



The workplace think tank.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Sloan Award for Business Excellence in Flexibility

What are the Sloan Awards?

The Alfred P. Sloan Awards for Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility is part of the When Work Works initiative. The Award recognizes exemplary employers of all types and sizes across the U.S. for their innovative workplace effectiveness and flexibility initiatives.

Using a rigorous scoring methodology, the Sloan Awards honor organizations that use workplace flexibility as a strategy to increase workplace effectiveness and yield positive business results, and to help employees succeed at work and at home.

What is When Work Works and what Organizations are Involved?

When Work Works is a national and community-based initiative that provides education and outreach on workplace flexibility and effectiveness. It is a project of Families and Work Institute (FWI) sponsored by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation in partnership with the Institute for a Competitive Workforce, an affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and the Twiga Foundation. In 2010, 26 communities are participating including 5 states. Among them are: Houston, TX; Seattle, WA; Chicago, IL; Georgia; Michigan; Arizona; New Hampshire; and, Kentucky. University of Kentucky Institute for Workplace Innovation (iwin) is heading the Kentucky state-wide initiative and Greater Louisville, Inc. is heading efforts for the Greater Louisville area.

Who Should Apply?

If your organization practices flexibility or is interested in gaining more knowledge about flexible workplace practices, you should apply. The awards are open to all employers, provided the following criteria are met:

- ☑ A minimum of ten employees must currently work from or report to the eligible worksite. This does not include contract workers or consultants who are not reported to the IRS.
- ☑ The organization must have been in operation for at least one year.
- ☑ If employers have multiple sites, each local worksite can apply.
- ☑ No formal workplace flexibility policies are required
- ☑ Worksites outside of Kentucky can apply. Please see “How does my Organization Apply?” for more information.

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What is the Application Process?

The application process takes place in two rounds.

✔ **Round I: Employers Self-Nominate and Complete Employer Survey**

To apply for the Sloan Awards, employers complete an online application survey at www.whenworkworks.org about their flexibility practices. The questionnaire typically takes about 30 minutes to complete.

Questions on this Round of surveying include:

- The workforce population: How many employees are there? Approximately how many are unionized? What is the approximate number of hourly wage employees?
- The availability and usage of formal and informal flexible work programs
- The influence employees have over their work schedule and environment
- Leave of absence policies for both women and men in the instances of childbirth or illness.

✔ **Round II: Finalists Move on to Employee Survey**

Responses to the employer survey are measured against a nationally representative sample of employers, based on Families and Work Institute's 2009 National Study of Employers. Employers that rank among the top 20% of employers in the U.S., when compared with this national data, are selected as **Sloan Award finalists** and move on to Round II, the Employee Survey.

In Round II, finalists are invited to have their employees complete a brief, multiple-choice questionnaire about their access to workplace flexibility and about the culture. The survey takes about 20 minutes to complete and is available online as well as in paper format for those employees without Internet access. Families and Work Institute will provide assistance with creating an employee sample and with distribution of the survey. In organizations with fewer than 250 employees, all employees are surveyed. In larger organizations, a random sample of 250 employees is selected. Of those surveyed, a 40% response rate is required.

The survey asks employees to assess:

- ✔ the accessibility of flexibility programs;
- ✔ the aspects of the workplace culture that support the ability to work flexibly; and
- ✔ whether or not there is jeopardy for the use of flexible programs.

All responses are confidential and are returned directly to Families and Work Institute.

The questionnaire for the Employee Survey is not available for review. It is important that this be the case in order to ensure the integrity of the award process and avoid any suggestion by the public that employees' answers could be influenced.

How are Winners Selected?

After the employee surveys are completed, researchers at Families and Work Institute score the results and produce an overall score for each employer that qualified as a finalist. One third of the overall score is derived from the employer survey, and two thirds from the employee survey. The overall score is computed on a scale of 1 to 100, with higher numbers reflecting more positive responses to questions on both surveys. **Selection of the winners and honorable mentions is made on the basis of these overall scores that combine employer and employee responses.**

What is the Timeline of the Awards Process?

- ✓ **January 12** AWARDS Application OPEN
- ✓ **April 16** AWARDS Application CLOSE
- ✓ **May 7** Round I: Finalists reviewed and notified about advancement to Round II
- ✓ **May 17 to June 25** Round II: Employee surveying period
- ✓ **July 9** Winners announced and notified
- ✓ **August** Award event

How does my Organization Apply?

- ✓ Visit www.iwin.uky.edu* to apply – iwin links to the application which is housed on www.iwin.uky.edu
- ✓ *Businesses located in the Greater Louisville/Southern Indiana region, select Louisville, KY as your worksite location
- ✓ *Businesses located outside of the Greater Louisville/Southern Indiana region, select Kentucky (statewide) as your worksite location.
- ✓ *Businesses outside of Kentucky and Southern Indiana may apply as an “at-large” participant.

What are some examples of flexible workplace practices?

Businesses use flexibility in many forms and practices can vary based your business. Some forms include:

- ✓ flexibility in scheduling such as a compressed work week or shift flexibility
- ✓ flexibility in amount of hours worked such as reduced work schedule or job-sharing
- ✓ flexibility in the place of work such as telecommuting
- ✓ time off from work for short or extended periods
- ✓ career maintenance and re-entry such as phased retirement, or leaves of absence

How can I Learn More About the Awards?

☑ **When Work Works**

www.whenworkworks.org

Access the award application, view sample benchmarking reports, sample flexibility policies, explore employer best practices from previous award winners and much more.

☑ **University of Kentucky Institute for Workplace Innovation (UK iwin)**

www.iwin.uky.edu

As the sponsor of the Award for the state of Kentucky, businesses can link to the award application, learn about the Institute and how it is helping employers in Kentucky adopt flexibility and other Innovative Workplace practices.

☑ **Greater Louisville, Inc. (GLI)**

www.greaterlouisville.com

Serving as the sponsor for the Greater Louisville/Southern Indiana region for the awards, GLI is the Metro Chamber of Commerce and supports member businesses, encourages entrepreneurial enterprises and contributes to business and community growth and prosperity.

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