

# Employer Excellence Certification

## Frequently Asked Questions

### GENERAL PROGRAM QUESTIONS

#### **What is the Employer Excellence Certification Program?**

The Employer Excellence Certification Program recognizes Cobb County businesses that demonstrate a strong commitment to workplace quality, employee engagement, retention, and equitable practices. Certified employers are recognized as organizations that intentionally invest in their people and workplace culture.

#### **Who operates and governs the program?**

The program is administered by SelectCobb in partnership with the Cobb Chamber. Program standards, scoring criteria, and oversight are guided by the [Employer Excellence Certification Committee](#) made up of subject-matter experts in HR, workforce development, business leadership, and organizational culture.

#### **Is this a certification for employees or employers?**

This certification is awarded to employers, not individual employees. It evaluates organizational practices, policies, and outcomes related to workforce excellence.

#### **Is this a competitive award?**

No. Businesses are evaluated against established criteria and standards, not against one another. Multiple businesses may earn certification at the same level in a given year.

#### **How does the program ensure fairness and consistency?**

- Standardized scoring rubric
- Committee-based review
- Conflict-of-interest policies for reviewers
- Annual Rubric and Application review

### ELIGIBILITY & PARTICIPATION

#### **Who is eligible to apply?**

Any business operating with at least two (2) full-time employees is eligible to apply.

#### **Do I have to be a Cobb Chamber Member to apply?**

No. Both members and non-members are encouraged to apply! If you are a member, you have the benefit of a discounted Application Fee.

#### **Are franchises eligible?**

Yes, franchises are welcome to apply. Franchise applicants must submit an overview of corporate policies, but answer questions with the workplace policies that are specifically associated with their owned locations.

### EMPLOYEE COUNT & WORKFORCE STRUCTURE

*This FAQ may be updated periodically to reflect program enhancements and policy clarifications.*

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### **How is employee count determined?**

Employee thresholds are based on **full-time employees (FT)**. Full-time status is defined as employees who regularly work 30 or more hours per week.

### **Are part-time/ contract/ or seasonal employees considered?**

Yes. While employee count tiers are based on full-time employees, applicants are asked to disclose:

- Employee makeup: full-time employees, part-time employees, contract employees, and/ or seasonal employees.
- Policies and practices supporting part-time staff

These practices may positively impact scoring in applicable categories.

## **EMPLOYER ON THE RISE (2–9 FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES)**

### **Is there a separate track for micro businesses?**

Yes. Businesses with 2–9 full-time employees are evaluated within a micro-business-focused framework that accounts for scale, resources, and organizational structure.

### **How does the micro business track differ from the standard program?**

The micro business track:

- Uses simplified documentation requirements
- Focuses more on practices and intent than formalized policies
- Applies adjusted scoring expectations appropriate for smaller teams

*The core values and standards of excellence remain consistent across all tracks.*

## **APPLICATION PROCESS**

### **When does the application open?**

The 2026 Employer Excellence application opens on Monday, March 30, 2026 and will remain open until 11:59 on Friday, March 22, 2026.

### **What is required to apply?**

Applicants must complete the online application and submit required supporting documentation related to workplace practices, benefits, policies, and engagement strategies.

### **Is there an application fee?**

Yes. A one-time application fee is due upon submission:

- Non-Member: \$100
- Signature & Premier Members: \$85
- Chairman's Circle Members: \$50

### **Is the application fee refundable?**

No. Application fees are non-refundable, regardless of certification outcome.

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### REVIEW & SCORING

#### Who reviews applications?

Applications are reviewed by the [Employer Excellence Certification Committee](#) using a standardized scoring rubric.

#### How are applications scored?

Applications are scored based on established criteria across categories such as:

- Workplace Flexibility & Work-Life Integration
- Employee Engagement
- Employee Development
- Health, Well-Being & Safety
- Compensation & Financial Well-Being
- Company Civility & Culture
- Community & Employee Impact

#### Are scores shared with applicants?

Applicants receive a summary of results, including certification status and feedback for improvement.

#### Can a business be denied certification?

Yes. If an applicant does not meet the minimum scoring threshold, certification may not be awarded. Feedback and improvement guidance will be provided.

### CERTIFICATION LEVELS & RECOGNITION

#### How many certification levels are there?

The program includes three (3) certification levels, reflecting varying degrees of workplace excellence.

- Gold
- Silver
- Bronze

#### How are certified businesses recognized?

Certified employers are:

- Notified directly of their certification level
- Recognized at a Cobb Chamber Signature Event
- Included in SelectCobb and Chamber press release & social media marketing
- Window decal with the corresponding certification level and year.
- Receive an 'Employer Excellence Promotional Guide' with materials and templates for promoting your certification recognition.

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### FEES & BILLING

#### **Is there a certification fee?**

Yes. Certified businesses are billed an **Annual Certification Fee** based on their full-time employee count.

#### **When is the certification fee billed?**

The annual certification fee is billed approximately 30 days after certification is awarded and annually thereafter during the certification term.

#### **Are certification fees refundable?**

No. Certification fees are non-refundable once invoiced.

### CERTIFICATION TERM, RENEWAL & RE-CERTIFICATION

#### **How long is certification valid?**

Certification is valid for three (3) years from the award date.

#### **Is annual renewal required during the 3-year term?**

Yes. Certified businesses pay an annual certification fee each year to maintain active status.

#### **What happens at the end of the 3-year term?**

Businesses must complete a **Re-Certification** process every 3 years, which includes updated documentation and a full review.

#### **Is re-certification different from the initial application?**

Yes. Re-certification:

- Reviews updated practices and changes over time
- Confirms continued alignment with program standards
- Resets the certification term for an additional three years