



PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

DEC 18 2024

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

SUBJECT: 2025 Red Ribbon Week Activities and Nominations for the Annual Drug Demand Reduction Awards

To support the health and readiness of the Total Force, it is fundamental that DoD military and civilian personnel and their families remain drug free. One of the Department's most successful outreach efforts has been our ongoing participation in the Red Ribbon anti-drug national campaign and Red Ribbon Week.

Red Ribbon Week is scheduled for October 23-31, 2025. In addition to encouraging the sponsorship and participation of anti-drug activities during that week and throughout the year, the Department seeks nominations for the 35th Annual Secretary of Defense Community Drug Awareness Awards and the 2025 Secretary of Defense Fulcrum Shield Award. The Community Drug Awareness Awards recognize the best Drug Demand Reduction Program within each Military Service, the National Guard, Defense Agencies, and DoD Field Activities. The Fulcrum Shield Award recognizes the best youth-based Drug Demand Reduction Program that is affiliated with any Military Service, the National Guard, Defense Agency, or DoD Field Activity. Eligibility and criteria for these awards are detailed in the attachment.

Nominations should be submitted through the appropriate chain of command to the Office of Drug Demand Reduction no later than July 31, 2025. Submissions that have not been coordinated through the appropriate component commands or headquarters will not be considered. Winners will be notified by August 31, 2025. Winners will be recognized during the Annual Red Ribbon Week Awards Ceremony on Thursday, October 16, 2025 at the Pentagon.

If you have any questions, please contact Captain Erin Wilfong at (571) 236-1766 or erin.r.wilfong.mil@mail.mil.

Ashish S. Vazirani
Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary of
Defense for Personnel and Readiness

Attachment:
As stated

35TH ANNUAL SECRETARY OF DEFENSE COMMUNITY DRUG AWARENESS AWARDS

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

A. Purpose

The Secretary of Defense Community Drug Awareness Award is presented annually to the best Drug Demand Reduction Program for the fiscal year (FY) within each Military Service, the National Guard, the Defense Agencies, and the DoD Field Activities. The award was established by the Department in 1990 to promote community drug awareness efforts across the DoD and encourage participation in the national Red Ribbon drug prevention campaign.

B. Eligibility

There are three types of drug reduction programs within the DoD that are eligible for this award:

- 1) Programs conducted wholly or partially with DoD assets, directed at our military personnel and their dependents, and DoD civilian employees;
- 2) Programs supported strictly by voluntary efforts of DoD personnel targeted to appropriate populations, with or without contributions by other non-DoD sources; and
- 3) Programs conducted by the National Guard of the various States under the terms of the Governors' State Plans (Section 112 programs).

The awards are in recognition of base, activity, or unit programs and are not awarded to specific individuals.

C. Criteria

Community outreach is a critical component of the DoD Drug Demand Reduction Program (DDRP) mission. Outreach provides our Service members, their families, and DoD civilian employees with current and relevant drug information about illicit drug use, the misuse of prescription drugs, drug use trends, and the health consequences of drug use.

Substance misuse remains a serious public health threat fueled by widespread drug availability and misperceptions regarding safety, acceptability, and perceived risk which are often promoted through social environments. Effective prevention efforts often address these misperceptions by leveraging a combination of digital and traditional outreach. Digital media, including social media, offers a low-cost, potentially high-impact approach to disseminate prevention messages in various forms such as text, images, videos, audio, and interactive content on multiple platforms; and community engagement brings organizations and individuals together around the shared purpose of preventing drug misuse.

Drug misuse dramatically declines when youth and adults perceive drug use as harmful and risky. DoD is committed to keeping our installations safe, healthy, and drug-free by working to prevent substance misuse before it starts. This awards program recognizes innovative outreach initiatives that provide credible information about the harmful effects of drug use.

This year's award nominations should highlight innovative and creative digital and traditional community outreach efforts during FY 2025, including Red Ribbon week. Nominations must include the following:

- 1) Program details (should not exceed two typed pages) and must include:
 - a. Name of the program and associated Military Service;
 - b. Location of the program (name of base, installation, ship, or facility, address, and point of contact);
 - c. Program mission, date of inception, size, and any other applicable information; and
 - d. Description of target audience (target population must be within the three categories of the DoD DDRP described in the Eligibility section).
- 2) A summary of your top three outreach efforts during FY 2025 (October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025), including Red Ribbon Week events. Please include measured outcomes, such as number of personnel impacted. The summary should not exceed two typed pages, and included pictures or flyers will not count towards the page limit.
- 3) A digital anti-drug campaign that includes:
 - a. 3 of the 4 following elements: short video (<1 minute), long video (2-3 minutes), text-based posts, podcasts, and/or GIF/images;
 - b. A brief 1-page summary with campaign title, central message(s), target audience, digital platform(s) utilized, and metrics (page views, social reach, engagements, etc.);
 - c. All digital elements must be designed and produced by the submitting organization during FY 2025.
- 4) Nomination recommendation and verification by proper authorities.

