



LA CROSSE COMPOSITE SQUADRON  
Civil Air Patrol – Wisconsin Wing  
United States Air Force Auxiliary  
2606 Fanta Reed Road  
La Crosse, WI 54601



Dear Parent,

We would like to welcome you and your cadet to the exciting world of the Civil Air Patrol Cadet Program! The CAP Cadet Program can provide your cadet with opportunities and experiences unlike any other youth program. However, like most things in life, your cadet will only get out of the program what he/she puts into it.

This guide is intended to highlight some important concepts and ideas about the Cadet Program. At times the military culture and structure of CAP can make the program seem foreign to parents. It is our hope that we can better help you understand the program and answer questions you may have. If at any point you have questions, do not hesitate to contact one of our squadron staff.

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## **OPERATIONAL INFORMATION**

### Meetings

The cadets meet for training on Saturday mornings from 0900-1130 hours. We ask that cadets arrive by 0900 hours and be picked up no later than 1200 hours. If your cadet cannot attend a meeting then he/she is expected to contact the Flight Sergeant or Flight Commander to let them know.

Attendance is not mandatory, however you will get out of CAP what you put into it. There are times that certain activities require specific training. Cadets who do not attend those necessary trainings are not able to participate in activities that need that training.

### Uniforms

The Air Force style uniform is a fundamental part of the Cadet Program and serves a variety of purposes. We use the uniform to celebrate our heritage and our partnership with the United States Air Force. We also use it to teach skills such as attention to detail and precision as well as values like pride and commitment. Your cadet will be taught how to wear the uniform and expected to wear it properly. The most common uniform error is grooming issues such as hair that is too long or failure to shave.

We will issue as many uniform items to your cadet as possible. There will be nametapes, patches, etc.. that need to be sewn on. They can be sewn on at home or by a commercial provider. In either case please pay special attention to the uniform requirements contained in your cadet's new member packet and/or the CAP uniform manual. Uniform items can be purchased at local surplus stores, on-line, and on EBay.

Cadets may wear their CAP uniform to and from CAP activities as well as while participating in CAP activities. If the travel to or from a meeting or activity is going to involve extended stops elsewhere (grocery shopping, eating out, etc...) then the cadet should change clothes before engaging in those activities.

### Free Cadet Uniform program

CAP National Headquarters provides each new CAP cadet with a free short-sleeve blue uniform. This uniform includes a flight cap, belt, buckle, pants, and shirt. It does not include black oxford shoes.

To obtain this uniform follow the instructions in your cadet's new member packet. You will need his/her measurements and will enter the data through e-Services.

### Staying up to date

There are many ways you can stay up to date with the squadron activities and information:

- Website: [www.lacrosseca.org](http://www.lacrosseca.org) is the squadron's official website.
- Facebook: "La Crosse Composite Squadron, Civil Air Patrol" is the squadron's official Facebook page.

- Listserv: All parents are automatically subscribed to the squadron's parent email list. Other email lists exist as well that provide information about the squadron and the state. Relevant information from these lists are forwarded to the parent list, however you may join these lists if you wish.

## **CADET OPPORTUNITIES**

### Promotions

Cadets progress through the Cadet Program at their own pace. In order to earn a promotion a cadet must complete an Aerospace test, Leadership test, Physical Fitness test, be active in the unit, and demonstrate a level of maturity commensurate with the promotion. Aerospace and Leadership tests can be taken at home and are open-book on-line tests. Physical fitness tests must be administered by CAP personnel. There are 16 achievements divided into four phases.

### Leadership Opportunities

The Cadet Program relies heavily on experiential learning to teach leadership. As your cadet gets older and earn promotions he/she may apply for a staff position. Staff positions can be support-related or command-related. Support positions help with issuing supplies, maintaining social media, administration, and other tasks. Command positions ensure the orderly function of the unit, teach younger cadets, serve as role models, and lead the cadet corps.

### Flight Training Program

Cadets may participate in flight training that leads to earning a Private Pilot's license. Cadets who wish to qualify for this privilege a cadet must have earned the rank of Cadet Master Sergeant and be in good standing. A specific operating instruction is available from the squadron explaining the process.

All costs associated with flight training are the cadet's responsibility. A cadet can expect to spend between \$1,500 and \$2,000 in completing their license. This is a significant savings over the \$6,000-\$8,000 it costs to do the training commercially.

### SAR Ground Team

Cadets may choose to belong to the squadron's search and rescue ground team. Membership on this team requires a commitment to on-going training and readiness. This team is called out by local and state authorities to assist in finding lost persons, missing aircraft, and other rescue functions. Team members must also have specific survival, camping, and outdoor equipment. However, this supply of equipment can be built up over time and is not necessary for at least the first six months.

