Annual Evaluation

Plan (AEP)

January 29, 2026

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I. Introduction

This is the Department of War (DoW) Annual Evaluation Plan (AEP) for FY 2026, developed in accordance with the requirements provided in the Foundations for Evidence-Building Policymaking Act of 2018[1] and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) guidance.[2] Specifically, this plan is a summary of details for some of the most significant evaluations that the DoW will undertake in FY 2026. Significant evaluations are defined as those that may be required by statute, used to inform important policy decisions, affect many people or organizations, or will fill an important knowledge gap. These evaluations enable the DoW's mission to "provide the military forces needed to deter war and ensure our Nation's security"[3] by effectively and efficiently managing its resources—a key strategic priority outlined in the Agency Performance Plan for FY 2026.

This Annual Evaluation Plan focuses on selected evaluations of DoW business operations that align with the Department's Agency Performance Plan for FY 2026 – specifically:

- Information Technology
- Real Property

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[1] Public Law No: 115-435, Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018, January 14, 2019.
[2] Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget, OMB Circular A-11, Section 290 - EVALUATION AND EVIDENCE-BUILDING ACTIVITIES. July 2024
[3] U.S. Department of War, "About," accessed on January 29, 2026, https://www.war.gov/about/.

II. Evaluations

Evaluation	Linkage to Performance Goals	Office of Primary Responsibility	Description
DoW Frontier AI Accelerator Analytic Program	5.8. Optimize the Department's federated infrastructure to support scaling data, analytics, and AI adoption	CDAO	Assess the feasibility and advisability of using AI-enabled software to optimize the workflow and operations for: (1) depots, shipyards, or other manufacturing facilities run by DoW; and (2) contract administration for DoW.
Space Utilization	6.2. Maintain 60 percent annual average occupancy rate at DoW-owned or occupied administrative spaces	OUSW(A&S)	Measure the occupancy and the actual utilization rates of space in federally leased space occupied by DoW.

A.

DoW Frontier AI Accelerator Analytic Program

Description: In Fiscal Year 2026, the Under Secretary of War for Research and Engineering (USW(R&E)), acting through the Chief Digital and Artificial Intelligence Office (CDAO), will be executing a variety of frontier AI pilot projects in partnership with DoW Components. These pilots will explore the application of frontier AI technologies to several warfighting and business functions and will result in the delivery of minimum viable capabilities supporting and enabling these functions. In parallel to development of these technical capabilities, the USW(R&E) will execute an analytic program that will evaluate the frontier AI pilot projects to provide the DoW with the data and analysis necessary to make evidence-based decisions about how the Department should use and acquire frontier AI and the impact of frontier AI on military capabilities, functions, and operations.

Linkage to Performance Goals: 5.8. Optimize the Department's federated infrastructure to support scaling data, analytics, and AI adoption.

Evaluation Timeline: Complete the pilot program no later than one year after the date of commencement.

Key Evaluation Questions:
1. What is the impact of frontier AI on mission effectiveness and decision quality within priority DoW workflows?
2. What are the highest priority changes to workflows, doctrine, organization, and personnel that are required to maximize the benefit the Department derives from frontier AI?
3. How much compute, in what modalities and at what classification levels, does the Department require to meet steady-state and peak frontier AI demand?
4. What are the primary policies blocking adoption and deployment of frontier AI? What policies should be eliminated or modified to accelerate adoption?

Design/Method: The USW(R&E) will work closely with mission owners to develop frontier AI pilot capabilities, including documenting and analyzing existing and AI-enabled workflows. USW(R&E) will design and execute experimentation with frontier AI pilot capabilities to measure their effectiveness, impact on mission outcomes, and return on investment. Throughout pilot development, USW(R&E) will identify blockers to frontier AI adoption and work with DoW components and other principal staff assistants to propose changes to doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities, and policy (DOTmLPF-P) that address these blockers.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies: This analysis program faces challenges in establishing consistent, quantifiable metrics for frontier AI's impact across diverse DoW workflows, and in ensuring standardized data collection from varied pilot projects for robust evaluation. Additionally, the rapid evolution of frontier AI demands an adaptive evaluation framework to remain relevant. Mitigation strategies will include developing clear, standardized evaluation methodologies and data requirements upfront and working closely with capability developers and mission owners to ensure measurements are relevant and accurate representations of operational outcomes.

Dissemination and Use: Analytic findings produced by this evaluation effort will be made as widely available as information handling requirements permit, including distribution to DoW components through the CDAO Council and the Analysis Working Group.

B.

Space Utilization

Description: As required by Section 2302 of the Thomas R. Carper Water Resources Act of 2024 (Public Law 118-159), measure and assess: (a) the occupancy and utilization rates of space in federally leased space occupied by DoW broken down by building and lease; (b) the utilization percentage of each federally-leased space by DoW, comparing the capacity to the actual utilization rate based on a utilization benchmark of 150 usable square feet; and (c) any costs associated with DoW capacity that exceeds DoW occupancy per person.

Linkage to Performance Goals: 6.2. Maintain 60 percent annual average occupancy rate at DoW-owned or occupied administrative spaces.

Evaluation Timeline: Report calendar year 2025 results in the General Services Administration (GSA) by January 4, 2026.

Key Evaluation Questions:

1. What are the occupancy and utilization rates of space in federally leased space occupied by DoW?
2. Did DoW building utilization meet the statutory target of 60 percent on average over a one-year period?
3. What are the costs to DoW of the unutilized capacity?

Design/Method: Use Personal Identity Verification badge swipe data, isolating only the first credential use of the day for each cardholder, and other GSA-approved technologies in federally leased space occupied by DoW to measure utilization rates and compare with occupancy. In addition, assess the costs of unutilized capacity by: (i) calculating the total usable square footage and cost to DoW of each building; (ii) divide the cost to DoW by the total usable square footage to determine the cost-per-square foot to DoW; and (iii) multiply the total square footage of unutilized usable space by the cost-per-square foot to DoW.

Challenges and Mitigation Strategies: A key challenge is the difficulty collecting the occupancy and utilization data from the thousands of public buildings and federally leased space occupied by DoW. To mitigate this challenge, DoW will rely on active support from senior DoW leaders, including the Secretaries of the Military Departments.

Dissemination and Use: The results of this evaluation will be provided in the form of a report to the GSA, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate, and the Committees on Appropriations of the House of Representatives.

III. Conclusion

DoW has a long history of evaluating programs and policies and leveraging the results of these evaluations to inform decision making. The evaluations included in the FY 2026 AEP focus on DoW top business operations goals and are intended to inform DoW efforts to improve efficiency and effectiveness.