

2026 AETC STRATEGY

COMAETC's FOREWORD

To the Airmen of Air Education and Training Command,

The operational environment has changed, and so must we. An era of strategic competition has emerged, calling on America to rise to the challenge by unleashing our innovative spirit to adapt, lead, and secure a decisive advantage for the future. In direct alignment with the 2026 National Defense Strategy, this strategy is our roadmap to ensure a warrior ethos and build the agile, resilient, and combat-credible Airmen required by the Joint Force for a future where victory can be decided in seconds.

We will forge a warrior mindset from day one, advance and accelerate our training, and hone our talent as the decisive weapon system required for victory. This strategy codifies our commitment to the families who are the bedrock of our strength, recognizing that family readiness *is* mission readiness. These are not separate efforts; they are interconnected pillars supporting a single objective.

This document is more than a strategy; it is our blueprint for the future. As you read it, see where your unique talents can drive our shared mission forward. You are empowered to challenge old assumptions, innovate with urgency, and discover the most effective ways to build combat-credible Airmen.

As 'The First Command', we do more than train - we build the foundation for every future victory. The character, lethality, and warrior spirit we forge in our Airmen today will be the decisive advantage on the battlefields of tomorrow. This is our responsibility to the U.S. Air Force, and the Air Education and Training Command team is up to the task!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of stylized loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

CLARK J. QUINN
Lieutenant General, USAF
Commander

STRATEGIC APPROACH

This AETC strategy framework is constructed upon the doctrinal relationship between ends, ways, and means to direct command-wide action. The strategy's *ends* are articulated through a clear vision for the future, defining the tangible end state we must achieve. This represents the ultimate "*what*"—the specific, measurable conditions we must create. The overarching "*why*" is the strategic imperative driving this transformation; it is the answer to the question, "Why is achieving this end state essential for our command's future mission success?" The Lines of Effort (LOEs) serve as the *ways* representing the primary methods and courses of action that will guide our transformation and outline "*how*" the command will achieve its objectives. This approach deliberately empowers commanders at all levels with autonomy to determine the most effective tactical approaches. Finally, the successful execution of this strategy depends on the synchronized application of our *means*—the full spectrum of resources and capabilities available. The success of each objective, therefore, is a shared responsibility, requiring unified action and the integrated application of these means across the entire command to realize the desired end state.

MISSION

Recruit, Train, and Educate Professional Airmen.

VISION

Develop Airmen for the U.S. Air Force with the Competencies and Warrior Ethos to Win.

This vision is a deliberate and concise declaration of AETC's core purpose, forged by the urgent demands of the modern strategic environment. It is not merely a collection of words, but a strategic formula—a repeatable, intentional process that guides every action within this command.

Competencies + Warrior Ethos = Winning

PROBLEM STATEMENT

We are the world's most formidable fighting force, and we intend to stay that way. Our ability to deter adversaries is our current strength, but the pacing challenge of China demands that we accelerate our focus on the high-end fight. Our measured pace of change, while once deliberate, has created a divergence from the speed and lethality the future requires. This strategy closes that gap. It is our answer to the National Defense Strategy's call to restore our warrior ethos, embrace the agility needed to master new technologies like drone operations, and build upon our proven strength. We are not broken, but we must be faster and more focused—and this plan ensures we will forge the combat-credible Airmen required to win.

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

The era of uncontested American dominance is definitively over, replaced by a dangerously unstable security environment where the risk of simultaneous major-power conflicts is a stark reality. Technologically sophisticated and numerically superior adversaries, led by the People's Republic of China, now directly challenge the United States and its interests, posing direct military threats to the U.S. Homeland through a combination of nuclear, space, and cyber capabilities. This new strategic environment is defined by a brutally fast and lethal battlespace, where pervasive electronic warfare and hyper-fast sensor-to-shooter networks are the norm, and mission success will be measured in seconds. In this constantly contested landscape, the foundational "Peace Through Strength" strategy of the 2026 National Defense Strategy can only be achieved by a Joint Force that is not only technologically advanced but also intellectually and culturally prepared for high-end conflict. This reality places AETC at the nexus of the new strategy, as it is tasked with forging the warrior ethos and developing the highly skilled Airmen required to operate and win in this demanding global environment.

STRATEGIC INTENT

AETC must accelerate its transformation from a peacetime training organization into a warfighting-centric forge. The command's central task is to build a force that is cognitively dominant, technically superior, and psychologically resilient enough to thrive in chaos. Every curriculum, technology, and process must be evaluated against a single metric: Does this create a more lethal, combat-ready Airman prepared to win against a peer threat?

AETC GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Airmen are AETC's primary responsibility!

Every line of effort must enable the timely, effective, & scalable development of disciplined, capable, Airmen for the Operational Force.

