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Family Friendly Employer

Certification Criteria



Illustrative seals. Company names and verification details are fictional.

CERTIFIED	SILVER	GOLD	PLATINUM
At least 120 / 200	At least 140 / 200	At least 160 / 200	At least 180 / 200

Family-friendly workplace certification based on an employee survey and a family-focused HR assessment.

Version 2026-1.3 · November 5, 2026 · Effective for an Order upon acceptance
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Part 1 · Certification Criteria

1. Purpose and Scope

The Family Friendly Employer program assesses how well an employer enables its workforce to combine work with family life and caregiving. It relies on a confidential employee survey and a documented HR assessment that concentrates on family-related policies, benefits, and day-to-day practice. Certified, Silver, Gold, and Platinum identify achievement against the published USIQ criteria, not a ranking against other employers. Results describe the covered workforce and assessment period. Certification does not guarantee any individual experience, future performance, or legal compliance. It is a private, employer-funded assessment, not a governmental designation, accreditation, legal opinion, or assurance audit. Part 4 and Annex E allocate contractual risk between USIQ and the employer; this allocation does not waive the rights of employees, applicants, regulators, or other nonparties.

In these Criteria, “family” and “caregiving responsibilities” are understood broadly. They include responsibility for children (biological, adopted, foster, or stepchildren), a spouse or domestic partner, parents, other relatives, and persons in an equivalent close relationship, irrespective of the employee’s gender, marital status, or family form. Employees are never required to have or disclose family responsibilities. Family-related practices must be offered on a nondiscriminatory basis and must not place employees without such responsibilities at a disadvantage.

Employers with at least 10 employees working in the United States may apply, regardless of industry, subject to these published requirements. The Order must identify the legal employer, all covered US locations, the workforce, and the assessment dates. Staffing agencies are assessed only for their internal staff, not workers placed with clients. A pending material government enforcement action concerning workplace matters triggers review under Section 5.2 and Part 4, Section 6; it is not treated as proof of a violation. USIQ may defer an award while material facts cannot reasonably be established, with reasons and a review date.

USIQ Top Employer and Family Friendly Employer are separate programs with separate Orders, HR assessments, Seals, and scoring rules. The wording, sequence, response options and voluntary demographic questions of the employee questionnaire are retained. A common survey administration may serve both Orders when scope and period match, but each program must calculate its own score. Version 2026-1.2 changes Family Friendly Employer scoring metadata and weights; component scores and tiers are not directly comparable with Top Employer or earlier Family Friendly Employer versions.

2. Assessment Model

The assessment has two components of 100 points each, for a maximum of 200 points. Component 1 is the Employee Survey (Part 2). Component 2 is the family-focused HR Assessment and Evidence Check (Part 3). The total score, both component minimums, all seven survey dimension minimums, the family compatibility requirement (Section 3.5), the core-area requirement (Section 4.4), the data requirements, and the exclusion criteria must be satisfied. Figures illustrate the method; the numerical rules and tables govern.

Employee Survey	Family-focused HR Assessment	Total score	Tier
0–100 points	0–100 points	0–200 points	All minimums apply

Figure 1 · Assessment model

Within the employee survey, direct family compatibility and working-time flexibility receive 50 of 100 points. The other 40 scaled questions on general employer quality receive the remaining 50 points. All 46 standard questions receive a documented assessment: 42 contribute numerically and four contextual questions inform the evidence and decision review. The HR assessment remains 100 points and entirely family-focused. Consequently, the family-focused maximum across the full 200-point assessment is 150 points (75%); the 50% allocation refers specifically to the employee survey. Core-item and core-area minimums continue to apply.

Combining employee perceptions with documented employer practice is supported by work–family research on policy availability, supportive culture, and supervision (Thompson et al., 1999; Kossek et al., 2011; Butts et al., 2013). These are complementary sources, not statistically independent measurements: survey findings also inform the HR consistency check. Triangulation can identify discrepancies but does not eliminate common-method bias, employer selection, or selective nonresponse (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The program is research-informed; the composite score and tier decisions have not yet been empirically validated.

3. Component 1 · Employee Survey

3.1 Population and administration

- All employees on the payroll during the survey period are invited across the covered US locations, including full-time and part-time employees, employees on leave who choose to participate, and paid employee apprentices and interns. Independent contractors, nonemployee interns, and staffing-agency workers placed with clients are excluded. The employer must supply an accurate eligible headcount and disclose material changes during the survey; exclusions cannot be used to improve results.
- Employees on parental, family, or medical leave are invited through a channel that does not require them to work and is not perceived as a request to work. Their participation is entirely voluntary, and no reminder may be sent to them by their manager.
- USIQ or a USIQ partner administers the survey. The employer distributes the approved invitation and reminders without changing their substance. Participation is voluntary and may occur privately during a reasonable opportunity to respond. The employer receives only protected aggregate reporting, not individual responses or participation lists identifying respondents. The employer must comply with any applicable labor consultation or bargaining obligation before introducing the survey and may not demand screenshots or proof of answers.
- The survey is open for 14 calendar days and may be extended once by 7 days.
- The employer must not select favorable respondents, require particular answers, offer response-linked rewards, use group completion sessions, identify or retaliate against participants or nonparticipants, or suppress criticism. If credible evidence indicates manipulation, USIQ may pause the assessment, investigate, and apply Part 4, Section 6. A reasoned decision may require a repeat survey or refuse reassessment for up to 24 months, proportionate to the conduct and remediation.

3.2 Minimum data requirements

Employer size (US headcount)	Minimum response rate	Minimum number of responses
10–39 employees	50%	5 (10 employees)
40–249 employees	30%	12 (40 employees)
250–999 employees	25%	63 (250 employees)
1,000 or more employees	20%	200 (1,000 employees)

Both the response rate and response count in the table must be met. Required counts are rounded up to the next whole person. A valid survey counts once per eligible employee and contains at least one valid scored answer. USIQ applies documented, viewpoint-neutral duplicate and integrity checks. If the minimum is not reached after the extension, no certification result is issued. The employer may repeat the survey once within 6 months at no additional assessment charge; this option does not postpone the refund under Section 7 of any amount paid in excess of the survey fee when the assessment closes without an award.

Response thresholds are operational minimums, not evidence of representativeness or a guaranteed margin of error. The assessment record must distinguish eligible employees, invitations successfully delivered, participating employees, incomplete responses, and valid answers per item. Before the award, compare respondent shares with available workforce totals for the existing broad location, function, tenure, and role categories, where privacy permits. Do not link responses to personnel files or infer family status. Report percentage-point differences, missing category data, and inaccessible groups. Compare early and late response scores as an additional diagnostic when cell sizes permit; agreement does not rule out bias. A material unexplained coverage gap requires a documented decision to remedy or defer, rather than a claim of workforce representativeness (AAPOR, Standard Definitions).

3.3 Items, scale, and scoring

All 46 standard questions in Part 2 are retained verbatim, in the same order and with the same response options. All are considered. The 42 scaled questions contribute to the 100-point survey score: family core items 6 and 7 carry 25 points each; each of the other 40 scaled items carries 1.25 points. Items 15, 16, 45 and 46 receive mandatory contextual assessment under Section 3.7. Each question remains voluntary; skipped answers and Not applicable / Prefer not to answer are excluded from item means. Optional employer questions and optional demographic responses remain contextual and unscored. Scoring labels and point columns describe this program's new calculation, not changes to question wording.

Scored statements use a six-point agreement scale; item 40 uses a 0–10 likelihood scale. Where a survey platform exports the agreement scale in reverse order (1 = Strongly agree … 6 = Strongly disagree), the coded mean is converted before normalization (positive mean = 7 − coded mean); the resulting score is identical. Accessible or translated versions require USIQ approval and equivalent meaning.

For each scaled item, normalize the valid-response mean to 0–1 using (mean − 1) ÷ 5, or mean ÷ 10 for item 40. The family subscore F = 25 × z6 + 25 × z7; the general employer subscore G = the sum of 1.25 × zj across the other 40 scaled items. The survey score S = F + G, maximum 100. Item 40 uses its normalized mean, not employee Net

Promoter Score. Both family items must satisfy Section 3.5; their weights cannot be redistributed. A general item with fewer than 5 valid answers is excluded and its weight redistributed equally only among eligible general items within its original dimension. At least half the general items of every dimension, rounded up, must remain eligible. Otherwise no component score or award is issued until a compliant repeat survey. No points move between family and general blocks or between general dimensions. Missing answers are never treated as favorable; report item counts, exclusions and adjusted weights.

Mean on 1–6 scale	Normalize	General item example	Family item example
Example: 4.8	(4.8 − 1) ÷ 5 = 0.76	0.76 × 1.25 = 0.95	0.76 × 25 = 19.00

Figure 2 · Normalization and item points. Sum family and general item scores to obtain the 100-point survey result.

Dimension	Scored items	Points	What it captures
1 · Company overall	4	5	Satisfaction, products or services, pride and use of feedback
2 · Working conditions and environment	10	60	Family block: items 6 and 7, 50 points. General block: items 5, 8–14, 10 points. Items 15 and 16: contextual review.
3 · Your work	7	8.75	Autonomy, variety, fair review, process understanding, realistic goals, job satisfaction and team information
4 · Learning and development	4	5	Current skills, development support, time to learn and support for new skills
5 · Team and climate	5	6.25	Atmosphere, mistakes, fairness, initiative and openness
6 · Your manager	7	8.75	Information flow, integrity, ideas, autonomy, clear goals, appreciation and feedback
7 · Satisfaction and loyalty	5	6.25	Recommendation, enjoyment, effort, reapplication and intent to stay
Total	42	100	Family 50 + general employer quality 50; four further questions receive contextual review.

Figure 3 · Survey dimensions and weights for Family Friendly Employer Version 2026-1.2

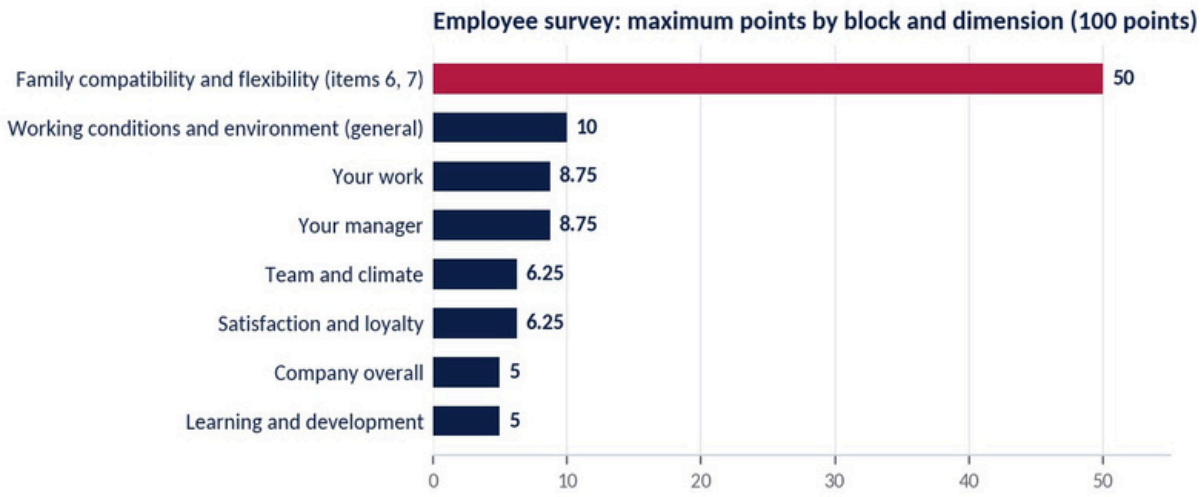


Figure 3a · Survey points by block and dimension (illustration of the table above)

3.4 Breadth requirement (dimension minimums)

Every tier requires the Section 3.4 minimum in each of the seven general employer dimensions. Compute these percentages using only the general questions and their allocated maxima: 5, 10, 8.75, 5, 6.25, 8.75 and 6.25 points respectively. In Dimension 2, exclude family items 6 and 7 from this general-quality hurdle; their separate Section 3.5 minimums apply. This prevents strong family scores from masking weak general working conditions. Award the highest tier satisfying all numerical and evidence conditions.

Tier	Minimum in every general dimension	Rationale
Certified	40%	Program floor of 40%; this is below the 50% numerical scale midpoint.
Silver	50%	Program floor of 50%, the numerical scale midpoint.
Gold	60%	Program floor of 60%, above the numerical scale midpoint.
Platinum	70%	Program floor of 70% in every dimension.

3.5 Family compatibility requirement (core items 6 and 7)

Items 6 and 7 ask employees directly whether they can balance work with their personal life and family or caregiving responsibilities and whether they have the working-time flexibility they need. They are the employees' own verdict on the subject this program certifies. Work–family conflict, a form of interrole conflict in which demands from work and family are mutually incompatible (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), is consistently associated in meta-analyses with lower job satisfaction and organizational commitment, higher turnover intentions, and poorer health (Allen et al., 2000; Amstad et al., 2011). In addition to the dimension minimums, each of the two items must reach the normalized item score shown below for the tier concerned.

Tier	Minimum normalized score, item 6 and item 7 each	Equivalent item mean (1–6 scale)
Certified	50%	at least 3.5
Silver	60%	at least 4.0
Gold	70%	at least 4.5
Platinum	80%	at least 5.0

- The requirement is checked at full precision; a mean of 3.49 does not meet 3.5.
- Both family core items must meet the applicable minimum and each must have at least 5 valid answers from at least half of participating employees, rounded up. If either item fails this data requirement, no certification is issued until a compliant repeat administration of the unchanged questionnaire is completed. The point redistribution rule in Section 3.3 cannot waive this certification condition.
- Employees without family or caregiving responsibilities answer item 6 with regard to their personal life or select Not applicable. The employer must not encourage or discourage either choice.

Items 6 and 7 are broad indicators of personal-life balance and working-time flexibility. They do not distinguish parents or caregivers from other employees, measure both directions of work–family conflict, or constitute a validated family-support scale. Without collecting family-status data, no caregiver-specific survey result or claim of equal experience across family groups can be made. Documentary review must therefore substantiate the family-specific scope of the award.

- All 46 questions feed the documented survey review. The 42 scaled results and protected findings from items 15, 16, 45 and 46 inform the HR consistency check and the contextual review in Section 3.7. Survey findings do not replace documentary proof of a specific HR practice.

3.6 Rationale for the weights

- The 50/50 split within the survey is an explicit program choice: family compatibility and flexibility receive half the survey weight, while broad employer quality receives the other half. Only items 6 and 7 directly address balance and required flexibility. Pay, leadership, learning and climate can influence family life, but their wording does not directly measure family-specific support; they remain in the general employer block. Each of the 40 general scaled questions receives equal weight to avoid unsupported fine distinctions among them.
- These weights are policy choices, not empirically validated effect sizes or optimal predictive weights. Two broad items carrying 50% create substantial concentration and require item-level precision and sensitivity review. This is a two-item family indicator, not a validated comprehensive work–family scale. General employer questions and all contextual questions remain material to the assessment; evidence from them may require clarification or deferral under the published evidence rules.
- Report the family and general subscores separately in points and as percentages. The seven questionnaire sections remain navigation categories; their full point shares are unequal because the family block sits within Dimension 2. General dimension minimums and separate family-item minimums limit compensation. None of these rules establishes representativeness or caregiver-specific results.

- USIQ reviews the methodology annually and after the first 100 Family Friendly Employer assessments. Any published reliability or validity statistic must identify its actual dataset, method, limitations, and period; no unmeasured reliability value or predicted tier distribution may be advertised.

3.7 Mandatory consideration of all questions

Items 15, 45 and 46 are open or mixed-format questions; item 16 measures change since joining rather than the current quality level. Their formats and wording remain unchanged. Do not convert silence, comment length, a No answer, or an improved / unchanged / declined answer into quality points. Improvement can occur from a low baseline and unchanged satisfaction can be high or low. These four questions are considered qualitatively and diagnostically rather than forced onto the agreement scale.

Before the award, record a review of every question. For each scaled question, record its normalized result, valid n, missingness, scoring block and points. For item 16, report the distribution of improved / stayed the same / declined, valid n and limitations. For items 15, 45 and 46, code protected, nonidentifying themes by topic (family-related or general), direction (positive, negative or mixed), and whether a potential contradiction or material criteria failure needs examination. State the coding rules, number of responding employees where safely available, and evidential limitations. A second reviewer verifies the themes and every material flag. Do not release verbatim comments or identify respondents.

General-quality strengths and concerns receive the same documented attention as family-related findings. Relevant concerns may trigger evidence requests, corrective-action review or deferral where eligibility cannot be established. Only corroborated grounds under the published Criteria support refusal or other adverse action; an anonymous allegation alone does not. Positive comments cannot add points or cancel a failed hurdle. Lack of comments is not a favorable finding. The decision record must show how material findings from all questions were resolved; no award is issued with this review incomplete.

4. Component 2 · HR Assessment and Evidence Check

4.1 Procedure

The HR Assessment is a digital review of the employer's questionnaire, selected documentary evidence, aggregate survey results, and relevant public sources. All 39 criteria concern family-friendliness. The review is not an exhaustive investigation or a legal-compliance audit. A human reviewer assigns scores and a separate human reviewer checks the award.

