



Common Sense on:

Applying to U.S. Military Academies

by Senator Tom Harkin

As Iowa's high school students look past graduation, there are many great opportunities for them to consider. One option, for those young people interested in military service, is our nation's military academies, which offer outstanding opportunities. Following my graduation from Iowa State University in 1962, I served as a Navy pilot and understand both the challenges and rewards of a military career. As a senator, it is a genuine honor to nominate outstanding young Iowans to military service academies. For more information on how to apply for a nomination to a military academy, please keep reading.

Where are the military academies located and what can students study there?

Students can specialize in a variety of fields at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, the Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs and the Merchant Marine Academy at Kings Point.

Who is eligible to receive a recommendation?

Each applicant must meet the following eligibility requirements as of July 1st of the year of admission to an academy. They must be at least 17 years old but not have passed their 23rd birthday; must be a U.S. citizen; must not be married, pregnant, or have legal obligations to support children or other dependents. Nominees must be a resident of the state from which they are nominated.

For every opening I have at an academy, I can nominate an unranked slate of up to ten Iowans for that opening. After evaluating my nomination slate, the academy will make the final decision on which nominee(s) will be offered a letter of acceptance to the academy.

What is the selection process to be nominated?

Most of Iowa's high school guidance counselors should have information about the application procedures that prospective candidates must follow. I use a competitive method to screen applicants, which includes the evaluation of ACT or SAT scores, high school grade point average, leadership abilities and physical aptitude. I have also appointed an academy selection committee to conduct personal interviews with academy finalists and provide me with their recommendations. I review the applicant's file and the selection committee's recommendations prior to making my decision on who to nominate. It is always a difficult choice.

How do I begin the nomination application process?

I am currently accepting applications for nomination to the United States' military academies for the class entering in the summer of 2012. Interested individuals should complete the Service Academy Nomination application, which can be found on my website <http://harkin.senate.gov>. Any additional questions should be directed to my Academy Nomination Coordinator, Tom Larkin, at 319-365-4504.

The best of luck to all of you who apply.