



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
**DCPAS**  
Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service

# Defense Civilian Personnel Advisory Service

## EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (ELDP) OVERVIEW

August 2025

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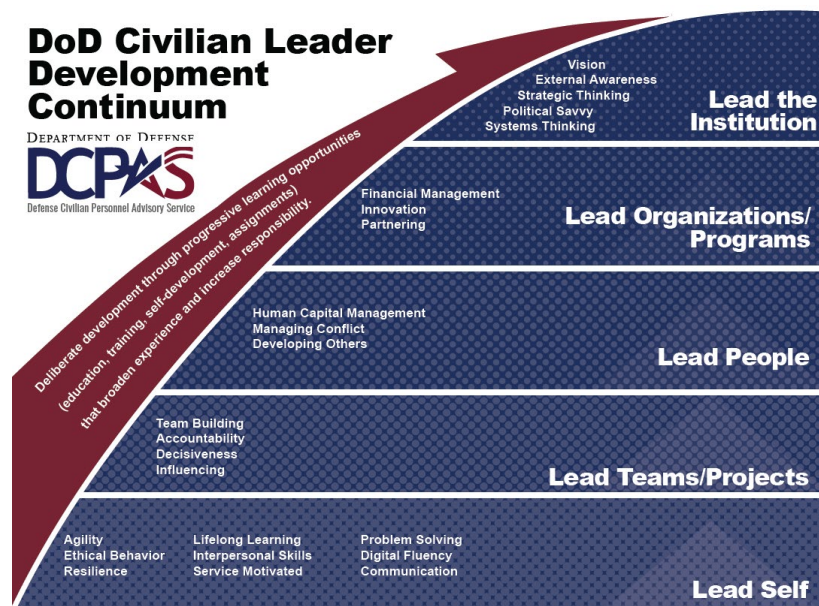
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## Program Description

The Executive Leadership Development Program (ELDP) is a transformative, ten-month program offered by the Department of Defense (DoD). It is meticulously designed to cultivate a cohort of high-potential, mid-level civilian employees and military officers into impactful leaders ready to tackle the complex challenges facing the DoD in the 21st century. The program emphasizes developing leaders who possess strategic thinking, adaptability, strong ethical principles, and the ability to foster collaborative relationships across diverse organizational structures. In an era of rapidly evolving global dynamics, ELDP equips participants with the essential tools and frameworks to lead effectively in dynamic and ambiguous environments. ELDP goes beyond horizontal development to foster vertical development, changing how participants think and behave.

ELDP is a key component of the Department’s strategy for growing civilian leaders as outlined in the DoD Instruction 1430.16 “Growing Civilian Leaders” and fully incorporates and institutionalizes the DoD Civilian Leader Development Framework and Continuum (CLDF&C). ELDP provides a competency-based approach to the deliberate development of executive leaders. While ELDP addresses civilian leader competencies on the DoD Civilian Leader Development Continuum, it emphasizes those competencies at the “Lead People” level and highlights competencies at the “Lead Organizations and Programs” levels of the continuum.



## References

- A. DoDI 1430.16 Growing Civilian Leaders, August 23, 2022
- B. DoD Civilian Leader Competency Model
- C. DoD Civilian Leader Development Continuum

## Program Vision and Goals

The overarching vision of ELDP is to develop DoD professionals who can lead effectively in any environment, adapting to constantly changing conditions with agility and a growth mindset. This includes fostering a deep understanding of the DoD mission, the challenges faced by warfighters, and the strategic priorities driving the Department. The program's primary goals include:

- **Developing Strategic Thinkers:** Participants will learn to analyze complex problems, assess risks, and develop innovative solutions aligned with organizational objectives.
- **Enhancing Leadership Acumen:** Through intensive training, mentorship, and experiential learning, participants will refine their leadership skills, including communication, managing conflict, team building, agility, resilience, ethical behavior, service motivation, and others.
- **Fostering Collaboration and Communication:** ELDP emphasizes the importance of building strong relationships across multiple organizational units. Participants will learn to communicate effectively, build consensus, and lead collaborative initiatives.
- **Promoting Ethical Leadership:** The program reinforces the critical importance of ethical conduct, integrity, and accountability in leadership. Participants will examine their own values and develop a strong ethical compass to guide their decisions.
- **Cultivating Adaptability and Resilience:** In a rapidly changing world, leaders must be adaptable and resilient. ELDP equips participants with the tools and techniques to manage stress, navigate ambiguity, and bounce back from setbacks.
- **Develop an understanding of the DoD mission and the warfighter:** During the 10-month program, participants travel to various military locations across the Department and engage with senior leaders, Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Guardians while participating in military readiness activities that offer a front-line perspective of the warfighter. This immersive environment cultivates exceptional leaders with profound understanding of the DoD's core tenets: Warrior Ethos, Lethality, and Deterrence.

