MAY – 6 2025

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

SUBJECT: Department of Defense Chief Information Officer Annual Awards Program 2025-Call for Nominations

The Department of Defense (DoD) Chief Information Officer (CIO) Annual Awards Program, now in the 25th year, recognizes individuals and teams within DoD for exceptional achievements within the DoD CIO portfolio of capabilities. Component CIOs may submit up to ten nominations for outstanding achievements that contribute to mission success for the DoD Information Enterprise.

Nomination packages are due to the DoD CIO Annual Awards Program Manager by August 04, 2025. For specific details and eligibility, please see the attached DoD CIO Awards Program 2025 Guidance. Award winners will be recognized in an in-person ceremony to be held in December 2025 in the Pentagon Auditorium.
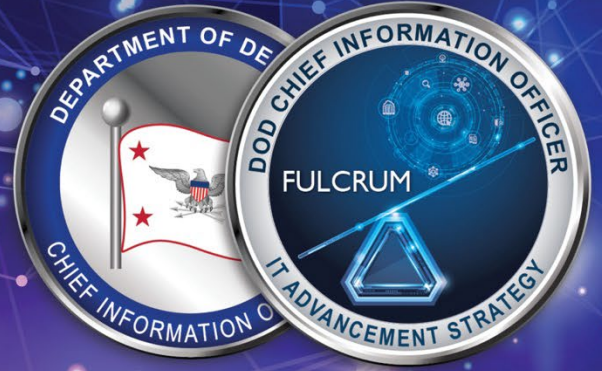
Questions regarding the award program should be addressed to the DoD CIO Annual Awards Program Director, Mr. Sam Kassem, ███████████████████████████.

Katherine Arrington
Performing the Duties of the
Chief Information Officer of the
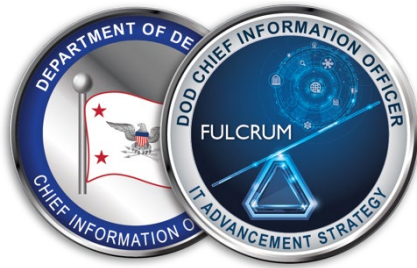Department of Defense

Attachment:
As stated

DoD CIO
ANNUAL AWARDS

2025 PROGRAM GUIDANCE

2025 DoD CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER (CIO) ANNUAL AWARDS PROGRAM GUIDANCE

Awards Program

The DoD Chief Information Officer (CIO) Annual Awards program recognizes eligible personnel, individually or in teams, for exceptional achievements in delivering capabilities and/or management practices that advance the strategic mission and objectives of the DoD CIO and support the DoD National Defense Strategy and the DoD Information Technology (IT) Advancement Strategy and objectives. The DoD CIO Awards recognition is through non-monetary items and winners are recognized in a ceremony and reception held at the Pentagon. The capabilities and functional areas covered by this program include Cybersecurity; Information Enterprise (IE); Command, Control, and Communications (C3); and Other (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1: Major Functional Areas
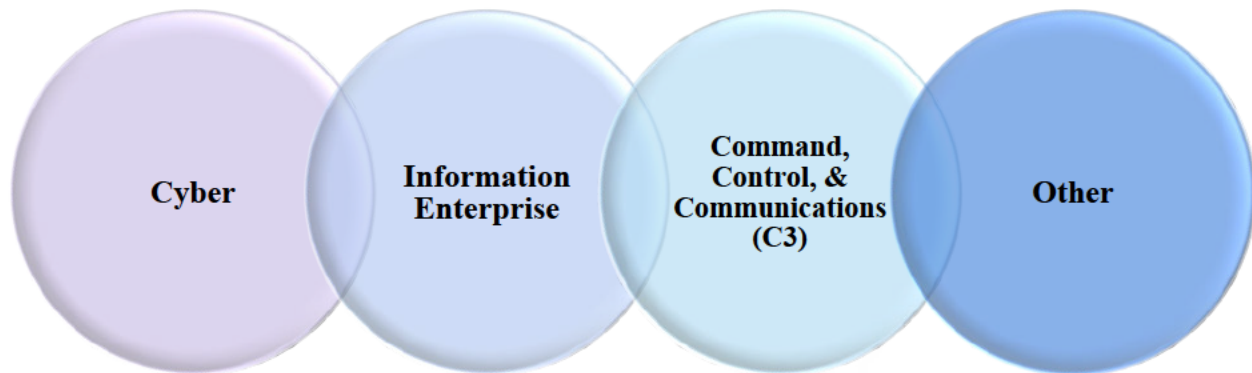
Table 1: Functional Area Subcategories

