USIQ
United States Institute for Quality

FOR HR LEADERS AND EXECUTIVES

A Family Friendly Employer seal built on criteria you can read.

A family-focused method, a survey that invites every employee, and a seal that applicants can verify.

WHY EMPLOYERS CHOOSE USIQ

1

Published criteria

You can read what is measured and how it is scored before you apply. No black box.

2

A research-based method

Built on work–family research on policies, supportive culture and supervision, with the limits of the evidence stated openly.

3

Every employee is invited

Not a small sample: the confidential survey goes to your whole workforce, so no group is left out of the invitation.

Four levels: Certified · Silver · Gold · Platinum

WWW.USIQ.ORG/FAMILY-FRIENDLY-EMPLOYER

WHAT SETS USIQ APART

Four things you can check for yourself.

A seal is only as credible as the method behind it. USIQ is built so that employers, employees and applicants can see how a result comes about.

1

Published criteria

The assessment criteria,the survey questionnaire and the scoring rules are public on usiq.org. You know what is measured and how results are evaluated before you apply, and so does every applicant who checks your seal. Each seal links to a verification page showing the tier, the covered employer and locations, the exact dates and the methodology version.

2

A research-based method

The criteria translate findings from organizational psychology, sociology, labor economics and public health into practices that can be assessed, and link each design element to its research. USIQ says openly that the composite score and tiers are not yet empirically validated, and reviews the criteria every year.

3

Every employee is invited

Many programs rely on a sample of employees. USIQ requires that all employees are invited to take part in the confidential online survey, including part-time staff and employees on leave, who are invited through a channel that does not ask them to work. Individual answers are never shown to the employer; results are reported in aggregate form only.

4

A survey plus an HR assessment

A tier is based on both sides of the story: 100 points from the employee survey and 100 points from a documented review of your family-related HR practices. USIQ can request evidence for your answers, a second reviewer checks the result, and minimum scores apply in both parts.

THE EXPERT BEHIND THE METHOD

PhDr. Oliver Scharfenberg, MBA

Founder of the certification programs with more than 750 companies certified. His (PhDr.) doctoral research analyzed employer seals, and he has written two books on employee recruitment, including The Visible Employer for the U.S. market. Also the author of The AI Visibility SEO & GEO Playbook.

THE FOUR LEVELS

Four seals, one published scale.

Every employer is scored on a 200-point scale: up to 100 points from the employee survey and up to 100 points from the HR assessment. The higher the score, the higher the level, as long as all minimums are met.

Certified

At least 120 of 200 points (60%)

Silver

At least 140 of 200 points (70%)

Gold

At least 160 of 200 points (80%)

Platinum

At least 180 of 200 points (90%)

Illustrative seals. Company name and verification details are fictional.

LEVEL	MINIMUM TOTAL	SURVEY AND HR, EACH	EVERY GENERAL SURVEY DIMENSION	FAMILY ITEMS 6 AND 7, EACH	CORE AREAS C, D, E, EACH
Certified	120 points	at least 50	at least 40%	at least 50%	at least 40%
Silver	140 points	at least 60	at least 50%	at least 60%	at least 50%
Gold	160 points	at least 70	at least 60%	at least 70%	at least 60%
Platinum	180 points	at least 80	at least 70%	at least 80%	at least 70%

No trade-offs between parts

A strong HR assessment cannot make up for a weak employee survey, and the other way round. Generous written policies cannot offset a workforce that says it cannot combine work and family. If a minimum is missed, the next lower level that meets all conditions is awarded.

Family focus, with breadth

Both family questions (balance and flexibility) and the three core HR areas each need a minimum. Every general survey dimension does too, so strength in a few areas cannot hide weakness in others.

Reading the stars: Certified shows four stars, Silver four stars and a plus sign, Gold five stars, and Platinum five stars and a plus sign. The stars name the USIQ level only; they are not a separate rating or a ranking against other employers. Every certificate is valid for 24 months and has its own verification page.

WHAT IS MEASURED

Two parts, 100 points each.

Everything below is published in the certification criteria. You can see how each point is earned before you apply.

PART 1

Employee survey

46 questions answered confidentially by your employees; 42 are scored. Half the points go to the two-family questions, half to seven dimensions of general employer quality.

Family: balance, flexibility	**50**
Company overall	**5**
Working conditions	**10**
Your work	**8.75**
Learning and development	**5**
Team and climate	**6.25**
Your manager	**8.75**
Satisfaction and loyalty	**6.25**
Total	**100 points**

PART 2

HR assessment

39 family-focused criteria in eight areas, rated by the strength of the evidence behind each practice.