This principle serves as the foundational, non-negotiable mission for AETC. It establishes that the command's ultimate product is not course completions, graduation certificates, or training hours; it is a fully prepared Airman ready to contribute to the mission of the U.S. Air Force. To elaborate on this principle:

- *Human-Centric Focus:* People are our mission. The Airman is the command's center of gravity, and all resources exist solely to support their development.
- *Accountability:* This is our solemn duty. AETC is directly accountable for the quality, readiness, and character of every Airman we deliver to the force.
- *Total Command Alignment:* Every action must directly support the development of a better Airman. If an activity doesn't contribute, it's a distraction from our core mission.
- *Timely:* Deliver Airmen at the speed of need. Delays in training directly degrade the readiness of the entire force.
- *Effective:* Training must produce Airmen with the skills and mindset to win in a complex, high-stakes environment.

- *Scalable:* The ability to surge or shrink the training pipeline to meet global demand without sacrificing quality.
- *Disciplined:* Forge Airmen who embody our core values and can be trusted to perform with integrity under extreme pressure.
- *Capable:* Produce Airmen who have mastered the technical skills of their career field and can apply them to accomplish the mission.
- *The Ultimate Customer:* We train Airmen for the operational force. Their success is our success. Every other command depends on the quality we deliver.

DESIRED END STATE

Produce disciplined, capable, **Airmen** to the Operational Force to win our nation's wars!

LINES OF EFFORTS (LOEs)

LOE 1: Forge Airmen of Character

Focus: This Line of Effort is the bedrock upon which our entire warfighting capability rests. While technology and strategy are vital, they are ultimately wielded by Airmen. Without men and women of uncompromising character, discipline, and a warrior ethos, even the most advanced force will fail under the immense pressures of modern conflict. It is the essential human investment that underwrites the success of every other line of effort.

Objective 1.1. Develop Air-Minded Warriors is our foundational mandate. We will act as the forge that transforms civilian recruits into lethal, Air-Minded Warriors. This is achieved by instilling a warrior ethos from day one, grounding every Airman in the 'why' of airpower, and cultivating an offensive, problem-solving mindset that moves beyond checklists. The result is a combat-ready warfighter who understands their role in the high-end fight

- *Why It Matters:* An Airman who understands *how* their specific job contributes to the broader airpower mission is more motivated, adaptable, and a better problem-solver.
- *Practical Example:* A cyber trainee learns to configure a network switch. The instructor explains: "This switch routes targeting data for the F-35s at our forward operating base. If you misconfigure it, or if you can't defend it from an attack, those pilots can't get their mission data." The final exam now includes a scenario-based question testing this strategic understanding.
- *Measures of Progress Examples:*
 - Percentage of students scoring 90% or higher on the standardized Airpower Doctrine Assessment.
 - Assess AETC's effectiveness in meeting field needs by administering Field Evaluation Questionnaires to supervisors of newly assigned Airmen.

Objective 1.2. Instill Mission Command & Warrior Mindset cultivates a "Contested Environment" mentality by fundamentally shifting every aspect of training from a peacetime proficiency model to one that forges combat-ready warriors from day one.

- *Why It Matters:* By introducing stress and friction early in training, Airmen learn to expect and operate through chaos. This builds resilience and adaptability for the modern battlespace.
- *Practical Example:* A logistics team is practicing loading a pallet. The instructor declares: "Communications are down, the inventory system is corrupted by a cyber-attack, and your route is blocked. Your commander's intent is to 'get these medical supplies to the front line.' Go." The team is now graded on their ability to improvise and accomplish the intent, not on following the original plan.
- *Measures of Progress Examples:*
 - Percentage of AETC courses that have incorporated a mandatory "contested environment" graded event.
 - Pre- and post-course survey scores measure an Airman's self-reported confidence in operating with incomplete information.
 - Create an assessment module for use during the initial accessions process.

Objective 1.3. Validate Syllabus Relevancy and Efficient/Effective Competency Based Training as a two-pronged attack on outdated training. First, we will validate every syllabus against real-world operational needs, cutting non-essential content. Second, we will replace time-based instruction with efficient, competency-based training where Airmen advance based on proven skill, not hours in a classroom—creating a more combat-ready force, faster.

- *Why It Matters:* The battlefield is evolving faster than our training, creating a dangerous skills gap at an Airman's first unit. This is a warfighting imperative: we must stop wasting time on irrelevant content and produce a lethal force ready for a high-tech fight
- *Practical Example:* Consider the F-35 Avionics Maintenance pipeline:
 - Old Way: A 9-month, time-based syllabus teaching legacy systems, graduating Airmen regardless of skill.
 - New Way: A 5-month, competency-based pipeline focused only on mission-critical tasks validated by operational units.
 - The result is a more lethal force: combat-ready maintainers with proven skills arrive at the flight line faster.
- *Measures of Progress Examples:*
 - Validate Syllabus Relevancy: Achieve 95% validation of all courses by operational commands within 24 months.
 - Cut Time-to-Train: Reduce average training time by 25% on our most critical pipelines.
 - Increase the "Ready on Arrival" Scores: Boost the average Airmen readiness score given by 6/10 to 8/10 which means we are delivering an asset, not a trainee, to the operational force.

Objective 1.4. Evaluate Readiness for AETC's Missions and Deployment Requirement forces AETC to look inward, assessing its own readiness to execute the core training mission while meeting deployment taskings without breaking the force generation pipeline.

