Department of the Navy
Life Cycle Logistics Workforce FY 2018-2023
Strategic Implementation Plan
Life Cycle support decisions have far reaching impacts on readiness, cost and most importantly, the men and women in uniform who are operating today’s complex, technologically advanced weapon systems. Life Cycle Logisticians (LCL) are continuously challenged to manage logistics spanning across the myriad functional disciplines from engineering to information technology to contract property management. The Department of the Navy (DON) recognizes the LCL workforce as a strategic asset. We are a community of professionals who must be capable and highly-functioning to deliver system readiness and availability while optimizing system life cycle cost.

The diverse, rapidly changing nature of threats to the Warfighter highlights the need for sound guidance to develop, train, and support the LCL workforce now and in the future. Operations and Support cost historically account for approximately 70 percent of a weapon system’s total life cycle costs, an ongoing challenge across the Department of Defense (DoD), which is not likely to change anytime soon, even with an increase in available resources and advancements in science and technology. Investing in our LCL workforce and training them to develop and use more effective product support tools and processes will efficiently address the numerous, complex cost drivers. Improving the professional and technical excellence of our workforce will place us on a glide path to enhance outcomes of our taxpayer’s dollars spent annually to sustain DON’s portfolio of capabilities.

The role of Life Cycle Logisticians is vital to the planning, development, implementation, and management of an overarching, affordable, and effective system support strategy. The role is influenced internally and externally through policy and statute, respectively. Specifically, the role of Product Support Managers (PSM) is codified in Section 2337 of Title 10, U.S. Code, which requires that each major weapon system be supported by a PSM, and illustrates the importance of having PSMs serve as the central authority for life cycle sustainment decisions. Through an initiative to establish PSMs as the Product Support Authority for Acquisition Category Programs, we will elevate, clarify, and further institutionalize the role of PSMs across DON, to facilitate improved support of our major weapon systems going forward.

As DON plans for the acquisition and life cycle sustainment of its current and future weapons systems, senior leaders will demand proactive use of emerging technologies and strategic leveraging of environmental factors to drive innovative support strategies. Concepts such as additive manufacturing and ongoing challenges like industry/vendor consolidation, counterfeit parts, technical data management, and cyber security are driving new ways of thinking about life cycle logistics and product support management. Undeniably, successful innovation will require paradigm shifts in both procurement and sustainment. The DON LCL workforce will need to be at the forefront of these movements to proactively ensure our programs realize capability from emerging technologies without sacrificing operational availability due to gaps in the sustainment framework.
The FY 2018-2023 LCL Workforce Strategic Implementation Plan sets a course to deliver an improved, forward thinking workforce that is well-managed, highly trained, and fully qualified. The Plan provides a framework to address the DON Acquisition Workforce (AWF) goals and objectives in order to realize the vision of world class acquisition professionals for today and tomorrow that are Energized, Focused, Responsible, and Accountable.

The LCL Workforce Strategic Implementation Plan provides a high level introduction to outline the purpose and context. In the next section, we articulate our mission and vision, along with providing a snapshot of the current demographic composition of the LCL Career Field (CF). Finally, the plan details the CF management framework and priorities to support the DON AWF goals.

By diligently working on the CF priorities, the LCL workforce will be able to deliver and sustain effective and affordable capabilities to our warfighters.
1. Introduction

The DON AWF FY 16-22 Strategic Plan describes a complex environment in which balancing the demands of investments and innovation will be a challenge for the AWF. The plan further states to effectively operate in today’s environment requires an understanding of the cost, productivity, and risk associated with AWF staffing to responsibly manage the community (i.e., recruiting, hiring, developing, retaining, and retiring). The plan also incorporates three overarching goals for the DON AWF:

- Energize the workforce
- Focused on Professional and Technical Excellence
- Reinforce Responsibility and Accountability

The DON LCL Strategic Implementation Plan describes the approach to position the LCL workforce to successfully contribute towards achievement of all three DON AWF goals, continually improve our ability to comply with DoD policies, and maintain a highly skilled workforce that is capable of meeting the demands that lie over the horizon.

