

# Direct Commission Lawyer – Selected Reserve Program

*Use your legal expertise to serve your country.*



We are a small yet dedicated workforce based who practice law, support the Coast Guard, and serve our nation. We are the uniformed lawyers of the U.S. Coast Guard.

Coast Guard reserve judge advocates are commissioned officers, licensed attorneys, and leaders who support the Coast Guard and its members every day. Coast Guard reserve judge advocates augment active duty members and are Always Ready to deploy to disaster sites to provide critical on-site legal support during Coast Guard contingency operations.

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## Application Deadlines

Application deadlines fall in the summer.

You can find the latest deadlines at <https://www.uscg.mil/Resources/Legal/>. You should connect with a recruiting office *at least* two to three months in advance of the application deadline. It may take several months to complete all pre-selection panel requirements, including compiling your application documents and completing your commissioning physical.

## Experience

- **Gain immediate experience.** You'll receive more leadership, sooner. We elevate our lawyers to positions of leadership early in their career.
- **Practice law in diverse areas.** Coast Guard legal supports all the Coast Guard's 11 statutory missions from search and rescue to drug interdiction to maritime environmental protection.
- **Serve in great locations.** The vast majority of legal jobs are in major, coastal U.S. cities.
- **Work with an outstanding team.** CGJAG is a very small community of close-knit practitioners that support each other and the Coast Guard's people.

## Benefits

*Becoming a Coast Guard judge advocate is personally, professionally, and financially rewarding. You'll receive financial and other benefits from the Coast Guard that aren't offered by other employers.*

### Competitive Salary

- Weekend drill pay starts at \$587.80
- Enter the Coast Guard as an officer at an advanced pay grade (Lieutenant Junior Grade, O-2)
- Receive a pay raise every one to two years

### Other Financial Benefits

- Low cost medical and dental coverage for you and your family
- ★ Low-cost life insurance coverage
- Retirement savings Plan—the Thrift Savings Plan—with government contribution
- VA home loan eligibility after qualifying time in service

### Work Life Balance

- Military exchange and commissary privileges
- Part-time service allows you to work full time in a civilian career or pursue an education

### Advance Your Education

- Opportunity to receive the Post-9/11 GI Bill to help you pay for school

## Service Obligation

Four-years in the reserves.

## Appointment Grade

Lieutenant Junior Grade (O-2)

## Locations

Judge advocates are assigned to legal offices across the U.S.

*Primary legal office locations include*

- Washington, DC
- Charleston, SC
- Boston, MA
- Norfolk/Portsmouth, VA
- ★ Miami, FL
- New Orleans, LA
- Yorktown, VA
- Cleveland, OH
- Alameda, CA
- New London, CT
- Cape May, NJ
- Seattle, WA
- Honolulu, HI
- Juneau, AK



*Location of CGJAG presence at various Coast Guard Offices throughout the Nation.*

## Practice Areas

As a reserve judge advocate, you will work in diverse practice areas throughout your career.

*Practice areas include*

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- Maritime and International Law
  - Administrative Law
  - Claims and Litigation
  - Member Advocacy and Legal Assistance
  - Intelligence and Information Law
  - Fiscal Law
  - Employment Law
  - Ethics
  - Real Property
  - Military Command Advice

## Eligibility Requirements

### Eligibility Criteria

- *Age:*
  - Minimum 20, Maximum 40, as of 30 September of the fiscal year in which the selection panel convenes.
- *Education:*
  - Graduate of an American Bar Association (ABA) accredited law school
- *Licensure:* Must be admitted to practice before the bar of the highest court of any State, the District of Columbia, or U.S. Territory.
- *Citizenship:* Must be a U.S. citizen.
- *Medical Requirements:* Must meet commissioning physical standards, including maximum height-weight requirements.
- *Prior Military Service:* No more than 12 years of non-Coast Guard active-duty military service. Members currently in another military

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service (or Reserve) must have an approved DD368 (conditional release).

Visit <https://www.gocoastguard.com/get-started/eligibility-requirements> for more information.

## Application Instructions

### 1. Contact the Coast Guard Legal Program (CGJAG)

Contact the CGJAG Accessions Manager at [CoastGuardDCL@uscg.mil](mailto:CoastGuardDCL@uscg.mil) if you'd like help connecting with a Coast Guard recruiter to start the application process. We can also connect you with a local judge advocate for information and advice.

Visit <https://www.uscg.mil/Resources/Legal/> for general information about the legal program, direct commission programs, and application deadlines.

### 2. Determine Application Deadline

Application deadlines fall in the summer. You can find the latest deadlines at <https://www.uscg.mil/Resources/Legal/>. You should connect with a recruiting office *at least* two to three months in advance of the application deadline. It may take several months to complete all pre-selection panel requirements, including compiling your application documents and completing your commissioning physical.

### 3. Contact a Recruiter

You must apply through your local Recruiting Office, regardless of whether you are a current Coast Guard member, a civilian, or a member of another branch of the Armed Forces. The CGJAG Accessions Manager can help you get connected.