- *Why It Matters:* The Air Force cannot win if its training factory is broken. Unmanaged deployments of instructors create a hollow force by sacrificing tomorrow's readiness for

today's fight. This objective compels a strategic choice: balance the risk to the current fight against the risk of building the future force.

- *Practical Examples:*
 - Internal Readiness: Instead of silently operating at reduced capacity, a training squadron formally elevates the risk of an instructor shortage, forcing a leadership decision.
 - Deployment Readiness: Instead of blindly filling in deployment, a commander uses a dashboard to show it would halt a critical pipeline, allowing them to negotiate a sustainable solution.
- *Measures of Progress Examples:*
 - Instructor Readiness: Percentage of instructor billets filled in critical AFSCs.
 - Training Asset MC Rate: Mission-capable rates for key aircraft and simulators.
 - Deployment Impact Score: A Red/Yellow/Green rating of a unit's ability to deploy without breaking its core training mission.

LOE 2: Inspire and Attract the Next Generation of Airmen to win the war for talent, we will overhaul our accession enterprise. By expanding our reach, restoring data ownership, and demanding industry accountability, we will build the predictable, data-driven pipeline needed to fill every AFSC and secure victory.

Objective 2.1. Increase Propensity, Awareness, and Credibility Across DAF Total Force Accession Pipelines cultivates a national culture of support for military service. We will reshape the narrative to establish the Total Force—Regular Air Force, Guard, Reserve and Space Force—as a premier and respected career path for young Americans and their influencers. This is a long-term investment in our brand to ensure the DAF's story is heard, believed, and inspires the next generation to serve

- *Why It Matters:* You cannot recruit people who don't know you exist or who hold negative, outdated perceptions of military service. In an era of intense competition for talent and a shrinking pool of qualified candidates, being a passive legacy brand is a losing strategy. High propensity and credibility create a "pull" effect, drawing talent toward us rather than forcing recruiters to constantly "push" against a wall of public indifference.
- *Practical Example:* Instead of just running TV ads, AETC partners with a major esports league to sponsor a national tournament. The partnership includes integrated "day in the life" content of Air Force cyber and IT professionals, branded challenges that test players' problem-solving skills, and having uniformed Airmen on-site to talk about their real-world tech experience. This authentically places the DAF brand within a key demographic ecosystem, building credibility and awareness.
- *Measures of Progress Example:*
 - Propensity: A year-over-year increase in the percentage of 17-21-year-olds who answer "probably" or "definitely" will serve in national youth polling surveys (e.g., an increase from 10% to 13%).
 - Awareness: A significant increase in organic web traffic and social media engagement (shares, comments, follows) on recruiting platforms.
 - Credibility: An increase in positive/neutral media sentiment tracking regarding DAF careers.

Objective 2.2. Generate Quality Leads to Fill all Programmed AFSCs shifts from broad awareness to targeted action. The focus is on quality over quantity. It's not about getting the most names possible; it's about getting the *right* names of individuals who are both qualified for and interested in the specific Air Force Specialty Codes (AFSCs) the DAF needs to fill, especially in hard-to-fill fields like maintenance, cyber, and special warfare. This means precision marketing that connects the right person with the right job.

- *Why It Matters:* An empty seat in a critical career field is a direct vulnerability. Generating thousands of generic leads that don't convert into qualified applicants wastes millions of marketing dollars and, more importantly, a recruiter's most valuable resource: time. High-quality leads streamline the recruiting process, reduce costs, and directly contribute to a fully manned and combat-ready force.
- *Practical Example:* A digital marketing campaign targets users on LinkedIn who list specific IT certifications (like Security+ or CISSP). The ad doesn't just say "Join the Air Force"; it says, "Use your cyber expertise to defend the nation. See how your certifications can accelerate your rank and career." The link directs them to a customized landing page about DAF cyber professions, not a generic homepage.
- *Measures of Progress Example:*
 - Quality: An increase in the lead-to-applicant conversion rate for critical AFSCs (e.g., a 15% improvement).
 - Efficiency: A decrease in the "per-qualified lead cost."
 - Effectiveness: Achieving 100% of the recruiting goal for every programmed AFSC before the end of the fiscal year.

Objective 2.3. Restore Government Ownership of Data and Marketing Strategy reclaiming the DAF's recruiting brain. We will end our reliance on contractors by building the in-house capability to collect, analyze, and act on our own data, creating government-owned and led marketing technology with the expert team to run it.

- *Why It Matters:* Whoever owns the data, owns the strategy. Without ownership, the DAF is unable to perform deep analytics, is perpetually dependent on contractors, and loses priceless institutional knowledge every time a contract is re-competed. Restoring ownership means we can make smarter, faster decisions, adapt to market changes instantly, and build a long-term, organic understanding of the American youth market.
- *Practical Example:* The Air Force Accession Center stops sending all its advertising performance data to a single "black box" contractor. Instead, it builds its own data warehouse using a government cloud platform. It hires and trains a small team of Airmen and civilians in data science and marketing analytics. This team can now directly answer questions from leadership, like "Which video ad is performing best with 19-year-old females in Texas?" without asking a contractor.
- *Measures of Progress Examples:*
 - Ownership: The stand-up of a government-owned and operated recruiting data warehouse/analytics platform.
 - Capability: The number of trained and certified government personnel (military and civilian) in key marketing and data science roles.

