CONGRESSIONAL APP CHALLENGE

2018 Congressional Office Toolkit

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[CONFIDENTIAL]

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INTRODUCTION

Dear Congressional Staffer,

We are thrilled to invite you and your office to host a Congressional App Challenge!

As the House of Representatives continues to grapple with evolving technological policy issues, the Congressional App Challenge (CAC) connects Members of Congress with the young coders in their districts.

From summer through fall, self-selected Member Offices across the country host a coding competition for their student constituents. Local judges evaluate the student submissions and choose a winning individual or team to be honored by their Representative. Winners from each district receive prizes, recognition from their Member of Congress, and their apps are put on display in the Capitol Building.

Pending sufficient funding, winners are invited to #HouseOfCode, the springtime computer science fair and reception held in their honor in Washington, D.C.

With the support of the program's non-governmental sponsor, the Internet Education Foundation (IEF), Representatives hosting a CAC encourage students to pursue valuable STEM-based skills – skills necessary for the jobs of the future.

In this toolkit, you will find everything you need to know, including an explanation of how the CAC operates, why it's important, and how we at the Internet Education Foundation can assist you in executing a successful competition.

Thank you for hosting this program and for supporting the students in your District as they embark on the journey of learning how to code. Your support for computer science and coding education makes a difference!

Sincerely,

Melissa Medina

Congressional Affairs Director,
Congressional App Challenge
A project of the *Internet Education Foundation*

ABOUT THIS TOOLKIT AND HOW TO USE IT

This toolkit was created by the Internet Education Foundation (IEF) for Congressional Offices hosting 2018 Congressional App Challenge.

In here, you will find resources, strategies, and information to make hosting a 2018 CAC as easy as possible. We start by explaining the basics of the Challenge (the program's mission, goals, terminology, etc.) and then outline, step-by-step, how you can successfully execute your district's Challenge. The Resources section includes materials for you to use as your office follows the outlined steps, and the Appendix includes various reference materials, such as the text of the legislation used to create the program.

Throughout this toolkit, you will find different kinds of tips, as shown in the boxes to the right:

The toolkit is *not* exhaustive. It is meant to be used in conjunction with the **biweekly emails sent by IEF**. IEF will provide additional materials (e.g. sample social media posts, letters, etc.) not included in this toolkit as the need for those items arise. It is critical that offices **read the CAC emails** in order to access those additional materials.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Abbreviations
- App: Application.
- CAC: Congressional App Challenge
- CS: Computer Science
- DIS: District Information Spreadsheet
- IEF: Internet Education Foundation
- POC: Point of Contact
- STEAM: Science, Technology, Education, Art, and Math
- STEM: Science, Technology, Education, Math

The Congressional App Challenge: ("CAC" or "the Challenge"). The official name of this program is the "Congressional App Challenge." The Congressional App Challenge is an "Officially-sanctioned Competition" of the U.S. House Of Representatives. The rules governing such competitions are in the Members' Congressional Handbook under "Officially-sanctioned Competitions" (link here). While the CAC has been called different things in the past, (e.g. the "House App Contest" or the "STEM Academic Competition"), these are incorrect.

The Sponsor: Per the rules issued by the Committee on House Administration, the CAC must be operated by an external, non-governmental "Sponsor" (see Rules Issued for the CAC by the

Committee on House Administration (2015)). The Committee on House Administration has appointed the Internet Education Foundation (IEF) as the official Challenge Sponsor.

Internet Education Foundation (IEF): The Internet Education Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization committed to a strong Internet to promote communications, commerce and democracy.

App: For the sake of this competition, an "app" is piece of software created to perform some function, to be executed on a digital device (PC, web, mobile or otherwise).

The Congressional App Challenge (CAC) was created because Congress recognized that STEM skills, and particularly those surrounding coding and computer science, are essential for America's economic growth and innovation.

