

STATE COUNCIL ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION
2026 State Council on Affirmative Action Impact Awards
Outstanding Leadership Award

I. Introduction

The State Council on Affirmative Action (SCAA) established its Awards Program in 2000 to recognize the achievements of outstanding Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Affirmative Action (AA) practices across Wisconsin state service. In 2025, the program was renamed the **State Council on Affirmative Action Impact Awards** to better reflect its purpose and reach. Pursuant to Wisconsin Statute, chapter 230.46, the Council advises the Division of Personnel Management Administrator on the progress of affirmative action programs throughout the Wisconsin civil service system, promotes compliance with state and federal regulations, and recommends improvements to the state’s affirmative action efforts as an employer.

As part of this Awards Program, the SCAA created the **Outstanding Leadership Award** in 2019 to recognize state employees serving in leadership roles within state agencies, Wisconsin Technical Colleges, and University of Wisconsin System campuses. This award honors individuals who demonstrate exemplary leadership by inspiring a shared vision, valuing inclusion, fostering a climate of trust, and enhancing self-determination and wellness. Recipients of this award have created and sustained inclusive, mindful, and positive work environments that promote access and opportunity for all employees.

II. Eligibility

Permanent, classified, or unclassified employees with leadership roles are welcome to apply. Nominations can also be submitted by team members, coworkers, employees supervised by the nominee, or by the nominee’s supervisor. Nominations submitted by nominee’s subordinate employees or team members must be accompanied by a letter from the nominee’s supervisor endorsing the nomination.

III. Nomination and Selection Criteria

The Council will accept nominations for the 2026 Outstanding Leadership Award until **Friday, September 11, 2026**.

In the selection process, the Council committee will review the nominations submitted by agency and university personnel. The nomination submitted to the Council for consideration must include:

1. A letter from nominee’s supervisor with optional supporting statements from the nominee’s team or subordinate employees to the State Council on Affirmative Action. The letter should introduce the nominee, the nominee’s current position with the state, and provide a description of the initiatives, programs, or practices the nominee has led in developing, or played a major role in facilitating, while fostering an inclusive, mindful, and positive work environment. The nominee’s supervisor submits the nomination to the State

Council on Affirmative Action and courtesy copies the division and agency head. The letter and accompanying statements should be no more than three to five (3-5) double-spaced, typed pages.

2. The letter(s) should describe the nominee's leadership in inspiring a shared vision, valuing inclusion, creating a climate of trust, and enhancing self-determination and wellness initiatives in the workplace. Community leadership and engagement in these categories will also be considered, but leadership in the employee's professional role is of primary consideration. The nominee's efforts should include engagement and promotion of employee wellness, participation in wellness committees/activities, and conduct that models respect and value for fairness, inclusion, and wellness efforts in the workplace. Supporting statements from subordinates or coworkers can provide personal testimonials to how the nominee's leadership helped them to feel included and supported in the workplace. Supervisory statements can provide information on how the nominee's leadership has had a positive impact on productivity, employee engagement, and overall workplace wellness.
3. Submissions will be evaluated based on information that demonstrates the nominee's individual efforts and achievements, which addresses the following:
 - i. Dedication to employee engagement and inclusiveness through any of the following: inspiring a shared vision, valuing inclusion, creating a climate of trust, and enhancing self-determination and wellness valuing and incorporating creative and innovative perspectives in the workgroup; modeling a respectful workplace environment; innovative recruitment of candidates; improving retention and promotion readiness within the workforce; creation of or participation in programs, initiatives, and practices aimed at increasing advancement opportunities and promoting employee wellness.
 - ii. Leadership in efforts to increase and maintain representation of Wisconsin populations.
 - iii. Promotion of employee wellness and a healthy (emotionally and physical) workplace, including but not limited to participation in the Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee and Wellness Committees, activities, training, and professional development.
 - iv. Providing or promoting training opportunities which may lead to upward mobility for all employees into leadership positions.
4. Email applications to: Briann Padrutt at briann.padrutt@wisconsin.gov with the subject line: **"2026 State Council on Affirmative Action Impact Awards"**.

IV. Judges

The members of the State Council on Affirmative Action, representing various communities across the state, will review all nominations and rate them according to the selection

criteria.

V. Award Presentation

The secretaries or chancellors of the selected agencies or universities, the individual receiving recognition for their outstanding service and their supervisor will be notified of the awards no later than **September 28, 2026**. Awards will be presented on **Friday, October 23, 2026**, in the **Assembly Chambers of the State Capitol**.

VI. Contact Information

For additional information about the State Council on Affirmative Action Impact Award program email: briann.padrutt@wisconsin.gov