

**BY ORDER OF THE  
SUPERINTENDENT**

**HQ UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
ACADEMY INSTRUCTION**



**36-2008**

**29 DECEMBER 2025**

**Personnel**

**CADET SPONSOR PROGRAM**

**COMPLIANCE WITH THIS PUBLICATION IS MANDATORY**

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This instruction implements Department of the Air Force Policy Directive (DAFPD) 36-20, *Recruiting Programs and Accession of Military Personnel*. This instruction outlines the procedures governing the Cadet Sponsor Program and applies to everyone involved in this program. This publication does not apply to Air Force Reserve Command (AFRC) units or the Air National Guard (ANG). Refer recommended changes and conflicts between this and other publications to, the Commandant of Cadets (CW), Sponsor Program (CWTM), 2354 Fairchild Drive, Suite 4A14, USAF Academy CO 80840 on Department of the Air Force (DAF) Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*. The authority to waive requirements in this publication are identified with a Tier 3 (T-3) number following the compliance statement. See DAFMAN 90-161, *Publishing Processes and Procedures*, for a description of the authorities associated with the Tier numbers. Submit requests for waivers through the chain of command to the appropriate Tier waiver approval authority. The waiver authority for non-tiered requirements in this publication is USAFA CW Training (CWT). Ensure all records created as a result of processes described in this publication are maintained in accordance with (IAW) Air Force Instruction 33-322, *Records Management and Information Governance Program*, and disposed of IAW Air Force Records Management System (AFRIMS) Records Disposition Schedule (RDS).

## ***SUMMARY OF CHANGES***

The application process to become a sponsor has been updated. This update introduces the requirement to have an annual background check for sponsor families. This version also aims to clarify and align the commander's intent of the Cadet Sponsor Program.

**1. Cadet Sponsor Program:** The United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) Cadet Sponsor Program encourages active duty, retired and reserve officers, noncommissioned officers, USAFA alumni, and Department of Defense (DoD) civilians to become cadet mentors. Through personal involvement, cadets interact with individuals who counsel and advise on military life and the positive aspects of a military career. Priority assignments are provided to personnel associated with the military and USAFA, however, non-DoD affiliated civilians may be accepted.

**2. Defining the Program:** The program provides cadets with a home away from home during their time at USAFA while also exposing them to military lifestyle and positive adult role models. Sponsors and cadets should develop an individual and professional relationship with their sponsor family. The program is offered to cadets for the duration of their time at USAFA, but is especially encouraged for fourth class cadets. Cadets and sponsors may each submit "by-name" requests and CW will attempt to honor these requests. Cadet requests will always have priority. If "by-name" requests are not submitted, CW will use common interests/criteria, collected from both sponsor and cadet to best match cadets with sponsors. Cadets always have the option to opt out or back into the program for any reason during their time at USAFA. In the event cadets would like to request a new sponsor, they may contact the Cadet Sponsor Office to request a family that might be a better fit.

### **3. Determining Eligible Hosts and Sponsors:**

3.1. **Residence Area.** Sponsors must reside within a 50-mile radius of USAFA. Requests by parents who wish to sponsor their cadet and live outside the greater Colorado Springs area will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis (T-3 waiver required); however, their residence should be within a sixty-minute drive from USAFA.

3.2. **Marital Status, Sex, and Age.** Single sponsors are only permitted to sponsor cadets of the same sex. All sponsors, military and civilian, must be at least 28 years old. Any requests for exceptions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis (T-3 waiver required).

3.3. **Military Status.** Active duty, Reserve, National Guard, or Retired Officers (O-3 and above), and non-commissioned officers (E-6 and above) are eligible to be sponsors. DoD Civilians (GS-5 and above, or equivalent) are also eligible to be sponsors.

3.4. **The following personnel are not eligible to participate in the sponsor program:** HQ USAFA, Superintendent (HQ USAFA/CC); HQ USAFA, Vice Superintendent (HQ USAFA/CV); Commandant of Cadets (USAFA/CW); Vice Commandant of Cadets (USAFA/CWV). Group Squadron Command Officers (Gq/CC), Deputy Gp/CCs, Group Senior Enlisted Leaders are not eligible to be sponsors; this includes spouses of the aforementioned personnel.

3.4.1. Squadron Commanders (Sg/CC) and AMTs are only eligible to sponsor cadets outside their respective groups. If any of the above personnel have a son or daughter attending USAFA and would like to be their official sponsor, a T-3 waiver will be required.

**3.5. Relatives of Cadets.** Parents, regardless of their marital status, may sponsor their own cadet(s). All relatives of cadets wanting to sponsor must reside within the boundaries cited in [Paragraph 3.1](#) and comply with all registration requirements, including annual background check.

**3.6. Civilian Sponsors.** Prospective sponsors must complete the questionnaire provided with the sponsor application package referenced in [Paragraph 3.8](#). Additionally, civilians from the local community must submit three letters of support (a family introduction letter and two letters of character reference from religious, work, or neighborhood affiliations). USAFA graduates separated from the Air Force (not active duty or retired) under honorable conditions are required to submit one letter of family introduction; character references are not required for USAFA graduates.

**3.7. Waivers for Sponsors.** Sponsors must request waivers for the following: (1) Residence is located outside the established 50 mile radius boundary, (2) if they are single and requesting a cadet of the opposite sex (if not related to the sponsor, an MFR from the squadron commander of the requested cadet will also be required), and (3) Sponsor is active duty military or a current DoD civilian and does not meet the age or rank requirement in [Paragraphs 3.2](#) and [3.3](#).

**3.8. Application.** All applicants, regardless of military affiliation, must complete an initial sponsor questionnaire (with the option to renew annually) and submit a family introduction letter. The questionnaire includes contact information to be used by 10th Security Forces Squadron to conduct an annual background check. The requested data also assists CWTM in matching cadets to sponsors.

