



U.S. CONGRESS' AWARD FOR YOUTH
INITIATIVE | SERVICE | ACHIEVEMENT

The Congressional Award
WORKBOOK

THIS WORKBOOK BELONGS TO:

I am earning the _____ award.
(write award level)

PARTICIPANT ACTIVITY START DATE:

_____/_____/_____
(Day) (Month) (Year)

ADVISOR:

- I understand this workbook is for personal use only. This workbook will not be accepted for official review. Please submit record books online at Submittable.

The Congressional Award Workbook

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Getting Started

The Congressional Award Workbook is a resource to help participants outline goals and activities along their journey to earning a Congressional Award. Brainstorm ideas and keep track of your service in this workbook. Have conversations with your advisor about your goals so you are adhering to the guidelines. Use the guided questions in this workbook and the calendar to keep track of service. Once you've completed every requirement and are ready to submit, visit congressionalaward.org and submit your record book online with [Submittable](#). This workbook is for personal use only and will not be accepted for official review.

Program Requirements Checklist

- Are you [registered](#) for the Congressional Award Program?
- Have you read the Congressional Award [Program Book](#) and do you understand the guidelines?
- Have you created a [Submittable](#) account?

What level of the Congressional Award are you earning?

I am earning the _____ award.
(write award level)

What are the level requirements of this Award?

(Refer to the Program Book)

Voluntary Public
Service
Hours:
Months:

Personal
Development
Hours:
Months:

Physical Fitness
Hours:
Months:

Exploration
Days:
Nights:

Write any previous hours and months you have earned:

	Voluntary Public Service		Personal Development		Physical Fitness		Exploration
	Hours	Months	Hours	Months	Hours	Months	Days/Activities
Bronze Certificate							
Silver Certificate							
Gold Certificate							
Bronze Medal							
Silver Medal							
Gold Medal							

Hours in Voluntary Public Service, Personal Development, and Physical Fitness are cumulative. For example, if you earn the Bronze Medal, you will only need to complete 100 more Voluntary Service Hours and a new 3-day/2-night Exploration to meet the Silver Medal requirements.

Goal Setting

A participant's goals should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely). Goals that are too broad, such as “I will help serve my community” or “I will get into shape” are not acceptable. Please be sure that goals clearly state a specific objective and are challenging as well as measurable.

Participants may set umbrella goals that include similar activities. For example, if your Voluntary Public Service goal is to help youth in your community, your activities to achieve this goal could include tutoring at the local library, assisting youth at the YMCA, and packing lunches at the food bank for local students.

Voluntary Public Service can have a maximum of 4 goals. Personal Development and Physical Fitness can both have a maximum of 2 goals. The goal amounts reset at each level. Participants may keep the same goals throughout the Award journey, or make new goals at each level. Goals across categories should not have similar activities.

Earning a Congressional Award is a marathon, not a sprint. Remember, you are taking the steps to work toward your goals and show improvement, it is acceptable if you do not achieve your goals!

Example Goal

Example: What is your Voluntary Public Service Goal?

I will help address food insecurity in my community by volunteering to plan and assist with the execution of at least two food bank events per month.

What activities or organizations will you participate in for this goal?

My service activities will consist of volunteering at the community food bank and food kitchen most Saturday and Sunday mornings. The food kitchen I will be working with is a non-profit that offers free meals to any person who visits the bank. This kitchen is open to the public. I will be volunteering my time and will not receive compensation. My service will consist of helping the food bank employees plan meals and receive donations (indirect service, which is no more than 25% of my service) and working the food bank donation drive, and serving in the food kitchen (direct service).

List a validator who can verify this goal:

Jane Doe, Director of Community Food Bank, jane@foodbank.net

Voluntary Public Service

Sharing Time and Talents for the Benefit of Others

Voluntary Public Service is meant to provide opportunities for you to dive into your community with hands-on volunteer experiences. This requires sensitivity, assessment of needs, and determination.

What is your 1st Voluntary Public Service Goal?

Describe your activities to achieve your goal.

