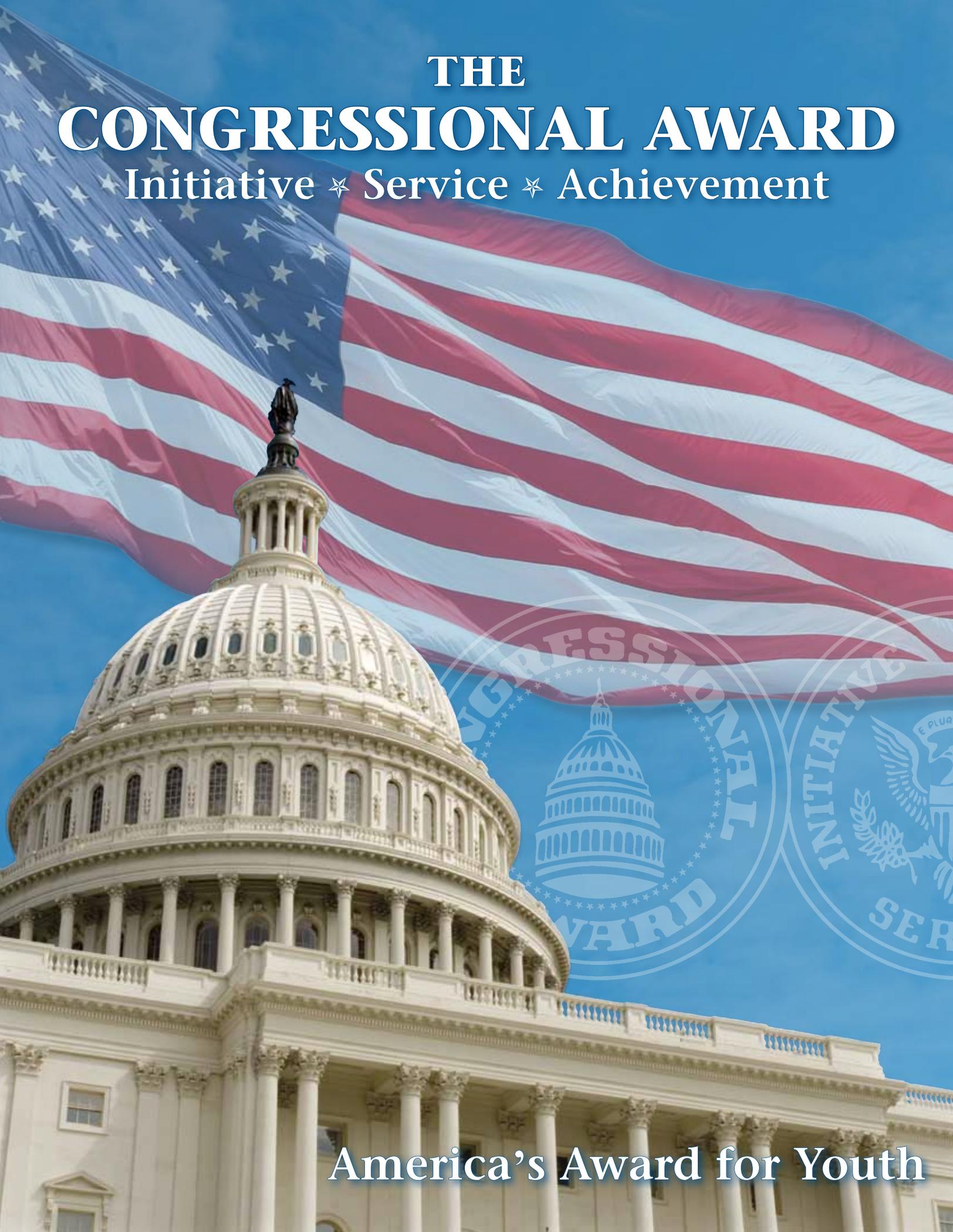


THE CONGRESSIONAL AWARD

Initiative ✦ Service ✦ Achievement



America's Award for Youth

THE CONGRESSIONAL AWARD

THE AWARD

The Congressional Award is about challenge. It is a fun and interesting way for you to become more involved in something you already enjoy or try something for the first time. After you register to earn the Award, you set goals in four areas; Voluntary Public Service, Personal Development, Physical Fitness and Expedition/Exploration. You must select an Advisor to help you set challenging but achievable goals and assist you in planning activities to reach those goals.

HISTORY

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 Senator Malcolm Wallop of Wyoming and the late Congressman James Howard of New Jersey. The enabling legislation (Public Law 96-114) established the Congressional Award as a private public partnership that receives all funding from the private sector. The bill was originally signed into law by President Jimmy Carter. Presidents Ronald Reagan, George Bush, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush have signed continuing legislation.

COUNCILS

A Congressional Award Council is created through a partnership of volunteers and support from the Congressional Delegation of the state. These Councils work with our National Office to provide youth with increased opportunities in service and personal development. If there is a Congressional Award Council in your area, direct all questions and submit your Record Book there. A list of active Congressional Award Councils can be found at www.CongressionalAward.org.

"The Congressional Award provides an opportunity to recognize the hard work and dedication of America's young people who have made the commitment to bettering themselves and their communities."

-Representative Nancy Pelosi (CA08)

"This is not just having your coach/teacher/parent tell you what to do. It is having that person ask you what you want to do, making a few suggestions, and watching you do it yourself."

*-Eric Alden
Council President
Wyoming Congressional Award Council*

INITIATIVE ✦ SERVICE ✦ ACHIEVEMENT

THE FOUR PROGRAM AREAS

Voluntary Public Service: Providing service to others and the greater community at large.

Personal Development: Developing personal interests, social or employment skills.

Physical Fitness: Improving quality of life through fitness activities.

Expedition/Exploration: Undertaking an outdoor, wilderness or venture experience (Historical, cultural or environmental).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Steps	2
Program Requirements	3
Advisors & Validators	4
Goal Setting	5
Program Descriptions	
Voluntary Public Service	6-7
Personal Development	8
Physical Fitness	9
Exploration/Expedition	10-11
FAQ's	13
Filling Out Your Record Book	14
Cover Page	15
Voluntary Public Service	16
Personal Development	17
Physical Fitness	18
Exploration/Expedition	19-20
Partnering Organizations	21

"Participating in the Congressional Award program has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. I have truly learned the meaning of being independent, disciplined and organized. I have become very goal-oriented, self-motivated and dedicated to the causes I am passionate about. This is a once-in-a-lifetime experience that I will never forget."

- Stephanie Hu, Congressional Award Gold Medalist
Honolulu, HI

HOW TO EARN THE CONGRESSIONAL AWARD!

