



NSBA Small Business Advocates of the Year 2025

Winners and Finalist Profiles

SEPTEMBER 2025

CAPITOL HILL | WASHINGTON, D.C. | **AMERICA'S SMALL BUSINESS FLY-IN** | SEPT. 10-11, 2025





Dwayne Groll

NSBA Small Business Advocate of the Year 2025 | **FINALIST**

Environmental Design Group, LLC

Akron, Ohio

envdesigngroup.com



Founded in 1984, Environmental Design Group is a civil engineering, planning, and design firm dedicated to enhancing the well-being of people and communities across Ohio.

Dwayne A. Groll is Chief Executive Officer and Founder of Environmental Design Group (EDG), LLC, an engineering and professional services firm headquartered in Akron, Ohio. Since founding the company in 2012, Mr. Groll has led EDG through sustained growth and diversification, expanding service lines into economic development, creative marketing, and right-of-way acquisition, while completing strategic acquisitions to strengthen the firm's reach in both northeast and southwest Ohio. Under his leadership, EDG has grown to employ more than 100 professionals and achieve annual revenues exceeding \$20 million.

Beyond his role as a business leader, Mr. Groll is deeply committed to small-business advocacy. He serves on the Board of Directors for the Greater Akron Chamber and is the inaugural Chair of the Akron-Canton Advocacy Alliance (ACAA), representing thousands of regional businesses. Through this platform, he has championed issues ranging from tax reform and regulatory relief to innovation funding and workforce development. His advocacy has contributed to major victories, including securing over \$100 million for Ohio's polymer industry cluster, advancing certification reciprocity for minority-, women-, and veteran-owned enterprises, and leading efforts to roll back harmful R&D amortization rules.

Widely respected as a coalition-builder, Mr. Groll emphasizes collaboration among business leaders, chambers of commerce, and policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels. Known as one of the "Community Impact People," he pairs his entrepreneurial success with a passion for improving the broader business climate, making him a recognized voice for small businesses across Ohio and beyond.



Christine Hopkins

NSBA Small Business Advocate of the Year 2025 | **FINALIST**

ASCI Federal Services, LLC

Anchorage, Alaska

ascillc.com



Since 1999, ASCI has provided comprehensive supply chain and asset management services, including vendor management and contracting, materials coordination and procurement, and transportation coordination and tracking, to name a few of their award-winning services.

SBA Small Business Owner of the Year for Alaska for 2025 is Christine Hopkins, President, CEO, and Managing Owner of the ASCI Family of Companies, a supply chain and asset management firm headquartered in Anchorage, Alaska. Since joining ASCI in 2013 and becoming majority owner in 2021, Ms. Hopkins has led a bold transformation of the company—pivoting from oil and gas into federal contracting. Under her leadership, ASCI has grown from seven employees in 2022 to more than 50 direct staff and 12 subcontractors in 2025, with revenues increasing from \$1.4 million to nearly \$8 million. Major contract wins under her tenure include a \$12.4 million GSA logistics support contract in Alaska and a \$25 million, five-year transportation support contract with the U.S. Navy's Fleet Readiness Center East.

A wife, mother, and military daughter, Ms. Hopkins is a nationally recognized small-business advocate. She serves on the National Small Business Association (NSBA) Leadership Council, is active with Women Impacting Public Policy (WIPP) and the Women's Business Enterprise National Council (WBENC), and advises the Alaska Women's Business Center. She has championed policies supporting women-owned and veteran-owned small businesses, advocated for tax reform and procurement equity on Capitol Hill, and mentored entrepreneurs nationwide—particularly veterans, military spouses, and women leaders. In 2025, she was named the SBA Alaska Small Business Person of the Year, a recognition of her resilience, advocacy, and strategic leadership.

Through her advocacy, mentorship, and business success, Ms. Hopkins has established herself as a powerful voice for entrepreneurs, using every platform—whether in Congress, in the media, or in her community—to advance inclusive growth and opportunity in the small-business ecosystem, and NSBA is privileged to have her leadership impacting our small-business community nationwide.



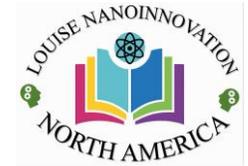
Jingbo "Louise" Liu

NSBA Small Business Advocate of the Year 2025 | **FINALIST**

Louise Nanoinnovation North American, LLC

Corpus Christi, Texas

nanoinnovationna.com



Louise Nano aims to deploy innovative technology to promote clean energy and healthy life," focused on technical services, wellness products, interactive materials, alternate energy commercialization, and green ecosystem services.

An NSBA Small Business Award Finalist for 2025, Dr. Jingbo Louise Liu is the Managing Member of Louise Nanoinnovation North America, LLC, a Corpus Christi-based consultancy specializing in educational support services, sustainable energy, and policy advocacy. Since co-founding the firm in 2018, Dr. Liu has guided its growth from a solo practice into a resilient, multi-client consultancy delivering hands-on technical workshops, microgrid prototypes, and compliance toolkits that help entrepreneurs reduce costs and compete in emerging energy markets. Beyond her entrepreneurial success, Dr. Liu is a nationally recognized advocate for small businesses and STEM innovation. She has organized more than two dozen Science Cafés—interactive forums on hydrogen energy, compliance roadmaps, and community-driven energy solutions—drawing hundreds of entrepreneurs, educators, and policymakers.

