

2020 Tennessee Small Business Week Awards Program Nomination Guidelines

The U.S. Small Business Administration is now accepting nominations for its 2019 National Small Business Week Awards, including the annual Small Business Person of the Year. You are encouraged to visit our dedicated website www.sba.gov/nsbw to download forms, criteria and guidelines for submitting a nomination. We look forward to your nomination and wish you the best of luck. Any individual or organization dedicated to the support of the small business community in the United States may submit nominations for the National Awards and state awards

NATIONAL AWARDS

- **Small Business Person of the Year**
- **Small Business Exporter of the Year**
- **8(a) Graduate of the Year**

Nominations for the national awards should be sent no later than **3 p.m. CST, on Wednesday, January 7, 2020**, to: SBA Tennessee District Office, Attn: C. Shawn Mckeehan, 2 International Plaza Drive, Suite 500, Nashville, TN 37217. Email submissions of SBA Awards forms will not be accepted. Any questions, please contact C. Shawn McKeehan by phone at (615) 736-2499 or via email at christopher.mckeehan@sba.gov.

TENNESSEE STATE AWARDS

- **Tennessee Minority Owned Small Business of the Year**
- **Tennessee Rural Owned Small Business of the Year**
- **Tennessee Veteran Owned Small Business of the Year**
- **Tennessee Woman Owned Small Business of the Year**
- **Tennessee Young Entrepreneur of the Year**
- **Tennessee HUBZone Firm of the Year**
- **Tennessee Online Small Business of the Year**
- **Tennessee Small Business Inventor of the Year**
- **Tennessee Small Business Media Advocate of the Year**
- **Tennessee Small Business Start-up of the Year**

Nominations should be sent no later than **3pm CST on February 3, 2020**, to: SBA Tennessee District Office, Attn: C. Shawn Mckeehan, 2 International Plaza Drive, Suite 500, Nashville, TN 37217. Email submissions of SBA Awards forms will not be accepted. Any questions, please contact C. Shawn McKeehan by phone at (615) 736-2499 or via email at christopher.mckeehan@sba.gov.

Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria

All nominees for Small Business Week awards (National Awards and Tennessee State Awards) must 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. The SBA size standards apply in defining a small business as small. Individuals may not be nominated for more than one award category. ***The Agency reserves the right, in its sole reasonable discretion, to remove a nominee from the selection process. Before SBA publicly announces any awards, nominee must be cleared by the SBA's Office of Inspector General and EEO/CR offices.***

Tennessee Small Business Person of the Year Award (eligible for National Award)

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. Business must qualify as “small” according to 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. **SBA assistance IS required** (one or more of the following: counseling, financing, contracting).

Evaluation Criteria:

In evaluating the nomination packages Person of the Year Award, the judges will look at the following 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 three years must be in excess of growth in Gross Domestic Product
- 3) Increase in sales, net profit, and net worth for the three prior calendar years, that is, 2015, 2016 and 2017.
- 4) Response to adversity—examples of problems faced in the nominee’s 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

Nomination Packages must include, in this order:

Nomination Packages must include, in this order:

1. A completed background form (SBA Form 3300, Award Nomination Form). For “team” nominations, a background form is required for each team member.
2. A completed nomination form (SBA Form 3301, Small Business Person of the Year)
3. An original 8” x 10” or 5” x 7” photo of the nominee or a digital photo (at least 300dpi). Photocopies are not acceptable.
4. Additional supporting documentation deemed significant by the nominator, including news clips, letters of recommendation, nomination letter (if not self-nominated) and other evidence of the appropriateness of the nomination. Supporting documentation must not exceed 10 pages. Videos will not be considered.
5. A completed SBA Form 2137 Award Nomination Consent Form. For “team” nominations, a separate form is required for each team member.

Submit nominations by 3pm CST on Wednesday, January 7, 2020

Mail or hand deliver to SBA Tennessee District Office, Attn: C. Shawn Mckeehan, 2 International Plaza Drive, Suite 500, Nashville, TN 37217. (Paper nomination packages must be typewritten on one side of 8 ½” x 11” white paper, and secured in a 1½” 3-ring binder. Please do not use page protectors except as necessary for supporting documentation (brochures/flyers, certificates, newspaper articles, etc.)

SBA Forms 3300 & 3301 can be found online at www.sba.gov/nsbw

In order to be considered for competition, the nomination package must contain each of the items listed above. All evaluation/selection criteria must be specifically addressed. Incomplete packages will not be considered.

