant IRS 990 data directly from the IRS website and developed methods for storing the information in Salesforce, significantly reducing the manual effort required by the membership team to collect and verify the information. The script saves weeks of labor and ensures that we are working with the most current data. By storing this information in Salesforce, we now have a centralized, easily accessible repository that supports our new annual dues audit process and helps ensure that we are charging members appropriate dues based on the most current financial information.

ACCE Foundation Updates

Amy Shields, Executive Director

January 2025

Programmatic Work

ACCE Foundation's Economic Mobility Fellowship: The final report to the Truist Foundation was submitted in November. Staff are planning for future Fellowship cohorts and exploring different ways to fund the program.

Equitable Credential Attainment Cohort Program: This month, communities will share enrollment, completion and job placement metrics. Staff continue to meet with communities every other month to provide technical assistance and coaching. The current cohort of the program will end in July 2025.

Urban Higher Education Ecosystems: The Foundation hosted another virtual training on identifying barriers to higher education on Dec. 10. Future webinars will focus on the learner's journey. We recently released the second series of [on-demand courses](#) to help chambers understand how to work with higher education partners support economic mobility within their regions. This work is funded by the Kresge Foundation.

Rural Workforce Development: The [Economic Mobility for Rural Workers](#) ended in November. Cohort members were profiled [here](#). The Foundation will release a toolkit to support other rural chambers in replicating these pilots in January 2025. The Foundation will also host a [webinar](#) on January 30 highlighting two members of the cohort. This work is funded by Ascendium Education Philanthropy.

Smart Justice: The ACCE Foundation's Smart Justice Roundtable meeting quarterly. The November call focused on engaging employers through re-entry simulations. The next call will be held in March.

DEI Resource Guide: In October 2024, the ACCE Foundation's [DEI Resource Guide](#) was updated with new content on how chambers can name their DEI work.

Skills-Based Hiring: The next Complete Skills-Based Hiring Lifecycle series started in January. In spring 2025, ACCE will launch an employer accelerator to coach small and mid-sized businesses on implementing skills-based hiring. This work is funded by the Rework America Alliance, an initiative of Jobs for the Future.

Development Pipeline and Partner Cultivation

Higher Education

- Submitted a concept to Strada to support alignment between education and employment outcomes
- Outlined a concept with Education Strategy Group to help chambers improve credit mobility between two and four-year institutions in their regions; target funders include ECMC, Dell Foundation and others
- Met with JPNC to discuss the role chambers play in building postsecondary-employer partnerships

Workforce Development

- Secured a \$200K grant extension from Ascendium Education Philanthropy to continue providing support for rural chambers to create pathways for mobility for local workforce (grantmaking from Ascendium Education Philanthropy is currently on hold as they finalize the new strategic plan)
- Secured a \$40K contract to develop resources to help chambers of commerce identify potential career pathways and support jobs in the electric vehicle industry

Other

- Met with FordNGL on possibilities for expanding participation of chambers in academies
- Secured a \$20K grant from the deBeaumont Foundation to develop tools for chambers to better engage with public health officials

Fringe Benefits, Inc.

Candace Boothby, CCE, Chair

January 30, 2025

After negotiations to adjust the contract between FBI and the Benefits Trust, we have hired a new team member, Christy Merilus. She will help support customer service, compliance and communications. She brings experience in the finance and business sectors involving customer service and support.

Q1 of each year is 401k compliance season for FBI. This is when we gather the data necessary from the Participating Employers to complete annual review and compliance testing for each location in the 401k profit sharing plan. The team also met for a 1.5-day strategic session this December to continue building on the efficiencies we created last year.

Our calendar for New Plan Administrator communications for each product line (401(k), 457(b), and insurance) was also modified at December's benefits team strategic planning session to combine topics into product specific newsletters each month. We are also working on a comprehensive summary of all 401k participant education planned for 2025. This will be posted to the Plan Administrator webpages - [ACCE/FringeBenefits](#) once completed. We hope that posting this information will assist our Administrators in knowing what emails to look for and when. In addition, we are building more "How To" documents, recorded webinars, and other materials to assist in understanding benefits, programs and operations.

Insurance rates remain unchanged for the 2025 calendar year, with the exception of dental which went up slightly for all coverage types.

