

Military Pathway Information

The U.S. Military consists of five service branches: Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force (Space Force), and Coast Guard. You must have a high school diploma or GED to enlist. There are funds to help pay for college after you serve, such as the Post-9/11 GI Bill.

There are also part-time options that allow you to attend college or have a job while serving in the Military, both of which offer money to help pay for college:

- [Reserves](#) are available for active-duty deployment in times of war or national emergency.
- [National Guard](#) focuses on homeland security and humanitarian relief.

Explore Options

Air Force | [AirForce.com](https://www.airforce.com)
Army | [GoArmy.com](https://www.goarmy.com)
Coast Guard | [GoCoastGuard.com](https://www.go CoastGuard.com)
Marines | [Marines.com](https://www.marines.com)
Navy | [Navy.com](https://www.navy.com)

Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC)

ROTC is a college program that prepares students to become an officer in the U.S. Military while they earn a bachelor's degree. This military officer training program is offered at 1,700 colleges across the nation. www.todaymilitary.com/training/rotc

Cadets agree to serve in the military post-college (usually 4-5 years) in exchange for potentially significant financial aid for their college education and a guaranteed post-college career. NOTE: The ROTC scholarship application is in addition to the college application. It has its own deadlines.

- Student graduates as an officer (higher salary & leadership skills).
- Significant/All costs paid.
- Focus on academic and physical development.
- Long-standing tradition and honor.
- GI Bill helps pay for future education (can be transferred to children).

Explore branch(es) of interest to learn the application process (including Army ROTC, Navy-option ROTC, Air Force ROTC, Marine-option ROTC).

Air Force ROTC

<https://www.afrotc.com/>

Host Schools

- Central Washington University
- University of Washington
- Washington State University

Crosstown Affiliate Schools

Offers Air Force ROTC, but students take AFROTC classes at the nearest host university.

- Bellevue College
- Cascadia Community College
- Clark College
- Edmunds Community College
- Everett Community College

- Green River Community College
- Highline Community College
- North Seattle Community College
- Northwest University
- Olympic College
- Pierce College
- Seattle Central Community College
- Seattle Pacific University
- Seattle University
- Shoreline Community College
- South Seattle Community College
- St. Martin's University
- Washington State University Vancouver

Army ROTC

<https://www.goarmy.com/rotc.html>

- Central Washington University
- Eastern Washington University
- Gonzaga University
- Pacific Lutheran University
- Seattle University
- University of Washington
- Washington State University

Navy/Marine Corps ROTC

Host School

- University of Washington

Cross-Town Affiliate

- Seattle University

Military Schools

There are three options for students who want a deeper understanding of military culture:

Service Academies

Extremely elite and selective, requires a minimum service obligation of five years after graduation. Tuition, books, board and health care are all fully paid for all four years. Requires a congressional letter of recommendation in order to apply; some admission requirements begin during the junior year of high school.

There are five federal United States service academies, and each have their own application and process. Visit each academy's website for details.

- United States Military Academy
- United States Naval Academy
- United States Air Force Academy
- United States Coast Guard Academy
- United States Merchant Marine Academy

Senior Military Colleges

Combines higher education and military instruction. Every student must participate in ROTC, but only those students who receive an ROTC scholarship are required to enter military service following graduation.

- The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina
- Texas A&M University
- University of North Georgia
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Maritime Academies

Produces officers for ships for shipping and transportation needs, but a service commitment is not always required.

- California State University Maritime Academy
- Great Lakes Maritime Academy
- Maine Maritime Academy
- Massachusetts Maritime Academy
- State University of New York Maritime College
- Texas A&M Maritime Academy

This application process is rigorous. Be early and thorough. The process must begin during your junior year of high school. You will be required to take the ACT or SAT. Prepare by:

1. Retaking exams, if you scored below 540 (SAT) or 26 (ACT) on any section.
2. Getting help from your local mentor.

3. Scheduling your medical exam EARLY.
4. Training for your Candidate Fitness Exam.
5. Treating the nomination interview like a job interview.

Enlisting

If you are interested in enlisting, you should visit Today's Military website at www.todaysmilitary.com or www.usa.gov/military-and-veterans and explore what it means to enlist and which branch you would like to pursue.

- Military pays for needed training/ education & provides place to live
- GI Bill help pay for future education (can be transferred to children).
- Guaranteed job placement after successful boot camp and training experiences.
- Sense of honor, duty, service & patriotism along with sought-after skills, leadership & experience.

You will need to take the ASVAB exam. You should prepare by visiting <http://official-asvab.com> to learn more about this test and what the testing experience will be like. Be sure to check out the ASVAB Career Exploration Program at www.asvabprogram.com to learn more and help with test preparation.

