

Q&A on Admission to the U.S. Service Academies

Written by Grassley Press

Tuesday, 10 January 2012 15:40

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with U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley

Q: How do young Americans get a place at the U.S. service academies?

A: Starting more than 200 years ago, the U.S. service academies have educated and trained the best and the brightest to lead and command the Armed Forces in service to the nation. The young Americans who want to serve our country and win places at the service academies are remarkable for their accomplishments and leadership. A rigorous selection process ensures that candidates for officers' training arrive with superior scholastic, athletic and leadership skills that will help preserve freedom and secure our American way of life for generations to come.

Admissions are highly competitive to the Military Academy in West Point, NY; the Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD; the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, CO; the Coast Guard

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Academy in New London, CT; and the Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, NY. Applicants to all of these service academies except the Coast Guard require a nomination to the school, and those can be made by U.S. senators, representatives, the President and the Vice President. Coast Guard applicants compete without by-state quotas.

Q: How does your nomination process work?

A: As a U.S. senator representing Iowa, I select ten Iowa students to nominate for each vacancy at the Military, Naval and Air Force academies, in accordance with the number of vacancies made available each year. I'm also able to nominate ten Iowans each year to the Merchant Marine Academy. Appointments to this academy are allocated in proportion to the state's representation in Congress. Iowa currently has access to four vacancies each year for the Merchant Marine Academy.

I encourage students to begin the process of applying for a congressional nomination in the spring of their junior year of high school and to consider applying to all of the service academies. Applicants also should apply directly to the academy and ask that a pre-candidate file be opened on their behalf.

Iowans can take pride in the [57 nominees](#) whom I recommended at the end of last year for consideration of appointments to the U.S. service academies. Their collective attributes and achievements are an impressive reflection on the state of Iowa. Already, from this group, [a Coralville student](#) has been offered an appointment to West Point and [a Boone student](#) has earned a place at the Naval Academy.

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The Army, Naval and Air Force academies are part of the Department of Defense. The Merchant Marine Academy is part of the Department of Transportation. And the Coast Guard is part of the Department of Homeland Security. Students at the academies are on active duty in the armed services from the day they enter and are commissioned as officers upon graduation. Graduates of the Merchant Marine Academy hold Coast Guard licenses for six years and are commissioned into the Navy Reserve. They also may cross commission into any other branch of the service.

Q: What are the basic criteria?

A: Candidates should rank in the top half of their high school class in a college preparatory curriculum. Candidates should have ACT scores of 25-36 in math and science and 22-36 in English. They should have demonstrated leadership in and outside of school, with outstanding records of extracurricular activities and/or job experience. Candidates need to have completed the physical requirements described by the academies. Those seeking my support must be legal residents of Iowa or dependents of members of the military who are Iowa residents. Applicants must be U.S. citizens, unmarried with no children or legal obligation for a child, and at least age 17 but not older than 23 years. Go to the link posted in Info for Iowans at <http://www.grassley.senate.gov> and send a copy of the completed material to: The Office of Senator Chuck Grassley, 150 1st Avenue NE, Suite 325, Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52401. Questions can be answered at [\(319\) 363-6832](tel:3193636832)

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