

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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### ***What are the requirements to join the Houston LGBT Chamber?***

There are four requirements for all members:

- Be a legally formed business
- Support the Chamber's Mission
- Adhere to the Chamber's Standards of Business Conduct & Ethics
- Pay annual dues investment

### ***Do I have to be Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender (LGBT) to join the Chamber?***

You do **not** have to identify as LGBT to join the Chamber. The only requirements to join are the four requirements mentioned above.

### ***What benefits do I get as a member?***

Your Chamber benefits begin as soon as you join. Various benefits include business growth opportunities, events (including joint events with other groups), networking, new membership recognition, e-mail alerts, advertising/sponsorship, volunteer/committee opportunities to name a few examples. Benefits vary by membership level.

Contact us at [info@houstonlgbtchamber.com](mailto:info@houstonlgbtchamber.com) or call **832-510-3002** to discuss membership opportunities and benefits.

### ***How can I advertise my business or company?***

The Greater Houston LGBT Chamber has various membership levels and advertising opportunities. Email us at [info@houstonlgbtchamber.com](mailto:info@houstonlgbtchamber.com) or call **832-510-3002** to discuss advertising opportunities through the Chamber.

All members of the Chamber receive an online directory listing as one of their member benefits. Our search engine optimized directory is a great way to market your business. In addition, members may post Hot Deals, special discount offers to members or the general public. It's included in your membership.

### ***What's the difference between the Greater Houston LGBT Chamber of Commerce and the National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC)?***

The Greater Houston LGBT Chamber of Commerce and the NGLCC are two independent organizations. However, the Greater Houston LGBT Chamber is a member of the NGLCC, also known as a Local Affiliate Chamber. Because of our relationship with the NGLCC, the Houston LGBT Chamber of Commerce is the area's exclusive provider of the National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce LGBT business certification program. The NGLCC's LGBT Business Enterprise® (LGBTBE®) certification verifies that eligible businesses are majority-owned by LGBT individuals, and subsequently grants LGBTBE® designation to such businesses as part of its LGBT Supplier Diversity Initiative.

### ***Does a company have to be 51% LGBT owned to join the Greater Houston LGBT Chamber?***

No, a business does not have to be 51% LGBT owned to join the Chamber. In fact, a business does not have to be LGBT owned to become a member. We encourage LGBT and LGBT-allied businesses to become a member of the Chamber. The 51% rule only applies to those members wishing to become LGBTBE® certified.

### ***How do I get to be a certified LGBT business?***

Your business must meet the following criteria:

- Majority (at least 51%) owned, operated, managed, and controlled by an LGBT person or persons who are either U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents
- Exercises independence from any non-LGBT business enterprise
- Has its principal place of business (headquarters) in the United States
- Has been formed as a legal entity in the United States

If you meet the criteria above, then the first step towards the LGBTBE® certification is to become a member of the Greater Houston LGBT Chamber of Commerce so your certification fee is waived through the National Gay & Lesbian Chamber



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of Commerce (NGLCC). Through the Chamber's affiliate partnership with the NGLCC, members that apply for the LGBTBE® certification will be eligible to have their application/certification fee waived. Your second step is to formally apply for the LGBTBE® certification through the NGLCC.

Learn more about the application process at our LGBTBE® certification information page and download the Chamber's "How To" PDF at [www.houstonlgbtchamber.com](http://www.houstonlgbtchamber.com).

***If I pay for my LGBTBE® application fee with the NGLCC do I automatically become a member of the Houston LGBT Chamber?***

No! This is one reason we encourage you to join the Greater Houston LGBT Chamber prior to applying for your LGBTBE® certification through the NGLCC. In fact, because of our relationship with the NGLCC, our members have opportunities to receive NGLCC scholarships, mentoring, and conference discounts without having to pay additional dues. Qualified members of the Greater Houston LGBT Chamber of Commerce are eligible to have the LGBTBE® certification fee waived just by being a member!

***Can I get a list of Houston LGBT Chamber members?***

The Chamber does not distribute its membership list. However we do have vehicles that allow our members to communicate with each other, including the online member directory and networking events.

***Does the Greater Houston LGBT Chamber of Commerce have a code of ethics for its members?***

Yes. The Chamber's Standards of Business Conduct & Ethics is located at [www.houstonlgbtchamber.com](http://www.houstonlgbtchamber.com).

***I'm considering starting a small business. Does the Greater Houston LGBT Chamber of Commerce have any resources available to help me?***

Of course! The Chamber has members and strategic partners whose expertise is focused on supporting entrepreneurs and/or small business owners. We provide education, access to capital, certification opportunities, supplier diversity networking and a myriad of other activities to support individuals in the creation of their businesses.

***I would like to present a program to the Greater Houston LGBT Chamber.***

The Chamber is continually focused on offering diverse programming for our members. If you have a program proposal, please contact us at [info@houstonlgbtchamber.com](mailto:info@houstonlgbtchamber.com) or **832-510-3002**. Please see the presentation guidelines under "Events" on the Chamber website at [www.houstonlgbtchamber.com](http://www.houstonlgbtchamber.com).

***I would like to be a member, but I do not want my membership public.***

Absolutely...we allow you to decide if you want your membership available in our online directory.

***How can I complain about a business or company?***

A Chamber of Commerce is different from the Better Business Bureau. However, if you believe a member of the Chamber has violated the Chamber's Standards of Business Conduct & Ethics you may contact the Chamber to file a complaint. However, the Chamber is under no obligation to take any action other than to forward the complaint to the member.

***How often does the Greater Houston LGBT Chamber meet?***

Unlike chambers of the past, the Greater Houston LGBT Chamber doesn't hold meetings simply to hold a meeting. We offer a variety of business networking/growth opportunities and educational programs. Check the calendar on our website for the program or event to fit your needs.