



AEMA and Riddell Launch Expanded 2026 Career Boost Program Supporting Recognition and Development of Emerging Equipment Managers

The Athletic Equipment Managers Association (AEMA), in partnership with [Riddell](#), is proud to announce the next chapter of the Career Boost Program—an initiative designed to recognize, support, and invest in the next generation of athletic equipment managers.

In 2026, the program will expand to include the new Rookie of the Year Awards. Together, these initiatives reflect AEMA and Riddell’s shared commitment to advancing professional development, supporting certification pathways, and celebrating emerging leaders in the equipment management profession.

Below is additional information on each program, including eligibility requirements, key dates, and application details.

2026 Career Boost Program

The Career Boost Program provides support to rising athletic equipment managers as they advance their careers and pursue professional certification. Selected recipients will receive two (2) nights of Convention hotel accommodations and a stipend.

Eligibility Requirements (Must Meet ONE):

- Student or Standard AEMA members attending Convention and pursuing certification
- Members planning to sit for the summer certification exam
- Newly certified professionals with fewer than three years of full-time experience

Priority consideration will be given to individuals from underrepresented backgrounds, members experiencing financial hardship, and those attending Convention who would benefit from additional support.

Key Dates:

- Applications Open: May 15, 2026
- Application Deadline: May 29, 2026
- Award Notifications: June 5, 2026

Apply Here:

[2026 Career Boost Program Application Link](#)



2026 Rookie of the Year Awards

The Rookie of the Year Awards recognize early-career equipment managers who are already making a meaningful impact within the profession.

Each AEMA District Director may nominate one candidate from their district. Award recipients will be recognized at the 2026 AEMA Convention.

Eligibility Requirements (Must meet ALL):

- Current AEMA member
- AEMA certified
- Fewer than three years in the profession
- Registered to attend the 2026 AEMA Convention

Key Dates:

- Nominations Open: May 15, 2026
- Submission Deadline: May 29, 2026
- District Director Selections Due: June 1, 2026
- Recipient Notifications: June 5, 2026

Nomination Link:

[2026 Rookie of the Year Application Link](#)

“These programs are about investing in people—supporting the next generation of leaders in the equipment management profession and recognizing individuals who are already making an impact early in their careers,” said Ann Kitt-Carpenetti, Executive Director of AEMA. “We are grateful to Riddell for their partnership in creating meaningful opportunities for growth, recognition, and long-term professional advancement.”

For more information about these programs or the 2026 AEMA Convention, visit:

www.equipmentmanagers.org