



2026

Accredited Quality Contractor
NEW APPLICANT CRITERIA

abc.org/aqc

 **Accredited Quality Contractor**
Associated Builders and Contractors

All applications are due by 11:59 p.m. ET on Friday, Oct. 23.

New Applicant Fee: \$475
Recertification Fee: \$375*

*Recertifying companies can save \$50 by registering by Friday, Aug. 28.



This form is intended to assist you with the preparation of collecting the required data. This document is NOT the application. Responses are required for ALL questions, and all applications must be submitted online at abc.org/aqcapp. 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.
- Receive 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.
- Adequately bondable 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. Contact stepsupport@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 a harassment-free workplace policy.
- Provide examples of how your company's leadership demonstrates commitment to attracting, developing and retaining the best talent.

COMPANY INFORMATION

- Full Company Name
- Contact First Name
- Contact Last Name
- Contact Title
- Contact Email Address
- Contact Phone Number
- Company Mailing Address
- Company Website
- ABC Primary Chapter
- Type of Contractor (General/Prime/Specialty)
- Primary Type of Company (NAICS Code)
- Primary Scope of Work Performed MasterFormat® (CSI Codes)
- Locations Where Your Company Performs Work
- Identify Business Management and Jobsite Technologies Used
- 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/X/LinkedIn/Instagram)



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ABC CODE OF ETHICS

Accredited Quality Contractor members of Associated Builders and Contractors will strive to observe the following principles in the conduct of their businesses:

- A. Maintain a standard of performance that meets the owner's expectations and fulfills the contractor's obligations.
- B. Quote only realistic prices and completion dates and perform accordingly.
- C. Cooperate to the fullest extent with the architect and/or engineer, and other agents of the owner toward fulfillment of a common goal.
- D. Solicit quotations only from firms with whom they are willing to do business.
- E. Make all payments promptly within the terms of the contract.
- F. Observe and foster the highest standards of safety and working conditions.
- G. Establish realistic wage schedules for employees commensurate with their ability and their industry so that they may enjoy the dignity to which they are entitled.
- H. Actively participate in the training of skilled craft professionals for the future welfare of the merit shop industry.

ELIGIBILITY

Before continuing, confirm your company meets the following criteria:

- My company is an ABC contractor member.
- My company promises to uphold the ABC Code of Ethics outlined above.
- My company has been in business more than three years.
- My company achieved STEP Gold, Platinum or Diamond 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 nonrefundable.

Payment is required before continuing to the following application sections and the fee is nonrefundable.



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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, etc., may be used to satisfy requirements in other sections of this application but do not satisfy the project-specific recognition requirement.

1.3 Via the online application, you must request five or more companies that your company has worked with within the past two years to complete the online Recommendation Form embedded within the application. To view the recommendation questions, [click here](#).

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 its 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 its letterhead, stating your company's bonding capacity is adequate for the scope of service provided.

This letter must be dated within six months of the application submission.

If your company is not bonded, provide a "letter of bondability" from a bonding company, on its letterhead, stating that your company is bondable.

This letter is sometimes called a "statement of bondability," "proof of bonding capacity" or a "sunshine letter."

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

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



1. QUALITY CONTINUED (30 points)

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 Health and Safety STEP® Management System verification email or certificate from ABC:

[STEP Diamond/STEP Platinum/STEP Gold]

STEP levels below Gold are not eligible. The STEP verification email states your achieved level and that your status has been confirmed; this is not the email stating your STEP application has been completed.

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. SAFETY CONTINUED (20 points)

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

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

2.4 Does your company have a policy for cybersecurity? [Yes/No]

ABC encourages all contractor members to conduct cybersecurity training for all employees.

Visit abc.org/cybersecurity for helpful resources.

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 resumes 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. CRAFT AND MANAGEMENT EDUCATION CONTINUED (25 points)

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. Include a summary or explanation of the material provided.

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. Include a summary or explanation of the material provided.

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 U.S. 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? [Yes/No]

If yes, include verification of the awards/certificates.



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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 Attract, Develop and Retain the Best Talent

Describe two examples of how your company's leadership demonstrates their commitment to creating a workplace culture that promotes putting the best talent on the construction field.

Accredited Quality Contractors maintain a commitment to placing the best talent on the construction field based on merit and the principles of nondiscrimination. This means creating opportunities for skilled, qualified and capable individuals—selected and compensated based on their performance, experience, work ethic and proven ability to deliver high-quality results—all while upholding the core values of the merit shop philosophy.

Examples include successful outcomes related to recruiting and supporting growth opportunities for all individuals; providing opportunities where everyone has a fair chance to excel based on merit, performance and potential; providing education and development programs that promote the principles of merit, total human health and a respectful workplace; and comprehensive performance management, compensation and employee benefit offerings designed to support all needs and lifestyles, reinforcing personal and professional well-being.

5.3 Supply Chain Management

Describe your company's approach to recruiting suppliers and contractors. Describe approaches to creating the opportunity for all those suppliers and contractors to compete on a fair and level playing field and to be successful based upon merit.

Examples may include joint ventures, sponsorships, strategic relationships, etc.

5.4 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.

5.5 Does your company classify all employees in accordance with federal and state law and issue Form W-2 to all employees, regardless of salary or hourly status? [Yes / No / Not Applicable (No Employees)]

5.6 Does your company verify employment eligibility for employees in compliance with federal employment authorization requirements (e.g., Form I-9, and E-Verify where applicable or required)? [Yes / No / Not Applicable (No Employees)]

5.7 Does your company require all 1099 independent contractors to comply with federal and state employment eligibility, worker authorization, and labor law requirements for any individuals performing services under the contract? [Yes / No / Not Applicable (No Subcontracted Workers)]

For more information, visit abc.org/immigrationresources.



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5. TALENT MANAGEMENT CONTINUED (15 points)

	Salaried		Hourly	
5.8 Does your company offer Affordable Care Act-qualified medical coverage?	Yes	No	Yes	No
If yes, what percentage does your company pay for employees?	_____%		_____%	
If no, why not?				

5.9 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

5.10 Which of the following benefits does your company offer its employees?				
Check all that apply				
Spending accounts (HSA/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

5.11 Does your company offer a retirement plan?	Yes	No	Yes	No
If yes, what type of retirement plan does your company offer eligible employees? (e.g., 401(k), 403(b), simple IRA, SEP IRA, etc.)				
Does your company offer a matching contribution?	Yes	No	Yes	No
Does your company offer a direct contribution?	Yes	No	Yes	No

5.12 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?	_____	_____

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

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

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

5.15 What percentage was your company's key personnel turnover in the last fiscal year?

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

5.16 What percentage was your company's total employee turnover in the last fiscal year?

Include voluntary and involuntary changes.



5. TALENT MANAGEMENT CONTINUED (15 points)

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

5.18 Does your company have policies that support hiring and 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]

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

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

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

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

5.23 Has your company been implicated or found at fault for any type of employment practice or discrimination claim in the past 24 months? [Yes/No]

If yes, explain.

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 gather 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.