Meet with a recruiter. Contact one at www.todaysmilitary.com/contact-a-recruiter. Visit the Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) website for more information at www.mepcom.army.mil. You will report to MEPS if you decide to enlist. You will spend the day at a military processing station (MEPS). That is where you will take the ASVAB, have a physical exam, and meet with a career counselor. If you are accepted, you will take the oath of enlistment.

Finally, you will await orders for basic training. You should receive orders within a few weeks. If you enrolled in the delayed entry program, you will get orders within a year.

Meet a recruiter

After exploring options online, consider talking to a local military recruiter to learn more about career paths, education. Have a list of prepared questions to help make sure you get your questions answered. Consider asking:

- Am I fit for military service?
- What are the academic, mental health and physical health requirements?
- Can you tell me about the commitment, benefits, and basic training?
- Can you give me more information on part-time versus full-time options, as well, as enlistment versus officer pathways?
- Can I attend college and enlist in the military at the same time?
- If so, do you offer financial aid to help pay for college? How much does it cover realistically?
- How do I turn military experience into a career?
- What do I need to do to prepare?

Recruiters are not allowed to force you to sign paperwork, guarantee that you will get the military career you prefer, guarantee where you will be stationed, or waive enlistment requirements. If you decide that this path is not the best fit for you after exploring your meeting with a recruiter, it is perfectly acceptable to tell them that you are no longer interested in pursuing this option.

Military Pathway Online Scavenger Hunt

Before our visit to/ or meeting with a recruiter from: _____,
you'll need to do some detective work. Start out by going to the www.todaysmilitary.com and answering the questions below.

1. What are the branches of service?

2. Which branches offer both part-time and full-time service options? What is the difference in the commitments?

3. What is the difference between an enlisted path versus an officer path?

4. Which specific branch of service interests you the most and why?

5. Are there local bases for this branch of service that you might be able to visit? Where does this branch have bases in the United States and around the world? Where would you like to be assigned if you were to join?

6. What does it take to be admitted into this pathway? Do the qualifications differ for Reserves versus Full Time? Enlisted versus Officer?

7. What kinds of grades or GPA do I need to be admitted?

8. What classes do I need to take?

9. Do I need a standardized test? Yes No
If yes, what is the name of the test?

10. What options are listed to help pay for college? What is required to qualify for those educational benefits?

11. In the Career Section, review the areas that interest you. Which career field are you most interested in?

12. How many schools offer a Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program for your preferred branch of service?

13. Now that you've done your research, think about what you would like to gain from a visit to the base. Give three answers for each question below.

- What are some questions you'd like to ask service members? Do you have any questions about the service generally or about the specific duty location?
- What parts of the base would you most like to see and why?

Military Pathway Comparison Worksheet

Investigate various aspects of different Service branches, part-time and full-time options, and enlisted and officer pathways. Evaluate and compare pathway options.

Base Environment	Pathway: _____	Pathway: _____	Pathway: _____
Base facilities, equipment and services			
Computers and internet access			
Food service (cafeterias)			
Health care (physical and mental health counseling)			
Housing (Do you need year-round housing? LGBTQ-safe/gender neutral housing?)			
Library			
Recreational			
Transportation (parking, buses, etc.)			
Base safety			
Base setting (urban, suburban, small town, rural)			
Geographic location (distance from home)			
Are there faith-based organizations/centers on base			
Childcare/Family housing			
Accessibility for physical disabilities			
Service Characteristics	Pathway: _____	Pathway: _____	Pathway: _____
Number of current service members			
% of full-time students			
% of men and women			
% of service members 25 or older			
% of people of color, LGBTQ+, other minority			
% of service members who live on base			
% of service members who serve overseas? In active combat?			
% of service members who graduate from college first? After?			
% of veterans employed within one year of leaving service?			
Pay and Benefits	Pathway: _____	Pathway: _____	Pathway: _____
Starting pay?			
Expected income after four years?			
Housing, medical, and educational benefits?			

