

Overview of New Mexico Academy Nomination Process

Nominations
Application Process
ROTC and NMMI

This is an overview of the nominations process for New Mexicans interested in attending one of the five military service academies: the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, NY, the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD, the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, CO, and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, NY. The U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, CT does not require a congressional nomination.

For students who want to experience a military environment while getting a first-class education, the service academies offer an outstanding education and full four-year scholarships. Tuition, books, board and medical and dental care are all fully paid for all four years.

The competition to get in is fierce. Admissions criteria include:

- High school academic performance
- Standardized test scores (SAT or ACT)
- Athletics and extracurricular activities
- Leadership experience and community involvement
- And a congressional letter of recommendation

Graduates of all academies receive a Bachelor of Science degree and are commissioned as officers in their respective Service branches. After graduation, they are obligated to serve a minimum of five years.

Nominations

Who can make nominations?

- There are two types of authorized nominating sources: “Congressional” and “Service-Connected.”
 - **Congressional:** Members of Congress and the Vice President of the United States
 - Senators Udall and Heinrich
 - Representatives Haaland, Torres Small, and Lujan
 - Vice President Mike Pence
 - **Service Connected:** Presidential, or service-connected, nominations are reserved for children of career military personnel

There are multiple nominating sources available to New Mexicans under two categories: Congressional and Service Connected.

Service Connected, or Presidential nominations are reserved for dependents of career military personnel. If a student thinks they might be eligible for this, they should talk to the Admissions Officer at the academy that they are interested in for more information.

Most students can apply for a nomination from up to four Congressional sources: their two U.S. Senators, their U.S. Representative (House member), and a nomination from the Office of the Vice President. Those students wanting to apply with the Office of the Vice President should talk to their Admissions Officer at the Academy that they are interested in for more information.

Applicant Eligibility

- ▶ Each applicant for a nomination must meet the following eligibility requirements as of July 1 of the year of admission to an academy:
 - ▶ **Age:** Be at least 17 years old, but not have passed the 23rd birthday.
 - ▶ **Citizenship:** Must be a U.S. citizen.
 - ▶ **Marital Status:** Be unmarried, not pregnant, and have no legal obligation to support children or other dependents.

Due to the highly competitive nature of the nomination process, many students will not be nominated or appointed the first time they apply. Those students will often attend a local community college or university to focus on building up their academic performance, enlist in active duty or the reserves, or go into the workforce and reapply. Individuals may reapply each year until the age of 23.

They must also be a U.S. citizen, with no legal obligations for others (spouse or dependents).

Application Process

- Completion of Online Questionnaire, including an essay (*two essays for Senator Heinrich*)
- Official ACT and/or SAT Scores
- Official High School Transcript
- 3 Letters of Recommendation
- Due Date is October 9, 2020 for ALL NM Congressional Offices

Senators Udall and Heinrich have tried to simplify the application process to be considered for a nomination. To be invited for an interview, candidates must submit the following items by the October 9 deadline:

Online Questionnaire and Essay(s)
Official High School Transcript
Official ACT and/or SAT scores
Three Letters of Recommendation

Complete Packet: The Online Application

▶ Tell us about yourself

- School/Community activities
 - Student Council, Band, JROTC, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, etc.
- Athletic Involvement
 - High school, collegiate, club
- Honors/Awards received (*in and outside of school*)
- Work Experience
- Academy Information
 - Rank your academy preferences

▶ Essay(s)

- "Why do you want to attend a U.S. Service Academy?"
- "Describe one experience where you have demonstrated exceptional leadership." (*additional essay for Sen. Heinrich*)

Candidates should go to both Senator Udall and Senator Heinrich's websites to set up an online profile. While the process and materials are nearly identical, they will have to set up files with both offices. Students are encouraged to develop a well written profile, and may copy and paste material to their other applications (no need to reinvent the wheel).

This is the time for them to brag about themselves! Include every student organization, sport, and club they've been a part of, every award they've received on and off campus, and their paid/unpaid work experience.

