

Item #5039 – Membership Applications

2. Valley Forge Military College – Wayne, Pennsylvania
 - a. Region 19
 - b. Division I & III
 - i. Men’s & Women’s Wrestling (Division I)
 - ii. Men’s & Women’s Cross Country (Division III)
 - c. President: Colonel Stuart Helgeson
 - d. Athletic Director: Robert Hjerling
 - e. Effective Dates:
 - i. Year 0 – 2026-27
 - ii. Year 1 – 2027-28
 - iii. Year 2 – 2028-29

[Link to additional documentation provided](#)

Form Name: NJCAA New Member Application
Submission Time: September 29, 2025 3:53 pm
Browser: Chrome 140.0.0.0 / Windows
IP Address: 50.236.138.90
Unique ID: 1385132626
Location:

NJCAA New Member Application

Institution Name	Valley Forge Military College
Institution Address	1001 Eagle Drive Wayne, PA 19087
Institutional Website	vfmcollege.edu
Which regional organization is your institution accredited by?	Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE)
Name	Robert Hjerling
Phone	(610) 989-1310
Email	rhjerling@vfmac.edu
Name	Robert Smith
Phone	(610) 989-1458
Email	rsmith@vfmac.edu
Academic Calendar at Institution	Semester
Is your institution	Private
How many sports do you plan to offer in your first year of competition?	3
1 - Sport to be offered	Men's Wrestling Women's Wrestling
Division	Division I
2 - Sport to be offered	Men's Cross Country/Half Marathon
Division	Division III
3 - Sport to be offered	Women's Cross Country/Half Marathon
Division	Division III
Has your institution had previous athletic membership with any governing body/organization?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>

If yes, please explain.

From approximately the year 2000-2020, Valley Forge Military College competed in several sports in the NJCAA. Those sports included Football, Men's Basketball and Women's Volleyball. Possibly, there were other sports throughout the years. Also, Valley Forge Military College has a wrestling history and competed as a club in the NCWA in the 1997-98 and 1998-99 season.

What year is your institution requesting to begin NJCAA membership?

2027-2028

Why is your institution seeking NJCAA Membership?

We would like to return to having intercollegiate sports at Valley Forge Military College. Initially, we would like to start with Wrestling and Men's and Women's Cross Country and, hopefully expand the Athletic Department in the future.

What value does your institution bring to the current NJCAA membership?

Valley Forge Military College has a historical and rich tradition. It is an institution of High Academic Achievement that is also Committed to Character Development. The addition of Athletics at Valley Forge will enhance the student-athlete experience and increase the level of students admitted and broaden the demographics of the institution.

Valley Forge Military College Campus Visit Review

Campus Visit Committee's Rubric Summary

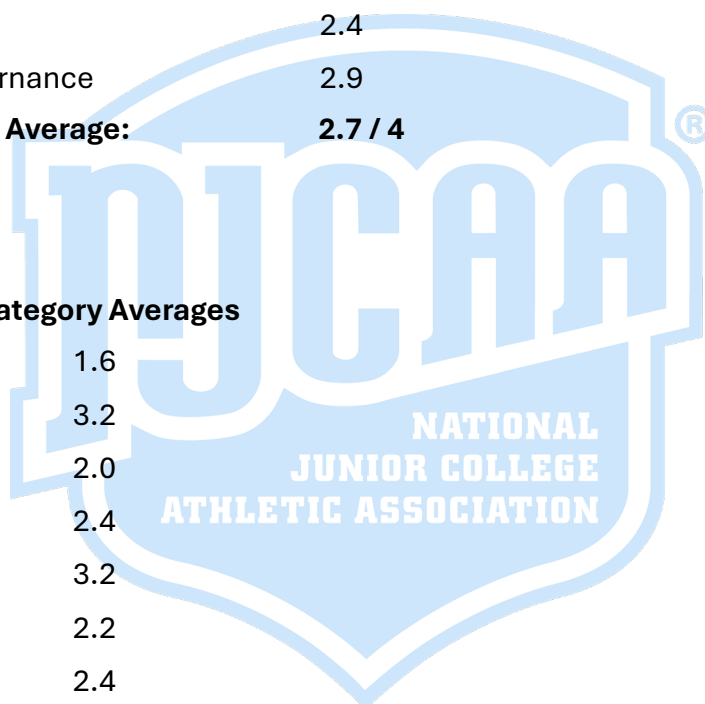
Facilities	2.2
Safety & Student Welfare	2.8
Budget & Financial Planning	2.8
Athletics & Institutional Strategic Plan	2.9
Staffing	2.4
Handbooks & Governance	2.9
Overall Composite Average:	2.7 / 4

