



2023

**Accredited Quality Contractor
NEW APPLICANT CRITERIA**

abc.org/aqc



Presenting Sponsor





This form is intended to assist you with the preparation of collecting the required data only. This document is NOT the application. Responses are required for ALL questions, and all applications must be submitted online at abc.org/aqc. If you are unable to meet any of the core requirements, you are not eligible for the AQC program. All responses will be held in strict confidence. If you have any questions regarding this application, call the ABC National office at (202) 595-1378 or email aqc@abc.org.

REQUIRED CORE CRITERIA

- Been in business for a minimum of three years.
- Received a minimum of two quality-based honors within the past five years.
- Receive a minimum of five AQC Recommendation Forms completed by third parties.
- Demonstrate financial stability per the company's financial institution of choice.
- Bonded adequately for the scope of service provided or share financial indicators to a satisfactory level.
- Maintain a company quality control program.
- Maintain STEP gold or higher, upholding an incident rate at or below the industry average. Companies with fewer than 100 employees may use a three-year average. Contact step@abc.org for more information.
- Provide and require continuing craft education for all craft professionals (for companies that self-perform only).
- Provide and require continuing management education.
- Regularly participate and/or encourage employees to participate in civic-oriented and community activities.
- Maintain and adhere to an Equal Employment Opportunity policy.
- Maintain and adhere to a harassment-free workplace policy.
- Maintain and adhere to a policy statement on diversity or provide examples of how your company's leadership demonstrates commitment to diversity and inclusion.

COMPANY INFORMATION

- Full Company Name
- Contact First Name
- Contact Last Name
- Contact Title
- Contact Email Address
- Contact Phone Number
- Company Mailing Address
- Company Website
- Type of Contractor (General / Prime / Specialty)
- Primary Type of Company (NAICS Code)
- Primary Scope of Work Performed (CSI Code)
- Select all states where your company does work
- Does your company work internationally?
If yes, where?
- Annual Volume (\$)
- Annual Work Hours
- Full-time Salaried Craft Professionals Employed
- Full-time Hourly Craft Professionals Employed
- Average Number of Seasonal Craft Professionals Employed
- Full-time Salaried Office Staff Employed
- Full-time Hourly Office Staff Employed
- Full-time Equivalent (FTE) Employee Calculation
- Total Number of Employees (office and field / salaried and hourly)
- Company Logo
- Special Designation (i.e. MBE, WBE, Veteran-owned)
- Social Media Handles (Facebook / Twitter / LinkedIn / Instagram)



STEP LEVELS AND ADDITIONAL BRANCHES

Is your company applying for AQC status for multiple office locations? [Yes / No]

When applying for the safety management system STEP—a prerequisite to the AQC application—each applicant may prepare one entry encompassing the entire company that includes aggregate company-wide safety data. Or, an applicant may elect to submit separate STEP applications with location-specific data to each local ABC chapter through which the company maintains membership. How the company elects to submit to STEP will determine the company's eligibility to apply for AQC and include any additional branches through ABC chapters where membership is maintained.

Example One: Company A has three office locations and belongs to the local ABC chapter nearest to each office. When submitting the application for STEP, Company A uses company-wide data and submits to all three chapters, receiving Gold level or higher. All three office locations are eligible for AQC with one primary office and two branches.

Example Two: Company B has three office locations and belongs to the local ABC chapter nearest to each office. When submitting the application for STEP, Company B uses location-specific data and submits three different applications to each of the three chapters. Once location received Gold level or higher and is eligible to apply for AQC, being the primary location. The other two qualified for Silver level and are not eligible for AQC.

Example Three: Company C has three office locations and only belongs to two local chapters. When submitting the application for STEP, Company C uses company-wide data and submits to their two chapters, receiving Gold level or higher. Both office locations are eligible for AQC with one primary office and one branch. The third office location is not eligible for STEP or AQC since it is not affiliated with an ABC chapter.