Get started today by registering at www.congressionalaward.org. You must register before you may start setting your goals. Hours dedicated to earning an Award at one level are carried to the next level. Along the way to the Gold Medal, you will earn a Bronze, Silver and Gold Certificate and a Bronze and Silver Medal. The minimum age to register is 13 ½ and goals must be achieved by your 24th birthday.



FOLLOW THESE STEPS

REGISTER FOR THE AWARD

Anyone between the ages of 13 1/2 and 23 may register for the Award.

WORK TOWARDS ACHIEVING YOUR GOALS

The only deadline is your 24th birthday. Work at your own pace.

Remember you may have up to four different goals per level for Voluntary Public Service and two goals per level for Personal Development and Physical Fitness, respectively.

You may start at any level you choose. You can start with the Bronze Certificate or go straight for the Gold Medal. You can also go level by level or skip levels. It's your choice.

You must keep records of your activities to show your Advisor and Validators.

After accomplishing your goals for the level you are working towards, have your Validators and Advisors sign off on the completed Record Book pages.

If you have any questions about a Goal or Activity, you may email information@Congressionalaward.org. While we can review your goal, we will not approve anything until we receive your actual Record Book.

REVISIONS

If we have questions regarding your submission, we will notify you in writing regarding changes we may need to see in order to approve your submission.

Follow instructions in the Revision letter from the National Office.

SELECT AND WORK WITH AN ADVISOR

Any adult may serve as an Advisor with the exception of your parent, relative or peer.

Review program guidelines and the Record Book with your chosen Advisor.

Develop and log goals on corresponding record sheets after your Advisor's approval.

Select appropriate activities that will help you achieve your goals.

SUBMIT COMPLETED RECORD BOOKS TO THE NATIONAL OFFICE

Make sure to make copies of everything you submit. We do not return submissions; do not send anything in that you would like back.

Submit all completed Record Books to:

**The Congressional Award
P.O. Box 77440
Washington, DC 20013**

Reviewing Record Books can take up to four weeks. Gold Medal Record Books may take up to eight weeks.

You will receive written notification of your approval or need for revisions.

APPROVAL

Continue working towards the next level.

RECEIVE YOUR AWARD

If you achieve a Bronze, Silver or Gold Certificate, we will mail it directly to you. If you apply for and earn a higher medal, all lower medals and certificates will be mailed directly to you.

Bronze and Silver Medals are presented locally by a Member of Congress. Please be patient, presentations often take months to arrange.

Gold Medals are presented annually in Washington, DC each June.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

There are six levels of the Award-Bronze, Silver and Gold Certificates and Bronze, Silver and Gold Medals. Each level is cumulative – time spent on one Award is carried with you to the next level.

	BRONZE CERTIFICATE	SILVER CERTIFICATE	GOLD CERTIFICATE	BRONZE MEDAL	SILVER MEDAL	GOLD MEDAL
VOLUNTARY PUBLIC SERVICE	30 HOURS	60 HOURS	90 HOURS	100 HOURS	200 HOURS	400 HOURS
VOLUNTARY PUBLIC SERVICE MONTHS OF ACTIVITY	N/A	N/A	6 MONTHS	7 MONTHS	12 MONTHS	24 MONTHS
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	15 HOURS	30 HOURS	45 HOURS	50 HOURS	100 HOURS	200 HOURS
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT MONTHS OF ACTIVITY	N/A	N/A	6 MONTHS	7 MONTHS	12 MONTHS	24 MONTHS
PHYSICAL FITNESS	15 HOURS	30 HOURS	45 HOURS	50 HOURS	100 HOURS	200 HOURS
PHYSICAL FITNESS MONTHS OF ACTIVITY	N/A	N/A	6 MONTHS	7 MONTHS	12 MONTHS	24 MONTHS
EXPEDITION/ EXPLORATION	1 DAY	2 DAYS	3 DAYS	1 OVERNIGHT	2 CONSECUTIVE OVERNIGHTS	4 CONSECUTIVE OVERNIGHTS

Along with the hour requirement, the higher levels of the Award require that your activities be spread out over a minimum amount of months. Please note the following:

- 1. The month requirement applies to Voluntary Public Service, Personal Development, and Physical Fitness.** You must accumulate the necessary hours over a certain amount of months. For example, the Bronze Medal requires a **minimum** of seven months of activity in Voluntary Public Service, seven months of activity in Personal Development, and seven months of activity in Physical Fitness.
- 2. Months do not need to be consecutive.** For instance, if you register with the Award in January and work on Personal Development in January, February and March and then do not work on any Personal Development until October, November and December that would count as six months of activity.
- 3. Months are cumulative.** For example, the seven months of activity you complete at the Bronze Medal level will be carried over to the next level, leaving a minimum of five more months of activity needed in order to qualify for the Silver Medal.
- 4. Months may only be counted once in the same activity area.** For instance, if you play soccer and soft-ball during the same six month period for your Physical Fitness activity, you will only get credit for six months of activity, not 12 months of activity. If different goals overlap in the same month, the month may only be counted once for the respective program area.

ADVISORS AND VALIDATORS

Advisors and Validators play an important role in your pursuit of the Congressional Award. To earn the Award, you set goals in four areas: Voluntary Public Service, Personal Development, Physical Fitness and an Expedition or Exploration. Advisors and Validators assist you in the goal setting process and monitor your progress in earning the Congressional Award.

The Congressional Award is an excellent way to increase your mentor base and work with adults who will encourage and support you in earning your Award. You will choose one adult to serve as your Advisor and other adults as your Validators. **You must select adults other than your parents, relatives or peers.**

Select an **ADVISOR** who is qualified to help guide you through the goal setting process. *Teachers, coaches, Scoutmasters, club advisors and civic leaders are examples of potential Congressional Award Advisors.* You will work with your Advisor in setting and achieving your goals and finalizing your completed Record Book.

An appropriate **VALIDATOR** depends upon the activities you select to achieve your goals. *Validators should be knowledgeable or experienced in the activities you pursue in each of the program areas.* For example, if your Physical Fitness goal and activities involve basketball, your basketball coach would be an appropriate Validator. Similarly, if you volunteer at an animal shelter, an employee or the volunteer coordinator of the shelter would be an appropriate Validator. If an appropriate Validator can not be found, and the Advisor is knowledgeable in the specific program area, then the Advisor may serve as the Validator.

The National Office does not match young people with Advisors.

