

2014 Houston District Small Business Awards



In recognition of the small business community's contribution to the American economy and society, the President of the United States designates one week each year as National Small Business Week. National Small Business Week 2014 (SBW 2014) will be celebrated the week of May 12-16, 2014.

Throughout Small Business Week, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), often in conjunction with public- and private-sector small business supporters, will host special events at the local and state levels to honor and present awards to local entrepreneurs and those who support and champion small business. Many of the award winners from those local and state events will be invited to Washington, D.C. for SBW 2014.

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National Small Business Week

May 12-16, 2014

Deadline for Award Nominations

January 17, 2014

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- Phoenix Award for Outstanding Contributions to Disaster Recovery

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Introduction

In recognition of the small business community's contribution to the American economy and society, the President of the United States designates one week each year as National Small Business Week. Leading up to National Small Business Week 2014, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), often in conjunction with public- and private-sector small business supporters, will host special events at the local and state levels to honor and present awards to local entrepreneurs.

When are nominations due?

All award nominations must be postmarked or hand delivered to the SBA Houston District Office located at 8701 S. Gessner, Ste. 1200, Houston, TX 77074 **no later than January 17, 2013.**

Online Nominations Portal

Nominations for the following award categories may be submitted online at <http://nationalsmallbusinessweek.sba.gov/>

- 1. Small Business Person of the Year**
- 2. Exporter of the Year**
- 3. 8(a) Graduate of the Year**
- 4. Phoenix Awards for Disaster Recovery:**
 - a. Phoenix Award for Small Business Disaster Recovery
 - b. Phoenix Award for Outstanding Contributions to Disaster Recovery
- 5. Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Excellence and Innovation Center Award**
- 6. Women's Business Center of Excellence Award**
- 7. Veterans Business Development Center of the Year**

Award nominations in the other categories must be submitted either by email, mail or hand delivered to the District Office.

Who may submit nominations?

Any individual or organization dedicated to the support of the small business community in the United States, including, but not limited to, trade and professional associations and business organizations, may submit nominations for these awards. Individuals may not be nominated for more than one award category.

For more information

Please contact Valerie Nguyen at (713) 773-6516 or Valerie.nguyen@sba.gov.

All SBA programs and services are provided on a nondiscriminatory basis.

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2014 SBA Houston Small Business Person of the Year

Any individual who owns and operates or who bears principal responsibility for operating a small business may be nominated. Partners who jointly own and operate a small business may be nominated as a “team,” so long as the number of individuals in the team nomination does not exceed four. A nominee for Small Business Person of the Year must own or operate a business defined as “small” under the applicable SBA size standards. Individuals who have received the Small Business Person Award at the State level within the past five years are not eligible. Nominees must also be residents of the United States or its territories and will be subject to background checks. Small businesses owned and operated by nominees must comply with federal civil rights laws. While receipt of SBA assistance is not required, it is preferred. Consult the Houston SBA district office if you have questions.

What are the evaluation/selection criteria for the Small Business Person of the Year award?

In evaluating the nomination packages, the judges will look at the following criteria:

- 1. Staying power** — a substantiated history as an established business; including:
 - a. Number of years in business; minimum three years.
 - b. Sustained expansion, addition of territories, growth in square footage occupied.
 - c. Steady growth in net worth as evidenced by total assets less total liabilities on fiscal year end annual balance sheets over three years.
- 2. Growth in number of employees** — a benchmark to judge the impact on the job market.
 - a. Sustained over a minimum of three years.
 - b. Increase over the three years must be in excess of growth in Gross National Product.
- 3. Increase in sales and/or unit volume** — an indication of continued growth over the last three years. Consistent growth in net income as evidenced by fiscal year annual profit-and-loss statements for a minimum of the last three years.
- 4. Current and past financial performance** — Reports substantiate improved financial position.
 - a. Profit-and-loss statements for the last three years, reflecting sustained upward growth.
 - b. Balance sheets for the last three years, showing consistent increase in net worth and/or partners’ return.
- 5. Innovativeness of product or service offered** — Show creativity and imagination
 - a. Specific description of uniqueness of product or service.
 - b. Explanation of how product or service fits a niche not being adequately addressed by the competition.
- 6. Response to adversity** — examples of problems faced and the methods used to solve them
 - a. Specific description of financial, physical, legal or other crisis.
 - b. Substantiation of the threat to the continuity of the business.
 - c. Defined actions taken by the nominee to resolve the crisis.
- 7. Contributions to community-oriented projects** — evidence of the use of personal time and resources, including:
 - a. Listing of specific contributions of money, time, or resources to charitable causes.
 - b. Membership in councils, boards and clubs providing support and services to the community.

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What information must the nomination package contain?

Nominations submitted to the U.S. Small Business Administration district office in the state or territory where the nominee is located must be typewritten on one side of 8 1/2" x 11" white stationery, collated and secured in a 1 1/2" binder.

Nominations submitted via the online nominations portal must also be typewritten and contain the information required below. Incomplete nomination packages will not be considered. All evaluation/selection criteria must be specifically addressed.

A complete nomination package will also include, in the following order if submitted via hard copy:

1. A single cover page stating —
 - a) the nominee's full name, title, business and home addresses with telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address if applicable;
 - b) the award for which the nomination is being made;
 - c) the nominator's name, title, place of business, business address and telephone number and e-mail address if applicable;
 - d) the type of SBA assistance received (e.g., loan, SCORE counseling, SBDC assistance, etc.), if applicable; and
 - e) a one-paragraph description of the nominee's business.
2. A completed background form (SBA Form 3300, Award Nomination Form) which is available through SBA district offices and the online nominations portal. For "team" nominations for Small Business Person of the Year, a background form is required for each team member;
3. An original 8" x 10" or 5" x 7" photo of the nominee; or a digital photo – at least 300 dpi; photocopies are not acceptable;
4. Four to five additional photos of the nominee's company and employees at work (official company photos may be submitted provided that the submitter has permission to use them from the company and/or employees in the photo);
5. A nomination letter, to include a concise statement of the qualities and performance that merit the award, not to exceed four pages;
6. A brief biography of the nominee, not to exceed one page;
7. A business profile, not to exceed one page;
8. The nominee's financial statement — including balance sheets, profit-and-loss statements and financial reports — not exceeding 12 pages, on 8 1/2" x 11" paper - for the calendar years 2010, 2011 and 2012.
9. Any other supporting documentation deemed significant by the nominator, including news clips, letters of recommendation and other evidence of the appropriateness of the nomination. Supporting documentation must not exceed 10 pages. Videos will not be considered.
10. A completed SBA Form 2137 Award Nomination Consent Form, which is available through SBA district offices and through the online portal.

