

2026 AWARDS

NOMINATION INFORMATION



For over a decade, the Manufacturing Institute has recognized individuals in manufacturing who exemplify leadership, mentorship and excellence through its annual awards. This national honor shines a spotlight on individuals who are making an impact within their companies, across the industry and in their communities.

As we look ahead to 2026, we are more energized than ever to build on this legacy. Following the debut of the Champion Award last year as a single recognition, we are thrilled to expand it into a full category, with up to 15 Champions being recognized for their allyship and commitment to creating workplaces where all talent can thrive. Alongside our Honoree and Emerging Leader categories, this year's program provides an even greater opportunity to highlight those shaping the future of manufacturing.

This guide provides the key information your company needs to begin preparing nominations ahead of the September 2, 2025 launch.

Key Dates

- › Nominations Open: September 2, 2025
- › Nominations Close: October 10, 2025
- › Nominators Notified: December 5, 2025
- › Awardees Notified: Early January 2026
- › Award Acceptance Deadline: January 30, 2026
- › Public Announcement: March 9, 2026
- › Leadership Program: April 22-23, 2026
- › Awards Gala: April 23, 2026

Award Categories

There are three award categories nominators may consider:

Honoree

Established professionals who have made a significant, sustained impact within their organization and across the manufacturing industry.

100 individuals will be recognized as Honorees.

Emerging Leader

Rising professionals who are already making an impact in manufacturing. Whether early in their careers or newly transitioned into the industry, nominees typically have fewer than ten years of manufacturing experience. They stand out for their leadership, fresh perspective and strong potential to shape the future of the industry.

30 individuals will be recognized as Emerging Leaders.

Champion

Individuals who demonstrate allyship in action. Champions actively support others by fostering supportive cultures, opening doors for others and modeling leadership that ensures all talent can thrive. Champions are known for their commitment to mentorship, advocacy and building strong teams across the organization.

Up to 15 individuals will be recognized as Champions.

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Nominee Eligibility

Nominees must meet the following eligibility requirements:

- › Currently employed in the manufacturing industry
- › Work for a company with a U.S.-based manufacturing presence
- › Nominated by a colleague, supervisor or industry peer (self-nominations are not accepted)
- › Companies may submit up to 10 nominations; an internal vetting process is encouraged

We recommend companies coordinate internally to ensure nominations are vetted and prioritized before submission.



Award Criteria

Honoree and Emerging Leader

Nominees in both categories will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- › **Industry Impact:** Contributions that have driven innovation, performance, operational excellence or organizational success.
- › **Leadership and Influence:** A visible leader or emerging changemaker who fosters collaboration and drives meaningful progress.
- › **Mentorship and Talent Development:** Actively supports the growth of others through mentoring, coaching or talent advocacy.
- › **Culture Driver:** Models behavior that strengthens organizational culture.
- › **Community Engagement:** Civic involvement and outreach beyond the workplace that enhances the broader community.

***Note for Emerging Leader Nominees:** Nominees typically have fewer than 10 years of experience in manufacturing and may have entered the sector through career transition or as early-career professionals.

Champion Criteria

Nominees will be evaluated on the following:

- › **Visible Allyship:** A proactive commitment to supporting women and others in manufacturing. This can include mentoring others and sponsoring growth opportunities.
- › **Track Record of Impact:** Proven history of fostering supportive workplace culture and driving meaningful change within their organization or the broader industry.
- › **Support for Advancement:** Leads or shapes programs, policies or practices that enable others to thrive.
- › **Community Engagement:** Civic involvement and outreach beyond the workplace that enhances the broader community.

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The Nomination Process

Submitting a Nomination

Nominations will open on **Tuesday, September 2, 2025**. This year, we will be utilizing a new nomination platform. Additional details on how to create an account and submit a nomination will be shared when the nomination period opens.

Nominations must be submitted by a colleague, supervisor or company leader. Self-nominations are not accepted. Each company may submit up to ten nominations total across all categories. We strongly encourage companies to establish an internal vetting process to help prioritize candidates.

Please note: each company may have **one awardee recognized per category**, with a maximum of **three total awardees**. This approach allows us to celebrate a broader range of companies and recognize outstanding individuals from across the industry.

Review and Selection

All submissions will be judged by former award recipients. Nominations will be evaluated based on how well the nominee aligns with the award criteria.

Award Notification and Participation

Companies will be notified of the status of each of their nominees in early December. Award recipients will be notified in early January 2026 and invited to participate in the two-day Leadership Program and Awards Gala, held April 22-23, 2026 in Washington, D.C.



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2026 Awards Nomination Form

Nominee Information

FIRST NAME:

LAST NAME:

PHONETIC PRONUNCIATION OF NAME:

WORK EMAIL:

PHONE NUMBER:

JOB TITLE:

COMPANY:

COMPANY ADDRESS:

CITY/STATE/ZIP/COUNTRY:

RELATIONSHIP TO NOMINEE:

COMPANY NAME (as it should appear in materials):

UPLOAD COMPANY LOGO

NOMINEE IS:

a) Currently in production

b) Not currently in production,
but has been in production

c) Not in a production role, and
has never been in production

Has the nominee ever received internal or external recognition for their work?

What is the size of the nominee's company

HR Contact Information

HR CONTACT NAME:

HR CONTACT TITLE:

HR CONTACT EMAIL:

Communications Contact Information

COMMUNICATIONS CONTACT NAME:

COMMUNICATIONS CONTACT TITLE:

COMMUNICATIONS CONTACT EMAIL:

Company Representative for Nominee

COMPANY REPRESENTATIVE NAME:

COMPANY REPRESENTATIVE TITLE:

COMPANY REPRESENTATIVE EMAIL:

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2026 Nomination Essay Questions – Honoree / Emerging Leader

Describe a significant accomplishment or contribution the nominee has made within their organization. What did they do, how did they do it and why was it impactful? This can include technical achievements, business results, innovation or operational excellence.

How has the nominee demonstrated leadership by shaping a strong workplace culture and supporting the growth of others? Please share a specific example of how they have built supportive teams, fostered collaboration or created an environment where others feel valued and empowered. Highlight any efforts to mentor, coach or advocate for colleagues or emerging talent.

How does your nominee engage with the broader community? This may include volunteering, civic engagement or youth outreach.

Why should this individual be selected as an awardee? Reflect on their overall impact – inside and outside of the organization – and how they embody the values of leadership, mentorship and manufacturing excellence.

2026 Nomination Essay Questions – Champion

How does the nominee demonstrate visible allyship in their workplace? Describe how the nominee actively supports and advocates for colleagues. Include examples such as sponsorship and efforts to challenge the status quo.

What specific actions has the nominee taken to create a more positive and supportive culture? Share examples of how the nominee fosters collaboration, builds strong teams and ensures others feel valued and supported.

How does the nominee engage with their broader community? Highlight the nominee's contributions to community initiatives.

Why should this individual be recognized as a Champion award recipient? Reflect on their overall influence inside and outside the organization and how they embody the values of allyship, mentorship and supportive leadership in manufacturing.