Her advocacy has shaped national policy outcomes, including helping secure FinCEN exemptions from Beneficial Ownership reporting for thousands of small businesses and proposing a \$5 million Department of Defense support fund to reduce cybersecurity compliance costs for small contractors. Dr. Liu's commitment extends to mentorship and education, partnering with institutions like Texas A&M-Kingsville to integrate her policy-toolkit modules into accelerator curricula, and donating 10% of her company's revenue to student support in STEM. Her contributions have earned her prestigious honors including the IUPAC Distinguished Woman in Chemistry Award (2021), the ACS Energy & Fuels Division Distinguished Service Award (2023), and the Texas Academy of Science Distinguished Scientist Award (2025).

With a career spanning scientific research, entrepreneurship, and policy advocacy, Dr. Liu is widely regarded as a bridge-builder between science, small business, and public policy, committed to creating an environment where small firms and innovators can thrive.



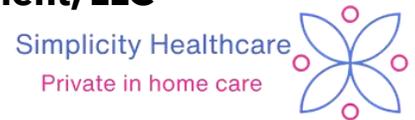
Valerie Rachel

NSBA Small Business Advocate of the Year 2025 | **FINALIST**

Simplicity Healthcare Management, LLC

Atlanta, Georgia

simplicityhealthcarega.com



Simplicity Healthcare Management is a licensed home care agency providing in-home care, personal care, and skilled nursing services with experienced home caregivers you can trust

An NSBA Small Business Award Finalist for 2025, Valerie Rachel is the Founder and CEO of Rachel Financial Services, LLC, a Georgia-based accounting and consulting firm dedicated to empowering entrepreneurs and small businesses with the tools they need to succeed. Since establishing her firm in 2017, Ms. Rachel has grown it into a trusted partner for dozens of small businesses, specializing in financial planning, tax strategy, and compliance solutions tailored to the needs of underserved communities. Her commitment to client success has helped entrepreneurs gain access to capital, streamline operations, and achieve sustainable growth.

Ms. Rachel is also a passionate advocate for small-business equity and inclusion. She has actively engaged with policymakers on issues ranging from tax fairness and access to lending, to reducing regulatory barriers that disproportionately impact minority- and women-owned enterprises. Through her leadership, she has mentored emerging business owners, hosted financial literacy workshops, and collaborated with local chambers of commerce to expand entrepreneurial opportunities in her community.

Unwavering commitments to advocacy and supporting small business success have earned Ms. Rachel recognition as both a leader and changemaker. She continues to use her expertise in finance to champion policies and programs that ensure small businesses—especially those led by women and minorities—can thrive and compete on a level playing field.



Di Tran

NSBA Small Business Advocate of the Year 2025 | **FINALIST**

Louisville Beauty Academy

Louisville, Kentucky

louisvillebeautyacademy.net



Louisville Beauty Academy is a state-licensed beauty school that empowers students through flexible, affordable training in cosmetology, nails, aesthetics, and beauty instruction while staying aligned with the latest industry and regulatory standards.

An NSBA Small Business Award Finalist for 2025, Di Tran is an entrepreneur, educator, and relentless advocate for small businesses and underserved communities. As CEO and founder of Louisville Beauty Academy, he has transformed a local vocational school into a statewide model for affordable, inclusive, and multilingual licensing education. Since 2016, the academy has trained and graduated nearly 2,000 licensed professionals—many of them immigrants, women, and non-English speakers—who now contribute tens of millions annually to Kentucky's economy as salon owners, taxpayers, and employers.

Beyond beauty education, Mr. Tran is the founder of the New American Business Association Inc. (NABA), where he has led successful advocacy for equitable licensing policies, multilingual licensing exams, and representation of diverse professionals on the Kentucky State Board of Cosmetology. His efforts were instrumental in shaping Kentucky Senate Bill 14, which secured the first-ever representation for Asian Americans, nail technicians, and estheticians on the board. A prolific author, Mr. Tran has written and self-published more than 120 books on entrepreneurship, artificial intelligence, faith, and human-centered education—many of which he distributes free or for \$0.99 to democratize access to knowledge. His advocacy extends into education reform, where he urges policymakers to integrate AI into classrooms as a tool for equity, especially for underserved communities.

Mr. Tran's also co-founded Kentucky Pharmacy LLC, launched MiaHire USA—an AI-powered hiring platform that reduces bias and expands job access—and has built ventures in real estate and online education. His work, alongside his wife and business partner Vy Truong, has earned numerous honors, including Louisville Business First's Most Admired CEO (2024) and the JFCS MOSAIC Award for immigrant advocacy.

Born in rural Vietnam in a mud hut, immigrating to the U.S. without English proficiency, and rising to success as an engineer, business leader, and community advocate, Mr. Tran embodies resilience and empowerment. His life's mission is clear: to lift others, dismantle barriers, and create a more inclusive path to success for small-business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs.