

Tips for Applying to the Service Academies



1) **START EARLY!** The fall of your senior year is NOT the time to start thinking about applying to an academy. The requirements for entrance to the Service Academies are more involved than the requirements for a Civilian College. There is LOTS of additional paperwork that is necessary and early fall deadlines. Best to start learning about the academy application process in your freshman year of high school. Start preparing for submitting application forms and nomination forms in your junior year.

2) **CANDIDATES; this must be your application, NOT your Parents.** You need to be applying to an academy because it is something that YOU really want to do. Do not apply just because your parents, grandparents, family or friends think that it would be good for you to attend an academy. The four years at the Service Academies are tough and stressful, but are very rewarding for those who graduate. It takes real heart and commitment to complete the four years. Think hard about the reasons for YOUR application as those goals will help you make it through to graduation.

3) **PARENTS; serve as mentor, guide, secretary and/or motivator for your child.** As parents, we want to help with the application process and your son/daughter will need some help with many schedule deadlines and getting all the applications done. BUT do NOT do the applications for them; it must to be their effort. Help keep them on schedule, do proof-reading and make suggestions but let your son or daughter express their true passions for selecting the academy and a military career.

4) **Do well Academically.** The Service Academies get approximately ten applications for each student position that they have open. Applicants come from every state in the nation. The students are generally in the Top 10 – 20% of their class. You will be competing with the best students in the country so doing well in all your high school classes is very important.

5) **Take the SAT or ACT more than once.** Applicants to the Academies perform well on scholastic tests. The average SAT score for students accepted to the academies is 1300 for the Math and Verbal sections. Studies show that students' scores on the SAT and ACT improve with repeated tests. Taking the test as a sophomore and then again as a junior is good idea if multiple tests can be afforded.

6) **Be Physically Fit.** As physical training is a daily part of military training, the academies are looking for candidates who can complete the rigors of their physical fitness program. In addition to attending classes, students at the academies participate in sports and physical fitness training year-round. So participate in high school sports, get a Varsity Letter in a sport or multiple letters if possible. Being the Star Athlete is not as important as becoming a team captain in your sport. The academies develop officers and they want candidates with leadership potential.

7) **Become Well-rounded.** While the academies want candidates who perform well academically and are physically fit, they also want candidates with Character. Graduates of the academies will become

officers in the military services. They will be responsible for equipment that is worth Millions of Dollars and more importantly, responsible for the lives of the men and women under their command. These future young officers need strong leadership skills and must be young men and women of good character. The academies are looking for candidates who already show potential for leadership and officer development. So become involved in your school and community.

- a) Work in your schools student government. Become an officer in the student government.
- b) Join the Band, Glee-Club, Yearbook committee or another school club. When ever possible, be a leader in the organization or club rather than just a member.
- c) Join scouting or youth groups in your community. Again, learn to be a leader in those organizations.
- d) Do volunteer work in your community. The academies are called Service Academies for a reason; they are looking for young men and women who are willing to give to their community and country.

8) **Practice Honor and Integrity.** All of the Academies have an Honor Code as they are developing future leaders for our military services. Character does COUNT! Incidents of cheating, school discipline, or minor run-ins with the law will affect your application. So always think before you act. What may seem like harmless fun could turn into an event that will seriously affect your future.

9) **Attend Candidate Orientations!** These events give you a chance to learn about student life at the academies. Often there are current academy students at these events and they will give a very REAL assessment of what their life is like. They are honest and will tell you both the GOOD and BAD. They are often your best source of information for determining if academy life will be right for you.

10) **Contact Admission Officers Early!** Each academy has officers (retired or active duty) who assist candidates with the application process. Their goal is help the right candidates get accepted to the academy. Getting to know your local Admission Officer early will really be helpful when it finally becomes time to submit the application.

11) **Make preliminary Applications on-line.** Each academy has website with lots of great information about the academy and the application process. There is place to make a preliminary application which can be done as early as your freshman year. This application puts your name into the academy's database so that you receive important information about the application process as it becomes available.

12) **Visit the Senators and your Congressman's Website for nomination information.** In addition to an application, potential candidates need a nomination from their State Senator or Congressman. The website of each representative has information about how to apply for a nomination from their office. It is good to know what is required for the nomination application as each Senator or Congressman has a limited number of nominations that he/she can make each year. Getting a nomination is highly competitive, with strict guidelines on how and when to submit the nomination application. Best to make the application early in summer or fall of junior year.

13) **Visit the Academy if possible.** Visiting several academies can be hard as none are located close to Georgia. Travel is required to visit and that can be expensive. If affordable and possible, try to visit the academy that you would most like to attend. It helps to see the surrounding area and get a feel for the campus life. Try to talk to current students that you may meet on campus.

14) **Consider attending one of the Summer Seminars offered at the Academies.** These week-long summer seminars are only available for rising seniors. During the seminar, you live in the dorm for a week and get to directly experience life as a cadet or midshipmen. As the number of openings in these seminars is limited, getting a spot in the seminar program is also competitive. Applications for the summer programs are made on-line December to February of your junior year. Attending these great seminars may not be possible for some, as seminar fees and travel costs are required to attend. For those who do attend, it gives them a real feel for academy life.

15) **If you become an Academy Appointee, Consider attending their spring orientation.** Again due to travel costs, this may not be possible for some. But is really great idea to go, especially if you have never been to the academy. The appointee actually spends two days with a cadet or midshipmen; going to class, eat meals and spending the night with them on campus. It is really good opportunity for the appointee to make sure that attending an academy is true what he/she wants to do. Each year, the academies lose students in the first couple of months as they realize that academy life is NOT for them. With so many students competing for so few spots, it is best if a candidate who is not 100% committed to a military career give up his/her spot early in the process so that another potentially more determined candidate can be give that precious spot.

16) **Have back-up Plans. Apply to other colleges.** Most people, who apply will NOT receive an appointment to an academy. It is important to have other plans for college. Apply for Army, Navy, and Air Force ROTC scholarships. Apply to colleges with ROTC programs. Many fine officers are commissioned through college ROTC programs. For many students, the ROTC program at a civilian college gives students the best of both worlds; military training and a civilian college experience. Plus the ROTC program gives an educational scholarship to help pay for college. College life at an academy is much more restricted than college life at most campuses. Many students, who do not receive an appointment the first year, go to a community or local college for a year and then re-apply to the academies with a stronger educational background. You should always have other plans; just in case, an appointment is not received.

17) **Final Parents' Tip.** Contact the local Parents Club for the academy early. Each academy has a Parents' Club that supports cadets and midshipmen from Georgia. While membership is generally limited to parents and family of students currently enrolled in the academies, their members can be great sources of information about academy life and the military career after the academy. Learning about the academies before your child invests his/her heart and soul into the application process can be valuable and save you much grief later on if your son/daughter chooses not to apply or attend an academy. While the Parents Clubs want every candidate and appointee to have a successful career at the academy, we also realize that academy life is NOT for everyone. We want to help you and your child to make the best decision for his/her life based on good information.