



SMALL BUSINESS AWARDS

WICHITA REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2025 APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Applications and all additional materials are due by 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, May 27, 2025.

There is no fee to apply.

PRESENTING SPONSOR



Nominee Information

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING

Qualified nominees receive

- 30" round cocktail table to exhibit your business to all attendees at the Networking at Noon featuring Small Business Awards Nominees on Wednesday, May 7, with two complimentary registrations
- Invite to Informational Webinar on Thursday, May 8 to learn more about application process

Application Information

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING

Qualified applicants receive

- Recognized in social media post of all applicants by tier
- Featured as part of the Chamber's eSynergy newsletter

Awards Finalists receive

- Highlighted on the Chamber website as a Small Business Awards Finalist
- One complimentary registration to the Sunrise Scrambler in June
- Four complimentary registrations to the July Sunrise Scrambler featuring Small Business Awards Celebration
- Plaque designating your company as an Awards Finalist
- Complimentary video highlighting business to be shown at July Sunrise Scrambler
- Complimentary 10'x10' booth space at Wichita Business Expo
- Invite to exclusive mixer for company president/owner to mingle with fellow finalists

Small Business of the Year recipients (one per tier) receive



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- Small Business of the Year award
- Highlighted on the Chamber website as Small Business of the Year
- Featured as part of the Chamber's eSynergy newsletter
- Recognized in social media post as award recipient

PARTICIPATION CRITERIA

- Must be headquartered in the Wichita MSA (Butler, Harvey, Sedgwick, Sumner)
- Employ 1-5 full-time equivalents (FTE) for Tier One; 6-20 FTE for Tier Two; 21-100 FTE for Tier Three; for the purpose of this award, FTE is defined as 35 hours
- A minimum of three years in business
- A commitment to good business practices
- Maintain good employee relations
- Contribute to the community
- Primary source of revenues from business operations, rather than grants, donors, or governmental funding
- Be a member in good standing of the Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce at the time of application

List of Small Business Awards Events:

NETWORKING AT NOON FEATURING SMALL BUSINESS AWARDS

Wednesday, May 7 | 12 – 1:30 p. m | The Vail by Hotel at Old Town
Exhibit business with two complimentary registrations

SMALL BUSINESS AWARD INFORMATION WEBINAR

Thursday, May 8 | 8:30 a.m. | Virtual

SUNRISE SCRAMBLER

Wednesday, June 18 | 8:00 – 9:30 a.m. | Wichita Marriott
One complimentary registration for Award Finalists

AWARD FINALISTS MIXER

June 24 | 4:30 – 6:00 p.m. | Monarch

SUNRISE SCRAMBLER FEATURING SMALL BUSINESS AWARDS CELEBRATION

Wednesday, July 16 | 8:00 – 9:30 a.m. | Hyatt Regency Wichita
Four complimentary registrations for Award Finalists



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Judges will conduct site visits to the finalists' businesses. These visits will be scheduled during normal business hours in June and July.

Finalists will participate in a video production process. The Chamber will coordinate all aspects of video needs with finalists and the video production company.

Sponsors of the Small Business Awards are not permitted to apply. If a company has already committed to sponsoring, that company will have the choice to sponsor or participate as an applicant.

Applicants are asked to provide narratives in five main judging elements. Recognizing that businesses have varying strengths, the judges will review the entire business profile rather than giving equal weight to each judging element. Do not let any perceived weakness in one of the judging elements deter you from applying for the award.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Judges will evaluate performance in five categories listed below:

- Entrepreneurship
- Employee Relations
- Inclusion and Diversity
- Community Contribution and Involvement
- Leadership and Performance

JUDGING TIMELINE AND PROCESS

Applications and all additional materials must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on May 27, 2025.

Applications will be judged by a three-person group of community leaders, based on the stated, specified evaluation criteria.

After reviewing all applications, the judges will select the Finalists, which will include no more than three from each tier:

- Tier 1: 1-5 full-time equivalents (FTE)
- Tier 2: 6-20 full-time equivalents (FTE)
- Tier 3: 21-100 full-time equivalents (FTE)

Businesses in consideration to be a finalist will be notified and required to submit an income statement and balance sheet for confidential review by an independent audit firm. This additional financial detail will not be seen by the Wichita Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Small Business Awards committee or the judges. The review firm will solely provide the judges with a "thumbs up" or "thumbs



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down” on whether a business should be considered as a finalist. All information is destroyed after the independent review is complete.

Awards Finalists will be announced on social media mid-June.

Between June and July, each finalist will host the judges for a site visit and have the opportunity to showcase their employees, facilities and business practices. The site visit will serve as the primary component for the selection of the Small Business of the Year. The site visits will be scheduled at times convenient for both the business and the judges.

The award recipients in each tier will be announced at the July Sunrise Scrambler featuring Small Business Awards Celebration on Wednesday, July 16.



