

## **COAST GUARD CITIES PROGRAM**

### **Current Coast Guard Cities**

Grand Haven, Mich. (Coast Guard City, U.S.A.)  
Eureka, Calif.  
Mobile, Ala.  
Wilmington, N.C.  
Newport, Ore.  
Alameda, Calif.  
Kodiak, Alaska  
Rockland, Maine  
Portsmouth, Va.  
Traverse City, Mich.  
Sitka, Alaska  
Astoria, Ore.  
Clearwater, Fla. (pending)

On November 13, 1998, Congress enacted a law that allowed the city of Grand Haven, Mich., to formally be called “Coast Guard City, USA” (Section 409 of P.L. 105-383). That law also provides for other cities, counties and municipalities to be similarly designated “A Coast Guard City” or “A Coast Guard Community” at the discretion of the Coast Guard Commandant. The law requires a 90-day notice of intent from the Commandant to the two authorizing congressional committees whenever a new Coast Guard City is named. In this guidance, we will use the term “Coast Guard City” to apply to any eligible city, county, or municipality. Counties or municipalities selected for this designation would be named “A Coast Guard Community.”

The Coast Guard City program recognizes the communities that support Team Coast Guard across the nation. A city, municipality or county earns the distinction of being named “A Coast Guard City” by making special efforts to acknowledge the professional work of the Coast Guard men and women assigned to its area. Coast Guard Cities regularly reach out to Coast Guard personnel and their families and make them feel “at home at their home away from home.” The city’s efforts illustrate a longstanding and enduring relationship, with an emphasis on considerations the community has made for the members of the Coast Guard family.

This document provides information and requirements for a city, municipality or county to be designated “A Coast Guard City.”

### **How to apply**

A great application documents a city, municipality or county’s support of the Coast Guard in a sustained manner over a significant period of time. At the minimum, an application must include:

- a letter from the mayor, city manager, or county executive that describes community-wide outreach and support of the local Coast Guard unit(s);
- a separate document listing specific examples of actions the community has taken and events it has sponsored to reach out to Coast Guard personnel, welcome them into the community, and embrace them in a full community partnership.

In addition, successful applications often include letters of support from local organizations that take part in the community's support for the Coast Guard. Examples include city government, Chamber of Commerce, non-government organizations (e.g., Navy League), civic organizations (e.g., Lions, Kiwanis, etc.), corporate partners, police/sheriff/fire departments, EMS, educational organizations, or individuals. These should be collected by the city and forwarded as part of application package.

Taken as a whole, a city's application should demonstrate a broad range of activities, programs and actions that show an unusual and sustained level of support for the local Coast Guard and families. While specific examples will be unique to local needs and resources, several common examples are given below. The request should specify which groups or organizations within the community are responsible for, or participate in, the initiatives.

- Support for MWR events;
- Support for educational/scholarship programs;
- Availability of community support services to Coast Guard members and their families;
- Sponsorship of Sailor of the Quarter, Sailor of the Year, Recruiter of the Year, and other similar types of awards;
- Demonstrations of sensitivity to life-altering events within the Coast Guard community including expressions of congratulations for weddings and newborns, and expressions of sympathy for deaths and other family tragedies;
- Sponsorship of community patriotic events that specifically include members of the Coast Guard family. These events could include but not be limited to Memorial Day picnics, July Fourth picnics, Armed Forces Day events, Veterans Day observances, Coast Guard Birthday events, etc.;
- Offer military or Coast Guard "Days" within the business community, at local sporting events, and other entertainment events;
- City-Coast Guard partnerships in community-based projects including law enforcement/fire/EMS projects, civic organizational projects, food drives, home building projects, educational projects, etc.;
- Establishing monuments, memorials, commemorations, or other tangible forms of public recognition.

A city, municipality, or county must send a copy of its application to be named "A Coast Guard City" to the local Coast Guard unit(s). Local commands provide feedback and endorsement of the city's request via the Coast Guard's chain of command to the Community Relations Division of Coast Guard Public Affairs, Commandant (CG-09223).

**Review Process:**

The Commandant has appointed a standing board to oversee the Coast Guard City program, review all applications and make recommendations to the Commandant. Its members represent Coast Guard public affairs, legal, personnel, and commandant staffs. The Commandant makes a final determination and notifies the applicant of the decision.

In accordance with Section 409 of P. L. 105-383, upon approval by the Commandant, the appropriate congressional committees will be notified of a new Coast Guard City designation and a required 90-day waiting period will begin. With no dissent from either committee, the requesting city, county or municipality will be proclaimed to be “A Coast Guard City” or “A Coast Guard Community” at the conclusion of the waiting period. At that point, the city may plan a ceremony to officially announce and celebrate its new status. A signed proclamation is sent to the local command for presentation to the city, municipality, or county.

**Ceremonies and Branding:**

The ceremony to mark a new Coast Guard City is organized by the city in coordination with local commands. This event can be a large, public celebration, a meeting between city and Coast Guard leadership, or anything in between. The local command will coordinate any requests for speakers, ceremonial support, or other Coast Guard support through the chain of command. There is no Coast Guard headquarters funding available for these ceremonies.

Coast Guard Cities may design signage, official stationery, websites, etc. noting their designation as “A Coast Guard City.” These designs must be approved in advance by Coast Guard Community Relations. For more information, contact (202) 372-4620.

**Recertification Procedures:**

The Coast Guard City designation is intended not as a “lifetime” award, but as a recognition of an active and ongoing commitment by the city, municipality, or county to supporting and honoring the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard City proclamation will remain in effect for a five-year term, after which the city will be required to apply for recertification. The recertification process helps ensure the designation remains accurate and meaningful.

The Coast Guard Community Relations staff will notify the city, municipality, or county approximately eight months before the expiration of its five-year term. To recertify, the city must provide a letter prior to the end of the term on or before 31 May of the current year describing its on-going relationship with the Coast Guard with examples of recent programs and projects. The Coast Guard City board will convene in September and

review your recertification package. If approved, your status will be renewed for another five-year term.

The recertification application does not have to be as lengthy as the original package, but it should demonstrate a vibrant and ongoing commitment to the Coast Guard personnel in the community. The Coast Guard City must again provide a copy to the local Coast Guard unit(s), who will review the request for recertification and forward it with an endorsement.

If a city's recertification package is determined not to meet the high standard set for Coast Guard Cities, or if the city chooses not to recertify, the designation of "A Coast Guard City" may be withdrawn with 60 days notification to the city. Within that time the city must remove the designation from any signs, letterhead, websites, etc.

**For more information**

If you have any questions, please feel free to call Coast Guard Community Relations at 202-372-4620.

**FAQs:**

*\*Can more than one local jurisdictions share a Coast Guard City designation?*

In areas with more than one local jurisdiction (such as a city, county, and township) one municipality must be selected to receive the Coast Guard City designation. The application should come from the local government that has the most direct and tangible relationship with local Coast Guard commands. Most often, that is the city level, but the law does allow for communities that are organized differently.

*\*Can a Coast Guard unit nominate its host community as a Coast Guard City?*

No; the application must come from the city itself. Local units may educate the host community about the program and help local leaders obtain more information on how to apply. Ultimately, however, the initiative should be undertaken by the community, independent of the local command. Local commands will be asked for their input as part of the application process.

*\*My city has recently been named a Coast Guard City and I would like to design a flag that incorporates the Coast Guard emblem. Does the design have to be approved?*

Yes. Any use of the Coast Guard emblem must be approved by Coast Guard. Please contact Coast Guard Community Relations at (202) 372-4620 for more information.