ACCE External Affairs Engagement

As the national association serving and representing the chamber community, it's critical that ACCE staff spend time embedded in the field. This takes the form of chamber visits for strategic guidance and idea-sharing, speaking and facilitation opportunities, attending broad-based events highlighting issues that impact chambers and the constituents they serve, and outreach to other stakeholders, including but not limited to: media; national associations; universities, etc. This list does not include events hosted by or at ACCE:

ACCE Staffer	Date	Event	Location	Description
Sheree Anne Kelly	July '24	Orlando Economic Partnership	Meeting	Discussion around hosting World Chambers Congress
Sheree Anne Kelly	July '24	Arlington Chamber board retreat	Arlington, VA	Facilitated strategic planning retreat
Sheree Anne Kelly	July '24	Chamber of Commerce of Fargo/Moorhead/W. Fargo	Fargo, ND	Facilitated strategic planning retreat
Sheree Anne Kelly	August '24	St. Paul Area Chamber	Virtual	Facilitated strategic planning retreat
Sheree Anne Kelly	Aug. '24	Pravi	Meeting	Meeting to discuss collaboration between our organizations
Amy Shields	Aug '24	WACE Academy	Sacramento, CA	Presented session on staff management and development
Amy Shields	Aug '24	Ruston-Lincoln Chamber of Commerce board retreat	Ruston, LA	Facilitated strategic planning session
Amy Shields	Aug '24	Rework America Alliance Network meeting	Virtual	Met with other national partners on hiring and skills
Sheree Anne Kelly	Sept. '24	Georgetown University McDonough School of Business	Washington DC	Meeting with Dean Dasmohapatra
Sheree Anne Kelly	Sept. '24	Lancaster Chamber	Kennett Square, PA	Facilitated strategic planning retreat
Sheree Anne Kelly	Sept. '24	KY Chamber of Commerce Execs	Louisville, KY	Keynote speaker at annual conference
Sheree Anne Kelly	Sept. '24	Greater Louisville Inc.	Louisville, KY	Facilitated staff retreat
Sheree Anne Kelly	Sept. '24	US Chamber Committee of 100	Palm Beach, FL	Member/attendee
Amy Shields	Sept '24	Urban Institute	Virtual	Met to discuss current initiatives and potential partnership
Amy Shields	Sept '24	National Fund for Workforce Solutions SHIFT Conference	Memphis, TN	Attendee
Sheree Anne Kelly	Oct. '24	AZ Chamber Execs	Mesa, AZ	Keynote speaker at annual conference
Sheree Anne Kelly	Oct. '24	ASAE Academy	Virtual	Building a Resilient and Future-Ready Workforce

Sheree Anne Kelly	Oct. '24	National Beer Wholesalers Association	Alexandria, VA	Met with president & CEO to connect around current initiatives
Sheree Anne Kelly	Oct. '24	National Assoc. of Workforce Boards & IEDC	Washington, DC	Met with CEOs to connect around current initiatives
Sheree Anne Kelly	Oct. '24	Eurochambres	Meeting	Met with president & CEO to connect around current initiatives
Sheree Anne Kelly	Oct. '24	Harvard Business Review	Virtual	Future of Business 2024
Sheree Anne Kelly	Oct. '24	Greater Spokane Inc.	Spokane, WA	Keynote speaker at Leadership Advisory Council; GSI staff & senior team presentations; keynote speaker at regional chamber event
Sheree Anne Kelly	Oct. '24	Montgomery County Chamber board meeting	Rockville, MD	Presented on the trends and best practices in the industry
Will Burns	Oct. '24	American Immigration Council	Columbus, OH	Attendee
Amy Shields	Oct '24	Glenwood Springs Chamber board meeting	Virtual	Presented on chamber foundation trends
Amy Shields	Oct '24	USCC, IOM Board Meeting	Washington, DC	Curriculum Committee, Board of Trustees and DEI Committee meetings
Amy Shields	Oct '24	Business-Higher Education Forum Meeting	Washington, DC	Connect with business and higher education executives
Amy Shields	Oct '24	Workforce Ecosystem Collaborative Kick-off	Virtual	Meeting with other adult education and workforce partners to identify trends and issues
Amy Shields	Oct '24	Opportunity@Work	Virtual	Discuss skills-based hiring and alignment in work
Rumsha Ahmed	Oct '24	CAEL Conference	New Orleans, LA	Presented on Designing a Regional Talent Strategy for Economic Mobility
Rumsha Ahmed	Oct '24	High school career fair	Aldie, VA	Presented on communication skills and chamber/association jobs
Karen Rose	Oct. '24	ASAE Business Solutions	Virtual	Attendee for webinar: An Ever-Evolving Boardroom: Examining the State of Association Governance
Amy Shields	Oct '24	CAEL Strategic Planning	Virtual	Provided input on CAEL's strategies for working with chambers
Sheree Anne Kelly & Amy Shields	Nov '24	NACo collaboration meeting	Washington, DC	Met to discuss alignment of work and potential future joint programming

