



AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION'S

CYBERPATRIOT

NATIONAL YOUTH CYBER EDUCATION PROGRAM

CyberPatriot: How it Works (All Service)

CyberPatriot is the premier national youth cyber education program 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.

Air Force Association



THE NATIONAL YOUTH CYBER DEFENSE COMPETITION

What makes up a team?

Each CyberPatriot team requires a coach, usually a teacher or adult leader of a team-sponsoring organization. Coaches need no special technical background. 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 enrolled with the school or organization 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 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 to three computers and an Internet connection are required for occasional weekend use during the online portions of the competition. Computer hardware requirements are modest, and most schools already have computers that meet the technical specifications of the competition. The computer technical requirements are available on www.uscyberpatriot.org. In the event that a school cannot provide the needed equipment or Internet connection, CyberPatriot will assist in attempting to provide possible leads in locating equipment. For teams needing alternate Internet connection, CyberPatriot will provide AT&T Air Cards (provided on a needs/first come-first serve basis). CyberPatriot's goal is to make sure that every team that wants to participate can participate.

High school JROTC / CAP/ Naval Sea Cadet Corps teams and middle school CAP teams pay no registration fee. 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 t-shirt, commemorative coin, official competitor's pin and other CyberPatriot gear.

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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.

How does competition work?

There are two possible divisions in which JROTC, CAP, and Naval 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 the rounds, teams download “virtual image” representations of operating systems with known flaws, or cybersecurity “vulnerabilities.” Teams must find the flaws while keeping computer functions 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 specific category. The categories are: Air Force JROTC, Army JROTC, Navy JROTC, Marine Corps JROTC, Civil Air Patrol, and Naval 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, Gold, or Silver. These tiers have cybersecurity challenges of different degrees of complexity, with Platinum being the tier with the highest degree of difficulty and the only tier where teams have the opportunity to advance to the National Finals competition. After the online State Round, the top six teams in each of their categories, and a number of wild card teams advance to the Category Round.

The top two Platinum tier teams from each category and one wild card team advance, all-expenses paid, to the in-person National Finals Competition held in Baltimore, Md. 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, visit www.uscyberpatriot.org or call 877-885-5716.

Registration for the next competition season will open in April 2016.

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