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Sep 22, 2026

Department of War
OFFICE OF PREPUBLICATION AND SECURITY REVIEW



DoW CIO ANNUAL AWARDS



2026 Nomination Instructions

26-P-1347

DEPARTMENT OF WAR
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON, WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

26th Annual DoW CIO Awards Program

Team,

We are amid a bold transformation of our technology ecosystem to empower our warfighters with data supremacy and decision dominance on the battlefields of today and tomorrow. This transformation is grounded in the ingenuity, passion, and unwavering commitment of our most valuable asset: **our people**.

The Department of War Chief Information Officer (CIO) Annual Awards serve as an elite showcase, designed to celebrate the very best talent within our ranks, the innovators, the risk-takers, and the creative technical minds who are building a more lethal, resilient, and agile Joint Force. This is where we honor the champions who are turning our vision into operational reality. This also includes our industry and interagency partners, who play a vital role in strengthening, securing, and advancing the DoW Technology Ecosystem. The CIO Annual Awards Program is structured to recognize exceptional achievements across each of the pillars of our transformation strategy:

Pillar I: Building an Enduring Foundation. We will celebrate the personnel who build, modernize, maintain, and secure our vast technology infrastructure. From undersea cables and data to satellites, from data centers to cloud, they provide the resilient foundation which our warfighters depend.

Pillar II: Delivering Agile Capabilities. We will honor the innovators who are delivering software, applications, and analytics at the speed of relevance, ensuring our forces have the digital tools they need to outpace any adversary.

Pillar III: A New Paradigm for Cybersecurity. We will recognize the trailblazers who are revolutionizing our cybersecurity, moving beyond compliance to a risk prioritized function that shields and hardens our warfighting ecosystem.

Pillar IV: Forging our People & Partnerships. We will champion our people, the decisive edge in any conflict, who are building our technology, AI, and cyber workforce and forging the powerful global partnerships that multiply our strength across the DIB, interagency partners and allies.

The CIO Annual Awards Program is more than a celebration of technical achievement; it is a vital catalyst for enterprise transformation and mission success. By aligning our workforce with our strategic priorities, we drive unified progress across our digital landscape. By honoring the risk-takers and innovators, we foster a resilient technology ecosystem that refuses to accept the status quo. Ultimately, every breakthrough we celebrate serves a singular purpose: to empower our warfighters from the enterprise core to the tactical edge with the lethality, readiness, and technological superiority required to deter, and where necessary, defeat our adversaries.

Leaders, please seek out your most talented performers and teams and nominate them, ensuring their vital work is recognized at the highest level. Let us use this program to showcase the technical talent that makes our Joint Force the most formidable in the world.

Thank you for your commitment to our mission of achieving "Peace through technical strength."

Sincerely,

KIRSTEN A. DAVIES

The Honorable Kirsten A. Davies
Chief Information Officer, Department of War

Instructions for Completing Awards Nomination Fields

The Department of War (DoW) Chief Information Officer (CIO) Annual Awards Program recognizes outstanding contributions across the DoW Information Technology (IT) ecosystem. For 2026, eligibility expands to include DoW Federal and Strategic Partners. All nominations, individual and team, must be reviewed and approved by the respective Component/Service/Agency (C/S/A) Headquarters before submission. Each C/S/A should designate primary and secondary points of contact. See the [DoW CIO Annual Awards Program Guidance](#) document for full eligibility and award category details.

Key Changes for 2026

- **Expanded Eligibility:** Welcomes nominations for DoW Federal and Strategic Partners.
- **New Submission Portal:** Public-facing online form simplifies the nomination process.
- **Mandatory Component Review:** All nominations require C/S/A Headquarters approval before submission.
- **Twelve Nominations per Component:** Each C/S/A may submit up to 12 nominations (any combination of individual/team).

How to Submit a Nomination

1. **Access the Portal.** Navigate to dowcio.war.gov/Awards/ and click **Start Now**.
2. **Complete the Online Form.** Fill out all fields; those marked with an asterisk (*) are mandatory based on nomination type. The form autosaves your entries as you work, so you can complete your nomination in one sitting or return to it later.
3. **Submit the Form.** Click **SUBMIT** to register your nomination.
4. **Email Supplemental Documents.** Your nomination is not finalized until the Awards team receives the CIO Submission Memo, CFO Endorsement Memo (if cost savings/avoidance are cited), and the required photo. Email all items in a single package to DoW-CIO-Annual-Awards-Supplemental@mail.mil.
5. **Internal SharePoint (CAC-enabled):** dod365.sharepoint-mil.us/sites/DODCIO-Awards—program details, status updates, and FAQs.

2026 Awards Program Timeline & Deadlines

Plan internal coordination against these dates. Each Component/Service/Agency should publish internal nomination deadlines to meet the **30 October 2026 at 12:00 pm EST** DoW submission deadline.

