



Human-Centered WorkplaceTM Certification

Frequently Asked Questions



About the Certification

[What is HiveWell's Human-Centered Workplace Certification?](#)

[What standards does the certification measure against?](#)

[How is HiveWell Certification different from employee engagement surveys or "Best Places to Work" awards?](#)

[Is HiveWell Certification accredited by an external body?](#)

[What are the certification levels?](#)

The Certification Process

[How long does the certification process take?](#)

[What is the difference between HiveWell's assessment and the full HiveWell Method?](#)

[What does the certification assessment actually evaluate?](#)

[Can we start with just the baseline assessment?](#)

[What documentation is required for certification?](#)

[Do we need to complete HiveWell Method training to get certified?](#)

[Who conducts the assessment?](#)

[Is the employee survey anonymous and confidential?](#)

[How much does certification cost?](#)

[What happens if an organization doesn't pass certification?](#)

Maintaining Certification

[How long does certification last?](#)

[What is required for recertification?](#)

[Can organizations lose certification?](#)

[Can certified organizations advance to higher tiers?](#)

Using Your Certification

[How can certified organizations use the HiveWell badge and certification mark?](#)

[What marketing claims can certified organizations make?](#)

[Does certification improve recruitment and retention?](#)

Intellectual Property and Competitive Protection

[Will our proprietary information be shared with competitors?](#)

[How does HiveWell protect its assessment methodology?](#)

Research Foundation and Advisory Board

[What research supports HiveWell's certification standards?](#)

[Does HiveWell have an advisory board?](#)

Getting Started (Pages 23-24)

[Is there a preliminary assessment before full certification?](#)

[What preparation should we do before applying?](#)

[How do we apply for certification?](#)

Contact and Additional Information (Page 24)

[How can we learn more about HiveWell Certification?](#)

[Does HiveWell offer consulting services to help organizations prepare?](#)

Legal and Compliance (Pages 25-26)

[How does HiveWell handle data privacy and security?](#)

[What are HiveWell's non-discrimination and fairness policies?](#)

About the Certification ---

What is HiveWell's Human-Centered Workplace Certification?

HiveWell's Human-Centered Workplace Certification is an evidence-based assessment and verification program that evaluates organizations against comprehensive workplace culture standards. The certification validates that an organization has implemented policies, systems, and practices that support employee wellbeing, psychological safety, and sustainable performance.

Unlike traditional employer awards or self-reported surveys, HiveWell Certification requires documented evidence, implementation data, and independent employee validation. Organizations that achieve certification demonstrate measurable commitment to human-centered workplace practices backed by organizational psychology research.

What standards does the certification measure against?

The certification evaluates organizations across six research-backed pillars of human-centered workplace culture:

- **Life Stage Support** - Policies and practices that support employees through major life transitions (parenting, caregiving, health crises, relocation)
- **Flexible Work Design** - Systems that enable genuine flexibility, autonomy, and work-life integration beyond token remote work policies
- **Human-Centered Leadership** - Manager capability, emotional intelligence, psychological safety creation, and supportive leadership behaviors
- **Crisis & Change Support** - Organizational resilience, communication transparency, and employee support during organizational transitions
- **Inclusive Culture Measurement** - Diversity, equity, belonging practices, and systematic measurement of inclusion outcomes
- **Financial Wellbeing & Transparency** - Fair compensation practices, pay equity, financial wellness support, and transparent compensation communication

These pillars are grounded in research from institutions including Harvard Business School, MIT Sloan Management Review, Stanford Graduate School of Business, and organizational psychology literature published in peer-reviewed journals.

How is HiveWell Certification different from employee engagement surveys or "Best Places to Work" awards?

