



Air & Space Forces Association



Advocate to Inspire Military Service

Guide



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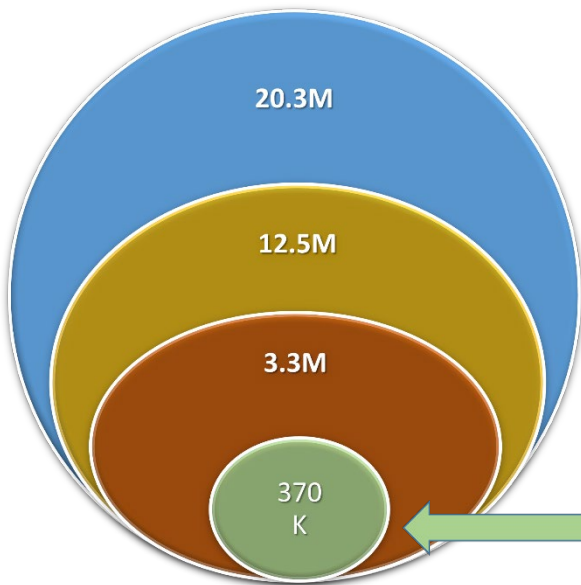
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Advocate to Inspire Military Service (AFA AIMS)

The AIMS mission is to advocate for the U.S. Air & Space Forces by equipping our members and chapters to positively influence those who inspire others to consider service to our nation, and specifically, to inspire youth to military service.

The Environment

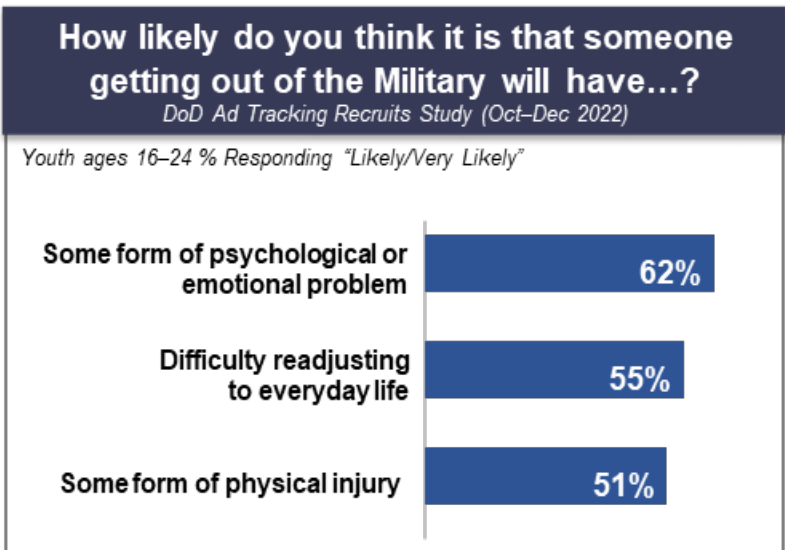
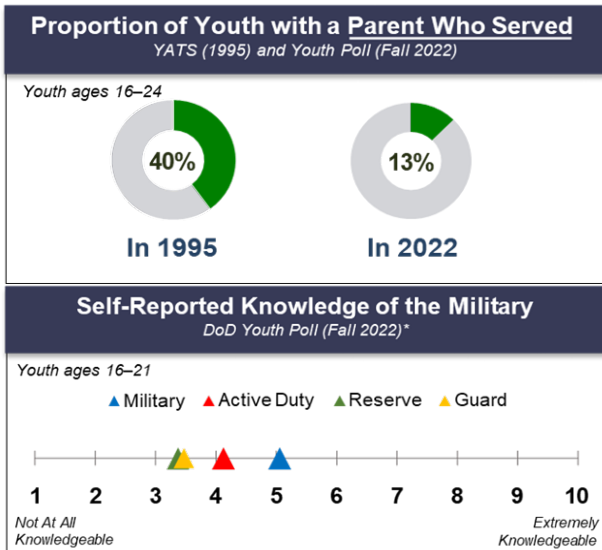
Only 23% of youth 17-24 are eligible for military service; and only 9% are aware of or interested in serving in military service.