Value of the CAC	
To Students	To Members of Congress
• **Work Skills:** Opportunity and incentive to learn incredibly valuable computer science and programming skills.	• **Community Relations:** Opportunity to interact with students and deepen constituent relations.
• **Civic Engagement:** Opportunity to meet and be honored by their Representative.	• **Improved Tech Policy:** Personal exposure to technologies, and the young innovators who create and use them.
• **Talent Recognition:** Opportunity to showcase their accomplishments on a national scale.	• **District Pride:** Opportunity to showcase the accomplishments of local students.
• **Job Opportunities:** Opportunity to build ties with potential future high-tech employers.	• **Tech Sector Relations:** Signals to the private sector that Congress is addressing the issues faced by the tech sector.

Encouraging students to learn the skills required for app development improves their long-term employment prospects, and will help fill the expanding gap between the tech labor force and employer demand. In its efforts to be as inclusive as possible, the CAC gives the House of Representatives an opportunity to show the tech sector that it recognizes these issues and takes them seriously, without implementing new regulatory burdens.

That is an opportunity students in every district in America deserve.

CAC MISSION

1. **Inspire:** To inspire students from every corner of the country to explore STEM, coding and computer science through hands-on practice;

2. **Include:** To actively include and engage students from communities that are traditionally underrepresented in the tech community; and

3. **Innovate:** To innovate policymaking by connecting Members of Congress to new and emerging technologies through personal interactions with their student constituents.

METRICS OF SUCCESS

IEF sets the national goals for the Congressional App Challenge. Offices are encouraged to set targeted goals for their own districts. The CAC will measure national success by:

National Goals

- District Count
- Student Engagement
- Diversity: Rural, racial and gender.

District Goals

Offices may set goals for their district however they see fit. We recommend the following metrics:

- Growth over past years
- Number of student participants
- Number of schools engaged
- Number of apps submitted

"App" is short for "application." An application is any computer software program written in any programming language. An application can run on a variety of platforms such as:

- a personal computer (example: Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel)
- a web app (example: Dropbox, Google Forms, MailChimp)
- a mobile phone (example: Lyft, Uber, WhatsApp, Candy Crush)
- a robot (example: computer program which makes a robot follow a delimited perimeter)
- a tablet, a vehicle with automated features, etc.

Applications can provide entertainment (i.e. games), simplify work functions (e.g. calendar), support health (e.g. fitness tracking apps), etc. Given their versatility, it's not surprising that many people have a hard time concretely defining what an app is.

An application receives an input, performs some function, and then produces an output.

Colloquially, the term "app" is often used to refer specifically to software that can be used on smartphones. While that use of the term is correct, **apps are *not* limited to mobile phones**.

To participate in the CAC, the students may create any type of application as long as the submission meets the originality and functionality requirements.

TIMELINE

TIMELINE SUMMARY

Step-by-step detail and instructions will be provided on the following pages.

10/22 to 12/9
Winner
Announcement

9/7
Last day
for Offices
to sign-up

10/15
Students'
Submission
Deadline

6/4
Launch

9/10
Target
Registration
for All
Students *

10/20
Judging
Period
begins
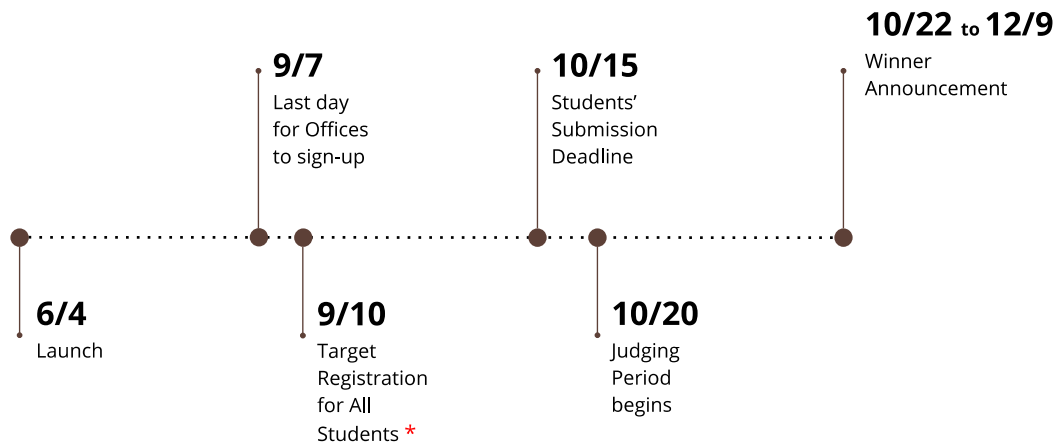
* We strongly encourage students to register by September 10, 2018. Early registration by students is extremely important to the success of the Challenge. Early registration also provides MOCs with a metric to assess student engagement with the district's Challenge.