We encourage you to reach out into your community to select an adult with whom you feel comfortable working on this endeavor. Most participants will work with a minimum of five adults throughout the program, providing an opportunity to learn from mentors who share your enthusiasm, skill and experience. One of the many benefits of the Congressional Award is the opportunity to establish new links within your community which can have a profound influence over time.

“Richard is an outstanding young man! His participation in this program greatly benefited not only himself but all individuals he worked with!”

*- Sherri DeNault, Congressional Award Advisor
Wright-Patterson AFB, OH*

THE ADVISOR...

1. Reviews the Congressional Award requirements and guidelines provided in the program booklet with you.
2. Helps you set goals that are personally challenging, achievable, worthwhile, measurable, and fulfilling.
3. Approves your goals after you record them in your Record Book.
4. Ensures that you identify appropriate activities and qualified Validators for each goal.
5. Maintains periodic contact with you while you work towards the Congressional Award.
6. Helps you revise your goals if needed by helping you set new goals and find activities to achieve them.
7. Encourages you to obtain written comments and signatures from your Validators as soon as your goals have been met.
8. Reviews your records and signs the front cover of your Record Book once you have completed your goals in each of the four program areas. Your Advisor's signature and comments will certify that you have completed all the requirements.
9. Retains a photocopy of your Record Book.
10. Works with you to set new goals and begin working on the next level of the Award once you have mailed in the completed Record Book.

THE VALIDATOR...

1. Reviews the Congressional Award requirements and guidelines listed in the booklet with you.
2. Discusses the specific requirements for the particular goal he/she will validate, including how your progress can be measured and documented.
3. Helps you identify your starting level in a particular area of endeavor.
4. Makes certain your goal is personally challenging, achievable, worthwhile, measurable, and fulfilling.
5. Periodically reviews your records that show your progress toward the goal.
6. Reviews all records and signs the appropriate page in the Record Book once you have met minimum hours and duration of activities.

GOAL SETTING

The Congressional Award is based on the concept that, as a participant, you set and achieve challenging yet achievable goals in each of the four program areas. **After registering, you set your goals and have them approved by your Advisor and Validators.** Your goals should demonstrate initiative and forethought. When you complete work on an Award level, you show your Advisor and Validators that you have provided the service you proposed or increased your knowledge and skills in the designated activities.

To help you set goals, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is my goal...achievable?
- ...worthwhile?
- ...measurable?
- ...challenging?
- ...fulfilling?

If you answer 'no' to any of these questions, take another look at your goals.

ADDITIONAL GOALS

You may complete the required hours within one program area by working on more than one goal. To do this, you'll set an additional goal in that program area. If you set more than one goal within a program area, you must submit separate Record Book pages for each goal. As you move from one Award level to the next, you can set new goals.

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF GOALS PERMITTED AT EACH LEVEL

Voluntary Public Service	4
Personal Development	2
Physical Fitness	2
Expedition/Exploration	1

MAKING CHANGES

Sometimes plans change and you need to re-work your goals. Part of the process of the Award is learning about yourself and what interests you. If you need to drop, add or revise a goal, talk with your Advisor and Validator and make the necessary changes. Once you have re-worked your goal and it has been approved by your Advisor and Validator, begin working toward the revised goal. The time spent on the previous goal, prior to the revision, will still count toward your required hours for the program area.

EXAMPLES OF UNACCEPTABLE GOALS:

VOLUNTARY PUBLIC SERVICE:

"I will be a teacher for our Sunday School program."

Why is this goal unacceptable?

While admirable, your Voluntary Public Service should benefit the community as a whole, not just private organizations. Activities related to internal membership may not be counted toward Voluntary Public Service.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT:

"I will continue to write every morning before school about whatever comes to mind."

Why is this goal unacceptable?

Your goal should challenge you. Continuing an activity will only maintain your ability level. You should set goals that compel you to strive for greatness. Your goal should also make it possible to measure that growth.

PHYSICAL FITNESS:

"I want to be more physically fit."

Why is this goal unacceptable?

Your Physical Fitness goal should be measurable and should include details of what you expect out of your activities. While becoming more physically fit is great to work towards, your goal needs to be specific.

EXPEDITION:

"I will attend summer camp."

Why is this goal unacceptable?

Attending a summer camp that you did not help organize cannot count as an Expedition activity as others most likely planned the itinerary, meals, etc. In order to qualify for an Expedition, you must show ample planning and preparation.

EXPLORATION:

"I will visit prospective colleges."

Why is this goal unacceptable?

An Exploration should not consist of a participant adjusting to a new lifestyle such as moving away to attend college, a work-study program, or pursuing their next stage in life.

EXAMPLES OF ACCEPTABLE GOALS:

VOLUNTARY PUBLIC SERVICE:

Goal: "I am going to dedicate four hours a week under the direction of St. Vincent de Paul, Inc."

Activities: "I will work in the clothing distribution center and the soup kitchen."

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Goal: "I would like to learn about yoga and progress from a beginning level to an intermediate level by learning at least three new poses a month. I would like to learn stress management and become more flexible and in-tune with my body and mind."

Activities: "I will take a yoga class at a local studio once a week, practice at home and research the difference between the variations of yoga and the different poses."

PHYSICAL FITNESS:

Goal: "I am interested in rowing and would like to row a 2k in 15 minutes."

Activities: "I will practice rowing on a machine three times a week, I will stretch and lift weights and I will join the rowing team."

EXPEDITION:

Goal: "I will take a day trip white water rafting."

Activities: "I will map the route that we will take, plan for my transportation to and from the rafting company, take preparatory safety classes and work on my arm strength by lifting weights."

EXPLORATION:

Goal: "I will plan and prepare a trip to Playa Dominical, Costa Rica to learn about surfing and explore a rainforest environment."

Activities: "I will research flights and hotels to determine my budget, apply for need-based scholarships, and work on small fundraisers. I will then map out the places I want to visit and select a variety of rainforest immersion tours."

SAMPLE ACTIVITY IDEAS

AmeriCorps NCCC
Animal Care Shelter Work
Aquatics/Water Safety Instructor
Camp/Outdoor School Volunteer
Civil Air Patrol
Conservation Projects
Crime Prevention
Disabled Citizen Assistance
Fire Dept. or Police Volunteer
First Aid Instructor
Health Service
Hospital Volunteer
Immigrant Services
Interpreter
Library Work
Meals on Wheels
Nursing Home/Aid to Elderly
Park Volunteer
Public Housing Services
Red Cross Volunteer
Safety Escort for Young Children
Tutoring within the Community
United Way Volunteer
VISTA Program
YMCA Volunteer

If you would like to know if a specific activity will qualify, please email

information@congressionalaward.org

"I encourage our youth to become more involved in their communities through service and meaningful activities that will teach them to appreciate the world in which they live and to make additional contributions throughout their lives."

