

Training Coordinators and Prospective Nominees

The Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service (DCPAS) is excited to announce nominations for the Fiscal Year 2026 White House Leadership Development Program (WHLDP) cohort.

Please Note:

- To ensure equitable access to the program, the current distribution of the GS-15 population across the Department determined the number of nominations accepted from each component.
- Nominations for IC employees in OSD, DA/FA and JS organizations will be reviewed jointly. IC employees within the Service Components will be considered with other nominations from their Service.
- The WHLDP requires nominees to have a current performance rating of record which “exceeds expectations.” DoD defines “exceeds expectations” as a rating of record of 4.3 or higher for those employees rated through the Defense Performance Management and Appraisal Program. For other performance management systems “exceeds expectations” is defined as a rating of record score in the top 15% of the rating range.

Program Overview

The WHLDP is sponsored by the Executive Office of the President and provides a unique growth opportunity focused on developing high potential General Schedule (GS)-15s and equivalents into the next generation of senior career executives. Participants work on the Federal government's high-visibility challenges that require the coordination of multiple Federal agencies to succeed. There is no tuition expense, but selected fellows will serve a one-year non-reimbursable rotational assignment in the National Capital Region. Travel requirements for the rotational assignment are funded by the component organizations. Fellows spend approximately 80 percent of their time in a placement assignment gaining on-the-job experience and approximately 20 percent of their time in leadership development programming built around the stakeholders, networks, and skillsets that senior leaders need in an interagency environment. For more detailed information on the WHLDP, consult the Program Manual and Nomination Guidance on the DCPAS website: <https://www.dcpas.osd.mil/learning/civilianleaderdevelopment/whitehouseleadership>.

Eligibility

Career GS-15/equivalent civilians with high potential to serve as senior executives are encouraged to apply. The WHLDP expects that nominees have a performance rating of at least “exceeds expectations.” To be accepted into the DoD nomination process, employees rated through the Defense Performance Management and Appraisal Program must have a current rating of record of 4.3 or higher. Employees rated through other performance management systems must have a rating of record score in the top 15% of the rating range to be considered for the program.

WHLDP -- A Two-Phase Process

Nomination to the WHLDP is a two-phase process: 1) the agency nomination process; and 2) the WHLDP process administered by the WHLDP Program Office by the General Services Administration (GSA). Executive Agencies (i.e. DoD) may nominate up to six employees to the WHLDP.

Phase I -- DoD Nomination Process (November – May)

DoD uses an internal review process to select the best qualified nominees to the program. To ensure equitable access to the program, the current distribution of the GS-15 population across the DoD determines the number of nominations accepted from each component. For the FY25 cohort, nomination quotas are: Department of the Army (4), Department of the Navy (6), Department of the Air Force (2), and OSD, DA/FA & JS organizations (6 combined). Military Departments are responsible for using an internal selection process, following applicable laws and regulations, to review and prioritize applications from their organizations. Nominations from OSD, DA/FA and JS organizations (no more than 1 from each sub-organization (e.g. OUSD (A&S), DIA, DHA)) are submitted directly to DCPAS who conducts a joint review board to select the six OSD, DA/FA and JS nominees.

- **All Applicants** – submit nomination package (as separate files) to your training POC (due date varies by Component training POC), including:
 1. DoD Application Form – as a working PDF file, *not* an image scan
 2. Most recent annual performance appraisal (annual performance rating must meet eligibility criterion)
 3. Resume – limited to 6 pages, submitted in MS Word *not* PDF. No personal identifiers, use your DOD EDIPI as your heading; repeat on subsequent pages. Do not use a Summary or Objective paragraph. Ensure all positions are properly formatted with Position Title, Pay Plan, Series, Grade and Dates.
 4. Supervisor Acknowledgement Form

- **OSD, DA/FA and JS Training POCs** (Due date: January 15, 2025)
 - Verify package is complete with DoD application, supervisor acknowledgment, performance appraisal, resume (as separate files)
 - Submit nomination packages directly to DCPAS group box at dodhra-whldp@mail.mil

- **Military Department POCs (Army, Navy, Air Force)** (Due date: January 15, 2025)
 - Nomination packages – verify each package is complete with DoD application, supervisor acknowledgment, performance appraisal, resume (as separate files)
 - Nomination cover letter rank ordering the nominations. This letter is signed by the official approving the results of the component’s internal review process (must be SES/GO/FO/DISES level).
 - Submit rank ordered packages to DCPAS group box at dodhra-whldp@mail.mil

Following the Military Department review boards, DCPAS will conduct an SES panel review of the component nominees to select the six DoD nominees. To ensure a timely endorsement by the Deputy Secretary of Defense (DEPSECDEF), DCPAS will conduct the DoD Review Panel in late February 2025. ***DCPAS will then coordinate with the six DoD nominees to complete the WHLDP application when released by GSA.***

Phase II - WHLDP Selection Process (May – August)

The DEPSECDEF’s nomination package will be due to the WHLDP program team at GSA in mid-May 2025. The WHLDP program office will begin reviewing applications received from across the government and use a rigorous multi-phase interview process to select fellows. Final selection of fellows is typically announced in early August and the new cohort begins in early October. More details of the WHLDP selection process phase will be released by GSA in/around February 2025.

DoD’s FY26 WHLDP Cycle Nomination Timeline

Phase I -- DoD Nomination Process (November – May)

- November 2024 - DoD Call for Nominations released
- January 15, 2025 - DoD Military Department (Army, Navy, Air Force) and OSD, DA/FA and JS nominations due to DCPAS
- Mid-February 2025 - OSD, DA/FA and JS SES Review Panel meets to select up to six nominees for the DoD Review Panel
- Late February 2025 - DoD SES Review Panel meets to select up to six nominees for DEPSECDEF nomination
- February 2025 - WHLDP Manual, Nomination Guide, and Application Form released by GSA/OMB
- March 2025 - Selected DoD nominees submit WHLDP application for DEPSECDEF’s nomination
- May 2025 - DoD nominations package sent to OMB/GSA WHLDP Program Office

Phase II – FY25 WHLDP Cohort Selection Process (May – August)

- June 2025 - OMB/GSA WHLDP selection process begins
- June – July 2025 - WHLDP interviews
- August 2025 - Selection announcement

Formal onboarding of WHLDP fellows and rotational assignments begin in October 2025.