



# ARIZONA ASSOCIATION FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT 2026 EDDE AWARDS

## Excellence in Economic Development Awards

Every year AAED honors significant contributions to the advancement of the organization and economic development within the State of Arizona. The Economic Development Distinguished by Excellence (EDDE) Awards were established by the members of AAED to recognize the outstanding work of their peers. The membership of AAED is responsible for nominating their peers for these awards. The value and prestige of the EDDE's is defined by the membership through their accomplishments and commitment to the organization. Your nomination is the recognition of their efforts.

## Deadline

The AAED Office must receive all nomination forms and supplemental documents by Thursday, February 12, 2026. Please submit your nominations on the AAED website or e-mail [info@aaed.com](mailto:info@aaed.com).

## 2026 EDDE AWARD CATEGORIES

### Economic Development Organization of the Year

This award recognizes outstanding contributions by an organization aimed at strengthening the efforts of AAED. Contributions may include the active involvement by organization staff on the AAED Board of Directors and committees, regular attendance by staff at AAED events, sponsorship of AAED and AAED events, etc. Nominations will be evaluated based on the overall impact of the organization on AAED, the development of strong relationships and community support, and contributions to the economic development profession. Eligible organizations must represent a community City or region that represents a service of the following:

- Small Organization – less than 50,000
- Medium Organization – 50,000-149,999
- Large Organization – more than 150,000

\*County nominees should apply to the category that represents their respective population.

*2025 Large Organization of the Year – Greater Phoenix Economic Council (GPEC)*

### The Best of Arizona

Best of Arizona is a prestigious award presented to individuals or organizations whose dedication to economic development in Arizona has been unequalled. Nominee's contributions to economic development must have resulted in a significant statewide impact on Arizona's economy. This impact can be a sustained impact over a long period of time or the result of a singular project or achievement.

*2025 Best of Arizona – TSMC Arizona*

## **Economic Development Professional of the Year**

This award recognizes outstanding achievement by an economic development professional. Nominations will be evaluated based on the overall economic impact to their community, the development of strong relationships and community support, the innovation and creativity used in the process, and contributions to the economic development profession. City or regional organization nominees represent a service area with a total population of the following:

- Small – Less than 50,000
- Medium – 50,000-149,999
- Large – More than 150,000

\*County nominees should apply to the category that represents their respective population.

*2025 Small Economic Developer of the Year – Maggie Holmberg, AZED Pro, Economic Development Manager, Town of Chino Valley*

*2024 Large Economic Developer of the Year – Mike Czechowski, CECD, Senior Project Manager, City of Tucson*

## **Emerging Economic Development Professional of the Year**

This award recognizes outstanding achievement by an emerging economic development professional. Nominations will be evaluated based on the overall economic impact to their community, the development of strong relationships and community support, the innovation and creativity used in the process, and contributions to the economic development profession. Additionally, this award will evaluate an emerging professional's contributions to the advancement, involvement, and empowerment of future economic developers. An Emerging Professional must be 35 years of age or under or have less than five years of direct economic development experience.

*2025 Emerging Economic Developer of the Year - José Contreras, Business Attraction Program Manager, City of Glendale*

## **Tribal Economic Development Champion of the Year**

This award recognizes outstanding achievement by an individual that has positively impacted economic development efforts for one or more of the 22 federally recognized Indian tribes in Arizona. Nominations will be evaluated based on the overall economic impact to the tribal community, the development of strong relationships and community support, the innovation and creativity used in the process, and contributions to the economic development profession. Nominees do not need to be a member of a federally recognized Indian tribe to qualify for this award or an AAED member.

*2025 Tribal Economic Development Champion of the Year - Vice Chairman Ricardo Pacheco, Yavapai-Apache Nation*

## **Member of the Year**

This award recognizes outstanding achievement by an AAED member (Practitioner or Provider) that has made a significant commitment to AAED through their active participation in the organization. Participation can include active involvement on the AAED Board of Directors, in AAED committees, the recruitment of new members, regular attendance at AAED events, and organizational/event sponsorship. Nominations will be evaluated based on the overall impact of the member on the organization, the development of strong relationships and community support, and contributions to the economic development profession.

Member contributions eligible for this award are evaluated during a calendar year period from January through December of the previous year (i.e. January 2025 – December 2025).

*2025 Member of the Year - Bridgette Blair, AZED Pro, Economic Development Specialist, Town of Queen Creek*

### **New Member of the Year**

This award recognizes outstanding achievement by a new member (Practitioner or Provider) that has made a significant commitment to AAED through their active participation on committee(s), recruitment of new members, and/or attendance at AAED events. Nominations will be evaluated based on the overall impact of the member on the organization, the development of strong relationships and community support, and contributions to the economic development profession.

Members joining AAED during the 18-month period from July through December of the following year are eligible for this award (i.e. July 2024 –December 2025).