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2014 Small Business Exporter of the Year

SBA will make Small Business Exporter of the Year awards to eligible small businesses at the State level (from each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam) and the National level. In those states served by more than one SBA district office, each district office will select a district level winner and the State winner will be selected at the regional level. The National Small Business Exporter of the Year will be selected from the regional level winners.

Who is eligible to be nominated for this award?

Any individual, or team of individuals, who own and operate a small business that is defined as "small" under the applicable SBA size standards and is engaged in exporting may be nominated. Nominees must also be residents of and employed in the United States or its territories and will be subject to background checks. Small businesses owned and operated by nominees must comply with federal civil rights laws. Consult your nearest SBA district office if you have questions.

Where are the nominations to be sent?

Nominations must be submitted in one of two ways:

1. Nominations may be submitted to the U.S. Small Business Administration district office in the state or territory where the nominee is located; or
2. Nominations may be submitted via the online nominations portal on www.sba.gov.

What are the evaluation/selection criteria for the Exporter of the Year award?

In evaluating the nomination packages for the Exporter of the Year award, the judges will look at the following criteria:

1. Increased sales, profits and/or growth of employment because of exporting.
2. Creative overseas marketing strategies.
3. Effective solutions to export-related problems.
4. Demonstrated encouragement of other small businesses to export.
5. Volunteer assistance to other small businesses entering the export market.
6. Cooperation with other businesses in the creation of export trading companies and/or introduction of unique trading relationships, products or services.

What information must the nomination package contain?

Nominations submitted to the U.S. Small Business Administration district office in the state or territory where the nominee is located must be typewritten on one side of 8 1/2" x 11" white stationery, collated and secured in a 1 1/2" binder. Incomplete nomination packages will not be considered.

Nominations submitted via the online nominations portal must also be typewritten and contain the information required below. Incomplete nomination packages will not be considered. All evaluation/selection criteria must be specifically addressed.

A complete nomination package will also include, in the following order if submitted via hard copy:

1. A single cover page stating:
 - a) the nominee's full name, title, business and home addresses with telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address if applicable;

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- b) the award for which the nomination is being made;
 - c) the nominator's name, title, place of business, business address and telephone number and e-mail address if applicable;
 - d) the type of SBA assistance received (e.g., loan, SCORE counseling, SBDC assistance, etc.), if applicable; and
 - e) a one-paragraph description of the nominee's business.
2. A completed background form (SBA Form 3300, Award Nomination Form) which is available through SBA district offices and the online nominations portal. For "team" nominations, a background form is required for each team member;
 3. An original 8" x 10" or 5" x 7" photo of the nominee; or a digital photo – at least 300 dpi; photocopies are not acceptable;
 4. Four to five additional photos of the nominee's company and employees at work (official company photos may be submitted provided that the submitter has permission to use them from the company and/or employees in the photo);
 5. A nomination letter, to include a concise statement of the qualities and performance that merit the award, not to exceed four pages;
 6. A brief biography of the nominee, not to exceed one page;
 7. A business profile, not to exceed one page;
 8. The nominee's financial statement — including balance sheets, profit-and-loss statements and financial reports — not exceeding 12 pages, on 8 1/2" x 11" paper - for the last three years (fiscal or calendar).
 9. Any other supporting documentation deemed significant by the nominator, including news clips, letters of recommendation and other evidence of the appropriateness of the nomination. Supporting documentation must not exceed 10 pages. Videos will not be considered.
 10. A completed SBA Form 2137 Award Nomination Consent Form, which is available through SBA district offices and through the online portal.

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Phoenix Awards

1. Phoenix Award for Small Business Disaster Recovery
2. Phoenix Award for Outstanding Contributions to Disaster Recovery

Phoenix Awards are given to those individuals (business owners, volunteers and public officials) whose efforts and contributions have enabled their businesses or communities to recover successfully from a disaster. SBA will make Phoenix Awards at the National level.

Phoenix Award for Small Business Disaster Recovery

Who is eligible to be nominated for this award?

Any individual who owns and operates a small business or bears principal responsibility for operating a small business that suffered physical damage following a disaster during the previous fiscal year and received an SBA physical disaster loan may be nominated. Partners who jointly own and operate a small business may be nominated as a “team” so long as the number of individuals in the team nomination does not exceed four.

Who may submit nominations for this award?

Any individual or organization dedicated to the support of the small business community in the United States, including, but not limited to, trade and professional associations and business organizations, may submit nominations for this award. Individuals may not be nominated for more than one SBW 2014 award category. Individuals may self-nominate for this award.

Where are the nominations to be sent?

Nominations must be submitted in one of two ways:

1. Nominations may be submitted to the SBA Disaster Field Operations Center West, P.O. Box 419004, Sacramento, CA 95841, Attn: Rick Jenkins; or
2. Nominations may be submitted via the online nominations portal on www.sba.gov.

What is the deadline for nominations?

All nominations for Phoenix Awards submitted to the SBA Disaster Field Operations Center West must be postmarked or hand delivered to the appropriate SBA Disaster Field Operations Center **no later than 11:59 p.m. ET, January 17, 2014**. All nominations submitted through the online nominations portal must be uploaded and submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. ET, January 17, 2014.

What information must the nomination package contain?

Nominations submitted to the SBA Disaster Field Operations Centers in the state or territory where the business is located must be typewritten on one side of 8 1/2” x 11” white stationery, collated and secured in a 1 1/2” binder.

Nominations submitted via the online nominations portal must also be typewritten and contain the information required below. Incomplete nomination packages will not be considered. All evaluation/selection criteria must be specifically addressed.

