

United States Service Academy Nominations

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the five service Academies?

[United States Military Academy](#)

[United States Naval Academy](#)

[United States Air Force Academy](#)

[United States Merchant Marines](#)

[United States Coast Guard Academy](#)

How do I attend an Academy?

Admission to an Academy is a competitive two-step process:

Step 1: Obtain a Congressional or Presidential nomination

Step 2: Receive an appointment from the Academy

What is a nomination?

A nomination is made by an authorized source, under Title 10 of the U.S. Code. Congressional nominations include selections made by **1) the Vice President**, who nominates candidates from any state or district in the nation, **2) U.S. Senators**, who nominate candidates from their entire state, and **3) from U.S. Representatives**, who nominate candidates that reside within their congressional district.

Each candidate is eligible for up to four congressional nominations. Because the nomination and appointment process is highly competitive, you are highly encouraged to apply for all the nominations for which you are eligible. In Montana, this a nomination from:

- Vice President Mike Pence
- U.S. Senator Jon Tester
- U.S. Senator Steve Daines
- U.S. Representative Greg Gianforte

Each of Montana's congressional offices has a different nomination process. For more details, visit Senator Tester's website [here](#), Senator Daines' website [here](#), and Representative Gianforte's office [here](#).

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What is an appointment?

An appointment allows you admission to the Academy, and is only granted **after** an applicant has received a nomination.

What are the basic eligibility requirements for a nomination?

To be eligible for a nomination, you must meet these requirements by July 1st, 2021:

- Between the ages of 17 and 23
- U.S. citizen
- Unmarried, not pregnant, and without legal obligation to support children or other dependents
- Reside within the legal boundaries of Montana

NOTE: If you are attending a service academy preparatory school, a university out of state, or have recently relocated out of Montana due to your parents' service in the military, and maintain Montana as your permanent residence, you may still apply with the Montana delegation.

What is a Presidential nomination?

Presidential, or service-connected, nominations are reserved for children of career military personnel. To qualify, the parent must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Be on active duty, and have served continuously on active duty for at least eight years
- Be retired with pay or have been granted retired or retainer pay
- Be a reservist or National Guard member
- Have died after being retired with pay or being granted retired or retainer pay
- Have begun adoption proceedings before the child's 15th birthday

Can I apply for a nomination if I am active duty in the armed services or reserves?

Yes. Active duty servicemembers meeting the basic eligibility criteria may apply for congressional nominations, in addition to a nomination through their branch of the armed services. For more details, contact your commanding officer.

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When should I apply for a nomination?

Most applicants begin the application process the spring semester of their junior year of high school.

What are the qualifications you look for in applicants?

Candidates are evaluated in four areas:

- Academics
- Extracurricular activities
- Personal motivation and character
- Commitment to military service

What comprises my nomination file?

Each of Montana's congressional offices has a different nomination process. For more details, visit Senator Tester's website [here](#), Senator Daines' website [here](#), and Representative Gianforte's office [here](#). Nomination applications for each office will include:

1) Completed Application

- School and community activities
- Athletic involvement
- Honors/Awards, in and out of academics
- Academy preference
- Personal essay

2) Letters of Recommendation

- Two letters should come from an academic source - a high school teacher/college professor, counselor/advisory, or principal/administrator.
- The third letter should come a non-academic source without familial relation - a coach, employer, clergy/church member, mentor, volunteer, or adult family friend.
- Please submit all letters of recommendation in PDF format.

3) Official Transcript

- High school/collegiate transcripts, including your fall 2020 class schedule.

4) Official ACT/SAT scores

- Results will be super-scored for a composite score. Applicants may take the test as many times as they wish.

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How should I submit my SAT/ACT scores?

Each office processes SAT/ACT scores differently. Find more details at Senator Tester's website [here](#), Senator Daines' website [here](#), and Representative Gianforte's website [here](#).

What is the deadline for submitting my nomination file?

Each of Montana's congressional office has a different nomination process. For more details, visit Senator Tester's website [here](#), Senator Daines' website [here](#), and Representative Gianforte's office [here](#).

Senator Tester's office will be accepting applications until **December 1st, 2020**.

- Please complete the online questionnaire and essay, available [here](#).
- Official transcripts must be submitted through an administrator. Recommendation forms must be completed by a high school principal or guidance counselor, and are available [here](#). Digital copies of both official transcripts and recommendation forms may be sent to Academy_Nominations@tester.senate.gov. Printed transcripts may be sent to:
Office of Senator Jon Tester
c/o Smith Works
8 3rd St. E
Kalispell, MT, 59901
- Please direct questions to Smith via email at Academy_Nominations@tester.senate.gov or by phone at 406-257-3859.

Senator Daines' office will be accepting applications until **November 1st, 2020**.

- Please submit completed applications to:
Academy Nomination Coordinator
Office of United States Senator Steve Daines
218 East Front Street, Suite 103
Missoula, MT, 59802
- Please direct questions to Sharon via email at sharon_parks-banda@daines.senate.gov or by phone at 406-549-8198.

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Representative Greg Gianforte's office will be accepting applications until **October 31, 2020**.

- Please submit completed application materials to:
Congressman Greg Gianforte
Billings District Office
222 North 32nd Street, Ste. 900
Billings, MT, 59101
- Please direct questions to Mike via email at mike.waters@mail.house.gov or by phone at 406-969-1736.

Can I be nominated to more than one Academy?

Yes. It is possible to be nominated to more than one service Academy. On your application, you will be asked to rank in numerical order your Academy preferences.

Do I need a nomination to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy?

No. The USCGA is the only service academy that does not require a congressional nomination. Applications can be submitted directly online by March 1, 2021 at www.uscga.edu.

Should I apply for an ROTC scholarship?

Because the nomination and appointment process is competitive, not all candidates will receive a nomination or an appointment. Consider earning a military commission through the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC). Additional information is available at:

- [Air Force ROTC](#)
- [Army ROTC](#)
- [Naval ROTC](#)

How will I know if I am nominated? When will I know if I am appointed?

All candidates will be notified by mail of their nomination status. The Academies will begin making appointments in early 2021. All appointment offers are generally made by May 1st of each year.

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Does a nomination guarantee an appointment?

No. A nomination is a selection made by an authorized source and allows a candidate to compete for an appointment. You must apply at the Academies in which you are interested in addition to applying for a nomination.

If I do not receive a nomination or an appointment, may I apply again?

Yes. Candidates may apply up until the age of 23, so long as they meet the eligibility criteria.

How can I improve my chances of qualifying academically for a nomination and an appointment?

Your high school preparation should include:

- Four years of mathematics courses, including geometry, algebra, and trigonometry. Pre-calculus and calculus courses are also encouraged.
- One year of chemistry
- One year of physics
- Four years of English, with special attention to the study and practice of effective writing.
- Two years of a foreign language
- Physical activity, including involvement in a school-sponsored or club sports team
- Demonstrated leadership ability
- Enrollment in one or more honors or advanced placement course
- Enrollment in one or more college or university course through dual enrollment

A **minimum** ACT composite score of 26 and/or SAT score of 1200 is recommended to be competitive.

Why should I participate in extracurricular activities?

Your participation in athletic and non-athletic extracurricular activities will help demonstrate your versatility, responsibility, and ability to meet the physical, time-management, and leadership demands of a service Academy. Maintaining the highest level of physical fitness at the high school level will benefit your application, as physical exercise is integral to everyday life at an Academy.