

Summit Chamber **BUSINESS** *Excellence* **AWARDS**

INFORMATION PACKET

The application deadline is as follows:

- **Application Submittal Deadline** – on or before 11:59 pm (MT) Friday, February 20, 2026.
- **Early Bird Review (OPTIONAL)** – submit your application by 11:59 pm (MT) Friday, January 30, 2026, and a judge from a previous BEA year will provide feedback, which gives you time to adjust and resubmit. This is OPTIONAL.

NO Late applications will be accepted!!!

Steps to Nominate OR Apply

Nominations

If you would like to nominate a business for one of the awards the process is simple! Please take the following steps:

1. Identify an email address for the business/person at the business you would like to nominate.
2. Email the below link to the business or organization you are nominating and inform them you think they would be a great fit for an award. Website = <https://summitchamber.org/bea>
3. In the email, carbon copy (CC or BCC) Chamber staff (info@summitchamber.org) so we can follow up with the business.

A nomination is not required to apply for the awards.

Applicants

Business applicants may only apply for one award from Categories 1 AND 2. Non-Profit Organizations may only apply for the Non-Profit Program of the Year. Governmental Organizations (local, state, and federal) may only apply for Government Department/Team of the Year. Ben Fogle Chamber Champion is an individual award and will not count towards the business in which the applicant works – that business may still apply for 1 award from Categories 1 and 2.

Category 1 - General Business Awards

- New Business of the Year
- Business Innovator of the Year
- beLocal Business of the Year

Category 2 – Business of the Year

- Small Business of the Year
- Medium Business of the Year
- Large Business of the Year

Category 3 - Community Champions

- Non-Profit Program of the Year
- Government Department/Team of the Year
- Ben Fogle Chamber Champion of the Year (*Must be an individual who is a member of the Summit Chamber*)

The application deadline is 11:59 pm (MT) on Friday, February 20, 2026 . NO Late applications will be accepted!!!

Not required to be a Chamber Member to apply.

Applicants **DO NOT** need to be a member of the Summit Chamber except when applying for the Ben Fogle Chamber Champion of the Year Award. Applicants should conduct business regularly in or be based in Summit County. Winners from the 2025 Business Excellence Awards are not eligible to apply for the same category in which they won the previous year but are encouraged to apply for other awards.

Judging

A volunteer panel of judges, which consists of previous award winners, sponsoring businesses, and/or Chamber Leadership and Staff will review and score each application based on a predetermined matrix and not based on comparing them to other applicants.

Category 1 & 2 Applications will be evaluated and scored based on the three areas below:

1. **Business Culture (60%):** Product or Services offered, employee engagement, general business practices, and other explanations provided in your application.
2. **Community Impact (30%):** Impact in the Community
3. **Public Appearance (10%):** Calculated based on uses of social media, internet search platforms, websites, and average web review scores.

Category 3 Applications will be evaluated and scored based on the three areas below:

1. **Community Impact (50%):** Impact in the Communities of Summit County
2. **Organizational Culture (40%):** Programs or Services offered, employee engagement, client & and partner engagement, and other explanations provided in your application.
3. **Varies based on award type** - Based on the award you are applying for 10% will be calculated based on the following:
 - a. **Non-Profit and Governmental Organizations - Public Appearance & Financials*** (10%):** Calculated based on uses of social media, internet search platforms, websites, average web review scores, and Employee Wage Averages (full & part-time).
 - b. **Ben Fogle Chamber Champion** – The Summit Chamber Board of Directors will each cast a vote making up this portion of the evaluation.

HOW TO APPLY

1. Visit <https://summitchamber.org/bea> find and click the “Category (1,2 or 3) Application” button to be taken to the online application.
2. Complete all fields of the application!
 - a. **NEW FOR 2026** – You can now save your application and return to it later. Anytime you want to save the application, click the “Save” button in the bottom right-hand corner of any page and follow the onscreen instructions.
3. Submit the completed application by **11:59 pm Friday, February 20, 2026**. Submitting an **Early Bird application** by **January 30, 2026** provides the opportunity to receive judge feedback and strengthen your submission before final review.
 - a. **Please note – saving your application is NOT submitting your application. You must still press the “Submit” button when you have completed the application.**
4. Look for a confirmation email that your application was received within 24-48 hours.