*2025 New Member of the Year – Erica (Roelfs) Sturwold, AZED Pro, Senior Economic Development Project Manager, SRP*

### **William Lampkin Long Term Excellence in Economic Development**

This award recognizes outstanding achievements by an individual that has made significant contributions to economic development efforts in Arizona and demonstrated a sustained commitment to AAED. Nominations will be evaluated based on the overall economic impact of their efforts to Arizona, contributions of the member to the organization, the development of strong relationships and community support, and contributions to the economic development profession.

*2025 Lampkin Award – Brad Smidt, CEcD, Senior Vice President, Business Development, GPEC*

### **Workforce Practitioner of the Year**

This award recognizes outstanding achievements by an individual to Arizona's Workforce Development efforts. Nominations will be evaluated based on the overall workforce impact on the community, the development of strong relationships and community support, the innovation and creativity used in the process, and contributions to the overall economic and workforce development profession.

*2025 Workforce Practitioner of the Year – Katherine Anderson, AZED Pro, Career Navigator, American Job Center at Yavapai College*

### **Economic Development Provider of the Year**

This award recognizes outstanding contributions by a provider organization aimed at strengthening the efforts of AAED. Contributions may include the active involvement by organization staff on the AAED Board of Directors and Committee, regular attendance by staff at AAED events, sponsorship of AAED and AAED events, etc. Nominations will be evaluated based on the overall impact of the organization on AAED, the development of strong relationships and community support, and contributions to the economic development profession. Eligible organizations must be AAED member companies in the Provider category. Eligible organizations must have at least one AAED member in the Provider category.

## Nomination Eligibility Criteria

- Nominations may only be made by members of AAED.\*
- Self-nominations by an individual or and an employee of an organization are acceptable. Self-nominations must be endorsed by an AAED member.\*
- Companies, organizations, and individuals are not eligible to win the same award two years in a row.
- Written and electronic nominations submitted on or before the nomination deadline will be eligible for consideration for all awards.
- Late nominations due to reasonable uncontrollable circumstances (technological failure, mail delay, accidents, etc) may be considered for eligibility by the Awards Committee.

\*Does not apply to the Tribal Economic Developer of the Year Award

## A Complete Nomination Application

- One copy of the completed application form (begins on page 8);
- Letters of support (optional) – may submit up to 3 letters; and
- Responses to questions pertinent to applicable award category submitted as a PDF (questions begin on page 4).

### Best of Arizona Question:

**Q1.** Describe in detail the impact this individual or organization/project has had on Arizona's economy. Impacts should be articulated regarding short and long-term effects. Impacts may include, but are not limited to:

- Growth and attraction of business/industry
- Jobs created and retained
- Increases in tax revenue
- Number of visitors attracted
- Positive prominent exposure of the state
- Increased quality of life for citizens
- Partnerships created
- Public policy changes
- Ripple effect – ability to attract/encourage additional positive impacts

### Economic Development Organization, Economic Development Provider Organization, Member of the Year, and New Member of the Year Questions:

**Q1.** Please describe the level of participation and involvement in AAED. What has been the impact of this participation and involvement on AAED as an organization? Examples may include increased membership, leadership or support of AAED initiatives, positive exposure of the organization to the community, etc. (60 points total)

**Q2.** How does the organization/nominee embody the three (3) AAED organizational pillars of educate, advocate, and collaborate? (30 points total)

- **Educate:** AAED is the leading provider of economic development education to its members, sister organizations, legislators, and community-at-large.

*Detail how this organization/nominee has demonstrated a commitment to education either through the staff/personal pursuit of education/professional development activities or through providing educational support and opportunity to the community/their peers.*

- **Advocate:** AAED is the unified voice of economic development in Arizona, advocating for the advancement of strong economic policy.

*Detail how this organization/nominee has provided support for public policy issues that will help advance economic development efforts. This support can be demonstrated through attendance at the legislative luncheon, participation on the government affairs committee, communication of the AAED talking points, etc.*

- **Collaborate:** AAED will advance the economic development profession and strengthen the Arizona business community through internal and external partnerships with groups representing and supporting issues affecting economic development.

*Detail how this organization/nominee collaborates with community and statewide partners to advance economic development efforts. Examples of this might be through luncheon program participation, committee participation, and statewide AAED events.*

**Q3.** Please describe the organization (and related staff) or nominee's involvement in other community and professional organizations (i.e. IEDC, PSRA, CoreNet, NAIOP, etc.) that support the efforts of AAED. (10 points total)

### **Economic Developer (Small, Medium, Large, Tribal, Emerging Professional) Questions:**

**Q1.** Please describe the principal economic development achievements of the nominee during the calendar year. For each achievement, provide a description of the benefit to the nominee's service area. (60 points total) Achievements may include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Companies recruited, retained, or expanded (detail jobs, capital investment, industry category, average wage, project square footage, etc.);
- New economic development policies, programs, or innovative strategies developed;
- New partnerships or alliances created;
- Professional development achievements (CEcD, EDFP, Certified Project Manager, AZED Pro, etc.); and
- Awards or recognition received by the professional's community, as a result of their leadership.
- For the Emerging Professional Award: Demonstrate a nominee's contributions to the advancement, involvement, and empowerment of future economic developers

**Q2.** How does the nominee embody the three (3) AAED organizational pillars of educate, advocate, and collaborate? (30 points total)

- **Educate:** AAED is the leading provider of economic development education to its members, sister organizations, legislators, and community-at-large.