- **Control:** A significant reduction in the percentage of the total marketing budget spent on contractor-owned data/analytics services.

Objective 2.4. Leverage Industry Expertise Through Competitive and Accountable Partnerships

recognizes that while the government must own the strategy, industry partners are essential for execution. The focus is on changing the *nature* of these partnerships. It means moving away from opaque, long-term contracts and toward a more competitive model where multiple partners are used for their specific expertise (e.g., creative content, media buying, social media) and are held to strict, performance-based metrics.

- ***Why It Matters:*** A single, monolithic contract stifles innovation and creates a lack of accountability. If one partner is doing everything, it's hard to fire them for underperforming in one area. A competitive, multi-vendor environment forces partners to bring their A-game every day. It allows the DAF to rapidly swap out a partner who isn't delivering results and ensures taxpayer dollars are tied directly to performance.
- ***Practical Example:*** Instead of one large advertising contract, the DAF signs three separate, shorter-term contracts: one with a top-tier creative agency for making compelling video content, a second with a specialized media-buying firm to place ads efficiently, and a third with a social media agency. Each contract has clear key performance indicators (KPIs), such as "cost per lead" or "video completion rate." If one partner fails to meet their KPIs for two consecutive quarters, their contract is reviewed for termination.
- ***Measures of Progress Examples:***
 - **Competition:** The transition from a single prime advertising contract to a multi-vendor ecosystem.
 - **Accountability:** The percentage of the advertising budget is tied to contracts with explicit, performance-based metrics and termination clauses.
 - **Performance:** A demonstrable year-over-year improvement in key metrics (like cost-per-lead) delivered by industry partners.

LOE 3: Modernize Training for Speed and Agility

Focus: Leverage immersive tech, human performance, innovation, and data analytics at scale to build agile, lethal Airmen. This LOE ensures the cognitive and tactical agility of our Airmen is not just a match for our adversaries, but a decisive overmatch. It is our primary mechanism for building a force that can out-think, out-adapt, and out-fight any potential adversaries.

Objective 3.1. Operationalize Foundational and Occupational Competencies builds a more lethal force by changing how we measure talent. We will operationalize both Foundational (leadership) and Occupational (technical) competencies, embedding them into an Airman's entire career. The focus is to build a system where proven mastery, not just completed tasks, determines an Airman's value and future.

- ***Why it Matters:*** We need proven warfighters, not box-checkers. This matters because competencies replace subjectivity with clear standards, enabling us to promote the best leaders, target our training, and forge a more agile and lethal force.
- ***Practical Example:*** Consider a Cyber student:

- Old Way: Graduates after 6 months by passing a multiple-choice test, regardless of hands-on skill.
- New Way: Graduates by proving mastery in a realistic capstone event that measures both their technical skill and their teamwork under pressure.
- The result: We deliver a proven, hands-on warfighter, not just a test-passer."
- *Measures of Progress Examples:*
 - PME Competency Mapping: The percentage of PME curriculum objectives that are directly mapped to a DAF Foundational Competency.
 - Instructor Certification Rate: The percentage of AETC instructors certified to conduct competency-based evaluations and validate student mastery.
 - Capstone Implementation: The percentage of training pipelines that use a performance-based capstone event, instead of a traditional exam, to validate competency mastery.

Objective 3.2. Leverage Tech-Enhanced Learning accelerates the integration of immersive technologies (VR/AR/MR) and AI-driven adaptive learning platforms into high-cost, high-risk, and high-repetition training environments to increase realistic practice.

- *Why It Matters:* This allows Airmen to experience thousands of "reps and sets" in complex scenarios that are too dangerous or expensive to replicate in the real world, building critical muscle memory.
- *Practical Example:* An Airman puts on a VR headset to practice an emergency engine shutdown on a C-130 dozens of times in an hour. The simulation can inject random failures that it would be impossible to safely replicate on a live aircraft, making them proficient before they ever touch the plane.
- *Measures of Progress Example:*
 - Percentage increase in the use of VR/AR modalities across targeted training pipelines.
 - Documented cost avoidance from reduced reliance on live-flying hours, fuel, or physical equipment.

Objective 3.3. Provide Seamless Access to Training by deploying a single, mobile-first Enterprise Learning Platform (ELP) that provides every Airman with on-demand, career-long access to their training records, course materials, and personalized supplemental learning content.

- *Why It Matters:* This demolishes the industrial age "schoolhouse only" model of learning, enabling a culture of continuous readiness and allowing Airmen to access critical knowledge at the point of need.
- *Practical Example:* When faced with an unfamiliar allied ID, a Security Forces Airman uses an AI assistant to get an instant, validated answer. By providing a checklist and images from a secure database, the AI enables a confident, on-the-spot validation in under 60 seconds, eliminating the need for slow radio calls for guidance.
- *Measures of Progress Example:*
 - Percentage of AETC Airmen who are monthly active users of the Enterprise Learning Platform (ELP).
 - Number of "just-in-time" learning assets accessed per month.