Talent acquisition is becoming harder and more expensive and American youth are increasingly disconnected from and less trusting of military

- 3.5% Unemployment rate in the U.S.
- 46% of influencers would recommend military
- 39% of young adults (ages 17-35) **do not** comprehend the most basic military fundamentals (i.e. ranks, officer/enlisted, standards & requirements)
- 11% of young adults (ages 17-35) **can** name All DoD Active Duty Services
- 13% of 16-24-year-olds with a parent who served
- 9% youth propensity and 2% propensed & qualified
- 23% of youth are eligible to enlist w/o a waiver

Academically Qualified, Eligible & Propensed



Inspire 101: How You Can Engage

It can seem daunting to get started and to engage. However, it is quite simple to begin to Inspire Military Service, you just need to *AIM* and *Set* an idea in your mind. You can inspire others!

1. AIMS Toolbox – Use Resources to Get Started

- Sometimes your story is a 15-minute speech at the Rotary Club and sometimes it is as simple as a chance encounter in the checkout line at the grocery store. Whatever the opportunity, a little preparation can enable you to tell your story in a way that personalizes your experiences and emphasizes important messages about military service.
- Information on building your story is below, and in the [AIMS Toolbox](#).



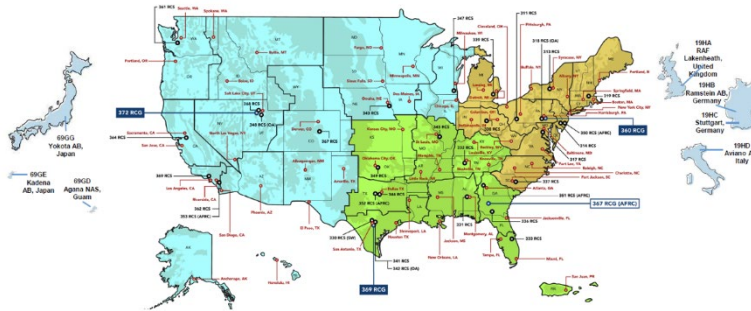
2. Tell Your Story

- Recognize opportunities to tell your story. This can be to friends, relatives, worship members, and those in your local community.
- Your story can be shared in your community. Look for and set up opportunities, or deliver it on the fly, where and whenever appropriate.
- If you have your story, use it where you feel it will BEST impact those who influence & inspire youth.
- We ask you to influence the “influencers.” *You do not need to be the recruiter.*
- *You can refer potential applicants to recruiters using the AIM HIGH App (in this guide).*



3. Reach Out to Your Local Recruiting Squadron

- You can find contact information for your closest recruiting squadron on the [Chapter-Squadron Locator Map](#) (QR 1), on the AIMS website, or the [AFRS Group/Squadron map](#) (QR 2), and **opt-in to our AFA map** as well.



- **What can you do to help?**
 - o Let the Recruiting Commander and senior leadership know where you are located.
 - o Ask them how you can help and what needs they have in areas you may be able to help or serve in.
 - o You, as an individual, can help in ways that can make a difference. Your AFA Chapter and team may be able to help. You and/or your chapter can opt-in and be recognized in our map. See how on [AFA AIMS](#).

What Does it All Mean?

in-flu-ence - (noun) - the capacity to have an effect on the character, development, or behavior of someone or something, or the effect itself.

Military Influencer: A military influencer is someone who shapes and supports the military community through advocacy, inspiration, innovation, and collaboration. This term encompasses a wide range of individuals, including leaders, entrepreneurs, content creators, creatives, and brands connected to the military community.

in-spire - (verb) - to spur on; to exert an animating, enlivening, or exalting influence on; to affect [to influence, move, or guide through inspiration].

A Nation of Influencers Who Can Inspire

We are now in a nation where familiarity with what our military is and who serves is decreasing as eligibility also decreases. It is a math problem: Bigger nation, smaller military, fewer bases. We need our veterans to influence and inspire young Americans to serve. Serving as a civilian, military member active-duty, guardsman, or reservist is meaningful service to our nation and communities.