- Senator Johnny Isakson (GA)

Sharing your time and talents for the benefit of others is an important part of the Congressional Award program. This requires sensitivity, perception of need, determination, perseverance and dedication. Voluntary Public Service activities must be performed without pay, compensation or school credit. Service provided to fulfill graduation requirements may be allowed. You should provide a **direct service**, rather than focus on issues. When setting your goals, identify activities that benefit the **community at large**. You may submit a maximum of four different goals per Record Book for volunteer service.

GUIDELINES

1. **UMBRELLA GOALS** Similar activities may be combined to achieve one goal. Collections of unrelated volunteer service activities would not be acceptable. **If you are planning on completing different activities in order to meet one final goal, please make sure the activities have an underlying connection or similarity that helps achieve your Umbrella Goal.**

• **Acceptable goal with a series of activities:**

"I will provide a minimum of 100 hours of service under the direction of the Volunteer Office of Southern Illinois." (A similar situation may be applied to service clubs, scouting programs, American Red Cross, etc.)

• **Unacceptable Voluntary Public Service submission with no clear goal:**

"I will volunteer at Habitat for Humanity for a day, the local SPCA for a week, I will tutor elementary students some afternoons, I will work with my Boy Scout Troop in leading training seminars, I will work at an elderly home for an afternoon, etc." (While all of these activities are commendable and may count towards Voluntary Public Service, they do not focus on **one defined goal**.)

2. **SPREAD OUT YOUR HOURS** In pursuit of your Award, if your volunteer activity requires you to spend several consecutive days logging many hours in a short period of time (such as serving as a counselor at a camp), plan a follow-up activity in order to meet your months requirement. Keep in mind for activities that last several days, you may only accumulate eight hours per day. You may also continue other volunteer activities throughout the remainder of your Voluntary Public Service requirements.

3. **GREATER COMMUNITY AT LARGE** In order to qualify under Voluntary Public Service, activities coordinated by a church, synagogue, mosque or the like, must provide service to the **community at large**. Responsibilities related to membership in a religious institution (churches, synagogues, etc.) are not acceptable forms of Voluntary Public Service, but may be acceptable as Personal Development. Public service work completed with religious institutions **MUST NOT** include any religious instruction or proselytizing.

• **Acceptable Voluntary Public Service activities accomplished with religious institutions:**

- Assisting with food and clothing drives
- Working at soup kitchens
- Constructing facilities for other communities, building playgrounds and sidewalks, etc.

VOLUNTARY PUBLIC SERVICE (CONTINUED)

- *Unacceptable Voluntary Public Service activities accomplished with religious institutions:*

- Singing in the church choir
- Participating in religious education
- Babysitting in the church nursery
- Teaching Sunday School or Vacation Bible School
- Proselytizing or teaching your faith

4. **DIRECT SERVICE** Activities pursued as a member of an organization or service club such as 4-H, Boy Scouts, Girls Scouts, KEY Club, fraternities, sororities, etc., must provide a direct service to the community. Work related to internal membership activities (such as recruitment, training or initiation) does not qualify for Voluntary Public Service.

5. **PRIVATE vs. PUBLIC** Volunteering at private businesses does not qualify for Voluntary Public Service. You may not volunteer to work at a private office, such as a law firm or doctor’s office as these activities do not benefit the greater community at large. These activities may however be acceptable for Personal Development.

6. **NON-PARTISAN** Voluntary Public Service must be non-partisan. You may not work for an elected official, promote a political issue or volunteer on a political campaign for Voluntary Public Service.

7. **PLANNING/TRAINING HOURS** Training hours for Voluntary Public Service work for the Congressional Award must consist of less than 25% of the total hours completed. For example, participants that serve as a lifeguard for Voluntary Public Service should count only 25% of their hours toward training classes, etc. All other hours must consist of a direct service.

8. **FUNDRAISING** If you would like to raise money or collect materials for Voluntary Public Service, no more than 25% of your fundraising efforts may take place within your home. While fundraising for various health related organizations is a valid cause, the efforts need to take place outside of the home within the community at large.

- *Acceptable Fundraising Activities for Voluntary Public Service:*

“I will collect donations for the local Red Cross by calling shops from my home for excess merchandise that they may contribute for disaster relief efforts. I will also volunteer with the local Red Cross at blood drives, assembling school chests and I will serve as a peer educator for volunteer training sessions.”

9. **ONLY COUNT ONCE** Opportunities for Voluntary Public Service are abundant in our communities and across the nation. **Service hours accumulated during an Expedition/Exploration cannot be counted toward the Award for Voluntary Public Service.** Your Expedition/Exploration is a onetime experience from start to finish. Every moment of your trip is dedicated to fulfilling your Expedition/Exploration goal. We fully encourage each participant to serve as they travel and gather new experiences, but hours from this service may not be counted toward your Award for Voluntary Public Service.

VOLUNTARY PUBLIC SERVICE	BRONZE CERTIFICATE	SILVER CERTIFICATE	GOLD CERTIFICATE	BRONZE MEDAL	SILVER MEDAL	GOLD MEDAL
TOTAL HOURS NEEDED	30	60	90	100	200	400
TOTAL MONTHS NEEDED	N/A	N/A	6 MONTHS OF ACTIVITY	7 MONTHS OF ACTIVITY	12 MONTHS OF ACTIVITY	24 MONTHS OF ACTIVITY

“Alaap is a very dedicated volunteer. He is conscientious and willing to help in any capacity.”

*-Constance Long, Congressional Award Validator
Holmdel, NJ*

SAMPLE ACTIVITY IDEAS

Agriculture/Farming
 Amateur Radio
 Arts and Crafts
 Astronomy
 Automotive Science
 Career Development Programs
 Clerical and Office
 Collecting (stamps, coins, etc.)
 Conservation/Environment
 Construction
 Creative Writing
 Cross Cultural Programs
 Dancing
 Dog Training
 Fashion Design/Tailoring
 Gardening
 Horsemanship
 Job Training Programs
 Language Study
 Leadership Training
 Learning for Life
 Literacy Programs
 Magic
 Model Building
 Music/Singing
 National Guard
 Part-Time Work
 Photography
 Speech and Debate
 Sewing/Quilting
 Theater/Acting
 Venturing
 Video Production
 Woodwork

If you would like to know if a specific activity will qualify, please email information@congressionalaward.org

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	BRONZE CERTIFICATE	SILVER CERTIFICATE	GOLD CERTIFICATE
TOTAL HOURS NEEDED	15	30	45
TOTAL MONTHS NEEDED	N/A	N/A	6 MONTHS OF ACTIVITY
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT	BRONZE MEDAL	SILVER MEDAL	GOLD MEDAL
TOTAL HOURS NEEDED	50	100	200
TOTAL MONTHS NEEDED	7 MONTHS OF ACTIVITY	12 MONTHS OF ACTIVITY	24 MONTHS OF ACTIVITY

Expand your horizons while developing individual interests, social and life skills. The Congressional Award challenges you to pursue a new interest or advance to a higher level in an ongoing interest through Personal Development activities. **This is your opportunity to explore an activity that you are interested in and really make the program about you!** If you do not have a full time job, you may not use activities where you receive class credit for Personal Development. Please remember that you may submit a maximum of two different goals per Record Book for Personal Development.