Objective 3.4. Invest in Workforce and Faculty Development implementing a continuous professional development program for upskilling the workforce and certifying all AETC faculty and instructors in learning engineering principles, immersive technology facilitation, and data-informed instruction.

- *Why It Matters:* A modern learning ecosystem is useless without a modern faculty. This investment ensures our instructors evolve from being lecturers into expert learning facilitators.
- *Practical Example:* A new instructor, as part of their "Certified Digital Instructor" program, learns to facilitate training on VR simulators and interpret the student data to provide targeted, data-informed coaching to accelerate learning.
- *Measures of Progress Examples:*
 - Percentage of all faculty and instructors who have achieved the "Certified Digital Instructor" credential.
 - Improvement in student feedback scores for certified instructors versus historical averages.

Objective 3.5. Optimize Headquarters Staff Structure to critically examine the headquarters (HQ) itself and redesign it for speed, agility, and effectiveness. The focus is on transforming the HQ from a bureaucratic, approval-focused organization into a lean, strategy-driven enabler of the field.

- *Why It Matters:* Decision-speed is survival. Our current HQ, crippled by silos and duplication, is a strategic vulnerability that wastes time, crushes initiative, and disconnects us from the field. Optimizing our staff is a warfighting imperative.
- *Practical Example:* A simple data call that takes two weeks to answer, burdening every level down to the squadron, is a symptom of a broken process. In an optimized HQ, an empowered data cell bypasses this chain, pulls the answer from authoritative sources, and responds in under two hours.
- *Measures of Progress Examples:*
 - Approval Layers Reduced: A 25% reduction in the number of required signatures ("chops") for the command's top 10 most common administrative and operational processes.
 - Decision Velocity: A decrease in the average time required for a formal decision package to move from the action officer to the final approval authority (e.g., from 14 days to 3 days).
 - Staffing Ratio: A reduction in the ratio of headquarters staff personnel to the total number of Airmen in the command, indicating a leaner, more efficient structure.

Objective 3.6. Cultivate an AI-Ready Force by executing a force-wide learning revolution to create an Air Force where every Airman, regardless of specialty, is upskilled to employ AI as a core component of their daily warfighting and mission support tasks.

- *Why It Matters:* Winning in an era of digital conflict requires more than just elite coders; it requires a total force that can cognitively out-think and out-pace our adversaries by leveraging AI at scale. To achieve this, AETC must evolve from producing a few AI

specialists to ensuring that every single Airman who graduates basic training, technical school, or PME can integrate AI as a natural and decisive tool in their job.

- *Practical Example:* AETC is embedding AI proficiency across the entire learning continuum through a multi-pronged effort. This approach moves beyond abstract theory to focus on role-specific application, ensuring the goal isn't to create thousands of data scientists, but to equip every Airman to use AI in their specific job. From learning AI fundamentals with GenAI.mil in BMT to applying AI-driven tools in technical training, every graduate will be AI-ready.
- *Measures of Progress Examples:*
 - Percentage of AETC technical training courses that have verifiably integrated role-specific AI applications and tools into their curriculum.
 - Validated AI competency levels achieved across all accession points (BMT, OTS, ROTC) and levels of Professional Military Education.
 - Field-level feedback scores from operational commanders on the AI-readiness and practical AI skills of all AETC graduates, not just those in technical fields.

LOE 4: Support Quality of Life and Family Readiness

Focus: A focused Airman is a lethal Airman. AETC will make family readiness a strategic imperative by fighting for the safe housing, spouse employment, medical access and improved Morale, Welfare & Resilience (MWR) programs that eliminate distractions and enable our warfighters to focus on the mission.

Objective 4.1: Campaign for Improved Housing and Appropriated Allowances to become data-driven advocates for our Airmen, campaigning to fix housing failures and inadequate allowances. We will use hard data to hold contractors accountable and secure the financial and residential well-being our people have earned.

- *Why It Matters:* This is a mission readiness issue, not just a quality-of-life issue. An Airman worried about mold or rent is not a focused, lethal warfighter. When we fail on housing and pay, we directly degrade readiness, lose the retention battle, and cripple recruiting.
- *Practical Examples:*
 - Housing Campaign: Instead of fighting housing issues case-by-case, AETC will consolidate all base-level data on contractor non-performance. We will use this evidence to brief senior Air Force leaders and Congress directly, applying national-level pressure to hold failing contractors accountable.
 - BAH Campaign: When local BAH rates fall below reality, we will produce data driven with a "BAH Deficit Report." This formal analysis will be our weapon to petition the Department of War for immediate, out-of-cycle rate adjustments, proving our Airmen cannot afford to live where they serve
- *Measures of Progress Examples:*
 - Resident Satisfaction Score: A year-over-year increase in the average satisfaction scores from residents in both dorms and privatized family housing, as measured by standardized surveys.