Facilities

Average: 2.2 / 4

Facilities — Sub-Category Averages

Training Room	1.6
Weight Room	3.2
Locker Rooms	2.0
Indoor Facilities	2.4
Outdoor Facilities	3.2
Maintenance Plan	2.2
Security	2.4
Emergency Action Plans	2.2
Meet NJCAA Standards	2.2



Safety & Student Welfare

Average: 2.8 / 4

Safety & Student Welfare — Sub-Category Averages

Transportation	2.6
Documentation Storage	2.4
Student Housing	3.4
Advising	3.0

Compliance	2.4
Academic Support	3.2
Online vs In-Person	3.4

Budget & Financial Planning

Average: 2.8 / 4

Budget & Financial Planning — Sub-Category Averages

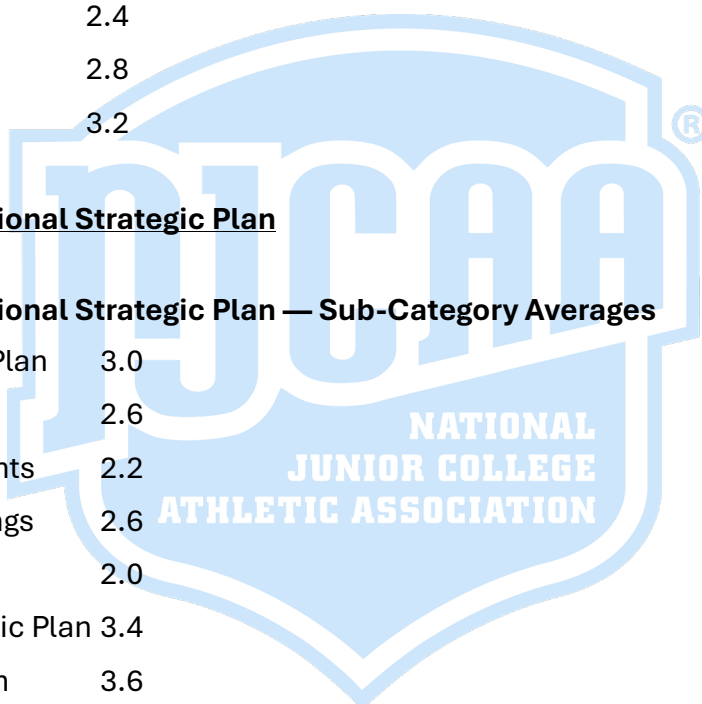
Funding Model	3.0
Recurring vs Stand-Alone	2.8
Annual vs Start-Up	2.8
Fundraising	2.4
Financial Aid	2.8
Insurance	3.2

Athletics & Institutional Strategic Plan

Average: 2.9 / 4

Athletics & Institutional Strategic Plan — Sub-Category Averages

Athletics Strategic Plan	3.0
Recruiting Plan	2.6
Facility Improvements	2.2
Future Sport Offerings	2.6
Website	2.0
Institutional Strategic Plan	3.4
Institutional Mission	3.6



Staffing

Average: 2.4/ 4

Staffing — Sub-Category Averages

Overall Staffing Plan	2.8
Full-Time AD	3.0
Compliance Staffing	2.2
Sports Information Director	2.2
Athletic Trainer	2.0
Game Day Management	2.2

Administrative Support	3.0
Athletic Academic Advising	2.8
Coach-to-Athlete Ratio	2.4
Job Descriptions	2.0

Handbooks, Policies & Governance

Average: 2.9 / 4

Handbooks, Policies & Governance — Sub-Category Averages

Student & Student-Athlete Handbook	2.6
Campus Code of Conduct	3.4
Athletic Department Rules	2.0
Campus Resource Guide	2.6
Athletic Philosophy	3.2
Institutional Academic Requirements	3.4
Media / Public Relations	2.4

Highest-Rated Subcategories:

- Institutional Mission Statement – 3.6
- Institutional Strategic Plan – 3.4
- Student Housing – 3.4
- Online vs. In-Person Learning Structure – 3.4
- Campus Code of Conduct – 3.4
- Institutional Academic Requirements – 3.4
- Weight Room – 3.2
- Outdoor Facilities – 3.2
- Insurance – 3.2
- Academic Support Systems – 3.2
- Athletic Department Philosophy – 3.2

Lowest-Rated Subcategories:

- Training Room – 1.6
- Locker Rooms – 2.0
- Athletic Department Rules – 2.0
- Job Descriptions – 2.0
- Website – 2.0
- Compliance Staffing – 2.2

- Sports Information Director – 2.2
 - Game Day Management – 2.2
 - Facility Improvement Planning – 2.2
 - Emergency Action Plans – 2.2
 - Maintenance Plan – 2.2
-