Students will also be able to rank their preference of academy. For example, if they ONLY want to attend the Air Force Academy, they should list that as #1 and leave the remaining options blank. If they are open to attending any of the academies, they should rank their preferences #1-4.

Lastly, the students are asked to submit an essay; "Why do you want to attend a U.S. service academy?" As this essay is the same for both Senators and all three Representatives (they can use the same essay for all offices), they are encouraged to spend the time writing a quality response (spell check and a second pair of eyes are highly encouraged).

Those students applying with Senator Heinrich's office will have a secondary essay

describing an experience where they've demonstrated exceptional leadership.

Complete Packet (cont'd)

▶ Official ACT/SAT scores

- Take the tests as many times as you need to improve your score
- **Super Score:** We will take the highest scores in each content area, to boost your overall composite
- Official scores should be sent to us directly from ACT or SAT (*codes may be found on our websites*)

▶ Official Transcript

- Should be sent to us from your school, include your fall schedule, AND unweighted GPA

The ACT and SAT tests can be intimidating to many and not everyone take tests well. We encourage students to take the test of their choice as many times as possible to get their desired result.

Like each of the Academy Admissions offices, we will super score all results submitted to our office, taking the highest score from each content area to provide a higher composite score.

Ex. ACT Results #1

E: 24, R: **28**, M: **32**, S: 25 → Composite: 27

ACT Results #2

E: **30**, R: 25, M: 28, S: **29** → Composite: 28

Our Scoring:

E: **30**, R: **28**, M: **32**, S: **29** → Composite: **30**

Complete Packet (cont'd)

▶ Letters of Recommendation

- Three letters
 - Two letters should come from an academic source:
 - High school teacher, college professor, counselor, or principal
 - One letter from a non-academic source:
 - Coach, employer, clergy/church member, mentor, volunteer, or an adult family friend (anyone that is not related to you who can attest to your character)
- These should be sent directly from the recommenders via the system-generated link

Our office places great emphasis on the Letters of Recommendation (LOR) we receive, as these individuals know the students best – what they have seen them accomplish, their setbacks, their ingenuity, their grit. Because the culture at each academy is very competitive and academically rigorous, we want to ensure that those students being considered for nomination can compete.

We ask for two LORs from someone that knows the candidate in an academic setting – a teacher, professor, counselor, or principal. We particularly want to see letters from one of these individuals in a math or science setting.

The third LOR may come from anyone who knows the candidate well and can speak to their character (as long as there is no family relation). Sometimes a student or their family think that requesting a letter from their local Mayor, City Councilor, County Commissioner, or another elected official helps provide more gravitas, however that is often not the case. Titles are less important than someone who can speak to the student's tenacity, character, or personal growth.

A guide to what we are looking for from those writing LORs can be found on Senator Udall's website and academy nominations page.

U.S. SENATE

Senator Tom Udall's Academy Nomination Application

Due on 10/09/2020

11:59 PM Mountain

Instructions

Application

Sign-in Page

☐ Submit Questionnaire

INSTRUCTIONS

Complete each section below. At any point you can save your progress and complete the application at another time.

Note: Once you "submit" your application, you will be unable to make any additional changes to your questionnaire and checklist. By submitting your application, upon nomination by our office, you are authorizing release of your name, city, and academy to the local media. Please contact our office with any questions.

Step 1. Complete Each Section

- [General Information](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Extracurricular Activities](#)
- [Work Experience](#)
- [Academy Information](#)
- [Essay](#)

Step 2. Submit Your Questionnaire

Once you submit your questionnaire, you will need to contact Senator Udall's office to make changes.

[Print Questionnaire](#)

☐ Complete Checklist

☐ Complete online questionnaire and essay.

Complete when verified by the office.

☐ Letter of Recommendation - Academic

pdf only

☐ Letter of Recommendation - Academic

pdf only

☐ Letter of Recommendation - Non-Academic

pdf only

☐ Official Academic Transcript (to be sent directly to the office)

Complete when verified by the office.