1.1 DON LCL Strategic Implementation Plan

In broad context, logistics, often referred to as “Big L”, encompasses four primary career fields, which are Life Cycle Logistics, Deployment/Distribution/Transportation, Supply Management, and Maintenance Support. As depicted in Figure 1, “Life Cycle Logistics” is unique because it is the only career field of the four that is part of the acquisition community, such that, its workforce operates in a narrow lane focusing on product support management for weapon systems development and fielding. Henceforth, the use of the term “Logistics” or "Life Cycle Logisticians" throughout this document refers to the roles, responsibilities, and requirements for the LCL workforce only.

Figure 1
Intersection of Acquisition & Logistics Communities
(Source: Defense Acquisition University)

The purpose of the LCL Workforce Strategic Implementation Plan is to create a framework to cultivate world-class “Life Cycle Logisticians” to support the warfighter, through the disciplined application of Logistics and Product Support practices. Today’s LCL professionals function in an environment that is challenged by increasingly constrained budgets and a growing proliferation of threats at home and around the globe. Success in our challenging environment mandates world-class, affordable, supportable, and adaptable product support strategies and operational logistics support to enhance system readiness and improve the effectiveness of our Warfighter on the field of battle. The DON AWF FY 16-22 Strategic Plan further defines the environment as “quickly changing with downsizing pressures, which increase the focus on cost control, more so than ever before. Recent sequestrations, pay freezes and furloughs, along with associated budgetary turmoil, have had a negative effect on the AWF.” The LCL workforce will continue to balance the demands of today’s challenging, dynamic environment in order to meet the capability needs of the warfighter.
The Professional Development and Career Professional Roadmap, Figure 2, was developed to assist with training and assignment of life cycle logisticians. Essentially, the roadmap serves as a framework to guide LCL workforce members in the Logistics Management Series (0346), since today there is no single career path that culminates into a qualified PSM. As Figure 2 illustrates, PSMs gain the necessary skills and competencies over the course of their career through a combination of assignments and training. To successfully achieve the expected product support and life cycle outcomes articulated in statute and policy and meet tomorrow’s challenges, DON must have the right people with the right mix of experience, expertise, professionalism, leadership, training, and education assigned as logisticians. The understanding of how acquisition and sustainment intersect, and how design for supportability from the earliest stages of program development is critical to efficient and effective life cycle management.

2. The Life Cycle Logistics Career Field

2.1 Mission

Our mission is to recruit, train, and retain a highly professional, agile, and technically proficient LCL workforce to deliver and sustain, effective and affordable warfighting capabilities.

It is imperative that we cultivate and train our LCL workforce to deliberately manage and align warfighter’s capability needs with professional and technical excellence. While the LCL Career Field mission is constant, our workforce faces a perpetually evolving strategic environment. As the world changes rapidly, and in multiple dimensions—social, economic, and political—the DON LCL workforce needs to continuously evolve and operate in a way that optimizes the overall DON enterprise.

2.2 Vision

Our vision is to create and maintain a highly professional LCL workforce to deliver agile, timely, precise and affordable warfighting capabilities, ensuring readiness and sustainability for the warfighter.

The DON AWF FY 16-22 Strategic Plan sets a course to deliver an improved, forward thinking workforce that is well-managed, highly trained, and fully qualified. Significant efforts are underway to realize the vision of world class acquisition professionals for today and tomorrow that are Energized, Focused, Responsible, and Accountable. The plan reinforces the DON vision with implementation of a LCL vision to epitomize logistics professionalism and leadership at all levels, create flexible sustainment strategies, and promote equitable standards for our product support professionals across the Life Cycle Logistics community. Our efforts stimulate innovation and foster efficient and effective product sustainment strategies, which support the Program Manager and ultimately the warfighter.
The LCL workforce will be energized and demonstrate professional excellence, mastery, and autonomy when they have a clear understanding of how they impact the Fleet, now and in the future. An energized workforce will be more personally engaged in the mission, more innovative in solving challenges, more resilient in the face of challenges, and inclusively more effective. They will succeed in the face of dynamic, complex challenges of today’s changing environment with vigilance and dedication to continuously:

- Gain valuable insight into policy development and coordination processes
- Increase breadth of logistics knowledge and of the inner workings of the DoD’s maintenance, materiel readiness, supply, and transportation systems
- Meet and share knowledge and experiences with AWF professionals across the DoD
- Improve management, communication, and collaboration skills