Evidence-Based Assessment vs. Popularity Contest

- HiveWell requires documented policies, implementation data, and usage statistics
- Other programs often rely on self-reported employee satisfaction surveys alone
- According to research from [McKinsey](#), only 26% of leaders create genuine psychological safety despite high survey scores

Independent Validation vs. Self-Reporting

- HiveWell conducts anonymous employee surveys independently
- Assessment team evaluates evidence using standardized criteria
- Organizations cannot game the system through selective reporting

Structural Change vs. Perks

- Certification requires systemic changes to policies, leadership practices, and organizational design
- Not based on superficial benefits like ping pong tables or free snacks
- Focuses on the conditions that research shows actually drive retention and performance

Ongoing Accountability vs. One-Time Award

- Annual recertification ensures sustained commitment
- Continuous improvement required to maintain certification
- Organizations can lose certification if standards decline

Is HiveWell Certification accredited by an external body?

HiveWell's certification program is designed according to industry best practices for organizational certification, drawing on frameworks established by certification standards bodies. While HiveWell is an independent certification organization (similar to B Corp, Great Place to Work, or industry-specific certifications), our methodology aligns with quality standards for certification programs.

According to [ANSI National Standards](#), quality certification programs are characterized by:

- Objective, measurable standards consistently applied
- Valid assessment methodology with documented reliability
- Independent verification processes
- Continuous improvement through recertification
- Protection against discrimination and bias

HiveWell's certification meets these criteria through our evidence-based assessment framework, independent employee validation, standardized evaluation procedures, and annual recertification requirements.

As we scale, we are exploring third-party accreditation options that would provide additional external validation of our certification standards and processes.

What are the certification levels?

HiveWell offers tiered certification reflecting the depth and maturity of an organization's human-centered practices:

Developing - Organization has established foundational policies and is building systematic implementation across most pillars (50-74% compliance).

Organizations at this level demonstrate:

- Commitment to human-centered culture with documented policies
- Beginning implementation of key practices
- Leadership engagement in transformation process
- Foundation for continued growth and improvement

Rooted - Organization demonstrates solid implementation across most areas with documented usage and positive employee validation (75-85% compliance)

Organizations at this level demonstrate:

- Comprehensive policies with evidence of actual employee usage
- Manager training completion and demonstrated capability
- Positive employee survey results validating lived experience
- Systematic approach to culture measurement

Growing - Organization shows strong performance across all pillars with evidence of continuous improvement and innovation (86-93% compliance) Organizations at this level demonstrate:

- High implementation quality and strong outcome metrics
- Employees actively using and benefiting from policies
- Innovative practices that go beyond standard approaches
- Culture of continuous improvement with documented progress

Thriving - Organization represents industry-leading practices with exceptional outcomes, high employee satisfaction, and demonstrated cultural impact (94-100% compliance) Organizations at this level demonstrate:

- Exceptional performance across all six pillars
- Outstanding employee experience validation
- Industry-leading innovation in workplace practices
- Measurable business impact from culture investment
- Model for other organizations in their sector

Important Note: Each tier requires meeting minimum standards across all six pillars. Organizations cannot achieve certification by excelling in some areas while neglecting others. This balanced requirement ensures authentic human-centered culture rather than selective compliance.

The Developing tier recognizes that culture transformation is a journey, not a destination. Organizations demonstrating genuine commitment and foundational implementation can achieve certification while continuing to build more comprehensive practices. This acknowledges that meaningful culture change takes time and that early-stage efforts deserve recognition and support.

The Certification Process

How long does the certification process take?

The HiveWell Certification process is designed as a comprehensive transformation journey, not a quick assessment. The timeline depends on your organization's current state and chosen pathway:

Assessment-Only Pathway (Organizations Already Meeting Standards):

Organizations that have already implemented robust human-centered policies and systems can pursue certification through assessment alone:

- **Initial Assessment:** 3-4 weeks from application to certification decision
- **Requirements:** Complete documentation, implementation evidence, and employee validation

Transformation + Certification Pathway (Most Organizations):

Most organizations partner with HiveWell for systematic culture transformation before pursuing certification:

