



Service Academy Nominations Frequently Asked Questions

If you hope to be nominated by Congressman Cisneros to the 2025 class please save the following dates:

1.) Rep. Cisneros Zoom Service Academy Info Session, June 17th.

Note: Those who attend the information sessions will be invited to follow-on information sessions with local service academy representatives and admissions officers.

2.) One Additional Information Night is planned for the fall; date will be published on the Congressman's web page, in his newsletter and shared with local high school guidance departments.

3.) Interviews with Rep. Cisneros' Nomination Board, Saturday & Sunday, Nov 21-22, 2020

*Note: Applicants will be notified when their written application is complete. All applicants should **keep Saturday and Sunday November 16th and 17th free for interviews.** Please understand, interviews are not guaranteed and will be scheduled to accommodate the Board's schedule. Applicants who are selected to interview must be available to meet at the time they are assigned.*

Thank you for your interest in serving in the United States military, applying to one of the U.S. Service Academies, and in the congressional nomination process. Below is a list

1) What is a 'nomination' and what is an 'appointment?'

In order to attend one of the service academies -- the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado; the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, New York; the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York; or the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland -- you must receive a nomination and, ultimately an appointment.

Title 10 of the U.S. Code establishes two types of nominations: congressional and military service connected. A non-military candidate may seek a nomination from the following three sources: a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from the congressional district where the candidate resides; both U.S. Senators from the candidate's state; or from the Vice President of the United States, who can nominate applicants from any part of the nation.

Students whose parents are service connected may also apply for a Presidential nomination. For a Presidential nomination, apply after July 1 of the year prior to admission and before

January 31 of the year of admission. For a Vice Presidential nomination, apply by October 31st of the year prior to admission.

If you are nominated to one or more of the service academies, you must gain admission to that academy and then receive a final appointment from your nominating source. More than one applicant may qualify for his nomination to an academy, however each academy can enroll only one (or in rare circumstances 2) of the Congressman's nominated candidates per year.

2) Do I have to live in the Representative's district to apply for his nomination?

Yes, only applicants who live within California's 39th Congressional District can be considered for a nomination from Rep. Cisneros. You should first verify your status as a constituent. It is often the case that a school that is within the 39th District resides near the boundaries of the district and includes students that reside just outside of his district.

To verify that you do or do not live in the 39th, please go to:

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

3.) 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:

- You must be at least 17 years old, but not have passed your 23rd birthday.
- You must be a U.S. citizen.
- You must be unmarried, not pregnant, and without legal obligation to support children or other dependents.
- You must reside within the boundaries of the 39th Congressional District of California.
- You must possess good moral character. It is assumed good moral character exists unless there is evidence to demonstrate otherwise.

3) When do I apply for a Congressional or Senate nomination?

You begin the process in the spring of your junior year with each U. S. Service Academy. In the fall of your senior year, submit an application for nomination to Representative Cisneros on or before October 25th. **The most important thing you can do to receive a nomination from Representative Cisneros is to demonstrate that you are an applicant of interest and likely to be admitted to the service academies that you are applying to.** Each

Academy maintains and makes available to Representative Cisneros's office an internet portal that lists the status of all constituents. Representative Cisneros will not nominate a candidate that is unlikely to be admitted by the academy and will give great consideration to the interests of each academy. It is sometimes the case that an applicant will receive a provisional acceptance, known as a "letter of assurance," stating that the applicant has been accepted and may attend the academy if they receive a nomination and appointment. The portal is designed to display this information to our office, however, if you are successful in obtaining such a letter you should forward a copy directly to our office to be certain that it can be considered in the nominating process.

4) What is the deadline for completing a nomination file?

Representative Cisneros' deadline for returning materials is October 25th at 5pm. Check with the California Senators for their respective deadlines. **The most successful candidates apply to all available nominating sources: Representatives, both Senators, Vice President and President.** See the respective Academy catalogues for deadlines and criteria for the Vice Presidential and Presidential nominations. The Presidential nominations are for military service connected families, but it is also highly recommended to apply for a Presidential and Congressional nomination, as the President only awards approximately 100 nominations nationwide. Candidates may be considered for both and it is advantageous to seek the Congressional nomination in addition to the Presidential nomination when a candidate qualifies for a Presidential nomination.