Was your company's STEP application submitted using: [company-wide data] or [location-specific data]?

Before continuing, confirm your company meets the following criteria:

- ☐ ABC Contractor Member
- ☐ Achieved STEP Gold, Diamond or Platinum in the current year
- ☐ I am aware that as a new applicant, I must distribute the Recommendation Form to third-party companies with a minimum of five completed forms sent directly to ABC staff by the third-party firms. See question 1.3 for more details.
- ☐ I have reviewed the application criteria and understand the application fee is non-refundable.

Payment is required before continuing to the following application sections.



1. QUALITY (30 points)

Core Requirements:

Missing any core requirement will disqualify the applicant.

1.1 How many years has your company been in business?

Your company must have been in business more than three years

1.2 It is required that your company received two or more forms of quality-based recognition within the past five years.

This may include project-based awards (i.e. Excellence in Construction® awards from ABC National or a chapter, or similar awards from other organizations), recognition by a quality-certified entity and/or an owner letter of praise or recommendation.

Provide copies of the awards, certificates or letters of acknowledgement specifying the project name, type of work, organization granting the award or recognition (including chapter versus national, if applicable), and the year the recognition was received. The scope of any letters submitted must be quality-based.

**Note:* This section is related only to project-specific recognition. Honors related to safety, diversity, etc., may be used to satisfy requirements in other sections of this application but do not satisfy the project-specific recognition requirement.

1.3 Request five or more companies that your company has worked with within the past two years complete the AQC Recommendation Form found at abc.org/aqc.

A minimum of five completed forms from a combination of client/owner, general contractor, construction manager, architect, subcontractor, tier sub and/or supplier/vendor must be sent directly to the ABC National office. Each applicant is limited to only one subcontractor, supplier or vendor.

1.4 Submit a letter from your bank or financial institution, on their letterhead, stating the length of the financial relationship and indicating the strength of the company's financial standing.

This letter must be dated within six months of the application submission. No confidential information is required.

1.5 Submit a letter from your bonding company, on their letterhead, stating your company's bonding capacity is adequate for the scope of service provided.

If your company is not bonded, provide the following information signed by your CPA on their letterhead:

- Your current ratio (current assets divided by current liabilities)
- Your debt-to-equity ratio (total liabilities divided by total net worth)
- Your ratio of backlog divided by working capital
- Your ratio of backlog divided by total net worth
- Your current D&B rating
- Your current Paydex score
- Your financial risk ratings

1.6 Submit the table of contents of your company's quality control program or manual.



Additional Information:

Responses are required and contribute to your company's overall application score.

1.7 In the past five years, have there been any judgments, claims, arbitration proceedings or suits either pending or outstanding against your company or its offices due to a construction defect? [Yes / No]

If yes, provide an explanation.

1.8 In the past five years, has your company been terminated from a project for any reason related to defective work? [Yes / No]

If yes, provide an explanation.

1.9 In the past five years, has your company had its own forces supplemented by an owner, contractor or construction manager? [Yes / No]

If yes, provide an explanation.

1.10 Does your company hold any current certifications relating to quality? [Yes / No]

If yes, provide documentation of the certificate(s).

1.11 Does your company have an employee incentive program that is tied to quality? [Yes / No]

If yes, provide an explanation.

2. SAFETY (20 points)

Core Requirements:

Missing any core requirement will disqualify the applicant.

2.1 Provide your company's current year STEP verification email or certificate from ABC:

[STEP Diamond / STEP Platinum / STEP Gold]

*STEP levels below Gold are not eligible. This is not the email first sent to you when you apply for STEP, but an email suggesting that your status has been verified. Example.

Additional Information:

Responses are required and contribute to your company's overall application score.

2.2 Does your company have an OSHA-compliant employee incentive program that is tied to safety? OSHA states that "employers must not create incentive programs that deter or discourage an employee from reporting an injury or illness. Incentive programs should encourage safe work practices and promote worker participation in safety-related activities." [Yes / No]

If yes, provide details.

