



# **THE CONGRESSIONAL AWARD**

## **U.S. HOUSE AND SENATE TOOLKIT**

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**2025**

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# 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Congressional Award Foundation's Board of Directors supports the work of The Congressional Award Foundation and provides mission-based leadership and strategic governance. While day-to-day is led by The Congressional Award Foundation's National Director, the Board-National Director relationship is a partnership, and the appropriate involvement of the Board is both critical and expected.

## EXECUTIVE OFFICERS



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Financial Development  
*PCMA*



**Dr. Linda Mitchell**  
Program  
*Mississippi State University*



**Col. Steven Roberts, ESQ.**  
Audit  
*The Roberts Companies*



**Mike Skahill**  
Financial Development  
*Virginia*



**David Schiappa\***  
Congressional Relations  
*The Duberstein Group*

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR CONGRESSIONAL RELATIONS CHAIR

"Since its creation, the Congressional Award Foundation has received strong bipartisan support in both Congress and administrations as a public-private partnership program that encourages the development of kids and young adults. Thousands of young people participate in the program each year to learn the virtue of volunteerism, to develop character and recognize the importance of fitness in their lives."

## NATIONAL BOARD MEMBERS

**The Honorable Cynthia Lummis, U.S. Senator for Wyoming**

**The Honorable Debbie Dingell, U.S. Representative for Michigan's 12th District**

**The Honorable Richard Hudson, U.S. Representative for North Carolina's 8th District**

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**LPL Financial** • Tom Gannon, *EVP, Chief Advocacy Officer*  
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## ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

**The Honorable Gregg Harper** • **Former U.S. Representative for Mississippi's 3rd District**  
**Simeon Banister** • **Rochester Area Community Foundation**  
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**George Coelho** • **Astanor Ventures**, *Co-Founder & Partner*  
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**Adrian Harpool** • **Adrian Harpool Associates**, *Principal*  
**Raymond Kerins, Jr.** • **The Next Security Group**, *CEO*  
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**Jaqueline Ruiz**  
**Sanyin Siang** • **Duke University, Coach K Leadership and Ethics Center**, *Executive Director*  
**Bruce Walker** • **DC Events**  
**Eric Zulkosky** • **Fierce Government Relations**



# HEAR FROM CONGRESS



## **U.S. SENATE DEMOCRATIC LEADER CHUCK SCHUMER**

"The Congressional Award Foundation helps mold the leaders of tomorrow by teaching and instilling virtues critical to helping the success of our country."



## **U.S. HOUSE SPEAKER MIKE JOHNSON**

"The Congressional Award Foundation is an essential institution which trains and equips the leaders of tomorrow to be productive American citizens."



## **U.S. SENATOR CYNTHIA LUMMIS | BOARD MEMBER**

"The Congressional Award has helped generations of young Americans dream big and achieve great goals. Be it through community service or personal development, participants learn valuable life lessons as they try things they didn't know they could do, and succeed at challenges they didn't think were attainable. I'm incredibly proud of Wyoming's role in establishing this incredible organization, and am honored to continue our legacy supporting the kids of today and leaders of tomorrow."



## **U.S. CONGRESSMAN RICHARD HUDSON | BOARD MEMBER**

"The Congressional Award promotes public service and develops the next generation of leaders across our country. I am proud to serve as a board member and encourage others to participate in their own communities."



## **U.S. CONGRESSWOMAN DEBBIE DINGELL | BOARD MEMBER**

"The Congressional Award Program provides a great opportunity for young people to achieve challenging personal goals and build strong character. This Program is essential to personal and educational growth, and will create stability and inspire kids to work together and support each other, while engaging in community service and personal development."



## **U.S. CONGRESSMAN RITCHIE TORRES | BOARD MEMBER**

"The Congressional Award Program has benefited countless young people across our country in their quest to become the next generation of leaders through public service. I am proud to support and advocate for a program that has proven to be an asset to community building and the personal development of so many young people. The Congressional Award Program is vital in strengthening communities today and molding leaders for tomorrow."