GUIDELINES

- 1. SKILL & IMPROVEMENT** Your Record Book should include a goal which identifies a definite task to be completed and activities which require the application of specific skills. Also, your Record Book should show an intended improvement level in a particular skill or hobby. The Personal Development goal should reflect a strengthening of your skill in a specific area. If you do not have a way to measure your progress, include extra activities.
 - Acceptable goal:**
 "I will improve my acting skills and learn more about working behind the scenes in a theater."
 - Acceptable activities in meeting your goal:**
 "I will perform in community theatre, work as a stage hand and learn about lighting, props and costumes."
- 2. PART TIME JOB** If you are a full-time student, a part-time job may count for Personal Development. In order to qualify, the goal must indicate the development of vocational and/or work skills and the activities **must be performed without school credit.**
 - Acceptable Part-time work pursued by a full-time student as Personal Development:**
 "I will work part-time at a bank where my duties will include: answering telephones, filing, word processing and operating photocopiers and fax machines. This will allow me to explore careers in banking while still being in school full-time."
- 3. BACK TO SCHOOL** If you are employed full-time, educational activities may serve as a Personal Development activity. In order to qualify, you must indicate your employment status on the cover sheet of your Record Book. **Activities completed at the employment site may not count towards the Award.**
 - Acceptable Education pursued as Personal Development by a person employed full-time:**
 "I will attend classes to prepare for and take the exam for a General Education Diploma. In addition, I will explore jobs that I will be qualified for at a hospital and practice writing letters to apply for those jobs."
- 4. GROUP WORK** Your Personal Development goal can be pursued either individually or as part of a group. If your goal is within a group activity, your individual contribution to the planning, execution, and completion of the activity is the basis for assessment. Your individual progress should be measured against your goal, not other teammates.
 - Acceptable Personal Development goal as part of a group:**
 "I will pursue my interest in photography as a member of the school newspaper staff. I intend to produce at least ten photos, which will be published during the next school year."

5. SPREAD OUT YOUR HOURS Please note that you should only count up to eight hours a day toward Personal Development. Please do not count more than eight hours a day, even if you are serving as a camp counselor.

SAMPLE ACTIVITY IDEAS

Aerobics
 Badminton
 Baseball
 Basketball
 Bicycling
 Boxing
 Canoeing/Kayaking
 Dancing
 Equestrian
 Fencing
 Field Events
 Figure Skating
 Fitness Walking
 Football
 Golf
 Gymnastics
 Handball
 Hiking
 Hockey
 Martial Arts
 Personal Workout
 Pilates
 Racquetball
 Rafting/Rowing
 Rollerblading
 Rugby
 Running or Jogging
 Sailing
 SCUBA Diving
 Skateboarding
 Skiing
 Spinning
 Soccer
 Tennis
 Volleyball
 Weight training
 Wrestling
 Yoga

If you would like to know if a specific activity will qualify, please email

information@congressionalaward.org

Improve your quality of life through participation in fitness activities. The Congressional Award challenges you to set and achieve a measurable Physical Fitness goal. Your goal can involve an activity that you have never attempted before or it can be a continuation of an activity that you have experienced before but at a higher level. Both team sports and individual activities are acceptable as long as the activities lead to an improved performance or greater physical health. Gym class is not acceptable for Physical Fitness. You may submit a maximum of two different goals per Record Book for Physical Fitness.

GUIDELINES

- 1. COMPETITION** Your activities for Physical Fitness may be competitive but your goal may not be competitive.
 - Acceptable Goal with Competitive Activities:**
Example Goal: "I will improve my basketball skills so that my free-throw percentage will increase from 35 to 40 percent."
Example Activity: "I will achieve this goal by practicing after school and by playing on the school basketball team."
Unacceptable Goal: "I will become the captain of the basketball team." (Becoming captain of the team depends on the decisions of others.)
- 3. MEASURABLE** Include relevant Physical Fitness statistics to ensure that a **challenging, objective goal** can be achieved such as: experience level, heart rate, respiration, specific skills, times and distances, barbell weight, batting averages, etc.
 - Example Activity:* "I will decrease my mile time from eleven minutes to ten minutes by running after school and joining the track team."
- 4. IMPROVEMENT** Include your **current fitness level** or sport skill and specify how much you plan to improve while working toward the Congressional Award.
 - Example Goal:* "I can presently jog five miles in 50 minutes and I intend to improve my time to 8.5 minutes per mile."
Example Goal: "Through my aerobics program, I will improve my resting heart rate from 90 to 75 and lose ten pounds within 15 months."
- 5. PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES** Physical Fitness goals for persons with disabilities are given special consideration. Often an appropriate activity can be identified with the help of a physician. Remember, a fitness activity does not have to be strenuous in order to be challenging.
- 6. CLASS CREDIT** Physical Fitness activities completed for a grade or graduation cannot be counted towards the Congressional Award. Extracurricular activities can be counted towards the Congressional Award.

PHYSICAL FITNESS	BRONZE CERTIFICATE	SILVER CERTIFICATE	GOLD CERTIFICATE	BRONZE MEDAL	SILVER MEDAL	GOLD MEDAL
TOTAL HOURS NEEDED	15	30	45	50	100	200
TOTAL MONTHS NEEDED	N/A	N/A	6 MONTHS OF ACTIVITY	7 MONTHS OF ACTIVITY	12 MONTHS OF ACTIVITY	24 MONTHS OF ACTIVITY

SAMPLE ACTIVITY IDEAS

EXPEDITION IDEAS:

Bicycle Tour
Camping
Canoe Trip
Civil Patrol Rescue
Horseback Endurance Ride
Mountain Climbing
Outward Bound Activities
Wilderness Hiking

EXPLORATION IDEAS:

Visit a State or National
Historical Site
Stay with a Family of a Different
Culture or Religion
Live the Life of a Ranch Hand for
Cattle Round-Up
Take part in a Reenactment
Visit a city or town to learn about
a historical event or time

PAST SUCCESSFUL GOLD MEDAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

- Philmont Scout Ranch, BSA
- Outward Bound
- People to People
Ambassador Trips

Expeditions and Explorations will not be reviewed over the phone. If you have a specific question regarding a specific activity, please email

information@congressionalaward.org

detailing your activity.