Portions of each winner's digital submission will be highlighted at the Department's October 2025 Red Ribbon Ceremony. Programs are highly encouraged to save social media posts and reels to include in their nomination package. For a copy of the highlight videos from the 2024 award ceremony, please contact Dr. Lynn Wagner at lynn.m.wagner2.civ@mail.mil or Captain (CAPT) Erin Wilfong at erin.r.wilfong.mil@mail.mil.

D. Nomination Procedures

Nominations for the Secretary of Defense Community Drug Awareness Award shall cover the period of FY 2025 (October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025). The nominations shall be

submitted by the installation commander (or equivalent official) to the applicable Secretary of the Military Department or Chief of the National Guard Bureau, as appropriate. The Defense Agencies and DoD Field Activities shall forward their nominations to their respective Defense Agency or DoD Field Activity Director. The Military Departments, National Guard Bureau, and Defense Agency or DoD Field Activity will then compile their nominations and submit them to the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (OUSD(P&R)). Each Military Service and the National Guard is limited to four submissions, while each Defense Agency or DoD Field Activity may submit two nominations. One program will be selected to receive the award from each of the Military Services and the National Guard, and one award recipient will be selected from among all the Defense Agency and DoD Field Activity submissions.

Submissions should be forwarded through the appropriate chain of command and should be submitted electronically to Dr. Wagner and CAPT Erin Wilfong no later than July 31, 2025. Please use DoD SAFE to transmit larger files. Questions may be directed to Dr. Lynn Wagner at (571) 286-6381 or lynn.m.wagner2.civ@mail.mil; and CAPT Erin Wilfong at (571) 236-1766 or erin.r.wilfong.mil@mail.mil.

Digital submissions may be used on official DoD websites and social media platforms, including the DoD educational campaign “Too Much to Lose,” and must adhere to applicable standards of professionalism as described in the DoD Instruction 5400.17, “Official Use of Social Media for Public Affairs Purposes,” and any Military Service-level guidance on social or digital media.

Common errors:

Some common errors encountered by the judges in the past resulting in a low score or disqualification are as follows:

- No visible objective measures of effectiveness of the program (i.e., no qualitative or quantitative data demonstrating how the program impacted the community);
- Programmatic achievements listed did not occur in the current FY;
- Exceeds page length;
- Nominations similar to previous nominations from the same installation are unacceptable and will be disqualified;
- Links to social media posts or reels that are non-functional or difficult to open/download; and
- No link to social media posts or reels – screenshots or images of social media posts or reels will not disqualify but are highly discouraged.

E. Selection of Awards Recipients

An awards committee shall be established by the OUSD(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 DoD civilian employees from outside of the DoD Office of Drug Demand Reduction. The awards committee will submit its recommendations to the Office of Drug Demand Reduction, OUSD(P&R). Winners will be notified by August 31, 2025.

F. Awards

The awards shall be presented to the recipients during the DoD Annual Red Ribbon Week Observance Ceremony tentatively scheduled for Thursday, October 16, 2025, at the Pentagon. The ceremony will showcase awardee anti-drug digital campaigns and campaigns may also be used on official DoD websites and social media platforms.

2025 SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FULCRUM SHIELD AWARD

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

A. Purpose

The Secretary of Defense Fulcrum Shield Award is presented annually to the best youth program associated with the Military Services, the National Guard, Defense Agencies, and DoD Field Activities for the fiscal year (FY). The award was established by the Department to promote community drug awareness efforts.

B. Eligibility

To be eligible for the award, the nominated organization must have:

- School age participants (ages 5-18) who have contributed towards articulating an anti-drug message to their peers and communities;
- Some form of direct association or sponsorship with or by a Military Service, the National Guard, Defense Agency, or DoD Field Activity;
- Demonstrated ability to reach populations outside the membership of the organization with the anti-drug message;
- A clear description of leadership by the youth members, not just adults leading the youth; and
- A direct, measurable impact on drug awareness in the community.

