**Who is eligible to be nominated for these awards?**

Any individual who owns and operates or who bears principal responsibility for operating a small business may be nominated. Individuals who have received the SBA's Small Business Person of the Year Award at the State level within the past five years are not eligible. All nominees must also be residents of and located in one of the 159 counties of the State of Georgia. All nominees 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. To be nominated and receive one of these awards, the nominee must fit within the category of the award.

**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 the Small Business Week Awards. Individuals may not be nominated for more than one SBW 2015 award category.

**Where are the nominations to be sent?**

Nominations for all award categories, except the Small Business Person of the Year, may be submitted in one of two ways:

1. Completed paper nominations may be sent to the SBA Georgia District Office located at:
   Small Business Week
   Georgia District Office
   233 Peachtree Street, NE
   Suite 1900 – Harris Tower
   Atlanta, GA 30303

2. By email to: georgia@sba.gov if the nomination and attachments do not exceed 5 MB. If the nomination and attachments exceed 5MB send in consecutive e-mails identified appropriately.

**What is the deadline for nominations?**

All nominations for all Georgia District Office awards must be emailed, postmarked, or hand delivered to the District Office **no later than March 6, 2015.**

**What information must each nomination package contain?**

These are the requirements for all award categories, except the Advocate Awards which do NOT require the submission of financial statements. Nominations must be typewritten on one side of 8 1/2" x 11" white stationery, collated and secured. 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 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. 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;
3. Four to five additional photos of the nominee's company and employees at work;
4. A nomination letter, to include a concise statement of the qualities and performance that merit the award, not to exceed four pages;
5. A brief biography of the nominee, not to exceed one page;
6. A business profile, not to exceed one page;
7. The nominee's financial statements — 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. Financial Statements will be reviewed only by the District Director for Lender Relations and will not be shared with anyone else. Strict confidentiality will be maintained at all times. Advocate Awards nominations are exempt from this requirement.
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 3300, Award Nomination Form which is available at: www.sba.gov. For "team" nominations for Small Business Owner of the Year, a background form is required for each team member.

**<u>What are the evaluation/selection criteria for awards?</u>**

In evaluating the nomination packages, the judges will utilize the following criteria:

1. Staying power — a substantiated history as an established business; including:
    - Number of years in business; minimum three years.
    - Sustained expansion, addition of territories, growth in square footage occupied.
    - 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.
    - Sustained over a minimum of three years.
    - 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.
   - Profit-and-loss statements for the last three years, reflecting sustained upward growth.
   - Balance sheets for the last three years, showing consistent increase in net worth and/or partners' return.
5. Innovativeness of product or service offered — an illustration of the creativity and imagination of the nominee.
   - Specific description of uniqueness of product or service.
   - Explanation of how product or service fits a niche not being adequately addressed by the competition.
6. Response to adversity — examples of problems faced in the nominee's business and the methods used to solve them, including:
   - Specific description of financial, physical, legal or other crisis.
   - Substantiation of the threat to the continuity of the business.
   - Defined actions taken by the nominee to resolve the crisis.
7. Contributions to community-oriented projects — evidence of the use of his/her personal time and resources, including:
   - Listing of specific contributions of money, time, or resources to charitable causes.