Work organization	**12**
Leadership, management	**12**
Flexible work and time	**15**
Pregnancy, leave, return	**15**
Childcare, family benefits	**18**
Fairness for parents, carers	**12**
Employer branding	**8**
Life events, emergencies	**8**
Total	**100 points**

Crimson: the two family survey questions and core HR areas C, D and E, each of which also has its own minimum.

How survey answers become points

Each scored item is rated on a six-point scale and converted to a share of its points. The two-family questions carry 25 points each, the other 40 items 1.25 each. Missing answers are never counted as favorable.

How the HR assessment is rated

A practice that is only claimed earns little. Each criterion is rated 0 to 5 for offer, access and implementation, and the lowest rating counts, so a generous policy cannot make up for poor access or delivery. Evidence is required above level 1. This is not a legal audit.

Open about its limits. The weights are program design choices. USIQ does not present them as empirically validated, and the thresholds do not say that an employer is above the market average. The two family questions are a short indicator, not a validated work–family scale.

HOW IT WORKS

From application to your seal in four steps.

01

Apply

Choose your package and confirm the legal employer and the US locations to be covered (at least 10 US employees). Your order also records who will handle the data and who your privacy and security contacts are.

02

Employee survey

All employees are invited to a confidential online survey that stays open for 14 days. You distribute the approved invitation, so no list of employee contacts has to be handed over. Answers cannot be traced back to individuals.

03

HR assessment

A company representative answers the 39 family-focused HR criteria online. USIQ may request supporting evidence and checks it with human research and an AI-assisted consistency review; a second reviewer checks the result.

04

Decision and results

You receive your evaluation, and if you reach the required scores, your tier (Certified, Silver, Gold or Platinum), your digital seal and certificate, and a public verification page. Certification is valid for 24 months.

If certification is not awarded, a $990 survey fee will be retained, and the remaining package amount will be refunded.

WHAT YOU RECEIVE

Comprehensive evaluation

Your survey results in clearly organized Excel tables, ready to discuss with your leadership team. Groups with fewer than 5 valid responses are suppressed.

Family and general scores

Your family score and your general employer-quality score are reported separately, in points and as percentages, so you can see where to focus.

Seal, certificate and verification

A digital seal and certificate for your career page and recruiting materials. Every seal links to its verification page.

Marketing package

Depending on your package: a landing page, social media posts, a press release and its distribution, to raise your visibility as an employer.

DATA PROTECTION

Invitation contact files are deleted within 30 days after the survey closes, and raw responses within 90 days after the decision. Survey data are never sold, used for targeted advertising or used to train general-purpose AI models. Neither the survey nor the HR assessment asks about pregnancy, family status or caregiving situation.

WHAT YOU RECEIVE

Proof you can show, and a way for anyone to check it.

SEAL CERTIFICATE DISPLAY EXAMPLE

Example for the Gold level. Company name, ID and dates are fictional. The same formats are available for every level.

1 Digital seal for your level

For your career page, job ads, social profiles and email signature. The seal names your level, your company, the validity period and its verification address.

2 Certificate with a unique ID

A digital certificate for your records and your recruiting materials, valid for 24 months from issue.

3 Public verification page

Applicants can check your level, the covered employer and locations, and the dates at any time at usiq.org.

4 Your results and visibility tools

Your comprehensive evaluation in Excel tables, plus, depending on your package, a landing page, social media posts and a press release with distribution.

PACKAGES

Choose the visibility you need.

	BASIC	BASIC PLUS	STANDARD	PREMIUM
	$2,990 one-time price	$3,990 one-time price	$4,990 one-time price	$5,990 one-time price
Survey, assessment and Excel evaluation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Digital seal, certificate and verification page	✓	✓	✓	✓
Company landing page	–	✓	✓	✓
Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram posts	–	–	✓	✓
Press release	–	–	✓	✓
Press release distribution	–	–	–	✓

If certification is not awarded, a $990 survey fee will be retained, and the remaining package amount will be refunded. No marketing services are provided, and you keep your tabulated survey results and an explanatory summary. With the Basic package, for example, you receive $2,000 back.

CONTACT

Find out where you stand as an employer.

REQUEST CERTIFICATION
www.usiq.org/family-friendly-employer

CONTACT FORM
www.usiq.org/contact

CRITERIA AND METHODOLOGY
www.usiq.org/family-friendly-employer/methodology

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VIDEO
youtube.com/@USIQ-INSTITUTE

USIQ Family Friendly Employer is an employer-funded assessment based on a confidential employee survey and a family-focused HR assessment against published criteria. Certification is a private designation, not a government approval, and does not guarantee recruiting or retention results, any individual employee's experience, or legal compliance. USIQ United States Institute for Quality® is a registered brand of Quality Standardization and Certification LLC, Wyoming, USA. © 2026. All rights reserved.