2.3 The LCL Workforce

The DoD LCL Workforce consisted of approximately 20,000 personnel in FY16, as shown in Figure 3. The DON LCL workforce represents 29% of the DoD LCL Workforce. At 12.3% of the Defense Acquisition Workforce, LCL remains the third largest career field, with 94.6% of the workforce comprised of US government civilians and 5.4% coming from the ranks of uniformed military personnel. And while the majority (62.8%) of civilian life cycle logisticians hail from the 0346 Logistics Management Specialist civilian occupational series, the remaining 37.2% are from a wide range of other occupational series including Technical Writers/Editors (1083), Equipment Specialists (1670), Manpower and Training Specialists (1712), Supply Specialists (2001), Supply Management Specialists (2003), Inventory Management Specialists (2010), Traffic Management Specialists (2130), Administration & Program Staff (0301), and Management and Program Analysts (0343), among others.

3. Life Cycle Logistics Career Field Management

3.1 Life Cycle Logistics National Lead Forum

The Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Expeditionary Programs and Logistics Management (DASN E&LM) serves as the LCL National Lead and chairs an executive level board, commonly referred to as the LCL Senior Executive Service (SES) Forum, composed of the Logistics competency senior leaders from each major systems command. The senior leaders influence the LCL CF through quarterly LCL SES Forums. The National Lead sets the agenda for the LCL community to collaboratively address current and future workforce mandates and initiatives. The LCL Working Group, consisting of action officers from each major systems command, meets monthly to execute the agenda set by the LCL senior leadership. As the community construct evolves and matures, the LCL senior leaders will continue to influence the LCL workforce through effective management of integrated and community-wide priorities.

“Life Cycle Logistics is defined as the planning, development, implementation, and management of a comprehensive, affordable, and effective systems support strategy.”

- DoD Logistics Human Capital Strategy, DoD Core Logistics Competencies and Proficiencies Booklet
3.2 Planning and Implementing Shared Priorities

The FY 2018-2023 LCL Strategic Implementation Plan describes the DON LCL community’s strategic priorities to strengthen the LCL workforce. Our strategy is to implement LCL objectives that support and complement the overarching DON AWF goals and to simultaneously meet the mission and vision of the LCL workforce. The DON AWF goals are:

**Goal 1: Energize the Workforce.** Connect people to product and mission. There is not a nobler mission than to support the men and women who protect and serve our nation. The acquisition workforce is grounded in the values of integrity, trust, diversity, teamwork, dedicated service, and excellence and is dedicated to that mission.


**Goal 3: Reinforce Responsibility and Accountability.** All work is performed through people. The values of integrity, trust, diversity, teamwork, dedicated service, and excellence are the foundation of our culture that must be sustained to ensure responsibility and accountability.

The acquisition and sustainment of complex, interoperable, and highly technical weapon systems required to support the warfighter requires a highly skilled, flexible workforce that can keep pace with today’s challenges as well as an unpredictable future impacted by environmental factors from agile, asymmetrical threats to technological innovation to industry consolidation. Work environments must enable diverse perspectives and empower all participants to contribute to the mission. Creating and maintaining a workforce that is energized, motivated, and technically competent and in alignment with the DON mission is paramount.

3.3 Career Field Performance Measures

The DoD is the government’s largest buying entity. In FY16 the acquisition community was responsible for the execution of over $177B in Procurement and Research and Development funding. Over 6,500 military and civilian personnel in the DON LCL workforce are the Government’s stewards for providing a wide range of acquisition, technology, and logistics support to the nation’s warfighters. Our human capital management strategies are focused on these men and women and targeted to address their competencies, capacity, and professional and technical skill sets required to deliver affordable and effective weapon systems. Going forward, the LCL Community Leaders will use a high-level scorecard to monitor the health of the workforce, facilitate the development of future goals, and identify areas for further diagnosis and analysis for improvement. The initial elements of the scorecard metrics are: hiring, attrition, certification, retirement eligibility, experience, and education. The data gathered to support the strategic implementation plan, other acquisition workforce data already being collected at the DoD-level and across other career fields, and new data from DON’s initiative to manage the AWF as a program will provide a comprehensive view of the LCL workforce health. The CF scorecard will help us develop and retain a high-quality, professional workforce to address the environmental challenges and deliver support to the warfighter.
4. Career Field Priorities

The following LCL career field objectives were developed and approved by the LCL Senior Executives to support the overarching DON AWF goals. As an implementation plan, these objectives are defined at an actionable level and will be executed as depicted in the LCL Workforce Strategic Implementation Phasing Plan (Table 1). The LCL Action Officer working group will track and report progress to the LCL senior leadership on specific actions and timelines for each objective.