☐ ACT and/or SAT Scores (to be sent directly to the office)

Complete when verified by the office.

Candidates have access to an online checklist attached to their profile, that shows what our office has received, and what materials are still outstanding. As the deadline approaches, it is the candidate's responsibility to follow up with the individuals writing their LORs,, and that material they've requested like transcripts are test scores are sent by the deadline. We highly encourage candidates to begin gathering material early and review their checklist frequently.

Selection Process: Next Steps

- ▶ If you submit a complete application with a Senate Office, you will be invited to interview in Albuquerque on Saturday, November 7
- ▶ What can you do to be prepared?
 - Participate in a practice interview
 - Dress to impress
 - Show up early

If an applicant submits a complete packet to the office by the deadline, they will be invited to interview with the Senators' Academy Nomination Interview Boards in Albuquerque. They are encouraged to talk with their teachers, employers, Academy Liaison Officers, or others to arrange for a practice interview or two. Many students have never participated in an interview before, so this is an opportunity to get rid of their jitters.

Dress to impress: we recommend applicants come in in business attire or, if in a JROTC program, their uniform.

We also recommend applicants arrive to their scheduled interview time and location at least 20 minutes early to ensure they have time to check in and confirm their participation.

Selection Process: Role of the Academy Nomination Review Board

- The Academy Nomination Review Board has the important role of helping the Senator select his nominees, by reviewing the complete application and interviewing each Applicant.
- During the interview, Board members will evaluate candidates to assess:
 - Academics
 - Extracurricular Activities
 - Grit
 - Personal Motivation and Character
 - Self Assurance and Poise
 - Commitment to Military Service

Each Review Board is made up of three individuals, with diverse backgrounds in military service, community and higher education. Many are graduates of the academies themselves. The Review Board helps to recommend to the Senator those candidates they feel can handle the rigorous academics, military lifestyle, and ability to succeed. Panelists will have reviewed all the submitted materials that were included in an applicants file, so the interviews will focus in on areas of their essay, academic history, extracurricular and leadership involvement, character, determination, and commitment to serve.

Interviews are held in Albuquerque and typically last 20 minutes. If a student has applied with both Senate offices, the offices will ensure there are no scheduling conflicts (both offices hold their interviews the same day and at the same location).

U.S. Rep. Debra Haaland

- ▶ Nomination Application (online PDF)
- ▶ Essay
- ▶ Three Letters of Recommendation
- ▶ Official Academic Transcript
- ▶ Official ACT and/or SAT scores



- ▶ Interviews on Saturday, October 31 in Albuquerque

- ▶ haaland.house.gov/services/military-academy-nominations

Service Academy Liaison:

Service Academy Liaison Contact:

jon.moore@mail.house.gov

Application Website:

Application Deadline for Office:

Interview Date and Location:

Albuquerque, NM

Jon Moore

505-346-6781 or

<http://haaland.house.gov>

Friday, October 9, 2020

Saturday, October 31, 2020 in

U.S. Rep. Xochitl Torres Small

- ▶ Nomination Application (online PDF)
- ▶ Essay
- ▶ Resume
- ▶ Three Letters of Recommendation
- ▶ Official Academic Transcript
- ▶ Official ACT and/or SAT scores



- ▶ Interviews on Sunday, November 8 in Las Cruces
- ▶ torressmall.house.gov/services/military-academy-nominations

Service Academy Liaison:
Service Academy Liaison Contact:
cody.mccarty@mail.house.gov
Application Website:
Application Deadline for Office:
Interview Date and Location:
NM

Cody McCarty
575-323-6384 or
<http://torressmall.house.gov>
Friday, October 9, 2019
Sunday, November 8, 2020 in Las Cruces,

U.S. Rep. Ben Ray Lujan

- ▶ Nomination Application (online PDF)
- ▶ Essay
- ▶ Counselor Evaluation
- ▶ Two Letters of Recommendation
- ▶ Official Academic Transcript
- ▶ Official ACT and/or SAT scores
- ▶ Interviews on Saturday, November 14 in Santa Fe
- ▶ lujan.house.gov/help/academy-nominations