## Program Elements

The ELDP's methodology is built on Outcomes Based Education principles that begin with desired outcomes and design learning experiences to achieve transformational results. The program distinguishes itself through three integrated pillars that work synergistically to develop exceptional DoD leaders: academic study that provides rigorous theoretical foundations, practical application that allows participants to apply leadership concepts in real-world scenarios, and immersive experiences that provide hands-on engagement with warfighters and senior leaders in their operational environments. These three pillars are integral—not supplementary—components that foster deep understanding of the DoD mission, warfighter perspective, and the sacrifices required to maintain national security.

### Academic Pillar

The academic pillar constitutes 50% of the overall ELDP program and encompasses classroom-based learning. A significant portion of this learning occurs during the CORE residency, but it also includes training time during the orientation and each of the deployments. The academic component is designed to develop specific leadership competencies and incorporates active learning methodologies. It includes gaining a deeper awareness of personal strengths, weaknesses, and values to guide professional and personal growth; continuous self-reflection, introspection, and adaptability to improve decision-making, conflict resolution, and coping strategies; identifying and applying effective negotiation, collaboration, change management, ethics, and systems thinking; and examining organizational and functional structures within the DoD and other relevant agencies. A key element of the academic pillar is the team project. This project provides participants with an opportunity to apply the tools, techniques, and leadership concepts learned throughout the program to a relevant DoD issue. Classroom learning varies from month to month and by deployment, adapting to the specific objectives of each program phase.

### Immersion Pillar

ELDP cultivates leaders who understand joint operations and can effectively support modern warfare's complex, multi-domain environment. Its unique training architecture uses a progressive immersion model, expanding participant perspectives from Service-specific foundations to Combatant Command and international levels.

The program begins by establishing an understanding of Service capabilities and doctrines. It expands to the Combatant Command (COCOM) perspective, exposing

participants to integrated operations, multi-domain challenges, regional expertise, strategic resource allocation, and joint planning processes. The ELDP experience culminates with an OCONUS deployment, emphasizing international interoperability, alliance dynamics, combined operations, and the broader context of the global security architecture. This carefully curated journey develops leaders who optimize support for joint warfighters.

## Practical Application Pillar

The Practical Application pillar of ELDP emphasizes the translation of leadership concepts into real-world practice. A key element of this pillar is the assignment of leadership roles to participants, providing hands-on experience and fostering the development of crucial leadership skills. Participants take on roles such as Team Lead, guiding smaller teams toward specific goals, facilitating collaboration, and ensuring tasks are completed effectively and on time. Group Leads oversee larger clusters of teams, facilitating communication, coordinating resources, and resolving conflicts to maintain progress. Cohort Leads serve as liaisons between the entire participant group and program management, championing initiatives, representing perspectives, and fostering a cohesive learning community. In addition to these core leadership positions, participants also take on roles within various committees formed within the cohort.

## Duration

- The program is 10 months long and includes approximately 67 training days over the length of the program with participants returning to home stations in-between temporary duty (TDY) events.
- Actual travel dates and locations are listed in the Annual Call for Nominations.

## Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible to be nominated for admission to ELDP, an individual must:

1. Be a permanent, full-time civilian employee of the DoD or a federal partner organization, with a minimum of one year of experience.
2. Occupy, on a permanent basis, a position at GS 12-14 level or equivalent, or O-3 and O-4 active-duty military members
3. Component quotas apply.

## Ideal Candidate

Each component will establish procedures to consider applicant qualifications and potential for higher level leadership positions in the Department of Defense.

Generally, the ideal ELDP candidate:

- demonstrates humility and a desire to serve others;
- is open to self-examination and feedback;
- has a broad and varied history of continually progressive experience leading to increased responsibility with an exceptional performance record;
- 
- demonstrates competence, confidence, and motivation to be a courageous follower and leader;
- recognizes and appreciates the value of continued learning and development;
- is willing to be open to and discuss beliefs, values, and norms in a constructive manner;
- is in good physical condition;
- is willing to challenge himself/herself in unfamiliar and uncomfortable situations;
- is willing to be a supportive peer and team member; and
- has the passion to lead, inspire, and produce results for the DoD.

## Accommodation for Employees with Special Needs:

It is the goal of ELDP to ensure that services, activities, facilities, and privileges are accessible to qualified individuals with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Reasonable accommodations will be made on an individual basis.

It is the responsibility of individuals with disabilities, however, to seek available services and make their needs known to the Component during the application process. Students who believe they have a disability, which might affect their participation in ELDP or may require accommodations or auxiliary aids/services, should discuss this with the appropriate Component representative, as associated costs will be the responsibility of the Component.



**Points of Contact:****Army:**

[usarmy.pentagon.hqda-asa-mra.list.samr-cslmo-edd@mail.mil](mailto:usarmy.pentagon.hqda-asa-mra.list.samr-cslmo-edd@mail.mil)

**Navy:** Contact your Major Command Training Representative.

**Air Force Civilians –**  
[AFPC.DPCZLE.civiliandevelopment@us.af.mil](mailto:AFPC.DPCZLE.civiliandevelopment@us.af.mil)  
210-920-4224

**Air Force Active Duty:**  
[dp2lwd\\_owd.workflow@us.af.mil](mailto:dp2lwd_owd.workflow@us.af.mil)

**Intelligence Agencies:**  
703-692-3765

**OSD, Defense Agencies and Field Activities:**

Contact your Human Resources or Training Office Representative.

