



U.S. Small Business
Administration

U.S. Small Business Administration (Houston) Annual Small Business Awards and Celebration!

Celebrate resilient small businesses and those who help them!
We will announce winners and celebrate **all week April 28-May 4 2024.**



Why do we do it?

The SBA works hard all year for the American economy and society, so when the President designates one week each year as National Small Business Week, the SBA district offices host special events to honor and present awards to local entrepreneurs – some of which go on to be recognized nationally!

Get Involved!

We are always looking for great candidates for our awards. Individuals may self-nominate, or if you are with an organization that assists small businesses in the U.S., you may submit nominations! But choose carefully - individuals may not be nominated for more than one award category. If you are an SBA employee, you cannot submit nominations. **Nomination Deadline: December 7, 2023 at 3PM (CT)**

Award Categories

District Small Business Awards:

[Small Business Person of the Year](#)
[Small Business Exporter of the Year](#)
[8\(a\) Graduate of the Year](#)
[Minority Owned Small Business of the Year](#)
[Veteran Owned Small Business of the Year](#)
[Woman Owned Small Business of the Year](#)
[Innovation \(SBIR/STTR\) Recipient of the Year](#)
[Rural Small Business Owner of the Year](#)

District Small Business Champion Awards:

[Small Business Community Partner of the Year](#)
[Small Business Media Advocate of the Year](#)

Small Business Award Eligibility

Any legal resident of the United States or its Territories who own and operate or who bears principal responsibility for operating a small business for a minimum of **three years** and have received **at least one type of SBA assistance** such as, but not limited to, an SBA loan, SCORE counseling, Small Business Development Center (SBDC) assistance, Veteran’s Business Outreach Center (VBOC) assistance, Women’s Business Center (WBC) assistance, government contracting assistance, disaster assistance, Emerging Leaders Initiative, or Boots to Business training.

Houston District Small Business Awards

Small Business Person of the Year

Nominees will compete for the title of the National Small Business Person of the Year, SBA’s signature award. Nominees must demonstrate success in business as well as contributions to their local communities. **This category has the ability to compete at the national level.**

Selection Criteria

- 1) Staying power — a substantiated history as an established business; including but not limited to expansion, exporting, addition of territories, or growth in square footage occupied
- 2) Growth in number of employees — Increases over the 3 years must be more than growth in Gross Domestic Product
- 3) Increase in sales, net profit, and net worth for the three prior calendar years, that is, 2020, 2021, 2022
- 4) Response to adversity — examples of problems faced in the business and the methods used to solve them
- 5) Contributions to community-oriented projects — evidence of the use of his/her personal time and resources towards community-oriented projects

Required Forms

[SBA Form 3300 – Nominee Background Form](#)

[SBA Form 3301 – Small Business Person of the Year Nomination Form](#)

[Authorization, Grant, and Release of Materials | U.S. Small Business Administration \(sba.gov\)](#)

Small Business Exporter of the Year

SBA's Small Business Exporter of the Year recognizes individuals for their success and dedication to exporting products or services. **This category has the ability to compete at the national level.**

Selection Criteria

- 1) Increased sales, profits and/or growth of employment because of exporting. Clearly articulate what exporting has meant to the company, such as exports as a percentage of sales, jobs created by exporting, etc.
- 2) Creative overseas marketing strategies, exporting history, and current export markets
- 3) Effective solutions to export-related problems, including trade financing, payment, and currency issues; market-entry and logistical challenges; cultural differences, etc.
- 4) Demonstrated encouragement of other small businesses to export and/or volunteer assistance to other small businesses entering the export market
- 5) Effective use of Federal and/or State government trade promotion or financing programs

Required Forms

[SBA Form 3300 – Nominee Background Form](#)

[SBA Form 3302 – Small Business Exporter of the Year Nomination Form](#)

[Authorization, Grant, and Release of Materials | U.S. Small Business Administration \(sba.gov\)](#)

8(a) Graduate of the Year

Any small business that is a graduate of SBA's 8(a) program **for at least one year as of April 1, 2022** may be nominated or self-nominate. The firm does not have to currently be a small business. **This category has the ability to compete at the national level.**

