

2026 Individual Recognition Awards

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Submission Deadline: **September 30th, 2026**
Submission Method: wtscencal@gmail.com
Questions: rachel@achieving.com
Email subject line: WTS-CenCal Award Nomination
File Names: Include the nominee's last name and content
(Example: Garcia_Nomination.pdf or Garcia_Headshot.jpg)

SUBMISSION ELIGIBILITY

- **Geographic Location:** Nominees must live, work, study, or make a meaningful contribution within the WTS-CenCal geographic area: **San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, Fresno, Kings, Tulare, and Kern counties**. WTS-CenCal members are eligible regardless of work location.
- **Nominee Consent:** All nomination materials must be accurate and submitted with the nominee's knowledge and consent. By submitting a nomination, the nominator confirms that the nominee has authorized WTS-CenCal to use the submitted name, biography, photographs, and nomination information for awards-related evaluation, recognition, publicity, and archival purposes.
- **Use of AI:** Any submission developed with the assistance of artificial intelligence (AI) must be thoroughly reviewed and verified for accuracy by the submitter prior to entry, as the WTS-CenCal Team is not responsible for errors, inaccuracies or misrepresentations resulting from AI-generated content.
- **Deadline:** All materials must be submitted by email to wtscencal@gmail.com by the end of the day on **September 30th, 2026**. Incomplete or late applications will not be considered. Please expect a confirmation email that your submission was received.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Each nomination must include:

1. **Nomination Form:** Provide the nominee's and nominator's contact information, select one award category, and confirm that the nominee meets the applicable eligibility requirements.
2. **Nominee Profile:** Describe the nominee's current role, transportation experience, professional or academic accomplishments, leadership activities, involvement with WTS, and other relevant service or contributions. Include information appropriate to the nominee's career stage and the selected award category. *1 page maximum; separate attached page acceptable*
3. **Award Category:** Describe why the nominee is deserving of the selected award and how the nominee aligns with each of the award category criteria. Provide specific examples and describe the results or impact of the nominee's contributions whenever possible. *2 page maximum; separate attached page acceptable*
4. **Letter of Support:** Include one letter of support from an individual with direct knowledge of the nominee's accomplishments and impact, such as a colleague, supervisor, client, agency partner, educator, mentor, mentee, WTS member, or community stakeholder.
5. **Photograph and Optional Supporting Materials:** Include one recent, high-resolution professional headshot of the nominee for awards-related recognition and publicity. Nominators may also submit up to three optional supporting photographs or graphics that illustrate the nominee's leadership, service, or industry involvement.

2026 Individual Recognition Awards

CATEGORIES

Public Sector Woman of the Year

The Public Sector Woman of the Year Award recognizes an individual identifying as a woman who has demonstrated exceptional leadership, innovation, and professional achievement while serving in the public-sector transportation industry. This award honors a woman whose contributions have advanced transportation programs, projects, policies, or services and positively impacted her organization, community, and the transportation profession.

Eligibility: Open to individuals who identify as women and are employed by a public agency, government entity, transit agency, educational institution, or other public-sector organization.

Criteria: Has the nominee served the public, led effectively, improved transportation, strengthened her organization, and advanced women?

- **Public Service Impact:** Makes meaningful contributions to transportation programs, projects, policies, or services that benefit the public.
- **Leadership:** Successfully leads people, teams, programs, or initiatives within a public-sector organization.
- **Innovation and Problem-Solving:** Develops or implements effective approaches to transportation challenges.
- **Organizational and Community Influence:** Positively influences her agency, partners, stakeholders, or the communities served.
- **Advancement of Women:** Mentors, advocates for, or creates opportunities for women in transportation.

Private Sector Woman of the Year

The Private Sector Woman of the Year Award recognizes an individual identifying as a woman who has demonstrated outstanding leadership, professional excellence, and meaningful contributions to the transportation industry while working in the private sector. This award honors a woman whose achievements have advanced transportation projects, services, or innovations and positively influenced clients, colleagues, and the broader industry.

Eligibility: Open to individuals who identify as women and are employed by a private-sector organization, including consulting firms, contractors, professional-service providers, suppliers, or industry partners supporting the transportation sector.

Criteria: Has the nominee excelled professionally, delivered results, led effectively, influenced the industry, and advanced women?

- **Professional Excellence:** Demonstrates exceptional expertise, achievement, and performance in her profession.
- **Project and Client Impact:** Delivers meaningful results for transportation projects, clients, partners, or communities.
- **Leadership:** Successfully leads people, teams, business initiatives, projects, or services.
- **Innovation and Industry Influence:** Introduces effective ideas, practices, or solutions that benefit her organization or the transportation industry.
- **Advancement of Women:** Mentors, advocates for, or creates opportunities for women in transportation.

2026 Individual Recognition Awards

Member of the Year

The Member of the Year Award recognizes a WTS-CenCal member who has demonstrated exceptional commitment to the chapter's mission, growth, and success through outstanding service, leadership, and engagement. This award honors an individual who has made significant contributions to chapter programs, initiatives, events, mentorship, scholarship efforts, or member development while serving as a positive ambassador for WTS and the transportation industry.

Eligibility: Open to any current WTS-CenCal member in good standing.

Criteria: Has the nominee served the chapter, strengthened its programs, engaged its members, advanced its mission, and represented WTS positively?

- **Chapter Service:** Contributes meaningful time, effort, leadership, or expertise to WTS-CenCal.
- **Program and Organizational Impact:** Strengthens chapter programs, events, initiatives, scholarships, operations, or growth.
- **Member Engagement:** Encourages participation, builds connections, and contributes to a welcoming and collaborative chapter.
- **Advancement of the WTS Mission:** Supports the recruitment, retention, and advancement of women in transportation.
- **WTS Ambassadorship:** Represents WTS-CenCal positively within the transportation industry and broader community.

Emerging Woman of the Year

The Emerging Woman of the Year Award recognizes a student or young professional who has demonstrated initiative, leadership potential, and a commitment to building a career in transportation.

Eligibility: Open to individuals who identify as women and are either enrolled in a transportation-related educational/training program or within the first 10 years of their transportation careers.

Criteria: Has the nominee achieved, taken initiative, committed to transportation, demonstrated leadership, and supported others?

- **Academic or Early-Career Achievement:** Demonstrates noteworthy achievement in education, research, internships, employment, or other transportation-related work.
- **Initiative:** Pursues opportunities, accepts new challenges, or contributes beyond what is ordinarily expected at her career stage.
- **Commitment to Transportation:** Demonstrates a clear and sustained interest in developing a career and contributing to the transportation industry.
- **Leadership and Engagement:** Positively influences others through leadership, teamwork, volunteering, or participation in professional, educational, or community activities.
- **Support for Others:** Encourages, assists, or creates opportunities for other women, students, or emerging professionals interested in transportation.

2026 Individual Recognition Awards

Women's Lifetime Achievement Award

The Women's Lifetime Achievement Award honors an individual identifying as a woman whose distinguished career has left a lasting impact on the transportation industry and the advancement of women in the profession. This award recognizes sustained professional excellence, leadership, mentorship, and service over the course of a career. The award celebrates a legacy of achievement, influence, and inspiration that will continue to benefit future generations of transportation professionals.

Eligibility: Open to individuals who identify as women and have demonstrated a significant and sustained record of achievement within the transportation industry.

Criteria: Has the nominee built an exceptional career, shaped transportation, established a leadership legacy, developed future leaders, and created lasting influence?

- **Sustained Professional Excellence:** Demonstrates a distinguished record of achievement throughout her transportation career.
- **Lasting Industry Impact:** Has made contributions that produced enduring benefits for transportation organizations, projects, policies, services, or communities.
- **Leadership Legacy:** Has influenced organizations, the profession, or future transportation leaders through sustained leadership and service.
- **Mentorship and Advancement of Women:** Has consistently mentored, sponsored, advocated for, or created opportunities for women.
- **Enduring Influence and Inspiration:** Leaves a professional legacy that will continue to benefit and inspire future generations.

WTS Champion Award

The WTS Champion Award recognizes an individual of any gender who actively advances women in transportation and supports the goals and purpose of WTS.

Eligibility: Open to individuals of any gender. WTS membership is not required.

Criteria: Did the nominee speak up, open doors, change systems, achieve results, and support WTS?

- **Advocacy:** Uses their voice, influence, or leadership position to advocate for women in transportation.
- **Opportunity Creation:** Connects women with career, leadership, networking, or professional-development opportunities.
- **Organizational Change:** Helps establish or improve policies, programs, or workplace practices that support women.
- **Demonstrated Impact:** Produces measurable or meaningful results for women's participation, visibility, retention, or advancement.
- **Support of WTS:** Contributes time, resources, expertise, sponsorship, or other support to WTS and its mission.