

Frequently Asked Questions

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What if I Cannot Attend the Gold Medal Ceremony and Events?

If I am not attending the Ceremony in Washington, DC, do I have to send in my RSVP forms and Biography?

We ask that you send in your RSVP Forms, even if you are not planning on attending the Ceremony in Washington, DC. We also request information from you regarding your choice of presentation if you cannot attend, your t-shirt size and contact information. The Gold Medal Biographies appear in the Program Book, allowing an opportunity for all Gold Medalists to share their accomplishments in earning the Congressional Award. The Program Book is shared with Congressional Offices and all Gold Medalists. If we do not receive your biography, it will not be included in the 2010 Gold Medal Program Book.

If I request a local presentation, what can I expect?

Following the Gold Medal ceremony, if you have not had your local presentation, we will notify your local Congressional Office regarding your Award. Local presentations most often occur in local Congressional District Offices, allowing families and medalists an opportunity for an intimate meeting with their Member of Congress. In July, you will receive Gold Materials from the National Office, including your Gold 2010 T-shirt and Program Book. If you have questions about your local ceremony, please contact Information@CongressionalAward.org. If you move or change your contact information before your presentation is scheduled, please let us know.

If I request my medal to be mailed to me, what can I expect?

We will send your Gold Medal Packet, including your Gold Medal and any of your lower levels, your Gold T-Shirt and copies of the Gold 2010 Program Book in July. If you move, we request that you update your contact information with us at Information@CongressionalAward.org. If you decide that you would actually like a local presentation, please contact Information@CongressionalAward.org.

Can I come to next year's Gold Medal Ceremony if I can't make this one?

You may request a deferral in writing before May 1, 2010. We offer deferrals to those who have extenuating circumstances that would not allow them to travel to Washington, DC for the appropriate ceremony. Deferrals have been granted in the past for military deployments, study abroad programs and health issues. If you need to request a deferral, please submit your request via email to gold@congressionalaward.org before May 1, 2010, including the reason for deferral. We will respond to your deferral request as expediently as possible.

Gold Medal Ceremony (June 23, 2010)

What is the set-up for the Gold Ceremony?

The Gold Medal Ceremony will be on June 23, 2010, in the Cannon Caucus Room in the Cannon House Building on Capitol Hill. We have two ceremonies in order to accommodate guests and family members in the Cannon Caucus Room. The ceremonies are divided by state. Once we notify medalists of their appropriate ceremony time, we will work with the Congressional Offices to confirm your Representative's attendance.

On the day of the Ceremony, **medalists are asked to check in for their ceremony forty-five minutes before the scheduled start time**, allowing National Staff time to prepare the Gold Medalists for the presentation. Guests will be able to check in twenty minutes before start time. The ceremony includes a Color Guard, invocation, speakers, and a brief biography of each Medalist as they receive their medals.

When do I know about my Ceremony time?

We do not assign a state to a ceremony time until we receive all RSVP Forms, to confirm which states will be represented. We will notify medalists of their ceremony time via mail and will post the ceremony listing by state on our website, generally one month before the ceremony date.

Can I request a specific ceremony time?

We do not take requests for specific ceremony times as we cannot accommodate everyone. While we understand a specific ceremony time may fit into your schedule better, we must be conscious of your Congressional Offices' schedule as well as other medalists from your state.

Can I contact my Congressional Office to let them know about my Award?

You may reach out to your Congressional Offices; however this often leads to confusion within the offices regarding the event. We ask that you allow us to contact your Congressional Offices about your attendance. If the office wants to reach out to you directly, we will release that information. It is imperative that we have your accurate contact information, including a means for contacting you while you are in Washington, DC, as schedules change and you may need to be notified of changes while you are here.

What happens if my Member of Congress cannot attend?

We make every attempt to have your Representative present for the presentation. If they can not make the presentation, we will ask another Member of Congress to step in for the presentation.

When do Medalists need to check in?

Medalists are asked to arrive forty-five minutes before their assigned start time.

When do guests check in for the Ceremony?

Guests of medalists may check in for the Ceremony twenty minutes before start time. We request this time for a run down of the proceedings with our medalists. Parents and guests will not be allowed to check in for the Ceremony until twenty minutes before start time. We ask that guests remain quiet if they choose to wait to check in as the Cannon Building holds many Congressional Offices that are doing normal business during our Ceremonies. Guests may visit the Longworth Building cafeteria in the interim.

Will there be a photographer at the Ceremony? Can my family take a picture of my presentation?

Pictures will be taken of each Medalist as they are presented with their Gold Medal. A picture of the Ceremony will be mailed directly to you in the weeks following the Gold Medal Ceremony, after you notify our photographer of your preferred picture (information will be given at the Ceremony). If you would like additional pictures, please contact our photographer, Carl Cox at <http://carlcoxphoto.com/>. As we will be providing a picture of the presentation, we ask that family members and guests not attempt to take their own picture. Flash photography and maneuvering for a personal picture may inhibit our professional photographer and may obstruct the view of other families.

Where are the group photos taken? What if the location changes?

Our group pictures will be taken at the Capitol Reflecting Pool Steps (1st Street between Pennsylvania Ave, NW and Maryland Ave SW on the West side of the Capitol) at 12 Noon in between the two ceremonies. A large group shot will be taken of all Gold Medalists followed by smaller group shots based on affiliation (Air Force, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H, etc). If you have an affiliation with any of our partners, please feel free to join the group picture for that organization.