Table 1

4.1 DON AWF Goal #1 - Energize the Workforce

4.1.1 Objective - Identify tools and platforms to communicate a common message of the LCL Career Roadmap

The LCL workforce has many stakeholders that possess a vested interest in maintaining an effective career roadmap. It is imperative that we communicate the Career Roadmap (Objective 4.2.1) as a clear, consistent message delivered in one voice to the workforce. The desired result of the objective is to identify and implement tools and platforms to effectively communicate the LCL Career Roadmap and other professional development messaging to the workforce. Communication venues may include, but are not limited to, roadshows, newsletters, webcasts, and other forums. The LCL Working Group will charter a team with representatives from each of the major Systems Commands to develop the message, define the marketing strategy and determine the frequency of communication to ensure DON LCL professionals understand the LCL Career Roadmap. Clear messaging and organizational communication will support positive employee morale, promote innovation and improve efficiency. Communication represents the lifeblood of an organization, and when it is faulty, desired outcomes are much harder to achieve. A feedback loop will be implemented to evaluate and continually improve the extent, effectiveness, and comprehension of the message delivered to the workforce.

4.2 DON AWF Goal #2 - Focus on Professional and Technical Excellence

4.2.1 Objective - Refine the LCL Career Field Roadmap to encompass current and future logistics capabilities

The implementation strategy for the LCL CF begins with validating the LCL Career Roadmap ensuring it encompasses the required building blocks of skill sets and experience levels to support current and future logistics capabilities. The LCL Working Group will identify a group of subject matter experts to review, evaluate, and refine, where needed, the requisite skills and experience required for the LCL workforce. Requisite supporting areas such as Data Analytics and Decision Support, Cyber Logistics, Industry Acumen, Additive Manufacturing,
Intellectual Property and Data Rights will be addressed in the roadmap and will greatly impact the agility and adaptability of the LCL workforce. The LCL Working Group will ensure the LCL Career Roadmap is current, with emphasis on utilizing talent management tools to identify potential skill gaps and future training offerings. The Career Roadmap will overlay a newly identified product support authority (Objective 4.3.1), and be shared via a robust communications plan (Objective 4.1.1).

4.2.2 Objective - Utilize talent management to enable the integration and growth of knowledge, skills, and abilities of the LCL Workforce

Talent management is more than human resources (HR); it is a set of integrated HR processes with the ultimate and ongoing goal of creating and sustaining an inclusive, diverse and high-performing workforce. Talent Management sets the course and prepares organizations to accomplish their mission and meet strategic goals and objectives. That is precisely why the LCL Senior Executives maintain a philosophy of putting people first to ensure DON provides the workforce with the best professional development opportunities to build a successful career. Professional development, to include training, education, and rotational assignments, is vitally important to deliver and sustain effective and affordable warfighting capabilities as well as assist in recruiting and retaining high quality and diverse members of the LCL workforce.

The LCL community will utilize talent management applications and tools to effectively execute standard, DON-wide commonality in documenting training, certifications, career planning, and Individual Development Plans (IDP), as well as provide visibility for developmental rotations and educational opportunities. Initially, the Systems Commands will conduct career field certification reviews to validate knowledge, skills, and abilities of their workforce and the associated data stored within a talent management system. Subsequently, these reviews will inform the creation of IDPs to address gaps in skills, education, training, experience, and leadership.

Succession Planning is critical to effectively managing the LCL Workforce. We must steadily recruit and retain high caliber LCL professionals in order to provide consistent and quality product support capabilities within the DON. The use of talent management applications allows for better tracking of gains, losses, diversity, education, experience, and skillsets of the workforce. The information will facilitate the ability to conduct trend analysis, characterize existing gaps, and make informed decisions based on forecasts of future needs. Effective use of the data will enable our LCL senior leaders to identify individuals with relevant, unique skillsets or experience to support specific weapon system development and sustainment.
The LCL Working Group will use the capabilities and tools of a talent management system to create common data sets and algorithms for effective and efficient recruitment and retention planning, training and development gap analysis, and critical skill sets identification.

