

ARNG Implementation of the Army Community of Excellence (ACOE) Program

What is it?

The Army Community of Excellence (ACOE) program within the Army National Guard is a holistic integrated business management approach that is used to measure organizational performance. The program provides a roadmap to assess performance excellence and develop organizational improvement initiatives. Participating organizations assess the current state of their organization by using the ACOE self assessment, feedback report and by conducting a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis. The assessment results help the Joint Forces Headquarters (JFHQ) set the strategic direction of the organization. Organizations new to the ACOE program begin with an initial assessment that contributes to setting the strategic direction and beginning a formalized strategic planning process.

What has the Army National Guard done?

In FY10, the ARNG selected Minnesota as the winner. Other FY10 winners included Texas as runner-up (Gold First Place), Georgia as second runner-up (Gold Second Place), and Iowa as third runner-up (Gold Third Place). A total of 28 JFHQ-states and 4 special category organizations participated. The ARNG held the Annual ACOE Best Practices Conference in May 2010, to provide a forum for the ACOE participants to showcase their exemplary and innovative management and performance practices and process improvements implemented from their ACOE feedback reports. The Georgia, Minnesota, Ohio, Texas and West Virginia Army National Guard teams presented their best practices at the ACOE Conference. Participants are encouraged to share their journeys toward performance excellence with other ARNG organizations.

What continued efforts does the National Guard have planned for the future?

The ARNG is striving hard to involve all 54 States and Territories and more special category organizations in the ACOE program. The ARNG will continue the deployment of the ACOE Program through Mobile Training Teams tailored to the States and Territories needs, increasing Senior Leaders involvement, and the integration of Business Transformation and Enterprise tools. The ARNG is looking for opportunities and incentives to continue this growth pattern.

Why is this important to the National Guard?

ACOE participants can see if they are “doing the right things, doing things right, and what they are missing.” Participants have fundamentally changed the way they think, operate and act toward their organization. The ACOE program emphasizes the following seven categories of the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence: Leadership; Strategic Planning; Customer Focus; Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management; Workforce Focus; Process Management; and Results.