AIMS Message

- **Our goal** is to *advocate to inspire military service.*
- **Everyone can be an influencer**; every person has a story to tell!
- **As personal connections to the military continue to decline**, the level of understanding of military service to the nation follows.
- **Engage in our communities** to inform *influencers*, parents, civic leaders, educators, and business leaders, that most talented and qualified young Americans should consider military service as a meaningful way to serve.
- **Contact Recruiting Squadrons** and see where there are opportunities to help to inspire military service.
- Develop methods that **refer applicants to recruiters!**

Influencers Are Keys to Future Success

Influencers have a significant role when it comes to young people making decisions that include joining the military. Consider how to **connect** with influencers in your local area, such as coaches, clergy, school counselors, youth organizations, or even social media influencers **to make a difference in your area and nation.**

What it Means to Advocate

ad-vo-cate (noun)

- one who supports or promotes the interests of a cause or group
- one who pleads the cause of another
- one who defends or maintains a cause or proposal

ad-vo-cate (verb)

- to support or argue for (a cause, policy, etc.), to plead in favor of,
- to act as advocate for someone or something

Every Member Participates, Every Member Advocates

- **EDUCATE** the public on the critical need for unrivaled aerospace power and promote aerospace and STEM education for a technically superior and professional workforce to ensure national security.
- **ADVOCATE** and promote aerospace power to favorably shape policy and resourcing decisions to guarantee the strongest aerospace forces in the world.
- **SUPPORT** Airmen, Guardians, and the families of the Total Air Force and Space Force. To include Active Duty, National Guard, Reserve, civilians, and members of the Civil Air Patrol.

The AFA’s ability to influence policy and inspire military service is only as powerful as the number of people involved. **But you can make a difference!** That is why engaging and being *involved* is not just your personal advocacy, it’s about engaging and encouraging other AFA members by your example.

As an AFA member one of your primary opportunities is to develop a network of people with whom you can share your affinity for AFA and our military. If you can connect as a constituent with your *elected officials*, it is all the better. You will rely on these connections to influence and inspire others in diverse settings to develop positive personal relationships that inspire action; to **join AFA as we inspire military service**.

- Neighbors and Associates
- Service Organizations, Chambers of Commerce, School Boards
- Defense Contractors and Businesses
- Military Affairs organizations and other Associations
- Local, State, and US Elected Officials

Calls to Action

- **Tell Your Story** – share your military experience with parents, civic groups, etc.
- **Advocate** for the Air Force and the Space Force and inspire military service.
- **Connect with AFRS Squadron and** with community and Elected Officials.
- **Be an AFA Ambassador** for the Total Force and their families.
- **Support the AFA Mission** – Educate, Advocate, and Support, and *inspire others*.

AFA Advocacy Briefing

- Learn more at AFA [Advocacy Briefing](#).



Key Stakeholder Contributions

Influencers Are Keys to Future Success

Influencers have a significant role when it comes to young people making decisions that include joining the military. Consider how to **connect** with influencers in your local area, such as coaches, clergy, school counselors, youth organizations, or even social media influencers **to make a difference in your area and nation.**

Airmen & Guardians and Their Families

Connect with local communities through visible participation in community activities, volunteer work & speaking opportunities that allow them to tell their AF story. Work with Public Affairs to determine safe/effective ways to tell their stories through social media. Encourage fellow Airmen who are separating to stay on the Total Force team and go to ANG/AFR.

Congress and Other Elected Officials

Understand the significance of recruiting to the AF and support national, state & local programs that support recruiting. Avoid politicizing military service in ways that would alienate potential recruits or influencers.

Veterans

Promote military service by connecting with civic groups, schools, bases, or recruiters who can provide opportunities to *Tell Your Story* for service recognition. Veterans can also talk about the positive impact military service had on their lives, both while in uniform, and after.

Industry/Academia

Support efforts to promote military service as a viable option for talented young Americans. Visibly support serving Guard & Reserve personnel. Vector transitioning students or employees toward exploring service opportunities.

Total Force Public Affairs

Prioritize support to recruiting and seek ways to incorporate recruiting presence, messages, or resource links into communication products & outreach events at all levels. Facilitate more engagements that bring Airmen into the community, and more that bring community influencers and young people onto bases where they can interact with Airmen.

News Media

Provide accurate information to stakeholders by going beyond descriptions of recruiting shortfalls & a small number of negative experiences. Ensure to address changes that are opening service opportunities, as well as the experiences of large numbers of Americans who find value & purpose in military service.