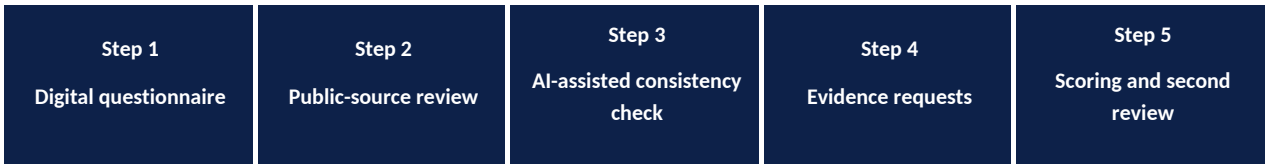


Figure 4 · HR Assessment process

- Step 1 · Digital questionnaire. An authorized employer representative completes all 39 criteria in Part 3 and the common response fields there. Every criterion receives separate offer (O), access (A) and implementation (I) ratings from 0 to 5 under Section 4.2. Submit the 12-month indicator schedule in Section 4.6 and the shift/presence evidence required by Section 4.7. For every rating above 1, provide documentary support; levels 4

and 5 require the specified corroboration. Submit redacted documents and aggregates only, not individual pregnancy, family, health, leave or accommodation records. Small counts are suppressed under Section 8. Where no relevant event occurred, verified operational readiness may substitute for event evidence; lack of use is not itself a failure.

- **Step 2 · Public-source review.** A reviewer checks relevant, lawfully accessible careers pages, job postings, benefits descriptions, review platforms, press coverage, and court or agency records. The reviewer distinguishes allegations, settlements, appeals, and final findings, checks identity and dates, and seeks corroboration before relying on adverse information. A review-platform post alone does not establish a legal violation. USIQ does not bypass access restrictions or obtain individual employment background reports for this program.
- **Step 3 · AI-assisted consistency check.** Approved tools may compare redacted employer materials, aggregate survey results, and relevant public information to flag inconsistencies, for example between a stated flexible-work policy and the aggregate result of item 7. AI outputs are leads, not evidence of wrongdoing. Reviewers verify each material flag against sources and record the human assessment. AI does not assign scores, decide certification, profile individual workers, infer protected traits or family status, or make employment recommendations. Section 11 of Part 4 and Annex A govern permitted inputs and vendors.
- Step 4 · Evidence requests. The reviewer records sources, effective dates, population denominators and gaps separately for offer, access and implementation. The common period and metric definitions in Section 4.6 apply. Review evidence across materially different locations, work schedules and presence requirements under Section 4.7; a convenient desk-based sample cannot stand for the entire workforce. Record the selection, missing coverage and limitations. Absence of criticism is not positive proof. USIQ may request clarification within 10 business days, with reasonable extensions. Missing evidence caps the affected rating at 1 unless reliable evidence establishes absence (0); approved Not applicable treatment remains subject to Section 4.2.
- Step 5 · Scoring and second review. Record O, A and I with evidence-based reasons for each of the 39 criteria. The criterion level is the lowest of these ratings, subject to any stricter published cap; calculate area points under Section 4.2. A second reviewer independently rates all three aspects for every criterion in core Areas C, D and E and a documented random 20% of the remaining criteria, rounded up, before seeing initial ratings. Any aspect difference greater than one level, or any difference affecting eligibility, triggers independent review of all 39 criteria. Preserve initial ratings and reasoned resolution. Check metric denominators, missing data, shift/presence coverage, conflicts and all award conditions. USIQ retains final decisions.

4.2 Offer access and implementation ratings

Level	Anchor	Apply separately to offer access and implementation
0	Absent	Reliable evidence establishes absence of the required offer, practical access or implementation, respectively. An allegation or a zero event count alone is insufficient.
1	Unsubstantiated	Plan or assertion without sufficient documentary support for the aspect concerned, or relevant requested evidence is missing. A material unresolved contradiction prevents a higher rating.
2	Partial	Offer: material requirements incomplete. Access: documented but materially restricted reach or barriers. Implementation: partial operation or readiness with substantial gaps. Record the specific deficiencies.

Level	Anchor	Apply separately to offer access and implementation
3	Established	Offer: current documented arrangement meets the main requirements. Access: defined eligibility and functioning routes for the principal affected groups. Implementation: relevant records corroborate operation or tested readiness, but coverage or monitoring is limited.
4	Substantially corroborated	Offer: all material requirements documented with only minor gaps. Access: eligible scope, routes and practical alternatives substantially evidenced across relevant work groups. Implementation: current-period records substantially corroborate operation across those groups; minor gaps are identified.
5	Fully corroborated within scope	Offer: all criterion requirements clearly documented and current. Access: full claimed scope and practical usability corroborated, with published coverage rules met. Implementation: representative records and review of exceptions demonstrate sustained operation, or equivalent tested readiness where no relevant event occurred. No material gap remains.

Figure 5 · Common evidence anchors applied separately to offer, access and implementation. Corroboration remains limited to assessment scope; this is not an exhaustive audit or legal finding.

For each criterion j, record offer Oj, access Aj and implementation Ij on the 0–5 scale. Offer assesses the substance and documented terms of the benefit, process or protection. Access assesses eligibility, communication and practical usability for the relevant population. Implementation assesses actual delivery, handling of exceptions and operation during the assessment period. Apply the published criterion requirements to all three aspects; do not invent an unrelated benefit requirement for a process criterion such as recruitment transparency or data protection. The relevant population may be employees, managers or applicants, as the criterion specifies.

The criterion level Lj = min(Oj, Aj, Ij), reduced further by any applicable criterion-specific, benefit or coverage cap. No average across the three aspects is used: a generous offer cannot compensate for inaccessible provision or failed implementation. A rating above 1 requires aspect-specific documentary support. Missing evidence and verified absence must be distinguished. The three ratings and the use of the minimum are transparent program design choices, not empirically validated effect weights; their inter-rater consistency and decision sensitivity must be evaluated under Section 10.3.

For each area k, area points = (sum of Lj for applicable criteria / number of applicable criteria) / 5 × the published area maximum. Sum the eight area scores for the 100-point HR component. Example: O = 5, A = 2 and I = 4 gives L = 2, not 3.67; an area average of 4 in a 15-point area gives 12 points. The eight area weights, component minimums, core-area minimums and total tier thresholds remain unchanged. Report the O/A/I profiles alongside, but do not award additional points for them.

Not applicable requires an objective written reason and USIQ approval for the criterion as a whole; the employer may not omit a weak aspect or move its weight elsewhere. At least half the criteria in every area, rounded up, must remain applicable; otherwise defer. Absence of a practice, legal obligation or request is not itself a reason for Not applicable. Where no qualifying event occurred, corroborated policy, communication, available capacity and a documented readiness walkthrough may support implementation ratings using the same material requirements. Record which evidence substituted for event records. Do not penalize a small employer merely for having no qualifying event or a legitimately suppressed cell.

4.3 Areas and weights

Area	Criteria	Points
A · Family-conscious work organization and scheduling	5	12
B · Leadership commitment and family-aware management	5	12
C · Flexible work and working-time models (core area)	6	15
D · Pregnancy, parental leave, and return to work (core area)	6	15
E · Childcare, caregiving, and family benefits (core area)	6	18
F · Fairness and nondiscrimination for parents and caregivers	5	12
G · Family-friendly employer branding and candidate experience	3	8
H · Life events, family emergencies, and transitions	3	8
Total	39	100

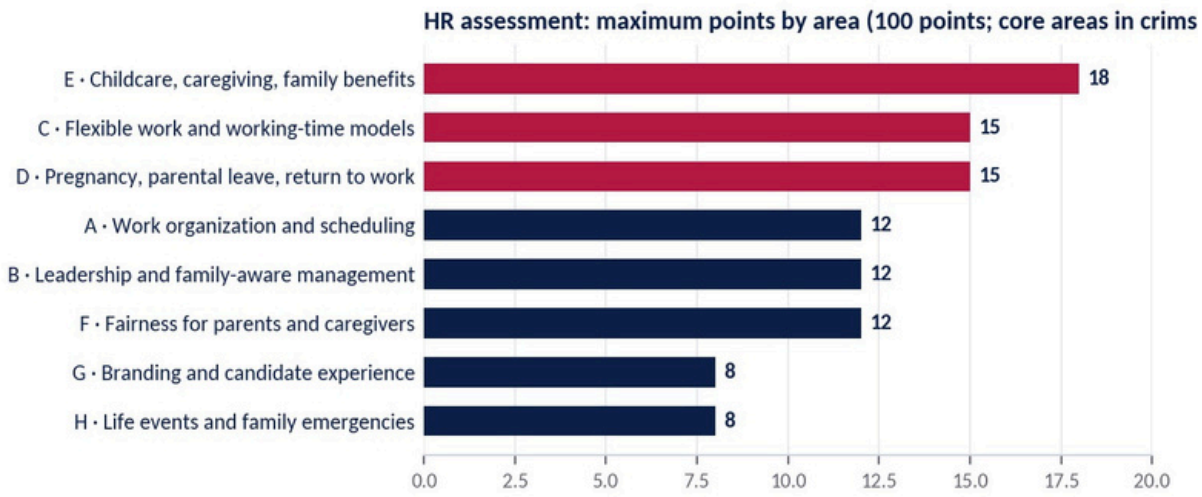


Figure 5a · HR assessment points by area; core areas C, D and E in crimson

The additional-benefit rule applies only to D1, D3, E1–E6, H1, and H3. Assess legal baseline, employer-funded additional value, accessibility, and workforce coverage separately. Where no provision beyond the applicable baseline is established, additional-benefit credit is 0. For D2, D4–D6 and H2, score the documented process under Section 4.2 without requiring it to exceed a legal baseline. For full benefit credit, at least 80% of the covered workforce must have access on published, objectively defined eligibility terms; below 80%, cap the criterion at level 2. Record the total covered headcount, the eligible headcount, waiting periods and material exclusions. For event-specific benefits, measure eligibility if the relevant event occurred, not how many employees actually had such an event or used the benefit. Legal-baseline and 80% rules are program choices, not validated effect thresholds. Legal restrictions and lawful equivalent arrangements require a reasoned decision. Apply these caps to the final criterion level after taking the minimum of O, A and I. A workforce coverage figure alone does not substantiate practical access or delivery; use the Section 4.6 indicators and Section 4.7 work-group evidence.

Many legal obligations depend on employer size. The federal Family and Medical Leave Act, for example, generally applies to private employers with 50 or more employees, and the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act and Title VII to employers with 15 or more employees. Where a law does not apply because of size, the legal baseline for benefit credit is zero, and a comparable voluntary practice is assessed on its merits. The absence of a legal obligation never makes a criterion inapplicable.

4.4 Core-area requirement

Areas C, D, and E carry 48 HR points and receive additional minimums as a program choice. Research supports schedule control and supportive supervision, paid leave in specific policy settings, and some childcare practices; evidence strength varies across individual benefits and settings. These studies do not establish the relative 15/15/18 weights or show that every benefit in Area E has equally strong effects (Allen et al., 2013; Kelly et al., 2014; Bloom et al., 2024; Nandi et al., 2018; Kossek & Nichol, 1992). Each core area must meet its published minimum.

Tier	Minimum share in Area C, Area D, and Area E each
Certified	40%
Silver	50%
Gold	60%
Platinum	70%

4.5 Proportionality for smaller employers

USIQ assesses whether a practice is appropriate in substance for the employer's size, industry, and operating model. Equivalent solutions count in full. A 25-person company does not need an on-site daycare to meet criterion E1; childcare subsidies, reserved places at a licensed provider, or a backup-care contract can achieve the same purpose. A manufacturing or retail employer whose roles cannot be performed remotely can meet Area C through predictable scheduling, shift swaps, part-time models, and compressed schedules. Smaller size never lowers the evidence level required, and it does not by itself justify a Not applicable treatment.

4.6 Common twelve month indicators

The Order records a single 12-consecutive-month HR reference period ending at the HR evidence cutoff, the cutoff date and the current policy snapshot at that date. The cutoff must not be later than the award decision. Check material changes between cutoff and decision. Newly established employers use their complete operating period, identify its length and do not extrapolate it to a full year. Partial histories and unavailable indicators are explicitly identified; reviewers assess what they establish rather than silently treating them as zero or as compliance.

For access, record total covered headcount and eligible headcount at the cutoff, including the effect of waiting periods and exclusions. For utilization, separately record the unique people eligible at any time during the period and unique users; do not mix this flow denominator with the cutoff snapshot. Event-specific eligibility means access if the event occurred, not the number of births, illnesses or care events. Calculate each relevant indicator below at employer level and, where safe and meaningful, by broad location, desk/presence/shift group and full-/part-time status. Use administrative aggregates; add no employee-survey questions and do not link survey answers to HR records.

Indicator	Definition and denominator	Use in assessment
M1 Access coverage	Eligible covered employees at cutoff / total covered employees at cutoff × 100. State numerator, denominator, waiting periods, exclusions and role-specific alternatives. For non-workforce process criteria, state the relevant population instead.	All access ratings; 80% benefit cap remains as published.
M2 Utilization	Unique users during period / unique eligible people during period × 100. Identify whether the record is of people, requests or events; do not mix units. If eligibility or usage cannot safely be counted, explain.	Relevant benefits. Descriptive; no target utilization rate and no automatic reward for higher use.
M3 Request outcomes	For requests received in the period: total, granted, partly granted/alternative accepted, refused, withdrawn and pending at cutoff. Each request has one final status; categories reconcile to total. Report opening backlog separately.	C5 and relevant leave, emergency and flexible-work processes. Refusals require grouped reasons, not personal case details.
M4 Response time	Calendar days from initial receipt to first substantive written decision; acknowledgment is insufficient. Report median and 90th percentile for decided requests, and the age of pending requests. State n, percentile method and any pauses; show unpaused elapsed time as well.	C5 and applicable processes. Publish small-n limitations; do not omit overdue pending cases.
M5 Timely response	Decisions delivered within the applicable stated deadline / requests decided or already due by cutoff × 100. Pending overdue requests remain in denominator; not-yet-due pending requests are reported separately. Exclude requests withdrawn before their deadline, but retain an overdue request withdrawn without a timely decision. Use the existing 30-calendar-day C5 program target or a shorter applicable requirement.	Request handling. No new approval-rate threshold; speed does not excuse an unsupported refusal.
M6 Schedule notice	Assigned shift instances first published at least 14 calendar days before start / all assigned shift instances × 100. Report median and minimum notice, dates of publication, and documented exceptions. For fixed schedules use standing notice plus exception records.	A1; the existing 14-day standard remains.
M7 Short-notice changes	Employer-initiated changes within 72 hours of shift start / assigned shift instances × 100. Count each affected shift once. Separately report changes initiated voluntarily by employees, reasons, consent and mitigation.	A1 and C4. The 72-hour reporting window is an operational definition, not a legal or validated quality cutoff.
M8 Shift swaps and emergencies	Record shift-swap and urgent-family-time requests, outcomes and response times under M3–M5 where applicable; distinguish employer refusal, lack of replacement and employee withdrawal. State available cover arrangements and alternatives.	A3, A5 and C4. No family diagnosis, names or individual reasons supplied to USIQ.
M9 Gaps across work groups	Compare access shares, overdue-response shares and notice/change patterns across the safe broad work groups above. Record absolute percentage-point gaps, explanatory operating constraints and actions. No comparison with an unsuitable zero denominator.	Access and implementation review. A gap triggers examination, not an automatic discrimination or quality finding.

Provide each applicable indicator with period, data owner, source system or redacted record reference, numerator/denominator, definition, completeness and reviewer explanation. Missing applicable data is not a favorable result; it may cap the affected aspect under Section 4.2. If data are genuinely inapplicable, record why without removing the underlying criterion. No-event readiness and lawful small-cell suppression remain available.

Raw employee records stay with the employer; USIQ receives privacy-protected aggregates and verifies the calculation through nonidentifying process evidence.

Use counts and rates only where the Section 8 safeguards are met. Suppress small numerators and complementary cells, and withhold rates, extremes or percentiles that could identify a person; do not reconstruct suppressed values. State when precision or comparability is inadequate. Higher utilization or approval is not automatically better, and low use is not evidence of poor access. Investigate barriers, decisions and context. The indicators substantiate O/A/I ratings; they do not create a separate bonus score, assumed causal effect or new automated exclusion rule.

4.7 Shift and presence based work

The employer provides a coverage map identifying broad covered locations and desk, on-site, frontline, shift and mixed roles, with full-/part-time access and relevant headcounts. For Areas A and C, review every materially different arrangement, including night/weekend schedules where used. Record which options each group can actually use, who authorizes them, how staff without regular computer access apply, how coverage is arranged and how requests are answered. Do not infer family status from work patterns or personnel data.

For shift-based work, provide the complete period aggregates in M6–M8 and reviewer-selected, nonidentifying schedule extracts covering ordinary and peak operating periods, material work groups, exceptions and any adverse survey consistency signal. Fixed shifts require the standing schedule and exception log; variable shifts require publication timestamps and change logs. Record the sampling frame, selection method, groups and dates examined and remaining gaps. Evidence chosen only by the employer or only from one favorable week is insufficient for level 5 implementation.