**3.9. Training Requirements.** Sponsors are required to receive initial and annual refresher sponsor program training. At a minimum, the required training will include Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR), Officer Development, Religious Accommodation, Cadet Life Overview, Cadet/Sponsor Family experiences, and any additional resources available to cadets. Refresher training is required every year; this will be conducted either in person or via virtual training link.

**3.10. Background Checks and DBIDS passes.** DBIDS passes/badges allow civilian sponsors to enter the installation through both South & North Gate entrances for the purpose of picking up and dropping off cadets. DBIDS passes are issued only to the primary sponsors and only after a favorable background check has been received.

3.10.1. All applicants, regardless of military affiliation and status, must undergo an annual criminal background check conducted by the 10th Security Forces Squadron; a favorable finding is required to be approved as a sponsor. Annual background checks are required for every individual over the age of 18 residing in the sponsor's home.

3.10.2. DBIDS passes will be issued for a maximum duration of one year. The DBIDS passes do not provide access to the cadet area. DBIDS passes will only be renewed after the following have been accomplished: training requirement has been met (every year), receipt of favorable criminal background check, and must currently have a cadet(s) assigned. DBIDS Passes/Badges will not be issued to individuals who do not have cadets officially assigned to the family. There are no military discounts associated with being a DBIDS Pass/Badge holder.

#### **4. Administering the Program:**

##### **4.1. Commandant of Cadets, Training Support Directorate (CWT) will:**

- 4.1.1. Serve as the approving authority for all waiver requests pertaining to this instruction.
- 4.1.2. Serve as the approving authority for removal of sponsors when deemed necessary.

##### **4.2. Commandant of Cadets, Support Division (CWTM) will:**

- 4.2.1. Recruit eligible members of the local community interested in joining the Sponsor Program with the intent to sponsor cadets in their homes.
- 4.2.2. Honor requests for cadets and sponsors either by name or areas of interest. Cadet requests receive priority placement. If USAFA/CWTM is unable to honor a special request, the cadet will be matched with a sponsor based on common interests.
- 4.2.3. Obtain personal preferences and areas of special interest from incoming fourth-class cadets.
- 4.2.4. Coordinate with Public Affairs (HQ/USAFA/CM) on promotional material and news releases for the program.
- 4.2.5. Appropriately marking all information collected from the sponsor in accordance with Privacy Act policies. All maintainers must be trained on their responsibilities to protect personally identifiable information (PII) from unauthorized use and disclosure.
- 4.2.6. Provide Sq/CCs or AMTs a list of sponsors for all cadets in their squadron, as requested by the Sq/CC or AMT.
- 4.2.7. Provide sponsors and cadets updated information on program policies and responsibilities, as necessary.
- 4.2.8. Provide initial sponsor training to new sponsors and annual refresher training for returning sponsors. At a minimum, all training must include Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR), Officer Development, Religious Accommodation, Cadet Life Overview, Cadet/Sponsor Family experiences, and any additional resources available to cadets.
- 4.2.9. Monitor, evaluate, identify, and correct any concerns or issues within the Cadet Sponsor program.
- 4.2.10. Recommend the removal of sponsors who permit, condone, and/or are aware of cadet misconduct and fail to cooperate with the Academy in investigating misconduct.
- 4.2.11. Survey the upper classes on an annual basis to verify the accuracy of their assigned sponsor information on file.
- 4.2.12. Brief cadets about the sponsor program during Basic Cadet Training (BCT) and on an as needed basis thereafter.
- 4.2.13. Assign all incoming fourth-class cadets a sponsor for Annual Basic Cadet Day Out Event.
- 4.2.14. Assign all "Opt In" Cadets a sponsor family within their first year at USAFA; and as needed thereafter. Cadets are able to "Opt Out" of the program to forgo a sponsor family

assignment. If at any time they would like to “Opt In” and would like to be assigned to a sponsor family, they should contact the Sponsor Program Office with this request.

**4.3. Squadron Commanders will:**

- 4.3.1. Ensure cadets understand their responsibility to comply with all policies and instructions governing their conduct while they are with their sponsors.
- 4.3.2. Encourage and allow cadets to contact their sponsors within the timeframe provided on assignment letters.
- 4.3.3. Authorize (when appropriate) passes to visit sponsors, according to the applicable USAFA/CW guidance.
- 4.3.4. Identify ineffective or unsuitable sponsors and recommend their removal from the sponsor program.
- 4.3.5. Provide all cadets in their squadron the opportunity to request a sponsor at any time throughout their time at USAFA.

TONY D. BAUERNFEIND  
Lieutenant General, USAF  
Superintendent

**Attachment 1****GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION*****References***

DAFPD 36-20, *Recruiting Programs and Accession of Military Personnel*, 10 March 2024

DAFMAN 90-161, *Publishing Processes and Procedures*, 17 October 2023

AFI 33-322, *Records Management and Information Governance Program*, 22 March 2020

***Adopted Forms***

DAF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*

***Acronyms and Abbreviations***

**AF**—Air Force

**AFMAN**—Air Force Manual

**AFI**—Air Force Instruction

**AFPD**—Air Force Policy Directive

**AMT**—Academy Military Trainer

**BCT**—Basic Cadet Training

**DBIDS**—Defense Biometric Information System

**DoD**—Department of Defense

**RDS**—Records Disposition Schedule

**SAPR**—Sexual Assault Prevention Response

**Sq/CC**—Squadron Commander

**USAFA**—United States Air Force Academy

**O-3**—Officer Pay Grade; example: USAF Captain

**E-6**—Enlisted Pay Grade; example: USAF Technical Sergeant

**GS-5**—Federal Government employee; General Schedule Grade 5