- **Maintenance Work Order Response Time:** A measurable decrease in the average time it takes for housing maintenance contractors to respond to and complete urgent work orders (e.g., for mold or HVAC failures).
- **BAH Parity:** A reduction in the percentage of Airmen living in areas where the current BAH covers less than 85% of the median local rental cost for their grade.

Objective 4.2: Support Spousal Employment Opportunities. Establish robust partnerships with local communities and national employers and streamline the process for spousal preference in on-base hiring to reduce spousal unemployment and underemployment.

- *Why It Matters:* Spousal underemployment is a significant source of financial stress and a primary driver of retention problems.
- *Practical Example:* The Airman & Family Readiness Center partners with companies that offer remote work. Before a family even moves, a liaison helps the military spouse secure a remote project management job, allowing their career to continue uninterrupted and enhancing the family's financial stability.
- *Measures of Progress Example:*
 - Increase in the percentage of military spouses in AETC who are employed.
 - Number of spouses placed in jobs through base-sponsored hiring fairs and remote work partnership programs.

Objective 4.3. Support and Advocate for Medical Access for our people's health. We will support them internally by helping them navigate the system, and advocate for them externally by using data to force systemic improvements from DHA and TRICARE.

- *Why It Matters:* Ensuring reliable access to healthcare directly enhances mission readiness by creating focused, resilient warfighters. It is a powerful driver of retention and builds unwavering trust in leadership by fulfilling our foundational commitment to our people.
- *Practical Examples:* We will support our people at the tactical level, like a First Sergeant who personally ensures their Airmen get specialist appointments. We will also advocate at the strategic level, using command-wide data on unacceptable waiting times to brief the Surgeon General and force systemic changes to TRICARE.
- *Measures of Progress Examples:*
 - **Appointment Wait Times:** A year-over-year reduction in the average wait time for both routine and specialty care appointments, as reported by DHA and validated by command climate surveys.
 - **Network Adequacy:** A decrease in the number of official "network gaps" identified by TRICARE for critical specialties (like mental health, cardiology, etc.) in the regions surrounding AETC bases.
 - **Patient Satisfaction Scores:** A measurable increase in the percentage of AETC Airmen and families who report being "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their access to healthcare in annual command surveys.
 - **Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) Resolution Time:** A reduction in the average time it takes for families enrolled in EFMP to successfully resolve healthcare and assignment coordination issues.

Objective 4.4: Enhance Morale, Welfare, and Resilience Programs to invest in the total well-being of our people. Our focus is to enhance MWR and resilience by delivering what Airmen want: modernized facilities, relevant activities, and stigma-free, accessible support. It means cutting what doesn't work and investing in what builds a more connected and resilient force

- *Why It Matters:* This is a readiness imperative. MWR and resilience programs are human preventative maintenance that prevents burnout, builds lethal teams, and wins the battle for retention.
- *Practical Example:* Our mission is to forge the 'whole Airman' by building resilience from Day One. We will build the modern MWR facilities our students demand and embed support directly into AETC squadrons, guaranteeing the warfighters we deliver are not just technically proficient, but mentally tough and ready for the pressures of the operational force.
- *Measures of Progress Examples:*
 - Program Utilization Rates: A year-over-year increase in the number of Airmen and families participating in MWR events and utilizing resilience programs (e.g., Military and Family Life Counselors and Chaplain Services).
 - Community Satisfaction Score: An increase in the average satisfaction scores related to MWR, fitness centers, and community support in annual command climate surveys.
 - Dorm Resident "Out-and-About" Metric: A decrease in the percentage of dorm residents who report "rarely" or "never" participating in on-base activities, indicating a more vibrant and engaging community.
 - HELP/1C2D Survey Trends: Positive trends in key indicators of unit cohesion, morale, and stress levels as measured by the Air Force's annual Defense Organizational Climate Survey.

IMPLEMENTATION

To ensure the successful implementation of the 2026 AETC Strategy, the command will follow a phased and governed approach, translating strategic objectives into concrete actions.

- ***Immediate Action (Within 30 days of Publication)***: To establish foundational alignment, HQ AETC will lead a comprehensive review and revision of all Mission Directives. This will be conducted in coordination with 2 AF, 19 AF, 502 ABW, Air University (AU), and the Air Force Accession Center (AFAC) to formally codify the missions, roles, and responsibilities of its Numbered Air Forces (NAFs) and their equivalents, aligning them with the recent headquarters reorganization. Ensure AETC Public Affairs has coordinated Communication Plan.
- ***Implementation Planning:*** In addition to the mission directive revisions, AETC NAFs/equivalents and the 502 ABW will publish an Implementation Plan (IP) based on Attachment 1, **Implementation Guidance**. These plans will detail their specific concept of operations, actions, timelines, and assigned Office of Primary Responsibility (OPR) and Offices of Collateral Responsibility (OCRs) for the three-year period (2026-2029) required to achieve the command's vision and objectives.

- ***Governance and Oversight:*** Plan execution will be managed through quarterly strategic reviews led by the COMAETC/DCOM. The AETC A5/8 Plans, Programs and Requirements is the OPR for overall implementation oversight. A cross-functional team comprises of the functional leads with established monthly review LOEs efforts, track progress against end state goals, ensure Commander's Critical Information Requirements (CCIR) are monitored, and facilitate quarterly progress briefings.