For presence-required roles, assess practical equivalents to remote work: predictable fixed or variable hours, employee-controlled shift swaps, adjustment of start/end times, protected breaks, part-time or job-sharing arrangements, and emergency cover where relevant. Do not demand every model or award points merely for listing several. Verify the solution against the underlying criterion and the group’s real access. A documented restriction of remote work does not justify excluding the role group from the access denominator or from the assessment. Where another criterion already scores the same arrangement, record the cross-reference; do not invent a duplicate benefit. Examine employer-initiated short-notice changes, mandatory overtime and expectations of work-related availability outside agreed hours through policies and protected aggregate scheduling/time records. Assess consent, explanation, alternatives, notice and practical mitigation under the relevant criterion. Do not request private messages or contact logs revealing individuals. Legitimate emergency changes are assessed in context; low change rates alone do not prove employee control. Unexplained material group gaps or unsupported claims prevent the relevant high O/A/I rating and require a documented resolution before award.

5. Total Score and Tiers

The total is the sum of both component scores. Tier thresholds are minimums, not closed score ranges or percentile rankings. Scores are calculated at full precision; display rounding cannot change eligibility. The highest tier meeting every requirement is awarded. A total of 139.99 does not meet 140. A total at or above a higher tier’s threshold may still result in a lower tier if a component minimum, dimension minimum, family compatibility requirement, or core-area minimum for the higher tier is unmet.



Figure 6 · Minimum total scores. Component, dimension, family compatibility, and core-area minimums and all other eligibility conditions also apply.

Tier	Minimum total	Minimum share	Minimum per component	Items 6 and 7	Areas C, D, E	Seal
Not certified	Requirements unmet	–	Any unmet hurdle	–	–	None
Certified	120	60%	50 each	≥ 50% each	≥ 40% each	Family Friendly Employer · Certified
Silver	140	70%	60 each	≥ 60% each	≥ 50% each	Family Friendly Employer · Silver
Gold	160	80%	70 each	≥ 70% each	≥ 60% each	Family Friendly Employer · Gold
Platinum	180	90%	80 each	≥ 80% each	≥ 70% each	Family Friendly Employer · Platinum

5.1 Multiple-hurdle rule

A tier is awarded only if the total score, both component minimums, the survey dimension minimums in Section 3.4, the family compatibility requirement in Section 3.5, and the core-area requirement in Section 4.4 are met. If the total qualifies for a tier but one of these conditions is not met, the next lower tier for which all conditions are met is awarded. A weak employee survey cannot be offset by a strong HR assessment, and vice versa. Generous written family policies cannot offset a workforce that reports it cannot combine work and family, and strength in a few areas cannot offset weakness in the core areas.

5.2 Exclusion criteria

Irrespective of the score, USIQ may refuse, defer, suspend, downgrade, or revoke certification when reliable evidence establishes a material failure of these Criteria relating to the 24 months before assessment or the Certification Period. USIQ applies the notice, response, reasoned-decision, and appeal procedures in Part 4, Section 6, to the following:

- a final court or agency finding, or an enforceable consent decree, concerning pregnancy or sex discrimination, discrimination against parents or caregivers, family or medical leave interference or retaliation, pregnancy accommodation, lactation break time and space, wage-and-hour, workplace safety, harassment, retaliation, or comparable workplace matters materially inconsistent with the Criteria; USIQ considers scope, severity, finality, corrective action, and continuing effects, and does not characterize a no-admission settlement as an admission;
- a pattern of specific, independently corroborated workplace misconduct materially inconsistent with the Criteria, in particular adverse treatment of employees because of pregnancy, parental leave, or caregiving; allegations, protected employee activity, anonymous criticism, a pending action, or an employer's silence does not by itself establish this ground. USIQ must assess the evidence and any response in good faith;

- material survey manipulation, retaliation connected with the assessment, or materially false or misleading assessment information, including an omission that makes a submitted answer materially misleading, for example describing a benefit as available to all employees when it is limited to a small group.

5.3 Rationale for the thresholds

- The entry threshold of 120 out of 200 and the higher tier thresholds are disclosed program standards. They do not establish that an employer is above the market average or among a stated percentage of US employers.
- The thresholds increase by 20 points on the 200-point total scale, equivalent to 10 percentage points. The family compatibility and core-area minimums rise in the same 10-point steps. USIQ does not claim a specific measurement error or misclassification rate without supporting validation. Sampling, nonresponse, self-reporting, and selective documentary review limit what a result establishes.
- Platinum requires at least 180 points plus all applicable minimums. Its frequency is determined by actual results, not a quota or assumed rarity. Material methodology changes apply prospectively under Section 9; any historical comparison must account for changes in methods, scope, and response patterns.

6. Validity, Verification, and Renewal

- Certification lasts 24 months from issue, subject to the conditions in Part 4. The certificate and verification page state exact issue and expiration dates, the covered employer and locations, the assessment period, tier, methodology version, and current status. Calendar-year labels on artwork do not extend the exact expiration date. The employer must provide a written material-change update at the 12-month point; this is not a full reassessment. A reduction or withdrawal of a policy or benefit assessed in Areas C, D, or E is a material change.
- Each certificate has a unique ID and a working USIQ verification link. Artwork must accurately identify the tier and scope. The authorized tier symbols are four stars for Certified, four stars followed by a plus sign for Silver, five stars for Gold, and five stars followed by a plus sign for Platinum. These symbols identify the named USIQ tier only and do not represent a separate star rating or a ranking against other employers. The artwork uses the wording “Based on Employee Survey & HR Assessment.” Seal use, verification and advertising are governed by Part 4, Section 3 and Annexes D and E.
- Renewal requires a new accepted Order and full reassessment using the then-applicable criteria. There is no automatic renewal, recurring charge, or continued right to display an expired Seal.

7. Independence, Fees, and Disclosures

- Annex C lists package prices and included services and applies to this program. The fixed package fee is agreed before work begins and does not vary with the awarded tier. It includes a survey fee of USD 990, which covers administration of the employee survey and a comprehensive tabulated survey report. No separate license fee is charged during the Certification Period. If no award is issued, USIQ retains only the survey fee: any amount paid in excess of USD 990 is refunded in full within 14 calendar days, and where the package fee has not yet been paid, only the survey fee is invoiced. For example, if the package fee is USD 2,990, USD 2,000 is refunded. The tabulated survey results are then supplied for internal improvement under Annex E, Sections 3.4–3.6, and no other fees or costs arise. The employer-funded relationship and the fee structure, including the survey fee retained when no

award is issued, must be clearly disclosed in certification advertising under Part 4, Section 3, on every verification page and in the methodology. Payment does not purchase a favorable result or influence the criteria or scoring.

- Scoring and final decisions must be separated from sales for the same employer. Reviewers must disclose financial, consulting, employment, or other conflicts, recuse where impartiality is impaired, and receive no compensation contingent on an award or tier. A separate reviewer checks each award. USIQ applies the published standards consistently to eligible applicants. USIQ will not certify itself or an entity it controls. Related-party applications require a documented conflict review and may not be portrayed as independent. The largely award-contingent fee model, under which everything except the survey fee is refunded when no award is issued, creates a structural commercial incentive that procedural separation cannot eliminate. An annual impartiality review by a person with no sales or award-linked financial interest must examine award and refusal files, reviewer overrides, complaints, and conflict controls. Publish aggregate findings without employee or employer-identifying information.

- AI may assist with organization-level consistency checks under Part 4, Section 11. Human oversight alone is not treated as an exemption from applicable AI, privacy, or employment law. USIQ must assess the actual tools, data, uses, and jurisdictions before deployment and material changes.

- USIQ and Partners involved in an employer's assessment or decision must not provide paid HR or benefits consulting to that employer during the assessment or Certification Period. USIQ will not represent a certification as independent of a material relationship that affects its objectivity. Other affiliations or material connections must be assessed, managed, and disclosed when relevant.

- USIQ may engage qualified affiliated companies and subcontractors ("Partners") for survey administration, research, evidence review, or first-level scoring under written confidentiality, independence, security, and data-processing terms. USIQ supervises their work, remains contractually responsible for their delegated performance, and retains certification decisions. Processing Partners are identified and controlled under Annex A; payment agents require separate written authorization.

- USIQ publishes these criteria, scored items, scoring formulas, and an annual methodology report showing actual tier counts and data limitations. USIQ also publishes fictional worked examples for each tier that illustrate the calculation with simulated data; they do not represent actual employers or results and do not indicate an expected tier distribution. Reliability statistics are published only where validly calculated from sufficient data, with the sample and method stated. Where no reliable estimate is available, the report says so. Assessment records must support each award and any public claim.

- Certificates and Seals are issued by Quality Standardization and Certification LLC under the registered USIQ UNITED STATES INSTITUTE FOR QUALITY brand. "Family Friendly Employer" is used here as descriptive program wording; no separate federal registration or exclusive right in those words standing alone is claimed. USIQ is a private certification provider, not a government body, and no government approval or accreditation is represented. The Seal does not state or imply that the employer provides any particular benefit to an individual employee or applicant.

8. Data Protection and Confidential Survey Reporting

- USIQ and approved processing Partners protect survey data and provide the employer with aggregates only. They do not provide individual answers, identifiable participation data, or verbatim comments. No subgroup or item-

level subgroup result is released with fewer than 5 valid responses. Complementary suppression, combination limits, and broader grouping are used where necessary to prevent inference through totals, overlapping groups, or small locations. Five responses alone do not guarantee anonymity.

- Family-related information is particularly sensitive. Neither the survey nor the HR assessment asks for an employee's pregnancy, family status, number or age of children, caregiving situation, health condition, or leave reasons. Where comments contain such information incidentally, it is restricted and redacted or deleted. Aggregate leave, return, and accommodation figures supplied by the employer are subject to the same small-number rule.

- Applicable federal and state privacy and security laws govern, including the CCPA as amended where applicable. USIQ processes survey personal information on the employer's documented instructions as a processor or service provider where the legal requirements for that role are met. Separate uses, such as business contact administration, necessary complaint or integrity investigations, lawful public-source review, and certification-status publication, require their own lawful basis and notice; a contractual label does not determine statutory status.

- The Order must identify processing vendors, functions, locations, approved AI tools, contacts, and applicable notices before access begins. Partners receive only necessary data and are bound by equivalent written restrictions. Annex A governs additions, objections, audits, incidents, and return or deletion. Individual survey data may not be sold, shared for targeted advertising, or used to train general-purpose AI models.

- Retention is limited to documented need. Invitation contact files and linkable distribution tokens are deleted within 30 days after survey closure unless a shorter period is required. Raw responses are deleted or irreversibly deidentified within 90 days after the initial decision or completion of a timely appeal. If no decision is issued, the deadline is 90 days after termination or documented closure of an abandoned assessment; the earliest applicable deletion deadline controls. Deidentified aggregate scoring and decision records may be retained for 36 months after assessment. Limited records subject to a specific legal obligation or documented legal hold are isolated, access-restricted, and deleted when that basis ends. Annex A addresses backups and earlier legal deletion duties.

- Employees may contact USIQ using the survey notice's privacy and reporting contacts. USIQ restricts reporter identity to personnel with a need to know and does not disclose it to the employer without the person's authorization, except where legally required or lawfully necessary to address a serious imminent threat. Notices must describe any such limits; absolute anonymity is not promised. No provision restricts lawful reports to authorities or protected workplace activity.

9. Complaints, Appeals, and Governance

- An employer may appeal an initial refusal, deferral, score, or tier in writing within 30 days after notification. A reviewer uninvolved in the original decision considers the record and relevant new evidence. USIQ supplies a reasoned written outcome within 30 days, or explains a necessary extension and gives a revised date. Part 4, Section 6.5 also applies to later adverse decisions. Internal review does not prevent court relief or suspend statutory filing deadlines.

- Any person may report suspected Seal misuse or facts relevant to a certification. USIQ screens reports for relevance, credibility, conflicts, and urgency, records its handling, and follows the procedure in Part 4 before an

adverse final decision. USIQ protects confidential sources while providing sufficient substance for the employer to respond. An unsubstantiated complaint is not a finding against the employer.

- USIQ reviews these criteria annually, including changes in federal, state, and local family-related law that affect the legal baselines in Section 4.3. Material changes are published with at least 6 months' notice for future Orders and renewals. Accepted Orders and issued certifications remain governed by their agreed version, except for a change strictly required by law and communicated with reasons. Administrative corrections may not secretly change a score, tier, or contractual protection. Certifications must remain under consistent quality control throughout their term.

10. Scientific Basis of the Criteria

The criteria translate findings from organizational psychology, sociology, labor economics, and public health into assessable employer practices. The table below links each design element to the research on which it rests. The cited studies describe average associations and, where stated, causal effects in specific settings. They do not establish that a certified employer will achieve these effects, and USIQ does not make that claim. Where a criterion sets a figure (for example, 6 weeks of paid leave or 14 days of schedule notice), the figure is a program standard chosen by USIQ in light of this evidence, not a threshold derived from a single study.

Design element	Research finding (summary)	Sources
Multi-source design: employee survey plus documented HR evidence (Sections 2, 4.1)	Policy availability and perceived support have related but distinct associations with employee attitudes. Complementary sources can help identify inconsistencies; their use does not establish statistical independence or remove all common-method bias.	Thompson et al. (1999); Butts et al. (2013); Podsakoff et al. (2003)
Family compatibility requirement on items 6 and 7 (Section 3.5)	Work–family conflict is an established construct associated with several adverse outcomes. Items 6 and 7 are broad balance and flexibility indicators, not the validated scales used in those studies. The studies support topic relevance, not the validity of this two-item gate or its cutoffs.	Greenhaus & Beutell (1985); Allen et al. (2000); Amstad et al. (2011)
Area A · Predictable scheduling and realistic workload	Unstable and unpredictable schedules among US service-sector workers are associated with psychological distress, poor sleep quality, and unhappiness, with work–life conflict as an important pathway. Work time demands and role stressors are robust antecedents of work–family conflict.	Schneider & Harknett (2019); Michel et al. (2011)
Area B · Leadership commitment and family-supportive supervision	Work–family-specific support from supervisors and the organization is more strongly related to lower work–family conflict than general support. Family-supportive supervisor behaviors (emotional and instrumental support, role modeling, creative work–family management) form a validated construct. A group-randomized workplace intervention that combined supervisor training with greater employee schedule control reduced work–family conflict.	Kossek et al. (2011); Hammer et al. (2009); Kelly et al. (2014)

Design element	Research finding (summary)	Sources
Area C · Flexible work and working-time models	Evidence varies by flexibility type and context. A randomized trial of 1,612 employees in a Chinese technology company found lower attrition with two home-working days per week. This does not establish the same effect for US frontline roles or every flexible schedule.	Allen et al. (2013); Gajendran & Harrison (2007); Bloom et al. (2024)
Area D · Paid parental leave, lactation support, return to work	A heterogeneous systematic review of statutory leave reforms in OECD countries found evidence of economic and child-health benefits in some settings. It did not validate employer-specific top-ups, the six-week standard, or all return-to-work practices. Employer lactation programs have a separate, mainly observational evidence base.	Nandi et al. (2018); Rossin-Slater et al. (2013); Dinour & Szaro (2017)
Area E · Childcare and caregiving support	One older employer childcare study and broader support research provide a rationale for childcare and caregiving access. They do not establish equal causal benefits for all six Area E criteria, particularly family-building and insurance design. These remain transparent normative program choices.	Kossek & Nichol (1992); Kossek et al. (2011)
Area F and D6 · Protection against motherhood and flexibility penalties	Field and laboratory experiments show penalties for mothers in hiring and starting pay that do not apply to fathers. Earnings of women fall sharply and persistently after the birth of the first child across countries. Employees using flexible work face career penalties when managers attribute its use to personal-life reasons, and a cultural flexibility stigma can deter use of policies.	Correll et al. (2007); Kleven et al. (2019); Leslie et al. (2012); Williams et al. (2013)

Figure 7 · Design elements and supporting research. Full references follow Part 4.

USIQ reviews the evidence base together with the annual methodology review (Section 9). New meta-analyses or randomized studies that materially change the assessment of a practice are considered for the next version, with the notice period set out in Section 9. Version 2026-1.3 introduces separate O/A/I HR ratings, the common twelve-month indicator schedule and shift/presence evidence. These rules apply prospectively under Section 9. The Employee Survey module, questions and 50/50 weighting of Version 2026-1.2 are retained without amendment. HR results under the previous single-rating method require recalculation before comparison; the new minimum rule is not a demonstrated improvement in measurement accuracy until evaluated.

10.1 Measurement status and permissible claims

The HR component is a formative index of heterogeneous practices. High internal consistency is not a necessary quality criterion for this index. The seven survey dimensions are proposed groupings whose structure, reliability, and comparability require empirical testing using the unchanged questionnaire. Published work–family scales cited here do not transfer their validation to USIQ items. No claim of a validated family-friendly employer test, causal effectiveness, market superiority, or caregiver-specific satisfaction is permitted without direct supporting evidence. The 50% family survey block uses only two broad items and must not be represented as covering every family-related need. Assess its reliability, stability and decision influence separately. The old 32-item weights do not apply to this version.

10.2 Precision and sensitivity review

Before the final decision, report valid n and missing-answer share for each scored item and examine the effect of allowed within-dimension redistribution. Recalculate the tier with missing-item weights treated as zero as a conservative sensitivity bound; this is not an imputed estimate of employees' views. Flag a total or any hurdle within 2 percentage points of its cutoff, any tier change in that sensitivity check, and unresolved data-coverage issues. The 2-point review trigger is an operational choice, not a validated error margin. A flagged result requires documented independent evidence and calculation review; no automatic score uplift is allowed. Defer if material uncertainty about eligibility remains. In addition, report how the tier changes under illustrative 40/60 and 60/40 family/general survey allocations and when either core item is omitted for diagnostic purposes, rescaling the retained core item to the full 50-point family block. These are sensitivity analyses only; no award may use a substituted allocation or waive either core item.