Describe how you improved and/or what you learned.

How did you serve the greater community at large?

List a validator who can verify this goal: (Name and Email Address)

A validator must be an adult who is familiar with the activity.

Parents, guardians, or relatives are not allowed to be validators. An advisor may also act as a validator.

Do your planned goals and activities follow the Voluntary Public Service guidelines?

(See complete descriptions in the Program Book)

- No School/Class Credit
- No Spreading of Faith or Proselytizing
- No Compensation
- No Private/For-Profit Businesses
- No Entrance/Membership Fees
- Service Be Open to the Public
- Must be Non-Partisan
- Indirect Service Cannot Exceed 25% of Activity

Keep track of daily hours in the log.

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Note: You are not required to have multiple goals, but you are permitted to have up to 4 separate Voluntary public Service goals if you need to spread out multiple activities.

Voluntary Public Service - Goal #2

Sharing Time and Talents for the Benefit of Others

Voluntary Public Service is meant to provide opportunities for you to dive into your community with hands-on volunteer experiences. This requires sensitivity, assessment of needs, and determination.

What is your 2nd Voluntary Public Service Goal?

Describe your activities to achieve your goal.

Describe how you improved and/or what you learned.

How did you serve the greater community at large?

List a validator who can verify this goal: (Name and Email Address)

A validator must be an adult who is familiar with the activity.

Parents, guardians, or relatives are not allowed to be validators. An advisor may also act as a validator.

Do your planned goals and activities follow the Voluntary Public Service guidelines?

(See complete descriptions in the Program Book)

- No School/Class Credit
- No Spreading of Faith or Proselytizing
- No Compensation
- No Private/For-Profit Businesses
- No Entrance/Membership Fees
- Service Be Open to the Public
- Must be Non-Partisan
- Indirect Service Cannot Exceed 25% of Activity

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Voluntary Public Service - Goal #3

Sharing Time and Talents for the Benefit of Others

Voluntary Public Service is meant to provide opportunities for you to dive into your community with hands-on volunteer experiences. This requires sensitivity, assessment of needs, and determination.

What is your 3rd Voluntary Public Service Goal?

Describe your activities to achieve your goal.

Describe how you improved and/or what you learned.

How did you serve the greater community at large?

List a validator who can verify this goal: (Name and Email Address)

A validator must be an adult who is familiar with the activity.

Parents, guardians, or relatives are not allowed to be validators. An advisor may also act as a validator.

Do your planned goals and activities follow the Voluntary Public Service guidelines?

(See complete descriptions in the Program Book)

- No School/Class Credit
- No Spreading of Faith or Proselytizing
- No Compensation
- No Private/For-Profit Businesses
- No Entrance/Membership Fees
- Service Be Open to the Public
- Must be Non-Partisan
- Indirect Service Cannot Exceed 25% of Activity

Keep track of daily hours in the log.

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Voluntary Public Service - Goal #4

Sharing Time and Talents for the Benefit of Others

Voluntary Public Service is meant to provide opportunities for you to dive into your community with hands-on volunteer experiences. This requires sensitivity, assessment of needs, and determination.

What is your 4th Voluntary Public Service Goal?

Describe your activities to achieve your goal.

Describe how you improved and/or what you learned.

How did you serve the greater community at large?

List a validator who can verify this goal: (Name and Email Address)

A validator must be an adult who is familiar with the activity.

Parents, guardians, or relatives are not allowed to be validators. An advisor may also act as a validator.

Do your planned goals and activities follow the Voluntary Public Service guidelines?

(See complete descriptions in the Program Book)

- No School/Class Credit
- No Spreading of Faith or Proselytizing
- No Compensation
- No Private/For-Profit Businesses
- No Entrance/Membership Fees
- Service Be Open to the Public
- Must be Non-Partisan
- Indirect Service Cannot Exceed 25% of Activity

Keep track of daily hours in the log.

Personal Development Checklist

Pursuing a new interest or advancing in an ongoing interest

Personal Development is a chance for you to explore a new interest or work to improve your skills in an existing hobby.