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WICHITA REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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Step 1 – Business Information

Business Name _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **ZIP** _____

Phone _____ **Email** _____

Website _____

Year Established _____

Industry (i.e. Manufacturing, Retail, Service) _____

Main Product or Service _____

Business Description (*No more than 50 words.* Prompts to consider when writing: What does your company do? What makes your business stand out? What about your company makes you most proud? What has helped your organization reach the place you are today?)

Owner(s) or Principal(s)

First and Last Name	Title	% Ownership
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Additional Leaders or Contacts for the Business

First and Last Name	Title
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



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Step 2 – Employee Information

Small Business Awards applicants are separated into three tiers for judging, based on their number of local Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) employees. Businesses who employ over 100 FTE in the Wichita metro area are not eligible for this award.

Recent economic conditions should not deter any qualified applicant, for they will be considered when judging employee retention.

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Employees _____

For the purpose of this award, FTE is defined as 35 hours. Visit www.clicktime.com/fte-calculator and click the EASY FTE CALCULATION button to determine your business's FTE count.

Number of Full-Time Employees _____ Number of Part-Time Employees _____

Number of Employees as of 12/31/2022 _____

Number of Employees as of 12/31/2023 _____

Number of Employees as of 12/31/2024 _____

Additional comments or explanation regarding the above employee information (optional):



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Step 3 – Financial Information

Applicants under further consideration as a finalist will be asked to submit a most recent income statement and balance sheet to validate information provided on this application. This review shall be conducted by an independent firm, will remain confidential, and will be destroyed after review. No one from the Chamber, the Small Business Awards Committee, or the judges will see this information.

Recent economic conditions should not deter any qualified applicant, for they will be considered when judging revenue growth.

What percentage of your current business comes from the Wichita MSA (Butler, Harvey, Sedgwick, Sumner counties) _____ %

What percentage of your current business comes from the rest of the United States? _____ %

What percentage of your current business comes from international dealings? _____ %

2021-2022 % Revenue Change _____ % 2021-2022 % Profitability Change _____ %

2022-2023 % Revenue Change _____ % 2022-2023 % Profitability Change _____ %

2023-2024 % Revenue Change _____ % 2023-2024 % Profitability Change _____ %

Additional comments or explanation regarding the above financial information (optional):



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Step 4 – Employee Relations

BENEFITS AND INCENTIVES OFFERED

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health Insurance | <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible Spending Account |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dental Insurance | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Savings Account |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vacation Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Stock Option Programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sick Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Retirement Plan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Time | <input type="checkbox"/> On-Site Child Care |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Time Off for Volunteering | <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership or Other Specialized Training |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employee Assistance Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Tuition Reimbursement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible Work Schedules | <input type="checkbox"/> Bonuses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life Insurance | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disability Insurance | |

Additional comments regarding benefits offered (i.e. percent of insurance paid by company, types of training offered, leave policies, etc.) (optional):



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Step 5 – ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The below individuals confirm that the information provided in this application is true and factual.

Form completed by (First and Last Name) _____

Job Title _____

The below business owner has reviewed and approved application (First and Last Name)



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Step 6 – Narratives

Provide no more than ONE-PAGE narrative responses to each of the areas outlined below. No more than ONE-PAGE of photos and graphics per area may be included in addition to your narrative responses. ***Do not include hyperlinks, videos, etc.*** Be specific and detailed. Responses should provide the judges with a clear view of your business's views, practices and philosophies. Judges look for practices that enable continued viability.

Please keep in mind the sheet of [tips from past judges](#). Upload your narratives [here](#) OR email them to Jessica Buettgenbach (jbuettgenbach@WichitaChamber.org)

COVER LETTER - Please title your narrative responses clearly

Express why your business should be considered for Small Business of the Year.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP - Please title your narrative responses clearly

Give a brief overview of your company history and how it reflects an entrepreneurial spirit, including but not limited to start-up rationale, challenges and successes, innovation in products/services and/or processes.

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS - Please title your narrative responses clearly

Think about what makes your company culture unique. How does this affect your employee recruitment and retention? Include relevant information that will enable a full understanding of your organization's employee relations philosophies. What has your business done with employee benefits that you are particularly proud of or that sets you apart within your industry?

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY - Please title your narrative responses clearly

How do you define inclusion and diversity? Describe any policies and practices you have for your workforce, clients and/or customers such as intentionality with marketing to different customer bases; providing inclusive employee development and learning opportunities; or accessibility.

COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTION AND INVOLVEMENT - Please title your narrative responses clearly

How do you see your business's role in the community? Describe your organization's participation in community and charitable events, employee volunteer programs, awards, board appointments and any employee benefits associated with volunteerism. Your description should provide a full understanding of your organization's efforts and philosophies.

LEADERSHIP AND PERFORMANCE - Please title your narrative responses clearly

Describe your company's current performance in your industry and any growth prospects. You may wish to answer questions like: What have been the key(s) to your firm's success? What are the biggest obstacles in sustaining your business and how are they being addressed? What do you believe is your company's competitive advantage within your industry? What is your strategic planning process?