1. A single cover page stating —
 - a) the nominee’s full name, title, business and home addresses with telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address if applicable;
 - b) the award for which the nomination is being made;

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- c) the nominator's name, title, place of business, business address and telephone number and e-mail address if applicable;
 - d) the type of SBA assistance received (e.g., loan, SCORE counseling, SBDC assistance, etc.), if applicable; and
 - e) a one-paragraph description of the nominee's business.
2. A completed background form (SBA Form 3300, Award Nomination Form) which is available through SBA district offices and the online nominations portal. For "team" nominations, a background form is required for each team member;
 1. An original 8" x 10" or 5" x 7" photo of the nominee; or a digital photo – at least 300 dpi; photocopies are not acceptable.
 2. Four to five additional photos of the nominee's company and employees at work; official company photos may be submitted provided that the submitter has permission to use them from the company and/or employees in the photo.
 3. A nomination letter, to include a concise statement of the qualities and performance that merit the award, not exceeding four pages.
 4. A brief biography of the nominee, not exceeding one page.
 5. A business profile that must include documentation supporting approval of the SBA disaster loan.
 6. A narrative reporting how the disaster damaged the business, how the company was able to rebuild and maintain 90 percent of its pre-disaster work force after receiving the SBA disaster loan, steps taken to prevent future disaster damage (if any), photos documenting the disaster damage (if possible), and photos of the rebuilt property.
 7. Any other supporting documentation deemed significant by the nominator, including news clips, letters of recommendation and other evidence of the appropriateness of the nomination. Supporting documentation must not exceed 10 pages.
 8. A completed SBA Form 2137 Award Nomination Consent Form, which is available at SBA district offices and through the online nominations portal.

What are the selection procedures for this award?

Following determination of eligibility by the appropriate SBA Disaster Field Operations Center, nomination packages will be forwarded to the Office of Communications and Public Liaison, Washington, D.C., for review and recommendation of national award winners. Winners will be selected by the SBA Administrator, based on the recommendations of a panel of judges comprised of federal employees.

What are the evaluation/selection criteria for this award?

1. Recent disaster — Businesses that suffered a physical disaster loss and received an SBA disaster loan during fiscal years 2012 or 2013 are eligible for nomination. A business that suffered losses in a disaster that occurred during fiscal year 2011 but did not receive an SBA disaster loan until fiscal year 2012 is also eligible for nomination.

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2. Resiliency — The business successfully resumed its operations within the same geographic area.
3. Extent of damage — The business suffered at least 40 percent physical damage.
4. Staying Power — The business was able to maintain at least 90 percent of its pre-disaster employment level or has plans to rehire employees.
5. Contribution to the local community (e.g., the only supermarket in town, a major source of employment in the city, etc.).
6. Speed of recovery.
7. Initiative and innovation displayed during recovery.
8. Efforts made by the business to protect the property from future disaster losses.

Phoenix Award for Outstanding Contributions to Disaster Recovery

Who is eligible to be nominated for this award?

Any private-citizen volunteer or public official may be nominated for his/her outstanding contribution to a community's recovery following a natural disaster which occurred during the previous fiscal year. For purposes of this award, a public official is a person who has been elected to carry out some portion of a government's powers, whether Federal, state, or local, or a person who has been appointed to a position at the Federal, state, or local level of government. In some cities, mayors or city council members are appointed, not elected, yet those non-elected officials are also eligible. For purposes of this award, a private citizen volunteer is an individual who uses available resources to support the recovery efforts of the community. Corporate citizens are not eligible for this award.

Who may submit nominations for this award?

Any individual or organization dedicated to the support of the small business community in the United States, including, but not limited to, trade and professional associations and business organizations, may submit nominations for this award. Individuals may not be nominated for more than one SBW 2014 award category. Individuals may self-nominate for this award.

Where are the nominations to be sent?

Nominations must be submitted in one of two ways:

3. Nominations may be submitted to the SBA Disaster Field Operations Center West, P.O. Box 419004, Sacramento, CA 95841, Attn: Rick Jenkins; or
4. Nominations may be submitted via the online nominations portal on www.sba.gov.

What is the deadline for nominations?

All nominations for Phoenix Awards submitted to the SBA Disaster Field Operations Centers in the state or territory where the nominee is located must be postmarked or hand delivered to the appropriate SBA Disaster Field Operations Center **no later than 11:59 p.m. ET, January 17, 2014**. All nominations submitted through the online nominations portal must be uploaded and submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. ET, January 17, 2014.

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What information must the nomination package contain?

Nominations submitted to the SBA Disaster Field Operations Center covering the state or territory where the nominee is located must be typewritten on one side of 8 1/2" x 11" white stationery, collated and secured in a 1 1/2" binder.

Nominations submitted via the online nominations portal must also be typewritten and contain the information required below. Incomplete nomination packages will not be considered. All evaluation/selection criteria must be specifically addressed.

A complete nomination package will also include, in the following order if submitted via hard copy:

- a) A single cover page stating —•the nominee’s full name, title, business and home addresses with telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address if applicable;
 - b) the award for which the nomination is being made;
 - c) the nominator’s name, title, place of business, business address and telephone number and e-mail address if applicable; and
 - d) a one-paragraph description of the nominee’s business and/or professional occupation.
2. A completed background form (SBA Form 3300, Award Nomination Form) which is available through SBA district offices and the online nominations portal.
 3. An original 8" x 10" or 5" x 7" photo of the nominee; or a digital photo – at least 300 dpi; photocopies are not acceptable.
 4. A nomination letter, to include a concise statement of the qualities and performance that merit the award, not exceeding four pages.
 5. A brief biography of the nominee, not exceeding one page.
 6. A narrative detailing how that person responded to the needs of the community in the aftermath of the disaster, as well as a biography and photo of the nominee.
 7. Any other supporting documentation deemed significant by the nominator, including photos, news clips, letters of recommendation and other evidence of the appropriateness of the nomination. Supporting documentation must not exceed 10 pages.
 8. A completed SBA Form 2137 Award Nomination Consent Form, attached and is available at SBA district offices and through the online nominations portal.

What are the selection procedures for this award?

Phoenix Award nominees in the Outstanding Contribution to Disaster Recovery by a Public Official and Private-Citizen Volunteer categories are judged on the substantive, selfless and far-reaching nature of their contribution to the post-disaster recovery of their respective communities. Following determination of eligibility by the appropriate SBA Disaster Field Operations Center, nomination packages will be forwarded to the Office of Communications and Public Liaison, Washington, D.C., for review and recommendation of national award winners. Winners will be selected by the SBA Administrator, based on the recommendations of a panel of judges comprised of federal employees.

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What are the evaluation/selection criteria for this award?

Public official:

1. Recent disaster — Communities that suffered a physical disaster during fiscal years 2012 or 2013 are eligible for nomination.
2. Took quick, proactive steps to establish calm in the aftermath of the disaster
3. Functioned as an organized and focused leader, communicating effectively with local and federal emergency responders while coordinating rescue and recovery efforts
4. Gave selflessly of his/her time, energy, and skills to protect and reassure the public
5. Deeply involved in the long-term recovery and future disaster preparedness of the community.