Selection Criteria

- 1) Management – overall qualifications/expertise of management, customer interface (customer engagement), response to adversities, obstacles, etc. to achieve present level of success
- 2) Exceptional results/special achievements – deliverables in line with or exceeding contract requirements, exceptional past performance record; and description of exceptional results and/or delivery performance that makes this company a valued product/service provider, awards and recognitions.
- 3) Cost performance – financial stability and credit worthiness, value engineering change proposals (performance adjustments), increase in sales, net profit and net worth, growth in full-time employees
- 4) Innovation – specific description of innovation or unique/superior product or service, explanation of how the product or service fills a niche or technical need not being adequately addressed by the competition
- 5) Economic engagement of the disadvantaged community – use of minority firms as suppliers, subcontractors, etc., noted recruitment and employment of socially disadvantaged personnel, participation in community projects and charitable affairs

Required Forms

[SBA Form 3300 – Nominee Background Form](#)

[SBA Form 3309 – 8\(a\) Graduate of the Year Form](#)

[Authorization, Grant, and Release of Materials | U.S. Small Business Administration \(sba.gov\)](#)

Minority Owned Small Business of the Year

Any individual, who qualifies as a federally recognized minority and who owns at least 51% of the business.

Selection Criteria

- 1) Staying power – a substantiated history as an established business; including but not limited to expansion, exporting, addition of territories, or growth in square footage occupied
- 2) Growth in number of employees – increases over three years must be more than growth in Gross Domestic Product
- 3) Increase in sales, net profit and net worth for calendar years 2020, 2021, 2022
- 4) Innovativeness of product or service offered – explanation of how the product or service fits a niche not being adequately addressed by the competition
- 5) Contributions to community-oriented projects – evidence of the use of his/her personal time and resources
- 6) Response to adversity – examples of problems faced in the business and the methods used to solve them
- 7) Volunteer efforts to advance minority business interests within the community

Required Forms

[SBA Form 3300 – Nominee Background Form](#)

[SBA Form 3315 – District Office Award Form](#)

[Authorization, Grant, and Release of Materials | U.S. Small Business Administration \(sba.gov\)](#)

Veteran Owned Small Business of the Year

Any individual, who is a veteran of the U.S. armed forces and owns at least 51% of the business.

Selection Criteria

- 1) Staying power – a substantiated history as an established business; including but not limited to expansion, exporting, addition of territories, or growth in square footage occupied
- 2) Growth in number of employees – Increases over three years must be more than growth in Gross Domestic Product
- 3) Increase in sales, net profit, and net worth for calendar years 2020, 2021, 2022
- 4) Innovativeness of product or service offered – Explanation of how the product or service fits a niche not being adequately addressed by the competition
- 5) Contributions to community-oriented projects – evidence of the use of his/her personal time and resources
- 6) Response to adversity – examples of problems faced in the business and the methods used to solve them.
- 7) Volunteer efforts to advance veteran business interests within the community
- 8) Increased employment opportunities for veterans

Required Forms

[SBA Form 3300 – Nominee Background Form](#)

[SBA Form 3315 – District Office Award Form](#)

[Authorization, Grant, and Release of Materials | U.S. Small Business Administration \(sba.gov\)](#)

Woman Owned Small Business of the Year

Any woman, who owns at least 51% of the business.

Selection Criteria

- 1) Staying power – a substantiated history as an established business; including but not limited to expansion, exporting, addition of territories, or growth in square footage occupied
- 2) Growth in number of employees – Increases over three years must be more than growth in Gross Domestic Product
- 3) Increase in sales, net profit, and net worth for calendar years 2020, 2021, 2022
- 4) Innovativeness of product or service offered – Explanation of how the product or service fits a niche not being adequately addressed by the competition
- 5) Contributions to community-oriented projects – evidence of the use of his/her personal time and resources
- 6) Response to adversity – examples of problems faced in the business and the methods used to solve them
- 7) Volunteer efforts to advance woman business interests within the community

Required Forms

[SBA Form 3300 – Nominee Background Form](#)

[SBA Form 3315 – District Office Award Form](#)

[Authorization, Grant, and Release of Materials | U.S. Small Business Administration \(sba.gov\)](#)

Innovation (SBIR/STTR) Recipient of the Year

A business that has successfully applied for and won one or more SBIR/STTR R&D awards and used this funding to commercialize a product.