Where feasible, calculate respondent-level bootstrap intervals for survey component scores and core-item means using at least 2,000 resamples and the complete published scoring algorithm, retaining within-person item patterns. State the method, respondent count, and assumptions. Such intervals describe uncertainty under the resampling model; they do not account for nonresponse, selection, or all measurement error and are not a workforce-wide margin of error. Where small or sparse data make intervals unreliable, state that precision cannot be established. Do not interpret overlapping intervals as proof of equivalence.

10.3 Prospective validation and reproducibility

Before the next assessment cohort, publish a dated analysis plan with outcomes, hypotheses, inclusion rules, missing-data handling, and intended analyses. Use an initial pilot to estimate feasible precision; set sample requirements by the proposed analyses and organizational clustering, not solely by the existing milestone of 100 employers. Record all eligible applicants, withdrawals and refusals to describe employer selection. Analyze survey dimensional structure, omega and its uncertainty where a reflective model is defensible, item distributions, missingness, and stability across broad role and industry groups where sample sizes permit. Do not publish a single alpha as proof of overall validity. Estimate HR inter-rater agreement from the initial independent ratings, using weighted kappa for ordinal criteria and an explicitly specified absolute-agreement ICC for component scores, with uncertainty intervals and the scoring design stated. Examine criterion and decision sensitivity to alternative defensible weights, cutoffs, and Not applicable decisions. Test prospective associations with independently sourced aggregate outcomes, with confounding and selection stated; an association does not establish a causal effect. Validate any tuned model on a later employer cohort. Publish null and adverse results, limitations, versioned calculation code or equivalent specifications, and conflicts. Changes apply prospectively under Section 9.

Part 2 · Employee Survey

All 46 standard questions below retain their original wording, order and response options. For this program, 42 scaled questions contribute 100 points: questions 6 and 7 receive 25 points each and the other 40 scaled questions receive 1.25 points each. Questions 15, 16, 45 and 46 receive mandatory contextual assessment under Part 1, Section 3.7. The Points and Assessment columns are scoring metadata for Version 2026-1.2. The questions remain voluntary. Optional employer questions and optional demographic answers are considered only in protected contextual reporting and never receive points. The Family Friendly Employer scoring differs from Top Employer despite the shared question wording.

Introduction shown to employees

USIQ is a program operated by Quality Standardization and Certification LLC. This survey asks about your workplace experience and usually takes about 8–10 minutes.

Participation is voluntary. You may skip any question without penalty. Your employer must not require particular answers, identify respondents, or retaliate because of participation, nonparticipation, or criticism.

USIQ and approved providers process responses confidentially. Your employer receives protected aggregates and nonidentifying themes, not individual answers or verbatim comments. Groups with fewer than 5 valid responses are suppressed, and additional safeguards may apply. Absolute anonymity cannot be guaranteed because comments, technical data, or small groups can identify a person.

Do not include names or identifying, medical, or other sensitive details, including information about a pregnancy, your family situation, or the health of a family member. Use a suitable reporting channel for matters requiring an individual response; this survey is not an emergency or grievance-response service. This does not restrict reports to authorities or other protected communications.

Before responding, read the linked survey privacy notice for the data collected, purposes, providers, retention, rights, and USIQ contact information. Unless stated otherwise, indicate how much you agree with each statement.

Agreement scale: 1 Strongly disagree · 2 Disagree · 3 Somewhat disagree · 4 Somewhat agree · 5 Agree · 6 Strongly agree. Every question also permits skipping or Not applicable / Prefer not to answer; these do not count as scored answers.

Section 1 · Your Company Overall

No.	Statement	Assessment	Points
1	Overall, I am satisfied with my employer.	Scored	1.25
2	I would recommend our products or services to friends and family.	Scored	1.25
3	I am proud to work for this company.	Scored	1.25
4	This company uses feedback from employees to improve.	Scored	1.25

Section 2 · Working Conditions and Environment

No.	Statement	Assessment	Points
5	I am satisfied with my opportunities for career growth and advancement here.	Scored	1.25
6◆	I can balance my work with my personal life and family or caregiving responsibilities.	Scored	25
7◆	I have the flexibility in my working hours that I need.	Scored	25
8	My pay is fair for the work I do.	Scored	1.25
9	Good performance and achievements are recognized here.	Scored	1.25
10	I am kept informed about the company's strategy and direction.	Scored	1.25
11	I am encouraged to contribute my own ideas.	Scored	1.25
12	Suggestions for improvement are taken seriously and, where possible, implemented.	Scored	1.25
13	I am satisfied with my physical working conditions (workspace, equipment, safety).	Scored	1.25
14	Feedback is welcome here regardless of level or position.	Scored	1.25
15	Is there anything about your employer that bothers you? (No / Yes – if yes, what would you like to see changed? Comment field)	Context	—
16	Compared with when I started, my overall satisfaction has: improved / stayed the same / declined.	Context	—

Section 3 · Your Work

No.	Statement	Assessment	Points
17	I have enough latitude to decide how I do my work.	Scored	1.25
18	My work is varied and interesting.	Scored	1.25
19	My performance is reviewed regularly and fairly.	Scored	1.25
20	I understand the internal processes that affect my work.	Scored	1.25
21	My work goals are realistic and achievable.	Scored	1.25
22	Overall, I am satisfied with my job.	Scored	1.25
23	Information flows well within my team.	Scored	1.25

Section 4 · Learning and Development

No.	Statement	Assessment	Points
24	I have the knowledge and skills I need to do my job well.	Scored	1.25
25	This company actively supports my continued learning and development.	Scored	1.25

No.	Statement	Assessment	Points
26	I have enough time to keep my knowledge up to date.	Scored	1.25
27	I receive support when my role requires new skills.	Scored	1.25

Section 5 · Team and Workplace Climate

No.	Statement	Assessment	Points
28	The working atmosphere in my team is positive.	Scored	1.25
29	Mistakes are handled constructively and used to improve.	Scored	1.25
30	People here are valued for their competence, regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, disability, or background.	Scored	1.25
31	Initiative and taking responsibility are valued here.	Scored	1.25
32	Problems can be discussed openly in my team.	Scored	1.25

Section 6 · Your Manager

"My manager" refers to the person you report to directly.

No.	Statement	Assessment	Points
33	Information flows well between employees and management.	Scored	1.25
34	My manager's actions match their words.	Scored	1.25
35	My manager is open to my ideas.	Scored	1.25
36	My manager encourages me to work independently.	Scored	1.25
37	My manager sets clear and realistic goals and priorities.	Scored	1.25
38	My manager shows appreciation for good work.	Scored	1.25
39	My manager accepts feedback about their own behavior.	Scored	1.25

Section 7 · Overall Satisfaction and Loyalty

No.	Statement	Assessment	Points
40	How likely are you to recommend this company as an employer to a friend? (0 = Not at all likely … 10 = Extremely likely)	Scored	1.25
41	I enjoy working at this company.	Scored	1.25
42	I put real effort into my work because I want this company to succeed.	Scored	1.25
43	If I had to decide again, I would apply to this company.	Scored	1.25

No.	Statement	Assessment	Points
44	I intend to still be working here in two years.	Scored	1.25

Section 8 · Optional Employer Items (unscored)

The employer may add up to 6 optional statements on the six-point scale, subject to USIQ's privacy and neutrality review. Items may address family-related programs or work arrangements, for example awareness of a childcare benefit or satisfaction with the leave process, but may not ask whether a respondent has children or caregiving duties, is or was pregnant, or has used a particular leave. They may not solicit medical, genetic, biometric, union-affiliation, or other sensitive personal information, identify respondents, or pressure favorable responses. Results are reported separately under the same aggregation safeguards and never affect certification.

Section 9 · Closing

No.	Statement	Assessment	Points
45	What is the one thing your employer should change or improve? (Comment field)	Context	—
46	What does your employer do particularly well? (Comment field)	Context	—

Section 10 · About You (optional, for aggregated reporting only)

Each answer is optional. Categories must be broad enough to protect respondents. Results are reported only when at least 5 valid responses and the additional suppression safeguards in Part 1, Section 8 are satisfied. USIQ may combine or withhold categories and cross-tabulations to prevent identification.

- Location or business unit: employer-provided broad categories approved by USIQ; include Prefer not to answer.
- Function: employer-provided broad categories approved by USIQ; include Prefer not to answer.
- Length of service: less than 1 year · 1–3 years · 4–10 years · more than 10 years
- Role: individual contributor · people manager

USIQ does not request protected-characteristic, family-status, medical, genetic, biometric, or union-affiliation data in this survey. Do not enter names or identifying details in comments. Incidental sensitive information is restricted and redacted or deleted. Any separate employer EEO analysis is outside this program and requires its own lawful process; survey answers may not be matched to personnel files.

Part 3 · HR Assessment Questionnaire

Complete every one of the 39 criteria using the common response record below. The employer supplies facts and evidence; USIQ assigns the three aspect ratings and final criterion level under Part 1, Section 4.2. The 12-month indicator definitions in Section 4.6 and shift/presence review in Section 4.7 apply to the relevant criteria. Evidence examples are illustrative; equivalent relevant material may be accepted. Submit protected aggregates and redacted nonprivileged documents only, not individual family, leave, pregnancy, accommodation or medical records. Retain the legal-baseline, coverage, core-area and proportionality rules. All numerical standards remain published program choices, not validated causal thresholds.

Common field for each criterion	Required entry
R1 Status and scope	Yes / No / In progress / Not applicable, explanation, affected workforce or other relevant population, locations and work groups; objective Not applicable reason if requested.
R2 Offer	Current policy or equivalent arrangement, material terms, effective date and evidence reference. Identify the specific requirements fulfilled and any gap.
R3 Access	Cutoff covered and eligible headcounts, conditions and waiting periods, practical application channels, group-specific alternatives and exclusions; M1/M9 where relevant.
R4 Implementation	Reference-period delivery, handling of exceptions, representative evidence or tested readiness for a genuine no-event case; do not substitute a policy assertion.
R5 Indicators	Applicable M1–M9 with the common period, source, numerator/denominator, missingness and privacy suppression. Explain genuinely inapplicable indicators and any incomplete history.
R6 Presence and shift evidence	Cross-reference the Section 4.7 coverage map, work-group arrangements and reviewer-selected schedule/request evidence. Explain peak-period and night/weekend access where relevant.
R7 Employer explanation	Material gaps, constraints and corrective steps already taken, with dates and responsible function. A promised future action does not count as delivered practice.
R8 Reviewer record	USIQ records O, A and I (0–5), evidence and reasons for each, Lj = min(O,A,I), stricter cap if any, weighted area contribution and second-review resolution.

Apply R1–R8 to each numbered criterion; do not repeat the same upload when a clear criterion-level cross-reference suffices. An indicator is a supporting observation, not a new employee question or an extra point-bearing criterion. Preserve the original 39 criterion IDs and eight area maxima.

Employer declaration

An authorized officer must sign or electronically affirm this declaration as part of the submission: "After reasonable inquiry, I confirm on behalf of the employer that its answers and evidence are accurate and complete in all material respects, that known material departures from applicable workplace laws have been disclosed, and that the employer has disclosed relevant pending or concluded government enforcement matters, court findings, and consent decrees during the preceding 24 months. Applicable laws include family and medical leave, pregnancy accommodation, lactation break time and space, pregnancy, sex, and caregiver-related discrimination, wage-and-hour, safety, harassment, retaliation, disability accommodation, privacy, and collective-activity protections. Benefits described as available are available on the stated terms to the stated share of the covered workforce. No favorable survey response has been required or induced."

Provide a separate explanation of exceptions, corrective actions, and legal restrictions on disclosure, without privileged advice or unnecessary personal data. An exception is evaluated under the Criteria and is not automatically an admission of liability. The declaration is unscored; USIQ does not certify legal compliance. A materially false or misleading declaration may lead to refusal or revocation under Part 4.

The submission must record the employer's legal name, signatory's name and title, signature or authenticated electronic assent, and date.

A · Family-Conscious Work Organization and Scheduling (12 points)

Evidence note: unpredictable schedules and high time demands are among the best-documented sources of work–family conflict (Michel et al., 2011; Schneider & Harknett, 2019).

No.	Criterion	Evidence for offer access and implementation
A1	Work schedules and shift plans are published at least 14 calendar days in advance (program standard). Supply M6 and M7 for the reference period, including standing schedules where applicable, publication timestamps, late employer changes, grouped reasons, employee agreement and mitigation. Distinguish employee-initiated changes. Routine unexplained exceptions prevent level 5 implementation.	Scheduling rules; twelve-month M6/M7 aggregates; reviewer-selected nonidentifying rosters and dated change logs across relevant shifts and peak periods.
A2	Meetings, mandatory training and company events occur within the affected employees' agreed working hours or defined core hours. For night, weekend, part-time and presence-based groups, provide equivalent access or a documented alternative without requiring unpaid attendance or disruption of necessary rest. Record exceptions and how alternatives worked.	Meeting/training rules; event schedule across relevant work groups; protected attendance/alternative-access records and exception review.
A3	Planned cover, temporary staffing or documented redistribution supports parental/family leave and short-notice care absences, including presence-required and shift roles. Explain how the arrangement avoids routine overload or compulsory extra shifts for colleagues and returning employees. Show implementation during ordinary and peak periods or tested readiness where no event occurred.	Cover/backfill and cross-training rules; protected aggregate overtime/cover records; reviewer-selected process evidence; M8 where applicable.
A4	Goals, workload, and targets are adjusted proportionately for reduced-hour, phased-return, and leave periods, and documented as such.	Goal-setting guideline, redacted representative examples, survey items 21 and 37

No.	Criterion	Evidence for offer access and implementation
A5	Employees can request short-notice time off for urgent family matters through a simple process accessible on every relevant shift and without regular computer access. State decision authority, response arrangements, paid/unpaid status, emergency cover and alternatives after a refusal. Use M3–M5 and M8 where applicable. Do not collect family details beyond what is needed and permitted.	Emergency-time policy; channels and shift contact arrangements; aggregate request/outcome/time statistics and grouped refusal reasons.

B · Leadership Commitment and Family-Aware Management (12 points)

Evidence note: work–family-specific supervisor and organizational support is more strongly related to lower work–family conflict than general support (Kossek et al., 2011); training content for B2 should cover the dimensions of family-supportive supervisor behavior (Hammer et al., 2009).

No.	Criterion	Evidence for offer access and implementation
B1	Senior management has adopted a written commitment to family-friendliness with concrete objectives and assigned responsibility. Progress is reviewed at least once a year.	Signed policy statement, objectives, review record or minutes
B2	Managers receive training in family-supportive conduct and the applicable handling of pregnancy, leave, lactation, caregiving, and flexible-work requests. Content covers emotional and practical support, role modeling, and creative work–family management. New managers complete it within 6 months. Record the eligible-manager denominator, completion rate, training content, and a check of learning or application; attendance alone cannot support level 5.	Curriculum, training records with completion rate (aggregate)
B3	A designated person or function advises employees confidentially on family-related benefits, leave options, and return to work, including the interaction between employer benefits and federal or state programs.	Role description, intranet contact page, number of consultations (aggregate)
B4	Employees are involved in identifying family-related needs and improving offerings, for example through needs surveys, focus groups, or a parents and caregivers network, and the results lead to documented actions.	Instrument and aggregate results, action log, survey items 4 and 12
B5	Family policies and benefits are documented in an accessible place and actively communicated to new hires, part-time staff, staff on leave and employees without regular computer access. Demonstrate how each material work group obtains current information and makes requests during its actual working hours.	Current benefits guide; dated communication/induction records; non-digital access routes; coverage map and documented communication gaps.

C · Flexible Work and Working-Time Models (15 points · core area)

Evidence note: see Allen et al. (2013), Kelly et al. (2014), and Bloom et al. (2024). Flexibility must be available in substance, not only on paper. For roles that cannot be performed remotely, USIQ assesses the scheduling options that are realistic for those roles (Part 1, Section 4.5).