Volunteer:

1. Recent disaster — Communities that suffered a physical disaster during fiscal years 2012 or 2013 are eligible for nomination.
2. Took the initiative, in the face of their own losses and/or risk, to coordinate the gathering and distribution of food, water, clothing, cleaning supplies, and other survival essentials to disaster victims
3. Creatively used their own resources toward providing assistance to those in need.
4. Reached out to local media, elected officials, and those not affected by the disaster to expand the circle of recovery support
5. Selflessly, consistently and tirelessly worked to help as many disaster victims as possible to take the first steps toward rebuilding their lives

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8(a) Graduate of the Year Award

SBA will make the 8(a) Graduate of the Year Award to a formerly certified 8(a) Business Development Program participant that **graduated from the 8(a) Program for at least one year as of April 1, 2013**. The firm does not have to currently be a small business.

Who is eligible for the National 8(a) Graduate of the Year Award?

1. Nominees must be residents of the United States or its territories and will be subject to background checks.
2. Firm must have a demonstrated history of successful performance on 8(a) contracts while in the 8(a) Business Development Program.
3. Companies and/or their principal owner(s) must not appear on the suspending or debarred list as published by GSA at www.sam.gov.
4. Firm must still be primarily owned, managed, and controlled by the person(s) whom 8(a) eligibility was based at the time of participation.
5. The most recent fiscal year-end financial statement must reflect non 8(a) sales of not less than 51 percent of total sales.
6. Businesses owned and operated by nominees must comply with federal civil rights laws.
7. If nominee or nominee's firm has an SBA loan, payment record must be satisfactory and the loan must be current and in good standing.
8. Firm must be in satisfactory financial condition, i.e. financial capability: sufficient capitalization, financial performance, bonding capacity, manageable debts. Applicants are ineligible if it is found that the firm, or any of its principals, has failed to pay Federal financial obligations.
9. For government contracts, the nominee must have performed satisfactorily on all contracts, and have had no terminations for default.
10. Before SBA publicly announces any awards, nominee must be cleared by the SBA's Office of Inspector General and EEO/CR offices.
11. The nominee must be a formerly certified 8(a) Business Development Program participant that graduated from the 8(a) Program for at least one year as of April 1, 2013.
12. The firm does not have to be a small business.

Who may submit nominations for this award?

Any individual or organization dedicated to the support of the small business community in the United States, including, but not limited to, trade and professional associations and business organizations, may submit nominations for the 8(a) Graduate of the Year award. Individuals may self-nominate for the 8(a) Graduate of the Year award. Individuals may not be nominated for more than one SBW 2014 award category.

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Where are the nominations to be sent?

Nominations must be submitted in one of two ways:

1. Nominations may be submitted to the U.S. Small Business Administration district office in the state or territory where the nominee is located; or
2. Nominations may be submitted via the online nominations portal on www.sba.gov.

What information must the nomination package contain?

Nominations submitted to SBA district office in the state or territory where the nominee is located must be typewritten on one side of 8 1/2" x 11" white stationery, collated and secured in a 1 1/2" binder.

Nominations submitted via the online nominations portal must also be typewritten and contain the information required below. Incomplete nomination packages will not be considered. All evaluation/selection criteria must be specifically addressed.

A complete nomination package will also include, in the following order if submitted via hard copy:

1. Nomination letter, to include a concise statement of the qualities and performance that merit the award, not exceeding four pages.
2. A single cover page stating:
 - Award for which the nomination is being made (i.e., 8(a) Graduate of the Year Award);
 - a) Nominator's name and title,
 - b) business address, home address,
 - c) telephone number and e-mail address.
3. A completed background form (SBA Form 3300, Award Nomination Form) which is available through SBA district offices and the online nominations portal.
4. An original 8" x 10" or 5" x 7" photo of the nominee; or a digital photo – at least 300 dpi; photocopies are not acceptable.
5. Four to five additional photos of the nominee's company and employees at work (official company photos may be submitted provided that the submitter has permission to use them from the company and/or employees in the photo).
6. A brief biography of the nominee, not exceeding one page.
7. A business profile, not exceeding one page.
8. Any other supporting documentation deemed significant by the nominator, including news clips, letters of recommendation and other evidence of the appropriateness of the nomination. Supporting documentation must not exceed 10 pages. Videos will not be considered.
9. A completed SBA Form 2137 Award Nomination Consent Form which are available at SBA district offices and through the online nominations portal.

What is the deadline for nominations?

All nominations for the 8(a) Graduate of the Year award submitted to U.S. Small Business Administration district office in the state or territory where the nominee is located must be postmarked or hand delivered **no**

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later than 11:59pm ET on January 17, 2014. All nominations submitted through the online nominations portal must be uploaded and submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. ET, January 17, 2014.

What are the evaluation/selection criteria for the 8(a) Graduate of the Year Award?

In evaluating the nomination packages, the judges will look at the following criteria:

1. Management
 - a. Overall Qualifications/Expertise of Management
 - b. Familiarity with Government Regulations/Contracting Practices
 - c. Staff Qualifications in line with Contract Requirements (Technical Capabilities)
 - d. Customer Interface (Customer Support)
 - e. Response to adversities, obstacles, etc. to achieve present level of success
 - f. Participation in community projects and charitable affairs.
2. Exceptional Results/Special Achievements
 - a. Deliverables in line with, or exceed, contract requirements
 - b. Full and efficient utilization of assets
3. Cost Performance
 - a. Sustained control over Performance Costs
 - b. Financial Stability over length of contract
 - c. Contingency Labor Adjustments
 - d. Value Engineering Change Proposals (Performance Adjustments)
 - e. Internal Cost Controls
4. Increase in sales and/or unit volume over the last three years
5. Current and past financial performance – document an improved financial position of the business:
 - a. Profit-and-loss statements for the last three years, reflecting sustained upward growth
 - b. Balance sheets for the last three years, showing consistent increase in net worth and/or partners' return,
 - c. Growth in full-time employees
6. Innovativeness of product(s) or service(s) offered:
 - a. Specific description of unique/superior product or service
 - b. Explanation of how product or service fills a niche or technical need not being adequately addressed by the competition
7. Description of exceptional results and/or delivery performance that makes this company a valued product/service provider
8. Economic engagement of the disadvantaged community
 - a. Use of minority firms as suppliers, subcontractors, etc.
 - b. Noted employment of the disadvantaged

What are the selection procedures for this award?