*Detail how the nominee has demonstrated a commitment to education either through the personal pursuit of education/professional development activities or through providing educational support and opportunity to their peers.*

- **Advocate:** AAED is the unified voice of economic development in Arizona, advocating for the advancement of strong economic policy.

*Detail how the nominee has provided support for public policy issues that will help advance economic development efforts. These policies can be local or statewide policies.*

- **Collaborate:** AAED will advance the economic development profession and strengthen the Arizona business community through internal and external partnerships with groups representing and supporting issues affecting economic development.

*Detail how the nominee collaborates with community and statewide partners to advance economic development efforts.*

**Q3.** Please describe the nominee's involvement in community and professional organizations.  
(10 points total)

### **Workforce Practitioner Questions:**

**Q1.** Please describe the principal workforce development achievements of the nominee during the calendar year. For each achievement, provide a description of the benefit to the nominee's service area. (60 points total) Achievements may include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Customers served;
- One-stop delivery innovation;
- State and federal performance standards met or exceeded;
- Significant economic impact because of job creation or jobs retained in a local area, region, or state level;
- Economic development accomplishments; and
- Professional certifications.

**Q2.** How does the nominee embody the three (3) AAED organizational pillars of educate, advocate, and collaborate? (30 points total)

- **Educate:** AAED is the leading provider of economic development education to its members, sister organizations, legislators, and community-at-large.

*Detail how the nominee has demonstrated a commitment to education either through the personal pursuit of education/professional development activities or through providing educational support and opportunity to their peers.*

- **Advocate:** AAED is the unified voice of economic development in Arizona, advocating for the advancement of strong economic policy.

*Detail how the nominee has provided support for public policy issues that will help advance economic development efforts. These policies can be local or statewide policies.*

- **Collaborate:** AAED will advance the economic development profession and strengthen the Arizona business community through internal and external partnerships with groups representing and supporting issues affecting economic development.

*Detail how the nominee collaborates with community and statewide partners to advance economic development efforts.*

**Q3.** Please describe the nominee's involvement in community and professional organizations.  
(10 points total)

### William Lampkin Award Questions:

**Q1.** Please detail the nominee's major economic development achievements, making sure to provide timeframes and communities impacted. Be sure to include relevant details including, but not limited to, the number of jobs created, capital investments made, jobs retained, policies implemented, companies successfully recruited, partnerships/alliances created, CECd or other professional certifications received, etc. (20 points total)

**Q2.** Please describe the nominee's involvement with economic development, community, and national boards as well as strategic initiatives and taskforces. (20 points total)

**Q3.** Please describe the nominee's level of participation and involvement in AAED. What has been the impact of this participation on AAED as an organization? Examples may include increased membership, leadership or support of AAED initiatives, positive exposure of the organization to the community, etc. (20 points total)

**Q4.** How does the nominee embody the three (3) AAED organizational pillars of educate, advocate, and collaborate? (30 points total)

- **Educate:** AAED is the leading provider of economic development education to its members, sister organizations, legislators, and community-at-large.

*Detail how the nominee has demonstrated a commitment to education either through the personal pursuit of education/professional development activities or through providing educational support and opportunity to their peers.*

- **Advocate:** AAED is the unified voice of economic development in Arizona, advocating for the advancement of strong economic policy.

*Detail how the nominee has provided support for public policy issues that will help advance economic development efforts. These policies can be local or statewide policies.*

- **Collaborate:** AAED will advance the economic development profession and strengthen the Arizona business community through internal and external partnerships with groups representing and supporting issues affecting economic development.

*Detail how the nominee collaborates with community and statewide partners to advance economic development efforts.*

**Q5.** Provide any other relevant points that support this nomination. (10 points total)

## Application Checklist

- ☐ One copy of the completed application form below
- ☐ Letters of support (optional) – may submit up to 3 letters
- ☐ References for All Awards
- ☐ Responses to questions pertinent to applicable award category submitted as a PDF (pages 4-7)

## 2026 EDDE AWARD APPLICATION FORM

**Please select the award category in which you are applying:**

Best of Arizona

Economic Development Organization – Small

Economic Development Organization – Medium

Economic Development Organization – Large

Economic Development Provider Organization

Economic Developer – Small

Economic Developer – Medium

Economic Developer – Large

Economic Developer - Emerging

Economic Developer – Tribal

Member of the Year

New Member of the Year

William Lampkin Award

Workforce Practitioner of the Year

Nominee (Individual or Organization):

Submitted by:

Phone Number:

Email:

City or Region Represented/Served:

Project/Event Being Recognized (if applicable):

Self-Nomination Endorsement:



## **References For All Awards**

Please provide contact information for at least three individuals that know this candidate well and could supply back up materials for an awards presentation should this candidate be selected as a winner.

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Relationship:

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Relationship:

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Relationship: