






What is the difference between a Torch Award and a Spark Award?

BBB Torch Awards are presented to established for-profit businesses. Winners demonstrate an outstanding commitment to integrity through their leadership character, work culture, customer relationships, and community involvement.

BBB Spark Awards are presented to eligible entrepreneurs, startup founders and new business owners. Winners embody and cultivate the future of a trusted marketplace.

The two awards have quite a few similarities, such as location requirements and award benefits. The three main eligibility differences are represented below:

TORCH AWARDS		SPARK AWARDS
Recognizes business that uphold ethics in the marketplace		Recognizes the up-and-coming leaders of our marketplace
For businesses in operation 3 or more years		For businesses in operation less than 3 years
Business owner's age not factored in		Business owner must be 35 years of age or less

Can I apply for both a Torch Award and Spark Award?

If your organization meets the criteria for Torch Awards, and you have a business owner that meets the criteria for Spark Awards, you may apply for both awards.

Please direct questions to
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ABOUT

The BBB Spark Awards is an annual celebration to honor exceptional leaders in the community. At the heart of a trustworthy marketplace are entrepreneurs creating businesses that will transform and enhance the communities they serve. The Spark Award is an international award that honors eligible social entrepreneurs, startup founders and new business owners that embody and cultivate the Three C's of Trust: Character, Culture and Community. These individuals are the future of a trusted marketplace.

The 2024 entry period is April 3 - May 29. If you apply on or before May 4, your business will be entered into a Dell Technologies raffle giveaway!

Entry is free and open to all eligible for-profit businesses, regardless of accreditation status. The Spark Awards is funded by BBB serving the Heart of Texas' 501(c)(3) nonprofit Education Foundation.

Benefits of winning a Spark Award

- In-person Spark Award trophy presentation by BBB
- Professional quality photos and promotional video for use by the winner
- Recognition on BBB.org for your commitment to an ethical marketplace
- Inclusion in a press release to local media markets announcing winners
- Announcements on BBB's social media channels totaling over 60,000 followers
- Inclusion in a variety of digital and print BBB promotional materials
- Lifetime use of the BBB Spark Award Winner Seal (as long as the winner maintains a "B" rating with BBB)

How do I apply?

Applications must be submitted online at BBB.org.

What are the criteria used to judge applications?

Submissions are evaluated based on the eligibility of the applicant and their commitment to character, culture, customers, and community.

- Eligibility of the application: The submission has been submitted online before the deadline with the required documentation and complies with the Terms and Conditions.
- Response criteria | Character, culture, customers, and community: Applicants should respond to the question in each category, clearly illustrating real-life examples that address each prompt. Applications will be scored based on how well the applicant exemplifies and demonstrates commitment to each criterion.

Additionally...

- Entrants must address all questions in a concise narrative that explains how their business exemplifies the given criteria in daily operations. Submissions should provide a robust and accurate description of general business operations and culture. Providing examples and quantifying impact when possible is always a good idea!
- The judges will be asked to score finalist submissions that best meet the scope of the application requirements.

How many winners will there be?

By using a benchmark scoring system, recipients are chosen based on whether the company meets certain criteria based on the four C's. There is no rigid ranking system that only allows for a certain number of businesses to receive the award per category.

By using this benchmark scoring system, BBB is able to recognize ethical businesses across all industries. BBB recognizes that each business industry faces its own unique challenges when it comes to ethics.



ABOUT

What are the eligibility requirements?

- Your business must be headquartered within the 105 counties served by BBB Serving the Heart of Texas. The regions covering these counties include Austin, Bryan/College-Station, Coastal Bend, Fort Worth, Permian Basin, Coastal Bend, and Waco.
- Entry is open to businesses that apply during the eligibility period from Wednesday, April 3, 2024, to Wednesday, May 29, 2024. For the purposes of this competition, a “business” is a fully registered and licensed entity that aims to meet a marketplace need by developing or offering products, processes, services, or solutions. To be eligible for entry into this competition, a business must carry and maintain all licensing necessary for their industry for the state(s) in which they operate.
- Applicants must have a business that's been operating for three years or more at the time of the application deadline (5/29/2024) OR have a business owner that's age 35 or younger at the time of the application deadline (5/29/2024).
- Applicant businesses must have a "B" rating or higher with BBB (BBB Accreditation is not required).
- Businesses are not eligible if they have received a Spark Award in the past three years (2021, 2022, or 2023).
- The applicant must have at least a “B” rating and hold a satisfactory record with BBB.
- Businesses are not eligible if they have any current government actions or are the subject of a BBB investigation.

Who selects the winners?

An independent, voluntary panel of judges located will take on the responsibility of reviewing, evaluating, and selecting winners of the Spark Awards. The judges are comprised of business and community leaders across our service areas dedicated to marketplace ethics.

How will I be notified if I win?

Spark Award winners will be notified via email in August 2024 to the contact indicated in the online application form and subsequently announced on various BBB platforms, including the competition website. An in-person event in each region is TBD.