The 8(a) Graduate of the Year Award winner will be selected at the District, Regional and National levels. Each District office will select a winner from which the Regional winner will be selected. Each Regional winner will be sent to the Headquarters Office of Business Development where final selection will be made for the National winner by a panel of judges that will be comprised of SBA employees.

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SBA Resource Partner Awards

Small Business Development Center Excellence and Innovation Award

Who is eligible to be nominated for this award?

This award honors a Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Service Center for excellence in providing value to small businesses and advancing program delivery and management through innovation.

Who may submit nominations for this award?

Any individual or organization dedicated to the support of the small business community in the United States, including, but not limited to, trade and professional associations and business organizations, may nominate an SBDC Service Center for this award. Lead SBDC Centers may nominate SBDC Service Centers in their network.

Where are the nominations to be sent?

Nominations must be submitted in one of two ways:

1. Nominations may be submitted to the U.S. Small Business Administration district office in the state or territory where the nominee is located; or

2. Nominations may be submitted via the online nominations portal on www.sba.go.

What is the deadline for nominations?

All nominations for the Small Business Development Center Excellence and Innovation Award submitted to the U.S. Small Business Administration district office in the state or territory where the nominee is located must be postmarked or hand delivered to the appropriate SBA District Office **no later than 11:59 p.m. ET, January 17, 2014**. All nominations submitted through the online nominations portal must be uploaded and submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. ET, January 17, 2014.

What information must the nomination package contain?

Nominations submitted to the U.S. Small Business Administration district office in the state or territory where the nominee is located must be typewritten on one side of 8 1/2" x 11" white stationery, collated and secured in a 1 1/2" binder. Incomplete nomination packages will not be considered.

Nominations submitted via the online nominations portal must also be typewritten and contain the information required below. All evaluation/selection criteria must be specifically addressed.

A complete nomination package will also include, in the following order if submitted via hard copy:

1. A single cover page stating:
 - a. the name of the SBDC, business addresses with telephone and fax numbers, website, and e-mail address;
 - b. the SBDC director's full name, title, business and home addresses with telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address;
 - c. the name of the host organization;
 - d. the name of the executive director;
 - e. the award for which the nomination is being made;
 - f. the nominator's name, title, place of business, business address and telephone number and e-mail address; and
 - g. a one-paragraph description of the SBDC's services provided.

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2. Nomination letter, to include a concise statement of the qualities and performance that merit the award, not exceeding five pages. In addition to describing the basis for the nomination, the nomination letter should highlight an individual counselor at the SBDC who, in the view of the nominator, has excelled in providing counseling, training and other program services to small businesses. The nomination letter should also highlight a success story relating to a particular client business served by the SBDC.
3. A completed background form (SBA Form 3300, Award Nomination Form) for the Center director which is available through SBA district offices and the online nominations portal. The Center director may also include completed background forms for individual Center employees, as applicable.
4. An original 8" x 10" or 5" x 7" photo of the SBDC director; or a digital photo – at least 300 dpi; photocopies are not acceptable.
5. A brief history of the SBDC, not exceeding one page.
6. A business profile, not exceeding one page.
7. Any other supporting documentation deemed significant by the nominator, including news clips, letters of recommendation and other evidence of the appropriateness of the nomination. Supporting documentation must not exceed 10 pages. Videos will not be considered.
8. A completed SBA Form 2137 Award Nomination Consent Form, which is available through SBA district offices and through the online portal.
9. Please include the chart below in the nominee's submission.

Goal	Actual	% Achieved
Long Term Counseling Clients		
New Business Starts		
Capital Infusion		
Client Satisfaction		
Other		
Other		
Other		

*SBDCs may have additional goals and performance measures that can be included in the "other" categories.

What are the selection procedures for this award?

Small Business Development Center Award winners will be selected at the State and National levels. In those states served by more than one SBA district office, each district office will select a district level winner and the State winner will be selected at the regional level. State level winners will be selected by a panel of judges that may be comprised of both SBA employees and non-federal employees. State level winners will be considered for awards at the next highest level.

Nomination packages for each State level winner will be sent to regional SBA offices and prepared for transmittal to the SBA's Office of Communications and Public Liaison for review. The National SBDC

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Excellence and Innovation Award of the Year winner will be selected from the State winners based on the recommendations of the Agency's National SBDC Advisory Board, whose members are appointed by the SBA Administrator.

What are the evaluation/selection criteria for this award?

In evaluating the nomination packages, the judges will look at the following criteria:

S – Surpasses

- Meets or exceeds the service center's performance milestones including long-term counseling clients (5 hours of counseling contact time), new businesses started, capital infusion, client satisfaction and may include other center goals. (Include actual results and the related goal).

B – Builds

- Helps build small businesses by creating and implementing innovative programs, events, publications, research materials, and online applications. This success is demonstrated through success stories, job creation/retention and revenue growth resulting from SBDC counseling and training assistance.

D – Develops

- Prepares the service center for success by actively participating with the lead center in the professional development of counselors in accordance with the network's strategic plan.

C – Champions

- Acknowledged by the local/regional small business and economic development community as an advocate for advancing opportunities for entrepreneurial development (include any relevant news articles and/or letters from partners-limit 4).

Good Standing: SBDC must be in good standing with SBA. This includes but is not limited to having no outstanding examination or review findings.

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Veterans Business Outreach Centers Excellence in Service Award

Who is eligible to be nominated for this award?

This award honors the Veterans Business Outreach Centers (VBOCs) for excellence in providing value to veterans and the veteran small business community by increasing the number of small businesses owned and controlled by veterans. The award should focus on the work of the VBOC and not on the host organization or the VBOC director.

Who may submit nominations for this award?

Any individual or organization dedicated to the support of the small business community in the United States, including, but not limited to, trade and professional associations and business organizations. Individual VBOCs may not be nominated for more than one SBW 2014 award category.

Where are the nominations to be sent?

Nominations must be submitted in one of two ways:

1. Nominations may be submitted to the Office of Veterans Business Development of the U.S. Small Business Administration, 409 3rd St., SW, Washington, DC 20416, Attn: Rhett Jeppson; or
2. Nominations may be submitted via the online nominations portal on www.sba.gov.

What is the deadline for nominations?

All nominations for the Veterans Business Outreach Centers Excellence in Service submitted to the Office of Veterans Business Development must be postmarked or hand delivered **no later than 11:59 p.m. ET, January 17, 2014**. All nominations submitted through the online nominations portal must be uploaded and submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. ET, January 17, 2014.

