USIQ
United States Institute for Quality

FIRST SELECTION ROUND: Q1 2027

USIQ FOUNDING PROGRAM 2027

100 free certifications for U.S. employers.



Illustrative seals. Company names and verification details are fictional.

Apply for a free place in one of two USIQ employer programs. You are assessed against the same published criteria, with the same scoring and the same second review as every paid certification.

For employers with 10 to 10,000 employees in the U.S.

WHY EMPLOYERS APPLY

1

No fee at all

No survey fee, no certification fee, no credit card. Applying does not commit you to anything.

2

The full assessment

Survey, assessment and results tables. If you qualify: seal, certificate and verification page for 24 months.

3

A real U.S. benchmark

Your anonymized results help set the comparison values for every future USIQ certification.

Top Employer · Family Friendly Employer

WWW.USIQ.ORG/FOUNDING-PROGRAM

THE PROGRAM

Why we certify 100 employers for free.

A certification standard is only as credible as the evidence behind it. We want our U.S. programs to rest on a broad mix of employers, not only on those who expect to pass. The Founding Program gives us that mix and gives you an independent look at your workplace at no cost.

100
free places for U.S. employers

10–10k
employees in the United States

1
place per employer, covering one program

24
months validity, same as a paid seal

HOW WE SELECT

A deliberate mix, not first come, first served.

We spread the 100 places across company sizes, industries and regions. Expected results play no role: an employer that is still working on its culture is just as welcome as one that already scores high.

SIZE BAND 1
10–49
employees

SIZE BAND 2
50–249
employees

SIZE BAND 3
250–999
employees

SIZE BAND 4
1,000–10,000
employees

Industries

From manufacturing and construction to healthcare, retail, professional services and technology.

Regions

We include employers from all U.S. regions.

Rounds

The first selection round takes place in Q1 2027. Every applicant hears from us by email.



THE EXPERT BEHIND THE METHOD

Oliver Scharfenberg, PhDr. MBA

Member of the Scientific Advisory Board. He has certified more than 750 companies worldwide. His PhDr. doctoral research analyzed employer seals. He has written two books on recruitment and is the author of The AI Visibility SEO & GEO Playbook.

THE CERTIFICATION

Same criteria. Same scoring. No shortcuts.

Free places use exactly the criteria, thresholds and review steps of a paid certification. Nothing is waived, nothing is added. When you apply, you choose one of two programs.



Top Employer

A confidential survey of all employees plus an HR assessment with evidence checks.

32 scored survey items in 7 dimensions
39 HR criteria in 8 areas

200 points: 100 survey + 100 HR



Family Friendly Employer

Work, family and caregiving: an employee survey plus a family-focused HR assessment.

42 scored survey items (of 46 questions)
39 family-focused HR criteria in 8 areas

200 points: 100 survey + 100 HR

THE FOUR LEVELS

Four seals, one published scale.



CERTIFIED
at least **120** of 200 (60%)



SILVER
at least **140** of 200 (70%)



GOLD
at least **160** of 200 (80%)



PLATINUM
at least **180** of 200 (90%)

Illustrative Top Employer seals with fictional company data. Family Friendly Employer uses the same levels and thresholds.

Minimums also apply to each part and to every survey dimension, so a strong HR assessment cannot make up for a weak survey. You receive the highest level for which you meet every requirement, and each seal links to a public verification page.

No guaranteed award. A free place does not guarantee a seal or a particular level. If you do not qualify, you still receive your full results tables, free of charge.

Open about its limits. The weights are design choices, not validated predictors of performance or retention.

READ THE DETAILS

Flyers and criteria, published in full.

Everything we assess is public. The program flyer gives you the overview. The certification criteria answer every question about what is measured and how it is scored, before you apply.

Top Employer

www.usiq.org/top-employer



PROGRAM FLYER

The method, the four levels, the process and what you receive, on a few pages.

OPEN THE PDF →

Overview for HR leaders and executives



CERTIFICATION CRITERIA

The full criteria: survey questions, HR assessment, scoring rules, thresholds and terms.

OPEN THE PDF →

Every rule, published in full

Family Friendly Employer

www.usiq.org/family-friendly-employer



PROGRAM FLYER

The family-focused method, the four levels, the process and what you receive.

OPEN THE PDF →

Overview for HR leaders and executives



CERTIFICATION CRITERIA

The full criteria: survey questions, family-focused HR assessment, scoring and terms.

OPEN THE PDF →

Every rule, published in full

Prefer the short version? Each program page on usiq.org explains the methodology in plain language, with the current criteria version.

HOW IT WORKS

From application to result in six steps.

01 Apply online

A short form, about five minutes. You get a confirmation by email right away.

02 Selection

We select by size, industry and region. Selected employers accept the participation terms online.

03 Online kick-off

Survey link, assessment questionnaire and timeline. USIQ may ask for evidence of your answers.

04 Confidential survey

Your employees answer anonymously. Each program sets a minimum participation level.

05 Evaluation and second review

Survey and assessment are scored against the published criteria. A second reviewer checks every decision.

06 Your result

Your results tables. If you qualify: seal in your level, certificate and verification page, valid 24 months.

WHAT WE ASK OF YOU

- Invite all eligible U.S. employees to the confidential survey
- Allow anonymized, aggregated use of your results for benchmarks
- Describe the certification accurately and point to the methodology
- Complete the assessment on time and answer truthfully
- Link every online display of your seal to its verification page

APPLY NOW

Apply for one of 100 free places.

Applying is free and does not commit you to anything. If you are selected, we send you the participation terms, and you decide then whether to take part.

APPLY ONLINE
www.usiq.org/founding-program

PARTICIPATION TERMS
www.usiq.org/about-us/founding-program-terms

QUESTIONS
e-mail@usiq.org

ADDRESS
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