

Template for
Chief Acquisition Officers Council
2026 Acquisition and Program Management Excellence Awards
Request for Nominations

The Chief Acquisition Officers Council (CAOC) is seeking nominations for the 2026 Acquisition and Program Management Excellence Awards. These awards recognize acquisition professionals who have contributed amazing results that improve the Federal Acquisition System. These awards are presented annually. You can see some of the prior outstanding achievements at <https://www.fai.gov/resources/acquisition-excellence-2025-awards>.

Last year, for the first time in more than forty years, the acquisition workforce was given the opportunity to begin operating in a more streamlined and empowering environment that rewards problem-solving and critical thinking rather than process perfection. We now have the mandate, the momentum, and the alignment to reset how the federal government buys and make faster delivery, reduced cost, and increased competition a reality.

Achieving these goals -- and excellence from the Federal acquisition system more generally -- depends on the ability of the acquisition workforce to provide strategic advice to their customers and timely execution on merit-based strategies that deliver the best value to the taxpayer.

Nominations are being solicited for Federal employees engaged in team or individual activities that led to excellent results in any of the following acquisition areas from July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026.

Acquisition Excellence Award – Two Awards

One award will be given to an individual and one award will be given to a team. The awards can be in any of these categories.

Category #1 – Strategic Acquisition: The nominee has advanced an acquisition strategy to drive speeding acquisition, increasing competition, and/or reducing cost while still obtaining strong overall value. Solutions can be in any acquisition area, and could involve: 1) supporting the Revolutionary FAR Overhaul (RFO) and OMB Memorandum M-25-26, such as by making contributions to practitioner albums and other tools that give the workforce tips on best ways to rely on good business discretion to achieve better outcomes,¹ 2) demonstrating effective cross-functional partnerships that transform the culture, 3) developing or adapting new strategies or tools to maximize the acquisition of goods made in America, 4) increasing the participation of new entrant businesses through use of strategies that reduce barriers to entry, such as through strengthened procurement forecasts or techniques described in the Periodic Table of Acquisition Innovations, 5) utilizing an acquisition collaboration workshop to build better requirements, 6) developing innovative acquisition training and development for the workforce, 7) accelerating internal capacity to facilitate innovative solutions, 8) leveraging AI or augmented intelligence to improve acquisition outcomes, and/or 9) developing strategies that promote efficiency, accountability and performance in agency contracts.

Category #2 – Procurement Consolidation and Category Management: The nominee demonstrated excellence and success in procurement consolidation and category management practices. These initiatives include, but are not limited to: 1) increasing use of best-in-class contracts (BIC) in furtherance of consolidated procurement, 2) implementing effective supplier engagement and demand management strategies, 3) using the principles of category management to create strategies and incentives that facilitate new or stronger opportunities for domestic sourcing and/or manufacturing, and/or 4) supporting the RFO, such as by contributing tips for the effective and efficient use of BICs.

Category #3 – Cost Efficiency and Performance Accountability: The nominee used applied data analytics results and insights and/or emerging technology to improve the overall acquisition lifecycle and

achieve cost efficiencies or performance accountability in the agency or across the Federal enterprise. The nominee demonstrated success in business processes, policies, and/or workforce, such as, but not limited to, 1) strengthened program performance by shifting its contract support from a cost-type to a fixed-price or hybrid contract, from a non-commercial to commercial acquisition, or from a non-competitive to competitive contract, 2) developing innovative business processes resulting from identification and use of data, and/or 3) using emerging technologies to create efficiencies in programs, policies, and practices.

Lisa M. Wilusz Program Management Excellence Award – One Award

An award will be given to either an individual or a team.

This award is in honor of Lisa M. Wilusz, the Director of the Office of Procurement and Property Management at the Department of Agriculture, who passed away in April 2017. Lisa had over 20 years' experience in the federal government and at USDA was responsible for providing leadership, oversight, and policy in the areas of procurement, property management, environmental stewardship, and employee safety.