Strengths vs. Risks Matrix

Strengths

- Strong institutional mission alignment
- Committed President and Board
- On-campus housing capacity
- Academic advising structure (military mentoring model)
- Regimented study expectations and retention focus
- Dedicated fundraising staff
- Institutional strategic planning
- Clear phased sport expansion model

Opportunities / Development Areas

- Facilities currently do not consistently meet NJCAA standards
- Training room underdeveloped
- Locker rooms require renovation
- No defined event management plan
- Limited compliance structure
- No dedicated SID model
- Athletic Trainer coverage inconsistent
- Game-day administration not fully defined
- Website presence minimal or developing
- Fundraising plan lacks specificity
- Handbook and athletic policies incomplete



Big Picture Takeaway

Across the five committee reviews, Valley Forge Military College is viewed as institutionally strong, with clear mission alignment, committed leadership, and a structured academic and residential model that supports student success. However, athletics operations are still developing, particularly in facilities, compliance systems, staffing structure, and formalized policies. Overall, the institution demonstrates the commitment and foundation necessary for NJCAA membership, with continued operational refinement needed to ensure sustainable, standards-aligned execution.

Recommended Follow-Up Conditions & Action Items

Facilities

- Develop and implement a formal facility upgrade timeline
- Submit documented renovation plan for training room & locker rooms
- Provide event ingress/egress and crowd management plans
- Confirm NJCAA compliance upgrades if adding volleyball/basketball

Safety & Student Welfare

- Formalize athletic training coverage (games and practices)
- Develop comprehensive Emergency Action Plans
- Establish compliance monitoring workflow
- Improve document storage & eligibility tracking system

Budget & Finance

- Submit finalized recurring vs. start-up cost breakdown
- Provide detailed fundraising strategy with benchmarks
- Confirm catastrophic insurance coverage

Staffing

- Identify designated compliance officer
- Clarify Sports Information structure
- Define game-day management personnel assignments
- Provide coach-to-athlete ratio thresholds
- Submit finalized job descriptions

Governance

- Complete and distribute finalized Student-Athlete Handbook
- Finalize athletic department rules and philosophy documentation
- Expand athletics website presence prior to launch

Executive Summary

Based on the review of five NJCAA Campus Visit Rubrics, Valley Forge Military College demonstrates strong institutional alignment, mission clarity, and leadership commitment to the development of intercollegiate athletics. Reviewers consistently noted presidential and board-level support, a clearly articulated institutional mission, and a structured residential and academic environment that provides a stable foundation for student-athlete success. The college's military framework, regimented academic oversight, and on-campus housing model were viewed as meaningful strengths that support retention, accountability, and student development.

At the same time, committee feedback indicates that while the institutional foundation is solid, several operational components of the athletics program remain in a developmental stage. Facilities, particularly the training room and locker rooms, require upgrades to consistently meet NJCAA expectations. Reviewers also identified the need for more formalized compliance systems, clearer documentation processes, expanded athletic training coverage, defined game-day management procedures, and a structured Sports Information function. Additionally, athletics-specific policies, handbooks, and website presence should be finalized and strengthened prior to full competitive implementation.

Overall, the collective evaluations suggest that Valley Forge Military College possesses the institutional commitment, strategic intent, and cultural framework necessary to support NJCAA membership. Continued attention to operational infrastructure, staffing clarity, and facility enhancement will be important to ensure sustainable, standards-aligned athletics programming moving forward.

Facilities

Agreed-Upon Strengths

- Adequate outdoor space for current sport offerings
- Functional weight room suitable for initial program needs
- Institutional willingness to invest in facility upgrades
- Campus-controlled environment provides security and structure

Agreed-Upon Weaknesses / Development Areas

- Training room significantly underdeveloped for NJCAA competition
- Locker rooms require renovation and modernization
- Several facilities do not consistently meet NJCAA standards
- Limited documented timeline for upgrades
- Event and game-day facility readiness needs clarification

Safety & Student Welfare

Agreed-Upon Strengths

- Strong residential structure with built-in accountability
- Clear academic oversight through military framework
- Structured mentoring model
- Solid academic support systems
- In-person learning model provides stability

Agreed-Upon Weaknesses / Development Areas

- Compliance monitoring processes need formalization
- Eligibility documentation systems require strengthening
- Emergency Action Plans need clearer articulation
- Athletic training coverage requires consistency and clarity
- Athletics-specific medical oversight procedures need refinement

Budget & Financial Planning

Agreed-Upon Strengths

- Clear presidential and board-level financial support
- Funding viable for initial sport launch
- Insurance coverage in place
- Institutional commitment to sustaining athletics

Agreed-Upon Weaknesses / Development Areas

- Recurring vs. start-up cost breakdown needs clearer documentation
- Fundraising strategy lacks detailed benchmarks
- Long-term sustainability model needs greater specificity
- Revenue projections and growth planning require refinement