If there is a need to change the location, we will notify medalists via the best contact information on the RSVP sheets as soon as changes are made. We do not expect any changes; however we do need accurate contact information in the event of a change of location.

How do we get to the Ceremony? Can we drive to the Capitol?

Parking is VERY limited around the Capitol. We recommend taking Metro (Washington, DC's subway system) into the city for the day of the Ceremony. The Cannon Caucus Building is almost directly off of the Capitol South stop on the Orange and Blue Lines. Please visit www.wmata.com for details about the Metro System. You may also look into other ground transportation options like taxis.

Gold Medal Open House (June 24, 2010)

The Gold Medal Open House is a new event in the place of the Gold Medal Dinner. We have decided to plan a more intimate event where you and your Ceremony guests will be able to mix and mingle with other Medalists and with Members of Congress. We will have the Open House on the day after the Gold Ceremony so that any Members of Congress who could not attend the Ceremony due to scheduling may be able to come in and congratulate you. The event will take place in the Capitol. Each Medalist will be invited to an hour of the event, based on state. We will have refreshments, a photographer and speaking within each hour block.

Can I request the time for my open house?

We do not take requests for specific Open House times as we cannot accommodate everyone. While we understand a specific time may fit into your schedule better, we must be conscious of your Congressional Offices' schedule as well as other medalists from your state.

When will I know my assigned hour?

We will notify you of your assigned Open House hour when we notify you regarding your Ceremony time. Just as in the Ceremony times, we cannot release the Open House times until we receive and process every RSVP Form.

May I request additional guests for the Open House?

Yes, you may request to bring additional guests to the Open House via email (Gold@CongressionalAward.org) by May 1, 2010. We will only review additional guest requests received on or before May 1, 2010. We will notify you via email of approved guests May 19, 2010.

Where is the Open House taking place?

We are still confirming the actual room for the Open House, but will have the exact room location (with directions) in the packet of information you receive in May that notifies you of your Ceremony and Open House times.

Gold Medal Week-Long Program (June 20 – June 24, 2010)

What is the week-long program? Do I have to attend?

The week-long program is offered to our Gold Medalists to come together and celebrate their accomplishments before the Gold Medal Ceremony. The week-long event is a time to meet other Gold Medalists from across the country and explore the Nations Capital together. As most Congressional Award Medalists work independently, the week-long program offers time to build friendships and share experiences with other Gold Medalists. The week-long program is not required; we have many medalists who only come to Washington, DC for the Ceremony and Gold events. If you do not take part in the week-long program, you will not receive information regarding the week-long events.

Is there a limit to the number of people on the week-long program?

We do not set a cap on the week-long program, but cannot accept any registrations for the program after April 17, 2010. Registrations must be postmarked by April 17, 2010, in order to come to the week-long program.

If I do not take part in the week-long program, can I come to some of the planned events?

Unfortunately, scheduled events for the week-long program are only open to those on the week-long program.

Can my family and friends take part in week-long planned events?

We do not have any planned events for family members and guests to take part in for the week-long program.

How much spending money should I bring for the week-long?

While we cannot give a specific amount, we recommend bringing enough to cover one lunch (\$15), souvenirs, snack items, etc. The majority of your trip is covered by the Congressional Award; you really only need to take into account how much you may spend on souvenirs and other items.

What is the best way to get to the week-long site?

We will provide detailed information for traveling to the George Mason University with the final week-long packet in May. The National Office does not make travel arrangements to and from Washington, DC and to and from the George Mason University facilities for the week-long participants and guests.

What if I need to arrive before the check-in time?

If you are traveling from the West Coast, we try to offer an option for medalists to stay at George Mason University with the chaperones. This option is dependant on the number of medalists that

submit requests. If you would like an early check in option, please contact Gold@CongressionalAward.org, including your name, city, state, phone number and a brief description regarding your need for early check in by April 17, 2010. If we feel that enough participants will take advantage of early check in, we will notify anyone who has sent a written request by May 1, 2010. If this option is provided, the cost would be between \$40 and \$60. We do not have planned events for our early arrivals as the program has not yet started.

What if my flight arrives after check-in for the week-long program?

If you are aware of the situation prior to arriving in Washington, DC, we ask that you contact the National Office at Gold@CongressionalAward.org. If your flight is delayed, please use the emergency contact information we will provide a week before the week-long program begins.

May I leave the week-long group to tour the city with my family or the like?

As a courtesy to our chaperones and the week-long group, we cannot allow medalists to come and go from the program. Medalists who sign up for the week-long program must stay with the group for the entirety of the program, from check in to check out. The only exception to this is if a Congressional Office requests a meeting time (see below).

What if I am on the week-long program and my Member of Congress wants me to come into the office?

Each year, some medalists are contacted directly by their Congressional Office for a personal meeting. We try to accommodate all requests without disrupting the group; however we cannot make any guarantees. Each Congressional Office is notified of your presentation at the Gold Ceremony, and will be notified of your scheduled time for the Open House. We have found that Members of Congress that have personal meetings in their offices do not tend to come to the Ceremony as they have busy schedules and have already met with you and your family. We also cannot guarantee that our chaperones can accommodate every request as it will be their final call regarding your availability. It will be at the discretion of the chaperones whether or not requests like these can be allowed.