Training?			
Other Considerations	Pathway: _____	Pathway: _____	Pathway: _____
<p>NOTE: This next section is geared towards students who are interested in going to college, participating in ROTC, and then becoming an officer after graduation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cadets in ROTC programs are not considered to be in the service. • They only incur obligation for future service if they receive ROTC scholarship. • There are very few four-year scholarships; however, some scholarship support may be available after two years for the remaining two years of an undergraduate program. • The ability to compare going to college on an ROTC scholarship versus enlisting in the service directly from high school varies a great deal. 			
Cost	Pathway: _____	Pathway: _____	Pathway: _____
Application fee?			
Test? Fee waiver?			
How do scores translate into MOS (Military Occupational Specialty) or a possible career for me?			
Financial Aid	Pathway: _____	Pathway: _____	Pathway: _____
Financial aid availability			
Grants (participates in federal and/or state grant program?)			
Scholarships			
Work study, can you get preference as a service member?			
% of undergraduates receiving financial aid			
Average amount awarded to undergraduates			
Activities/Enrichment	Pathway: _____	Pathway: _____	Pathway: _____
Athletic offerings (sports: collegiate and intramural)			
Organizations and events			
Support Services	Pathway: _____	Pathway: _____	Pathway: _____
Counseling, mentoring, affinity or support groups or clubs			
Support for physical challenges & learning disabilities			
Career, internship, employment assistance, job placement services			

Pre-Visit Survey

Have you been on a base or met with a recruiter before? Yes No

Select the answer that best applies.	Yes	No	Maybe
I think I will go to pursue a military pathway.			
I can picture myself as a service member.			
I believe I can afford to go to college.			
I can name at least one college major that interests me and is applicable to my future career.			
I know about health support services are offered.			
I know about activities, sports, and other social groups on a base.			
I have talked to a current service member and asked him/her questions I have about this pathway.			
I have talked to someone who works at the base and asked him/her questions I have about this pathway.			

How did you prepare for this visit?

(Select all that apply)

- Information from counselor
- Visited the website
- Class or homework assignment
- Nothing
- Other

When I think of going into this pathway, I think of:

Three questions I have for current service members while on a visit:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Three things that I would like to learn while on a visit:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Pre-Post Rubric: Military Pathway Visit

- For Military Base Visits
- For Military Recruiter Meetings

Branch of Service: _____

Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard

What we already know about this individual Service branch and career paths?	What we want to learn about this individual Service branch and career paths?	What we learned about this individual Service branch and career paths during our visit.

Military Pathway Visit Checklist

When planning a visit with a recruiter or to a base, make sure to allow time to get your questions answered to decide if it is a good fit.

<p>Gather information. Find out what you need to do to apply or enlist and see if the branch offers a career pathway that you are interested in:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take part in an information session. • Talk with a recruiter to learn information without making a formal commitment. • Visit a base. • Meet a service member in a career pathway that interests you. • Talk to service members and veterans about what they think of their experience. • Get the names of the people you meet and their business cards so you can contact them later if you have questions or concerns.
<p>Explore the base or a ROTC program at a nearby college. Get a feel for life in the service to see if it is a place where you will thrive:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take a tour. • Talk to service members about life on base or college. • Scan bulletin boards to see what daily life is like. • Go to the career center and learn what services they offer. • Browse the website.
<p>Questions to ask during your visit. Here are some questions you may want to ask your tour guide or service members you meet:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the best reasons to join this branch of service? • To enlist? To become an officer? To join ROTC? • What's it like to go from high school into service? Or into ROTC? • What do you do in your free time? On the weekends? Do you have weekends? • What do you love about this branch of service? • What do you wish you could change? • Why did you choose this branch? Why did you enlist or choose to become an officer? • What is it like to live here?
<p>Get ready. Before your visit, you should get prepared: When you're ready to go, remember to do the following:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the service branch's official website and review any materials that have been sent to you. This will help you come up with questions specific to that program. • Make and bring a list of questions to ask both staff and members. • Get a map of the campus and check where you are to meet your tour guide or recruiter. This will help ensure that you're on time for your visit.
<p>When you're ready to go, remember to do the following:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pack a notebook so you can record your impressions. You'd be surprised at how easy it is to forget details after you've visited. • Compare with the colleges and other programs that you visit.

Base Visit Checklist

When you visit a military base, it is important that you ask the right types of questions:

Look at Equipment and Facilities

- Are the facilities and equipment up-to-date and operating?
- Is the equipment similar to what you will be using on the job?
- What is the living situation? What are you allowed to bring from home?
- What is the dining facility (cafeteria/mess hall) like?
- Are there computer labs? Is there Internet access?

Talk with Current Service Members

- How long have they been serving?
- What is a day like in boot camp?
- Are they learning what they need to know to get a job?
- What do they like most/least about the service?
- How do they spend their free time?
- What are the other service members like?

Talk with Recruiter

- What are the academic requirements for different career paths?
- What qualifications are needed for occupational specialties of interest to you?
- How do you apply, and which forms do you fill out?
- Are there important deadlines to meet?
- What percentage of veterans is employed within one year of leaving the service?