

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: Contracting Professional of the Year Award

Background: The 2026 AAE's Excellence in Leadership Award for the Contracting Professional of the Year recognizes the contracting professional whose outstanding contributions, innovative thinking, willingness to take calculated risks, and achievements support the Army Contracting Enterprise and merits special recognition.

Eligibility:

1. Any contracting professional whose contributions support an office within the Army Contracting Enterprise.
2. Nominee contributions must have been made between 1 June 2025 – 31 May 2026
3. Nominees must:
 - a. Occupy an acquisition workforce designated position in the Contracting Functional Area.
 - b. Be current, or within the grace period, in their Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act (DAWIA) Contracting 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 for this award must have made a significant contracting 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 contracting mission accomplishment, selfless service to the United States, extraordinary and uncompromising professionalism, a willingness to champion new ideas and calculated risks, and 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** 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, such as the nominee's impact on the unit or command, the nominee's implementation of a novel solution or unrelenting professionalism and dedication to the contracting career field that resulted in a tangible benefit, etc.

2. **Value of the nominee's contributions** during the award period to the contracting mission of one's organization in supporting one or more of the ASA(ALT)'s priorities:
 - a. Program Execution and Performance
 - b. Embrace New Approaches to Improve Software Acquisition
 - c. Security of Acquisition Efforts (Cyber, Supply Chain)
 - d. Ensure Testing and Evaluation Provides Valuable Feedback
 - e. Improve Coordination with Congress
 - f. Innovation and calculated risk-taking
3. **Demonstration of leadership**, including, by example, mentoring, and 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. **Contracting Professional of the Year specific criteria:** recognizes a single contracting professional (enlisted/officer/civilian) who has the most impactful accomplishments supporting ASA(ALT) priorities within one or more of the following contracting missions: contract execution, contract management and oversight, and/or contract termination. Contracting Professional must additionally have demonstrated a willingness to champion innovative solutions and take calculated risks, resulting in substantial improvements in contract quality, compliance, or savings (contract or organizational).

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 (one per nomination).
 - a. The senior ranking civilian employee or military official will provide an endorsement letter to describe the nomination. The letter **MUST** indicate that the

- nominee is current, or within the grace period, in his or her DAWIA Contracting 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, Bldg. 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 Contracting Professional of the Year 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/>