



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

UNDER SECRETARY OF WAR
4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

MAR 31 2026

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOW FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: 2026 Department of War Drug Prevention Awards and Red Ribbon Week

To support the health and readiness of the force, it is fundamental that Department of War (DoW) military and civilian personnel and their families remain drug free. One of the Department's most successful outreach efforts has been our continued participation in the Red Ribbon campaign, which is the Nation's largest drug-prevention awareness program.

Red Ribbon Week is scheduled for October 23-31, 2026. Alongside our efforts to promote sponsorship of anti-drug outreach activities during this period and year-round, the Department invites nominations for the 36th annual Secretary of War Community Drug Awareness Awards and the 2026 Secretary of War Fulcrum Shield Award. The Community Drug Awareness Awards recognize outstanding drug misuse prevention initiatives within each Military Service, the National Guard, Defense Agencies, and DoW Field Activities. The Fulcrum Shield Award recognizes the best youth-based program affiliated with any Military Service, the National Guard, Defense Agency, or DoW Field Activity. Award eligibility and criteria are detailed in the attachments.

To be eligible for consideration, nominations must be coordinated through appropriate component commands or headquarters and received by the Office of Drug Demand Reduction no later than July 31, 2026. Winners will be notified by August 31, 2026, and recognized during the DoW Annual Red Ribbon Week Awards Ceremony on Thursday, October 15, 2026, at the Pentagon.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Lynn Wagner at (571) 286-6381 or lynn.m.wagner2.civ@mail.mil.



Anthony J. Tata

Attachments:
As stated

Attachment

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**36th ANNUAL SECRETARY OF WAR
COMMUNITY DRUG AWARENESS AWARDS**

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

A. Purpose

The Secretary of War Community Drug Awareness Award is presented annually to recognize outstanding anti-drug prevention and community awareness initiatives carried out during the fiscal year (FY) across the Services, National Guard, Defense Agencies, and Department of War (DoW) Field Activities. The award was established by the Department in 1990 to promote drug misuse awareness efforts across the DoW and encourage participation in the national Red Ribbon drug prevention campaign.

B. Eligibility

Eligible initiatives include those conducted by:

- 1) Military installations, units, or commands;
- 2) Defense Agencies or DoW Field Activities;
- 3) Reserve components, including National Guard;
- 4) Volunteer or community-based efforts led by DoW personnel; and
- 5) Programs conducted by the National Guard of the various states under the terms of the Governors' State Plans (Section 112 programs).

C. Criteria

Substance misuse remains a significant public health threat driven by widespread drug availability and misperceptions about safety, acceptability, and risk, which are often reinforced through social environments. Outreach programs, including drug-misuse prevention campaigns, community engagement activities, and partnerships with schools and community groups, play a critical role in providing Service members, their families, and DoW civilian employees with current and relevant information about illicit drug use, the misuse of prescription drugs, and associated health consequences.

The Department is committed to maintaining safe, healthy, and drug-free installations by preventing substance misuse before it begins. This awards program recognizes outreach initiatives that employ innovative approaches to reducing drug-related harm and strengthening community resilience.

Nominations for this year's award should highlight impactful and innovative community outreach efforts conducted during FY 2026, including activities associated with Red Ribbon Week. Digital media plays a vital role in broadening outreach, enhancing engagement, and delivering timely prevention messaging across various DoW populations. Incorporating digital media, including social media, is strongly encouraged to strengthen the reach and effectiveness

of campaign activities. Nominations should be concise and may not exceed two typed pages, excluding digital media samples and the endorsement page. Nominations must include:

- 1) Organization details, including:
 - a. Name and associated Service, DoW agency, or field activity; and
 - b. Location (installation, ship, or facility), full address, and point of contact.
- 2) A summary of major outreach efforts conducted during FY 2026 (October 1, 2025 – September 30, 2026), including Red Ribbon Week events. The summary should describe key initiatives, identify the target audience, and include measurable outcomes such as the number of personnel reached or engaged.
- 3) A digital anti-drug campaign developed during FY 2026, including:
 - a. A brief campaign overview describing the communication objective, target audience, and digital platforms used;
 - b. At least three representative digital products, such as short-form videos, long-form videos, text-based posts, podcasts, or graphic content; and
 - c. Available performance metrics, including reach, engagement, and any observed outcomes.
- 4) A nomination endorsement signed by the appropriate authority within the organization's chain of command.