CYBER
Cryptographic Modernization
Zero Trust
Cybersecurity of the Defense Industrial Base (DIB)
Cyber Hygiene
Cross Domain Solutions
Capability Maturity Model (CMMC)
Cyber Innovation

INFORMATION ENTERPRISE
Cloud Innovation
Network Transport and Optimization
Software Modernization /DevSecOps
Coalition Information Sharing
Defense Business System Improvement and Modernization
Data Center Optimization and Application Rationalization
Identity, Credentialing, and Access Management (ICAM)
SAP IT Ecosystem/SAP IT IC Enterprise Architecture/SAP IT IC Tools and Capabilities

Command, Control, and Communications
C3
Telecom
Position, Navigation and Timing (PNT)
5G/6G/XG
National Leadership Command Capability (NLCC)
Satellite Communications / Tactical Data Links/ Radio Systems
Public Safety Communications
Electromagnetic Spectrum and Dynamic Spectrum Sharing (DSS)

Other
Financial and Management Audits
IT & Cyber Budget
IT and Communications Accessibility (Section 508)
IT and Cyber Workforce
Industry and International Engagements Support
Tech Debt
Electronic Records Management

Eligibility

- DoD Components may nominate Service members (officers and enlisted) O-6 and below or DoD civilians GS-15 and below. Contractors may be recognized as part of a team if led by a Service member or a DoD civilian. DoD CIO personnel may be recognized as part of a team if the team lead is outside of DoD CIO. Nominations that include external partners must be addressed by the Component/ Service/Agency (C/S/As) internal processes.

- Previous nominees, whether individual or teams, who were selected as a winner for Calendar Year CY22 – CY24 will not be eligible for CY25 Awards program.

- Highly Qualified Experts (HQE) or Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) are not eligible for the DoD CIO Awards.

- DoD recognizes our partner's efforts and in contributing to the DoD mission and DoD CIO portfolio. To recognize our partners, DoD CIO encourages DoD Federal partners (e.g., members of the Intelligence Community and other federal agencies) to apply and include individuals and teams performing duties that advance the DoD IT Information Enterprise and other related functions that are within the DoD CIO Portfolio.

Nomination Sponsorship and Approval

- Each Component is limited to no more than ten nominations (any combination of individual /team).

- The Component Comptroller or budget office must approve and endorse any quantified technical or financial cost savings or cost avoidance cited in the nomination. Any nomination that does not have the Component Comptroller or budget office endorsement and appropriate signature will be rejected.

- Component/Service/Agency (C/S/As) are responsible for submitting quality products through their respective Headquarters.

- It is the responsibility of the C/S/A Headquarters to task subordinate organizations in a timely fashion to ensure successful outcomes. C/S/A CIO Offices shall act as a single point of nominations. C/S/As may issue internal awards guidance to meet the DoD CIO Annual Awards Deadline. COCOMS will go through Joint Staff J6 to ensure a single point of nomination.

Table 2: Approving Authority

Component	Approving CIO
Military Departments/Services	Military Department or Service CIOs
Combatant Commands/Joint Staff	Director, Joint Staff (J6)
Principal Staff Assistant (PSA) and Defense Agencies & Field Activities (DAFAs)	PSA CIO, DAFA CIO, or Senior IT Official

DoD Federal Partners	Federal agency CIO (DHS CIO, Veterans Dept CIO, etc).

Command and Nominee's Responsibilities

- It is the nominator's / nominating command and leadership's responsibility to ensure that the nomination is in direct support of the functions listed in Figure 1.

- C/S/As may issue internal guidance for internal nomination selection.
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- Submissions are recognized as a commitment to attend the DoD CIO Awards Ceremony. The DoD CIO Ceremony and Reception will occur in early December.

- C/S/A's will prioritize their Individual and Team nominations.

- Winners will be announced and Components asked to confirm attendees who will be present for the Awards ceremony.

- C/S/As and sponsoring organizations are responsible for funding and making travel arrangements to the Awards ceremony for that organization's awardees. This is not a funded event.

- Final nomination packages must be complete in accordance with the following timelines.