KEY DATES

Preparation Period (Spring 2018)

April: Congressional Sign-Up Period begins.

May: Congressional Info Sessions on the Hill. Begin/continue Community Outreach

- Let middle and high school teachers know their students final projects can be submitted starting in June.
- Reach out to summer programs about to launch

June: IEF will begin sending check-in emails every other week with guidance on CAC execution

Student Registration for Early Incentives Period (June – Sept 10, 2018)

June 4: Congressional App Challenge launches

- MOCs begin Judge Recruitment.

September 7: Deadline for MOCs to sign up for 2018 App Challenge

September 10: Target Student Registration*

*To help Member offices gauge interest and collect student contacts, we strongly encourage students to register early to receive incentive prizes.

- Continue community outreach and student recruitment

- Follow up with students who registered early to remind them about the submission deadline

Student Submission Period (June – October 15, 2018)

October 4: Deadline for MOCs to submit selected judges to IEF.

October 15: Deadline for students to submit their app.

Judging Period (October 20 – 28, 2018)

October 20: CAC Judging Period Begins

October 22: First day Offices may announce their winner

October 29: Deadline for judges to submit selected winner to Office for approval

October 31: Deadline for offices to report winners to IEF

December 4 – 10: Computer Science Education Week

December 5: Deadline for Offices to announce their winner

December 6: IEF will make National Winners Announcement

PROCESS

STEP 1. GETTING STARTED

ASSIGN THE POINTS OF CONTACT

The sign-up process itself only less than 3 minutes. Before you sign up, decide which two people will be serving as the point of contacts (POC) in the Washington DC and the District Office.

The POC does *not* have to be an expert in tech or education policy.

Offices may divide the work of executing the *Challenge* however they see fit. A suggested breakdown:

1. **District Point of Contact**
   - The district POC is arguably the most important person working on the CAC.
   - This person will be the main point of contact for students, teachers, and any other stakeholders in the district.
   - This person should execute community outreach, build relationships with teachers and orgs, to promote the CAC, and plan relevant events in the district (e.g. award ceremony).
   - The District POC should be familiar with this toolkit, and should also be sure to "attend" the info sessions

> **Best Practices:**
> **District POCs play a KEY role**
>
> Your district POC will be the face of the Challenge in your district. Most offices reported that 80-85% of CAC implementation was led by someone in the district office.

2. **DC Point of Contact**
   - The DC POC is responsible for attending any DC briefings and reporting necessary information back to relevant staff.
   - The DC POC will be in charge of getting approvals for materials the district POC might need. (example: getting a flyer approved from House Franking).

3. **Communications Lead**
   - This person should assist with promoting awareness of your Office's Challenge.

- The CAC is an *amazing* opportunity for positive local press. (Since 2015, IEF has tracked over 500 local news stories published about the CAC.)
- The comms lead should push the CAC through social media posts, floor speeches, op-eds, and whatever other means your office utilizes.

CAC Social Media:	
Facebook	AppChallengeCoalition https://www.facebook.com/AppChallengeCoalition/
Twitter	@congressionalAC https://twitter.com/congressionalAC Hashtag: #Congress4CS
Instagram	Congressional App Challenge https://www.instagram.com/CongressionalAppChallenge/
Linked-In	https://www.linkedin.com/company/congressional-app-challenge/

SIGN UP

Sign up online:

