

Air Force Association's CyberPatriot National Youth Cyber Education Program



CyberPatriot: How it Works (All Service)

Air Force Association



CyberPatriot is the premier national youth cyber education program. It was created to inspire high school and middle school students toward careers in cybersecurity or other science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines critical to our nation's future. The program was created by the Air Force Association. The Northrop Grumman Foundation is the presenting sponsor.

THE NATIONAL YOUTH CYBER DEFENSE COMPETITION

What makes up a team?

Each CyberPatriot team requires a coach, usually a teacher or adult leader of the team's sponsoring organization. Coaches need no special technical background, and coaching a CyberPatriot team is not restricted to instructors of technical subjects like math or science. Any teacher or youth organization leader with the desire to help students learn something new, exciting and relevant can be a great CyberPatriot coach!

In addition to the coach, a team is made up of two to six students (5 competitors, 1 alternate). Students must be registered with the CyberPatriot Program office and must be a member of the JROTC, Civil Air Patrol, or Naval Sea Cadet Corps program they are competing with. All cyber teaching materials are provided, and there is no course or skill prerequisite for the program. Any student with the interest can join a team and be successful.

In cases where a team needs help with computer basics, the team Coach can request help from qualified Technical Mentors. Technical Mentors are local volunteers who possess appropriate IT knowledge and skills. Background checks are required of all Technical Mentors in our mentor network.

What does a team need to participate?

One or two computers and an Internet connection are required for occasional weekend use during the online portions of the competition. Computer hardware requirements are modest. The computer technical requirements are available on www.uscyberpatriot.org. In the event that the proper equipment or Internet connection is not available, CyberPatriot will assist in attempting to provide possible leads in locating equipment or providing alternate Internet access (e.g. AT&T Air Cards). CyberPatriot's goal is to make sure that every team that wants to participate can participate.

High school JROTC / CAP/ Sea Cadet Corps and middle school CAP teams pay no registration fee. Other middle school teams pay \$195. In return, each registered team receives access to the Microsoft Developers Network Academic Alliance software. This allows the team to download a number of operating systems and productivity tools that can be used to prepare for the competition, a benefit that alone is worth several thousand dollars. Each registered team member also receives a CyberPatriot participant kit. Past kits have included a bag, t-shirt, commemorative coin, and official competitor's pin.

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What training materials do we need?

Although coaches are welcome to supplement the provided teaching materials as they wish, all materials necessary for a successful competition are provided on the CyberPatriot website. Coaches are encouraged to use the provided materials not solely for use in preparing their team for competition, but also to educate all students in their organization about good cyber security practices and safe computer and Internet use.

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How does competition work?

There are two possible divisions in which JROTC, CAP, and Sea Cadet teams can compete:

- **All Service Division:** High school JROTC Programs / CAP squadrons / Naval Sea Cadet Corps units
- **Middle School Division:** Open to teams of middle school students

Prior to each round, teams download “virtual image” representations of operating systems with known cybersecurity vulnerabilities. The team’s assignment is to find the vulnerabilities while keeping specified computer functions (e.g., email) working. Team progress is recorded by a central CyberPatriot scoring system.

In the All Service Division, teams of the same service are scored within their own category. The categories are: Air Force JROTC, Army JROTC, Navy JROTC, Marine Corps JROTC, Civil Air Patrol, and Sea Cadet Corps. Registration is free for all teams.

After two online qualification rounds, scores are added together to determine team placement into one of three tiers for the State Round: Platinum: (Top 30% of each category), Gold (Middle 40% of each category), or Silver (remaining 30% of each category). After the online State Round, the top six teams in each of their categories, and the top six highest State Round scores among the remaining teams, regardless of category, advance as Wild Cards to the Category Round.

The top two Platinum tier teams from each category and one Wild Card advance, all-expenses paid, to the in-person National Finals Competition held at National Harbor, Maryland. There, the 13 All Service finalist teams compete face-to-face to defend virtual networks from a professional aggressor team. Winners of the National Finals are awarded scholarship grants.

The structure of the Middle School competition is slightly different. After two qualification rounds, the top 50 percent of middle school teams advance to the Semifinals Round. From there, the top three teams advance to the National Finals Competition.

For more information or to register before the October 10, 2014 deadline, visit www.uscyberpatriot.org or call 877-885-5716.

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