Portions of each winner's digital submission will be featured during the Department's October 2026 Red Ribbon Ceremony. Programs are encouraged to retain copies social media posts, reels, and other digital content so they can be included in the nomination package. For a copy of the highlight videos from the 2025 awards, please contact Dr. Lynn Wagner at lynn.m.wagner2.civ@mail.mil or CAPT Jenifer Scancelli at jenifer.m.scancelli@mail.mil.

D. Nomination Procedures

Nominations for the Secretary of War Community Drug Awareness Award will cover the period of FY 2026 (October 1, 2025 – September 30, 2026). The nominations shall be submitted by the Installation Commander (or equivalent official) to the applicable Military Department or Chief, National Guard Bureau, as appropriate. The Defense Agencies and DoW Field Activities shall forward their nominations to their respective Agency or DoW Field Activity Director. The Secretaries of the Military Departments, Chief, National Guard Bureau, and Directors of Defense Agencies and DoW Field Activities will compile their nominations and submit them electronically to the Office of Drug Demand Reduction, Office of the Under Secretary of War (Personnel and Readiness) (OUSD P&R) no later than July 31, 2026. Please use DoD SAFE to transmit larger files.

Each Military Service and the National Guard is limited to four nominations, while each Defense Agency or DoW Field Activity may submit two nominations. One program will be selected to receive the award from each of the Services and the National Guard, and one award recipient will be selected from among all the Defense Agency and Field Activity nominations.

Digital submissions may be used on official DoW websites and social media platforms and must adhere to DoD Instruction 5400.17, “Official Use of Social Media for Public Affairs Purposes,” and the applicable guidance and professional standards of the Component concerned.

Common errors resulting in low score or disqualification include:

- Lack of measurable evidence of effectiveness, such as missing qualitative or quantitative data demonstrating community impact;
- Outreach efforts occurring outside the current FY;
- Exceeding the page length requirement;
- Submitting nominations that closely replicate previous submissions from the same organization; and
- Providing non-functional or inaccessible links to social media posts, reels, or other digital content.

E. Selection of Awards Recipients

An awards committee shall be established by the OUSW(P&R) to review and evaluate the nominations. The committee shall be composed of active duty military personnel and/or full-time time or permanent part-time DoW civilian employees. The awards committee will submit its recommendations to the Office of Drug Demand Reduction, OUSW(P&R). Winners will be notified by August 31, 2026.

F. Awards

The awards will be presented to the recipients during the DoW Annual Red Ribbon Week Observance Ceremony tentatively scheduled for Thursday, October 15, 2026, at the Pentagon. The ceremony will showcase the awardees’ digital anti-drug campaigns, and selected campaign materials may also be featured on official DoW websites and social media platforms.

Questions may be directed to the Office of Drug Demand Reduction, Dr. Wagner at (703) 695-5230 or lynn.m.wagner2.civ@mail.mil and CAPT Scancella at (703) 697-8690 or jenifer.m.scancella.mil@mail.mil.

Attachment

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2026 SECRETARY OF WAR FULCRUM SHIELD AWARD

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

A. Purpose

The Secretary of War Fulcrum Shield Award is presented annually to recognize outstanding anti-drug prevention and community awareness initiatives carried out during the fiscal year (FY) by youth programs associated with the Military Services, the National Guard, Defense Agencies, and Department of War (DoW) Field Activities. The award was established by the Department more than 20 years ago to promote drug misuse awareness efforts across the DoW and encourage participation in the national Red Ribbon drug prevention campaign.

B. Eligibility

Eligible initiatives include those conducted by a youth organization (ages 5-18) associated with or sponsored by a Military Service, the National Guard, Defense Agency, or DoW Field Activity.

