

Nominate a

Change
Maker



2026 Awards
Program!

Together, we
shape the future
of aging.

2026 Annual Conference
& EXPO **JUNE 1 - 3**

Wenatchee Convention Center

2026 ChangeMaker Recognition Process

**ChangeMaker Stories will be displayed in the Poster Gallery at Annual Conference.
Award winners will be selected from the Gallery.**

Submit



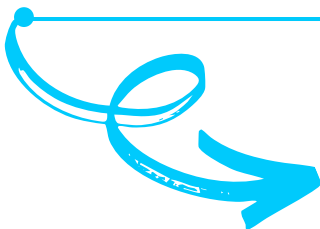
Nominate a ChangeMaker and submit a short description that highlights the reason behind the award nomination, as well as a photo.

Enjoy



ChangeMaker stories will be selected and displayed at the conference to inspire attendees in our "Change in Action" Poster Gallery (32 max).

Celebrate



1 honoree for each Award Category will be selected from the Poster Gallery stories and will be recognized at the 75th Anniversary program during the Annual Conference.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: APRIL 10

Submit your story at
<https://form.jotform.com/LeadingAgeWA/2026-awards>

Questions? Contact Cassi Meritt - cmeritt@leadingagewa.org or Sarah Whitmarsh - swhitmarsh@leadingagewa.org

ChangeMakers in Action

Poster Gallery + Awards Program

LeadingAge Washington Annual Conference 2026

This year, we are reimagining recognition.

Instead of a traditional awards nomination process, we are inviting members to share real stories of change happening in their communities. These stories will become part of a *ChangeMakers in Action* Poster Gallery at the conference – and from those stories, our 2026 ChangeMaker Award recipients will be selected.

One inspiring submission. Two powerful forms of recognition.

Part 1: *ChangeMakers in Action* Poster Gallery

Selected stories will be featured as large-format posters displayed in a high-visibility gallery space at the conference. These posters will celebrate:

- Resident impact
- Staff leadership
- Innovation and creative problem-solving
- Culture change and collaboration
- Courage, resilience, and transformation

This gallery will be a storytelling centerpiece of the conference – honoring the everyday change makers across our field.



Part 2: *ChangeMaker* Awards

From the gallery group, the awards committee will identify up to eight *ChangeMaker* Award honorees representing individuals, teams, organizations, and business partners whose stories demonstrate exceptional impact.

This means:

- ✓ Nominations receive recognition
- ✓ The strongest stories rise to award-level honors
- ✓ The awards are rooted in real, visible member stories

Award Categories



INDIVIDUALS: Honoring personal leadership, courage, and contribution.

Catalyst for Change Award

Recognizes an individual whose leadership, vision, or initiative sparked meaningful transformation. This includes both formal leaders and informal influencers who inspire others, drive innovation, or reimagine what is possible within their community.

Resilience in Action Award

Honors an individual who demonstrated extraordinary perseverance, adaptability, or courage during a period of challenge or rapid change. This award celebrates those who rise to the occasion in ways that strengthen their community.

Spirit of Service Award

Honors a frontline staff member whose compassion, resident connection, and mission-driven work create a powerful daily impact within their community. This award celebrates those who uplift others through their attitude, heart, and everyday leadership—individuals whose consistent presence enhances resident well-being, strengthens team culture, and embodies the true spirit of service in aging care.

TEAM / DEPARTMENT: Celebrating collaborative change and organizational culture shifts.

Culture Shift Award

Recognizes a team or department that successfully advanced workplace culture through communication improvements, increased engagement strategies, or innovative workforce solutions. Highlights collective leadership and positive change at the team level.

Community Connector Award

Honors a team that has built meaningful partnerships or strengthened relationships outside their organization. This can include intergenerational programs, school partnerships, volunteer collaborations, or family/community engagement initiatives.

ORGANIZATION: Highlighting system-wide innovation and resident-centered transformation.

Innovation for Impact Award

Presented to a community or organization that implemented a transformative program, technology, or care model that significantly improved operations, workforce experience, or resident outcomes. This award focuses on quantitative data demonstrating measurable impact.

Transforming Lives Award

Honors a community whose initiative elevated resident well-being—emotionally, socially, physically, or spiritually. Recognizes programs or approaches that provide qualitative data that reflects an enhanced quality of life. Communities are encouraged to include resident-led initiatives in nominations.

BUSINESS MEMBER: Celebrating partners who advance mission and innovation in aging services.

Mission Supporter Award

Honors a business member whose contributions strengthened the mission of aging services through philanthropy, volunteerism, education, or direct community impact. This award celebrates generous, mission-centered partnership that uplifts providers and residents.



Submission Details

Submit your Nomination by April 10

Follow this link to submit your nomination:

<https://form.jotform.com/LeadingAgeWA/2026-awards>

You will be asked to include:

- A minimum of one high-quality photo (up to 3 maximum). Photo(s) should show the nominee and/or represent the story behind the nomination.
- A short story (150–250 words) highlighting an individual, department/team, community, or a business member that embodies mission-driven work through a spirit of service, courage, creativity, innovation, resilience, or transformation.
- A simple consent form for anyone featured in the photo(s).

LeadingAge Washington will create a poster utilizing your photo(s) and story. It is critical that your photo(s) be in a high-resolution format (not a screenshot).

What Happens Next

- **Step 1** – Submit your story by April 10, 2026
- **Step 2** – Gallery Selection: A committee will select up to 32 stories to be featured in the Poster Gallery during the Annual Conference June 1-3, 2026. LeadingAge Washington will create each poster for display.
- **Step 3** – Award Selection: From those gallery stories, up to 8 award honorees will be chosen based on the award categories outlined on page 4. Winners will be notified in early May.
- **Step 4** – Conference Recognition: Award recipients will be honored during the 75th Anniversary Luncheon on June 3rd in Wenatchee.

Why Participate

- Recognize your staff and residents.
- Showcase your community's innovation and heart.
- Inspire peers across the state.
- Be part of a powerful conference storytelling experience.
- Your story could help show the entire field what change in aging services really looks like.

The Details

- The Gallery and Awards are open to all LeadingAge Washington provider and business members.
- You may submit more than one nomination, but an individual may not be nominated in more than one category.
- Please ensure that photos are high resolution (not screenshots) so that LAWA can enlarge for display.
- This is about impact, not perfect writing – we want authentic stories and are excited to read yours!