Total Force Recruiters

Utilize media blitz plan, marketing tools and other guidance to maximize potential of making a presence in their area of responsibility.

Civic/Community Leaders

Use connections within the community to bolster local recruiting efforts. Advise commanders, Public Affairs, and recruiters on how to improve existing programs, or recommend new ones.

In Service Recruiters

Emphasize the benefits of continuing to serve and the value prior service members bring to the fight, while highlighting career bonuses, education benefits and low-cost insurance benefits.



Inspire Military Service – Tell Your Story

The approximately 2,400 total force recruiters and staff (Regular AF, ANG, AFR, USSF, & Civilian) assigned to Air Force Recruiting Service stationed across the nation cannot do this alone. This is now a challenge for all veterans and Americans.

This guide is intended to facilitate deliberate communication and engagements in our local communities across the nation. The focus is on *making key influencers of youth aware of the benefits and realities of serving in uniform*, to increase awareness of the challenges of the current recruiting environment, and to encourage other veterans to be more present in their communities by *telling their stories* of service.

All Veterans Can Help – Do You?

- Tell your military story.
- Attend community events and interact with parents, civic leaders, and educators.
- Ask local recruiting squadrons how best to help them and their recruiters.
- Encourage influencers to download the Aim High mobile app to help refer recruits.

Tell Your Story

[Get more info at www.afa.org/AIMS]



My Air or Space Force Story in 30 seconds

I enlisted (or got commissioned through ____ program or joined) in the Air Force in ____ (or ____ years ago) and served for ____ (number of) years.

My favorite part of serving in the Air Force was _____. (Or you can answer this prompt: The Air Force taught me _____.)

My Air or Space Force Story in 2 Minutes

I enlisted (or got commissioned through ____ program or joined) and joined the Air Force in ____ (or ____ years ago).

What motivated me to join the Air Force was the _____.

My job was _____. I served in the Air Force ____ years and had ____ (number) assignments. My favorite assignment was _____ because _____.

My favorite part of serving in the Air Force was _____. The Air Force taught me _____.

Example of “Tell Your Story”



My Story – Pat Nugent

I joined the Air Force during the turbulent times of the Vietnam War with the intention of becoming a jet engine mechanic. However, the needs of the Air Force led me to be trained as a parachute rigger and to deploy to Vietnam.

Despite my initial plans to be a mechanic being sidelined, a unique opportunity for an overseas assignment in England appeared. This overseas experience broadened my horizons and exposed me to European cultures and perspectives. These experiences helped shape who I am.

The Air Force and my firsthand experiences fueled my passion for photography. This hobby eventually evolved into a new Air Force career path demonstrating how a personal interest can lead to unexpected professional opportunities.

A significant turn came with the selection as the team photographer for the USAF Air Demonstration Team, the "Thunderbirds." This role was both thrilling and demanding, capturing the high-energy performances of one of the most prestigious aerial demonstration teams in the world, documenting the awe-inspiring displays in front of a world-wide audience.

My journey didn't end there as my Air Force career progressed, I transitioned into the role of a photojournalist. From documenting humanitarian missions, covering global events and being at the forefront of history, the story played a role for Department of Defense and Air Force decision makers which also included the public.

My career path may have been unconventional but it's a testament to the transformative power of following one's passions. The Air Force provided fantastic opportunity and training. From military conflicts to the heights of aerial performance, my camera documented the Air Force mission and the people who supported it, and enabled the flying to show the value of “Fly, Fight, & Win.”

