



Karen A. Cardin
Army & Air Force Exchange Service
Executive Vice President &
Chief Merchandising Officer

Karen A. Cardin is an Executive Vice President and the Chief Merchandising for the Army & Air Force Exchange Service (Exchange), at the organization's headquarters in Dallas.

The Exchange is a non-appropriated fund entity of the Department of Defense. Established in 1895, the Exchange is the 54th largest retail organization in the U.S. With annual revenues of \$8.5 billion, the Exchange employs approximately 29,000 associates, including military personnel.

In the last 10 years, the Exchange benefit has provided \$3.5 billion in earnings for critical military Quality-of-Life programs such as outfitting more than 600,000 Warfighters at cost annually, providing school meal support for Department of Defense Education Activity facilities overseas and delivering needed services to locations impacted by natural disasters.

Cardin's position is commensurate in rank to a member of the Senior Executive Service. Cardin provides vision and leadership in the planning and development of purchasing, pricing and merchandising strategies to support overall growth while maintaining focus on customers' wants, needs and tastes. She is also the Executive Champion for Promote Opportunities for Women by Effecting Results (POWER), the Exchange's federal women's Special Emphasis Program.

The Exchange operates more than 5,000 facilities, including department and convenience stores, restaurants, malls, movie theaters, gas stations and other specialty retail businesses on military installations. The Exchange's operations span 50 states, four U.S. territories and more than 30 countries. Additionally, the Exchange Credit Program manages a \$2.2 billion credit card receivables portfolio.

To support readiness and provide foreign-based service members and their families with U.S. products, the Exchange operates bakeries in Europe and Asia and water bottling plants in Europe under 10 brand licenses from U.S. consumer goods companies, including Wonder Bread, Krispy Kreme and Culligan.

The Exchange recruits, hires, promotes and retains a diverse and inclusive workforce. A major employer of Veterans and military spouses, the Exchange has hired more than 1,900 Wounded Warriors since 2010 and more than 57,000 Veterans and military spouses since 2013.

Cardin has a Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. In 2000, she received a Master of Business Administration with an emphasis in Strategic Leadership from Amber University (later renamed Amberton University).

Cardin began her Exchange career while still in college as a part-time Express cashier at Little Rock Air Force Base, Ark., in 1991. After graduation, she entered the management college trainee program and was assigned to Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. From February 1993 to June 1995, she was stationed at Fort Hood, where she held various mid-level management positions. Her next assignment was to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz., starting out as Operations Manager and later being promoted to Sales and Merchandise Manager.

Cardin took on her first headquarters position as a Retail Buyer in 1997. She progressed through the Sales Directorate ranks as a Buyer, earning the title of Divisional Merchandise Manager for the Outdoor Living/Toy team. In 2007, she deployed to Southwest Asia, where she worked at facilities in Kuwait, Iraq and Qatar. In fall 2007, the Exchange selected Cardin as a Planning, Allocation, and Replenishment (PAR) manager for Softlines, where she assisted with the implementation of the new PAR group at the Exchange. In September 2009, she received a promotion to Director of PAR for Consumables.

Cardin was promoted to Vice President of Consumables/Specialty Stores in 2010, later becoming Vice President of Hardlines. In 2013, she was named Vice President of E-Commerce Operations. In this role, she led oversight for the e-commerce call center and third-party logistics and collaborated with the Merchandising Directorate on the e-commerce merchandise assortment. Cardin then served as Vice President of the Merchandising Directorate before being promoted to E-Commerce Senior Vice President. In this role, Cardin oversaw development of the Digital Garrison mobile app, a one-stop information source for Army communities developed by the Exchange in partnership with the U.S. Army and launched in August 2020. She was named to her current position in July 2021.

Cardin is the recipient of multiple Excellence and Superior Accomplishment awards. In 2014, she received the Extraordinary Service award for her leadership in the eCommerce division and the launch of the Exchange's new website, ShopMyExchange.com. In 2017, Cardin received the Extraordinary Achievement Award for her work to launch the Veterans online shopping benefit. In addition, she received Extraordinary Achievement Award in 2020 for the launch of Digital Garrison.

(Current as of Aug. 2023)