Service Academy Liaison:
Service Academy Liaison Contact:
brian.lee@mail.house.gov
Application Website:
Application Deadline for Office:
Interview Date and Location:
NM

Brian Lee
505-324-1005 or
<http://lujan.house.gov>
Friday, October 9, 2020
Saturday, November 14, 2020 in Santa Fe,

Academy Application Process

- ▶ In addition to the nomination application process, you should apply to each Academy you are interested in attending.
 - Receiving a nomination allows you to be considered by the Academy (*does not guarantee admittance*)
- ▶ In addition to nominations, the Academies require each applicant to complete:
 - Medical/Optometric examination through the Department of Defense Medical Examination Review Board (DODMERB) to determine their individual medical status.
 - Candidate Fitness Assessment (CFA)

It's important to remember that the application process for a nomination is in ADDITION TO the candidate's application to the academy(ies) directly. If they receive a nomination, it allows them to be *considered* for an appointment (acceptance) to that Academy. It does not guarantee admittance.

In addition to submitting a complete file with each academy, the schools will communicate additional requirements such as a medical and fitness assessment.

How many nominations may a Member of Congress Make?

- **Five at a time Rule:** Each U.S. Senator and Representative may have a maximum of five charged cadets or midshipmen at each service academy over a four year period.
 - Air Force Academy (example)
2021 – 1, 2022 – 1, 2023 – 2, 2024 – 1
- The NM Congressional delegation use the “competitive” process
 - Up to ten nominations per opening – unranked – are made for each Academy, to select the most qualified for appointment.

New Mexico’s Senators and Representatives use what’s called the ‘Competitive’ Nominations process. For each opening that is available, they will submit an unranked slate of up to 10 names for the academy to consider. This doesn’t mean only one will be accepted, however it allows the other candidates to compete in other areas of admission.

ROTC Opportunities

- ▶ The Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) is another route to becoming a commissioned officer
 - Receive your undergraduate degree from any number of institutions AND your commission in the armed forces
 - NMSU: Army and Air Force ROTC
 - UNM: Army, Air Force, and Naval ROTC
- ▶ Scholarships are available (which may also be coupled with other awards)
 - Tuition, room and board, stipends, etc.

Because the process is so competitive for an appointment to a service academy, students are encouraged to consider applying with ROTC units at the collegiate level. In New Mexico, ROTC programs are available at New Mexico State University and the University of New Mexico. Students in ROTC programs will still graduate with a degree and a military Commission, however their studies are in a traditional collegiate environment vs. a strict-military one.

Scholarships and financial support are available.

New Mexico Military Institute

A Global Military School for Leadership Development

- ▶ Offers a 2-Year Early Commissioning Program (AROTC)
 - Serve in the Reserves or National Guard while completing your undergraduate degree at a four-year institution
- ▶ Service Academy Prep Program
 - Sponsored-Prep: via an Academy Foundation
 - Self-Prep: candidates choose to enroll themselves
- ▶ Scholarships and other financial assistance is available
 - NM Legislative ("lottery") Scholarship may be used



2020 Timeline

- ▶ April 6 – Applications Open
- ▶ May 4–7 – Virtual Information Nights (4)
- ▶ October 9 – Application Process Closes
- ▶ Interviews
 - October 31 – Rep. Haaland
 - November 7 – Senate Office Interviews
 - November 8 – Rep. Torres Small
 - November 14 – Rep. Lujan
- ▶ Mid–December – Nominees Announced

All material is due by October 9th. This is a hard deadline. If candidates have any questions or concerns about their applications, we highly encourage them to contact our offices. We also provide frequent reminders of upcoming deadlines and outstanding checklist items.

Questions?

Visit www.heinrich.senate.gov/helping-you/academy for a copy of this presentation, answers to frequently asked questions, and more.