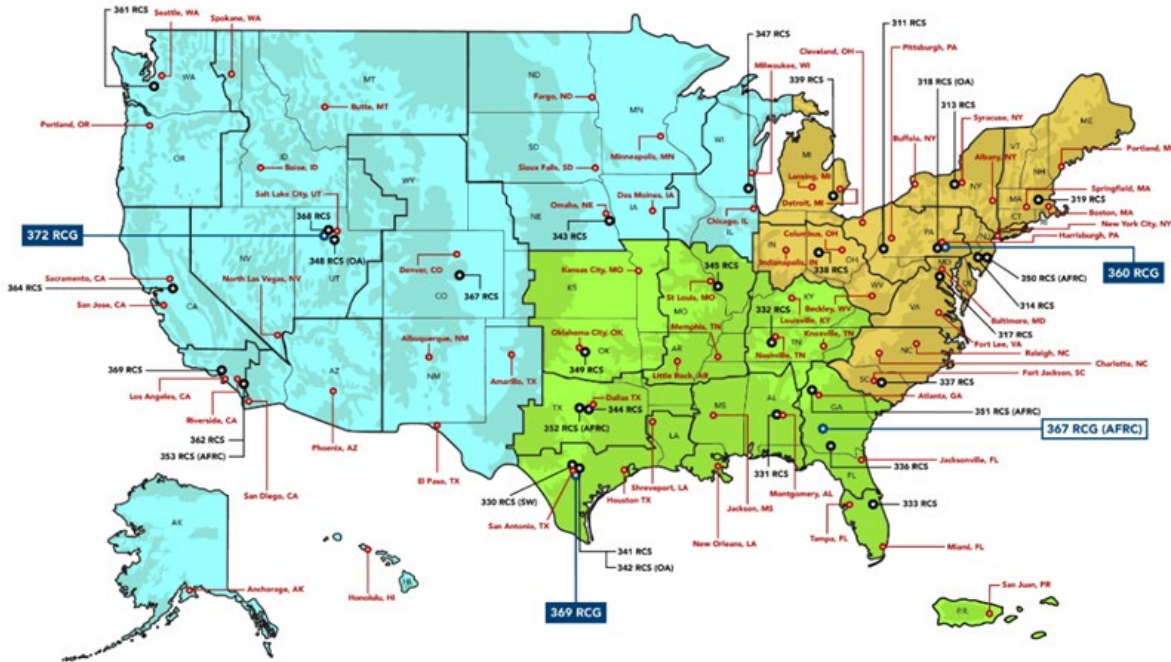
My Air Force journey reminds me that the most unexpected detours lead to the most remarkable destinations.

*#airforce #usairforce #usaf #aimhigh #flyfightwin #spaceforce #ussf #teamspace #digitalspace
#afa #afa_air_space*



Air Force Recruiting Squadron Engagement

The Commander of AFRS has suggested that AFA members and chapters assist, as able, with influencing & inspiring recruiting efforts for Air & Space Forces accessions.



Contact with AFRS Squadrons

The Chapter-Squadron Locator Map provides contact information for recruiting squadrons. This information is taken from the [AFRS locator page](#) and is usually the email and phone number of the squadron commander. Recommend members and chapters use this information to contact the Commander, Senior Enlisted Leader, and/or Marketing Leader as initial points of contact.

We strongly recommend not contacting local recruiters directly until contact has been made with AFRS Squadron leaders and appropriate operational interactions are established. Recruiters are busy running their business – finding eligible applicants desiring an opportunity to serve in the Air & Space Forces. Their ability to call, meet, and be available for you is limited. **Seek guidance from squadron leaders.**

Initial Contact

The initial call is important and could be initiated by you or by an AFRS squadron. The AFRS Commander is telling his squadrons to expect contact from AFA members and chapters. He explained the engagement initiative so they should not be surprised. You may also receive a call from a squadron if you volunteer through the Opt-In process and your contact information is listed on the Chapter-Squadron locator map. In either case the first call may just be a “get-acquainted” call. AFA and AFRS can generate success if we work together. Reach out and let the squadron know AFA members and chapters are available and desire to help.

- Make initial contact with Air Force Recruiting Squadron Commander, Senior Enlisted Leader, and Marketing Manager.
- Share your contact information, your position, and the levels of effort you can provide.
- Gain awareness of the recruiting squadron's area of responsibility, their areas of concern or challenges, and areas where you can assist.
- Keep in mind, many of their recruiting territories are large.
- If you have an upcoming event such as a chapter membership or executive council meeting, you may want to invite the squadron representative.

Even if there are no immediate areas identified for assistance, contact has been made at the leadership level and this will set the stage for engagement such as the activities described below.

Community awareness and support

- Share your community involvement and where you may know city, school, or other leaders who could help in recruiting efforts.

Ask what specific help the Squadron/Recruiter Could Use

- Do not assume what help is beneficial to the squadron and the recruiters. ASK
- See where the recruiting squadrons may want your help; introductions to school officials to discuss program access or support, city official who can help with specific programs, etc.