2.3 Has your company received safety awards or recognition of safety excellence over the past five years? [Yes / No]

If yes, how many? Provide verification of the awards/recognition.



3. CRAFT AND MANAGEMENT EDUCATION (25 points)

Core Requirements:

Missing any core requirement will disqualify the applicant.

3.1 Does your company self-perform work? [Yes / No]

If yes, provide supporting documentation that your company provides continuing education for all craft professionals. A letter from an ABC chapter, NCCER or other educational institution confirming your company regularly participates in a craft education program is preferred. If you are unable to provide such a letter, upload any of the following documents: curriculum, education schedule, curriculum assessments and examples of education announcements or notices. Be sure to include who conducts the education.

If no, skip this question, but include a statement certifying that your company does not employ craft professionals at any time.

If your education program is currently inactive, contact ABC at aqc@abc.org before continuing.

3.2 Provide an outline of your company's management education curriculum, including course offerings and frequency. Indicate the types of education offered:

[Management seminars / Supervisor courses / Administrative skills courses / Other (specify)]

Additional Information:

Responses are required and contribute to your company's overall application score.

3.3 Does your company provide craft education in-house? [Yes / No / Not Applicable]

If yes, provide copies of résumés or certifications for your instructors.

3.4 What percentage of your craft professionals are certified or at journey level?

Certified or journey-level craft professionals have the skill and expertise necessary to perform any reasonable task within the craft.

If your company does not self-perform, enter zero

3.5 What percentage of your craft professionals have completed a formal education program and/or have received a certification or journey-level assessment?

If your company does not self-perform, enter zero

3.6 Provide a copy of your management education schedule and examples of education announcements or notices.

*Note: Craft and management education does not include information regarding OSHA, first-aid, CPR or other safety-related education.



4. COMMUNITY RELATIONS (10 points)

Core Requirements:

Missing any core requirement will disqualify the applicant.

4.1 In the past year, your company must have directly participated and/or encouraged its employees to join and participate in civic oriented and community activities. Provide materials used to promote and communicate your company's efforts.

Examples include blood drives, toy drives, United Way support, ACE Mentor Program, adopt-a-highway and adopt-a-school programs and athletic team sponsorships.

4.2 In the past five years, your company must have participated in construction activities that positively affect your community and the image of the industry.

Provide materials that are used to promote and communicate your company's efforts. Examples include Habitat for Humanity activities, home fix-up efforts, other charitable build projects and school projects.

Additional Information:

Responses are required and contribute to your company's overall application score.

4.3 Does your company make speakers available to civic groups, school career days, etc.? [Yes / No]

If yes, provide materials used to promote and communicate your company's efforts.

4.4 Is your company a member in good standing with either the Chamber of Commerce or the National Federation of Independent Business? [Yes / No]

4.5 Has your company received awards or certificates related to community service, diversity or minority employment? [Yes / No]

If yes, include verification of the awards/certificates.



5. Talent Management (15 points)

Core Requirements:

Missing any core requirement will disqualify the applicant.

5.1 Provide a copy of your company's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policy.

5.2 Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Initiatives

Accredited Quality Contractors embrace policies and practices that allow the company to attract and retain the best talent available.

Describe how your company's leadership demonstrates commitment to creating a culture of inclusion, diversity and equity by sharing two total examples of employee policies or practices that demonstrate all are welcome and valued. Below are definitions and examples to help identify your two examples.

Inclusion: To value and leverage differences to achieve superior results.

Examples: Training courses, reading and research on inclusion, mentorship programs, performance management evaluation and unique employee benefits.

Diversity: The variety of abilities, skills, experiences and cultural backgrounds in all stakeholders.

Examples: Engagement with minority contractors or communities; recruitment efforts to attract diverse individuals, veterans, women and ex-offenders; unique employee benefit programs; and working with local high schools, vocational schools and colleges.