- **Phase 1 - Baseline Assessment (2-3 weeks):** Diagnostic assessment identifies gaps and establishes improvement priorities
- **Phase 2 - HiveWell Method Training (3-6 months):** Comprehensive 8-10 course training system for leadership and employees
- **Phase 3 - Implementation Support (3-6 months):** Policy development, system building, manager capability development
- **Phase 4 - Certification Assessment (3-4 weeks):** Final evaluation and certification decision

Total Timeline for Transformation Pathway: Typically 6-12 months from engagement to certification, depending on:

- Organization size and complexity
- Current culture baseline
- Implementation pace and resources
- Leadership commitment and change readiness

This longer timeline reflects HiveWell's commitment to authentic, sustainable culture transformation rather than superficial compliance.

What is the difference between HiveWell's assessment and the full HiveWell Method?

HiveWell Strategic Culture Assessment (\$3,500): A diagnostic tool that evaluates current state across approximately 120 questions covering:

- ~40 employee experience questions (anonymous survey)
- ~40 leadership and management practice questions
- ~40 organizational policy and system questions

This assessment provides:

- Comprehensive gap analysis
- Prioritized improvement recommendations
- Certification readiness evaluation
- Baseline for measuring transformation progress

HiveWell Method Training System: An 8-10 course comprehensive training program that builds the capabilities required for certification:

- Leadership development and human intelligence training
- Manager capability building for psychological safety
- Communication and conflict resolution systems
- Change management and crisis support protocols
- Inclusive culture practices and measurement

Organizations typically complete HiveWell Method training before pursuing certification, as the training provides the knowledge and skills required to implement certification-level practices.

Integrated Transformation + Certification:

1. **Baseline Assessment:** Understand current state and gaps
2. **HiveWell Method Training:** Build leadership and organizational capability
3. **Implementation Period:** Develop policies, train managers, establish systems
4. **Pre-Certification Assessment:** Evaluate readiness and identify final gaps
5. **Final Certification Assessment:** Comprehensive evaluation for certification decision

This integrated approach ensures organizations don't just pass an assessment, but genuinely transform their workplace culture with sustained capability.

What does the certification assessment actually evaluate?

The certification assessment evaluates three critical dimensions:

1. Employee Experience Validation (~40 questions) Anonymous employee survey administered independently by HiveWell covering:

- Psychological safety and trust in leadership
- Workload sustainability and work-life balance
- Access to support during life transitions and crises
- Perceived fairness and inclusion
- Manager effectiveness and support quality

2. Leadership & Management Practices (~40 questions) Assessment of leadership capabilities and management systems:

- Manager training completion and demonstrated competency
- Leadership communication patterns and transparency
- Conflict resolution and feedback systems
- Employee development and growth support
- Crisis response and change management effectiveness

3. Organizational Policies & Systems (~40 questions) Policy audit and implementation evidence review:

- Documented policies across all six certification pillars
- Policy usage rates and accessibility
- System design for flexibility and employee autonomy
- Outcome metrics and continuous improvement evidence
- Alignment between stated policies and lived experience

Each dimension receives weighted scoring, and organizations must meet minimum thresholds across all three areas to achieve certification.

Can we start with just the baseline assessment?

Yes. Many organizations begin with HiveWell's Strategic Culture Risk Assessment (\$3,500) to:

Understand Current State:

- Identify specific culture strengths and risks
- Pinpoint gaps relative to certification standards
- Receive prioritized improvement recommendations
- Establish baseline metrics for measuring progress

Plan Strategic Approach:

- Determine if you're ready for immediate certification or need implementation support
- Understand which areas require HiveWell Method training
- Build business case for transformation investment
- Create realistic timeline for certification pursuit

Assessment Credit: The baseline assessment fee is fully credited toward either:

- Full certification assessment (if pursued within 6 months)
- HiveWell Method training enrollment
- Integrated transformation + certification program

This approach allows organizations to make informed decisions about their certification pathway based on actual assessment data rather than assumptions about readiness.