No.	Criterion	Evidence for offer access and implementation
C1	Written arrangements provide working-time control wherever tasks allow. State the actual options and eligibility for desk, presence-required and shift-based groups, including predictable hours, adjustable start/end times or self-scheduling as relevant. Document who can use each option, barriers and implementation; a nominal policy is insufficient.	Policy; group-specific eligibility and access routes; M1 and applicable M3–M7; representative nonidentifying implementation records.
C2	Remote or hybrid work is offered under clear rules wherever role tasks allow, with necessary equipment. For presence-required roles, substantiate a practical equivalent package of predictable hours and employee schedule control under Section 4.7. Explain task-based restrictions and actual alternatives; lack of remote feasibility is not grounds to exclude the group or claim Not applicable.	Role/task eligibility and restrictions; equipment rules; presence-role alternatives; M1/M9 and applicable scheduling/request evidence; cross-references to C1/C4.
C3	Part-time work is possible at all levels, including roles with management responsibility, with proportional pay, pro-rata benefits where plan rules permit, and equal access to development and promotion.	Part-time policy, share of part-time employees by level (aggregate), examples of part-time managers
C4	Feasible models include job sharing, compressed weeks, annualized hours and employee-controlled shift swaps. State what each relevant frontline, shift, part-time and desk group can actually use, the approval process and limits. Verify representative delivery through M3–M8 as applicable; listing more models does not itself earn extra points.	Published model and swap rules; access map; aggregate requests, outcomes and response times; dated nonidentifying schedule and cover records.
C5	Employees may request changes to working time, schedule or location through accessible channels. Provide a substantive written answer within 30 calendar days (program standard), or a shorter applicable requirement. Refusals state the business reasons and consider feasible alternatives. Report M3–M5, overdue pending requests and group differences; no target approval quota applies.	Request policy; twelve-month reconciled status counts; median/90th-percentile response times and pending ages where safe; grouped refusal/alternative reasons; M9.
C6	Employees who temporarily reduce hours for family reasons can return to their previous hours or a comparable schedule under stated conditions. Document access across relevant work groups, request handling and practical delivery or readiness. Explain waiting periods, capacity constraints and alternatives instead of reporting the policy alone.	Return-to-hours terms; M1 and applicable M3–M5/M9; nonidentifying aggregate implementation or documented readiness evidence.

D · Pregnancy, Parental Leave, and Return to Work (15 points · core area)

Evidence note: see Rossin-Slater et al. (2013), Dinour & Szaro (2017), and Nandi et al. (2018). Benefit credit under Part 1, Section 4.3 applies to D1 and D3. State program benefits and legally required job protection form the baseline; only the employer's additional contribution counts.

No.	Criterion	Evidence for offer access and implementation
D1	Employer-paid parental leave is available to every new parent, regardless of gender or family form, for birth, adoption, and foster placement. Full credit requires at least 6 weeks of pay replacement of at least two-thirds of base pay (program standard), in addition to any medical recovery period after childbirth and beyond any state program benefit (top-up).	Policy (weeks, pay rate, eligibility, waiting period), legal baseline by state, aggregate utilization
D2	Pregnant and postpartum employees and applicants receive reasonable accommodations through a documented, prompt interactive process consistent with the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act and applicable state law. Employers below the federal coverage threshold apply an equivalent process.	Accommodation procedure, request form, aggregate response times
D3	Lactation support goes beyond the federal minimum: a clean, lockable space that is not a bathroom, with seating, a table, an electrical outlet, access to refrigeration and nearby running water; break time for pumping is paid; and support remains available beyond the first year where requested.	Room description or photos, lactation policy, pay rule for breaks
D4	Before leave, a structured planning conversation covers handover, contact preferences, and the return plan. During leave, employees may voluntarily stay informed and use optional keep-in-touch arrangements, without any expectation of work.	Planning checklist, keep-in-touch guideline
D5	Return to work includes a re-onboarding conversation and access to phased or reduced-hour return. Monitor aggregate return and 12-month retention only for cohorts with complete follow-up, reporting denominators, time windows, and suppressed small counts. Rates inform improvement and are not scored as causal evidence of quality; absence of a mature cohort does not itself lower the score if readiness is documented.	Return policy, aggregate return and 12-month retention rates (suppressed below 5)
D6	Leave, pregnancy, and reduced hours do not lead to lower performance ratings, forfeited variable pay for time worked, missed pay reviews, or exclusion from promotion rounds. Goals and variable pay are prorated transparently.	Performance and pay-review guidelines, calibration instructions, plan documents

E · Childcare, Caregiving, and Family Benefits (18 points · core area)

Evidence note: see Kossek & Nichol (1992). Benefit credit is limited to provision beyond applicable federal, state, and local requirements, under Part 1, Section 4.3. Full benefit credit requires at least 80% workforce coverage. The listed benefits are program criteria, not legal or tax advice or mandatory employee entitlements; lawful plan eligibility and equivalent arrangements must be documented. Tax incentives that may be available to the employer, such as the employer-provided child care credit under Internal Revenue Code Section 45F, are not assessed.

No.	Criterion	Evidence for offer access and implementation
E1	Childcare support is provided through on-site or near-site childcare, reserved places at licensed providers, childcare subsidies, or backup care for days when regular arrangements fail.	Provider contract or subsidy policy, eligibility, aggregate utilization

No.	Criterion	Evidence for offer access and implementation
E2	A dependent care assistance program (Internal Revenue Code Section 129) is offered with an employer contribution or comparable employer-funded value. A plan funded only by employee salary reductions is capped at level 3.	Plan document, employer contribution, participation rate (aggregate)
E3	Employer-sponsored health coverage extends to spouses or domestic partners and dependent children, with an employer contribution of at least 50% of the premium for the family coverage tier (program standard); prenatal, maternity, newborn, and well-child care are covered.	Plan summary, contribution rates by coverage tier, eligibility
E4	Employees caring for parents or other adult relatives have access to elder- or adult-care support, such as care navigation, referral services, backup adult care, or paid time for care coordination.	Vendor contract or service description, aggregate utilization
E5	Family-building support is available regardless of sexual orientation, gender, or marital status, such as adoption assistance (Internal Revenue Code Section 137), fertility or surrogacy benefits, or paid time off for related appointments.	Plan summary or policy, eligibility
E6	Paid time off to care for family members exceeds applicable law, for example paid sick time usable for a wider circle of family members, additional paid family-care days, or employer top-ups to state paid family leave benefits.	PTO and sick-leave policy, comparison with the applicable legal baseline

F · Fairness and Nondiscrimination for Parents and Caregivers (12 points)

Evidence note: mothers face documented penalties in hiring, pay, and earnings trajectories, and users of flexible work can face career penalties (Correll et al., 2007; Kleven et al., 2019; Leslie et al., 2012; Williams et al., 2013).

No.	Criterion	Evidence for offer access and implementation
F1	A written policy prohibits discrimination, harassment, and retaliation based on pregnancy, childbirth, related medical conditions, lactation, parental status, caregiving responsibilities, association with a person with a disability, and the use of family-related leave or flexible work, even where applicable law does not list every ground expressly. A reporting channel exists and is communicated.	Policy, training records, reporting channel
F2	Hiring, promotion, and assignment decisions do not take family status or family plans into account. Interviewers are instructed not to ask about pregnancy, family plans, or childcare arrangements.	Interview guidelines, structured interview materials, interviewer training
F3	Employees working part-time, remotely or flexibly, or returning from leave receive fair evaluation, development and promotion access. Review aggregate opportunity and selection rates with suitable denominators, job level and time window, where privacy and adequate counts permit. Record limitations and corrective actions; a raw difference or small suppressed cohort alone establishes neither discrimination nor equality.	Nonprivileged aggregate analysis (suppressed below 5), corrective actions

No.	Criterion	Evidence for offer access and implementation
F4	Pay equity is reviewed at least every 24 months, including the effects of leave, part-time periods, and caregiving interruptions on pay progression, and findings are acted on.	Nonprivileged description of review process and corrective action; do not submit privileged pay analyses or individual salaries
F5	Family-related information, such as pregnancy, family status, leave reasons, accommodation requests, and medical certifications, is handled confidentially on a need-to-know basis, kept separate from general personnel files where law requires, and retained only as long as necessary.	Employee privacy notice, access controls, records-retention schedule

G · Family-Friendly Employer Branding and Candidate Experience (8 points)

No.	Criterion	Evidence for offer access and implementation
G1	Family-related offerings are described accurately on the careers site and in job postings, without overstating availability, coverage, eligibility, or amounts.	Careers site, sample postings, comparison with policy documents
G2	The hiring process takes candidates' caregiving constraints into account, for example through flexible interview times, video interviews, or reimbursement of childcare costs for on-site interviews. Job postings state whether part-time, flexible, or remote arrangements are possible.	Process description, sample postings, candidate feedback
G3	Candidates returning after a career break for caregiving are actively considered, and gaps in employment are not treated as a negative criterion. Former employees can return through a defined rehire or returnship route.	Re-entry or returnship program, hiring guidelines

H · Life Events, Family Emergencies, and Transitions (8 points)

Benefit credit under Part 1, Section 4.3 applies to H1 and H3.

No.	Criterion	Evidence for offer access and implementation
H1	Paid bereavement leave beyond applicable law is available for an inclusively defined circle of close family members, including leave after pregnancy loss, a failed adoption, or an unsuccessful fertility treatment.	Bereavement policy, family definition, legal baseline
H2	Employees have access to confidential counseling and practical support for family matters, for example through an employee assistance program covering parenting, elder care, and the care of a seriously ill or disabled family member.	EAP contract and scope, aggregate utilization
H3	Extended family-related career breaks or leaves beyond legal requirements are possible, with a guaranteed return to the same or a comparable position and options to continue benefits, together with flexible transition arrangements for employees with long-term care responsibilities.	Policy, redacted examples

Part 4 · Assessment and Seal License Terms

The contractual terms for the Family Friendly Employer program are the same as for the USIQ Top Employer program. Part 4 of the USIQ Top Employer Certification Criteria, Version 2026-3.2 of October 21, 2026, remains incorporated by reference. Annexes A, B, C, D and E of that edition, including Appendices E-A, E-B and E-C to Annex E, are reproduced in full as original pages in this document. The incorporated terms and reproduced annexes form an integral part of the agreement, with the following adjustments:

- References to “Top Employer,” “USIQ Top Employer,” and the “USIQ Top Employer Seal” read as “Family Friendly Employer” and the “Family Friendly Employer Seal.”
- References to the “Criteria” and to Parts 1–3 mean Parts 1–3 of this document, Version 2026-1.3. Methodological references, including those to 39 criteria, the eight areas, the evidence levels, and the tier conditions, refer to the provisions of this document.
- The acceptance acknowledgment in Annex B names the Family Friendly Employer Certification Criteria, Version 2026-1.3, together with the incorporated Part 4 and Annexes A–E of the USIQ Top Employer Certification Criteria, Version 2026-3.2, and Annex E Version 1.2 dated October 21, 2026.
- Annex C applies with the same packages, included services, and prices. Annex D applies to the Family Friendly Employer artwork; the authorized tier symbols and the wording “Based on Employee Survey & HR Assessment” are unchanged.
- Fees without an award follow Part 1, Section 7. Where Annex C, Annex E (including Sections 3.4–3.6) or a reproduced form provides that no fees or costs arise, or that amounts collected are refunded in full, if no award is issued, it reads as providing that USIQ retains the survey fee of USD 990 and refunds any amount paid in excess of it within 14 calendar days.
- Where an employer holds both Seals, each Seal is licensed, verified, suspended, or revoked separately. An adverse decision concerning one Seal does not automatically affect the other; USIQ assesses separately whether the underlying facts are relevant to the other program under its own Section 5.2 and Part 4, Section 6.

Before acceptance, USIQ must supply the complete text of all incorporated provisions in a downloadable or retainable form together with this document (Part 4, Section 1.2). Incorporation by reference does not change the conspicuousness and express-acknowledgment requirements of Part 4, Section 14.4, Annex B, and Appendix E-C to Annex E.

Key terms at a glance (summary only; the incorporated text governs)

Subject	Rule
Fees	Fixed package fee under Annex C, including a USD 990 survey fee; payable by credit card; no separate license fee during the Certification Period.
No award	Only the USD 990 survey fee is retained; any amount paid above it is refunded within 14 calendar days (for example, USD 2,000 of a USD 2,990 package); tabulated survey results supplied.

Subject	Rule
Certification Period	24 months from issue; written material-change update at month 12; no automatic renewal.
Suspension and revocation	Only on specific, credible grounds, after written notice and at least 14 days to respond; reasoned decision; appeal within 30 days.
Liability	Exclusions and aggregate cap under Part 4, Section 8 and Annex E, Section 14, subject to the mandatory exceptions in Section 8.6.
Governing law and courts	Wyoming law and Wyoming courts (Sheridan County or US District Court for the District of Wyoming); no arbitration, class-action waiver, or jury-trial waiver.
Data protection	Annex A data processing terms; aggregate reporting only; suppression below 5 responses.

References

Sources cited in Parts 1 and 3 (APA 7th edition). Statutory and regulatory references are to the provisions as in force on the version date and are reviewed annually under Part 1, Section 9.

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Legal and regulatory sources (as of October 2026)

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Fair Labor Standards Act, 29 U.S.C. § 218d (break time and space to express breast milk), as amended by the PUMP for Nursing Mothers Act (2022).

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Annexes A to E

The following pages reproduce Annexes A–E of the USIQ Top Employer Certification Criteria, Version 2026-3.2 dated October 21, 2026, in full, including their cover pages, tables, illustrations, forms, Appendices E-A, E-B and E-C, and source references. These are original-page reproductions; their source headers, version labels and page numbers are retained. The source page numbers in the index below refer to that edition, not to the preceding Family Friendly Employer pages.

The Family Friendly Employer adjustments in Part 4 of this document govern the program-specific reading of these annexes. References to Top Employer, its criteria, certification and seal must be read for Family Friendly Employer as specified there. The original Top Employer artwork remains illustrative and is not authorized Family Friendly Employer artwork. Only the correct Family Friendly Employer artwork released by USIQ may be used.

For Annex B and Appendix E-C, the accepted Order and acceptance record must identify the Family Friendly Employer Certification Criteria Version 2026-1.3, the incorporated Part 4 of the USIQ Top Employer Certification Criteria Version 2026-3.2, the reproduced Annexes A–E of that edition, and Annex E Version 1.2 dated October 21, 2026. The original forms must be completed with the correct program and version references under Part 4; their original printed Top Employer references do not replace that requirement.

The questionnaire wording and the 50/50 family/general weighting within the employee survey remain those of Family Friendly Employer Version 2026-1.2. Adding these annexes does not change assessment scores, thresholds or questions. The full text of the incorporated Top Employer Part 4 must also be supplied before acceptance as required by Part 4; it is not reproduced in this annex section.

Annex	Contents	Original pages
Annex A	Data Processing Terms	34–38
Annex B	Order and Acceptance Requirements	39–41
Annex C	Package Prices and Included Services	42–44
Annex D	Seal Usage Guidelines	45–49
Annex E	Certification Seal Terms of Use, including Appendices E-A, E-B and E-C and source references	50–66

Source: https://www.usiq.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/Top_Employer_Certification_Criteria.pdf

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Annex A

Data Processing Terms



Illustrative seals. Company names and verification details are fictional.

PRIVACY
Data roles

SECURITY
Safeguards

REQUESTS
Rights and support

RETENTION
Return and deletion

Data protection roles, safeguards and responsibilities for certification.

Version 2026-1.3 · November 5, 2026 · Effective for an Order upon acceptance

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Annex A · Data Processing Terms

This Annex is part of the accepted Order. "Personal Information" includes information relating to an identified or reasonably identifiable person under applicable law. "Survey Data" means personal information processed for the employer's survey and assessment. Applicable privacy, security, breach-notification, and AI laws govern according to the actual processing and people concerned.

A1 · Roles and documented processing

Licensee determines the lawful purpose of requesting its workforce assessment. To the extent USIQ processes Survey Data on Licensee's behalf, USIQ acts only on documented lawful instructions as processor, service provider, or contractor where the statutory requirements are met. The instructions are limited to delivering this assessment, protected reporting, necessary support and security, and permitted return or deletion. USIQ must notify Licensee if an instruction appears unlawful and suspend the affected activity until lawfully resolved. Licensee may not instruct USIQ to reveal individual responses or circumvent the Criteria's protections.

The Order must record the covered employer and workforce jurisdictions; processing purposes and operations; data categories and sources; approved vendors and locations; duration; security and retention arrangements; and privacy/security contacts. Normal categories are work contact details only if needed for invitations, survey ratings, optional broad group attributes, optional comments, and redacted employer evidence. Direct employer distribution without transfer of contact lists is preferred. USIQ must configure collection to minimize IP/device data and avoid persistent identifiers or linkage between invitation records and answers except for strictly necessary, disclosed integrity controls.

USIQ is separately responsible, where it determines purposes and means, for necessary business-contact administration, billing and legal records, necessary complaint and integrity investigations, lawful public-source review, and accurate public certification-status information. Each independent activity requires appropriate notice, restricted access, minimization, and its own justified retention schedule. Such uses must be documented and notified and may not be a pretext to repurpose identifiable Survey Data. Public status uses no individual employee data. Any independent use of identifiable Survey Data requires a separate lawful basis, the correct statutory role, and the required notices and agreements before processing; this Annex does not authorize it.

A2 · Restricted use and confidentiality

USIQ must not sell Survey Data, share it for cross-context behavioral advertising, use it for targeted advertising, or retain, use, or disclose it outside the specific permitted purposes or the parties' direct business relationship, except where applicable law expressly permits or requires. It must not combine it with data from another customer or its own consumer interactions except for adocumented use expressly permitted by applicable law and these instructions. No identifiable Survey Data may be used for cross-employer benchmarking, independent profiling, generalized product development, model training, or individual employment decisions.

USIQ certifies that it understands and will comply with these restrictions, must provide the same level of privacy protection required by applicable law, and must notify Licensee promptly if it can no longer comply. Licensee may take reasonable and appropriate steps to verify compliant use, stop unauthorized use, and require remediation. Personnel access is limited to authorized persons under enforceable confidentiality obligations and documented training.