# THE NATIONAL TEAM

(202) 226-9979 | 301 FORD HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING



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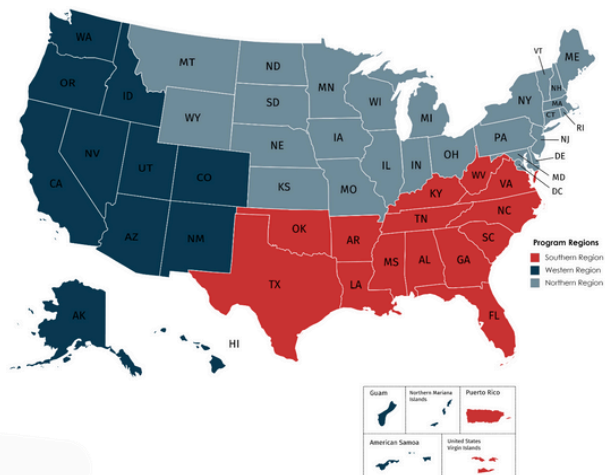
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# OUR HISTORY

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The United States Congress established The Congressional Award in 1979 to recognize initiative, service, and achievement in young people. It began as a bipartisan effort in both the United States Senate and the House of Representatives. The original bill was sponsored by U.S. Senator Malcolm Wallop of Wyoming and U.S. Congressman James Howard of New Jersey.

The enabling legislation (Public Law 96-114) established The Congressional Award as a public-private partnership, which receives all funding from the private sector. The legislation was originally signed into law by President Jimmy Carter. Presidents Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama, Donald J. Trump, and Joseph R. Biden have each signed continuing legislation.



## THE PROGRAM

The Congressional Award is the United States Congress' award for young Americans. It is non-partisan, voluntary, and non-competitive. The program is open to all youth in the U.S. between the ages of 14 to 24 regardless of ability, circumstance, or socioeconomic status. Constituents are eligible to register with the Award at 13 ½ years old. They are able to submit completed record book applications when they reach the age of 14 years old.



Participants earn Bronze, Silver, and Gold Certificates and Bronze, Silver, and Gold Medals. Each level involves setting goals in four program areas: Voluntary Public Service, Personal Development, Physical Fitness, and Expedition/Exploration.

Participants can choose whichever level they would like to start with and can go at their own pace. Each level of the Award has specific time and hour requirements the participant must meet. The program instills valuable skills such as short- and long-term goal setting, time management, and organization. It fosters mentor-based relationships with Advisors and Validators and friendships with peers. Ultimately, the program encourages constituents to better both themselves and their communities through service, personal development, fitness, and curiosity about the world around them.



## OUR MISSION

The primary goal of the Congressional Award Foundation is to promote and recognize service, initiative and achievement, in America's youth. We strive to help young people realize their full potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens.

Young people set personally challenging goals in four program areas – Voluntary Public Service, Personal Development, Physical Fitness and Expedition/Exploration. These diverse areas encourage young people to discover new talents, learn about the world around them and to take positive action in their communities.

The Congressional Award program requires that youth work with an adult mentor or advisor, providing an opportunity for young people to learn from adults who will encourage and support them in their endeavors. The program also encourages the establishment of community networks and links, which can enable disadvantaged youth to become a part of the community.

## OUR IMPACT

FROM THE 2024 IMPACT REPORT

# 2024 *by the numbers*

### Awards Earned

Bronze Certificates 1,577

Silver Certificates 1,409

Gold Certificates 1,347

Bronze Medals 1,511

Silver Medals 1,065

Gold Medals 724

**7,633** Awards earned this year



### Advisors

**1,599** Active adult mentors registered in the program

### Program Participation

**50,763** Active youth participants enrolled in the program

### New Registrations

**8,071**  
New participants

**24%**  
Increase from previous year



### Activity Hours

**772,126**  
hours of  
Voluntary  
Public Service

**532,420**  
hours of  
Personal  
Development

**611,152**  
hours of  
Physical  
Fitness

# STRATEGIC PROGRAMMING

For over four decades, The Congressional Award has brought together the private and public sectors to address critical issues and provide previously unreachable personal development opportunities for youth from all backgrounds and circumstances.

## MILITARY YOUTH

We partnered with **Boeing** to provide special programming to military youth, both domestic and abroad. This program seeks to provide resources to existing Congressional Award participants, strengthen outreach efforts to military families who may not be familiar with The Congressional Award program or its benefits, and make invaluable connections among youth across the country who are experiencing similar challenges.



## FINANCIAL LITERACY

**Intuit** has partnered with The Congressional Award Foundation to power our first online **Personal Finance and Entrepreneurship Program** to help students become self-reliant, financially informed, and capable of using their talent, resources, and personal business values to make the world a better place. Learn more at [www.congressionalaward.org/intuit](http://www.congressionalaward.org/intuit).



## GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY

Together with **Bayer** and program partners like **4-H**, The Congressional Award's Global Sustainability Program brings together leaders from the private and public sectors to increase awareness of critical issues like food insecurity and provide hands-on voluntary public service projects so students can make a difference.

POWERED BY



## STEM STARS

Through a partnership with **Ferring Pharmaceuticals**, The Congressional Award launched STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) Stars to stoke a passion for science and math at an age when many young people lose interest. The initiative exposes students to STEM-related concepts as well as STEM in everyday life – helping to make STEM more approachable. STEM Stars are awarded to Gold Medalists who complete at least one STEM activity over the course of their time in the program.

POWERED BY



[LEARN MORE AT THE PROGRAMMING PAGE](#)

# PILOT PROGRAMS

Pilot programs expand our grassroots efforts in targeted communities where there is a specific need. The Congressional Award aims to learn the professional and personal interests of students, particularly serving the most vulnerable student populations. Additionally, we seek to learn best practices to best support gaps and areas of difficulty for students in the Congressional Award program at the national level.

## DEANWOOD PILOT PROGRAM

The Congressional Award Foundation partnered with the **Deanwood Recreation Center** in **Wards 7 and 8 of Washington, D.C.** The pilot mentorship program works to bring high level speakers to engage and expose students to career and education opportunities in the communications industry.

SUPPORTED BY



## ELEVATING DC YOUTH PODCAST

Local students develop their journalism skills by leading the Elevating DC Youth Podcast, interviewing Congressional Award alumni and corporate leaders. The Congressional Award Foundation partnered with the D.C. Office of Cable Television, Film, Music, & Entertainment and the Deanwood Youth Journalism Program to create the podcast. This student-led podcast is designed to educate youth about the program and offer valuable career insights.

PARTNERED WITH



### ***LISTEN TO THE PODCAST***



"This program is designed to give these students real life experience with journalism and storytelling, while helping them develop and gain confidence in their abilities as well as engage with alumni and young people across the Nation."  
**Bruce Walker • The DC Office of Cable Television Film, Music and Entertainment**  
**Congressional Award Board Member**

## LAREDO, TX PILOT PROGRAM

The Congressional Award Foundation partnered with the **Magdaleno Leadership Institute** and the **Laredo Independent School District** to support over 100 students from four area high schools in Laredo, Texas.

Our partners are working directly with **vulnerable student populations** like homeless youth, farmworker children, and first-generation immigrants as they complete their secondary education and enter the workforce. Together, we aim to grow **the average graduation rate from 23%** and equip students with a framework that promotes **goal setting** and **mentorship**.

SUPPORTED BY

**KKR**



# OUTREACH PARTNERSHIPS

## SCOUTING

The Congressional Award and **Boy Scouts of America (BSA)** have been partnered since 1999. This partnership allows Scouts the unique opportunity to use much of their Scout work towards their Congressional Award. In September 2021, the Congressional Award hosted the Scouts BSA Webinar. Viewers heard from Members of the House, corporate leaders, and CAF alumni who were all former Scouts on how being a Scout positively impacted both their personal and professional lives. This Webinar also launched the Congressional Award Scouting Toolkit.



## STUDENT-ATHLETES

The **NCAA** and The Congressional Award teamed up to host the Student-Athlete Mental Health Webinar. Students heard from Members of the House and mental health professionals such as Dr. Brian Hainline, Chief Medical Officer of the NCAA, and Dr. Stephany Coakley of Temple University to discuss the unique challenges student-athletes face when it comes to dealing with mental health.

## 4-H

**4-H** and the Congressional Award are thrilled to partner. 4-H provides experiences where young people learn by doing. Students complete hands-on projects in areas like health, science, agriculture and citizenship, in a positive environment where they receive guidance from adult mentors and are encouraged to take on proactive leadership roles. Students experience 4-H in every county and parish in the country—through in-school and after-school programs, school and community clubs and 4 H camps.



## HUGH O'BRIAN YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Founded in 1958, **HOBY's** mission is to inspire and develop the global community of youth and volunteers to a life dedicated to leadership, service, and innovation. HOBY programs are conducted annually throughout the United States, serving local and international high school students selected by their schools to participate in unique leadership training, service-learning, and motivation-building exercises.