What documentation is required for certification?

Organizations pursuing certification must submit a comprehensive evidence package demonstrating both policy existence and actual implementation:

Policy Documentation:

- Complete employee handbook with all HR policies
- Benefits documentation with eligibility criteria and usage data
- Manager training curricula, materials, and completion records
- Crisis communication protocols and support systems
- Organizational structure, role descriptions, and decision-making frameworks

Implementation Evidence:

- Policy usage statistics - What percentage of eligible employees actually use benefits (not just eligibility)?
- Training completion data - Manager training participation rates and assessment scores
- Outcome metrics - Retention rates, turnover data by demographic, engagement trends
- Employee feedback - Recent satisfaction survey results, exit interview summaries
- Improvement initiatives - Documented culture projects, interventions, and measured results

Manager Capability Indicators:

- Manager effectiveness ratings from employee surveys
- 360-degree feedback results or equivalent
- Documentation of manager support for employee wellbeing
- Evidence of psychological safety creation
- Conflict resolution and feedback quality indicators

All data must be current within the past 12 months. Organizations that completed HiveWell Method training will have structured documentation from that process to support certification submission.

HiveWell maintains strict confidentiality of all submitted materials under non-disclosure agreements.

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Do we need to complete HiveWell Method training to get certified?

No, but most organizations benefit from it. There are two paths to certification:

Path 1: Assessment-Only (Ready Now) Organizations that already have:

- Comprehensive human-centered policies across all six pillars
- Strong implementation data showing actual usage and positive outcomes
- High employee satisfaction and psychological safety indicators
- Trained managers demonstrating human-centered leadership
- Systematic measurement and continuous improvement practices

These organizations can apply directly for certification assessment.

Path 2: Transformation + Certification (Most Common) Organizations that:

- Have some policies but need systematic implementation support
- Want to build manager capability and leadership effectiveness
- Need guidance developing evidence-based workplace practices
- Seek to create sustainable culture transformation, not just pass an assessment
- Want structured training that prepares them for certification success

These organizations enroll in HiveWell Method training as preparation for certification pursuit.

The Distinction:

- **HiveWell Method** = Learning how to build human-centered culture
- **HiveWell Certification** = Independent validation that you actually did it

Think of it like getting a degree versus getting licensed: you can study on your own and take the licensing exam, or you can complete a structured program that prepares you for success. Most choose the structured approach.

Who conducts the assessment?

HiveWell certification assessments are conducted by HiveWell's assessment team using a proprietary integrated evaluation system that combines human expertise with data analytics.

Assessment Process:

- Comprehensive review of all submitted documentation and evidence
- AI-assisted analysis of policy quality, implementation patterns, and outcome trends
- Independent employee survey administration and statistical analysis
- Evaluation against standardized certification criteria across all six pillars
- Detailed feedback report with data-driven improvement recommendations

Quality Assurance:

HiveWell's advisory board, composed of experts in organizational psychology, business ethics, HR management, and workplace research, provides oversight of:

- Assessment methodology validation
- Question design and evaluation criteria
- Certification standards maintenance
- Continuous improvement of assessment framework

This combination of proprietary technology, practitioner expertise, and academic oversight ensures certification assessments are rigorous, fair, consistent, and grounded in evidence-based workplace practices.

As HiveWell scales, the assessment capabilities will expand while maintaining the same standardized methodology and quality standards.

Is the employee survey anonymous and confidential?

Yes. Employee validation is a critical component of certification integrity, and anonymity is essential for honest feedback.

HiveWell's Employee Survey Protocol:

- Administered directly by HiveWell, not through the employer
- Completely anonymous with no personally identifiable information collected
- Minimum 10% employee sample randomly selected
- Responses cannot be traced back to individual employees
- Aggregate results only shared with employer
- Individual response data protected by HiveWell

This independent survey process prevents organizations from manipulating results or retaliating against honest feedback.

