

Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology

2026 Army Acquisition Executive's (AAE) Excellence in Leadership Awards

Please read the following information carefully before completing and submitting this application.

Category: Business Operations Professional of the Year Award

Background: The 2026 AAE's Excellence in Leadership Award for the Business Operations Professional of the Year recognizes the individual whose outstanding contributions, innovative thinking, willingness to take calculated risks, and achievements merit special recognition. It also provides an opportunity to showcase the professionalism of the Army Acquisition Workforce.

Eligibility:

1. Nominee contributions must have been made between 1 June 2025 – 31 May 2026.
2. **Any business operations professional is eligible if he or she:**
 - a. Occupies an acquisition workforce designated position in business-financial management or business-cost estimating.
 - b. Meets the specific criteria of the award for which they are nominated.
 - c. Is current, or within the grace period, in Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) acquisition functional area certification and achieved the required 80 continuous learning points during the prior two-year continuous learning cycle (1 Oct 2022- 30 Sep 2024).

Evaluation Criteria:

Nominees must have made a significant contribution during the eligibility period to be considered for this award. This award recognizes the past performance of an individual who has clearly demonstrated exceptional mission accomplishment, selfless service to the United States, a willingness to champion new ideas and calculated risks, and extraordinary and uncompromising professionalism in business operations and a true commitment to the personal and professional growth of others within the command.

Nominations will be considered based on demonstrated excellence and contribution to acquisition mission success in the following areas:

1. **Specific achievements** within the functional area during the eligibility period. Given that many achievements result from one's efforts and contributions cumulatively over a period of time, achievements that take place over more than the 12-month window may be reported, but the culmination of the work must be within the window. Quantifiable descriptions of achievements are particularly desired. What impact did their action have on the unit or command? Did the nominee implement a novel solution or take a calculated risk that resulted in a tangible benefit to the workforce?

2. **Value of the nominee's contributions** during the award period to the mission of one's organization in supporting one or more of the ASA(ALT)'s priorities:
 - a. Rapid Material Modernization
 - b. New Capabilities
 - c. Robust, Resilient, Secure, and Innovative Industrial Base
 - d. Digital Transformation
 - e. Sustainable Force
 - f. Productive Collaboration
 - g. Innovation and calculated risk-taking

3. **Demonstration of leadership**, including by example, mentoring and sharing best practices to enhance the success of one's team, as well as fostering an environment where innovation and smart risk-taking are encouraged to achieve acquisition outcome success.

4. **Acquisition Functional Area-specific criteria:**
 - a. **Business-Financial Management:**
 - Support for auditability.
 - Ability to develop and execute realistic spend plans in accordance with guidance.
 - Successful implementation of cost categories.
 - Ability to meet OSD funds execution goals for Procurement Obligations.
 - Ability to meet OSD funds execution goals for RDTE Disbursements
 - Ability to solve complex business financial challenges through critical thinking and problem solving.
 - Ability to utilize and report acquisition programs using the Project Management Resource Tool (ASA(ALT) submissions only).
 - b. **Business-Cost Estimating:**
 - Ability to deliver accurate, credible, comprehensive, and well-documented cost products.
 - Ability to deliver timely cost information to support decision makers.
 - Ability to solve complex cost estimating challenges through critical thinking and problem solving.
 - Successful application of sound mathematical and analytical techniques.

Nomination Deadline and Submission:

1. The deadline for nomination submissions is July 27, 2026. **Submissions will not be accepted after 11:59 p.m. ET, July 27, 2026.**

2. Only one nomination may be submitted from each organization.

3. Completed nomination packets must be submitted to the U.S. Army Acquisition Support Center (USAASC) Army Director, Acquisition Career Management (DACM) Office through the Web-based call for nominations application at:
<https://asc.army.mil/web/acquisition-awards/aae-awards/>

Nomination Packet Requirements and Format:

A completed nomination submission package will include the following:

1. Signed endorsement memo.
 - a. The senior ranking civilian employee or military official will provide an endorsement letter to describe the nomination. If the nominee is a member of the AAW, the letter MUST indicate that the nominee is current, or within the grace period, in his or her DAWIA acquisition functional area certification and continuous learning points.
 - b. Each nomination must have its own endorsement memo addressed to Director, Acquisition Career Management, 9900 Belvoir Rd, Bld 201, Fort Belvoir, VA 22060.
2. Completed nomination form with the following components:
 - a. Narrative
 - Separate sections describing the contributions for each of the four evaluation criteria (specific achievements; value of the nominee's contributions; demonstration of leadership; and Business Operations specific criteria)
 - Should not exceed **two** pages.
 - The format will be single-spaced text, Arial, 12-point font, single- sided 8 ½" x 11" page, 1" margins.
 - b. Citation
 - A short summary of accomplishments (not to exceed 200 words). This should be at the end of the nomination form and does not count against the two-page limit.

Miscellaneous Details:

1. The nominating point of contact (POC) and/or the organization's award POC will receive an automated email to confirm receipt of a completed submission. Contact the awards coordinator if the POC does not receive a confirmation email within one day after the submission.
2. An appointed panel of judges will select the award winners.
3. The awards will be presented by the AAE at the annual Army Acquisition Awards ceremony in early 2027.

Monetary Award:

Subject to Office of the Secretary of War (OSW) Acquisition and Support guidance, winners may be eligible for a \$3,000 monetary award. Monetary awards are normally funded with mission funding or available Defense Acquisition Workforce Development Account (DAWDA) funding. Per the OSW Personnel and Readiness memo, "Department of War Awards Spending Guidance for Non-Senior Executive Service and Senior Professional Employees", dated April 8, 2026, awards should be allocated in a manner that provides for "meaningful distinctions in performance." Organizations must coordinate with their budget and human resources offices to ensure compliance with funding and the respective awards guidance.

Awards Coordinator:

Questions regarding the 2026 Army Acquisition Executive's Excellence in Leadership Awards or the application and nomination submission process should be addressed to the awards coordinator, Ms. Rachel Longarzo, at rachel.m.longarzo.civ@army.mil. Additional information can be found on the award website at

<https://asc.army.mil/web/acquisition-awards/aae-awards/>