

## Business Exchange Network Rules & Commitment Statement

North Texas LGBT Chamber of Commerce is the voice of LGBT and allied businesses throughout north Texas. The Chamber provides business growth opportunities, informal business advice, as well as advocacy on important issues.

The **Business Exchange Network (BEN)** was created by the Chamber in 2007 to facilitate the creation of business relationships between Chamber Members, provide a venue for professional development, and to generate opportunities for business growth.

The success of the BEN Program relies on full participation of each BEN member and adherence to the BEN guidelines outlined in this Commitment Statement.

### I. Financial Commitment:

1. All BEN members must be a member in good standing of the North Texas LGBT Chamber of Commerce. Annual membership or membership subscription may not be past due at any time during the BEN semester.
2. BEN dues will be collected at, or prior to the first meeting of the semester or upon joining. **Failure to pay BEN fees within 30-days of the beginning of the BEN semester will result in the loss of member's position in the BEN program for two semesters from the date of removal.** Dues are not refundable, in whole or in part. Reinstatement into the BEN group/program is subject to availability.

### II. Time:

1. Be on time! Meeting begins promptly. Arriving 15 minutes after the start of the meeting, or later, will be considered an absence.
2. A BEN member may be absent from a **maximum of two** BEN meetings per semester. If a current member reaches **2 absences in a semester**, the Group Chair shall contact the member to confirm that the member is aware of the group's attendance requirements, and ascertain what business and/or personal issues may be affecting that member's meeting attendance. **A third absence** may result in termination from the BEN group for a period of no more than **two semesters**. Reinstatement into the BEN group/program is subject to availability.
3. **Members are responsible for attendance and referral requirements.** A replacement representative who **must be from the BEN member's business** (a Chamber Member) is permissible; however, an absence will still be issued against the primary member. If the allowable number of absences is exceeded, the result will be loss of the member's position in the BEN for two semesters from the date of removal as noted above.
4. For special situations a member of a BEN, may be granted a leave of absence for the remainder of the semester. Each Group Chair may use his/her discretion for issuing a leave of absence.
5. Anyone leaving a group at any point in a semester may not join another group until the beginning of the next semester. Only one move per person is permitted in a calendar year.

### III. Participation:

1. **i. Members may occupy one, and only one, Business Category.**
  - ii. A Member business may participate in **more than one BEN group** under the following guidelines:
    - a. There may not be competing member (business category) on the BEN Wait List.
    - b. No member business may occupy more than 2/3 (67%) of the total number of BEN groups.
    - c. Placement for secondary participant is not permanent. Multi-group participation will be reviewed each year to determine availability.
    - d. The same member representative may NOT participate in more than one BEN group.
    - e. Member business must be a member of the North Texas LGBT Chamber of Commerce for no less than one year.
    - f. Must be a member in good standing of the North Texas LGBT Chamber of Commerce at a Premium level membership or higher and must maintain that level of membership throughout their BEN semester.
    - g. Pay BEN participation fee for each group.
2. Within the BEN Meeting members' **discussions will be limited to the one Business Category that they designated** on the BEN group membership list created at the beginning of each semester, **even if other categories area not yet represented in the group**. Failure to do so after three warnings will result in the loss of the member's position in the BEN for two semesters from the date of removal.
3. Prepare and perform one 10-minute presentation each semester.
4. Initiate one or more one-on-one meetings with other BEN members between BEN meetings.
5. It is recommended that each BEN member provide either **2 quality referrals** or **2 guests per month**. (See IV.4 below.)
6. Infomercials are limited to 30-seconds to allow special speakers enough time for their presentation.
7. Show loyalty to BEN member whenever you need a product or service.
8. Be an active listener in business and social settings.

### IV. Guests/Visitors:

1. Guests: Guests may visit a BEN one time only before joining.
2. Visitors: Chamber Members may visit a BEN for the purpose of making a short announcement, e.g., community events. This visit must be approved by the Group Chair prior to the BEN meeting.
3. **A guest or visitor should never be allowed to bring up business which is in direct conflict with a member of the group.**
4. **All Guests must be pre-registered and pre-paid to attend a BEN meeting.** BEN members may pre-register and pay for their guests or they may provide their guest(s) with the registration link. **A guest should never be given the BEN Promo Code.**

**V. OTHER:**

1. All Chamber Members operate under the Chamber' **Standards of Business Conduct & Ethics**.
2. Complaints about other members **will not be discussed in the group forum**. Issues between members must be dealt with privately. Chamber politics will not be discussed.

The Group Chair should be notified if a complaint exists and he/she should try to act as a moderator to assist with the problem or concern. If the Chair is not able to resolve the issue, the problem or concern should be directed to the BEN Program Chair and if necessary, the Chamber President.

3. **All printed material to be distributed at a BEN meeting must have prior approval** by the Group Chair or Chamber President.
4. Each BEN Member is responsible for making sure that he/she has the proper tools for their presentation. **If a BEN Member needs A/V equipment for a presentation, he/she must notify the group chair & Chamber office no less than 5 business days in advance of the meeting.** Members are responsible for returning equipment to the Chamber office in the same condition and organized in the same manner in which it was received. Presenters should plan to arrive to the meeting early to set-up and test all equipment.
5. Multi-level marketing members and other companies offering a business opportunity are welcome to represent their products and services at the BEN meetings but not the business opportunity element of their business.

**I have read and agree to make the above commitment:**

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name (print):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please keep a copy for your records.**