How much does certification cost?

Certification pricing is scaled by organization size to ensure accessibility for mid-market companies:

- 50-100 employees: \$4,000 initial certification / \$2,500 annual renewal
- 101-250 employees: \$6,000 initial certification / \$4,000 annual renewal
- 251-500 employees: \$9,000 initial certification / \$6,500 annual renewal
- 501+ employees: Custom pricing based on scope

The certification fee includes:

- Comprehensive assessment and scoring
- Employee validation survey administration
- Detailed feedback report with improvement recommendations
- Certification badge and marketing materials
- Spotlight on HiveWell website
- 12 months of certification status
- Access to certified organization network

Organizations that do not achieve certification on their first attempt receive a detailed gap analysis and can reapply at a reduced rate once improvements are implemented.

What happens if an organization doesn't pass certification?

Organizations that do not meet certification standards receive a comprehensive feedback report identifying:

- Specific policy gaps or weaknesses
- Implementation areas requiring improvement
- Employee experience disconnects
- Recommended actions to achieve certification

Organizations can reapply for certification once they have addressed the identified gaps. Reapplication fee is 50% of initial certification cost. HiveWell maintains strict confidentiality. Organizations that do not achieve certification are not publicly disclosed.

Maintaining Certification

How long does certification last?

HiveWell Certification is valid for 12 months from the date of award. Annual recertification is required to maintain certified status.

This annual cycle ensures:

- Continued adherence to standards
- Ongoing improvement rather than one-time achievement
- Accountability for sustained commitment
- Updated evidence reflecting current organizational state

What is required for recertification?

Annual recertification requires:

- Updated policy documentation reflecting any changes
- Current implementation data and usage statistics
- Recent employee survey results or engagement data
- Evidence of continuous improvement initiatives
- New employee validation survey (HiveWell-administered)

Can organizations lose certification?

Yes. HiveWell maintains certification integrity through ongoing monitoring and can revoke certification if:

- Annual recertification requirements are not met
- Significant policy or practice violations are documented
- Employee survey results indicate major culture deterioration
- Organization engages in discriminatory or unethical practices
- Fraudulent information was provided during certification

Organizations have the right to appeal certification decisions through HiveWell's formal appeals process.

Can certified organizations advance to higher tiers?

Yes. Organizations are encouraged to pursue continuous improvement. During annual recertification, organizations demonstrating enhanced practices, improved outcomes, and stronger employee validation can advance to higher certification tiers.

Many organizations achieve initial certification at the Developing or Rooted level and advance to Growing or Thriving status as their practices mature.

Using Your Certification

How can certified organizations use the HiveWell badge and certification mark?

Certified organizations receive licensing rights to use HiveWell's certification badge and mark in accordance with usage guidelines. Permitted uses include:

- Website and digital marketing materials
- Recruitment and employer branding campaigns
- Email signatures and social media profiles
- Physical signage in workplace locations
- Press releases and media communications
- Investor and stakeholder communications

Usage must comply with HiveWell's Brand Guidelines, which specify:

- Approved badge designs and color variations
- Minimum size and clear space requirements
- Prohibited alterations or modifications
- Co-branding and placement standards
- Required disclaimers and attribution

Certified organizations may not:

- Suggest HiveWell endorsement of products or services beyond certification
- Alter or modify the certification badge design
- Use certification for unrelated business lines or subsidiaries
- Continue displaying certification after expiration or revocation

What marketing claims can certified organizations make?

Certified organizations may accurately describe their certification status and achievements. Approved claims include:

- "HiveWell Human-Centered Workplace™ Certified"
- "Certified at [tier level] by HiveWell"
- "Independently verified through HiveWell Certification"
- Specific achievements within certification pillars (if documented in certification report)

Organizations may not:

- Make exaggerated or unsubstantiated claims beyond certification scope
- Suggest certification covers areas not assessed
- Misrepresent their certification tier or status
- Use expired or revoked certification status

HiveWell provides approved marketing language templates to all certified organizations.