\* Prospective applicants must use these organization Points of Contact to apply for ELDP.

\* Should you have difficulty using the component web links please contact your Training Office for assistance.

## Application Requirements:

Applicants must apply through, and be nominated by, their Component/Agency. Specific guidance is available from the Component/Agency points of contact. All applicants are required to furnish a nomination package that includes:

- Nominee Information Sheet
- Statement of Interest
- Supervisor Endorsement
- Biography and/or Resume; and,
- Additional information may be required by the nominating Component, organization, or Defense Agencies and Field Activities (DAFA).

All applications must be vetted/screened through the respective Components Representative:

- US Army
  - US Navy
  - US Air Force
  - National Guard Bureau
  - Intelligence Agencies
  - OSD, Joint Staff, Defense Agencies and Field Activities (a.k.a Fourth Estate): *No more than 3 applicants per Agency or Field Activity.*
- Selection Board process managed by DCPAS.

## Application and Nomination Process

The nomination process is designed to be rigorous. This extensive process is intended to ensure that only ideal candidates are admitted into the program. ELDP nominations involve three primary channels. Each is described below:

1.1 **The Component process:** Each Component (Army, Navy, Air Force) will establish and manage its selection process and procedures, and apply the criteria as stated in the nomination and selection process, to select candidates to fill Component allocations. Components will submit their selectees and alternates to ELDP Program Office by the due date listed in the Annual Call for Nominations.



- 1.2 Office of the Secretary (OSD), Joint Staff, Defense Agencies and Field Activities (DAFA), and Federal Partners (FP): The OSD, DAFA, and FP selection process is managed by the ELDP Program Office. Nominations from OSD and the Washington Headquarters Service (WHS) are first vetted through WHS based on the published submission channels. All other OSD, DAFA and FP organizations shall submit directly to the ELDP Program Office. OSD and DAFA organizations may not submit more than three nominations per academic year. DAFA nomination packets must include a one-page bio and a two-page resume.
- 1.3 Intelligence Community (IC): The Director of Professional Development, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security will establish and manage selection process and procedures, and apply the criteria as stated in the nomination and selection process, to select candidates to fill the IC allocations. USW(I&S) will submit their selectees and alternates to ELDP Program Office by the due date listed in the Annual Call for Nominations.

## Foreign Travel

ELDP travels to foreign countries during the program year. Candidates should review the travel and entry requirements to the locations published in the Annual Call for Nominations in the Access the Electronic Foreign Clearance Guide (FCG), <https://www.fcg.pentagon.mil/fcg.cfm> to ensure eligibility. Read all FCG sections carefully. Pay particular attention to the following Sections: Passport and Identification Credentials for Official Travel, Immunizations and Other Medical Requirements, and Mandatory Pre-Travel Training and Documentation.

## Informed Consent and Release of Liability

In consideration of being allowed to use facilities and equipment while participating in activities, programs, and training exercises (conducted by the Executive Leadership Development Program, the Department of Defense, and the United States Government) host agents may require participants to sign a waiver. This tool will release, and forever discharge, the officers, agents, employees, representatives, executors, and all others involved from all responsibilities or liability for injuries or damages resulting from voluntary participation in any activity, use of equipment or machinery in any way associated with ELDP, and/or arising out of participation in any activities.

Candidates should be in good physical condition to be able to participate in scheduled program activities. It is strongly recommended that candidates get a physical by a medical professional.

Some of the physical activities that participants may engage in are as follows:

- Running obstacle courses
- Rappelling (heights)
- Land Navigation
- Field Hiking
- Working at high elevations
- Working in all weather conditions
- Leadership Reaction Course
- Daily Physical Fitness Training
- Weapons Training
- Waterborne Operations
- Working in confined spaces

## Program Costs:

### Tuition Paid by Participant's Organization

Approximately \$14,648 tuition for all participants (subject to change) this includes the uniform cost.

### Travel Costs

Participants organization is responsible for travel and per diem expenses to temporary duty locations at various military installations around the world (see schedule in Annual Call for Nominations). Travel is estimated to cost roughly \$30K-\$40K.

## Uniform Requirements for ELDP Participants

***Participants will be issued and required to wear the following uniform clothing and equipment items:***

- three (3) polo shirts – two (2) black and (1) gray with ELDP logo affixed left side;
- one (1) black zip-up jacket with ELDP logo affixed left side;
- one (1) black backpack;
- two (2) black cargo pants;
- one (1) pair of black boots, (tactical, non-slip);
- two (2) black shorts and two (2) grey t-shirts with ELDP logo affixed on left side for fitness activities;



- one (1) black belt;
- one (1) name tag; and
- one (1) pocket size journal.