[\*\*LEARN MORE AT THE PARTNERS PAGE\*\*](#)

# THE VALUE OF THE AWARD

The Congressional Award is Congress' only charity and highest honor for youth. The program provides a unique opportunity for youth to have a direct line to Members of the House and Senate with the national office acting as a liaison.

## BRINGING YOUTH AND CONGRESS TOGETHER

The Award not only allows for young people to hear from Congress, but it allows for Members of the House and Senate to interact with their constituents in a variety of ways. The program's commitment to accessibility ensures our participants are from all backgrounds. This gives Members of the House and Senate the opportunity to meet with the entirety of their constituency, not just one population.



## BUILDING POSITIVE YOUTH EXPERIENCES

The backbone of the program is service. At the Gold Medal level, participants are required to complete 400 hours of Voluntary Public Service at minimum. Giving back and improving the lives of others is not only a rewarding experience, but it positively impacts self-esteem and mental health. Many of our participants are at the age where self-esteem and mental health decline. Our program provides spaces for young people to improve their mental health and self-esteem through productive and healthy activities such as service, personal development, fitness, and exploration.

## TEACHING VALUABLE LIFE SKILLS

Each participant of The Congressional Award has made a commitment to bettering themselves and their communities – meaning they are making positive contributions to the legislative district in which they live and positively impacting that constituency. The program teaches valuable skills such as time management, organization, short-term and long-term goal setting, and thoughtful communication. With these skills, Congressional Award program participants are sure to be productive members of society. With the support of each legislator, the national office can continue to expand the program and reach more young people than ever before.



# HOUSE AND SENATE INVOLVEMENT

The Congressional Award is promoted throughout the country by Members of Congress in the House and Senate who share with their constituents a unique opportunity to provide today's youth with the tools they need to thrive as adults. The program is a great opportunity to recognize young constituents and promote the goods works they have contributed to their community.

## ENGAGE YOUTH CONSTITUENTS



**COMMUNITY EVENTS**



**SCHOOLS**



**CAPITOL VISITS**

## PROMOTE LOCALLY & VISIT SCHOOLS

Leverage schools, non-profits, youth and service groups, and community leaders with a footprint in the Member's district to stimulate enrollment growth. Incorporate The Congressional Award into talking points at local forums, town hall meetings, banquets, site visits, etc.

***School Promotion Toolkit***

## EVENTS

Many events outside statewide and local medal presentation ceremonies are offered to meet the needs of participants. Please contact the national office with any topics of interest.

## COMMITMENT

As Congress' award program, the national office values Member participation to ensure America's youth are receiving enriched programming and events. The commitment is at the Member's discretion and a hands-off experience. The Award works to prepare numerous webinars, educational programs, and outreach events where Members of the House and Senate are invited to speak and interact with young people.

The Award also offers many in-house events like the Power Lunch series where Members and the Congressional Award Board of Directors have a networking segment.

The three marquee events each year are the Gold Medal Ceremony, Chiefs of Staff Poker Tournament, and the Golf Classic.



# AWARD CEREMONIES



## PRESENT THE AWARD

Connect with constituents via a statewide ceremony or a local medal presentation. The Award's national office will alert each Member's office when there are medalists in the district. Medalists can be honored virtually, by phone call, or at the Member's district office. Recognizing medalists via a press release, social media post, and letters of commendation are also encouraged.

[Virtual Event Toolkit](#)

**Be Inspired to Host:**

[Wyoming Presentation](#)

[Georgia Presentation](#)

## REGIONAL AND DISTRICT CEREMONIES

Designed to elevate the visibility of the program in a particular state or geographic area, both regional and statewide award ceremonies are held on a rotating basis each year. State partnerships are forged when members of the congressional delegation and corporate partners with a footprint in a state come together to strengthen the program and support local youth.

## GOLD MEDAL CEREMONY

Every summer, Congress celebrates the hundreds of youth from across the nation who have earned The Congressional Award Gold Medal, the pinnacle of the program. Gold Medalists and their families are invited to Capitol Hill for a once-in-a-lifetime recognition of accomplishments. Members of the House and Senate present the awards to their constituents at a distinguished ceremony, attended by corporate and civic leaders, media, and peers. These young people are truly America's most deserving youth, having dedicated hundreds of hours and at least two years to community service and personal goal-setting. More than 6,000 Gold Medals have been awarded since the program's founding in 1979.



# CONGRESSIONAL STAFF INVOLVEMENT

## MEET WITH CONGRESSIONAL AWARD STAFF

Learn more about the Award program, how to get involved and promote the program, and current participating status in Member's communities.

***Schedule a meeting or attend an Award information session***

## DESIGNATE A STAFF LIAISON

Select a designated staff member to add the Congressional Award to their portfolio and to be the point person to inform constituents about the Award. It is recommend a staffer in the district office who interacts with youth entities to be a liaison with schools and youth organizations. As part of the constituent services portfolio, an office could also select a legislative education assistant or a communications staffer in the D.C. office, along with a district director or field representative in the district office, to serve as the point of contact for our national office. Contact the Award to get started with an informational meeting and receive updates on the program in the state or district.

## RECEIVE AWARD MATERIALS FOR YOUR OFFICE

The Award offers many informational and supplemental materials so the D.C. and district offices are prepared to introduce and educate young people on Congress' Award program. These are great handouts and talking points to bring when on the go in communities, visiting schools, or meeting families in D.C. Contact the national office to have brochures and materials mailed.



**Erica Heyse**  
National Director

### FOUNDATION AND CONGRESSIONAL RELATIONS CONTACT:

heyse@congressionalaward.org  
6-9767

# COMMUNICATIONS RESOURCES

**[Download Content and Digital Resources](#)**

## **ADD THE AWARD TO THE MEMBER'S WEBSITE**

The Congressional Award operates as a constituent service in both the House and Senate. Include it under the youth, student opportunities, or constituent services pages. **Please link to the website [www.congressionalaward.org](http://www.congressionalaward.org).**

**[Speaker Nancy Pelosi](#)**

**[Rep. Jody Hice](#)**

## **NEWSLETTER FEATURE**

Showcase Congress' award for youth to constituents in weekly or monthly newsletter or other member communications.

## **GET SOCIAL**

Connect constituents with the program through social media by creating Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Twitter posts.

**Join the conversation using #EarnedIt.**

**[Rep. Kelly on Facebook](#)**

**[Rep. Hudson on Instagram](#)**

**[Rep. Wexton on Twitter](#)**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Write a press release to promote the program or recognize recent awardees.

**[Sen. Crapo Release](#)**

## **SEND A LETTER**

Congratulatory letters to Congressional Award Medalists in the district or letters of encouragement to schools reinforce support of youth participants and offer a lasting memento of their achievement.

**[Rep. Sean Maloney Letter](#)**

## **GIVE REMARKS ON THE FLOOR**

Speak on the House or Senate floor about the accomplishments of youth constituents. This will not only be a special memory for medalists, but it is also a great way to promote the program to fellow Members of the House or Senate.

**[Rep. French Hill Speech](#)**



**Bethie Woodall**

Deputy National Director  
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6-9721

# THE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

## CERTIFICATES

	Bronze Certificate	Silver Certificate	Gold Certificate
Voluntary Public Service	30 Hours	60 Hours	90 Hours
Voluntary Public Service	No Minimum Months	No Minimum Months	6 Months
Personal Development	15 Hours	30 Hours	45 Hours
Personal Development	No Minimum Months	No Minimum Months	6 Months
Physical Fitness	15 Hours	30 Hours	45 Hours
Physical Fitness	No Minimum Months	No Minimum Months	6 Months
Expedition/ Exploration	1 Day	2 Days	3 Days

## MEDALS

	Bronze Medal	Silver Medal	Gold Medal
Voluntary Public Service	100 Hours	200 Hours	400 Hours
Voluntary Public Service	7 Months	12 Months	24 Months
Personal Development	50 Hours	100 Hours	200 Hours
Personal Development	7 Months	12 Months	24 Months
Physical Fitness	50 Hours	100 Hours	200 Hours
Physical Fitness	7 Months	12 Months	24 Months
Expedition/ Exploration	2 Day, 1 Night Trip	3 Day, 2 Night Trip	5 Day, 4 Night Trip

## GENERAL RESOURCES

**REGISTRATION** - Participants must register online or by mail before starting

**PROGRAM BOOK** - Program overview, sample activities, requirements, and FAQs

**DEAR COLLEAGUE** - Hear from Members of Congress and the importance of the Award

**SUBMITTABLE GUIDE** - The online record book for youth participants to digitally submit



## PROGRAM PARTNERS



## CORPORATE PARTNERS





## **The Congressional Award | Congress' Award for Youth**

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Mailing Address: Post Office Box 77440 • Washington, D.C. 20013


Visit [www.congressionaward.org](http://www.congressionaward.org)

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