- Go to
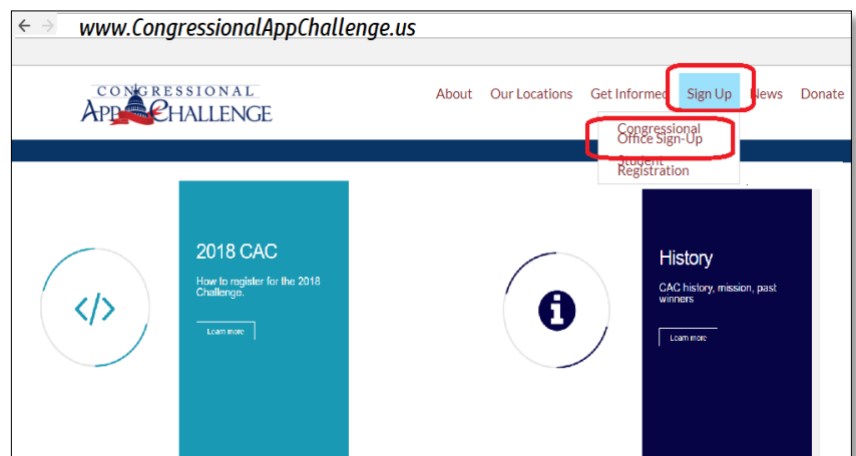
www.CongressionalAppChallenge.us
- Click on the "Sign-Up" tab
- Select "Congressional Offices"
- Fill out the Congressional Sign Up form.

Within 3 business days of signing up, your Office's assigned POCs will start receiving emails from IEF, which will include a confirmation email with next steps and the link to your **District Information Spreadsheet (DIS)**.

STAY ON TRACK: E-MAILS & CONFERENCE CALLS

After the contest launches, IEF sends the POC's emails every other week with guidance and instructions. These emails include guidance and answers to common challenges IEF has identified.

If the POC's don't start receiving the emails after having signed up, they should contact the Congressional Affairs Director to rectify the situation.
(CAD@CongressionalAppChallenge.us)

To provide additional support, IEF will also hold monthly conference calls (dates will be sent in the emails), to give offices a chance to ask questions that haven't been covered in this toolkit or on the emails.

Best Practices:
Read the emails!

Besides this toolkit, these emails will be your most important resource for successful challenge execution. They include up-to-the-minute tips. **Please be very careful to read them thoroughly**.

USING YOUR DISTRICT INFORMATION SPREADSHEET

IEF will create unique District Information Spreadsheet (DIS) for each office that signs up to host a CAC. The DIS provides information that is only pertinent to *your* district (as opposed to this toolkit, which is intended for use by all offices).

The DIS includes sensitive contact information; for that reason, **you should never share access to the DIS** with *anyone* who isn't working on the CAC in your office.

Six Tabs

The DIS will be *crucial* to successfully running your challenge, so you should get familiar with it. The DIS includes 6 sections, which can be accessed using the tabs at the bottom of the page:

- Instructions
- Students
- Judges
- Submissions
- Contacts
- Schools
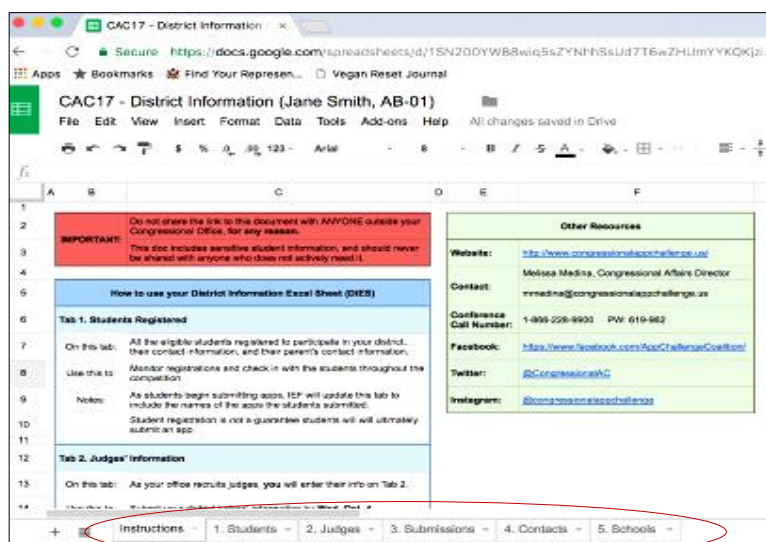
Instructions: This tab explains how the DIS works and what's included on each tab.
> *You'll use this tab:* as a reference for what each tab includes; for links to other online resources and contact information,

1. Students: This tab lists all the registered students in your district and their contact information.

As students register to participate, IEF vets their information for you to ensure that they're competing in the correct district. Once we've verified that they're eligible to compete, we will update your DIS with the student contact information.