Athletics & Institutional Strategic Plan

Agreed-Upon Strengths

- Strong alignment between athletics and institutional mission
- Clear strategic vision supported by leadership
- Thoughtful phased sport expansion model
- Institutional planning structure is well established

Agreed-Upon Weaknesses / Development Areas

- Athletics website presence is limited or underdeveloped
- Recruiting plan detail needs expansion
- Facility improvement plan needs formal documentation
- Operational execution plans require further clarity

Staffing

Agreed-Upon Strengths

- Leadership support present for athletics
- Administrative structure exists to support launch
- Coaching ratios appear manageable at start-up level

Agreed-Upon Weaknesses / Development Areas

- Compliance oversight role not clearly defined
- Sports Information responsibilities lack structure
- Athletic training staffing inconsistent
- Game-day management roles unclear
- Job descriptions need formalization and clarification
- Role delineation and accountability lines need strengthening

Handbooks, Policies & Governance

Agreed-Upon Strengths

- Strong institutional code of conduct
- Clear academic standards and expectations
- Structured behavioral accountability model
- Institutional governance systems well established

Agreed-Upon Weaknesses / Development Areas

- Athletics-specific handbook requires completion
- Athletic department rules need formalization
- Media and public-facing policies incomplete
- Documentation should be finalized prior to full implementation





STATEMENT OF ACCREDITATION STATUS

The Statement of Accreditation Status (SAS) is the official statement of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) about each institution's current accreditation status and scope of accreditation. The SAS also provides a brief history of the actions taken by the Commission.

Institution: VALLEY FORGE MILITARY COLLEGE Wayne, PA

Address: 1001 Eagle Road
Wayne, PA 19087-3695

Phone: (610) 989-1200

Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO): Dr. Robert Smith

Commission Staff Liaison: Suzan Harkness, Vice President

Accreditation Summary

For more information, see the Commission's [Accreditation Actions Policy and Procedures](#).

Phase: Accredited

Status: Accreditation Reaffirmed

Accreditation Granted: 1954

Last Reaffirmation: 2022

Next Self-Study Evaluation: 2028-2029

Alternative Delivery Methods

The following represents approved alternative delivery methods included in the scope of the institution's accreditation:

Distance Education

Approved to offer programs by this delivery method

Correspondence Education

Not approved for this delivery method

Credential Levels

☑ Approved Credential Levels

The following represents credential levels included in the scope of the institution's accreditation:

- **Postsecondary award (1-2 years)**
Included within the scope
- **Associate's Degree or Equivalent**
Included within the scope

Locations

The following represents branch campuses, additional locations, and other instructional sites that are included within the scope of the institution's accreditation:

Location	Type
Valley Forge Military College 1001 Eagle Road Wayne, PA 19087-3695	Main Campus
Department of Military & Veterans Affairs ATTN: Education & Incentives Fort Indiantown Gap, Building 9-54 Annville, PA 17003	Additional Location
Fort Indiantown Gap National Guard Training Center 1 Garrison Road Bldg. T-01- Fort Indiantown Gap Annville, PA 17003	Other Instructional Site

*Definitions: For definitions of branch campus, additional locations, or other instructional sites, see the **Commission's Substantive Change Policy and Procedures**.*



VALLEY FORGE
MILITARY COLLEGE

Office of the President

March 3, 2026

Greetings,

This letter is provided to certify that Valley Forge Military College is not an online college as defined by the NJCAA.

Per the 2025-2026 NJCAA Policies Manual, *the NJCAA defines an online college as any entity that offers less than 20% of their courses in a traditional, in-person, and synchronous setting.* Valley Forge Military College typically offers only 1% of its coursework online each semester to address scheduling issues and teacher availability. The college's full-time student programming is built around a traditional, in-person, synchronous classroom environment.

Our Provost and Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Robert Smith would be happy to provide the NJCAA with any further documentation necessary to demonstrate the College's compliance with this requirement of membership.

Sincerely,

Col Stuart B. Helgeson, USMC (Ret)
President

THE MILITARY COLLEGE OF PENNSYLVANIA



VALLEY FORGE
MILITARY COLLEGE

Office of the President

March 3, 2026

Greetings,

According to item A-3 of the New Member Guidelines of the 2025-2026 NJCAA Policies Manual, Valley Forge Military College *must designate a full-time employee to serve as Director of Athletics.*

This letter is to certify that the College currently maintains the position of Director of Athletics with a full-time staff-member and will continue to maintain that position with a full-time employee while the institution is a member of the NJCAA. Currently, Mr. Robert Hjerling has been appointed as the interim Director of Athletics and he will serve in that role until a new individual is selected to assume the position permanently.

Sincerely,

Col Stuart B. Helgeson, USMC (Ret)
President

THE MILITARY COLLEGE OF PENNSYLVANIA