What information must the nomination package contain?

Nominations submitted to the Office of Veterans Business Development of the U.S. Small Business Administration must be typewritten on one side of 8 1/2" x 11" white stationery, collated and secured in a 1 1/2" binder.

Nominations submitted via the online nominations portal must also be typewritten and contain the information required below. Incomplete nomination packages will not be considered. All evaluation/selection criteria must be specifically addressed.

A complete nomination package will also include, in the following order if submitted via hard copy:

1. A single cover page stating:
 - a. the name of the VBOC, business addresses with telephone and fax numbers, website, and e-mail address;
 - b. the VBOC director's full name, title, business and home addresses with telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address;
 - c. the name of the host organization;
 - d. the name of the executive director;
 - e. the award for which the nomination is being made;
 - f. the nominator's name, title, place of business, business address and telephone number and e-mail address; and
 - g. a one-paragraph description of the VBOC's services provided.

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2. Nomination letter, to include a concise statement of the qualities and performance that merit the award, not exceeding five pages.
3. A completed background form (SBA Form 3300, Award Nomination Form) which is available through SBA district offices and online nominations portal.
4. An original 8” x 10” or 5” x 7” photo of the nominee’s executive director; or a digital photo – at least 300 dpi; photocopies are not acceptable.
5. A brief biography of the VBOC director, not exceeding one page.
6. A business profile, not exceeding one page.
7. Any other supporting documentation deemed significant by the nominator, including news clips, letters of recommendation and other evidence of the appropriateness of the nomination. Supporting documentation must not exceed 10 pages. Videos will not be considered.
8. A completed SBA Form 2137 Award Nomination Consent Form, which is available through SBA district offices and through the online portal.
9. Please include the chart below in the nominee’s submission.

Goal	Actual	% Achieved
Long Term Counseling Clients		
New Business Starts		
Capital Infusion		
Client Satisfaction		

What are the selection procedures for this award?

The Veterans Business Outreach Centers Excellence in Service Award winner will be selected at the national level.

Nomination packages will be sent to the SBA’s Office of Veterans Business Development and prepared for transmittal to the SBA’s Office of Communications and Public Liaison for review. The national winner will be selected by a panel of judges that may be comprised of both SBA employees and non-federal employees. Non-federal individuals serving as judges must sign a conflict of interest/non-disclosure certification.

What are the evaluation/selection criteria for this award?

In evaluating the nomination packages, the judges will look at the following criteria:

V – Veterans

- Meets or exceeds the VBOC’s performance milestones including long-term counseling clients (2 to 5 hours of counseling contact time), new businesses started, capital infusion, client satisfaction and may include other center goals. (Include actual results and the related goal).

B – Business

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- Helps build small businesses by creating and implementing innovative programs, events, research materials, and online applications. This success is demonstrated through success stories, job creation/retention and revenue growth resulting from VBOC counseling and training assistance.

O – Outreach

- Prepares the VBOC for success by providing relevant and timely training and counseling services to veterans interested in starting or growing a small business

C – Champions

- Acknowledged by local and regional veteran service organizations, federal, state, and local government agencies based on the wide dispersion of veteran/reservists groups VBOCs educate on the full-range of business/technical assistance programs and tools the agency offers; in addition to the centers' penetration within the veteran business communities through their successful marketing and external communication strategies used to promote the VBOC program.

Good Standing: VBOC must be in good standing with SBA. This includes but is not limited to no outstanding examination or review finding.

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Women's Business Center of Excellence Award

Who is eligible to be nominated for this award?

This award honors a Women's Business Center (WBC) for its excellence and innovation in assisting women entrepreneurs by providing a wide variety of training and counseling. The award should focus on the work of the WBC and not on the host organization or the women's business center director.

Who may submit nominations for this award?

Any individual or organization dedicated to the support of the small business community in the United States, including, but not limited to, trade and professional associations and business organizations, may submit nominations for this award. Individual WBCs may not be nominated for more than one SBW 2014 award category.

Where are the nominations to be sent?

Nominations must be submitted in one of two ways:

1. Nominations may be submitted to the U.S. Small Business Administration district office in the state or territory where the nominee is located; or
2. Nominations may be submitted via the online nominations portal on www.sba.go.

What is the deadline for nominations?

All nominations for the Women's Business Center of Excellence Award must be postmarked or hand delivered **no later than 11:59 p.m. ET, January 17, 2014**. All nominations submitted through the online nominations portal must be uploaded and submitted no later than 11:59 p.m. ET, January 17, 2014.

What information must the nomination package contain?

Nominations must be typewritten on one side of 8 1/2" x 11" white stationery, collated and secured in a 1 1/2" binder. Incomplete nomination packages will not be considered. All evaluation/selection criteria must be specifically addressed.

A complete nomination package will also include, in the following order if submitted via hard copy:

1. A single cover page stating —
 - the name of the WBC, business addresses with telephone and fax numbers, website, and e-mail address;
 - a. the WBC director's full name, title, business and home addresses with telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address;
 - b. the name of the host organization; the name of the executive director;
 - c. the award for which the nomination is being made;
 - d. the nominator's name, title, place of business, business address and telephone number and e-mail address; and
 - e. a one-paragraph description of the WBC's services provided.
2. A completed background form (SBA Form 3300, Award Nomination Form) which is available through SBA district offices and online nominations portal.
3. An original 8" x 10" or 5" x 7" photo of the nominated WBC's Center Director; or a digital photo – at least 300 dpi; photocopies are not acceptable.
4. A nomination letter, to include a concise statement of the qualities and WBC performance that merit the award, not exceeding five pages. In addition to describing the basis for the nomination, the nomination letter should highlight an individual counselor at the WBC who, in the view of the

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nominator, has excelled in providing counseling, training and other program services to small businesses. The nomination letter should also highlight a success story relating to a particular client business served by the WBC.

5. A brief biography of the Center Director, not exceeding one page.
6. A business profile, not exceeding one page, including the WBC mission statement, target market, and types of services offered, including any specialized programs or services.
7. Any other supporting documentation deemed significant by the nominator, including news clips, letters of recommendation and other evidence of the appropriateness of the nomination. Supporting documentation must not exceed 10 pages. Videos will not be considered.
8. A completed SBA Form 2137 Award Nomination Consent Form, which is available at SBA offices and through the online nominations portal.
9. A statement by the WBC Director that the Center is in compliance with the Notice of Award.