Equity: The quality of being fair and impartial and giving everyone opportunities.

Examples: Unique employee benefits, performance management to include equal compensation and treatment for diverse employees, training courses, reading and research on equity and employee assistance programs.

If you are looking for additional resources to help you develop your inclusion, diversity and equity resources, contact ABC National staff at diversity@abc.org.

Check here if you would like to apply for a National Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Excellence Award.

5.3 Provide a copy of your company's harassment-free workplace policy.

If you would like vetted model policies to discuss with your legal counsel and consider adopting, contact ABC National staff at aqc@abc.org.



Additional Information:

Responses are required and contribute to your company's overall application score.

5.4 Does your company offer Affordable Care Act-qualified medical coverage?

If yes, what percentage does your company pay for employees?

If no, why not?

Salaried

Yes No

_____%

Hourly

Yes No

_____%

5.5 Which of the following ancillary coverages does your company offer?

Check All that Apply

Life insurance and accidental death and dismemberment

Yes No Yes No

Short-term and/or long-term disability

Yes No Yes No

Vision

Yes No Yes No

Dental

Yes No Yes No

Voluntary benefits (accident, critical illness, etc.)

Yes No Yes No

Other (specify)

Yes No Yes No

5.6 Which of the following benefits does your company offer its employees?

Check All That Apply

Spending accounts (HAS/FSA/HRA)

Yes No Yes No

Travel reimbursement (education/meetings)

Yes No Yes No

Reimbursement to and from project

Yes No Yes No

Parental leave

Yes No Yes No

Employee assistance plan

Yes No Yes No

Wellness program (stress management, physical activity, etc.)

Yes No Yes No

5.7 Does your company offer a retirement plan?

Does your company offer a matching contribution?

Yes No Yes No

Does your company offer a direct contribution?

Yes No Yes No

Yes No Yes No

5.8 How many days of paid leave (vacation, sick and/or holiday)

Does your company offer its full-time employees after:

1-4 years of employment?

5-9 years of employment?

10+ years of employment?

5.9 Does your company provide company vehicles? [Yes / No]

5.10 Has your company won any awards related to employment, programs or benefits? [Yes / No]

If yes, provide verification of the award(s).

5.11 What was your company's key personnel turnover the last fiscal year?

Include voluntary and involuntary changes. Key personnel includes superintendents, project managers and executives.

5.12 What was your company's total employee turnover the last fiscal year?

Include voluntary and involuntary changes.



5.13 Provide a copy of your employee benefits handbook, or similar information.

5.14 Does your company have policies that support equal pay regardless of a person's race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity and sexual orientation), national origin, age (40 or older), disability or genetic information? [Yes / No]

5.15 Does your company employ minorities reflective of the market you are serving? [Yes / No]

5.16 Are your company's work sites gender-friendly, with equal facilities for men and women? [Yes / No]

5.17 Does your company encourage the use of minority vendors and local purchasing? [Yes / No]

5.18 Does your company have an employee recruitment program? [Yes / No]

Examples include partnerships with local schools or employee-referral incentives.

5.19 Do you have multiple avenues for employees to submit harassment claims discreetly? [Yes / No]

5.20 Do you have a whistleblower policy, and is it adhered to? [Yes / No]

5.21 Do you have policies that support prompt, effective investigation and remedial action to end poor behavior within the organization? [Yes / No]

FINALIZE

Prior to finalizing your AQC application, you will be required to declare the below statement to be true:

I verify the information provided in this application is accurate. I understand that Associated Builders and Contractors is authorized to request additional information to assist its efforts in authenticating this application. I understand ABC National will contact the local ABC chapter in order to ascertain information about my company, our AQC eligibility and our ABC membership. I understand ABC National has ownership of the materials provided and has the permission of this company to refer its name to construction buyers and other construction users.