



CCE Application Guidelines – 2027

This document explains how to complete and submit your [CCE application](#). It follows the order of the application. If you have any questions, please contact Ashley Purdy at apurdy@acce.org.

Before You Begin

- **We recommend that you open and save a blank copy of the CCE application to your own computer and then work from that as you fill out and complete the application. If you work on the application online, changes may not be saved.**
- The application form automatically totals your points and applies the maximum for each section.
- You must have at least 175 points combined from all sections to be eligible to apply. Use the CCE Points Worksheet to check your points before you begin.

Key dates

Step	Date	Time
Application due	February 5, 2027	By 11:59 pm PST
Application pass/fail notification	February 19, 2027	By 5:00 pm EST
Candidate group call #1	February 24, 2027	1:00 pm EST

Eligibility

Applicants are required to have at least six years of senior-level chamber management experience and be currently employed in a senior-level chamber management position. To be considered a senior level manager, the applicant must manage a staff, a budget, programs, and have direct contact with the board.

In some cases, several of the required six years of senior-level chamber management experience may be satisfied by senior-level management experience in other membership organizations or other highly relevant professional experience. Eligibility determinations are made by the CCE Commission on a case-by-case basis. Contact [ACCE staff](#) if you believe you have professional experience that may meet these qualifications, **before** submitting your application.

In all cases, an applicant's most recent two years of eligible experience must be at a chamber, and the applicant must currently be employed in a senior-level chamber management position.

Experience waiver

The [CCE Experience Waiver Eligibility Guide](#) explains how the six years may be satisfied and what qualifies as senior-level management experience. Anyone applying for an experience waiver must submit their waiver **before** the CCE application deadline. Waivers will not be granted after the deadline. Contact cce@acce.org for more information.

Financial Oversight Information and Documents

The audit is no longer a requirement to apply for your CCE. However, we do request information about the financial oversight process at your chamber if your chamber does not complete an audit.

All candidates will receive three points for this section whether they are submitting an audit or other financial documentation.

Does your chamber complete an audit?

- **Yes (Option 1):** Please submit your most recent audit with your application.
- **No (Option 2):** Please submit your chamber's financial review or year-end financial statements for the last two years, along with a separate attachment that answers the questions below.

What the financial documents must show

Your chamber's financials must be reviewed by someone outside of chamber staff. At minimum, they must include an income statement and a balance sheet, and they must identify who reviewed them.

- **Accepted:** an independent audit, a CPA financial review or compilation, or year-end statements reviewed by your treasurer, finance committee, or board.
- **Not accepted:** Form 990s or other tax returns, a profit and loss statement on its own, or statements prepared by the CEO or bookkeeper with no outside review.

Questions to answer if your chamber does not conduct an audit

Answer these questions on a separate sheet and include it with your application documentation.

- Describe the financial oversight processes and internal controls that are implemented at your chamber.
 - Who compiles the financial statements?
 - What sorts of checks and balances does your chamber have in place to ensure separation of duties and proper use of funds?
 - Who is responsible for reviewing and approving checks?
 - How does your chamber protect against fraud and ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements?
- If regular audits are not conducted, what is the rationale or reasoning behind that decision?

Documentation

Please submit the documentation listed in this section along with your online application. Files should be in PDF format.

- Completed application
- Chamber Strategic Plan – current
- Chamber Annual Business Plan or Program of Work – most recent year
 - This is the document that details your chamber's planned work for the current year: its goals, the programs and initiatives planned to achieve them, and how progress will be measured. Your chamber may call this a Program of Work, Annual Business Plan, Operating Plan, or Work Plan.
- Chamber Annual Report – most recent year
- Annual Budget – most recent year
- Annual Budget – previous year
- Position Description
- Chamber Organization Chart
- Personnel / Policy Manual
- Resume
- Financial documents
 - Option 1: Audit – most recent year
 - Option 2: Financial review or year-end financial statement – last two years, with an additional attachment answering the questions in the Financial Oversight section above

We prefer that all documentation relate to your current chamber. However, if it would more appropriately demonstrate your professional skills and experience to submit documentation from your former chamber, please contact [Ashley Purdy](#) to discuss and obtain approval.

References

You will need to submit **five** professional references as part of your online application. Please be prepared to share the name, phone number, and email address for each of your references when you submit your materials online. ACCE will contact them directly.

Letters of recommendation are not needed.

Each reference must be someone who has worked closely with you for at least one year and can speak to your work firsthand. Someone you know only in passing, such as a colleague you see once a year at a professional conference, does not qualify.

Your references must include at least one person from each of these categories:

- Current CCE: a chamber professional who currently holds the CCE designation.
- Chamber leader in your area: a leader at another chamber in your geographic area whom you have worked with directly.

- Community leader: a leader you have worked with in your community, such as a PTA president, faith leader, elected official, or nonprofit director.
- Volunteer organization chairperson or president: someone who has served as chair or president of a volunteer organization within the last four years and whom you have worked with directly, such as your chamber's board chair or the chair of another volunteer organization.

Your fifth reference may come from any of these categories.

The reference check is intended to assure that applicants are highly regarded by the chambers and communities they serve. References will be notified that the applicant is pursuing the certification. They will not be informed of examination results.

CCE Main Essay Topic Approval

In the essay step of the CCE process, you will write three essays – one main essay and two financial essays. Your main essay will be focused on a project you led. You will also present on this project in the final step of the CCE process.

The CCE Commission will approve this essay topic in advance to ensure that it meets the requirements. Please review the requirements below and submit your topic with your application materials.

- The main essay must discuss a recent, significant project of the candidate's chamber, led by the candidate. The project must have taken place within the last three years. The project must be completed before the start of the CCE application process. Projects that are in progress are not eligible for the CCE essay.
- The program or initiative discussed must demonstrate the candidate's professional skill, experience, and leadership ability, and his/her knowledge of one or more of the four core chamber leadership areas: management, planning and development, membership and communication, or operations.
- The selected program or initiative should have elevated the role of the chamber in its community, and should highlight the innovation, impact, and leadership of the candidate. There must be clear demonstration of project results, using qualitative and/or quantitative measures as appropriate.
- Example essay topics from previous years can be seen [here](#).

Submit your essay topic and details on [this form](#).

Next Steps

- All applications, including supporting documents, must be submitted by **February 5, 2027, at 11:59 pm PST** on the [online submission form](#).
- On the same form, you will provide the names and contact information for your references and agree to the CCE Code of Ethics and Violation Procedures. You can review the [Code of Ethics and Violation Procedures](#) before you submit.
- You will be notified whether your application passed by February 19, 2027, at 5:00 pm EST.
- After applications are received and reviewed, you will receive a link to pay your application fee. This may not arrive until after the application deadline. You may also contact our team to pay the application fee over the phone (Ashley Purdy, 703-998-3572).

Congratulations on taking the next step in obtaining your CCE! If you have any questions regarding your application, please contact Ashley Purdy at apurdy@acce.org.