Program Management: The nominee demonstrated success in balancing the many factors that influence cost, scope, and schedule, while controlling risks. In addition, ensuring overall positive performance of the program, as well as its respective sub-programs and projects by using critical thinking and innovative techniques to solve management or oversight challenges in direct alignment with the organization's strategic goals. Success should be demonstrated by 1) specifically describing the nominee as utilizing at least five of the standards and principles listed in Table 1² of OMB memorandum M-18-19, Improving the Management of Federal Programs and Projects through Implementing the Program Management Improvement Accountability Act (PMIAA), and why having competency in these areas was critical to success, 2) completing a major project of program within 5% of the original cost and schedule estimates, or 3) successfully establishing or utilizing an enterprise-wide Program Management Office (PMO) to add value to the organization as demonstrated by effective governance and oversight of major acquisitions; comprehensive guidance and frameworks; and training and development of employees.

Judging Process

Nomination packages will be evaluated against the following criteria:

- **Criterion #1 – Results:** The team or individual demonstrated results that exceeded original expectations.
- **Criterion #2 – Impact:** The impact of the effort was substantial and provided significant value to the agency, taxpayers, and/or other beneficiaries.

The deadline for nominations is August 31, 2026. All nominations must be submitted through the online form at <http://fai.gov/survey/AE2026-Award-Submission>.

Nominations will be judged using a two-step process:

- **Step 1:** The initial nominations will be judged by senior government professionals and narrowed down to the highest rated nominations.
- **Step 2:** A panel of executive judges will select the winners.

The awards will be presented at ACT-IAC's Imagine Nation Executive Leadership Conference 2026 in National Harbor, MD in December 2026.

If you have additional questions regarding the awards, please contact Joanie Newhart, Associate Administrator of Acquisition Workforce Programs, Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) at jnewhart@omb.eop.gov.

¹ Consistent with M-25-26, agencies can also support the RFO by testing the broadened discretion granted by RFO deviations.

² The standards and principles include: Change Management; Stakeholder Engagement and Coalition Building; Contracting and Acquisition Management; Customer Service; Financial Management; Human Capital Management; Information Management;

Performance Management; Portfolio Management; Process Improvement; Project Management; Requirements Development and Management; Risk Management; and Strategic Planning.

The Acquisition and Program Management Excellence Awards allow the Chief Acquisition Officers Council (CAOC) to recognize outstanding improvements in acquisition throughout the Federal government.

The deadline for nominations is August 31, 2026.

Nominee Information

In Section I, please indicate whether this award nomination will be for an individual or a team. In Section II, enter the nominator's name, title, organization, email address and phone number. In Section III, enter the nominee's name, title, organization, email address and phone number. In Section IV, enter the contact information for the nominee's direct supervisor. For a team award, enter the information in Sections II, III and IV for the primary point of contact for the team.

If this nomination is for a team award, please enter the name of each team member in Section V.

Section I. Is this a nomination for an individual or a team?

- Individual Award
- Team Award

Section II. Nominator's Information

Nominator's Name:

Nominator's Title:

Nominator's Organization:

Nominator's Email Address:

Nominator's Phone Number:

Section III. Nominee's Information

Nominee's Name:

Nominee's Title:

Nominee's Organization:

Nominee's Email Address:

Nominee's Phone Number:

Section IV. Direct Supervisor's Information

Supervisor's Name:

Supervisor's Email Address:

Supervisor's Phone Number:

Section V. Additional Team Members (Applicable only to a team nomination)

Team Member 2:

Team Member 3:

Team Member 4:

Team Member 5:

Team Member 6:

Team Member 7:

Team Member 8:

Team Member 9:

Team Member 10:

Initiative Information

In Section I, indicate the type of award for which this nomination is submitted. For your reference, each of the award categories includes a brief description of the information sought following the title. In Section II, provide some information regarding the challenge faced. In Section III, provide a description of the approach taken to achieve success. In Section IV, provide information surrounding the metrics which were used to evaluate the outcome of this effort.

Please note that responses to the open-ended questions are limited to a maximum of **500 words**.

Each nomination will be evaluated on two main criteria: **results** and **impact**. During the evaluation stage, judges will look to see how the individual or team achieved results that exceeded original expectations. The judges will also determine if the impact of the effort was substantial and provided significant value to the agency and/or other beneficiaries.

Section I.

Is this nomination for an Acquisition Excellence Award or a Program Management Excellence Award?

- Acquisition Excellence Award
- Lisa M. Wilusz Program Management Excellence Award

Agency AIA Information (Applicable only to Acquisition Excellence Award)

Agency Acquisition Innovation Advocates (AIAs) can be found on the Acquisition Innovation Hub at <https://hallways.cap.gsa.gov/app/#/gateway/acquisition-innovation-0>.