5) What is a Letter of Assurance?

A Letter of Assurance (LOA) is a letter sent to the candidate from the Admissions Office by the Academy advising the Academy is offering a Conditional Appointment to the Academy **provided the candidate successfully completes** the application process, the medical review by the Department of Defense, and the physical fitness assessment and receives a nomination from their Congressman or Senators. Letters of Assurance are conditional and subject to review throughout the entire application process.

Candidates receive Letters of Assurance based upon outstanding ACT/SAT scores early in the process and other information the candidate has submitted to the Admissions Office. It is our office's recommendation that candidates prepare well for ACT/SAT tests and take them "early and often."

6) What must be included in my nomination file?

A complete nomination file consists of the following items:

1. Application Packet, including 2 Teacher Recommendations
2. At least 1, but not more than 3 additional Letters of Recommendation
3. SAT or ACT scores
4. Official High School or College Transcripts and a copy of your Senior Classes

7) What happens after I have completed my nomination application file?

Applicants who meet the basic eligibility requirements and complete a nomination file by **the October 16th deadline** will be reviewed by Representative Cisneros's staff. The most competitive applicants will be contacted and assigned an appointment time to be interviewed by the Congressman's Academy Nomination Board. Not everyone will be granted an interview with the board. However, it is expected that candidates offered an interview slot will attend at the date and time it is offered. A candidate who is unable to attend an interview may continue her or his application and any extenuating circumstance may be explained with the caveat that both the board and the Congressman are likely to view candidates who have not been available to interview with less favor than those who have interviewed and can be measured equally against other interviewees. One notable exception relates to candidates who are attending the US Navy, Army or Air Force preparatory academies on scholarship. These candidates have already received a nomination for the previous year and their official duties require them to be out of state. Thus, these candidates will not be required to interview. Candidates who are not at the official service academy prep schools but are CA-39 constituents that are attending institutions out of state when the board meets will be given the option of traveling to the interview, or, if the candidate is unable to attend due to those travel constraints the board and the Congressman will take this into account in trying to fairly evaluate that candidate against those that did interview. **Interviews will take place between 8 am and 5pm on Saturday and Sunday November 21st and 22nd.** Please be certain to keep your calendar clear between those hours on both days, as the scheduled appointment times will not be flexible.

8) Why does Representative Cisneros use a nominating board?

The office expects to receive more than 100 applicants for the congressman's maximum of 40 nominations. It is not possible for him to personally interview every applicant. The nomination board was personally selected by Representative Cisneros to evaluate applicants and recommend vetted candidates for final nomination decisions, made by reviewing both the raw application materials and the written evaluations made by the board. This well-qualified, non-partisan board will ensure a fair and impartial process. Most members are academy alumni and all are military veterans.

9) What criteria does the board use in selecting candidates?

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

10) What is Congressman Cisneros’ "method of nomination?"

The preferred method of nomination is the competitive nomination. This process allows Representative Cisneros to nominate up to 10 qualified candidates for each available opening for a maximum of 40 qualified nominations.

11) How do I open an admissions file with the academies?

All applicants must directly contact the academies they are interested in attending to open an admissions file. Please refer to the Service Academy Contact Information listed below for further information.

12) How many academies are there?

There are five:

Three reside within the Department of Defense:

- The U.S. Military Academy at West Point, NY
- The U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, MD
- The U.S. Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs, CO

One resides within the Department of Transportation:

- The U.S. Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point, NY

One resides within the Department of Homeland Security

- The U.S. Coast Guard Academy at New London, CT. Applicants to the Coast Guard Academy apply directly to the academy and do not require a political nomination or appointment.

13) Are the requirements the same for all of the service academies?

