

1: Qualifications

Do I need a college degree?

Although most audition winners have earned undergraduate degrees, a college degree is not required to become a member. Candidates are offered positions solely on the basis of a successful audition.

Are there physical requirements?

To be considered for a position with an Air Force Band you must be between the ages of 18 and 39. Additionally, you must not have a medical condition that would prevent you from enlisting in the United States Air Force. Waivers for medical conditions may be applied for if you do not meet these requirements, but are decided on a case by case basis and no guarantee can be made that they will be granted.

As a member of the Air Force, you must maintain high standards of personal appearance and physical fitness. You will be required to pass bi-annual physical fitness evaluations and will be subject to random drug urinalysis testing at any time during your enlistment. Prior to your audition, you will be asked to demonstrate that you fall within the Air Force maximum allowable [weight standards](#).

Will I need a security clearance?

Members of Air Force Bands must obtain a Secret Security Clearance. Due to the length and scope of the security clearance process, it is initiated when a new member arrives at the Band. An extensive background investigation is necessary to be granted the clearance. Failure to obtain and maintain this security clearance may result in administrative separation.

2: Audition Procedures and Joining the Air Force

How do I find out about openings?

Membership in a premier band is accomplished through a round of competitive auditions, scheduled when vacancies are projected. Vacancies are advertised on the [Upcoming Vacancies](#) page, as well as various music industry trade and technical journals. In addition, universities, colleges, and applicable music societies are notified by email.

How do I get an audition?

Step One: Send required materials to the band. A committee will review the materials and determine whether an applicant demonstrates the professional musical skills necessary to warrant a live audition.

Step Two: Applicants contact their local Air Force recruiter who sets up a prescreen interview to determine the applicant's eligibility to enlist in the U.S. Air Force.

Step Three: Applicants who pass the initial prescreening are invited to a live audition. (Note: those invited to the audition travel at their own expense.)

What happens when I am accepted?

When you accept a position, you will be given an Air Force Form 485, Application for Enlistment in an Air Force Band, which allows you to begin the enlistment process and join the Air Force. Simply take the form to your local recruiter who will guide you through the enlistment process. You must pass the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (a skills assessment test) and complete a physical exam. The enlistment process is completed at your local Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) where you will sign an enlistment contract. After enlisting, you will go to Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas, to complete Basic Military Training.

Where can I find information about joining the Air Force?

The Air Force has a comprehensive Website - www.AirForce.com - that provides a great deal of information about joining the Air Force. Additionally, your local Air Force recruiter will answer all of your questions about the benefits of joining the Air Force. To find your local recruiter, go to www.airforce.com/find-a-recruiter (for enlisted recruiters, mark "High School student or graduate" under "Your education").

What is Basic Training like and how long is it?

Basic training is an initial 8 1/2 week course at Lackland AFB (San Antonio, TX). While in basic training, you'll learn standard military drill and ceremonies, Air Force history, customs and courtesies, and will participate in daily physical fitness exercises. For more details, please visit: www.airforce.com/education/military-training/bmt.

After Basic, what happens?

When you graduate from Basic Military Training, you will be immediately assigned to your respective Air Force Band. You are allotted a specific number of travel days to move from your home of record.

Incoming members (with or without dependents) can be housed temporarily on base for up to 30 days for a small reimbursable fee. Incoming members will report to the assigned band and sign in on the first duty day of their arrival, triggering your immediate date of rank (DOR) to Technical Sergeant, grade E-6. Once officially signed in, members may be given 8 days for "house hunting" which will not count against your regular vacation time (leave). This allotted time must be taken immediately following sign in if requested.

The Air Force will move your household goods, and if necessary, will store them until you find permanent housing. If you decide to move yourself, you will be reimbursed for some of the moving and storage expenses.

3: Professional Life

Where does the Band perform?

The Band performs in all types of settings, from the finest concert halls to other venues such as school or civic auditoriums, outdoor festivals, parades, gymnasiums and field houses. On occasion, units of the Band even deploy around the world to entertain American troops who are serving overseas to defend our nation's security. The Band also performs in major metropolitan regions as well as small communities and the homes of senior government and military leaders who are hosting their counterparts from around the nation and the world.

The Band is in great demand to perform at educational conferences around the country and members are afforded the opportunity to present outreach concerts, masterclasses, clinics, and side-by-side performances with students and educators from the elementary to the collegiate education level.

At home and at Air Force installations around the country, the Band performs for a variety of official military functions and ceremonies.

Are there other performance opportunities?

Although you are assigned full time to perform with one or more of the Band's ensembles, you may volunteer or be temporarily asked to perform with other units to alleviate manning shortages in those ensembles. You may also choose to participate as a civilian in the community or give private lessons to music students. However, if a scheduling conflict should arise, your Air Force commitments must take priority.

Are instruments, equipment and uniforms provided?

The Band will supply you with professional-caliber musical instruments as well as the musical supplies and performance uniforms (or costumes) you need to accomplish your musical duties. Air Force equipment may not be used in activities unrelated to your official duties (freelancing, teaching, etc.)

What will my duty schedule be like?

Each unit of the Band is unique in its scheduling and has different rehearsal/performance requirements that change on a weekly basis according to the mission. Band units frequently perform on evenings, weekends, and holidays. Compensatory days off may be scheduled on weekdays following the return. The band schedule typically includes the same number of days off enjoyed by the rest of the Air Force. A typical non-performance day consists of rehearsals and administrative duties, spending about half of the duty day in each area.

Will I have any non-musical duties?

Air Force Bands are self-contained organizations, meaning their people must perform a variety of non-musical duties to ensure the smooth day-to-day functioning of the unit.

These duties may range from performing simple clerical work to coordinating and managing the activities of an entire unit.

Most new members of the Band are assigned to stage crew and will assist with the transporting, setting up and tearing down of the equipment for performances. In addition, members are assigned to work in one of the following areas:

- Operations (coordinating group tours and performances)
- Publicity (web site development and maintenance, media engagement, concert/virtual productions)
- Admin Support (records clerk, training monitor, computers, awards and decorations)
- Resources (equipment supply, government travel programs, purchases)
- Readiness (training, wellness, deployment, safety and security)

Is The Air Force Band a full-time job?

Yes. Working as a musician in Air Force is a full-time profession, not a side activity. You will be an active duty member of the United States Air Force. In wartime or peacetime, your primary duty is to perform as an Airman and musician.

4: Education and Benefits

How much is the salary and other allowances?

In the Air Force, every Airman is paid compensation based on their rank and years of service. But your base salary is only part of the over-all package you receive. The moment you put on this uniform you're also eligible to receive additional compensation based on your job and where you are stationed as well as low-cost insurance, food and housing allowances, 30 days paid vacation annually, tuition assistance, and a generous retirement package after a minimum of 20 years of honorable service. Please visit [Air Force Careers, Pay & Benefits](#) for more information.

What other benefits are there for my family?

Military family support centers provide job-search, volunteer and educational assistance to military family members. Some of the services provided are career counseling, interview techniques training, assistance with resume preparation and access to job banks and Department of Defense job listings. Free informational assistance for house hunting and understanding the local real estate market is also available for military families.