> *You'll use this tab to:* monitor number of registrations; get student and parent contact information to remind them about upcoming due dates, inform them about events, etc.

2. Judges: On this tab, *you* will enter your selected CAC judges' information

As soon as you confirm your judges, enter their information on this page. IEF also recruits volunteer judges who can supplement any district's judging panel. If you request assistance with finding judges, we will enter the volunteer judges on this tab for you.

> *You'll use this tab to:* Report your judges' information; find contact information for your supplemental judges.

3. Submissions: As your office receives submissions from students, IEF will add them to this tab.

You'll use this tab to: Monitor submissions; copy the submission information onto a separate excel to send to your judges. REMEMBER: DO NOT share the DIS link with anyone outside your office as student information is listed in the document.

4. Contacts: This tab includes a customized list of relevant contacts in your district.

These contacts are aggregated from previous year App Challenges.

You'll use this tab to: get started on outreach; save new contact information; build your network for future years.

5. Schools: This tab includes a list of relevant schools in your district.

IEF has collected a list of schools in your district that have either provide AP Computer Science classes, or which have had students participate in the CAC in the past.

You'll use this tab to: get started on school outreach; save new school information; build your network for future years.

Do not give ANYONE outside your Office access to the District Information Sheet, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE.

STEP 2. PREPARE FOR ANNOUNCEMENT AND LAUNCH

Constituents need to know that your office is hosting an *App Challenge* this year using local media, social media and email to local educational institutions. Check out the CongressionalAppChallenge.us website for CAC social media graphics and flyers.

CREATE OR UPDATE CAC PAGE ON OFFICE WEBSITE

We highly recommend creating/ updating a page on your House.gov webpage dedicated to the CAC, similar to what most offices have created for the Congressional *Art* Competition. (See suggested text for your website page 35 -- Content for Your Congressional Page (house.gov) in the Appendix.)

ISSUE A PRESS RELEASE

Issue a press release announcing your hosting a CAC to all local media. See sample press release content in Generic Template for Press Release/ Press Pitch, page 33.

GET FAMILIAR WITH YOUR DIS

The District Information Spreadsheet (DIS) is an important resource for your outreach efforts. It is described on page 14. Be sure to keep the link. Your office will refer to this document throughout the competition.

COMMUNICATE WITH SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS

Ensuring that the local schools and teachers know your office is hosting a Challenge is a critical component of reaching students. Review the list of schools the CAC has identified. Add more schools that have a computer program or interested students. This information will carry over year after year. Building the list will benefit your office. Refer to **DIS - Tab 5** (DIS information on page 16 in the 2018 Toolkit).

1. *Inform the Schools:* Reach out to all the local middle and high schools. Let them know you're hosting a CAC. We've provided a sample Invitation Letter to Local Schools on page 37. Following up with the school contacts also increases participation rates.

2. *Visit Schools*: Offices which received a high number of submissions reported that their in-person visits – either by the Member of Congress or a staff member in the district – made a significant difference in the engagement of students and teachers.

INFORM RELEVANT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Connect with STEM and coding-related organizations in your district. It is important to identify and contact these groups that may have summertime classes or after school programs that teach students how to code.

For example, for example CAC partner *Girls Who Code* is a nonprofit organization which hosts summer immersion camps for young women in various cities around the country. This is in addition to the year-round coding clubs they facilitate, which currently operate in all 50 states. If you have a *Girls Who Code* chapter in your district, reach out to them and let them know about the CAC. You can see CAC's partners on our website.

We recommend identifying and reaching out to these types of organizations. If you find that you need assistance, please get in touch with IEF before August 1st.

SOLICIT STUDENT SUBMISSIONS

IEF aims to make the Challenge execution as easy as possible for each office, but the success of the Challenge will ultimately be determined by how much effort the office puts into recruiting student participants. To make that as easy as possible, we've provided the following suggestions.