A3 · Notices and individual rights

Before collecting data, Licensee must provide any required workforce notice and lawful instructions; USIQ must supply the information needed for accurate notices and provide its own notice for its independent uses. The survey must prominently link to a notice identifying the parties and contacts, categories including technical data, purposes, recipients, role-specific rights, retention criteria, and any legally required disclosures. Required consents must be obtained separately; employment participation or acceptance of this contract is not blanket privacy consent.

USIQ must promptly forward a request concerning employer-controlled data and reasonably assist with verified access, correction, deletion, restriction, appeal, or other rights within the time needed for legal deadlines. It must respond directly where law assigns it that obligation. Neither party may unnecessarily collect identity data, reidentify a protected response, or disclose others' data to answer a request. Where data cannot reasonably be linked to a requester, the response must explain the applicable limitation without falsely claiming anonymization. USIQ assists with required privacy impact assessments, regulator inquiries, and incident duties relevant to its processing.

A4 · Security and incidents

USIQ must maintain a written, risk-appropriate security program including least-privilege access, multifactor authentication for privileged and remote administrative access, encryption in transit and at rest where supported by the relevant platform, logical separation of customer data, secure configuration and timely patching, access logging, personnel confidentiality, tested backups and recovery, secure disposal, vendor review, and an incident-response plan. If a system cannot provide a required safeguard, it may not process Survey Data without a documented equivalent protection agreed before use. Security duties are not a guarantee that no incident can occur.

USIQ must notify Licensee's security contact without undue delay and no later than 48 hours after becoming aware of a confirmed or reasonably suspected unauthorized access, acquisition, disclosure, alteration, loss, or material compromise of Survey Data, or sooner if law requires. An initial notice may be incomplete and must not be delayed for a final investigation. It must describe known facts, categories and approximate numbers affected, timing, consequences, containment, and the response contact, with prompt updates. USIQ must contain and investigate, preserve relevant evidence, cooperate on legally required notices, and remediate within its control. Each party remains responsible for notices the law assigns to it; neither may delay a mandatory notice for the other's approval. Forty-eight hours is a contractual notice obligation, not a statement of a statutory safe harbor.

AS · Partners and access locations

Before processing, USIQ must identify each subprocessor by legal name, task, data categories, and access or hosting countries in a supplied register incorporated into the Order. Only listed providers are initially authorized. USIQ must give at least 30 days' advance notice of a new or replacement subprocessor and permit reasonable objections based on privacy or security. The parties will seek an alternative; USIQ may not provide the disputed vendor access while an unresolved reasonable objection remains. If no reasonable solution exists, either party may terminate the affected service, with refunds under Part 4, Section 5.1 and Annex E, Section 3.4; if no award is issued, all amounts collected are refunded in full. Urgent security replacements require prompt notice before access and equivalent safeguards.

Every subprocessor must be bound before access to written obligations at least as protective as these, including purpose limits, rights assistance, security, deletion, oversight, and incident reporting fast enough for USIQ to meet its duties. USIQ remains responsible for delegated obligations. Access outside disclosed locations or an international transfer requires advance review and any required authorization, contractual mechanism, and legal safeguards; no cross-border transfer is approved by a general Partner clause. USIQ must not disclose data to a public AI interface or permit a vendor's own model training.

A6 · Reporting and deidentification

USIQ must provide only the aggregate and thematic reports allowed by Part 1, Section 8. It must suppress small and complementary cells, limit cross-tabulations and overlapping reports, and review free text before producing nonidentifying themes. The employer may not receive verbatim comments or raw row-level data through export, dashboards, support requests, or Partners. USIQ and Licensee must not attempt reidentification or permit recipients to do so. Information may be treated as deidentified only where the applicable legal standard and reasonable technical and organizational safeguards are met; any required public non-reidentification commitment and recipient contract must be in place. Pseudonymous data remain personal information where legally identifiable.

A7 · Retention and disposal

Invitation contact records and linkable distribution tokens are deleted within 30 days after survey closure. Raw response data are deleted or irreversibly deidentified within 90 days after the initial decision or completion of a timely appeal. If no decision is issued, the deadline is 90 days after termination or documented closure of an abandoned assessment; the earliest applicable deadline controls, with earlier deletion where required by law ora valid instruction. Necessary deidentified aggregate scoring and decision records may remain for 36 months after assessment. Other personal information, such as business contacts and invoices, follows a separately disclosed purpose-specific legal retention schedule. A shorter lawful period controls; these limits are not permission to retain unnecessary data.

At the end of processing, USIQ will return employer-supplied personal information at Licensee's choice or delete it, subject to the survey nondisclosure protections and lawful retention. Individual responses are not returned to the employer; they are deleted or deidentified. Isolated backups are overwritten or deleted within 90 additional days, not used for ordinary purposes, and deleted again if restored. A specific legal

obligation or documented hold permits retention only of necessary records, with restricted access and periodic review until the basis ends. USIQ will provide reasonable written confirmation of deletion on request and require the same from subprocessors.

A8 · Verification and remedies

USIQ will make available information reasonably necessary to demonstrate compliance, including relevant policies and available independent assessments. Licensee may conduct a proportionate confidential audit through a qualified independent reviewer on reasonable notice, normally once annually, with additional review for a credible incident, material noncompliance, or regulator request. Procedures must protect other customers' data, system security, and privileged information without preventing legally required oversight. The parties will agree on reasonable logistics and documented remediation. Each bears its ordinary compliance costs; exceptional assistance costs must be reasonable, agreed in advance, and may not obstruct mandatory rights. Section 8 of Part 4 governs contractual monetary liability only to the extent lawful and does not prevent corrective action, regulatory powers, or individual rights.

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Annex B

Order and Acceptance



Illustrative seals. Company names and verification details are fictional.

SCOPE
Order details

ACCEPTANCE
Required documents

CONTACTS
Responsibilities

RECORDS
Confirmation

Requirements for documenting the order, its scope and acceptance.

Version 2026-1.3 · November 5, 2026 · Effective for an Order upon acceptance

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Annex B · Order and Acceptance Requirements

Before work begins, the parties must complete and retain an Order containing the information below. A separate signed order form or an authenticated electronic order may be used. Appendix E–Cto Annex E supplies asupplementary License Schedule and acceptance form; the Order must also include all information required by this Annex. Acompleted processing schedule and the complete version of this document must be attached or made available in a retainable form at acceptance.

B1 · Parties and commercial scope

Record Quality Standardization and Certification LLC as the contracting provider; the employer's full legal name, entity type, jurisdiction, and business address; each party's signatory and authority; covered US locations and workforce; eligible headcount and census method; assessment dates; selected package under Annex C, agreed fee and taxes; credit-card payment method and channel, payment dates after award, the no-award full-refund commitment, and authorized collection agent, if any; both parties' monitored email and physical notice addresses; and this document's exact version. Identify any separately signed deviation expressly. Do not use a Partner's name as the issuer or substitute a brand name for the contracting employer.

B2 · Processing and implementation schedule

Record the parties' actual privacy roles, employee jurisdictions, invitation method, data fields and sources, purposes, processing dates, retention/deletion settings, approved subprocessor register and countries, AI tools and permitted redacted inputs, security arrangements, applicable survey privacy notice and URL, and privacy/security contacts. Confirm the technical ability to prevent employer access to individual responses and to apply suppression and deletion. Any additional mandatory jurisdiction-specific terms must be agreed before affected processing.

B3 · Authority and affirmative acceptance

The acceptance record must identify both organizations, authorized signatories' names and titles, the exact documents and version accepted, signature or affirmative electronic act, and date. USIQ must retain executed assignments and other instruments establishing its ownership and authority before issuing or licensing any Seal. The employer's separate declaration in Part 3 must be signed or affirmed with its questionnaire.

The following acknowledgment must appear conspicuously at employer acceptance: "I am authorized to bind the employer identified in this Order. The employer has received and accepts the Order and USIQ Family Friendly Employer Certification Criteria Version 2026-3.2, including Parts 1–4 and Annexes A-E, with Annex E Version 1.2 dated October 21, 2026. I specifically acknowledge Part 4, Sections 8 and 13, and Annex E, Section 14, including the express ordinary-negligence exclusion, excluded damages, aggregate liability cap and continuing duties and exceptions in Sections 14.6 and 14.7. I acknowledge Annex E, Sections 3.4 and 3.5: no award means no fees or costs, full refund of amounts already collected and free available employee survey results.

Fees are payable by credit card only after an award under Section 3.6. Wyoming courts apply; no arbitration agreement is made. Employee survey participants are not parties to this agreement.”

USIQ’s acceptance must confirm the agreed scope, selected package, fee, document version, processing schedule, and authorized signatory. The parties must retain an accessible copy of the complete agreement and acceptance evidence, including the express Annex E acknowledgment. Existing engagements require express acceptance of the amended terms; this document alone does not amend them. No seal may be used before the assessment is completed, an award is issued, and authorized artwork and a functioning verification page are supplied.

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Annex C

Packages and Services



Illustrative seals. Company names and verification details are fictional.

PACKAGES
Services

FEES
Agreed prices

PAYMENT
Timing

DELIVERY
Included outputs

Package prices, included services and payment arrangements.

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Annex C · Package Prices and Included Services

This Annex sets out the USIQ Family Friendly Employer service packages and their one-time prices in US dollars. The selected package and agreed fee must be recorded in the Order. The listed price is payable only if an award is issued, under Annex E, Sections 3.4–3.6. Package selection does not affect the assessment method, eligibility requirements, or awarded certification tier.

C1 · Package overview

Service or fee	Basic	Basic Plus	Standard	Premium
Fee if awarded (USD)	**$2,990**	**$3,990**	**$4,990**	**$5,990**
Digital employee survey	Included	Included	Included	Included
Online HR Assessment	Included	Included	Included	Included
Evaluation in Excel	Included	Included	Included	Included
Digital Seal artwork	Included	Included	Included	Included
Digital certificate	Included	Included	Included	Included
Promotional landing page	—	Included	Included	Included
Facebook post	—	—	Included	Included
LinkedIn post	—	—	Included	Included
Instagram post	—	—	Included	Included
Press release	—	—	Included	Included
Press release distribution	—	—	—	Included

Included = part of the selected package; — = not included.

C2 · Delivery and payment

Seal artwork, the digital certificate and certification-related marketing materials are provided only after a successful award. Every issued certificate has a functioning verification page and link, including in Basic. The promotional landing page is an additional marketing service.

Payment is by credit card after an award is issued. USIQ may appoint third parties to collect lawful amounts on its behalf under Part 4, Section 2.5. Without an award, no fees or costs arise; 100% of any amounts already collected, including credit-card payments, are refunded without deduction within 14 calendar days after the final no-award decision or closure. The available employee survey results and an explanatory summary are provided free of charge within 14 calendar days after the final assessment decision or closure for internal improvement, with privacy safeguards, under Annex E, Sections 3.4 and 3.5. Part 4, Section 5 and Annex E govern payment, refunds and renewal. No separate Seal license fee is charged during the Certification Period. The Order states applicable taxes and delivery arrangements. Seal use is subject to Part 4 and Annexes D and E.

Package prices and listed services: USIQ Family Friendly Employer product page, checked October 21, 2026.

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Annex D

Seal Usage Guidelines



Illustrative seals. Company names and verification details are fictional.

IDENTITY
Approved seals

SPACE
Clear space

DISPLAY
Readable use

INTEGRITY
Correct application

Visual guidance for clear, consistent and accurate use of the USIQ seals.

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Annex D· Seal Usage Guidelines

These guidelines explain how certified employers and their production partners may reproduce and display the USIQ Family Friendly Employer Seal. They supplement Part 4 and Annex E and apply to every package in Annex C. Annex E contains the contractual seal-use conditions, including fees, reporting, liability and acceptance. The awarded tier, covered employer and current certification status control every use.



Figure D1. Authorized tier symbols. The company, dates and verification details shown are fictional examples. These illustrations are not artwork released for another employer's use.

D1 · Who may use the Seal and for how long

Use begins only after USIQ has issued an award, released the employer's artwork and supplied a functioning verification page. Applying, paying or completing an assessment does not authorize a certification claim. Use the Seal only for the certified legal employer, covered workforce and assessed US locations. Unlisted affiliates, subsidiaries, franchisees, acquirers and locations are not covered.

Certification lasts 24 months from issue, subject to Part 4. The exact issue and expiration dates control; a calendar-year label does not extend validity. Renewal requires a new Order and full reassessment. Production vendors may reproduce the released artwork on the employer's behalf but acquire no independent right to use it.

Basic, Basic Plus, Standard and Premium are service packages described in Annex C. They do not determine Certified, Silver, Gold or Platinum status, change the assessment standards or extend the license.

D2 · Artwork size color and placement

Use the current original artwork supplied by USIQ for the correct employer, tier and period. Preserve its proportions, colors, typography, border, stars, plus sign, employer details and verification information. Keep the wording “Based on Employee Survey & HR Assessment.” Do not recreate or trace the artwork, use a screenshot as a master, or combine separate elements into a new Seal.

Clear space. Leave at least 10% of the Seal’s displayed width on every side. Keep surrounding text, other logos and page edges outside that area. Use a quiet background with enough contrast to distinguish the entire edge. Do not place text or graphics over the Seal.

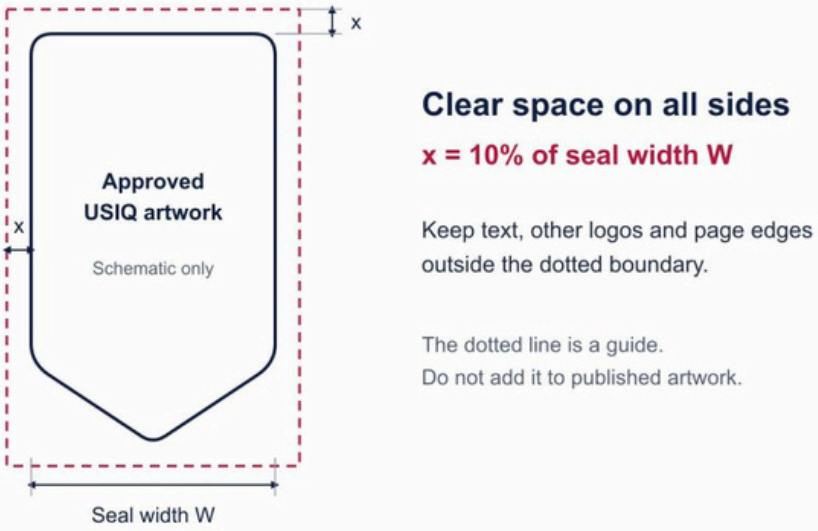


Figure D2. Minimum clear space. The shield is aschematic; reproduce only the released USIQ artwork.

Size and legibility. Choose a size at which the employer, tier, assessment wording, certification period and verification reference remain readable in the final medium. Check digital output at its actual displayed size and printed output ona full-size proof. Enlarge the Seal if any required wording becomes unreadable; a nearby caption does not justify cropping or covering the artwork.

Color and files. Preserve the colors and any gradients embedded in the supplied file. Do not substitute brand colors, grayscale or a self-created one-color version. Obtain an alternative released by USIQ if the supplied artwork cannot be reproduced clearly. Use a suitable original file and sufficient resolution; do not upscale a small screenshot.

D3 · Examples of incorrect reproduction

The examples below are prohibited alterations. The same rules apply to all four tiers. USIQ's original border and artwork elements must remain intact; the red crosses identify incorrect examples and are not part of any Seal.



Figure D3. Incorrect use shown for instruction only. Do not download or reproduce these altered examples as certification artwork.

1 Recoloring: do not replace or tint the supplied colors.

2 Distortion: do not stretch, squeeze, rotate or skew the Seal.

3 Cropping: do not remove the logo, border, assessment wording, employer, dates or verification details.

4 Added effects: do not add shadows, glow, bevels, transparency effects or animation that changes the artwork.

5 Extra frame: do not add a new outline or frame to the Seal itself.

6 Changed stars: do not change the tier, number of stars or plus sign. The symbols identify the awarded USIQ tier only.

D4 · Publication verification and removal

Use the Seal in communications for the covered US operations, including career pages, job advertisements, social profiles, recruitment materials and corporate communications. Place it so that the certified employer and scope are clear. Do not imply government approval, legal-compliance certification, an audit opinion, guaranteed safety or satisfaction, comparative superiority, or endorsement of products or services.

Verification and disclosures

Show the certificate ID and a readable verification reference. Digital uses must link directly to the current verification page. In print, retain a readable verification address; aQR code may supplement it. Every certificate has a verification page, including Basic. The promotional landing page in AnnexC is an additional service.

Each advertisement or public promotional use must identify USIQ Family Friendly Employer, the actual tier, covered employer, US scope and certification period. Clearly disclose the employer-funded assessment and provide the certification-criteria link as required by Part 4, Section 3 and Annex E, Sections 4 and 7, including that fees are payable only upon an award. Make the disclosure readable or audible in the medium; do not hide it in unrelated terms.

Example accompanying wording

USIQ Family Friendly Employer · [awarded tier]. [Certified legal employer], [covered US locations]. Valid [issue date] to [expiration date]. Employer-funded assessment; fees payable only if an award is issued. Verify: [certificate-specific USIQ URL]. Certification criteria: [criteria URL].

Replace every bracketed field with the current certificate details. Link the digital Seal directly to its verification page and link the criteria reference separately.