Sheree Anne Kelly & Amy Shields	Nov '24	WACE	Alexandria, VA	Met with president & CEO to discuss current initiatives and potential partnerships
Sheree Anne Kelly	Nov '24	IEDC	Washington, DC	Met with president & CEO to discuss continued partnership opportunities
Sheree Anne Kelly	Nov '24	National Assoc. of Workforce Boards	Podcast guest	Workforce Central Podcast
Sheree Anne Kelly	Nov '24	ASAE	Webinar	Tomorrow's Workforce Coalition: General Election Recap Webinar
Sheree Anne Kelly	Nov '24	Bend Chamber of Commerce	Bend, OR	Keynote speaker at annual Impact Conference
Amy Shields	Nov '24	Washington Chamber of Commerce Executives Exec2Exec webinar	Virtual	Presented on public opinion poll results & Horizon preview
Amy Shields	Nov '24	Carolinas Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives conference	Blowing Rock, NC	Keynote on public opinion poll results & Horizon preview
Emma Griffin	Nov '24	AMS Fest	Washington, DC	Attended meeting for association technology
Sheree Anne Kelly	Dec '24	Bastrop Chamber	Bastrop, TX	Keynote speaker at annual luncheon
Sheree Anne Kelly	Dec '24	Temple Chamber of Commerce Board	Temple, TX	Facilitated strategic planning retreat
Sheree Anne Kelly	Dec '24	Greater Austin Chamber	Austin, TX	Facilitated staff retreat
Amy Shields	Dec '24	Association of Career and Technical Education Summit 7.0	San Antonio, TX	Attended convening of associations and training providers to discuss talent needs and challenges
Amy Shields	Dec '24	Glendale Chamber Board Meeting	Virtual	Presented on chamber foundations
Jen Pruden	Dec '24	FACP	Virtual	Public Opinion Poll Presentation
Sheree Anne Kelly	Jan '25	NASC Winter Meeting	Rancho Mirage, CA	Presented on public opinion poll data and Horizons update; attendee
Sheree Anne Kelly	Jan '25	ASAE / Key Assoc. Industry Committee	Washington, DC	Committee meeting and peer-led roundtable; asked to lead discussion on workforce
Sheree Anne Kelly	Jan '25	Montgomery County Chamber Execs	Rockville, MD	Presented on ACCE and Public Opinion Poll
Sheree Anne Kelly	Jan '25	Highlands Chamber of Commerce Board & Staff	Virtual	Presented on Horizon and Public Opinion Poll
Amy Shields	Jan '25	Safal Partners Apprenticeship webinar	Virtual	Presented on the role of chambers in work-based learning
Amy Shields	Jan '25	Benefits Cliff conversation	Virtual	Discussed the work of chambers in addressing the Benefits Cliff

Amy Shields	Jan '25	FordNGL discussion	Virtual	Conversation on expanding the role chambers plan in setting up career academies
Amy Shields	Jan '25	RiseKit	Virtual	Discussion on the use of technology to adopt skills-based practices
Rumsha Ahmed	Jan '25	Workforce Development Institute	Coronado, CA	Presenting on equitable credential attainment work
Amy Shields	Jan '25	Myrtle Beach Workforce Summit	Myrtle Beach, SC	Presenting on the value of skills-based hiring to chamber members
Jen Pruden	Jan '25	IACCE	Virtual	Public Opinion Poll Presentation

Do you know of events at which our team should speak? Conferences/virtual meetings where our industry's voice should be heard? Know a chamber that could benefit from customized consulting, training or facilitated retreats? Let us know. Tell Sheree Anne – skelly@acce.org.