In the two weeks before the Student Registration deadline, Congressional offices should make a final push to recruit submissions. Final push efforts should include:

- Posting reminders on social media, and doing so more frequently as the last day approaches.
- Visiting schools or programs.

IEF will provide Congressional Offices with graphics and materials you can use closer to the Student Submission Deadline.

Utilize Social Media and Use Visuals

Social media is a great (and free!) resource to raise awareness about the Challenge. Make sure that you use the hashtags **#Congress4CS** (and whatever hashtag you use for your own district), as this will allow IEF to see your posts, and reshare them to amplify your message.

Using graphics on social media also make information easier to digest. IEF will provide various graphics (both in this document and on our website throughout the CAC), but feel free to make your own as well.

The CAC is an incredible opportunity for offices to engage with constituents, and pictures are worth a thousand words. Students, schools, and parents *love* when the Members share pictures recognizing their efforts. Tweet pictures of your students!
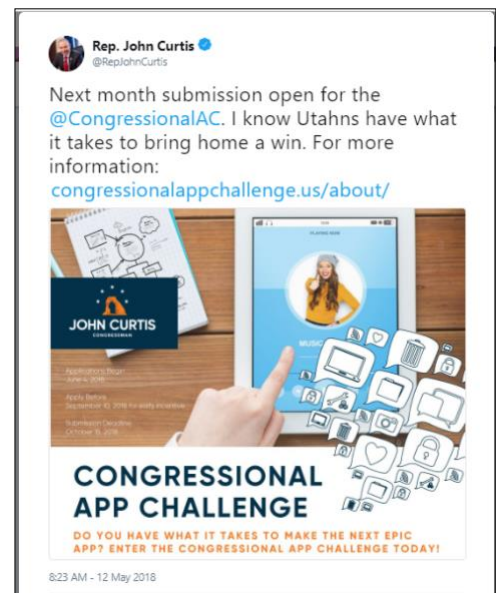
#Congress4CS

Get buy-in from other levels of government

Reach out to state, county, and local government officials to let them your District is hosting a Challenge.

Best Practices:
Get Community Gov't Buy-In

In 2015, Rep. Bruce Westerman (AR-04) aligned his district's Congressional App Challenge with the state-wide efforts to expand computer science education, led by Governor Asa Hutchinson. The Governor attended Rep. Westerman's award ceremony, and even published an article about the

L to R: Rep. Bruce Westerman (AR-04), First Place Team, and Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson

Offices should strive to connect with local government officials, especially if there are already local government-sanctioned efforts underway to support computer science education. Aligning the Challenge those efforts can significantly boost student participation rates.

Congressional offices have the opportunity to select their own judges to evaluate local submissions. To facilitate the process, we offer the following best practices and suggestions.

Selecting Judges

Offices are encouraged to use the CAC as an opportunity to engage with local computer science professionals. We recommend that Offices recruit a diverse selection of professionals to act as judges.

District staff reserve the right to substitute or modify the judging panel at anytime for any reason. Judges have the right to withdraw from judging in the event of circumstances beyond their control. Judges must be fair and impartial. A judge may elect to recuse him or herself from judging a submission, if it is not appropriate for him or her to judge that particular submission because of a past or current relationship with that particular participant.

> **Best Practices:**
> **Judges can help raise awareness**
>
> Your judges can be an excellent asset to help you raise awareness in the community, both during and after the Challenge. Announce your judge selection on social media. Suggest that your judges' institutions issue press releases announcing their selection. Another option is to ask the judges to write blog posts or articles about their experience.

Judging panels should:

- Consist of impartial judges who do not have a conflict of interest in the outcome.
- Consist of an odd number of judges (ideally 3-7), in the case of a tie.
- Be as close to equal in terms of gender as possible, to avoid any unintentional judging bias.
- Include judges of different racial backgrounds, to avoid any unintentional bias.

Profile of ideal judge:

- A Computer Science professor or college student from a local university
- A tech entrepreneur
- A local celebrity related to Computer Science
- An employee at a tech-related company in the district

Note: If you are having difficulty recruiting judges that meet these criteria, the Internet Education Foundation can assist you. The Internet Education Foundation (IEF) actively recruits judges on a national scale, in case offices are in need additional judges for any reason.