When current use must end

Action	Deadline under Part 4 Section 6.4
Stop new promotion, distribution and claims of current certification	Immediately on suspension, revocation, expiration or license termination
Remove or disable digital uses under employer control	Within 5 business days
Cover or remove physical displays	Within 30 days

Earlier action is required where law or a documented urgent misleading impression requires it. These deadlines do not permit continued promotion. After adowngrade or scope correction, replace affected uses within the same periods. For third-party displays outside the employer's control, promptly request correction and document reasonable follow-up.

Historical references must state accurate dates and make clear that certification is no longer current; they must not imply an undisturbed valid period if the award was invalidated. An appeal does not automatically stay necessary removal. Part 4, Section 6 and Annex E, Sections 10 and 11 govern the procedure; the Family Friendly Employer periods in Part 4 apply. Obtain replacement artwork and clarification through the USIQ contact identified in the Order.

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Annex E

Seal Terms of Use



Illustrative seals. Company names and verification details are fictional.

LICENSE Permitted use | **INTEGRITY** Conditions | **REMEDIES** Enforcement | **ACCEPTANCE** Signatures

License conditions, responsibilities and acceptance for use of the USIQ seals.

Version 2026-1.3 · November 5, 2026 · Effective for an Order upon acceptance

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Annex E · Certification Seal Terms of Use

This Annex contains the contractual conditions for USIQ Family Friendly Employer applicants and authorized award recipients. In this agreement, "Participant" means the Licensee in Part 4. "These Terms" and unqualified section references within this Annex refer to Annex E. Its Appendices E-A, E–Band E–Care distinct from the main document's Annexes A, B and C. Part 4, Section 1.2 and Annex E, Section 1.4 govern priority; Annex A continues to control data processing. Annex D provides the Family Friendly Employer artwork rules.

Terms for USIQ Family Friendly Employer applicants and authorized award recipients

Version 1.2 | October 21, 2026 | US English | Integrated Family Friendly Employer edition

Quality Standardization and Certification LLC owns the USIQ Marks and grants the licenses governed by these Terms. These Terms apply to USIQ Family Friendly Employer applicants and award recipients, including the no-award no-charge policy, delivery of employee survey results and permitted use of an issued seal. The application or accepted order identifies the legal employer, covered US locations and workforce; an issued Award Record defines the authorized scope. Assessment eligibility, scoring and award decisions remain governed by Parts 1 through 3 of the USIQ Family Friendly Employer Certification Criteria.

1 Parties and contract formation

1.1 Quality Standardization and Certification LLC is the owner and licensor of the USIQ Marks and is referred to as the Company or USIQ. The Participant is the legal employer identified in the application, accepted order or License Schedule and is the Licensee under Part 4, including while it is an applicant and if no award is issued. References to a Participant do not imply that it has received an award ora license.

1.2 The Certification Agreement means the signed or electronically accepted assessment agreement or order identified in the application, accepted order or completed License Schedule. The Award Record means USIQ's written award decision and accompanying certificate, specifying the USIQ Family Friendly Employer certification, legal employer, covered US locations and workforce, awarded tier, and validity dates. The Marks are the exact Family Friendly Employer seal artwork and award designation that USIQ authorizes for that recipient.

1.3 The complete Terms must be provided in a form the Participant can retain and expressly accepted by the Participant or its authorized representative before the assessment begins, through a signed application or order or a recorded electronic acceptance identifying this version and specifically acknowledging Section 14. The no-charge policy, reporting obligations and applicable liability provisions bind the parties whether or not an award is issued. Merely visiting a website is not acceptance, and acceptance does not authorize seal use before an award and license are issued.

1.4 Priority. Mandatory law controls. Annex A of the main document controls conflicting data-processing terms. Once expressly accepted, Sections 3.4 through 3.6 and Section 14 of this Annex override inconsistent standard fee, refund, reporting, warranty-remedy or liability terms in the Certification Agreement or order. A different individually negotiated arrangement must expressly identify the affected provision and be accepted by both parties in writing, subject to mandatory law. Part 4 governs other contractual conflicts, Parts 1–3 govern assessment methodology and Annex D governs artwork and placement details. The Family Friendly Employer procedural cross-references in this Annex govern notices, review and removal. The Award Record identifies the recipient, scope, tier and dates; it does not silently amend the agreement. No ambiguity permits a fee prohibited by Section 3.4.

1.5 The Family Friendly Employer conditions in Appendix E–Aand the completed License Schedule in Appendix E–Cform part of these Terms. Appendix E–Bprovides examples subject to the actual Award Record. The source references are informational and do not incorporate third-party terms. Website changes do not automatically replace the version accepted by the Participant.

2 License grant and covered scope

2.1 After an award is issued and the agreed conditions for release are met, USIQ grants the Participant a limited, nonexclusive, nontransferable license to reproduce the authorized Marks to communicate that award during its validity period. The license is subject to these Terms and may be suspended or terminated only as provided here or in the controlling Certification Agreement.

2.2 Use is limited to the named legal employer, US locations and workforce expressly covered by the Award Record. A parent company, subsidiary, franchisee, supplier, customer or other affiliate receives no independent right through its relationship with the Participant. Group communications must identify the covered entity and any material limitations next to the claim.

2.3 Advertising may reach an international audience, subject to applicable local law, but that reach does not expand the geographic scope of the assessment. A website serving several countries must not imply that uncertified operations are covered.

2.4 A change of ownership, legal entity, operating name or assessed scope does not transfer or expand the license automatically. USIQ must confirm any continuation or amendment in writing. Where a change makes the existing claim inaccurate, use of that claim must stop pending confirmation.

2.5 Application, participation in a survey, purchase of marketing services or receipt of preliminary or final survey results does not establish certification. A higher package price does not authorize a higher tier. A free survey report following an unsuccessful application confers no seal, award status or permission to imply certification. Rights not expressly granted are reserved.

3 Validity, fees and survey results

3.1 The exact start and expiration dates in the Award Record govern. The standard Family Friendly Employer certification period is 24 months from issue. Calendar years printed in artwork do not extend those dates. Suspension does not extend the validity period.

3.2 The Participant may use only the Family Friendly Employer tier and artwork actually awarded. Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum are the available designations, subject to the criteria in Parts 1–3 and the Award Record. No organization may self-select a tier, change a date or substitute different scoring thresholds.

3.3 Renewal requires a new award decision and written authorization under the applicable criteria. A pending application, payment or reassessment creates no extension or advertising grace period. These Terms create no automatic renewal or recurring charge.

3.4 NO AWARD, NO FEES OR COSTS. If no award is issued, or the application or assessment closes without an award, the Participant owes no fee or cost for the application, agreed assessment, employee survey, evaluation, certification, Seal license or associated marketing package. USIQ may not impose an administration, processing, cancellation or third-party charge to circumvent this commitment. USIQ must cancel related invoices and refund 100% of all amounts already collected, including credit-card payments and related amounts charged with them, without any deduction, within 14 calendar days after the final no-award decision or closure. Credit-card payments must be refunded to the original card

where possible; if that is not possible, another agreed method must preserve the full refund and deadline. USIQ remains responsible when a payment or collection provider is involved.

3.5 For the Family Friendly Employer employee survey, USIQ will provide the Participant with the available aggregate survey results and explanatory information for internal workplace improvement at no charge even if no award is issued. The results will be supplied in organized tables within 14 calendar days after the final assessment decision or closure of the application and will not be withheld for nonpayment or made conditional on buying another service. Reporting must protect respondents and respect the applicable confidentiality and small-group rules. If responses are insufficient, the report will provide safely reportable findings and explain the limitations; if no usable responses exist, USIQ will provide a written explanation instead of invented results.

3.6 Fees for a successful award must be agreed before the assessment and become payable only after the award is issued, in accordance with the accepted order. The conditional fee arrangement does not permit payment to purchase a favorable decision or a higher tier; reviewers must apply the published criteria. Family Friendly Employer seal use during the certified period carries no separate license fee. Later expiration, suspension or revocation of an award already issued does not, by itself, trigger the no-award policy; other contractual and statutory refund rights remain unaffected. Payment is by credit card through the channel identified in the Order. USIQ may appoint third-party payment processors or collection agents under Part 4, Section 2.5; this authority creates no extra charge and does not limit Section 3.4.

4Accurate claims and verification

4.1 Each use must communicate the USIQ Family Friendly Employer designation and awarded scope. The Participant must not imply government approval, regulatory accreditation, legal compliance, universal employee satisfaction, or a guarantee of future conduct. A certification does not establish superiority over all competitors or authorize an unsupported ranking claim.

4.2 Every use must provide a practical way to verify the award. Part 4, Section 3.1 and Annex D require the certificate identifier and a readable verification reference; digital uses must link directly to the current verification page. Printed uses must retain a readable verification address; aQR code may supplement it. Social, video and other formats must provide an accessible verification route with the claim. If a format cannot meet the applicable verification and disclosure rules, use a compliant alternative or omit the certification claim.

4.3 For an award actually issued, USIQ will provide and maintain an official verification record identifying the recipient, USIQ Family Friendly Employer designation, awarded tier, covered scope, issue and expiration dates, current status and relevant criteria or methodology version. It must be accessible without a paid marketing package or a request for marketing consent. Apromotional company landing page is separate from this verification function. An unsuccessful Family Friendly Employer applicant receives its report privately under Section 3.5; the free report does not create a public award record.

4.4 Material qualifications must be clear at the point of the claim. A link, QR code, small print or disclaimer cannot cure a headline or image that creates a misleading overall impression. If the format cannot accommodate a necessary qualification, the Participant must change the format or omit the claim.

4.5 Claims about representative findings, scientific methods, independence, scores or measured improvements must match the actual assessment and supporting evidence. Published percentages must state the relevant measure, population and period where needed to avoid misunderstanding. Results

must not be selectively presented in a way that materially changes their meaning. The seal does not authorize promises about applications, retention, sales, savings, media reach or search visibility.

4.6 The Participant must promptly report an inaccurate verification entry. Pending correction, it must use only the confirmed scope and avoid repeating the disputed information. A temporary technical outage does not by itself invalidate an otherwise current award, but the Participant must provide the certificate and verified details on reasonable request.

5 Artwork and visual presentation

5.1 Use only the current files supplied or expressly approved by USIQ for the specific award. Reproduce the complete artwork, including the Family Friendly Employer designation, USIQ identification, tier, year or dates, border and other required elements. Retain any trademark notice included in the authorized file.

5.2 Proportional resizing and faithful file conversion are permitted. Do not redraw, crop, stretch, recolor, retouch or rearrange the seal; replace fonts or wording; remove elements; add a different tier; or create a derivative badge. Do not recreate the artwork with generative AI. An original approved file may be placed in a design or mockup only if the resulting context is accurate.

5.3 Every required word must remain readable at its intended viewing size. Provide sufficient contrast and clear space so surrounding text, images and logos do not merge with the seal. Follow any dimensions and reproduction instructions supplied with the authorized files. If an application is too small to reproduce the seal faithfully, use an accurate text reference and verification link instead.

5.4 Monochrome, reversed, translated, animated, embroidered, engraved or other adapted versions require an alternative artwork file released by USIQ under Annex D. A production proof does not authorize self-created replacement artwork. The Participant may not translate wording within the seal independently. Audio descriptions and accessibility text must describe the actual award without adding claims.

5.5 The license covers the issued seal as a whole. It does not authorize extracting the USIQ institutional logo for separate use, combining it into the Participant's own logo, or using the branding of another certification provider. Third-party logos, photographs, quotes and media mastheads require their own rights or permission.

6 Permitted channels and service providers

6.1 Subject to the covered employer, workforce and US locations, permitted channels include corporate and careers websites, job advertisements, social media, email signatures, brochures, proposals, presentations, event materials, and signage at covered locations. Compliant routine use does not require separate approval for every placement.

6.2 The USIQ Family Friendly Employer seal concerns the assessed employer and workplace only. It must not be placed on products or packaging as a product quality or safety mark, or used to imply endorsement of products or services.

6.3 Advertising agencies, recruiters, designers, printers and other suppliers may handle the approved files solely to perform work for the Participant. The Participant must instruct them on the relevant restrictions and remains responsible for their authorized work. They receive no independent license and must cease use when instructed or when the license ends.

6.4 The Participant must not sell, sublicense or distribute the files for unrelated use, register the Marks or confusingly similar branding as its own, or use USIQ branding to imply that it is the certifier. Search

advertisements, account names and page titles must not falsely suggest an official USIQ channel or a broader certification.

6.5 Where a publisher or platform controls a placement, the Participant must supply correct assets and limitations and request timely corrections when needed. It is not responsible for independent reporting it neither commissioned nor controls, but must not knowingly amplify a misleading claim as its own.

7 Marketing packages and commercial relationships

7.1 A landing page, social media post, press release, distribution service or physical display is included only if stated in the accepted order and an award is issued. Related promotional charges may not be imposed before an award or used to defeat Section 3.4. Purchasing a package does not change eligibility, scoring or the award decision. Unless expressly agreed otherwise, no particular editorial publication, reach, engagement, recruiting outcome or business result is promised.

7.2 Press-release distribution and paid placements must not be presented as independent editorial endorsement. A customer may not reuse a media logo merely because it appears on usiq.org or a distribution report. Any media claim must accurately describe the actual publication and respect the rights of its publisher.

7.3 USIQ will accurately explain in its program and verification information that participating organizations pay the agreed fees only if an award is issued. Neither party may misrepresent that commercial arrangement or imply that the program has no financial relationship with award recipients. Each party must make clear disclosures of material connections where required to prevent misleading endorsements. Paid promotion and sponsorship must be identified where required; they must not be presented as independent editorial endorsement.

7.4 USIQ may publish the factual award information described in Section 4.3. Promotional use of the Participant's logo, testimonials or case study beyond that factual record requires the scope of permission stated in the order or separate written approval. Silence does not authorize publication of a testimonial.

8 Assessment integrity and material changes

8.1 The Participant must provide accurate and complete material information, preserve the integrity of required surveys, and meet the ongoing conditions stated in the applicable criteria. It must not fabricate responses, direct respondents toward favorable answers, retaliate for criticism, or conceal material facts that affect the award.

8.2 The Participant must disclose material changes that could make the award or public claims inaccurate. Part 4, Sections 2.3 and 4.2 govern the triggers and deadlines: planned ownership or scope changes are disclosed when lawfully possible before they occur, otherwise within 30 days after the event; other specified material developments are notified within 30 days after learning of them. A known materially misleading public use or serious immediate integrity risk must be reported without undue delay. The month-12 confirmation in Part 4 remains required. A disclosure may preserve privilege and identify legal restrictions; it does not by itself establish grounds for revocation.

8.3 The Participant must retain reasonably necessary evidence of its authorized seal uses and the factual basis for its own public claims for the license period and 12 months afterward, subject to applicable retention and privacy requirements. This does not require collecting identifiable survey responses or

retaining personal data solely for these Terms. This is arecordkeeping rule for advertising and authorized uses, not permission to retain identifiable survey data beyond Part 1, Section 8 or Annex A.

8.4 A complaint, lawsuit, adverse review or allegation does not automatically establish a failure of certification. USIQ will assess its relevance and reliability under the applicable criteria. These Terms do not restrict lawful employee activity, truthful reviews, protected disclosures, reports to authorities or the exercise of legal rights.

9 Monitoring and correction

9.1 USIQ may review public uses and request reasonable samples, publication links or evidence relevant to compliance. The Participant must respond within 10 business days, or another reasonable period stated in the request. Any access to nonpublic premises, systems or records requires an agreed lawful arrangement and appropriate confidentiality protections.

9.2 USIQ may require correction of an artwork, placement or disclosure error within a reasonable period stated in the notice, proportionate to the risk. New misleading distribution must stop immediately. A material Seal-use breach is subject to the 14-calendar-day cure opportunity and the adverse-action safeguards in Part 4, Section 6; this paragraph does not shorten those rights. Lawful urgent action remains available under that Section.

9.3 USIQ may require a shorter deadline where reasonably necessary to address a serious misleading claim, unauthorized tier, falsified artwork or use outside the certified scope. The notice must explain the reason and the affected use. Corrective directions must be proportionate to the issue and applied consistently.

9.4 Approval of a particular proof confirms only that use in the stated context. It does not approve unrelated claims or future changes, waive the need for accurate information, or transfer the Participant's legal responsibilities to USIQ.

10 Suspension, revocation and review

10.1 USIQ may suspend use, reduce the authorized scope or revoke the license following adocumented, good-faith determination of material misrepresentation, survey manipulation, loss of an eligibility requirement, material misuse of the Marks or an uncorrected material breach. A disputed allegation alone is insufficient. The grounds and cure periods in Part 4, Section 6.1 control, including 30 days after a written reminder for valid, overdue and undisputed fees following an issued award. Nonpayment measures may not impose a charge for an unsuccessful application or justify withholding its free survey report.

10.2 Before a final adverse decision, USIQ provides written grounds, a sufficient summary of the supporting information and a meaningful opportunity to answer. Part 4, Section 6.3 provides at least 14 calendar days to respond, and Section 6.1 supplies any applicable cure period. Confidential information may be summarized or redacted without removing that meaningful opportunity. The written decision and any extension must follow the timing and reasons required by Part 4.

10.3 USIQ may impose a temporary suspension for adocumented urgent risk of materially misleading ongoing use, including credible indications of serious deception, falsification or unlawful use. Part 4, Section 6.3 requires a narrowly tailored measure, reasons at or promptly after action, at least five business days to respond and prompt review of continuing necessity. ,Atemporary suspension must not be presented publicly as a final finding.