Recruiter Assistance & Support

- Recruiters can be far away from typical military support and bases. For many it could be the first time in their career they are without commissaries, fitness centers, base support opportunities, etc. You may be able to sponsor or just help with life in the area.
- Suggest ways you can help support the local recruiters.
 - Let them know about local business discounts, help familiarize them with the area.
 - Provide introductions to local resources.
 - Ask questions about what help recruiter's families may need.
 - Suggest entertainment, doctors, military friendly businesses, unique attractions both well and lesser known, and so on.

City and Community Events

- Find out what events recruiters are already engaged in in your area.
 - Examples could be Our Country Salutes, CAP Awards and events, others.
- Ask how AFA members can assist the Recruiters by helping or speaking at an event.

AFRS Recruiting Events & Engagement

- Ask how you and your team can participate to gain increased awareness of recruiting processes and efforts. See what you can learn and then provide better support.
- Ask what events you could brief at with recruiters present to express AFA and its' role in becoming AFA Advocates to Inspire Military Service (AFAAIMS).
 - Briefing materials, etc. are on the AFA AIMS page (www.afa.org/aims), and able to be downloaded and tailored for your needs.

AFA event hosting or participation

- Share the events you are engaged in that you think recruiters may be interested in.
 - Civil Air Patrol, CyberPatriot, StellarXplorer, JROTC, ROTC, STEM activities, school programs (Veteran's Day, etc.), and AFA hosted events (Community Partner events, awards ceremonies, chapter/state and other meetings, etc.).
- Ask about interactions the squadron and local recruiters might like your engagement with.
 - City council, school boards, local businesses, etc.
- Find out what civic organizations AFA member/chapter could provide beneficial introductions for the recruiting team. (Rotary, VFW, PTA, etc.)

Unique Area Engagement

- Share your area one-of-a-kind industry, business, or sightseeing attractions.
- Provide information or introductions to your local congressperson and city officials.
- Generate opportunities with area businesses and activities that are military-centric.

Chapter Meeting Participation (In-person/virtual)

- Invite leadership and local recruiters to chapter meetings.
- Consider targeting areas of recruiting interest up front to minimize recruiter time.
- Share AFA membership benefits, but remember it is voluntary.

Monetary Considerations: Coordinate with Squadron CCs

Recruiter: Recruiters can only accept gifts of \$20 or less and not totaling more than \$50 in a year. Consider this if you are offering anything to a recruiter, like free membership, etc. We have an obligation to help them with the ethical issues required of them. *Work with squadron leadership on the best ways to provide anything of monetary value.*

Events: When AFA members/chapters are paying for events, ensure they are AFA or personally funded. Be cautious and *work with the squadron leadership* to ensure the best way to cover costs.

Larger Gifts: Any AFA or individual gifts over \$20 should be worked with the AFRS/CC on behalf of the Air Force as required. The individual or chapter will need to coordinate with the recruiting squadron commander (CC) and the CC can help coordinate appropriate AFRS/JA (Judge Advocate) requirements with chapter leadership.

Links to Air & Space Forces Recruiting Information

[Air Force Recruiting Service \(AFRS\)](#)

[Air Force – How to Join](#)

[Space Force – How to Join](#)

[AIMS Opt-In Database Explanation](#)

[Air Force FAQs](#)

[Space Force FAQs](#)

Staying Connected

Social media covers many areas and is a means to reach influencers and youth. The ‘Handles’ for Air Force Recruiting Service for both Air & Space Forces are listed below. We hope this helps you stay connected.