Small Business Exporter of the Year Award (eligible for National Award)

Any individual who owns and operates a small business engaged in exporting may be nominated. **SBA assistance IS required** (one or more of the following: counseling, financing, contracting).

Evaluation Criteria:

In evaluating the nomination packages for the Exporter of the Year Award, the judges will use the following criteria:

- 1) Increased sales, profits and/or growth of employment because of exporting. Clearly articulate what exporting has meant to the company (e.g. 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

Nomination Packages must include, in this order:

1. A completed background form (SBA Form 3300, Award Nomination Form). For “team” nominations, a background form is required for each team member.
2. A completed nomination form (SBA Form 3302, Small Business Exporter of the Year)
3. An original 8” x 10” or 5” x 7” photo of the nominee; or a digital photo (at least 300dpi). Photocopies are not acceptable.
4. Additional supporting documentation deemed significant by the nominator, including news clips, letters of recommendation, nomination letter (if not self-nominated) and other evidence of the appropriateness of the nomination. Supporting documentation must not exceed 10 pages. Videos will not be considered.
5. A completed SBA Form 2137 Award Nomination Consent Form. For “team” nominations, a separate form is required for each team member.

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SBA Forms 3300 & 3302 can be found online at www.sba.gov/nsbw.

In order to be considered for competition, the nomination package must contain each of the items listed above. All evaluation/selection criteria must be specifically addressed. Incomplete packages will not be considered.

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

SBA will make the 8(a) Graduate of the Year Award to a formerly certified 8(a) Business Development Program participant that has graduated from the 8(a) Program for at least one year as of April 1, 2019. The firm does not have to currently be a small business. Nominees for this award must meet the

following eligibility requirements. Consult C. Shawn McKeehan by phone at (615) 736-2499 or by email at christopher.mckeehan@sba.gov if you have questions.

Eligibility Criteria:

- Firm must have a demonstrated history of successful performance on 8(a) contracts while in the 8(a) Business Development Program;
- Companies and/or their principal owner(s) must not appear on the suspended or debarred list as published at www.sam.gov;
- Firm must still be primarily owned, managed, and controlled by the person(s) whom 8(a) eligibility was based at the time of participation;
- The firm must show reduced reliance on 8(a) contracts; the most recent fiscal year-end financial statement must reflect non 8(a) sales of 50% or more of total sales;
- Businesses owned and operated by nominees must comply with federal civil rights laws;
- 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;
- 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;
- For government contracts, the nominee must have performed satisfactorily on all contracts, and have had no terminations for default;
- 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, 2019; and
- The firm does not have to be a small business.
- Individuals or firms who are currently suspended or debarred by the Federal government are not eligible.

Evaluation Criteria:

1) Management

- a. Overall Qualifications/Expertise of Management
- b. Customer Interface (Customer Engagement)
- c. Response to adversities, obstacles, etc. to achieve the present level of success

2) Exceptional Results/Special Achievements

- a. Deliverables in line with or exceeding contract requirements
- b. Exceptional past performance record; and description of exceptional results and/or delivery performance that makes this company a valued product/service provider
- c. Awards and Recognition

3) Cost Performance

- a. Financial Stability and Credit Worthiness
- b. Value Engineering Change Proposals (Performance Adjustments)
- c. Increase in sales, net profit and net worth Growth in full-time employees

4) Innovation

- a. Specific description of innovation or unique/superior product or service
- b. 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

- a. Use of minority firms as suppliers, subcontractors, etc.
- b. Noted recruitment and employment of socially disadvantaged personnel

c. Participation in community projects and charitable affairs

Nomination Packages must include, in this order:

1. A completed background form (SBA Form 3300, Award Nominee Background Form) which is available at www.sba.gov/nsbw.
2. A completed nomination form (SBA Form 3309, 8(a) Graduate of the Year Award) which is available at www.sba.gov/nsbw.
3. An original 8" x 10" or 5" x 7" photo of the nominee or a digital photo – at least 300 dpi is required. Photocopies are not acceptable.
4. Any other supporting documentation deemed significant by the nominator, including news clips, letters of recommendation, nomination letter (if not self-nominated) and other evidence of the appropriateness of the nomination (supporting documentation must not exceed 10 pages). Videos will not be considered.