STEP	DATE	ACTIVITY
1. Program Announcement	September 22, 2026	DoW CIO nomination call via CATMS.
2. Submission Deadline	October 30, 2026 12:00 pm EST	Final nominations and supplemental documents due to DoW CIO.
3. Finalists and Winners Announced	November 20, 2026	DoW CIO announces finalists and winners; Components confirm attendees.
4. Awards Ceremony	December 9, 2026	DoW CIO Annual Awards Ceremony at the Pentagon. Sponsoring organizations fund all travel and arrangements for awardees.

Pre-Nomination Checklist

STEP	ACTION	DETAILS
Review	Read the Program Guidance	Read the <i>DoW CIO Annual Awards Program Guidance</i> for eligibility, award categories, and evaluation criteria.
Verify	Confirm eligibility	Nominees who received an award or honorable mention in CY23–CY25 are not eligible for CY26.
Draft	Prepare your narrative	The online form autosaves as you work. Prepare a clear, factual narrative with quantifiable results, then enter it directly in the form.
Coordinate	Obtain C/S/A approval	Work with leadership to ensure the nomination is vetted, prioritized, and approved.
Prepare	Gather supplemental documents	Have the CIO Memo, CFO Memo (if applicable), and professional photo(s) ready for email submission.

Helpful Guidelines

- Verify all nominee and nominating official information is accurate; spell out all acronyms; be clear and concise.
- Use quantifiable data to support every claim; avoid excessive superlatives.
- Contact the nominating official for changes after a nomination is saved, or the component-level reviewer after the due date. All submissions must be unclassified and publicly released.

Nomination Content & Requirements

Eligibility & Qualifications

- **Eligible:** Service members O-6 and below (including all Warrant Officer ranks); DoW civilians GS-15 and below; Federal Partners (IC and other federal agencies). Contractors may be included on teams led by a Service member or DoW civilian.
- **Ineligible:** Highly Qualified Experts (HQE); Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) personnel.
- **Performance Period:** Achievements must have occurred during June 2025 – July 2026.
- **Public Release:** Winners' names, rank, service, and citation will be released by the DoW Media Agency (DMA) via the DoW CIO website, social media, and Defense.gov.

Nomination Justification & Citation

Justification (250 words max): Unclassified narrative with specific, factual data on the activity accomplished, its benefits, and how the individual or team advanced DoW and Component missions and operations.

Recommended Citation (150 words max, third person): A brief citation for the award certificate using

CITATION PART	FORMAT
First Sentence	"In recognition of [Individual or Team Name]'s outstanding contributions to..."
Last Sentence	"[Name]'s leadership, dedicated service, and exceptional accomplishments reflect great credit upon [him/her/them] self, the Department of the [Army], and the Department of War."

Four CIO Pillars

Select **at least one** Pillar and describe how the nominee's accomplishments delivered results in that functional area. See the [Program Guidance](#) for subcategories.

- **Pillar I:** Building an Enduring Digital Foundation
- **Pillar II:** Delivering Agile Capabilities
- **Pillar III:** A New Paradigm for Cybersecurity
- **Pillar IV:** Forging our People and Partnerships and Others

Six Mandatory Evaluation Criteria

Address all six criteria with specific, quantifiable detail. The Awards Selection Panel scores each criterion.

- **Scope of Impact** — significance, reach, and lasting mission effect.
- **Creativity & Innovation** — originality and novel approaches.
- **Management Efficiency & Effectiveness** — quantified improvements (better, faster, cheaper).
- **Technical Merits** — technical excellence, scalability, and KPIs.
- **Operational Impacts** — direct improvement to mission and warfighter capability.
- **Financial & Management Audits (ROI)** – cost savings/avoidance and ROI from technical/financial improvements (must be endorsed by Component Comptroller).

Endorsements, Photos & Final Submission

- **CIO Submission Memo:** Required from the Component CIO or Senior IT Official. **CFO Endorsement Memo:** Required from the Component Comptroller or budget office when cost savings or avoidance are cited. Use the DoW SNAP IT site for UII data: snap.cape.osd.mil/snapit/home.aspx.
- **Photos:** Individuals submit a professional headshot (jpg, 300 dpi+, solid background or with flags). Teams submit a single group photo (jpg, 300 dpi+, solid background).
- **Email all supplemental documents to:** DoW-CIO-Annual-Awards-Supplemental@mail.mil

Note: Clicking **SUBMIT** registers the nomination but does not finalize it. The submission is not complete – and the nominee is not eligible to win – until all required memos and photos are received by the DoW CIO Awards team.

DoW CIO ANNUAL AWARDS



The DoW CIO Annual Awards Program recognizes outstanding contributions to the DoW CIO portfolio from individuals and teams within DoW, Federal Agencies, and Strategic Partners.

For More Information...

Please review the associated *DoW CIO Annual Awards Program Guidance* document for full eligibility, award categories, and evaluation criteria.

Internal DoW CIO Annual Awards Site (CAC-enabled):

 dod365.sharepoint-mil.us/sites/DODCIO-Awards/

Public-facing DoW CIO Annual Awards Site:

 dowcio.war.gov/Awards/

✉ DoW-CIO-Annual-Awards@mail.mil

Submit your photos, CIO Submission Memo, and CFO Endorsement Memo to:

✉ DoW-CIO-Annual-Awards-Supplemental@mail.mil

