

2025 Kinetic Business: Community Champions Award

Criteria and Disclaimers Award Criteria

1. Eligibility Requirements:

Eligibility for the Community Champion award is limited to small businesses (SMBs) who are current Kinetic customers, utilizing either Kinetic Business or residential services, and residing within Windstream's 18-state footprint. Nominated businesses must have been in operation for at least one year prior to nomination and must be registered and operate within the local community it serves. Eligible businesses must meet the criteria of a small or medium-sized enterprise as defined by applicable local regulations and must have annual revenue that does not exceed \$50 million. This threshold can be adjusted based on the specific industry norms. The business must be independently owned and operated, not a subsidiary or part of a larger corporation. Government agencies, government-funded businesses, and businesses owned or controlled by Windstream employees are excluded from eligibility.

2. Nomination Procedure:

Nominations may be submitted by peers, customers, or as self-nominations, accompanied by details of community impact initiatives. A business may nominate itself only once to ensure a fair and equitable evaluation process and to manage the volume of entries effectively. In the event additional nominations are submitted by a business, only the first nomination will be considered. All nominations must be submitted via the official nomination platform at <https://business.windstream.com/2025-kinetic-businessawards-community-champions/>. This submission form is the only method that will be accepted, and nominations must be completed by the specified deadline. All nominations must be submitted via the official nomination platform by the specified deadline.

3. Selection Standards and Evaluation Process:

Nominations will be evaluated through a structured, multi-stage process designed to ensure fairness and objectivity. All nominations will undergo a first round of blind judging conducted by a panel of Kinetic employees. Identifiable details, such as business names, will be removed to ensure impartiality. This round will identify monthly finalists, known as Community Advocates. Community Advocates will receive recognition, including a commemorative plaque and inclusion in social media and blog posts celebrating their achievements.

Finalists will be assessed by the Kinetic Business executive leadership team in a second round of blind judging. Each nominee will be evaluated using a scoring rubric with a maximum of 10 points allocated per category: positive community impact, technological innovation, creativity, sustainability, and potential for ongoing engagement. Quantifiable metrics within these categories will carry more weight, ensuring a data-driven assessment process.

This evaluation process is designed to ensure that nominations are reviewed comprehensively and ranked objectively, minimizing bias and emphasizing the diverse forms of excellence and impactful community work. Three grand finalists will be selected as Community Champions,

based on their rankings across all evaluation categories. These winners will receive grants at the value of \$2,500, \$5,000, and \$10,000 to give back to the local charity of their choice, commemorative trophies, as well as video and social media promotion once agreed upon via a publicity waiver.

Disclaimers

1) Consent to Use of Likeness:

- Participation in the Kinetic Business Award: Community Champions program constitutes consent for the use of nominees' names, images, and project descriptions in various media formats, including but not limited to press releases, social media, and promotional materials. Please refer to [publicity waiver](#) for more information. Participants retain ownership of their projects and initiatives.

2) Limitation of Liability:

- The parent company, Windstream, and all of its Kinetic subsidiaries, shall not be liable for any claims, losses, damages, or disputes arising from participation in the award program or from the use of participants' likenesses in promotional content.
- Kinetic Business/Windstream reserves the right to modify, cancel, or suspend the award program at its discretion due to unforeseen circumstances.

3) Confidentiality Obligations:

- All nomination information shall remain confidential and will be utilized solely for the purpose of evaluating the award program.
- Personal data collected will be managed in accordance with Windstream's privacy policy.

4) Verification and Compliance:

- Windstream reserves the right to verify the information provided by nominees and may disqualify any nomination that fails to meet the award criteria or comply with the terms and conditions of this program.

5) Non-transferability:

- Awards are non-transferable and cannot be substituted for cash or other benefits.
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Definition of a Qualified Charity

- A U.S.-based charitable organization, local to your community, that:

- Is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) public charity and is listed as “Eligible to Receive Tax-Deductible Charitable Contributions” (IRS Pub 78/Tax Exempt Organization Search).
 - Is in good standing (federal and applicable state) and not subject to suspension or revocation.
 - Is not on any applicable sanctions, terrorism, or restricted-party lists (e.g., OFAC).
 - Can receive contributions without providing goods/services in return to the winner or to Kinetic/Uniti.
- **Organizations that are not eligible:**
 - Charities engaged in procurement activities with Kinetic or its affiliates.
 - Government entities/programs, public agencies, or fiscal arms of government and Universal Service Fund participants.
 - Political organizations, candidates, PACs, 527s, or organizations whose primary purpose is lobbying or influencing legislation/elections.
 - Religious organizations would not be eligible unless their 501c3’s purpose is serving the broader community in one of these areas: healthcare, hunger or STEM.
 - Schools/PTAs/Booster Clubs that are not 501(c)(3) or where funds would be applied to specific individuals’ tuition, fees, or dues.
 - Private benefit/self-dealing: donations to entities that would materially benefit the winner, their family, or their business (including directing funds to themselves or their business).
 - Payments to individuals, crowdfunding pages (e.g., GoFundMe), or donor-advised fund accounts advised by the winner.
 - Sponsorships, tables, memberships, or events that provide any benefits (tickets, advertising, promotions) to the winner or to Kinetic/Uniti.
 - Organizations that discriminate unlawfully or fail to meet our company’s cultural and ethical standards.
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Process for winners:

1) Charity selection window

- a) Winner has 30 days from notification to submit a charity via our Charity Selection Form.

- 2) What the winner provides
 - a) Charity legal name and DBA (if any)
 - b) EIN
 - c) Website URL
 - d) Contact name/email for the charity's development office
 - e) Preferred purpose (optional). Note: by default, funds are unrestricted.
 - f) Confirmation that the winner has no personal/financial interest or expected benefit.
- 3) Internal verification (5–10 business days)
 - a) Verify IRS 501(c)(3) public charity and Pub 78 eligibility.
 - b) Sanctions/restricted-party screening.
 - c) State registration/good standing check (as needed).
 - d) Compliance and Corporate Communications review.
 - e) Fit with company values and exclusion list.
 - f) If not eligible, we'll ask the winner to choose an alternative.
- 4) Disbursement (within 30 days of approval)
 - a) Paid directly to the charity via check or ACH.
 - b) No goods/services or benefits provided in exchange.
 - c) Gift letter states: donation is from Kinetic/Uniti in recognition of the winner's award selection; the winner is not the donor and will not receive a tax receipt.
- 5) Communications and publicity
 - a) We will recognize the charity and the winner in program materials/social posts with consent from both parties, in accordance with our [publicity waiver](#). Opt-out available.