Regular Air Force (AF)

Facebook: @USAirForceRecruiting
Twitter/X: @USAFRecruiting
Instagram: @usaf_recruiting
LinkedIn: @UnitedStatesAirForce
YouTube: @USAirForceRecruiting
Snapchat: @usafrecruiting (unable to link)

Air National Guard (ANG)

Facebook: @AirNationalGuardRecruiting
Twitter: @ANG_Recruiting
Instagram: @AirNationalGuardRecruiting

Air Force Reserve (AFR)

Facebook: @AirForceReserveRecruiting
Twitter: @Join_AFRreserve
Instagram: @AirForceReserveRecruiting

United States Space Force (USSF)

Facebook: @GoSpaceForce
Twitter: @GoSpaceForce
Instagram: @GoSpaceForce
YouTube: @SpaceForceRecruiting

Websites and More

For more information about recruiting and our Air & Space Forces on the web: www.airforce.com

For videos and informational clips: www.YouTube.com

- Watch the **BASIC** series and learn about recruiting and basic training. [[BASIC - Episode 01: First Impressions \(4K\) \(youtube.com\)](#)] and then watch more of the series.
- Listen to remarks from the [AFRS Commander & Command Chief Master Sergeant](#).
- You will be amazed by what you can learn and find out; *be sure to validate all you hear!*

Search in YouTube for *Air Force Recruiting* and you will find information about your *Air & Space Forces*, as well as see what others are saying about both.

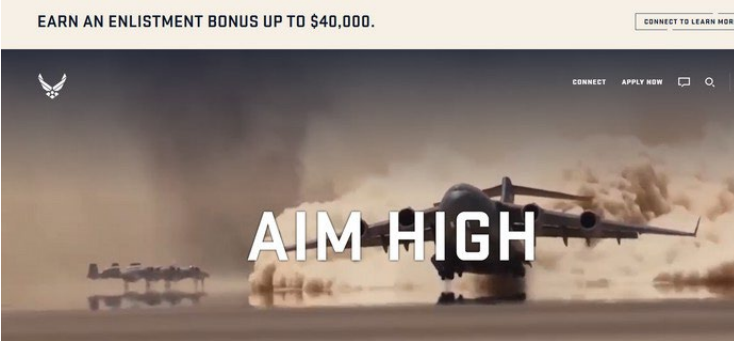
AIM High App

The AIM HIGH App has Frequently Asked Questions, information about military career fields, contains information on *how to contact a recruiter*, *how to refer a candidate to a recruiter*, and more. Use this link on your computer or go to your APP Store and enter “AIM High” and **download the app to your phone**.



[Aim High App - U.S. Air Force](#)

Resources

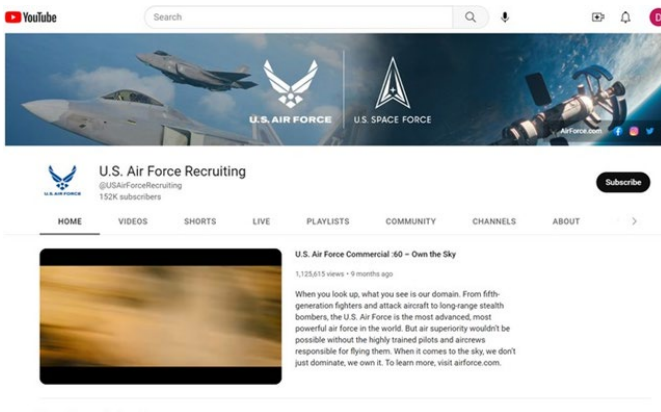


[AirForce.com](https://www.airforce.com)

Info on pay, careers, benefits, the different components & more!

Why Join Benefits. Ask Your Employer to Match

1. Ask for a starting salary of at least \$1918.00 a month with assurance of frequent pay raises.
2. Request a rent-free apartment / house (if married) with all utilities paid and free meals.
3. Ask for minimum of 30 days PAID vacation per year, plus weekends, 11 federal holidays off!
4. Demand FULL medical and dental coverage at no cost to you with unlimited paid sick leave!
5. Hire you with no experience, provide college accredited job training, while earning full pay!
6. Request 100% college tuition while you work for them and attendance accommodations.
7. Request free MEMBERSHIP to state-of-the-art fitness facility and to work out during work!
8. Demand a low-cost life insurance package providing up to \$500,000 of coverage!
9. Insist they provide you with a 401K with an automatic 1% investment of your pay (not out of your pay), even if you do not contribute.
10. Tell them you might be leaving in 4 or 5 years and expect full tuition and fees for in-state public schools, monthly housing allowance, books & supplies stipend.
11. Retire payments at 20 years equal to 2% times number years of service equal to 40% of pay.