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Tennessee State Awards

Tennessee Minority Owned Small Business of the Year

Nominee must be a minority and the sole proprietor or majority owner of a small business.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Evidence of success as measured by sales and profits.
- Innovativeness of product or service
- Response to adversity
- Demonstrated potential necessary for long-term business success and economic growth.
- Community contributions

Tennessee Veteran Owned Small Business of the Year

Nominee must be a veteran of the U.S. armed forces and be a sole proprietor or majority owner of a small business.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Evidence of success as measured by sales and profits.
- Innovativeness of product or service
- Response to adversity
- Demonstrated potential necessary for long-term business success and economic growth.
- Community contributions

Tennessee Woman Owned Business of the Year

Nominee must be a woman and the sole proprietor or majority owner of a small business.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Evidence of success as measured by sales and profits.
- Innovativeness of product or service
- Response to adversity

- Demonstrated potential necessary for long-term business success and economic growth.
- Community contributions

Tennessee Young Entrepreneur of the Year

Any individual who serves as a majority owner and operates or bears 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, 2019**, may be nominated.

Evaluation 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.
- Community contributions

Tennessee Rural Owned Small Business of the Year

Any small business that has operated successfully for the last three years in a community of 50,000 people or less.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Evidence of success as measured by sales and profits.
- Innovativeness of product or service
- Response to adversity
- Demonstrated potential necessary for long-term business success and economic growth.
- Community contributions

Tennessee HUBZone Firm of the Year

Any SBA HUBZone Certified firm or individual that is not currently suspended or debarred by the Federal government.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Firm must have a demonstrated history of successful performance on HUBZone contracts while in the HUBZone Program;
- Companies and/or their principal owner(s) must not appear on the suspended or debarred list as published at www.sam.gov;
- Firm must still be primarily owned, managed, and controlled by the person(s) whom HUBZone eligibility was based at the time of participation;
- 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;
- 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;
- For government contracts, the nominee must have performed satisfactorily on all contracts, and have had no terminations for default;
- The firm must be small.

Tennessee Online Small Business of the Year

Nominees should conduct all business activity online and have no brick and mortar presence for the last 3 years.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Evidence of success as measured by sales and profits.
- Innovativeness of product or service
- Response to adversity
- Demonstrated potential necessary for long-term business success and economic growth.
- Community contributions

Tennessee Small Business Inventor of the Year

Nominees should have created an invention that has been patented and produced by the business.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Evidence of success as measured by sales and profits.
- Innovativeness of product or service
- Response to adversity
- Demonstrated potential necessary for long-term business success and economic growth.
- Community contributions

Tennessee Small Business Start-up

Any small business that has been in operation a minimum of one year may be nominated.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Evidence of success as measured by sales and profits.
- Innovativeness of product or service
- Response to adversity
- Demonstrated potential necessary for long-term business success and economic growth.
- Community contributions

Tennessee Small Business Media Advocate

Nominees should have provided outstanding and frequent reporting on SBA, SBA Resource partners, and small businesses.

Evaluation Criteria:

- Evidence of success as measured by articles published or broadcast reports on SBA, small businesses, and SBA resource partners
- Frequency of publications or broadcasts

Submission of State Awards:

Submit nominations as listed below not later than **3pm EST on February 3, 2020.**

Mail or hand-deliver to: SBA Tennessee District Office, Attn: C. Shawn Mckeehan, 2 International Plaza Drive, Suite 500, Nashville, TN 37217. Email submissions of SBA Awards forms will not be accepted.

Nomination packages ***must be typewritten on one side of 8 ½" x 11" white paper, and secured in a 1½" 3-ring binder.*** Please do not use page protectors except as necessary for supporting documentation (brochures/flyers, certificates, newspaper articles, etc.)

In order to be considered for competition, the nomination package must contain each of the items listed above. All evaluation/selection criteria must be specifically addressed. Incomplete packages will not be considered.

For questions, contact C. Shawn McKeehan by phone at (615) 736-2499 or by email at christopher.mckeehan@sba.gov.

Nomination Packages must include, in this order:

- A. SBA Form 3300 (Award Nominee Background Form) available online at www.sba.gov/nsbw.
- B. SBA Form 2137 (Award Nomination Consent Form)
- C. A nomination letter
- D. A brief biography of the nominee, not exceeding one page.
- E. A business profile, not exceeding one page.
- F. A concise statement of the qualities and performance that merit the award, not exceeding four pages. Please refer to bulleted items listed under the category you are entering
- G. 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.

NOTE: Finalists in each category may be asked to provide additional information as requested by the panel of judges.