What are the selection procedures for this award?

The National Women's Business Center for Excellence Award of the Year recipient will be selected by the SBA Assistant Administrator for Women's Business Ownership based on the recommendations of a panel of judges that may be comprised of both SBA employees and non-federal employees. The winner will be announced during National Small Business Week. Non-federal employees serving as judges must sign a conflict of interest/non-disclosure certification.

What are the evaluation/selection criteria for this award?

In evaluating the nomination packages, the judges will look at the following criteria:

- 1) **Delivers Results:** Meets or exceeds performance milestones. (This is reflected in the center's on-site review, the DOTR mid and end of the year evaluations, and SBA's data collection system for counseling and training), i.e. long-term clients, new businesses created, jobs creation/retained, capital infusion, client satisfaction, success stories, counseling evaluations, etc.
- 2) **Innovates:** Creates and develops innovative events and/or programs, publications, research materials and online applications to enhance small business awareness and solutions.
- 3) **Champions:** Advocates for women's entrepreneurship and the overall small business community.
- 4) **Develops:** Partners with a variety of local, state and other entities (including SBDCs and SCORE) to grow the program through unique collaborations that not only bring in monetary matching funds but also help market the WBC.
- 5) **Good Standing:** Center must be in good standing with the SBA. This includes but is not limited to having no outstanding examination or review findings.

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Small Business Champion Awards

1. Young Entrepreneur of the Year
2. Family-Owned Business of the Year
3. Financial Services Champion of the Year
4. Home-Based Business Champion of the Year
5. Minority Small Business Champion of the Year
6. Veteran Small Business Champion of the Year
7. Women in Business Champion of the Year

SBA will make the above referenced awards to eligible small businesses at the District and Regional level.

Who may submit nominations for these awards?

Any individual or organization dedicated to the support of the small business community in the United States, including, but not limited to, trade and professional associations and business organizations, may submit nominations for these Small Business Champion Awards. Individuals may not be nominated for more than one award category.

Where are the nominations to be sent?

Nominations must be submitted to the U.S. Small Business Administration district office in the state or territory where the nominee is located.

What information must the nomination package contain?

Nominations must be typewritten on one side of 8 1/2" x 11" white stationery, collated and secured in a 11/2" binder. Incomplete nomination packages will not be considered. All evaluation/selection criteria must be specifically addressed. A complete nomination package will also include, in the following order:

1. A single cover page with —
 - a. the nominee's full name, title, business and home addresses with telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address if applicable;
 - b. the award for which the nomination is being made;
 - c. the nominator's name, title, place of business, business address and telephone number and e-mail address if applicable;
 - d. type of SBA assistance received (e.g., loan, SCORE counseling, SBDC assistance, etc.) if applicable; and
 - e. A one-paragraph description of the nominee's business.
2. A completed SBA Form 3300, Award Nomination Form. For "team" nominations for Small Business Person of the Year, a background form is required for each team member.
3. An original 8" x 10" or 5" x 7" photo of the nominee; or a digital photo – at least 300 dpi; photocopies are not acceptable.
4. Four to five additional photos from the nominee's company, employees at work.
5. A nomination letter, to include a concise statement of the qualities and performance that merit the award, not to exceed four pages.

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6. A brief biography of the nominee, not exceeding one page.
7. A business profile, not exceeding one page.
8. The nominee's financial statement — including balance sheets, profit-and-loss statements and financial reports — not exceeding 12 pages, on 8 1/2" x 11" paper - for the **last three years**.
9. Any other supporting documentation deemed significant by the nominator, including news clips, letters of recommendation and other evidence of the appropriateness of the nomination. Supporting documentation must not exceed 10 pages. Videos will not be considered.
10. A completed SBA Form 2137 Award Nomination Consent Form, which is available through SBA field offices.

What are the selection procedures for these awards?

The SBA Small Business Champions will be selected at the district level by a panel of judges. The winners will be announced during National Small Business Week. Non-federal employees serving as judges must sign a conflict of interest/non-disclosure certification.

Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria

To be nominated and receive one of these awards, the small business nominee must fit within the category of the award. Each of the above Small Business Champion awards has specific evaluation criteria which are listed below:

Young Entrepreneur of the Year

To be considered a young entrepreneur, the individual must serve as a majority owner and operate or bear principal responsibility for operating a small business with a three year track record, and who will not have reached the age of 30 by June 1, 2014.

1. Evidence of success as measured by sales and profits.
2. Increased employment opportunities created by the nominee's business.
3. Development and/or utilization of innovative or creative business methods.
4. Demonstrated entrepreneurial potential necessary for long-term business success and economic growth.

Family-Owned Business of the Year

This award honors a family-owned and operated business which has been passed on from one generation to the next. The owner must also serve as a majority owner and operator or bear principal responsibility for operating a small business with at least a 15-year track record.

1. Evidence of success as measured by sales and profits.
2. Increased employment opportunities for family members and non-family members for the nominee's business.
3. Demonstrated potential necessary for long-term business success and economic growth.
4. Voluntary efforts to strengthen family-owned businesses within the community.

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Financial Services Champion of the Year

An individual who assists small businesses through advocacy efforts to increase the usefulness and availability of accounting or financial services for small businesses may be nominated. Nominees may or may not be small business owners.

1. Outside of regular business duties, the amount and quality of assistance given small businesses to obtain financing.
2. Advocacy for changes in the financial services industry to assist small companies.
3. Encouragement of the flow of investment capital to small ventures.
4. Active support for legislative or regulatory action designed to help small firms.
5. Measurable accomplishments through the advocacy efforts of the financial services or accounting industries to advance small business interests.

Home-Based Business Champion of the Year

An individual who has experienced the rewards and difficulties of owning a home-based business and has volunteered to improve the climate for these businesses may be nominated. Nominees may or may not be current small business owners.

1. Volunteer efforts to improve the conditions for home-based businesses.
2. Entrepreneurial training, policy development efforts, or financial or business planning specifically tailored for home-based businesses.
3. Demonstrated interest in home-based businesses by an owner or former owner.
4. Measurable accomplishments in advancing home-based businesses, such as adoption of public policy or expansion of a program.

Minority Small Business Champion of the Year

An individual who has fulfilled a commitment to the advancement of small business opportunities for minority business owners may be nominated. Nominees may or may not be small business owners.

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

Veteran Small Business Champion of the Year

An individual who has fulfilled a commitment to the advancement of small business opportunities for veterans of the U.S. armed forces may be nominated. Nominees may or may not be veterans.