C. Criteria

Substance misuse remains a significant public health threat driven by widespread drug availability and misperceptions about safety, acceptability, and risk, which are often reinforced through social environments. Outreach programs, including drug-misuse prevention campaigns, community engagement activities, and partnerships with schools and community groups, play a critical role in providing Service members, their families, and DoW civilian employees with current and relevant information about illicit drug use, the misuse of prescription drugs, and associated health consequences.

The Department is committed to maintaining safe, healthy, and drug-free installations by preventing substance misuse before it begins. This awards program recognizes outreach initiatives by youth programs that employ innovative approaches to reducing drug-related harm and strengthening community resilience.

Nominations for this year's award should highlight impactful and innovative community outreach efforts conducted during FY 2026, including activities associated with Red Ribbon Week. Digital media plays a vital role in broadening outreach, enhancing engagement, and delivering timely prevention messaging across various DoW populations. Incorporating digital media, including social media, is strongly encouraged to strengthen the reach and effectiveness of campaign activities. Nominations should be concise and may not exceed two typed pages, excluding digital media samples and the endorsement page. Nominations must include:

- 1) Organization details, including:
 - a. Name and associated Service, Defense Agency, or DoW Field Activity; and
 - b. Location (installation or facility), full address, and point of contact.
- 2) A summary of major outreach efforts conducted during FY 2026 (October 1, 2025 – September 30, 2026), including Red Ribbon Week events. The summary should describe

key initiatives, identify the target audience, and include measurable outcomes such as the number of personnel reached or engaged.

- 3) A digital anti-drug campaign developed during FY 2026, including:
 - a. A brief campaign overview describing the communication objective, target audience, and digital platforms used;
 - b. At least three representative digital products, such as short-form videos, long-form videos, text-based posts, podcasts, or graphic content; and
 - c. Available performance metrics, including reach, engagement, and any observed outcomes.
- 4) A nomination endorsement signed by the appropriate authority within the organization's chain of command.

Portions of each winner's digital submission will be featured during the Department's October 2026 Red Ribbon Ceremony. Programs are encouraged to retain copies social media posts, reels, and other digital content so they can be included in the nomination package. For a copy of the highlight videos from the 2025 awards, please contact Dr. Lynn Wagner at lynn.m.wagner2.civ@mail.mil or CAPT Jenifer Scancellia at jenifer.m.scancellia.mil@mail.mil.

D. Nomination Procedures

Nominations for the Secretary of War Fulcrum Shield Award will cover the period of FY 2026 (October 1, 2025 – September 30, 2026). Each Defense Agency and DoW Field Activity is limited to one nomination, while each of the Military Departments and the National Guard Bureau are limited to three. After review by the award selection committee, one overall program will be selected to receive the award.

Submissions should be forwarded through the appropriate chain of command and should be submitted electronically to the Office of Drug Demand Reduction, Office of the Under Secretary of War for Personnel and Readiness (OUSW P&R) no later than July 31, 2026. Please use DoD SAFE to transmit larger files.

Digital submissions may be used on official DoW websites and social media platforms and must adhere to DoD Instruction 5400.17, "Official Use of Social Media for Public Affairs Purposes," and the applicable guidance and professional standards of the Component concerned.

Common errors resulting in low score or disqualification include:

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- Outreach efforts occurring outside the current FY;
- Exceeding the page length requirement;
- Submitting nominations that closely replicate previous submissions from the same organization; and
- Providing non-functional or inaccessible links to social media posts, reels, or other digital content.

E. Selection of Awards Winners

An awards committee shall be established by the OUSW(P&R) to review and evaluate the nominations. The committee shall be composed of active duty military personnel and/or full-time time or permanent part-time DoW civilian employees. The awards committee will submit its recommendations to the Office of Drug Demand Reduction, OUSW(P&R). Winners will be notified by August 31, 2026.

F. Awards and Presentations

The awards shall be presented to the recipients during the DoW Annual Red Ribbon Week Observance Ceremony tentatively scheduled for Thursday, October 15, 2026, at the Pentagon. The ceremony will showcase the awardees' digital anti-drug campaigns, and selected campaign materials may also be featured on official DoW websites and social media platforms.

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