10.4 The final decision must state its material reasons, effective date, affected scope and required corrective actions. Public status notices must accurately distinguish expiration, suspension and revocation and disclose no more than reasonably necessary. An administrative suspension of seal-use rights, including for nonpayment, must not be presented as a failure to meet assessment criteria. USIQ will correct a material error in its own notice promptly.

10.5 Part 1, Section 9 and Part 4, Section 6.5 govern review. The Participant may appeal an adverse decision within 30 days, without an appeal fee. A qualified reviewer not involved in the initial decision considers the record and relevant new evidence. USIQ gives a reasoned written outcome within 30 days or explains an extension and revised date. An appeal does not automatically restore use, but USIQ must consider a reasoned stay request. Internal review does not shorten legal filing periods or prevent urgent court relief.

11 Use after expiration suspension or termination

11.1 Current-certification claims and new publication, production or distribution must stop when the license expires or the relevant restriction takes effect. Plan for a scheduled expiration in advance. Part 4, Section 6.4 governs removal: controlled digital uses must be removed or disabled within five business days, sooner where law or a documented urgent misleading impression requires. These are removal deadlines, not an extension of the license or permission for continued promotion.

11.2 Physical displays must be covered or removed within 30 days under Part 4, Section 6.4, sooner where law or a documented urgent misleading impression requires. Existing stock does not create a right to continue advertising. Before further distribution, affected materials must be corrected, covered or withdrawn. On downgrade or scope correction, replace affected uses within the same periods.

11.3 The Participant must promptly instruct its suppliers and request correction or removal from commissioned third-party placements. Materials outside its reasonable control require documented, reasonable efforts; these Terms do not impose an automatic recall of every previously delivered item. USIQ may request a proportionate corrective notice where a material misrepresentation would otherwise continue.

11.4 The Participant may retain records for legal and internal purposes. An authentic, dated historical publication may remain in a clearly identified archive if it states the former certification period and that the award is no longer current, includes a verification route where practicable, and is not featured, promoted or reused as current advertising. A separate historical badge display requires USIQ's written approval. A materially false historical claim must be corrected or removed.

11.5 The Participant may stop using the Marks and end its license by written notice. Ending a license after an award does not itself cancel valid charges or create a refund. If an application ends without an award, Section 3.4 applies and the available employee survey results remain deliverable under Section 3.5. Only payment obligations lawfully due under those provisions survive; confidentiality, accrued claims and other provisions intended to continue remain effective to the extent necessary.

12 Ownership and public award records

12.1 Quality Standardization and Certification LLC owns the USIQ Marks and grants the permissions described in these Terms. The Participant acquires no ownership and must not seek a conflicting registration. No statement in these Terms represents that the USIQ Family Friendly Employer seal is a federally registered certification mark.

12.2 Use a registration symbol only as supplied and expressly authorized for the relevant mark and jurisdiction. The Participant must notify USIQ of suspected counterfeiting or material unauthorized use that comes to its attention, without undertaking enforcement in USIQ's name.

12.3 USIQ may maintain an accurate public verification history after an award ends, including its former scope and status. The Participant permits use of its legal or trade name for that limited purpose. The record must not imply current certification after expiration, suspension or revocation, and identifiable survey responses must not be published.

13 Confidential information and personal data

13.1 Each party must protect nonpublic information received for the certification relationship with reasonable care and use it only for agreed purposes, administration of the program, or lawful enforcement. Disclosure is permitted to personnel and service providers with a need to know and appropriate obligations, or where legally required. This restriction does not cover information independently known, lawfully received without restriction, or made public without breach. Part 4, Section 10.1 governs duration and its exceptions; personal data remain subject to Annex A.

13.2 The Participant may use its aggregate employee survey report internally to improve workplace practices whether or not an award is issued. It may publish accurate, nonidentifying extracts consistent with these Terms and the report's limitations, without implying an award that was not issued. It must not disclose confidential responses, identify respondents from small groups, or use findings to retaliate against an individual. USIQ may require removal of an extract that creates a misleading impression or material privacy risk, but confidentiality does not prevent the internal improvement use promised in Section 3.5.

13.3 These Terms do not by themselves authorize sharing personal data or replace a required privacy notice, lawful basis, data processing agreement or security arrangement. Each party remains responsible for the personal data it handles. Requests for verification or acompliance review must be limited to information reasonably necessary for that purpose. Part 4, Section 11 and Annex A apply, including the minimum reporting-group size and suppression rules in Part 1, Section 8.

14 LIABILITY EXCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

14.1 Responsibilities and protected persons. Quality Standardization and Certification LLC must perform its express commitments and administer assessments and licensing in good faith. The Participant remains responsible for its employment practices and advertising. USIQ's work does not replace the Participant's regulatory duties, professional advice or substantiation. Protected Parties means the USIQ Parties defined in Part 4, Section 1.1: USIQ and its affiliates, owners, managers, officers, employees, reviewers, agents and Partners, but only for conduct within their work on the affected engagement. The same definition applies throughout the agreement.

14.2 No additional warranties. Certification reflects the evidence, period and scope of the actual assessment. USIQ does not guarantee an award, renewal, future business performance, employee retention, sales, media coverage or uninterrupted availability of third-party systems. Subject to Sections 14.6 and 14.7, and to the fullest extent permitted by law, the Company disclaims all warranties beyond its express written commitments, including implied warranties of merchantability, fitness for a particular purpose and noninfringement where applicable. This does not disclaim ownership of the Marks or authority to grant the agreed license. The express rights-authority and infringement obligations in Part 4, Sections 2.4 and 9.2 remain applicable, subject to their stated limits and Sections 14.6 and 14.7.

14.3 EXPRESS EXCLUSION OF ORDINARY NEGLIGENCE. Subject to Sections 14.6 and 14.7 and to the fullest **extent permitted by applicable law, the Company and Protected Parties are not liable to the Participant for economic loss caused by their own ordinary negligence in conducting an assessment, preparing survey results or reports, administering an award, licensing the Marks or providing agreed related services. The parties expressly intend this exclusion to cover the Company's and Protected Parties' own ordinary negligence. If this exclusion is unenforceable, the other independently** enforceable limitations in this Section continue to apply.

14.4 EXCLUDED DAMAGES. Subject to Sections 14.6 and 14.7 and to the fullest extent permitted by **applicable law, the Company and Protected Parties are not liable to the Participant for indirect, incidental, consequential, special, exemplary or punitive damages. They are also not liable for lost profits, revenue, anticipated savings, business opportunities, goodwill or reputation, whether those losses are characterized as direct or indirect. These exclusions apply even if the possibility of the loss was disclosed or foreseeable, regardless of the theory of liability, including contract, tort and ordinary negligence.**

14.5 AGGREGATE LIABILITY CAP. For liability not otherwise validly excluded, and subject to Sections 14.6 **and 14.7, the combined aggregate monetary liability of the Company and all Protected Parties arising from the affected assessment cycle and related services will not exceed the total fees actually paid by the Participant for that cycle and its associated services, including amounts paid through an authorized provider. An assessment cycle means one application and the resulting assessment, award if any, and licensed award period; a renewal is a separate cycle. Related claims and claims against several Protected Parties share one cap for the affected cycle. The cap applies to the fullest extent permitted by law regardless of the legal theory, including contract, tort and ordinary negligence. It is not a charge payable by the Participant. There is no minimum dollar floor. Fees are measured before refunds; a refund does not consume or reduce the damages cap. If no fees have been paid, the cap is zero only to the extent lawfully enforceable and always subject to Sections 14.6 and 14.7.**

14.6 EXCEPTIONS THAT REMAIN FULLY EFFECTIVE. No exclusion, disclaimer or cap in these Terms applies to fraud, fraudulent misrepresentation, willful or reckless misconduct, gross negligence, or death or personal injury caused by negligence. Nothing excludes or limits any other liability or remedy that applicable law does not permit the parties to exclude or limit. No provision requires the Participant to

indemnify the Company or a Protected Party for such person's own excluded misconduct. These Terms do not bind a regulator, an employee or another person who has not agreed to them.

14.7 NO-AWARD PROMISE AND EXPRESS PERFORMANCE. No liability exclusion, cap, disclaimer, indemnity or remedy limitation excuses the Company's obligation to charge no fees when no award is issued under Section 3.4, cancel related invoices, return amounts collected contrary to that commitment or deliver the employee survey results promised by Section 3.5. Refunds owed under these Terms, the accepted order or mandatory law remain payable in full and do not count toward the damages cap. The Company may not replace delivery of the promised results with a zero-dollar refund. Express performance, correction of inaccurate award records and nonwaivable remedies remain available; permissible monetary damages remain subject to this Section.

14.8 Independent limitations and beneficiaries. Each exclusion and limitation applies independently to the extent enforceable; invalidity of one does not automatically invalidate another. The Protected Parties are intended third-party beneficiaries solely for enforcing the protections in this Section, subject to the same exceptions and aggregate cap. Assisting USIQ does not by itself make a provider a contracting party or remove its independent legal duties. The Participant's acceptance must expressly acknowledge this Section as required by Section 1.3 and Appendix E-C; it does not waive any protection that applicable law makes nonwaivable. The separate indemnity protections expressly stated in Part 4, Section 9 remain subject to the same exceptions and applicable cap; no additional protection is created by this cross-reference.

15 Third party claims and enforcement

15.1 Subject to any controlling indemnity provision in the Certification Agreement, the Participant will indemnify USIQ and its personnel against a third-party claim to the extent caused by the Participant's unauthorized use of the Marks, materially false advertising, unlawful materials supplied by the Participant, or material breach of these Terms. This covers reasonable defense costs, an approved settlement and amounts finally awarded, only to the extent permitted by law. It does not cover loss caused by USIQ's own breach, negligence, misconduct or infringement inherent in unmodified artwork supplied by USIQ.

15.2 USIQ must promptly notify the Participant of such a claim, provide reasonable cooperation at the Participant's expense, and permit control of the defense by reasonably acceptable counsel. Late notice reduces the obligation only to the extent it causes material prejudice. A settlement requiring an admission, nonmonetary obligation or payment by USIQ, or failing to release USIQ from the covered claim, requires its prior written consent, which will not be unreasonably withheld. The fuller, reciprocal claim procedure in Part 4, Section 9.3 controls in the event of a conflict.

15.3 Either party may seek remedies available under the agreement and applicable law, subject to Section 14, including appropriate court relief to stop unauthorized or misleading use. An injunction, damages award, statutory remedy or recovery of attorneys' fees is subject to the relevant legal requirements. These Terms impose no automatic penalty, liquidated damages amount or prevailing-party fee award. Failure to receive an award or a preferred tier is not, by itself, abreach by the Participant. No indemnity or enforcement demand may disguise a fee or cost prohibited by Section 3.4. The same loss may not be recovered twice.

16 Notices, changes and disputes

16.1 Notices must be sent to the designated contacts in the application, accepted order or License Schedule, with the relevant application or certificate identifier. Part 4, Section 14.3 controls: formal notices use tracked delivery or email with anonautomated acknowledgment; an unacknowledged email is followed by tracked delivery. Incident notices under Annex A must be sent promptly and do not await acknowledgment. Each party must keep its contact details current. Business days mean Monday through Friday, excluding United States federal holidays.

16.2 USIQ may issue reasonable technical instructions needed for faithful reproduction or to address a legal requirement, with appropriate notice and an implementation period proportionate to the risk. Material changes to fees, liability, dispute provisions, the agreed term or substantive certification obligations require express agreement or apply prospectively on renewal. An online update alone does not amend this license.

16.3 The governing law and court provisions in Part 4, Section 13 apply to this Family Friendly Employer agreement. These Terms do not create mandatory arbitration, a jury-trial waiver or a class-action waiver.

16.4 Before litigation, the parties will attempt in good faith to resolve a written dispute for 30 days, unless urgent relief or a filing deadline requires earlier action. This process does not automatically extend a statutory or contractual deadline. Either party may seek urgent relief from a court with jurisdiction where the legal requirements are met.

16.5 The parties remain independent contractors. A delay in enforcement is not a continuing waiver. If a provision is unenforceable, it is severed or limited only to the extent permitted by the governing law, and the remaining provisions continue where legally possible. These Terms and the documents identified under Section 1 constitute the agreement on seal use without excluding liability for fraud or rights that cannot be waived.

Appendix E–AFamily Friendly Employer conditions

The Award Record and Parts 1–3 of the USIQ Family Friendly Employer Certification Criteria define the precise assessment scope. Use is limited to the assessed employer, workforce and US locations. The program combines an employee survey and an HR assessment. Platinum denotes the highest program tier, not superiority over every other employer. The seal does not certify products, occupational safety or an identical experience for every employee.

Appendix E–BAdvertising examples

Replace every bracketed field with the actual award information. Use a tier only if it appears in the Award Record. Examples remain subject to the complete advertisement, the verification requirements and applicable law.

Program	Example of accurate wording	Claims the seal does not support
Family Friendly Employer	"{Entity} holds USIQ Family Friendly Employer Gold certification for [covered locations], valid [start date] through [expiration date]. Verify: [official link]."	"America's best employer" or "All our international offices are certified" when the award does not substantiate that claim.

For short formats, use the exact award title, recipient and a readily accessible verification route. Place any scope limitation needed to prevent misunderstanding with the claim.

Appendix E–CLicense Schedule and acceptance

Confirm the parties, USIQ Family Friendly Employer assessment and contract terms in this Schedule or an accepted application or order before assessment begins. Complete award, validity and artwork fields only if an award is issued and before seal use. Equivalent particulars may be supplied in the Award Record. Blank scope fields do not extend an award.

E-C1 Parties and covered award

Licensor legal name

Quality Standardization and Certification LLC

Licensor address and jurisdiction of formation

_____

_____

Trademark owner and licensor

Quality Standardization and Certification LLC

Participant legal name and any covered trade name

_____

Participant address and jurisdiction of formation

_____

_____

Certification Agreement or accepted order

Reference and date: _____

Certification

USIQ Family Friendly Employer

Certificate identifier and awarded tier

_____

Covered legal employer US locations and workforce

_____

_____

_____

Authorized advertising limits for the covered US locations

_____

E-C2 Authorization and agreement

Issue date expiration date and applicable time zone

_____

USIQ Family Friendly Employer criteria version and link

_____

_____

Public verification URL

_____

Authorized artwork files or asset reference

_____

USIQ contact and notice email

_____

Participant contact and notice email

_____

Fees and marketing rights if awarded

Order reference: _____

No award: no fees or costs; 100% refund of amounts already collected, including credit-card payments, under Section 3.4. Available employee survey results are free under Section 3.5. Payment after award is by credit card under Section 3.6.

Special permissions or restrictions

_____

_____

Governing law and court jurisdiction

Part 4, Section 13: Wyoming law and the agreed Wyoming courts.

Additional signed terms or amendments

_____

E-C3 Acceptance by authorized representatives

By signing below, each representative confirms authority to bind the identified party. The parties accept Version 1.2 of the USIQ Certification Seal Terms of Use dated October 21, 2026, the completed application or License Schedule and the documents expressly identified in it. Acceptance includes Parts 1–4 and Annexes A-E of USIQ Family Friendly Employer Certification Criteria Version 2026-3.2, and must meet Annex B of that document. Quality Standardization and Certification LLC confirms that it owns the USIQ Marks and grants the authorized licenses. Seal use remains conditional on issuance of the applicable Award Record. Exceptions must be expressly identified and accepted in writing, subject to Section 1.4.

The Participant specifically acknowledges Section 3.4 (no award, no fees or costs), Section 3.5 (free employee survey results) and Section 14 (ordinary-negligence exclusion, excluded damages, aggregate liability cap and the exceptions and continuing duties in Sections 14.6 and 14.7). The Participant also specifically acknowledges Part 4, Section 13 (Wyoming courts; no arbitration agreement).

For Quality Standardization and Certification LLC

Legal entity

Quality Standardization and Certification LLC

Authorized signatory and title

_____

Signature

_____

Date

_____

For the Participant

Legal name

_____

Authorized signatory and title

_____

Signature

_____

Date

_____

Electronic acceptance may replace signatures when it records the representative, organization, version, date and express acknowledgment above, and makes the complete terms available for retention before assessment begins. Existing engagements require express assent to this revised version.

Source references

The references below concern USIQ Family Friendly Employer and the legal background to these Terms. They are informational and do not create additional contractual terms. Part 4, Section 13 governs law and forum. Cited cases provide drafting background and do not represent nationwide enforceability.

USIQ Family Friendly Employer information

1. Family Friendly Employer

United States legal and regulatory sources

2. FTC Endorsement Guides 16 CFR Part 255 including Section 255.5
3. USPTO guidance on certification mark applications
4. 15 USC 1125 on false designation and misleading commercial claims
5. 15 USC 1064 on cancellation of registration
6. 15 USC 1117 on remedies for infringement

US liability and contract formation background

7. Matter of Part 60 Put-Back Litigation — New York Court of Appeals (2020)
8. 1SChrystie Management LLC v ADP LLC — New York Appellate Division (2022)
9. Berman v Freedom Financial Network — Ninth Circuit (2022)

Wyoming contract background

10. Sinclair Wyoming Refining v A&B Builders — Tenth Circuit (2021)
11. Fremont Homes v Elmer — Wyoming Supreme Court (1999)
12. Dimick vHopkinson — Wyoming Supreme Court (2018)