"I have never been so thoroughly in charge of something before and I felt a great sense of responsibility. When something would go wrong I felt a lot more concerned than in the past. I also felt more excited when things went as planned."

- Aurora Florence, Congressional Award
Gold Medalist
Rocklin, CA

Challenge yourself with a wilderness adventure or by fully immersing yourself in an unfamiliar culture. The Congressional Award allows you to choose between an Expedition and an Exploration.

The aim of your Expedition or Exploration should be to develop a spirit of adventure and discovery. Organizing, planning, training and completing the Expedition or Exploration requires *self-reliance, determination and cooperation*.

The Expedition or Exploration is a **one-time experience** that you plan and execute. **It is not an event you attend that someone else has planned.** Sign up and go activities such as jamborees, conferences, sport and summer camps, leadership workshops, cruises, college visits, Mission Trips, competitions, retreats and orientations are **not** appropriate for the Congressional Award Expedition or Exploration. You should learn to be responsible for yourself while learning more about our world through first-hand experience in the wilderness or in a new and different culture. **Activities completed on your Expedition or Exploration may only be counted in the Expedition or Exploration category of the Award.** Activities completed on your Expedition or Exploration cannot be counted toward Voluntary Public Service, Personal Development or Physical Fitness.

Many activities are acceptable for the Expedition or Exploration; remember your activity must involve a significant amount of independent planning and initiative on your part.

GUIDELINES

Expeditions are typically outdoor excursions that include camping, hiking, and wilderness or outdoor activities. This activity usually compels you to forgo the comforts of home and learn to pack and prepare equipment, set up a tent, and cook food without modern conveniences. You may choose to incorporate a scientific study into your Expedition like completing a wildlife survey while on a backpacking trip in a National Park or searching for signs of pre-historic life in a remote area.

Explorations are trips that provide you with a new cultural experience. These may include living on a farm, traveling to a foreign country, visiting a historical site or exploring a new environment. Explorations involve preliminary research and preparation. Challenges may include language barriers, traveling great distances, or learning new skills.

1. CHALLENGE When planning an Expedition or Exploration take into account the level of challenge expected of the Award requirements. What is personally challenging for a young man who enters the program having already earned the Eagle rank in Boy Scouts will be remarkably different from a young man from the inner city who has never left his neighborhood. The consideration of what is personally challenging is always important.

2. COST Expeditions and Explorations are neither designed nor intended to be expensive. Should you find your Expedition is costly, investigate options. You can work with others to secure camping equipment, instead of purchasing tents, sleeping bags, etc. Some Explorations can be more expensive. This is something you must consider if you choose this type of activity. You may wish to explore sponsorship or scholarships.

3. SUPERVISION Although you are to be self-supporting and self-sufficient, **an adult supervisor may oversee the venture.** The adult supervisor may observe the activities, but you are responsible for carrying out the Expedition or Exploration.

4. DURATION OF ACTIVITY You must show at least 6-8 hours of activity in order to count the activity as a day Expedition/Exploration.

EXPEDITION OR EXPLORATION (CONTINUED)

5. **GOLD MEDAL LEVEL** If you have the opportunity to complete a Gold Medal Expedition/Exploration while working on earlier Award level requirements you are allowed to proceed with the Gold Medal level Expedition/Exploration activity. Completing the Gold Medal level Expedition/Exploration requirements may be credited to lower Award levels. However, three rules apply:

1. You must submit a Record Book write-up of the Expedition/Exploration at **each level**; otherwise your Record Book is incomplete.
2. The National Office can request additional information at any level, even if the Expedition/Exploration has been approved at a lower level.
3. Since higher levels of the Award require a more challenging Expedition/Exploration, the National Office will not necessarily approve an activity at a higher level, even if it was acceptable at the lower level. You must fully detail the challenge of your activity at each level; remember we can only review what you submit. Be as descriptive as possible.

GUIDELINES FOR AN EXPEDITION

Example Goal: “I will plan a four consecutive night camping trip on the Appalachian Trail where I will hike fifteen miles a day and will compare and contrast the foliage of the surrounding trees on each leg of my hike.”

Example Activities: “I will plan for my four-night camping trip by coordinating my travel arrangements and meals, mapping the trail, packing, researching the area and training to carry a large backpack.”

- **GROUP** Although it is not required participants often coordinate with a team to plan, train for, and undertake a wilderness activity. This usually involves a hike, canoe trip, long-distance cycling, cross-country skiing, or something of a similar nature. Be sure to detail your initiative and your contributions in your write up.
- **SUPERVISION** The Congressional Award encourages adult supervision during the event. Your Advisor or Validator does not necessarily need to accompany you on your trip, but they should be aware of all your plans for Record Book purposes. Sharing photographs, journals, or timesheets with your Advisor and Validator is **required**.
- **PREPARATION** The Expedition may, by its nature, involve uncertain circumstances such as weather or terrain. You or your group have the responsibility to be properly trained and to work with a qualified adult in preparing for the Expedition.

GUIDELINES FOR AN EXPLORATION

Example Goal: “I will travel from Centreville, Pennsylvania to New York City to explore different types of architecture and study my own heritage.”

Example Activities: “I will use public transportation to visit Little Italy, Chinatown and Ellis Island. I will plan and prepare for my Exploration by coordinating my travel and researching the different cultures. I will also find information about my family at Ellis Island to complete a study on my own heritage.”

- **CHALLENGE** While family vacations are fun and relaxing there must be a level of challenge and discovery involved with any trip to count as an Exploration. Please show ample planning, along with a real immersion in a different culture where you are asked to think on your feet. Vacations planned by others with limited time spent learning about different societies will not be accepted for an Exploration goal. You must show at least four days of actual immersion for the Gold Medal level.
- **IMMERSION/LEARNING** If you choose an Exploration you should plan a trip that includes some sort of study or actual “Exploration” project. For example, visiting the Florida Keys works well for an Exploration as long as you can show that you immersed yourself in a new surrounding, were self-sufficient and gained from the experience. You should plan on discussing how your activity was unlike anything you had ever experienced by researching the new environment. Sample activities would include comparing and contrasting the architecture or ecosystem between two cities/states/regions. Training may be required.
- **EVERDAY vs. NEW EXPERIENCE** While moving to a new place is always a challenge - handling logistics, meeting new people, packing, etc. - an Exploration need to be a one-time experience that involves it’s own purpose. An Exploration should not consist of adjusting to a new lifestyle such as moving away to attend college, a work-study program, or pursuing your next stage in life.