ATTACHMENT 1 IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE

1. **PURPOSE:** This attachment provides the implementation framework and template for the 2026 AETC Strategic Plan, operationalizing its four strategic Lines of Effort (LOEs)—the strategic *ways*—into actionable key tasks. This framework directs the application of the command's *means* (personnel, resources, and capabilities) by assigning lead Offices of Primary Responsibility (OPRs) to establish key tasks, timelines and end states to guide the development of detailed NAFs/equivalents and the 502 ABW Implementation Plans (IPs).

2. **GOVERNANCE AND EXECUTION:** To translate the 2026 AETC Strategy into tactical action, the AETC Directorate of Plans, Programs, and Requirements (AETC/A5/8) will lead a deliberate process to convert strategic goals (*ends*) into executable Military Type Orders (MTOs). This process begins with designated LOE OPRs developing detailed Implementation Plans that define the *ways* (key tasks) and allocate the *means* (resources and personnel). Progress is monitored through quarterly strategic reviews with the AETC Commander. Upon finalization, AETC/A3 will publish a formal MTO, directing unified action and ensuring every task is directly traceable to our strategic imperatives.

3. IMPLEMENTATION OVERVIEW:

LOE #	Line of Effort	Primary OPR	Timeline
1	Forge Airmen of Character	AETC/A3 (Operations)	36 Months
2	Inspire and Attract the Next Generation of Airmen	AFAC (Air Force Accession Center)	36 Months
3	Modernize Training for Speed and Agility	AETC/A3 (Operations)	36 Months
4	Support Quality of Life and Family Readiness	AETC/A1 (Manpower & Personnel)	Ongoing

LOE 1: Forge Airmen of Character

Focus: Instill a warrior ethos, discipline, and an Air-Minded character in all Airmen from their first day of service.

Primary OPR: AETC/A3 (Operations)

Supporting OCRs: Air University (AU), 2 AF, 19 AF

Objective	Key Tasks	Timeline (Phased)	End State
1.1 Develop Air-Minded Warriors	1.1.1: Integrate airpower doctrine and its strategic context into all foundational training curriculum. 1.1.2: Develop scenario-based final exams testing strategic understanding.	Phase 1 (0-12 Mo): Curriculum Review Phase 2 (12-24 Mo): Implementation	- 90% or higher score on standardized Airpower Doctrine Assessments. - Positive trends in Field Evaluation Questionnaires from supervisors on new Airmen's mission understanding.
1.2 Instill Mission Command & Warrior Mindset	1.2.1: Design and mandate "contested environment" graded events in all relevant AETC courses. 1.2.2: Develop pre- and post-course surveys to measure confidence in operating with incomplete information.	Phase 1 (0-18 Mo): Develop & Pilot Phase 2 (18-36 Mo): Full Implementation	- 80% of AETC courses incorporate a mandatory "contested environment" graded event. - 25% increase in post-course survey scores for confidence in operating with incomplete information.
1.3 Validate Syllabus Relevancy & Competency-Based Training	1.3.1: Establish a review process with operational commands to validate all course syllabi. 1.3.2: Convert the top 10 longest/most critical training pipelines from time-based to competency-based models.	Phase 1 (0-24 Mo): Syllabus Validation Phase 2 (12-36 Mo): Competency-Based Conversion	- 95% of all courses validated by operational commands. - Average training time reduced by 25% in converted pipelines. - Average "Ready on Arrival" scores from field supervisors increased from 6/10 to 8/10.
1.4 Evaluate AETC Readiness	1.4.1: Develop and deploy a dashboard to track instructor manning, asset mission-capable rates, and deployment impacts. 1.4.2: Formalize the risk elevation process for instructor and resource shortages.	Phase 1 (0-12 Mo): Develop & Deploy	- Instructor billets in critical AFSCs filled at 95% or higher. - Maintain a "Green" rating on the Deployment Impact Score for 90% of training units.

LOE 2: Inspire and Attract the Next Generation of Airmen

Focus: Overhaul the accession enterprise to win the war for talent and build a predictable, data-driven pipeline to fill every Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC).

Primary OPR: Air Force Accession Center (AFAC)

Supporting OPRs: AETC/PA (Public Affairs), AETC/A8 (Plans & Programs)