C. Criteria

This award is designed to recognize the best youth anti-drug outreach group that has a military affiliation. Courses or programs developed for youth by the Military Services, the National Guard, Defense Agencies, and DoD Field Activities, conducted as part of their demand reduction programs may be considered.

Community outreach is a critical component of the DoD Drug Demand Reduction Program mission. Outreach provides our Service members, their families, DoD civilian employees, and the larger community with current and relevant drug information about illicit drug use, the misuse of prescription drugs, drug use trends, and the health consequences of drug use.

Substance misuse remains a serious public health threat fueled by widespread drug availability and misperceptions regarding safety, acceptability, and perceived risk, which are often promoted through social environments. Effective prevention efforts often address these misperceptions by leveraging a combination of digital and traditional outreach. Digital media,

including social media, offers a low-cost, potentially high-impact approach to disseminate prevention messages in various forms such as text, images, videos, audio, and interactive content on multiple platforms; and community engagement brings organizations and individuals together around the shared purpose of preventing drug misuse.

Drug misuse dramatically declines when youth and adults perceive drug use as harmful and risky. DoD is committed to keeping our installations and larger communities safe, healthy, and drug-free by working to prevent substance misuse before it starts. This awards program recognizes innovative outreach initiatives that provide credible information about the harmful effects of drug use.

This year's award nominations should highlight innovative and creative digital and traditional community outreach efforts during FY 2025, including Red Ribbon Week. Nominations must include the following:

- 1) Program details (should not exceed two typed pages) and must include:
 - a. Name of the program and associated Military Service;
 - b. Location of the program (address and point of contact);
 - c. Program mission, date of inception, size, and any other applicable information;
- 2) A summary of your top three outreach efforts during FY 2025 (October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025), including Red Ribbon Week events. Please include measured outcomes, such as number of community members impacted. The summary should not exceed two typed pages, and included pictures or flyers will not count towards the page limit;
- 3) A digital anti-drug campaign that includes:
 - a. At least three of the following digital elements: short video (<1 minute), text-based posts, infographics, and/or GIF/images. All elements must be appropriate for a school age audience (ages 5-18 years);
 - b. A brief 1-page summary that includes: campaign title, central message(s), target audience, and digital platform(s) utilized;
 - c. All digital elements must be designed and produced by the submitting organization during FY 2025.
- 4) Nomination recommendation and verification by proper authorities of the component concerned.

D. Nomination Procedures

Nominations for the Secretary of Defense Fulcrum Shield Award shall cover the period of FY 2025 (October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025). The nominations shall be submitted by the appropriate chain of command. Each Defense Agency and DoD 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 electronically submitted to Dr. Lynn Wagner and Captain (CAPT) Erin Wilfong no later than July 31, 2025. Please use DoD SAFE to transmit larger files. Questions may be directed to Dr. Wagner at (571) 286-6381 or lynn.m.wagner2.civ@mail.mil; or CAPT Wilfong at (571) 236-1766 or erin.r.wilfong.mil@mail.mil.

Digital submissions may be used on official DoD websites and social media platforms, including the DoD educational campaign “Too Much to Lose,” and local community social media platforms, and must adhere to applicable standards of professionalism as described in the DoD Instruction 5400.17, “Official Use of Social Media for Public Affairs Purposes,” and any Service-level guidance on social or digital media. Individuals under the age of 18 cannot appear in digital campaign images/GIFs, infographics, or videos.

Common errors:

Some common errors encountered by judges in the past, resulting in a low score or disqualification are as follows:

- No visible objective measures of effectiveness of the program (i.e., no qualitative or quantitative data demonstrating how the program impacted the community);
- Programmatic achievements listed did not occur in the current FY;
- Community service efforts were not focused on anti-drug messaging;
- Exceeds page length;
- Nominations similar to previous nominations from the same installation are unacceptable and will be disqualified;
- Links to social media posts or reels that are non-functional or difficult to open/download; and
- No link to social media posts or reels – screenshots or images of social media posts or reels will not disqualify but are highly discouraged.

E. Selection of Awards Winners

An awards committee shall be established by the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness (OUSD(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 DoD civilian employees from outside of the DoD Office of Drug Demand

Reduction. The awards committee will submit its recommendations to the Office of Drug Demand Reduction, OUSD(P&R). Winners will be notified by August 31, 2025.

F. Awards and Presentations

The awards shall be presented to the recipients during the DoD Annual Red Ribbon Week Observance Ceremony tentatively scheduled for Thursday, October 16, 2025, in the Pentagon. The ceremony will showcase awardee anti-drug digital campaigns and campaigns may also be used on official DoD websites and social media platforms.