Table 3: DoD CIO Annual Awards Process Timeline

Month	Activity
May	DoD CIO nomination call memo issued
August	Awards submission deadline
September - October	Nomination consolidation and internal processes initiation: Awards Consolidation, Traceability Matrix, Scoring criteria
October - November	DoD CIO Awards Panel to review submissions
November	Winners announced
December	DoD CIO Awards Ceremony

Nomination Content Requirements

- The nomination package includes the signed and fully completed nomination form, endorsement memo, and associated nominee photos.

- Achievements must occur during June 2024-July 2025.

- Nominations should convey the achievement's relevance, significance, and impact in a clear and concise manner that is understandable to a general audience, and demonstrate specific results that contribute to the implementation of the DoD IT Advancement Strategyin one or more of the functional areas.

- Focus on tangible accomplishments to include scope of impact, creativity and innovation, problem resolution, Management efficiency and effectiveness, cost savings and/or efficiencies, technical merits, and operational impacts.

- Properly address all key weighted areas in the evaluation criteria. These key factors will be reviewed and used by the Selection Panel Board Members to rate/score the nomination.

- Nominees should have demonstrated minimum a fully successful performance rating and have had no adverse disciplinary actions.

- All submissions shall be unclassified and publicly releasable.

- Include the endorsement memo from the Component CIO and the Component Comptroller or budget office if cost savings or avoidance are included in the nomination submission if applicable and reflect it over the FYDP.

- Cost savings or avoidance for IT activities, or systems must provide the IT investment Unique Investment Identifier (UII). UII and other budget information can be obtained via the DoD SNAP Information Technology website: https://snap.cpae.osd.mil/snapit!home.aspx. If Cost avoidance and cost savings are applicable, then this needs to be addressed within the separate section of the form and must include the CFO/CIO or equivalent signature. The Technical, Financial, and ROI to include cost savings/cost avoidance should be addressed across the FYDP.

Awards Evaluation Criteria

Nominations will be evaluated by the DoD CIO Awards Selection Panel Board Members. Aggregated totals will be used to determine the winners.

Table 4: Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Achievements
Scope of Impact (Assesses the significance, reach, and lasting effects of the project)	• Measurable outcomes that strengthen resilience, increase performance, and enable the Department to respond with greater speed and agility. • Deployment of new capabilities creating, extending, or significantly enhancing or improving mission effectiveness. • Critical delivery of mission capabilities and performance under extreme or urgent circumstances. • Local unit/operational area (i.e., ship, wing, battalion), DoD Component (i.e., Military Department, DAFA), Department- wide or cross-agency, or external partners or public.
Creativity and Innovation (Assesses the originality, creativity, or ingenuity of the project)	• Use and extent to which new or novel approaches, solutions or technologies were deployed. • Degree of departure from or improvement, modernization of existing practices, processes, and technologies.
Management Efficiency/Effectiveness e.g., (better, faster, cheaper) (Assesses effectiveness of planningand resource utilization)	• Quantified improvements in terms of time, use of resources, process performance, efficiency, or results. • Dollar amount of financial benefits realized or the expected reductions to future resource requirements for the same activity.
Technical Merits	• Address the overall concept, strategy, expertise, methods, materials/tools, procedures, implementation, and execution. • Address any tangible/realistic measures of performance, measures of effectiveness and/or Key Performance

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(Assesses the technical aspects and qualities of the project)	Indicators • Address the technical competency in the applied field. • Describe improvement in performance, supportability, and/or usability. • Improved overall efficiency of tangible asset from computing resources, telecommunications, networks, and supporting infrastructure, etc. • Ability to scale to broader user base or enterprise level.
Operational Impacts (Assess improvements to mission or business operations)	• Describe how this capability, project, or pilot helped improve mission and operational effectiveness and efficiency for the warfighter. • Describe the project's impact to the organization culture, people, processes, tools, procedures, infrastructure, timely information dissemination at the strategic/tactical/operational levels for command elements
Financial and Management Audits - ROI on (financial and technical)	• This criteria addresses multiple aspects. One is the Return on investment from financial and technical perspectives as cost avoidance/cost savings. Focus on direct monetary benefits resulting from the audit to include cost savings and or cost avoidance, revenue generations,reduced financial risks, and improved financial reporting • Describe what benefits derived from improvements to technical systems, processes, or infrastructure identified during the audit. • Specify examples, quantifying the benefits whenever possible, and calculating the ROI, to demonstrate the value of financial and management audits to justify the investment

Awards Recognition

Starting in 2025 the Awards Program will implement an Olympic style methodology. Awardees will receive a physical commemorative trophy and coin with program branding. The DoD CIO

will announce the award including the citations on the DoD CIO website and social media channels. The DoD CIO will display photographs of award recipients in the Pentagon E-Ring hallway. The 2024 Award display is shown below.