Objective	Key Tasks	Timeline (Phased)	End State
2.1 Increase Propensity & Awareness	2.1.1: Launch targeted marketing campaigns in non-traditional channels (e.g., esports, tech forums). 2.1.2: Establish partnerships with key influencers and community leaders.	Phase 1 (Ongoing)	- Year-over-year increase in national youth polling surveys for "probably" or "definitely" will serve (e.g., from 10% to 13%). - Increase in organic web traffic and social media engagement.
2.2 Generate Quality Leads	2.2.1: Implement precision digital marketing campaigns targeting users with specific, in-demand skills and certifications. 2.2.2: Create customized landing pages for critical AFSCs.	Phase 1 (0-12 Mo)	- 15% improvement in the lead-to-applicant conversion rate for critical AFSCs. - Achieve 100% of the recruiting goal for every programmed AFSC annually.
2.3 Restore Government Ownership of Data	2.3.1: Build a government-owned and operated recruiting data warehouse and analytics platform. 2.3.2: Hire and train a government team (military and civilian) in data science and marketing analytics.	Phase 2 (12-36 Mo)	- Stand-up of a government-owned recruiting data/analytics platform. - Significant reduction in budget percentage spent on contractor-owned data services.
2.4 Leverage Industry Expertise	2.4.1: Transition from a single prime advertising contract to a competitive, multi-vendor ecosystem. 2.4.2: Embed explicit, performance-based metrics and termination clauses into all marketing contracts.	Phase 2 (6-24 Mo)	- Transition to a multi-vendor contract ecosystem. - 90% of the advertising budget is tied to contracts with performance-based metrics.

LOE 3: Modernize Training for Speed and Agility

Focus: Leverage immersive technology, human performance, and data analytics at scale to build agile, lethal, and cognitively dominant Airmen.

Primary OPR: AETC/A3 (Operations)

Supporting OPRs: AETC/A1 (Personnel), AETC/CDO (Chief Data Officer), AETC/A2/6 (Comms)

Objective	Key Tasks	Timeline (Phased)	End State
3.1 Operationalize Competencies	3.1.1: Map all PME and technical training curricula to DAF Foundational and Occupational Competencies. 3.1.2: Implement performance-based capstone events to replace traditional exams in critical courses.	Phase 2 (12-36 Mo)	- 100% of PME/technical curricula mapped to DAF competency. - 50% of training pipelines use a performance-based capstone for graduation.
3.2 Leverage Tech-Enhanced Learning	3.2.1: Identify high-cost, high-risk training and integrate VR/AR simulation to increase practice repetitions. 3.2.2: Field AI-driven adaptive learning platforms in select courses.	Phase 2 (12-36 Mo)	- 30% increase in the use of VR/AR modalities across targeted pipelines. - Documented cost avoidance from reduced reliance on live-flying hours or equipment.
3.3 Provide Seamless Access to Training	3.3.1: Deploy a single, mobile-first Enterprise Learning Platform (ELP) for all AETC personnel. 3.3.2: Populate the ELP with "just-in-time" learning assets and AI-enabled assistants.	Phase 2 (18-36 Mo)	- 60% of AETC Airmen are monthly active users of the ELP. - High user satisfaction scores for platform accessibility and content relevance.
3.6 Cultivate an AI-Ready Force	3.6.1: Integrate role-specific AI applications and tools into technical training curricula. 3.6.2: Validate AI competency levels at all accession points (BMT, OTS) and PME.	Phase 2 (12-36 Mo)	- 75% of AETC technical courses verifiably integrate role-specific AI tools. - Positive field-level feedback from commanders on the AI-readiness of AETC graduates.

LOE 4: Support Quality of Life and Family Readiness

Focus: Make family readiness a strategic imperative by championing improvements to housing, spouse employment, medical access, and MWR programs.

Primary OPR: AETC/A1 (Manpower & Personnel)

Supporting OPRs: 502 ABW, AETC/FM (Financial Management), Wing Command Teams

Objective	Key Tasks	Timeline (Phased)	End State
4.1 Campaign for Improved Housing & Allowances	4.1.1: Consolidate base-level data on housing contractor non-performance for senior leader advocacy. 4.1.2: Produce and submit "BAH Deficit Reports" for areas where allowances are inadequate.	Phase 1 (Ongoing)	- Year-over-year increase in resident satisfaction scores for dorms and family housing. - Decrease in average response time for urgent housing maintenance work orders.
4.2 Support Spousal Employment	4.2.1: Establish partnerships with local and national remote-friendly employers. 4.2.2: Streamline and promote the spousal preference process for on-base hiring.	Phase 1 (Ongoing)	- Increase in the percentage of military spouses in AETC who report being employed. - Increase in spouses placed in jobs through base-sponsored programs.
4.3 Advocate for Medical Access	4.3.1: Establish a command-level team to track and advocate for patient issues regarding waiting times and network gaps. 4.3.2: Use command climate survey data to identify systemic issues and engage with DHA/TRICARE.	Phase 1 (Ongoing)	- Year-over-year reduction in average wait times for routine and specialty care. - Increase in patient satisfaction scores regarding access to healthcare.
4.4 Enhance MWR Programs	4.4.1: Survey Airmen and families to identify desired programs and facility upgrades. 4.4.2: Invest in modernizing MWR facilities and embed resilience programs (e.g., MFLCs) directly into squadrons.	Phase 1 (Ongoing)	- Year-over-year increase in participation rates for MWR events and resilience programs. - Positive trends in key indicators of morale and unit cohesion from climate surveys.

ATTACHMENT 2
COMMANDER'S FOCUS AREAS

Infrastructure

Personnel End Strength

Marketing

T-7A Transition

Fighter Bomber Fundamentals

1500 Pilots Production

Professional Military Education