Does certification improve recruitment and retention?

Research supports that authentic workplace culture certification drives recruitment and retention outcomes:

Recruitment Impact: According to research cited by Oyster HR, 84% of job seekers value psychological safety as one of the top three workplace factors. Organizations that can demonstrate certified commitment to human-centered practices gain competitive advantage in talent acquisition.

Retention Impact: Research published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine found that employee burnout costs \$3,999 to \$20,683 per employee annually. Organizations implementing the practices required for HiveWell Certification address the systemic causes of burnout, reducing turnover and associated costs.

Employer Brand Value: Organizations with strong, verifiable employer brands see measurable business impact beyond recruitment. Third-party certification provides independent validation that candidates trust more than company-created marketing materials.

Intellectual Property and Competitive Protection —

Will our proprietary information be shared with competitors?

No. HiveWell maintains strict confidentiality of all submitted materials, assessment data, and organizational information.

Confidentiality Protections:

- All submitted documents protected by non-disclosure agreement
- Assessment teams bound by confidentiality requirements
- No disclosure of specific organizational practices or proprietary systems
- Aggregate data used for research does not identify individual organizations
- Certification status and tier are the only publicly disclosed information (with organization permission)

Organizations control whether certification status is made public. Some organizations choose confidential certification for internal accountability without external promotion.

How does HiveWell protect its assessment methodology?

HiveWell's assessment questions, scoring criteria, and evaluation methodology are proprietary intellectual property protected by:

- Trade secret protections for assessment content
- Trademark registration for certification marks and badges
- Copyright protection for assessment materials and training content
- Licensing agreements with certified organizations
- Contractual protections with assessment team members

Organizations being assessed do not receive:

- Assessment scoring criteria or algorithms
- Internal evaluation rubrics or standards
- Competitive intelligence about other certified organizations
- HiveWell's proprietary training or methodology content

This protection ensures certification integrity and prevents gaming the system.

Research Foundation and Advisory Board ---

What research supports HiveWell's certification standards?

HiveWell's certification framework is grounded in peer-reviewed research from organizational psychology, business management, and workplace wellness literature. Key research sources include:

Psychological Safety and Performance:

- Google's Project Aristotle (team effectiveness research)
- Dr. Amy Edmondson's psychological safety research (Harvard Business School)
- [McKinsey research](#) on leadership and psychological safety

Employee Wellbeing and Business Outcomes:

- [CUNY Graduate School of Public Health](#) research on employee burnout costs
- Gallup's employee engagement research (30+ years of data)
- MIT Sloan Management Review organizational culture research

Workplace Flexibility and Inclusion:

- Stanford research on work design and flexibility
- Wharton School employee experience research
- Cornell ILR School workplace dynamics research

All certification standards are updated annually to reflect latest academic research and workplace trends.

Does HiveWell have an advisory board?

Yes. HiveWell's advisory board is composed of recognized experts who provide strategic guidance, methodology validation, and quality assurance for our certification standards and assessment framework.

- Higher education leadership and evidence-based assessment methodology
- Business ethics, DEIB research, and organizational behavior
- Technology strategy, AI systems, and data security
- Clinical psychology, mental health, and employee wellbeing

Advisory board members provide:

- Methodology review and enhancement recommendations
- Research validation and academic credibility
- Assessment design and quality assurance oversight
- Ethical standards and employee protection guidance
- Technology implementation and security best practices
- Certification standards maintenance and continuous improvement

This combination of academic rigor, clinical expertise, business ethics leadership, and technology innovation ensures HiveWell Certification maintains the highest standards of quality, fairness, and scientific validity. Advisory board member backgrounds and credentials are publicly disclosed on the HiveWell website.

Getting Started

Is there a preliminary assessment before full certification?