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If you have questions or concerns about the application process, the awards, or any aspect of the Summit Chamber Business Excellence Awards - please reach out to us at info@summitchamber.org with BEA in the subject line

Announcement of Winners

Top Finalists per award will be announced starting the week of March 16, 2024, via social media and direct email to all applicants. **Winners and runner-ups will be announced live** at the Summit Chamber Business Excellence Awards Gala on **April 9, 2024**. **All applicants AND finalists will also be recognized during the April 9th Awards Gala.**

Awards Criteria

General Criteria

Tips for successfully answering the application questions:

- Provide specific examples your business has when answering each question.
- Do Not use general or high-level comments when providing answers that might leave questions in the minds of the judges.
- Ensure ALL questions AND ALL parts of questions are answered for the award(s) you are applying for.

Category 1 – General Business Awards

New Business of the Year Criteria

- Business must have started or expanded into Summit County in the calendar years 2024 OR 2025.
- The award is open to any type or size of business.

Business Team of the Year Criteria

- Generally, should be a business with at least 2 or more employees.
- Should be able to clearly demonstrate how your management AND non-management team members have created a great workplace culture.
- Information provided in the application should have occurred in 2025.

beLocal Business of the Year Criteria

- In 2025 the Summit Chamber launched our beLocal initiative to encourage businesses, locals and visitors to shop locally and support other businesses. Your business should be able to clearly demonstrate how you work to keep as much of your spending in Summit County as possible.
- Demonstrate how you invest in the community through participation in events, business organizations and/or educate others on the benefits of shopping local.
- The award is open to any type or size of business.

Category 2 – Business of the Year

Small Business of the Year Criteria

- This business should have gone above and beyond to serve their customers, employees, and Summit County Community.
- Must have 1-5 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employee(s).
 - o Each full-time employee counts as 1 FTE
 - o Each part-time employee counts as 0.5 FTE
 - o 1099 contractors who do direct sales-related work should be calculated as 0.5 FTE.

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Medium Business of the Year Criteria

- This business should have gone above and beyond to serve their customers, employees, and Summit County Community.
- Must have 6-20 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees.
 - o Each full-time employee counts as 1 FTE
 - o Each part-time employee counts as 0.5 FTE
 - o 1099 contractors who do direct sales-related work should be calculated as 0.5 FTE.

Large Business of the Year Criteria

- This business should have gone above and beyond to serve their customers, employees, and Summit County Community.
- Must have 21 or more Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees.
 - o Each full-time employee counts as 1 FTE
 - o Each part-time employee counts as 0.5 FTE
 - o 1099 contractors who do direct sales-related work should be calculated as 0.5 FTE.

Category 3 – Community Champions

Non-Profit Program of the Year Criteria

- Must have a registered non-profit status (for example 501C3). *Proof of status may be requested.*
- Applicants should be for one program or service you provide, not your entire organization.
- Applicants should focus their application on what they do to serve, promote, or improve Summit County.

Government Department of the Year Criteria

- **ONLY** Local, State or Federal Government agencies who provide services in Summit County may apply
- Applicants should be for one department or team within the governmental organization. This is not for the entire governmental organization.
- The department or team should focus their application on what they have done special in 2025 to serve, promote or improve Summit County.
- Multiple departments/teams from a single government organization may apply.

Ben Fogle Chamber Champion Criteria

- Individuals (through a business) must be a member of the Summit Chamber.
- Demonstrate how the individual has demonstrated carrying out the mission and vision of the Summit Chamber.
- Actively participated in Chamber events, projects and initiatives.

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