



Public Law 96-114, The Congressional Award Act

Congressional Award

The Congressional Award Advisor and Validator Guide

Why Advisors And Validators?

As an Advisor or Validator, you play an important role in a young person's pursuit of the Congressional Award. To earn the Award, participants set goals in four program areas: Voluntary Public Service; Personal Development; Physical Fitness; and Expedition/Exploration. **Advisors** guide participants through the goal-setting process in each of the four program areas and monitor their progress toward the Congressional Award. **Validators** assist the participant with individual activities.

While any 14 to 23 year old may pursue a Congressional Award, it takes the commitment of volunteer adults to help them realize their potential. Your part in the Congressional Award is essential. Your guidance will be remembered long after the participant successfully meets his or her goals and is presented a Bronze, Silver, or Gold Certificate or Medal by the United States Congress.

Who is Eligible?

Any adult may serve as an Advisor or Validator with the exception of parents, relatives, and peers. Congressional Award Gold Medal earners may also serve, regardless of their age. Keep in mind that it is the responsibility of the young people to identify their Advisor and Validators.

Advisors meet with the young people while they set personally challenging goals, stay in touch while the participant pursues the Award, and provide assistance with the Record Book detailing their goals and activities. Teachers, coaches, neighbors, club sponsors, and civic leaders all make excellent advisors.

The appropriate Validator depends on the participant's activities. Validators should be knowledgeable in the activities a participant pursues to achieve a particular goal. For example, if a young person's goal and activities involved basketball, a coach would make a suitable validator. Similarly, if a young person volunteered at an animal shelter, an employee or the volunteer coordinator would be an appropriate validator.

The Advisor's Role and Responsibilities

1. With the participant, review the Congressional Award requirements and guidelines as provided in the program booklet.
2. Assist the participant in setting goals that are personally challenging, achievable, worthwhile, measurable, and fulfilling.
3. Help the participant identify appropriate activities and qualified Validators for each goal.

4. Maintain periodic contact with the participant while he or she works toward The Congressional Award.
5. If the participant needs to revise goals, help him or her set new goals and find activities to achieve them.
6. Encourage the participant to obtain written comments and signatures from his or her validators as soon as an individual goal has been met.
7. Once the participant has completed the set activities for a given Award level, review his or her records and help complete the Record Book. Please be sure to provide comments. Make certain that you and the participant keep a photocopy of the Record Book.
8. Once the participant has mailed in the Record Book, work with him or her to set new goals and begin working on the next level of the Award.

The Validator's Role and Responsibilities

1. Review the Congressional Award requirements and guidelines listed in the participant's program booklet.
2. Discuss the specific requirements for the program area in which you'll be working with the participant.
3. Help the participant identify his or her starting level in a particular area of endeavor.
4. Make certain that the participant's goal is personally challenging, achievable, worthwhile, measurable, and fulfilling.
5. Once minimum hours and months of activity have been met in your program area, review all of the appropriate documentation and sign the Record Book. Please be sure to provide comments.

National Office

If a participant is uncertain about how to proceed, please contact the Congressional Award National Office. Telephone calls from participants, advisors, and validators are welcome at any time.

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