### Summer Encampment & National Activities

Each summer Wisconsin Wing holds its Summer Encampment. Attendance at an encampment is required before earning the General Billy Mitchell Award. Encampment can be one of the most rewarding and powerful experiences a cadet can have in CAP. However, it is a high stress environment

that requires a certain level of maturity. For this reason we do not recommend that 12 year old cadets attend encampment.

During the summer cadets can also attend National Cadet Special Activities. To attend an NCSA a cadet must have completed encampment. NCSAs are an amazing chance to find out more about career fields, develop one's skills, and meet cadets from around the country. A list of NCSAs is available at [www.ncsas.com](http://www.ncsas.com) and I encourage you to visit and see the width and breadth of experiences available.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN OPPORUNITIES**

### **Membership Opportunities**

The CAP Cadet Program requires dedicated and caring adults to make it run. You do not need experience in the military to participate. All members go through fingerprinting and an FBI background check. Parents who are interested in helping have two options:

- **Cadet Sponsor Member.** CSMs must be the parent or guardian of a current CAP cadet. These members can chaperone, drive vehicles, help with squadron functions, and work on cadet activities. They cannot wear the Air Force uniform, serve on aircrews, hold command positions, earn CAP rank, or participate in search and rescue operations.
- **CAP Senior Member.** As a CAP senior member you have the full privileges and expectations of a CAP member. You can earn rank, hold leadership positions, wear the uniform, and so on.

### **Financial Support**

We do our best to keep the costs low to participate in CAP. Your cadet will, at times, need specific gear or items. First have your cadet check with us to see if we have equipment that can be issued. Also understand that rarely do cadets need a full set of equipment to start participating. I would encourage you to compile a set of equipment over time.

Running a CAP squadron does take financial support. In a typical year our utility bills run more than \$3,000. Our unit raises funds through a variety of ways and events. We ask you for your support of these endeavors. Here are a few of the ways you can help our unit:

- **Kwik Trip card designation:** If you have a Kwik Trip gas card you can designate the squadron to receive your 3% rebate instead of having your 3% rebate sent to you.
- **Aluminum cans:** Do you recycle aluminum cans at home? Instead of putting them out on the curb, donate them to the squadron! There is a "Can for Kids" collection point in the Bridgeview Plaza parking lot (ShopKo lot near Exit 3). Bring your bagged cans and put them in the collection area or bring them to the squadron. We earn more than \$1,000 a year through this program.
- **Employer matching funds:** Many employers sponsor a matching program for donations or time spent with an organization.

- F-16 simulator: Our squadron operates a mobile F-16 Falcon simulator. During an average summer we attempt to have the simulator at four to five community festivals. We need volunteers and support to staff these events.
- Donations and in-kind support: We accept donations and in-kind support of equipment such as computers, printers, office supplies, etc...

Learn more about CAP

There is a wide variety of information available about CAP, how it operates, and how you and your cadet support a greater nationwide effort to provide service to our communities, states, and the nation. Here are some websites that can help you find out more:

- CAP National Headquarters: [www.capmembers.com](http://www.capmembers.com)
- Wisconsin Wing Headquarters: [www.wiwgcap.org](http://www.wiwgcap.org)
- CadetStuff: [www.cadetstuff.org](http://www.cadetstuff.org) (this site is operated by CAP members but is not an official CAP website)

Acronym Primer

We're a military-style organization so we have acronyms and terms for lots of things. We can't hope to put every one of them down on paper, but here are some of the most common in the hopes that this new language your cadet starts speaking won't be so foreign:

- 24 hour pack – Equipment for ground team members allowing them to operate in the field
- 72 hour pack – Additional equipment allowing ground team members extended field operation
- AE – Aerospace Education
- Blues – the blue dress uniform
- BDUs – Battle Dress Uniform (the woodland camo uniform)
- Cover – the hat assigned to a specific uniform
- CPFT – Cadet Physical Fitness Test
- ES – Emergency Services
- E-Services – CAP's online membership records management portal
- Group – The intermediary echelon between the squadron and the wing
- GTM – Ground Team Member
- MRE – Meal Ready to Eat (dehydrated foodstuffs that keep forever and taste sort of delicious)
- O-flights – Orientation flights
- Oh Dark 30 – Meeting time is really early in the morning
- SAR – Search and Rescue
- SAREX – Search and Rescue exercise
- Wing – The state-level organization for CAP (i.e. Wisconsin Wing)
- WMIRS – An online mission management system