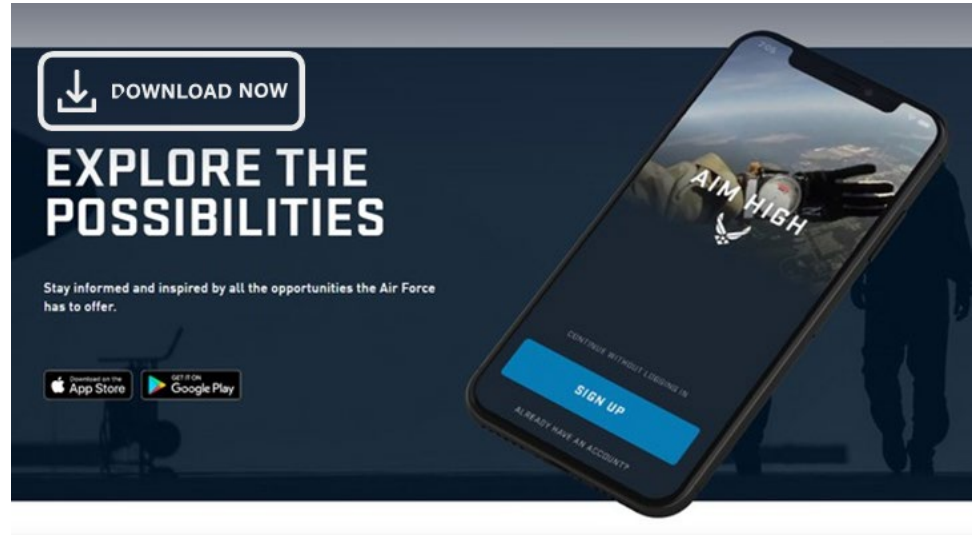
YouTube Channel

U.S. Air Force Recruiting

Hosts a variety of Air & Space-themed content that can help educate potential recruits about life in the USAF/USSF and see how our Airmen become leaders, innovators, and warriors every day and embrace some of the most future-forward technology on the planet.

Aim High App

Potential applicants can explore careers, play games, and keep up with Air Force news. Anyone can refer leads to recruiters through the app.



The Aim High App has information for those who inspire others to military service and are trying to answer questions from moms & dads, friends, business leaders, and even youth.

Wonder about Air Force Components, careers & benefits, education & training, lifestyles? The app has FAQs for all of these. You can find answers to those questions and more.

Looking for videos to show family members, friends, and others about Air & Space Forces? The app has videos on Air Force Recruiting from YouTube covering all the components. Videos on Space Force are included as well.

Want to find the nearest recruiter to an interested applicant? You can use the find option based on your applicant's interest whether it is basic enlistment, special warfare, officer, or other.

Looking for links to Air Force, or to San Antonio, Basic Training, education opportunities, for the Space Force, or even fitness, nutrition, and weight info for joining? The app has info on these too!

Our end goal is to eventually refer applicants to recruiters, the app does that!

The AIM High App is a Valuable Resource – Use it!



AIMS Feedback & Incorporation of Lessons Learned

AIMS efforts are works in progress. To improve the AIMS Toolbox, please provide feedback on the material, your work, and efforts, and AFRS squadron & recruiter interactions.

If you organize or are involved in an event, share what you did with the AIMS team. Share your ideas and work with others, and lessons learned.

Please provide:

- 1) Type of event
- 2) Number of people needed to run event
- 3) Number of people who attended
- 4) Any costs or resources required
- 5) Desired outcome
- 6) Actual outcome
- 7) Suggestions on how others could improve what you did

A simple word document or email will help us update our toolbox and provide suggestions for others. Please send to AIMS.Communications@afa.org and AIMS.Chair@afa.org.

Please provide input to [AFA In Action](#) to publicize your efforts. AFA In Action has an AIMS category and sharing your efforts will inspire others and show AFA engagement and impact.

Your Engagement Matters

We know you are deeply engaged in other areas in your community: the Air & Space Forces Association, your family, worship, and work, to name a few. All these areas are opportunities to engage and to share your story, tell about what you did, and to let others know that “You” still feel the military, and our Air & Space Forces are viable job opportunities and careers for a select group of qualified volunteers who decide to serve.

Contact AFA AIMS

For additional help, or if you have suggestions, please contact us.

AIMS.Communications@afa.org