Nominee's Agency AIA Name:

Nominee's Agency AIA Phone:

Nominee's Agency AIA Email:

Section I. Acquisition Excellence Award Category

Choose one of the following categories.

Category #1 – Strategic Acquisition: The nominee has advanced an acquisition strategy to drive speeding acquisition, increasing competition, and/or reducing cost while still obtaining strong overall value. Solutions can be in any acquisition area, and could involve: 1) supporting the Revolutionary FAR Overhaul (RFO) and OMB Memorandum M-25-26, such as by making contributions to practitioner albums and other tools that give the workforce tips on best ways to rely on good business discretion to achieve better outcomes, 2) demonstrating effective cross-functional partnerships that transform the culture, 3) developing or adapting new strategies or tools to maximize the acquisition of goods made in America, 4) increasing the participation of new entrant businesses through use of strategies that reduce barriers to entry, such as through strengthened procurement forecasts or techniques described in the Periodic Table of Acquisition Innovations, 5) utilizing an acquisition collaboration workshop to build better requirements, 6) developing innovative acquisition training and development for the workforce, 7) accelerating internal capacity to facilitate innovative solutions, 8) leveraging AI or augmented intelligence to improve acquisition outcomes, and/or 9) developing strategies that promote efficiency, accountability and performance in agency contracts.

Category #2 – Procurement Consolidation and Category Management: The nominee demonstrated excellence and success in procurement consolidation and category management practices. These initiatives include, but are not limited to: 1) increasing use of best-in-class contracts (BIC) in furtherance of consolidated procurement, 2) implementing effective supplier engagement and demand management strategies, 3) using the principles of category management to create strategies and incentives that facilitate new or stronger opportunities for domestic sourcing and/or manufacturing, and/or 4) supporting the RFO, such as by contributing tips for the effective and efficient use of BICs.

Category #3 – Cost Efficiency and Performance Accountability: The nominee used applied data analytics results and insights and/or emerging technology to improve the overall acquisition lifecycle and achieve cost efficiencies or performance accountability in the agency or across the Federal enterprise. The nominee demonstrated success in business processes, policies, and/or workforce, such as, but not limited to, 1) strengthened program performance by shifting its contract support from a cost-type to a fixed-price or hybrid contract, from a non-commercial to commercial acquisition, or from a non-competitive to competitive contract, 2) developing innovative business processes resulting from identification and use of data, and/or 3) using emerging technologies to create efficiencies in programs, policies, and practices.

Section II. What was the acquisition challenge that prompted the initiative and what goal were you trying to achieve? (limited to 500 words)

Section II. Response:

**Section III. Please provide a description of the approach taken to achieve success.
(limited to 500 words)**

Section III. Response:

Section IV. What were the quantifiable results and impact, including metrics that were captured? (limited to 500 words)

Section IV. Response:

Section I. Lisa M. Wilusz Program Management Excellence Award

Program Management: The nominee demonstrated success in balancing the many factors that influence cost, scope, and schedule, while controlling risks. In addition, ensuring overall positive performance of the program, as well as its respective sub-programs and projects by using critical thinking and innovative techniques to solve management or oversight challenges in direct alignment with the organization's strategic goals. Success should be demonstrated by 1) specifically describing the nominee as utilizing at least five of the standards and principles listed in Table 1 of OMB memorandum M-18-19, why having competency in these areas was critical to success, 2) completing a major project of program within 5% of the original cost and schedule estimates, or 3) successfully establishing or utilizing an enterprise-wide Program Management Office (PMO) to add value to the organization.

Section II. What was the program management challenge that prompted the initiative and what goal were you trying to achieve? (limited to 500 words)

Section II. Response:

**Section III. Please provide a description of the approach taken to achieve success.
(limited to 500 words)**

Section III. Response:

Section IV. What were the quantifiable results and impact, including metrics that were captured? (limited to 500 words)

Section IV. Response:

Submitter Information

Section V. Submitter's Information

Submitter's Name:

Submitter's Title:

Submitter's Organization:

Submitter's Email Address:

Submitter's Phone Number:

The deadline for nominations is August 31, 2026. All nominations must be submitted through the online form at <http://fai.gov/survey/AE2026-Award-Submission>.