No. Although many of the qualifications are similar, each academy operates under its own admissions guidelines. Refer to the Service Academy Contact Information for the academies you are interested in and contact each academy directly for an academy catalog. Each academy will outline its particular admissions qualifications. You may also discuss this matter with the member(s) of the Service Academy Board who represents your academy

choice(s). Congressman Cisneros' nominating board does not represent the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. It is not necessary to seek a nomination to the Coast Guard Academy. U.S.C.G.A. accepts candidates based on their own testing criteria.

14) Can I have family members submit letters of recommendation?

No. All recommendations must come from outside your immediate or extended family.

Typical recommendations are from:

- Principals & Teachers - Especially teachers of Math and Science
- Counselors
- Clergy
- Employer
- Scout Leaders
- Coaches

Letters of recommendation must be submitted with the application prior to the deadline.

15) Do I have to have all of the required paperwork collected before submitting it to Representative Cisneros?

Yes, it is preferable to receive a complete candidate packet, however, Representative Cisneros will accept ACT/SAT scores directly from the testing agencies.

16) How should I submit my SAT/ACT scores?

Test results must be sent directly to Representative Cisneros's office by the testing service. The institution code for SAT scores is **4255** and for ACT scores the code is **7278**. Applicants must have a cumulative SAT score of at least 1000 in order to meet minimum academic qualifications. It is recommended to take the ACT/SAT test "early and often". Also see Question 19 for more information.

17) When will I receive my nomination?

Congressional nominations must be delivered to the academies no later than January 31st. In practice, however, the Congressman strives to make his final nominations to the four academies by January 15th. He does this because it gives applicants from his district the best chance of being admitted to these highly selective institutions; e.g. many of the offers of admission are already snapped up by the end of January as the academy's like other highly selective institutions compete for the very best applicants and award offers of admissions as early as the fall, a process that picks up speed in January. Successful applicants who

interview and are found to be qualified will receive notice that they have received the Congressman's nomination sometime between mid-January and January 31st . Those that are accepted and who will receive an appointment to attend are likely to know by the end of January. However, final decisions about appointments (e.g. final admission to an academy) can be made as late as May or June.

18) 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 a letter of appointment directly from the academy.

19) 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 rank among the pool of candidates. It is also possible to win multiple appointments. It is recommended that each apply to at least two academies and it is also recommended to apply to the Merchant Marine and Coast Guard Academies, in addition to the Air Force, Naval and Military Academies. **The most successful candidates apply to three academies, thereby giving themselves the most options of earning an appointment to one of the academies.**

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

Academies will begin to notify candidates of their admissions status in February. All offers of appointment are generally sent out by May 1st. The Academies will award appointments after the candidate file is reviewed and the candidate is determined "fully qualified".

Academies review files weekly, so it is in the candidate's best interest to have their file at the Admissions Offices completed by December or certainly by early January if the ACT/SAT scores are where the candidate wants them. As these scores weigh heavily in the appointment process, it is recommended to take ACT/SAT tests early and often. It is also recommended to complete the candidate's file at the Academy when the scores are where you want them, otherwise the candidate may be reviewed and not found "fully qualified" on their competitive point basis.

Service Academy Contact Information

United States Military Academy

Director of Admissions
United States Military Academy
606 Thayer Road
West Point, NY 10996-9902
Director of Admissions (845) 938-4041
Toll Free Number (800) 822-2769
Website: usma.edu

United States Naval Academy

Candidate Guidance Office
United States Naval Academy
117 Decatur Rd.
Annapolis, MD 21402-5018
Candidate Guidance Office (410) 293-4361
Toll Free Number (800) 638-9156
Website: usna.edu

United States Air Force Academy

USAFA/RRS
2304 Cadet Drive, Suite 200
USAF Academy, Colorado 80840-5025
Toll Free Number (800) 443-9266
Website: usafa.af.mil

United States Merchant Marine Academy

Director of Admissions
U.S. Merchant Marine Academy
Kings Point, New York 11024-1699
Toll Free Number (800) 732-6267
Website: usmma.edu

***United States Coast Guard Academy**

Director of Admissions
15 Mohegan Ave
New London, CT 06320-4195
Toll Free Number (800) 883-USCG
Website: cga.edu

***The USCGA accepts candidates based on its own evaluation criteria and does not require congressional nominations or appointments.**