Selection Criteria

- 1) Individual(s) must own and operate a business with evidence of successfully receiving Phase I and/or Phase II SBIR/STTR funding in the past
- 2) Furthered the development of and commercialized a product with SBIR/STTR funding
- 3) Increased employment opportunities created by the nominee's business
- 4) Development and/or utilization of innovative or creative business methods
- 5) Demonstrated entrepreneurial potential necessary for long-term business success and economic growth

Required Forms

[SBA Form 3300 – Nominee Background Form](#)

[SBA Form 3315 – District Office Award Form](#)

[Authorization, Grant, and Release of Materials | U.S. Small Business Administration \(sba.gov\)](#)

Rural Owned Small Business of the Year

This award honors a rural-owned and operated business. The owner must be the majority owner and operator or bear principal responsibility for operating the small business. Rural eligibility is determined by a business located in an area with less than 50,000 in total population.

Selection Criteria

- 1) Staying power – a substantiated history as an established business; including but not limited to expansion, exporting, addition of territories, or growth in square footage occupied
- 2) Response to adversity – examples of problems faced in the business and the methods used to solve them
- 3) Contributions to community-oriented projects – evidence of the use of his/her personal time and resources

Required Forms

[SBA Form 3300 – Nominee Background Form](#)

[SBA Form 3315 – District Office Award Form](#)

[Authorization, Grant, and Release of Materials | U.S. Small Business Administration \(sba.gov\)](#)

District Small Business Champion Awards

Small Business Community Partner of the Year

This award will be presented to a certified non-profit, chamber, or other organizations whose primary mission is to help entrepreneurs start or grow their businesses. This award will recognize the impact an organization has on the local entrepreneurial community through advocacy and other efforts that raise the profile, effectiveness, health, vitality, growth, or expansion of small businesses in the SBA's Houston District Office territory. These efforts can target specific segments of the small business population such as women, veterans, minorities, exporters, and those small firms located in rural communities.

Selection Criteria

- 1) Demonstrated accomplishments over the last 3 years to supporting the growth and expansion of small businesses (as measured by job creation or retention, service to underserved markets, number of loans to small businesses, number of businesses started or expanded, number of clients served, access to business opportunities, etc.)
- 2) Advocacy of the small business community as a whole and not solely for individual personal advancement.
- 3) Efforts to increase business opportunities for small companies.
- 4) Innovation in advocacy strategies with measurable benefits to small businesses in the Houston District.
- 5) Longevity and success of sustained commitment to small businesses and entrepreneurship.
- 6) Other accomplishments demonstrating the nominee's merit as an effective advocate for small business interests.

Required Forms

[SBA Form 3300 – Nominee Background Form](#)

[SBA Form 3315 – District Office Award Form](#)

[Authorization, Grant, and Release of Materials | U.S. Small Business Administration \(sba.gov\)](#)

Small Business Media Advocate of the Year

An individual who has fulfilled a commitment to the advancement of small business opportunities may be nominated.

Selection Criteria

- 1) Demonstrated efforts to improve conditions in the small business community as a whole, not solely for individual personal advancement
- 2) Demonstrated accomplishments in advising small business groups of opportunities within the overall business community
- 3) Volunteer efforts beyond business/professional responsibilities to advance small business interests within the community, state and/or nation
- 4) Volunteer efforts to provide professional services to the small business community in a legal, legislative, managerial, or financial capacity
- 5) Other accomplishments/recognition demonstrating the nominee's merit as an effective advocate for small business interests

Required Forms

[SBA Form 3300 – Nominee Background Form](#)

What is Included in a Small Business Award Nomination?

A complete nomination package will include:

1) REQUIRED FORMS:

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| Small Business Person of the Year | SBA Form 3300 + SBA Form 3301 |
| Small Business Exporter of the Year | SBA Form 3300 + SBA Form 3302 |
| 8(a) Graduate of the Year | SBA Form 3300 + SBA Form 3309 |
| Minority Owned Small Business of the Year Veteran Owned Small Business of the Year Woman Owned Small Business of the Year Innovation Recipient of the Year Rural Owned Small Business of the Year Small Business Community Partner of the Year Small Business Media Advocate of the Year | SBA Form 3300 + SBA Form 3315 |
| All Categories | Authorization, Grant, and Release of Materials U.S. Small Business Administration (sba.gov) |

- 2) Additional **supporting documentation** deemed significant by the nominator, including news clips, letters of recommendation and other evidence of the appropriateness (not to exceed 10 pages).
- 3) A **digital photo of the nominee** – at least 300 dpi; photocopies are not acceptable. For “team” nominations, a group photo is acceptable.

All nominations must be submitted online via [Box.com](#) by 3:00pm CT on December 7, 2023.

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