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## Michiganders: Nominate your favorite small business for statewide recognition

September 10, 2025

# Nominations now open for 2026 Michigan Celebrates Small Business Awards

Lansing, MI – Nominations are now open for the [2026 Michigan Celebrates Small Business \(MCSB\) Awards program](#), the premier annual program recognizing outstanding small businesses, their employees and communities.

Through MCSB, Michigan companies are celebrated for their entrepreneurial spirit and contributions to both their local communities and the state's economy. Since its debut in 2004, the gala has grown into the state's top small business awards program, with more than 1,200 honorees.

"Michigan thrives when small businesses succeed, and Michigan Celebrates Small Business exists to amplify the achievements of those who have conquered the odds to find lasting success," said Brian Calley, President and CEO of the Small Business Association of Michigan. "This awards program is designed to bring the small business community together, recognize their accomplishments, and foster an entrepreneurial spirit that fuels further momentum and growth."

The Small Business Association of Michigan (SBAM) Foundation will continue to serve as managing partner of the program, under the direction of an advisory committee established in 2024. Work continues to expand and modernize the program. The advisory committee includes:

- Edward Lowe Foundation
- Kinexus
- Michigan Black Business Alliance (MBBA)
- Michigan Small Business Development Center (SBDC)
- Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS)
- National Veteran Business Development Council (NVBDC)
- Small Business Association of Michigan (SBAM)
- West Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

"Entrepreneurship is a pathway to prosperity and strong communities, and Michigan's economy is at its best when this ecosystem thrives," said Charity Dean, President and CEO of the Michigan Black Business Alliance. "By recognizing and celebrating the many types of small businesses, MCSB helps with visibility and support across the state. We want to see strong representation across all award categories for Michigan Celebrates 2026, so please take the time to nominate your favorite small business!"

J.D. Collins, State Director of the Michigan Small Business Development Center, said: "Across Michigan we see small businesses innovating, hiring, and strengthening Michigan's economy. MCSB shines a spotlight on those achievements and encourages the next wave of growth. We urge small business owners and supporters alike to submit nominations."

Awards open for nominations include:

- **Michigan 50 Companies to Watch**

- Veteran-Owned Small Business
- Minority-Owned Small Business
- Woman-Owned Small Business
- Disability-Owned Business
- Micro Business

Recognition will also be given to MCSB Alumni who previously won a Michigan 50 Companies to Watch Award through the **Great Place to Work** and **Strategically Focused** awards. The 2026 awards will also recognize the **SBDC "Best Small Business"** companies.

"Receiving a 2025 Minority-Owned Small Business Award was an incredible honor that impacted our entire community," said Rebecca Calhoun, Owner of Water's Edge Gymnastics. "Every small business success is worthy of celebration, and I encourage anyone who wants to uplift a small business to nominate them for a Michigan Celebrates Small Business award."

To nominate a small business, visit <https://michigancelebrates.org/>. Self-nomination is also encouraged.

Nominations close on October 8, 2025. All awards will be presented at the Michigan Celebrates Small Business Awards Gala on April 22, 2026.

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