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Visit <https://www.gocoastguard.com/connect> to identify your closest Coast Guard Recruiting Office.

4. Recruiter Screening

Your recruiter will conduct a screening to ensure you meet eligibility requirements. The screening process will validate that you meet the specific set of criteria (academic, financial, character, dependency, etc.) for your program. Your local recruiter will determine if you may be eligible to apply for any waivers based on your individual circumstances.

5. Complete Application Package

Your recruiter will provide the Officer Program Application form and checklist associated with your program of interest. Complete all application forms and assemble all application material.

**Application Package**

Components of the application package include:

- *Resume*: maximum of 2 pages
- *Personal Narrative*: maximum of 2 pages, single-spaced, signed by the applicant, 12-point font, Times New Roman
- *Letters of Recommendation*: maximum of 2 pages and maximum of 3 total letters, signed by the author, addressed to “USCG Officer Selection Panel”
- *All Official College and Law School Transcripts*: must include all institutions, earned credits, and semester hours, including Joint Service Transcripts
- *College Diploma(s) or Official Letter* from degree granting institution proving conferment of degree 30 days prior to the Reserve Officer Indoctrination Course (ROCI)

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- *Personal Awards and Recognized Achievements*: 1 award per page, maximum 5 pages (certifications; academic, athletic, leadership, service, etc. awards; public recognition; letters of appreciation, etc.)
- *Proof of Bar Membership*
- *Legal Writing Sample*: maximum of 10 single-spaced pages
- *Commanding Officer's Endorsement*: maximum 2 pages, signed, New Page Memorandum format, content compliant with 7.B.2. of the Coast Guard Recruiting Manual (COMDTINST M1100.2 (series)) (current Coast Guard members only)
- *Officer and/or Enlisted Evaluations/FITREPs* for last 3 years prior to panel (current or prior military service only)
- *Bar Status Worksheet*: a Coast Guard-created document to indicate your bar status

*Applicants will work with a Coast Guard recruiter to complete all other application requirements.*

## 6. Submit Application Package

Submit your application and supporting documents to your recruiter by the application deadline.

## 7. Medical/Physical Screening

Meeting accession height and weight standards and passing a commissioning physical are required as part of the eligibility screening process. Your recruiter will assist with scheduling the physical exam.

If you are currently serving in the military, your physical must be completed with a military treatment facility (MTF). All civilian applicants will receive their physical through a local Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS).

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Your recruiter will provide you with a comprehensive questionnaire to examine your medical history and submit to MEPS. If you answer “yes” to any questions, more documentation will likely be necessary. To expedite the process, it’s important to start gathering medical documents early.

If you’re eligible for a waiver, your recruiter will provide information about submitting a waiver.

8. Interview

Once your application is complete and your recruiter has ascertained program eligibility, they will be scheduled for an interview with three Coast Guard officers who will provide a recommendation to the selection panel on your potential to become a Coast Guard officer. Recruiters coordinate interview boards with local units. At least one member of your interview panel will be a Coast Guard judge advocate.

9. Recruiter Review

★ Your recruiter will conduct a final review of your application for completeness, incorporate the interview recommendation, and submit the application for consideration by the selection panel. ★

10. Selection Panel

The selection panel consists of Coast Guard officers who will review your application package, including your interviewers’ recommendation, and make a selection decision.

The selection panel typically meets in late August.

11. Selection Notification:

Unofficial primary and alternate selection results are typically announced approximately two months after the panel starts. Your recruiter will notify you of your selection status.

*If you have any questions or concerns throughout the application process, please contact the Coast Guard Legal Program's Accessions Manager at [CoastGuardDCL@uscg.mil](mailto:CoastGuardDCL@uscg.mil).*

## Accession and Training Overview

### 1. Accessions and Assignments

If selected, you will receive information about onboarding, commissioning, and the assignment process around December.

Selectees submit preferences for their initial legal assignment in February and are provided with their assignments a month or two later, in March or April.

The billet selection process is collaborative, designed to consider both the member and service needs. However, the Coast Guard is a military organization, so service needs remain paramount when determining assignments. Most legal billets are 3 years in length.

### 2. Reserve Officer Candidate Indoctrination (ROCI)

Selectees will commission as a Lieutenant Junior Grade (O-2) after completing Reserve Officer training, usually in the summer following selection. ROCI is a 5-week training course at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut.

ROCI is designed to test candidates physically, mentally, and academically. Candidates' days are filled with physical training, academics, inspections, and team-building exercises. ROCI consists of four phases: indoctrination, junior phase, senior phase, and transition phase. Each phase simulates the challenges of serving as an officer, and the duration of each phase is dictated by the company's performance.

### 3. Reporting to Your First Unit

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DCL-SELRES members typically begin drilling after graduating from ROCI around October. They do not attend Naval Justice School (NJS) or participate in an operational familiarization tour after graduation. However, opportunities to attend NJS later are available. Generally, all reservists must drill one weekend a month and two weeks out of the year.