4.3 DON AWF Goal #3 – Reinforce Responsibility and Accountability

4.3.1 Objective - Establish and implement Product Support Authority for ACAT Programs

In accordance with Title 10 USC 2337, a PSM must be assigned to each major DoD weapon system. The statue requires the PSM to evaluate the best blend of public and private resources as well as develop an effective product support strategy that delivers quality operational readiness for the warfighter at an affordable cost. In short, the PSM is the authority for product life cycle support. PSMs should carry warrants for product support similar to that of Lead Engineers for program design, development, integration, and testing. The purpose is to help further facilitate the successful execution of the above statue, in order to support Program Managers in their role as the single point of accountability for accomplishing program objectives for total life cycle systems management and sustainment. An authoritative type of warrant can ensure uniform and rigorous application of product support governance and best business practices. More specifically, it can potentially leverage enterprise-wide opportunities and drive standardized solution sets across programs and other DoD Components.

The LCL Working Group will establish the “Product Support Authority Initiative” to further develop the concept and approach for implementation across DON. Current statutes and policies that will facilitate successful leadership buy-in and formal implementation will be identified, along with barriers and roadblocks. The working group will explore all the elements needed for successful implementation, such as cooperative agreements between the DON Engineering and LCL communities to formally establish the DON Product Support Authority, which will be embedded within the program office and held by the PSM.

4.3.2 Objective - Grow a diverse, high-performing workforce

The DoD Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan (2012 – 2017) defines three major focus goals, which are leadership commitment, strategic outreach, and retention of top talent from across the force. DON’s diversity efforts align with DoD’s goals and include a focus on recruitment, education and training, career development, and mentoring programs to improve and retain a professional and agile workforce. Our objective is to develop and implement a diversity strategy to address retention, recruitment, talent management, and succession planning.

DON encourages unique differences and similarities, which serve to facilitate the development of innovative product support solutions for life cycle weapon system management. Studies have shown that a diverse group makes better decisions, allows for the diversity of ideas, and encourages alternative ways of thinking. Recognizing diversity challenges is an important step in breaking down barriers to facilitate cultivating a diverse workforce. Admittedly, the LCL community has challenges of its own. For example,
the minorities and women represent 25 and 32 percent of LCL workforce, respectively. At the senior levels (GS 14 and above), both of these categories decrease to 19 (with no Senior Executive Service members) and 25 percent, respectively. Additionally, our multigenerational workforce can create management challenges in today’s dynamic, complex environment. Of significant interests are perceived barriers to knowledge sharing and skill gap mitigation among the generations. If not properly managed, these barriers could have an impact on weapon systems development and sustainment. At the same time, it is difficult to retain talented individuals due to the stresses of doing more with less while building on the culture of affordability and process improvements. We must take action to remove any barriers and obstacles to grow a diverse workforce and take advantage of inclusion at every level. **To address our diversity challenges, the LCL Working Group will be charged to develop an action plan to assist the community on improving underrepresentation at all levels of the workforce, increasing educational and career development opportunities to narrow the skill gaps across generations, and providing mentoring opportunities to promote knowledge sharing, professional growth, and succession planning.**

**Conclusion**

The Life Cycle Logistics Workforce Strategic Implementation Plan identifies the objectives to address the needs of the Life Cycle Logistics workforce. The plan provides an overarching construct, which encourages commitment, and creates alignment across DON with the latitude for commands to incorporate initiatives unique to their organizations. Through these objectives, the Department of Navy can provide an improved, forward thinking LCL workforce that is well-managed, highly trained, agile, and fully qualified.

*“The line between disorder and order lies in logistics.”* - Sun Tzu
“To be successful, life cycle logisticians must be proficient across the 12 Integrated Product Support (IPS) Elements: (1) product support management, (2) supply support, (3) packaging, handling, storage & transportation, (4) maintenance planning & management, (5) design interface, (6) sustaining engineering, (7) technical data, (8) computer resources, (9) facilities & infrastructure, (10), manpower & personnel, (11) support equipment, and (12) training & training support.”

- DoD Product Support Manager’s Guidebook