

STEP AHEAD

2026 AWARDS

APRIL 22-23, 2026 | WASHINGTON, D.C.



PROSPECTUS

STEP Ahead Awards and Leadership Conference

Manufacturing is at a crossroads. Over the next decade, the manufacturing industry will need to fill millions of jobs. The companies that win won't just be the ones that make the best products. They'll be the ones that attract, retain and inspire the best people.

That's why the **STEP Ahead Awards and Leadership Conference**, hosted by the Manufacturing Institute, exists. Every year, we recognize more than 130 leaders, women and allies who are redefining what leadership in manufacturing looks like. These are the people who are innovating, mentoring, breaking barriers and transforming their companies from the inside out. They represent a variety of manufacturers, from small to large.

But **STEP Ahead** isn't just about recognition. It's about changing the culture of manufacturing. To close the skills gap and stay competitive, we must make the industry a place where everyone can thrive. That means equipping women and allies to lead boldly, create workplaces where people feel valued and inspire the next generation to see manufacturing as a career worth pursuing.

The **STEP Ahead Leadership Conference** hosted annually in Washington, D.C., brings together leaders from across the country to connect, share and learn from each other. It's a catalyst for action. Participants leave with new tools, new networks and a renewed sense of purpose, ready to continue driving changes in their organizations and across the industry. The **STEP Ahead Awards** is the culminating event of the experience where the MI hosts over 800 guests who attend to recognize the outstanding contributions of women and allies, celebrating their achievements and inspiring others to follow their lead. Manufacturing executives from the C-suite to key leaders throughout the organization attend along with industry leaders and other distinguished guests who convene for an evening recognizing the very best talent in manufacturing.



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When you invest in **STEP Ahead**, you're investing in people; the leaders who will close the skills gap and build stronger companies. To explore sponsorship opportunities, contact Rachael Scheffler, Head of Partnerships and Philanthropy, at rscheffler@nam.org.



STEP Ahead Ally | \$50,000

- One STEP Ahead Awards table (10 guests).
- Verbal, onstage recognition by MI leadership during the gala, plus acknowledgment in pre- and post-event published content.
- Logo visibility on signage, event materials, electronic monitors, onstage screens, on your sponsored table and on the STEP Ahead Awards website.
- Recognition as a welcome reception co-host at the Leadership Conference, with the option to deliver brief remarks during the reception.

Friends of Rosie | \$25,000

- One STEP Ahead Awards table (10 guests).
- Logo visibility on signage, event materials, electronic monitors, onstage screens, on your sponsored table and on the STEP Ahead Awards website.

Supporter | \$15,000

- One STEP Ahead Awards table (10 guests).
- Logo recognition on your sponsored table.

A LA CARTE SPONSORSHIP OPTIONS

➤ **After-Party Celebration Reception Sponsor** (one available) | **\$45,000**

- Recognition as the host of the post-gala after-party at the Salamander hotel.
- Company logo displayed on signage at the event.

➤ **Entertainment Sponsor** (two available) | **\$40,000**

- Onstage logo recognition during performance introduction.
- Opportunity to co-introduce entertainment from stage.
- One STEP Ahead Awards table (10 guests).
- Logo visibility on signage, event materials, electronic monitors, onstage screens, on your sponsored table and on the STEP Ahead Awards website.

➤ **VIP Reception Sponsor** (one available) | **\$25,000**

- Recognition as the host of the VIP Welcome Reception at The Anthem – an invite-only event of C-suite leaders, notable supporters, partners and friends of STEP Ahead.
- Opportunity to provide welcome remarks during the reception.
- Logo visibility on event signage.

➤ **STEP Awards Leadership Conference Breakfast Sponsor** (one available) | **\$5,000**

- Recognition as Breakfast Sponsor for the Leadership Conference.
- Option to provide opening remarks at breakfast.
- Logo visibility on event signage.

➤ **STEP Awards Leadership Conference Lunch Sponsor** (two available) | **\$5,000**

- Recognition as Lunch Sponsor at the Leadership Conference.
- Option to provide opening remarks at lunch.
- Logo visibility on event signage.

➤ **Wellness Partner** (one available) | **\$3,500**

- Recognition as the sponsor of the Wellness Lounge and morning yoga session held at the Leadership Conference.
- Option to provide branded giveaways to participants.
- Logo visibility on event signage.

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