REPORT JUDGE SELECTION ON DIS

Once you have selected your judges, your Office will need to report your choices and the judges' information on Tab 2 of the District Information Spreadsheet.
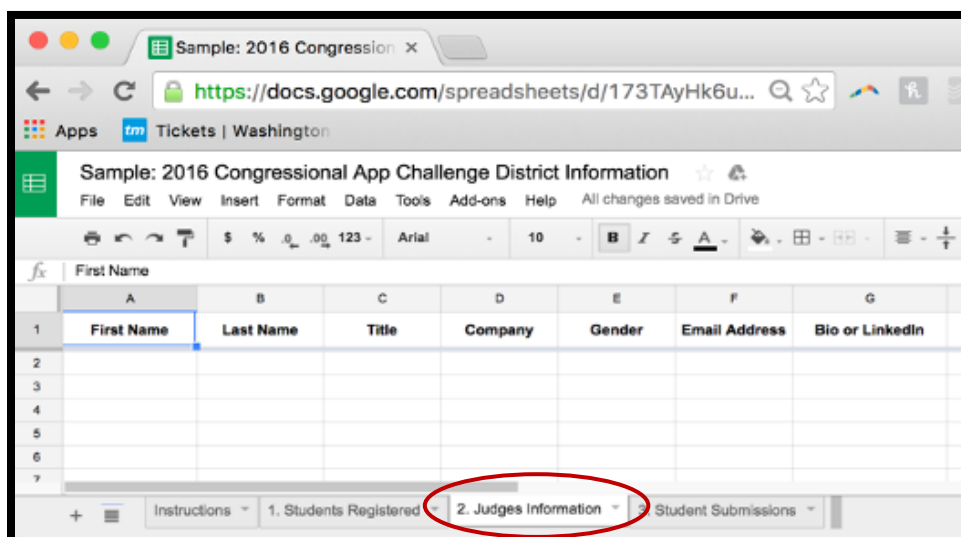
This should be done as you recruit judges, but should be completed by no later than **Wednesday. October 4, 2018.**

IEF needs this information to gauge which offices have judges and which offices may need to request judges for their panel. Please fill it out as soon as your nominees have agreed to serve as judges.

Final Recruitment Push

In the two weeks before the deadline, Congressional offices should make a final push to registered students in their district. Final push efforts should include:

- Visiting schools or programs.
- Emailing students who've registered, reminding them to submit their work (Reminder: you can find the student contact information on your District Information Spreadsheet.)

Best Practices: Finish strong!

Outreach in the final week is key. Many students start off strong, but then get distracted by life. Reminding students in the final week to submit their apps will significantly improve the ratio of registrations to submissions.

Please **be careful to read the bi-weekly emails thoroughly**, as that's where we'll notify offices when those materials are available.
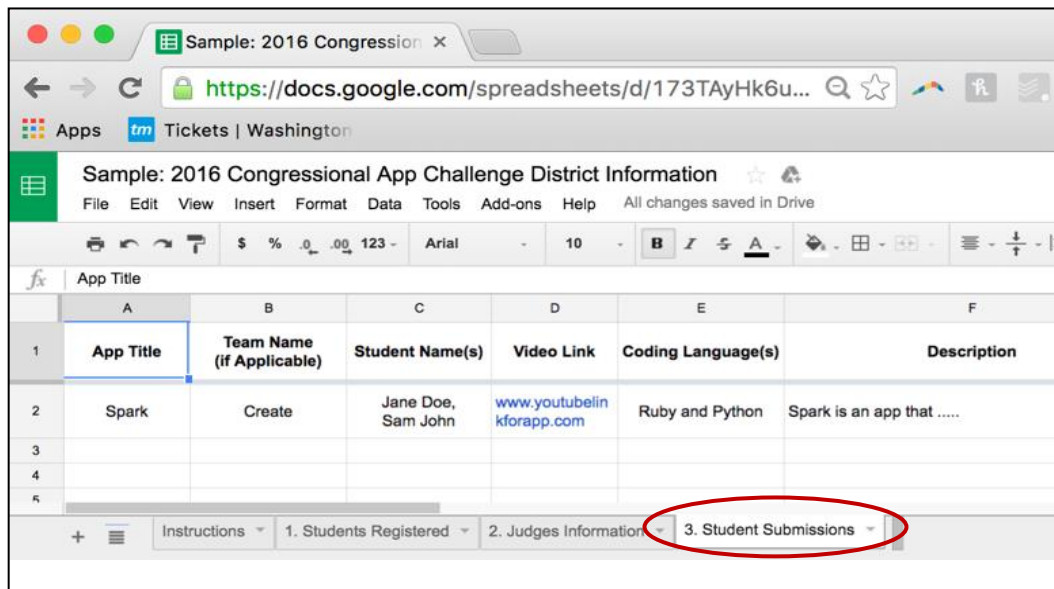
JUDGING