EXPEDITION OR EXPLORATION	BRONZE CERTIFICATE	SILVER CERTIFICATE	GOLD CERTIFICATE	BRONZE MEDAL	SILVER MEDAL	GOLD MEDAL
NEEDED	1 DAY	2 DAYS	3 DAYS	1 OVERNIGHT (2 DAYS/1 NIGHT)	2 CONSECUTIVE OVERNIGHTS (3 DAYS/2 NIGHTS)	4 CONSECUTIVE OVERNIGHTS (5 DAYS/4 NIGHTS)



Can the work I completed before I registered count towards the Award?

No. Hours completed before you register for the Congressional Award cannot be counted toward the Award. However, once you register and your goals are approved by your Advisor, hours can be counted and carried to each level of the program.

When can I begin counting hours?

You may begin counting hours once you have submitted your Registration Form and your goals have been approved by your Advisor.

What if I want to go straight for a Higher Level (i.e. Silver Medal)?

You may begin with any level that you choose. We consider every participant to be on the road to the Gold Medal, and we'll give you everything you earn along the way. Simply submit a Congressional Award Record Book for the level that you'd like to pursue once you fulfill those requirements. We recommend that you start at one of the lower levels. If you submit at a lower level, you can be sure that you understand the Congressional Award's program requirements.

What is an Advisor?

An Advisor serves as a coach or mentor, guiding you through the program. The Advisor can be anyone besides than your parent, relative or peer. Advisors oversee your efforts in the program.

What is a Validator?

Validators attest to specific work completed. For instance, if you volunteer with Habitat for Humanity, the Validator might be a site supervisor. Your Validator cannot be your parent, relative or peer.

Can I change my Advisor?

Yes, just note the change of Advisor on your next Record Book submission.

What does "Spreading out Your Hours" mean?

When we ask you to "Spread out Your Hours," we are asking you to show activity in each of the three main program areas (Voluntary Public Service, Personal Development and Physical Fitness) over a minimum amount of months. The program is a marathon, not a sprint to reach your goals. Keep in mind these are only minimums; you should take as long as you need. The first two levels, Bronze and Silver Certificates, have no minimum month requirement. The levels that have minimum month requirements are:

- Gold Certificate - 6 months of activity
- Bronze Medal - 7 months of activity
- Silver Medal - 12 months of activity
- Gold Medal - 24 months of activity

For more information on the month requirements, see page three.

I've completed the requirements for one of the program areas, can I submit those activities?

Please only submit **complete** Record Books. You must satisfy the requirements in each of the four program areas. Incomplete Record Books will not be reviewed.

Can activities with other organizations count towards the Award?

You may work with another organization as long as you can show your work and your activities in striving to reach your Congressional Award goals.

Can time spent at regular club meetings count towards the Award?

Club meetings related to internal membership may not be counted toward the award. Activities within club meetings should further your goals. Please show that you were either planning an activity or working on an activity during the meeting time.

Can I complete activities with other people? How would I submit a group activity?

You may work within a group in any of the program areas. When working with a group, please note your individual contribution within the group activity to show your progress and your effort.

Can I complete a Fitness activity for Personal Development?

You may complete a physical activity like dance or soccer for Personal Development as long as it has not already been counted towards Physical Fitness. Activities may only be counted once towards the Award.

When is my Record Book due?

Record Books are accepted all year. There are no deadlines. Just make sure you achieve your goals by your 24th birthday. Those wishing to participate in the National Gold Medal Ceremony held every summer in Washington, DC, must submit their Gold Medal Record Book no later than February 1st of that year. Otherwise, they will be included in the following year's Gold Medal Ceremony.

How do I know if my Record Book is complete?

Your Record Book is complete only after you have achieved your goals in each of the four program areas and accumulated the required months and hours for the Award level. Once the Record Book is filled out properly and all necessary signatures have been obtained, submit all records of your achievements to the National Office or respective council.

Can submissions be returned to me?

Please do not send anything that you would like returned, we do not return Record Books or supporting materials.

How long does the review process take?

It may take several weeks to review Record Books. Please be patient. Participants should hear from their Program Manager within four weeks. The Gold Medal Record Books take about eight weeks to process. If you would like to check on the review status of a Record Book, E-mail information@congressionalaward.org with your name, city and state, level you are applying for and the date you sent in your Record Book, and we will check on the status of your paperwork.

What if I need to send in revisions?

Complete the required revisions that are outlined in the revision letter you received from the National Office. After you have made the necessary alterations, send the updated information to the National Office.

When will my Medal be presented?

Once you are approved for a Congressional Award Medal, we will forward your approval onto your Member of Congress for a local presentation. The Congressional Office will then notify you regarding the presentation. Please be patient as it does take time to get onto the schedule of a Member of Congress. Gold Medals are presented annually in Washington, DC. If you are unable to attend the Washington, DC Ceremony, we will work with your Member of Congress to set up a local presentation.

How are Certificates presented?

You will receive Certificates with your approval letter in the mail.

Should I re-submit hours and activities that I already sent in?

Hours are cumulative in the Award. Any hours you submit to us through Record Books are filed with your ongoing program applications. Do NOT re-submit hours from an activity that you have already submitted.

Do I submit a new Record Book at each Award level?

Yes. Each level of the Award you choose to apply for will require a new Record Book. Each Record Book must contain details of your works in each activity area and the signed Record Book Cover Page.

I recently moved. How do I update my contact information?

In order to update contact information, please just note the change in your next Record Book submission. We will update our system when we receive your change. If you move between the time that you are approved for a Medal and the actual presentation of the Medal, please email your updated contact information to information@congressionalaward.org.

If you have additional questions, visit www.congressionalaward.org for more information.

FILLING OUT YOUR RECORD BOOK

GENERAL

Remember to be as detailed as possible in your Record Book. We can only review what is submitted.

While we appreciate the support of parents, we ask that you take the initiative to complete your Record Book. The Congressional Award is about you taking the challenge to set and complete goals and then submitting the appropriate documentation of these activities in your own words. We need to hear from you about what you achieved and what you learned. If legibility is a concern, electronic Record Book pages are available online at www.congressionalaward.org.

Maintain documentation of your hours for possible clarification. Appropriate documentation may be timesheets in an Excel Spreadsheet, a journal, a calendar, etc. These may be requested if revisions are needed.

Make sure your goals are accurately described and your activities to meet your goals share a common thread.

Make sure you did not count more than eight hours a day for Voluntary Public Service, Personal Development and/or Physical Fitness.

Do not submit hours or activities that may have already been counted (except for a Gold Medal Level Expedition/Exploration). We keep your records on file and do not need your previous materials.

Did you Spread Out Your Hours? Remember, if you are applying for anything above the Silver Certificate, you need to show activity in a minimum span of months (*see page three for more information*).

Make sure to have your Validators and Advisor review your documentation and add comments about your work before they sign off on the completed Record Book pages. If revisions are requested, you may need to get their signatures again.

If you completed your goals with a group, did you describe your contribution?

VOLUNTARY PUBLIC SERVICE

Did you accurately describe how the community at large benefited from your activities?

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

If you used a part time job as a goal, did you accurately note your current school information? If you used a class, did you accurately note your employment status?

PHYSICAL FITNESS

Did you include your starting level and your end goal? Did you detail what you did on a weekly/ monthly/yearly regiment to achieve your goal?

EXPEDITION/EPLORATION

Did you include the following....

- Challenge Level
- Immersion in a different environment/culture
- Unique Experience
- Planning and preparation
- Instances of thinking on your feet

MONTHS OF ACTIVITY CHARTS *(Voluntary Public Service, Personal Development and Physical Fitness pages)*

Please use these charts to note the months that you completed activities in for this specific goal. Simply check the months that you logged hours in for this specific goal. Make sure to fill in the appropriate years on the chart. If your goal spanned more than four years, please make a copy of the sheet and add onto the month total. If you check a box, you are stating that you worked on your goal in that month. Just as in hours, do not report any activities that have already been submitted.

IMPORTANT DATES

REGISTRATION COMPLETED: ___/___/_____

REGISTRATION MAILED IN: ___/___/_____

REGISTRATION PACKET RECEIVED: ___/___/_____

RECORD BOOK SUBMISSION: ___/___/_____

RECORD BOOK APPROVED: ___/___/_____

BEGIN NEXT LEVEL: ___/___/_____

The Congressional Award Record Book

Level Applying For:

Certificate Medal
Bronze Silver Gold

Prior Awards: _____
Date of Birth: ____ / ____ / ____

Office Use Only:

Record Book

(Please print or type)

Name: _____

Address: _____ / ____ / ____
Street Address City, State, Zip

Phone: ____ / ____ - ____ (H) ____ / ____ - ____ (W)

Email: _____

Attending School: YES NO Year of Study: _____

School: _____

Employed: YES NO If Yes: Part-Time Full-Time

Employer: _____

What I have gained by participating in the Congressional Award:

My goals and requirements to earn a Congressional Award have been achieved as stated herein.

Signed: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

ADVISOR INFORMATION:

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ / ____ / ____
Street Address City, State, Zip

Phone: ____ / ____ - ____ (H) ____ / ____ - ____ (W)

Relationship: _____ Occupation: _____

Advisor's comments concerning the candidate's participation in the Congressional Award:

I certify that the candidate established goals in accordance with program guidelines and has satisfactorily completed all goals and requirements for the Congressional Award.

Signed: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Advisor Signature

Submit this six-page Record Book after you have achieved your goals and completed the required hours and months.
Please print legibly; Electronic Record Book Pages are Available at www.congressionalaward.org

Mail completed Record Book to: The Congressional Award, PO Box 77440, Washington, DC 20013

The Congressional Award Record Book

Candidate: _____

VALIDATION OF ACTIVITY HOURS

Personal Development

Describe your **goal**: _____

Describe your **activities** to achieve your goal: _____

Describe what you **learned**: _____

Months of Activity (check all that apply below ↓) **Hours** (only report *NEW* hours): _____

YEAR	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC

If your activities for this goal span more than four years, please copy this page as needed

VALIDATOR INFORMATION:

Name: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____
Street Address City, State, Zip

Phone: _____ (H) _____ (W)

Relationship: _____ Occupation: _____

Validator Comments: _____

I certify that the hours, activities and goal as stated above were completed by the candidate:

Signed: _____ **Date:** / /

Validator's Signature

*Remember: If you have more than one goal, you must complete a separate sheet for each goal (make copies as needed). No more than **two** goals are allowed in Personal Development per level.*

NATIONAL PARTNERS OF THE CONGRESSIONAL AWARD

4-H



AMERICORPS*NCCC



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA



GIRL SCOUTS OF THE USA



HOBY



PEOPLE TO PEOPLE INTERNATIONAL



PRESIDENTIAL CLASSROOM



UNITED STATES AIR FORCE



YOUTH SERVICE AMERICA



JAMES AND EUNICE DOTY PEOPLE TO PEOPLE/ CONGRESSIONAL AWARD SCHOLARSHIP FUND

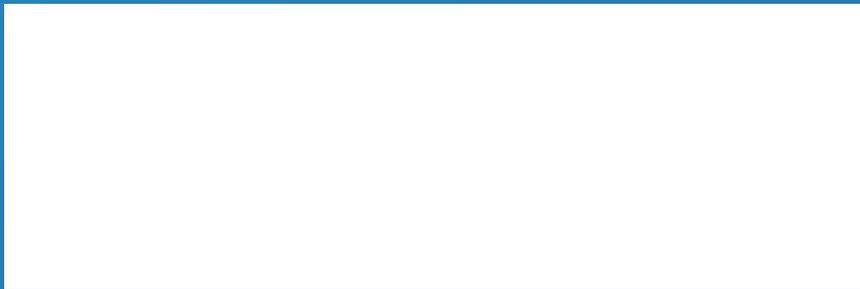
In 1986, in cooperation with the Congressional Award Leadership Commission, People to People International established the James and Eunice Doty People to People/ Congressional Award Scholarship Fund. At the end of each calendar year, four scholarships are awarded by the fund to junior high and high school students who have earned the Congressional Award that year. The scholarship underwrites participation in a People to People International trip during the summer months of the next calendar year. Students are eligible to apply for the scholarship if they earn the Congressional Award prior to the submission date the previous year. People to People International is an educational, cultural and humanitarian exchange organization founded in 1956 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Its purpose is to advance international understanding through the direct exchange of ideas and experiences among people of different countries. For additional information, please visit our website at www.congressionalaward.org/congress/org/people.htm.

We recommend working with one or many of our partners in earning your Award





PO Box 77440
Washington, D.C. 20013
www.congressionalaward.org



Public Law 96-114: The Congressional Award Act
The Congressional Award is a 501(C)(3) IRS-designated tax-exempt organization