Figure 2: 2024 E-Ring Award Display
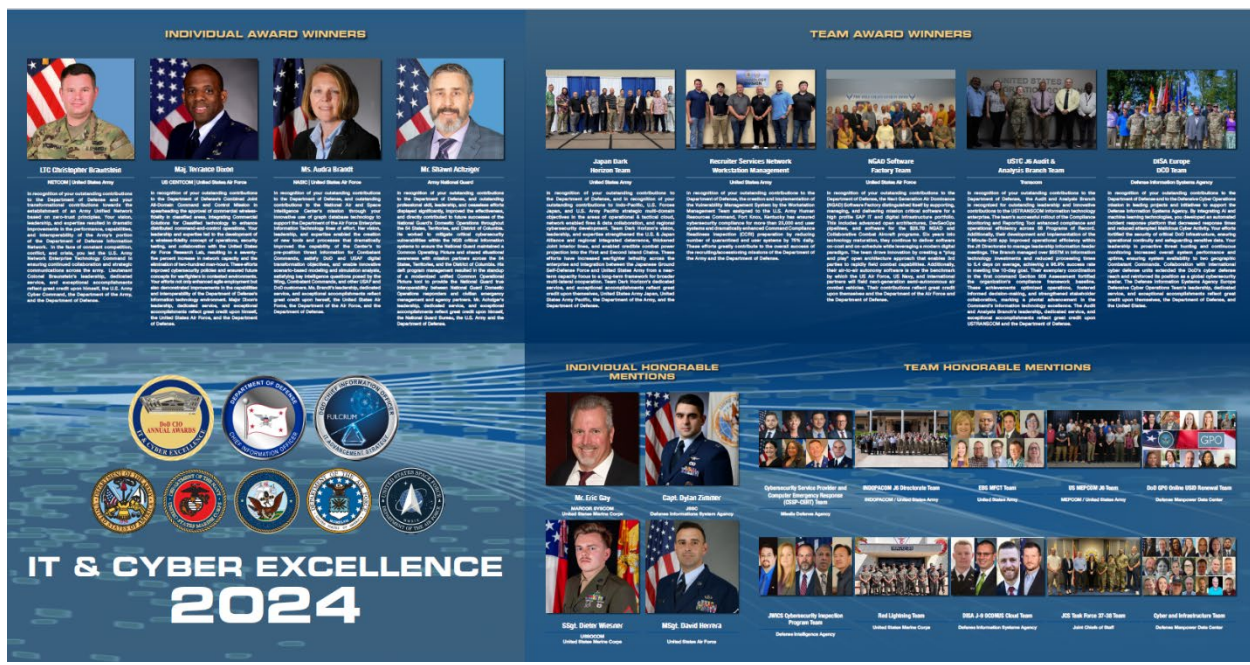
Example Award Citation

Team Award
Type of Award: Silver
Component: United States Army
Name: Dark Horizon Team

In recognition of your outstanding contributions to achieving strategic multi-domain objectives in operational and tactical cloud environments, network-enabled fires and data collaboration, and regional cybersecurity development, Team Dark Horizon's vision, leadership, and expertise have demonstrably strengthened the U.S.-Japan Alliance. These efforts enhanced regional integrated deterrence, thickened joint interior lines, and enabled more credible combat power projection into the First and Second Island Chains. As a result, these efforts have increased warfighter

lethality across the enterprise and fostered greater integration between the Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force and the United States Army. This transition shifts from a near-term capacity focus to a long-term framework for broader multilateral cooperation. Their leadership, dedicated service, and exceptional accomplishments reflect great credit upon themselves, the Department of the Army, and the Department of Defense.

References

A. DoD CIO Awards Program POC: osd.mc-alex.dod-cio.mbx.dod-cio-awards@mail.mil

B. DoD IT Advancement Strategy document: https://dodcio.defense.gov/Library/

C. DoD CIO Strategies: https://dodcio.defense.gov/Library/

D. DoD CIO Charter: DoD Directive 5144.02, https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodd/514402p.pdf

E. DoD SNAP Information Technology: https://snap.cape.osd.mil/snapit/home.aspx

F. DoD CIO Awards Program: https://dod365.sharepoint-mil.us/sites/DODCIO-Awards/SitePages/Home.aspx

G. DoDD 8140.01, "Cyberspace Workforce Management"