Where to find your submissions

IEF will vet all submissions to your district and as we verify them, we will update your District Information Spreadsheet. That's where you can find your submissions.

We expect that we will receive the greatest number of submissions in the hours before the deadline. Because IEF vets the submissions to ensure the students have submitted all the necessary components, and that they're competing in the correct district, expect a delay of up to 5 business days for the vetting process to complete.

What to do with your submissions

After **all** your student submissions have been dropped into your District Information Spreadsheet, you should share the submissions with your judges.

Copy the submission information into a new, separate excel sheet, and email that to your judges, along with the judging criteria and timeline. (IEF will create sample materials for you to send, which we will send to you as Student Submission Deadline approaches.)

Judges should return their scores to the Congressional Office by **November 17th, 2018.**

JUDGING CRITERIA

This competition is meant to be as inclusive as possible, so as not to discourage students who haven't coded before. For all these reasons, the Internet Education Foundation has intentionally created a very broad set of judging criteria that give the local judges a lot of leeway in their evaluation.

As long as the submission meets the bare minimum requirements, there will be at least one winner in each district that has submissions.

The judges will view the Submission and Demonstration Videos, and may judge the apps on:

1. Demonstrated Excellence of Computer Programming Skills

Use of "block code" (computer programming with graphical blocks). Students create apps without writing a single line of code, learning the syntax of a formal programming language.	**vs.**	**Use of "text based" programming**, in a programming language such as C/C++, Javascript, Python, etc. It requires coders to obey and conform to formal syntax, as experienced in college and in the workplace.

2. Quality of the Idea

- How creative is the app?
- How original is it?
- If the app addresses a problem, how creative is the solution?

3. Implementation of the Idea

- Did the student consider the user experience?
- Did the student give thought to the app design?

Additional Notes on Judging

Themes. On a national level, the CAC does not set a theme. If an office would like to set one however, that is your prerogative. If you choose to do so, please be sure to inform the Internet Education Foundation.

Source Code. On a national level, the CAC will not collect source code. Offices are welcome to collect student source code, but any office that chooses to do so is responsible for the collection, storage, and dissemination of the code to the judges and intellectual property risks.

OFFICE REVIEW OF JUDGES' CHOICES

Each Congressional Office has final say on their district winner. (Historically, almost every office approves their judges' choice.)

After receiving the scores from the judges, each Office has a week and a review the scores, tally the judges' choices, and approve the final winner.

SUBMIT WINNER TO IEF

As soon as the District winner is chosen and approved, Congressional Offices submit their choice to IEF.

A few weeks before the deadline, IEF will send a link to all offices which are hosting a Challenge. Offices will use the link to submit their winner(s)' information.

IEF WINNERS ANNOUNCEMENT

IEF will make the national announcement of the CAC winners at the start of Computer Science Education Week (Dec. 9, 2018).

Congressional offices are encouraged to host their own event or meet-and-greet to honor the winner before or after the national announcement.

Regardless, the winner information **will be public** during the second week of December.

HOST AN EVENT TO HONOR WINNER(S)

At a minimum, Congressional offices must to meet with their winning student(s).

We encourage each Congressional office to host a recognition event in their district; it's an incredible opportunity for positive constituent engagement. Congressional offices have a variety of options which include (but are not limited to):

- **Meet-and-Greet.** Offices that receive four or fewer entries might opt for a meet-and-greet with the Member (inviting students, family and teachers) where they will present the student(s) with certificates of recognition.
- **Reception.** