

JOINT CIVILIAN ORIENTATION CONFERENCE FACT SHEET

1. **GENERAL.** The Joint Civilian Orientation Conference (JCOC) is a weeklong, multi-Service orientation program for civilian public opinion leaders who have limited knowledge of national defense issues. JCOC participants attend briefings in the Pentagon given by the highest levels of Department of Defense (DoD) civilian and military leadership. The participants then spend the rest of the conference in the field with all of the Military Services observing exercises, firing weapons, and participating in training. It is a program in which the Secretary of Defense takes a personal interest and is the only civilian orientation program that he sponsors. It is the oldest existing Pentagon program, having been held 66 times since 1948.

2. **OBJECTIVES.** The overall purpose is to increase public understanding of national defense through a forum of free exchange among influential citizens, DoD officials, and military leadership. Specific objectives are to:

- a. Acquaint participants with the strength and readiness of the U.S. Armed Forces through personal observation of Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard activities;
- b. Facilitate the candid exchange of information on defense matters between the Secretary of Defense and JCOC participants; and
- c. Help the American public obtain a better understanding of national defense policies and programs through opinion leaders who return to their communities and share firsthand observations and knowledge gained during the Conference.

3. **CONFERENCE.** JCOC has two phases:

- a. **Pentagon Phase.** JCOC participants meet with senior defense officials in Washington to discuss national defense matters from a strategic perspective. Defense participants normally include the Secretary of Defense, the Secretaries and Service Chiefs of the Military Departments, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
- b. **Field Phase.** JCOC participants visit military commands headquartered in the United States to observe activities and operations of each Service. The locations of the field trips are determined each year and will be in the continental United States.

4. **NOMINATIONS.**

- a. **Sources.** Nominations are solicited from major offices, military commands, and the Military Departments within DoD, as well as the U.S. Coast Guard (in view of its wartime mission with DoD), and JCOC alumni.

b. Eligibility. Nominees are regionally or nationally influential citizens from across the country. They neither possess special knowledge of DoD nor have existing strong relationships with senior members of the military. The purpose of JCOC is educational. The goal is to reach individuals who have neutral, negative, or unformed opinions on DoD or the U.S. Military. Since the program is directed toward people with little or no exposure to DoD, nominees should not have been exposed to any of the services' VIP, civic leader or distinguished visitor tours. Individuals who have had special flights on military aircraft as civilians or possess a well-rounded familiarity with an entity within DoD are not eligible for JCOC. The selection panel will not consider nominations of individuals with significant military knowledge. JCOC alumni are ineligible to participate in JCOC. Other excluded persons include those working for, retired from, or drawing any kind of paycheck from the federal government and employees of government contractors whose primary area or responsibility is military related.

1. Nomination and selection procedures are designed to bring together a geographical, occupational, and cultural cross-section of influential Americans who are leaders in their fields. JCOC participants routinely include opinion leaders such as presidents of universities and colleges; publishers/editors of newspapers; others with management positions in print and broadcast media; published authors/syndicated columnists; national association and regional leaders of professional, minority and women's organizations; and CEOs and senior officials of private enterprises with regional or national reach.

2. Nominations of rising state and local elected and appointed officials are encouraged. We also encourage nominations of leaders representing a broad spectrum of issue areas. Examples: the law, medicine, business and finance, religion, education, the media, philanthropies, the environment, public service, civil rights, minority organizations, women's groups, and local, regional and state government.

3. JCOC is a non-partisan program. Federally elected officials or candidates who will be in campaign status are ineligible. Eligible elected officials (local, state, regional) who will be in a campaign status during the JCOC program are not eligible for nomination.

4. Because more than 400 nominations are received each year, and only 60 slots are available for each conference, the selection process is extremely competitive. Selections are based on the qualifications of the nominees as

determined by an inter-Service selection panel, not by the rank or the position of the nominator.

c. **Confirmation of Intent.** Nominators should speak directly with their nominees prior to nomination to establish that minimum basic eligibility requirements are met and to ensure that if selected they will accept the invitation, barring an emergency. Nominees must also be clearly informed that their nomination is not a guarantee of selection.

5. **SELECTION.** Nominating components receive information on the status of their nominees after the invitation list is compiled.

6. **FUNDING.** JCOC is financially self-supporting, except for escort officers' per diem expenses during the Conference and routine and recurring conference-associated expenses such as mailing costs, official film processing, notebooks and items of this nature. Participants pay a pro rata registration fee (\$2,500 for JCOC 67/68) to cover meals, lodging, receptions and incidental expenses associated with the Conference. A non-refundable deposit of \$400 is due with each acceptance. Each participant also pays the cost of his/her transportation to the start of the JCOC and back to the place of origin. Transportation between Washington and the military commands visited during a JCOC is arranged on routinely scheduled military training flights. JCOC registration fees are determined on a conference-by-conference basis.

7. **MANAGEMENT.** The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs is the DoD proponent for JCOC. Within that office, the office of the Directorate for Programs and Community Relations and Public Liaison is responsible for the orchestration and execution of JCOC.

8. **POINTS OF CONTACT.** If you have questions about JCOC or the nominating procedure, please call the Coast Guard JCOC Coordinator, LT Brad Terrill, at (202) 267-0929 or <mailto:bterrill@comdt.uscg.mil>.