1. Active support for legislative or regulatory action designed to help small businesses.
2. Evidence of increased business opportunities for veterans as a result of the nominee's actions.
3. Advisory activities to improve awareness of small business opportunities among veterans' groups.

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4. Advocacy of special consideration for veteran-owned small businesses in government policymaking.
5. Demonstrated success in obtaining support within the community for the establishment of veteran-owned small businesses.
6. Other accomplishments demonstrating the nominee's effective advocacy of veteran-owned small businesses.

Women in Business Champion of the Year

An individual who has fulfilled a commitment to the advancement of women's business ownership may be nominated. Nominees may or may not be small business owners.

1. Active support for legislative or regulatory action designed to help small businesses.
2. Efforts to increase business and financial opportunities for women.
3. Legal, financial or managerial assistance provided to enhance women's business ownership.
4. Voluntary efforts to strengthen the role of women business owners within the community.
5. Advocacy of the women-owned business community as a whole, not solely for individual personal advancement.
6. Other accomplishments demonstrating effectiveness in improving the environment for the creation and expansion of businesses owned and operated by women.

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Entrepreneurial Success Award

Individuals must own and operate businesses initially launched as small businesses according to SBA size standards and subsequently developed into large businesses; and they must have received SBA assistance to help the businesses grow.

SBA will make the above referenced award to eligible businesses on the district level (in multi-district states), the state level (from each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam) and the national level. The National winners will be selected from the State winners.

Who is eligible to be nominated for this award?

To be nominated and receive this award, the nominee must be an individual who owns and operates or who bears principal responsibility for operating a business. Partners who jointly own and operate a business may be nominated as a “team,” so long as the number of individuals in the team nomination does not exceed four. A nominee for this award must own or operate a business that initially was defined as “small” under the applicable SBA size standards, developed into a large business and must have received SBA assistance to help the business grow. Nominees must also be residents of and employed in the United States or its territories and will be subject to background checks. Consult your nearest SBA district office if you have questions.

Who may submit nominations for this award?

Any individual or organization dedicated to the support of the small business community in the United States, including, but not limited to, trade and professional associations and business organizations, may submit nominations for this Award. Individuals may not be nominated for more than one award category.

Where are the nominations to be sent?

Nominations must be submitted to the U.S. Small Business Administration district office in the state or territory where the nominee is located.

What is the deadline for nominations?

All nominations for the Entrepreneurial Success Award must be postmarked or hand delivered no later than **Jan 17, 2014**.

What information must the nomination package contain?

Nominations must be typewritten on one side of 8 1/2” x 11” white stationery, collated and secured in a 11/2” binder. Incomplete nomination packages will not be considered. All evaluation/selection criteria must be specifically addressed. A complete nomination package will also include, in the following order:

1. A single cover page with —
 - a. the nominee’s full name, title, business and home addresses with telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address if applicable;
 - b. the award for which the nomination is being made;
 - c. the nominator’s name, title, place of business, business address and telephone number and e-mail address if applicable;
 - d. type of SBA assistance received (e.g., loan, SCORE counseling, SBDC assistance, etc.) if applicable; and
 - e. A one-paragraph description of the nominee’s business.
2. A completed SBA Form 3300, Award Nomination Form. For “team” nominations for Small Business Person of the Year, a background form is required for each team member.

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3. An original 8" x 10" or 5" x 7" photo of the nominee; or a digital photo – at least 300 dpi; photocopies are not acceptable.
4. Four to five additional photos from the nominee's company, employees at work.
5. A nomination letter, to include a concise statement of the qualities and performance that merit the award, not to exceed four pages.
6. A brief biography of the nominee, not exceeding one page.
7. A business profile, not exceeding one page.
8. The nominee's financial statement — including balance sheets, profit-and-loss statements and financial reports — not exceeding 12 pages, on 8 1/2" x 11" paper - for the **last three years**.
9. Any other supporting documentation deemed significant by the nominator, including news clips, letters of recommendation and other evidence of the appropriateness of the nomination. Supporting documentation must not exceed 10 pages. Videos will not be considered.
10. A completed SBA Form 2137 Award Nomination Consent Form, which is available through SBA field offices.

What are the selection procedures for this award?

The SBA Entrepreneurial Success Award winners will be selected at the district level by a panel of judges. The winner will be announced during National Small Business Week. Non-federal individuals serving as judges must sign a conflict of interest/non-disclosure certification.

What are the evaluation/selection criteria for the SBA Entrepreneurial Success award?

In evaluating the nomination packages, the judges will look at the following criteria:

1. **Staying power** — a substantiated history as an established business; including:
 - a. Number of years in business; minimum three years.
 - b. Sustained expansion, addition of territories, growth in square footage occupied.
 - c. Steady growth in net worth as evidenced by total assets less total liabilities on fiscal year end annual balance sheets over three years.
2. **Growth in number of employees** — a benchmark to judge the impact of the business on the job market.
 - a. Sustained over a minimum of three years.
 - b. Increase over the three years must be in excess of growth in Gross National Product.
3. **Increase in sales and/or unit volume** — an indication of continued growth over the last three years. Consistent growth in net income as evidenced by fiscal year annual profit-and-loss statements for a minimum of the last three years.
4. **Current and past financial performance** — financial reports substantiate an improved financial position of the business.
 - a. Profit-and-loss statements for the last three years, reflecting sustained upward growth.

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- b. Balance sheets for the last three years, showing consistent increase in net worth and/or partners' return.
- 5. **SBA Assistance** – documentation of the type(s) and amount(s) of SBA assistance received by the business and the year(s) in which it was received.
- 6. **Innovativeness of product or service offered** — an illustration of the creativity and imagination of the nominee.
 - a. • Specific description of uniqueness of product or service.
 - b. Explanation of how product or service fits a niche not being adequately addressed by the competition.
- 7. **Response to adversity** — examples of problems faced in the nominee's business and the methods used to solve them, including:
 - a. Specific description of financial, physical, legal or other crisis.
 - b. Substantiation of the threat to the continuity of the business.
 - c. Defined actions taken by the nominee to resolve the crisis.
- 8. **Contributions to community-oriented projects** — evidence of the use of his/her personal time and resources, including:
 - a. Listing of specific contributions of money, time, or resources to charitable causes.
 - b. Membership in councils, boards and clubs providing support and services to the community.

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The Agency reserves the right, in its sole reasonable discretion, to remove a nominee from the selection process.