What is your 1st Personal Development Goal?

Describe your activities to achieve your goal.

Describe how you improved and/or what you learned.

Optional Section: Personal Development can have a maximum of 2 goals

What is your 2nd Personal Development Goal?

Describe your activities to achieve your goal.

Describe how you improved and/or what you learned.

Do your planned goals and activities follow the Personal Development guidelines?

(See complete descriptions in the Program Book)

- Measurable & Challenging
- No School/Class Credit
- Part-Time Jobs are allowed
- Many clubs, organizations, or hobbies may count here

Keep track of daily hours in the log.

Physical Fitness Checklist

Improve one's quality of life through fitness activities

What is your 1st Physical Fitness Goal?

Describe your activities to achieve your goal.

Describe how you improved and/or what you learned.

Optional Section: Physical Fitness can have a maximum of 2 goals

What is your 2nd Physical Fitness Goal?

Describe your activities to achieve your goal.

Describe how you improved and/or what you learned.

Do your planned goals and activities follow the Physical Fitness guidelines?

(See complete descriptions in the Program Book)

- Must be measurable & challenging
- After-school fitness activities are allowed (i.e. school sports team)
- Must not receive class credit for activity
- Must take place outside of school/class time
- Must be non-competitive goal
- Must be an activity outside of daily routine

Keep track of daily hours in the log.

In Person Expedition/Exploration Questions

Immersion in an unfamiliar environment or culture

In-Person Exploration

1. Location of Expedition/Exploration _____

2. Trip Start Date: _____ Trip End Date: _____

3. Number of Days: _____ Number of Nights: _____

How many travel days did you have? *Travel days are any Expedition days where a large portion of the 6-8 hours of activity for the day was spent travelling to or from your Expedition location.* _____

4. Did you visit a college during your Expedition? *Please note that only one college visit can count per day of an Expedition and there still must be 6-8 hours of activity for that day.*

Yes or **No**

5. What was your goal? _____

List a validator who can verify this goal: (Name and Contact Information)

Do your planned goals and activities follow the Expedition/Exploration guidelines?
(See complete descriptions in the Program Book)

- Activities should be challenging and immersive
- No 'sign-up and go' trips
- Adult supervision is encouraged
- No work-study, internship, conferences, or study-abroad program trips
- If including college visits, should not include more than 1 college visit/tour per day
- If including college visits, do not visit the same institution over multiple days
- Must have 6-8 hours of activity per day
- No School/Class Credit
- You cannot combine trips from previous levels, trip days must be consecutive
- You may submit a higher award level exploration at a lower level

Please note that a participant cannot mix and match the in-person and virtual Expeditions, they must choose one or the other.

Keep track of daily hours in the log.

In Person Expedition/Exploration Questions Cont.

Immersion in an unfamiliar environment or culture

In-Person Exploration

6. Provide a brief overview of how you prepared/planned for your trip and what resources you used. _____

7. Did you plan the itinerary for your trip or was an itinerary provided for you?

- I planned the itinerary for my trip
- Another organization or group created my itinerary for my trip.
- My itinerary was planned by a partnering organization of The Congressional Award

(e.g., Philmont Scout Ranch)

8. Please check any of the following that apply to your Expedition: *Multiple choice.*

I signed up for a trip with an organization for my Expedition that is not a partner of The Congressional Award

- I participated in an internship or work-study program for my Expedition.
- I attended a conference, convention, mission trip or competition for my Expedition.
- None of the above apply to my Expedition.

9. How were you challenged? Include examples of thinking on your feet. *Before and during the trip, what obstacles did you encounter and how did you handle them? How did you take the initiative and rise to challenges that came up while exploring an unfamiliar environment? Show us how you were able to adapt to the real world in a different environment or in planning for this trip. If you worked with a group, how did you show leadership in implementing your trip?*

Please note that a participant cannot mix and match the in-person and virtual Expeditions, they must choose one or the other.

Keep track of daily hours in the log.

Expedition/Exploration Questions Cont.

Immersion in an unfamiliar environment or culture

In-Person Exploration

10. Please briefly list what activities you did on your trip that meet the 6-8 hour requirement for each day of your Expedition. *Please be sure to include how long you did each activity for, or a timestamp, so it's clear that you met the 6-8 hour requirement!*

Day 1:

Day 2:

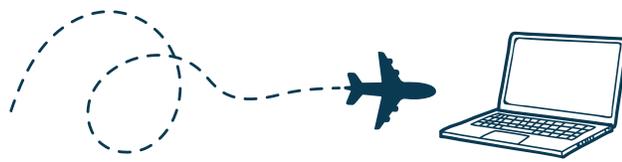
Day 3:

Day 4:

Day 5:

Please note that a participant cannot mix and match the in-person and virtual Expeditions, they must choose one or the other.

VIRTUAL



EXPEDITION/EXPLORATION

ACTIVITY GUIDE

Choose the number of activities pertaining to the Award level you are applying for. Read the brief description, and answer the italicized prompt below. These are separate from the reflection questions, as those questions are for your whole Virtual Expedition.

Virtual Museum Tours: Participate in a virtual tour of the museum of your choice.

- *Discuss the history of some of your favorite pieces and how each influenced the history and culture of your chosen country.*

National Park Tours: Embark on a virtual tour of a national park and explore related topics (i.e. geology of the park, local flora/fauna, history, etc.) of your choice.

- *Discuss the geological make-up of the park, the wildlife, and how the park has changed over the years.*

National/International Landmark Tours: Virtually visit a famous or important landmark.

- *Discuss its history as well as some facts that you learned from the tour.*

Literary Art Review: Watch your favorite international film or read one of the classic books from your country of choice. If you cannot find either a film or book, newspapers, articles, journals, and poetry are also acceptable.

- *Provide a detailed write-up discussing the impact the film/book/scholarly work had on the country and how that literary work shaped thoughts and society during that time.*

Documentary Review: Watch and review a documentary on a particular location. The documentary can be historical, a wildlife documentary, etc.

- *Prepare a write-up discussing the movie, including your takeaway thoughts.*

Interview a Local: Take time to interview someone who lives in the country or works at the museum/landmark you are writing a report on.

- *Your write-up should include details of the interview, such as an edited script, and what you learned from the discussion.*

A Taste of the World: Prepare a favorite/new food that represents the location you are researching.

- *Provide a detailed write-up on your preparation, ingredient list, as well as the origins of the food or drink, if applicable. Many traditional foods have stories so be sure to include this in your write-up.*

Architectural Review: Research and study buildings or structures from your chosen location.

- *Provide a detailed write-up on the influences, impacts, and history of the architecture. You may also compare and contrast architecture from different periods of time within your chosen location, or compare more than one location.*

Transportation System Tours: Research the history of a transportation system (metro, bus, train, etc.) in your chosen region.

- *Create an itinerary for a day-long virtual tour around an area using any available schedules. Discuss what you learned and provide some pros/cons of the transportation system you chose.*

Moving Plan: Research a few major aspects of what you would need move to and live in the region you chose.

- *Create a brief plan for what you might need to move to your chosen region including how much the cost of living is compared to your hometown and what cultural norms/practices might be different there.*

Cultural Pastime Review: Research and learn about a cultural pastime (performance art, sport, entertainment, etc.) that is special to the region you chose.

- *Provide a detailed write-up on the history of the pastime, why it interests you, and the impact it has had on the region(s) that practice/play it.*

REFLECTION WRITE-UP GUIDELINES

After you complete your activity(s), please review the reflection questions below and answer them regarding your entire Virtual Expedition experience. **Do not answer the 7 questions for each individual activity.**

- 1** *What interests you about the topic you chose to learn about? Do you have a personal connection to the place or culture that you studied? Was this somewhere that you were planning to travel in person before you had to change your plans and stay home, or somewhere that you might never have thought to go on your own?*
- 2** *Why did you choose the specific activities? If you chose to consume media (art, literature, film, etc.) what drew you to the form that you chose? If you chose something hands-on, was this a skill you already possessed, or were you starting from scratch?*
- 3** *Did you have a specific plan about how you were going to complete your activities? Please discuss the steps you took to complete your required activities. How did you do your research? Did you search the internet for films to watch, or call someone who might be able to share recipes? Please be detailed about your journey from the planning stages to the finished product.*
- 4** *Did your activities raise any new questions for you about your topic? If you were going to start your project over, what would you do differently? Did you miss any important details in your original plan? If someone wanted to follow your plan, would they be fully immersed in your topic?*
- 5** *If you were traveling to learn about your topic in person, how would your experience have been different? How would being in a museum to learn about your topic have been different than learning it at home? Would you have faced a significant language barrier? Did you learn more about a part of the world that is either hazardous or logistically difficult to reach? How would travelling in person have changed what kind of immersion you were willing to take on?*
- 6** *Did your activities open a topic you would like to explore more in the future? Do you feel motivated to engage with this topic in person in the future? How did your activities challenge any ideas you might have had coming into your topic? If you are not motivated to explore this topic more in the future, why is that?*
- 7** *What interesting facts did you learn about the history and culture of the location/destination you researched?*

Note: Excessive images and extra spaces in the formatting of the write-up to meet the page-count requirement will result in a revision. Images and other additions are welcome, but thoughtful and in-depth answers to each question are the key to receiving an approval! The page requirement is also a minimum, so feel free to add a little extra!

In addition, **you cannot reuse any activities from a previous submission!** If you completed 3 activities for a Gold Certificate, you cannot add 1 more to earn the Bronze Medal, you would need to submit 4 brand new activities. You are able to use the same location, but you cannot reuse the same activities.

Virtual Expedition/Exploration Checklist

Immersion in an unfamiliar environment or culture

Virtual Exploration Checklist

Location: _____

Number of activities required: _____

List a validator who can verify this goal: (Name and Contact Information)

-
- Completed the correct number of activities for the Award Level
 - Completed the write-up for each activity guide question
 - Completed the 7 question reflection write-up guidelines once
 - Compared/contrasted (only required if multiple countries/locations were selected)
 - Met the page requirements

Tips:

- Make sure your write-up is formatted to be easy to read and understand.
- Please use 12-point font.
- Double space is permitted.
- Having sections is recommended.

Virtual Exp. Submission Requirements

Bronze Certificate: 1 activity with a 1-page write-up

Silver Certificate: 2 activities with a 2-page write-up

Gold Certificate: 3 activities with a 3-page write-up

Bronze Medal: 4 activities with a 5-6-page write-up

Silver Medal: 5 activities with a 7-8-page write-up

Gold Medal: 6 activities with a 9-10-page write-up

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Final Checklist

- Ensure all the activities listed occur after your Activity Start Date.
- Do not submit any activities from previous Record Book submissions. Our office keeps all approved hours from past submissions in your participant file.
- Acknowledge that your Advisor and Validators are not family members.
- Indicate that you have not received class credit for any of your activities.
- I have met the hour and month requirements for this Award level.

Submit Online Submittable Record Book

1. When you are ready to submit your record book online, log on to your [Submittable](#) account. Remember, you need to create your own account.
2. Follow the [How to Guide for Submittable](#) and enter your activity and hours on the Submittable application.
3. After each goal, select 'send request now' to send validators a verification email. Please note, your submission won't be approved until your validators have completed the validation forms you sent to their email.
4. At the end of the application, select 'send request now' to send your advisor a verification email. Please note, your submission won't be approved until your Advisor has validated your Record Book.
5. Submit your application!
6. [Start working toward any next level of the Award.](#)

Additional Resources

[Award Program Book](#)

[Submittable](#)

[Submittable Support](#)

[Collaborator Guide](#)

[How to Guide for Submittable](#)

[VIDEO: How to Guide for Submittable](#)

More Questions? [Send the Award your question.](#)