Yes. HiveWell offers a Strategic Culture Risk Assessment for \$3,500 that organizations can complete before pursuing full certification. This assessment:

- Evaluates current culture strengths and risks
- Identifies gaps relative to certification standards
- Provides prioritized improvement recommendations
- Helps organizations understand certification readiness
- Can be applied toward full certification cost if pursued within 6 months

This preliminary assessment allows organizations to understand where they stand and make strategic decisions about certification timing and preparation.

What preparation should we do before applying?

Organizations should prepare by:

1. **Conducting internal policy audit** - Review all employee-related policies for completeness and quality
2. **Gathering implementation data** - Compile usage statistics, training completion rates, outcome metrics
3. **Surveying employees** - Conduct recent engagement or satisfaction survey to understand employee perspective
4. **Documenting improvements** - Collect evidence of culture initiatives, manager training, improvement projects
5. **Securing leadership commitment** - Ensure executive support for certification process and potential improvements

HiveWell provides a certification readiness checklist to help organizations prepare efficiently.

How do we apply for certification?

Organizations interested in certification should:

- **Schedule consultation call** - Discuss certification goals, timeline, and readiness with HiveWell team
- **Review certification standards** - Understand requirements across five pillars and tier expectations
- **Complete application** - Submit formal certification application with organization details
- **Submit documentation** - Provide comprehensive evidence package through secure portal
- **Participate in employee survey** - Facilitate HiveWell's anonymous employee validation process

HiveWell's team guides organizations through each step and provides support throughout the certification process.

Contact and Additional Information

How can we learn more about HiveWell Certification?

Website: www.hivewell.com

Email: hello@hivewell.com

Consultation: Schedule a free 30-minute consultation to discuss your organization's certification goals and readiness

Resources: Visit our website for:

- Detailed certification standards overview
- Case studies from certified organizations
- Research foundation and methodology overview
- Pricing and timeline information
- Certification readiness checklist

Does HiveWell offer consulting services to help organizations prepare?

Yes. HiveWell offers consulting services separate from certification to help organizations:

- Design and implement human-centered policies
- Develop manager training programs
- Create flexible work systems
- Build inclusive culture practices
- Prepare for certification assessment

Organizations can work with HiveWell consultants for implementation support, then pursue independent certification once ready. This separation ensures certification objectivity while providing implementation expertise.

Legal and Compliance

How does HiveWell handle data privacy and security?

HiveWell complies with applicable data privacy regulations including:

- GDPR (for organizations with EU operations)
- CCPA (California Consumer Privacy Act)
- Industry-standard data security protocols
- Secure document storage and transmission
- Limited data retention (documents destroyed after certification process unless required for appeals)

All employee survey data is:

- Anonymized and aggregated
- Never shared with employer in identifiable form
- Protected by encryption during transmission and storage
- Retained only as long as necessary for certification purposes

Organizations receive detailed privacy policy documentation before beginning certification.

What are HiveWell's non-discrimination and fairness policies?
HiveWell is committed to fair, objective, and non-discriminatory certification practices:

Standard Application:

- Identical standards applied to all organizations regardless of size, industry, or location
- No preferential treatment or bias in assessment process
- Consistent scoring criteria used across all assessments

Accessibility:

- Pricing scaled by organization size to ensure mid-market accessibility
- Accommodation for organizations with unique circumstances
- Support for diverse industries and business models

Appeals Process:

- Formal appeals procedure for disputed certification decisions
- Independent review by senior assessment team members
- Transparent rationale for all certification decisions

HiveWell does not discriminate based on organization characteristics unrelated to actual workplace practices.

HiveWell exists to end the Sunday Scaries by certifying workplaces where humans thrive. Our evidence-based certification provides independent validation that your organization has implemented the policies, systems, and practices that research shows actually drive employee wellbeing and sustainable performance.

Questions not answered here? Contact us at hello@hivewell.com

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HiveWell LLC | Human-Centered Workplace Certification