

2017 Champion Award Categories

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. They are judged based on the following criteria:

- Sustainability — a substantiated history as an established business
- Growth in number of employees — a benchmark to judge the impact of the business on the job market
- Increase in sales and/or unit volume — an indication of continued growth over the last three years.
- Current and past financial performance — financial reports substantiate an improved financial position of the business.
- 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.
- Innovativeness of product or service offered — an illustration of the creativity and imagination of the nominee.
- Response to adversity — examples of problems faced in the nominee's business and the methods used to solve them
- Contributions to community-oriented projects — evidence of the use of his/her personal time and resources.

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. Nominees are judged on the following criteria:

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

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 and are judged on the following criteria:

- Outside of regular business duties, the amount and quality of assistance given small businesses to obtain financing.
- Advocacy for changes in the financial services industry to assist small companies.
- Encouragement of the flow of investment capital to small ventures.
- Active support for legislative or regulatory action designed to help small firms.
- 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 and are judged on the following criteria:

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

LGBT Business Advocate of the Year

The LGBT Business Advocate of the Year Award will recognize an individual or individuals who champion the advancement of small business opportunities for LGBT business community.

- Concerted and demonstrated efforts to increase public understanding of the importance of LGBT small business contributions to the economy, especially in Georgia.
- Other achievements that exemplify the nominee's efforts to improve the advancement of the LGBT business community.
- Other accomplishments demonstrating the nominee's merit as an effective advocate for LGBT small business interests.

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 and are judged on the following criteria:

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

Small Business Media Advocate of the Year

The Small Business Media Advocate of the Year Award will recognize an outstanding journalist from television, radio, web, electronic or print media whose work supports the growth and expansion of small businesses in the state of Georgia. The nomination package must include a minimum of three of the nominee's originally authored and published articles or URL links. The selection will be based on:

- Concerted and demonstrated efforts to increase public understanding of the importance of small business contributions to the economy, especially in Georgia.
- Contribution of content and feature stories, editorials, columns and commentary that highlight and analyze small business issues in Georgia.
- Voluntary community service aimed at enhancing small business opportunity and growth.
- Other achievements that exemplify the nominee's efforts to improve the understanding and importance of small businesses to the U.S. economy with a particular focus on those in Georgia.

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 and are judged on the following criteria:

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

- Advocacy of special consideration for veteran-owned small businesses in government policymaking.
- Demonstrated success in obtaining support within the community for the establishment of veteran-owned small businesses.
- 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 and are judged on the following criteria:

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

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, 2017. Nominees are judged on the following criteria:

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