



## 2026 Service Academy Nomination FAQ's

Thank you for your interest in a military service academy. The following is a list of frequently asked questions on the military nominations process. Feel free to reach out to our Collinsville office if you have any questions that are not answered here.

### **General Nomination/Qualification Questions:**

#### **Do I need a nomination?**

A nomination is required for the U.S. Military Academy, Naval Academy, Air Force Academy, and Merchant Marine Academy. A nomination is not required for the Coast Guard Academy.

#### **What is a nomination?**

Members of Congress may nominate applicants who meet the eligibility requirements established by law. A candidate may seek a nomination from the following:

- A member of the U.S. House of Representatives who represents the Congressional district in which the candidate resides
- Both U.S. Senators from his or her state (Sen. Tammy Duckworth and Senator Dick Durbin)
- The President of the United States
- Presidential nominations
  - These are available for children of: career military, POW/MIA service members, disabled service members, and Medal of Honor awardees
- The Vice-President of the United States

#### **Do I live in the 13th Congressional District of Illinois?**

The 13th District covers all of Macoupin County, and sections of Champaign, Macon, Madison, Piatt, Sangamon, and St. Clair counties. You can input your address at the following website and it will tell you which congressional district that you reside in:

<https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>.

#### **Can a candidate apply through more than one source?**

It is encouraged that candidates apply through all the sources that he/she is eligible.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact McKayla Bartkiewicz at [mckayla.bartkiewicz@mail.house.gov](mailto:mckayla.bartkiewicz@mail.house.gov) and/or [budzinski.nominations@mail.house.gov](mailto:budzinski.nominations@mail.house.gov).



## What are the basic eligibility requirements?

Each applicant for a nomination must meet the following eligibility requirements as of July 1st of the year of admission to an academy:

- **Age:** Be at least 17 years old, but not have passed their 23rd birthday
- **Citizenship:** Must be a U.S. citizen
- **Marital Status:** Must be unmarried, not pregnant, and without legal obligation to support children or other dependents.
- **Residence:** Must reside within the boundaries of the 13th Congressional District of Illinois (or a resident of Illinois for the US Merchant Marine Academy)
- **Skill / Fitness:** Must meet the medical, physical, and academic requirements of the Academy

## Nomination Process FAQ's

### When do I apply for a nomination?

My nomination application period opens April 1st of each year. Students should start applying to U.S. service academies during their **junior year of high school**, with most applications submitted and completed during **senior year**.

### What must be included in my nomination file?

- Application Form (found on our website)
- Resume and list of activities: Summarize interscholastic athletics, school activities, community involvement (volunteer or work experience), awards and honors, and any other activities you find noteworthy. Include specific leadership positions and recognitions of achievement, as well as dates of involvement in each activity.
- Personal Statement: 300 words or less outlining why you want to attend a U.S. service academy.
- Two personal Three recommendation letters: The most impactful character letters are usually completed by counselors, principals, teachers, religious leaders, coaches, employers, or community leaders. A successful application should have two personal recommendation letters. Applicants should be mindful that personal recommendation letters are the most common cause of delays in scheduling nomination interviews.
- Official copy of high school transcript (Must include all course work, GPA, and \*class rank)
- Official copy of college transcript (if applicable)
- Official copy of SAT/ACT scores

**\*If school does not utilize class ranking system, please have your school counselor or official note that on your transcript.**

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### **What criteria is used in selecting candidates?**

Nominations are based on a "whole person" evaluation. Factors such as academic achievements, extracurricular activities, leadership skills, physical aptitude, character, and motivation are taken into consideration and compared with other applicants.

### **What is the deadline for completing a nomination file?**

The deadline for submitting a nomination packet to my district office is **October 15th, 2026**.

### **What happens after I have completed my nomination file?**

Applicants who submit a completed nomination file will be scheduled for an interview in early or mid November.

### **Who do I contact with questions about my application?**

Contact McKayla Bartkiewicz at my Collinsville office at (618) 212-7333 with questions regarding the nomination process.

## **Military Academy Specific FAQ's**

### **How many academies are there?**

There are five service academies. Three reside within the Department of Defense:

- U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York
- U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland
- U.S. Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs

One resides within the Department of Transportation:

- U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, New York

One resides with the Department of Homeland Security (nomination not required):

- U.S. Coast Guard Academy at New London, Connecticut

### **Are the requirements the same for all the service academies?**

No. Although many of the qualifications are similar, each academy operates under its own admissions guidelines. Visit the academy of your choice via the websites noted for each academy's particular admissions qualifications:

- **United States Military Academy:** <https://www.usma.edu/>
- **United States Naval Academy:** <https://www.usna.edu/>
- **United States Air Force Academy:** <https://www.usafa.edu/>
- **United States Merchant Marine Academy:** <https://www.usmma.edu/>

It is not necessary to seek a nomination to the Coast Guard Academy, as the U.S.C.G.A. accepts candidates based on their own testing criteria.

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**Along with seeking a nomination, do I have to apply for the academy?**

Yes, the academy application is separate from the nomination process. Our office only uses the candidate's information to select individuals for nomination. Each candidate is required to apply at their desired academy.

**Will I automatically be selected by the academy after I receive a nomination?**

No. You will be placed among a select group of nominees, and the academy of your choice will make the final decision. If selected, you will receive an offer of admission (an appointment) directly from the academy.

**What if I choose more than one academy? Will I be limited to a single nomination?**

No. You can be nominated to multiple academies depending on how well you have competed among this year's pool of candidates. It is also possible to win multiple appointments.

**What academy is best for me?**

Each academy is different. Just like colleges and universities, the academies have different sizes and different programs. A candidate should look at class size, location, degree programs, and future intent when deciding. For example, the Merchant Marine academy has a smaller class size and allows individuals to commission into any branch of service or serve on merchant vessels while in the Naval Reserve. However, the Merchant Marine Academy does not pay a monthly stipend.

**When will I know if I have been offered an appointment by an academy?**

Academies will begin to notify candidates of their admission status in February. All offers of appointment are generally sent out by May.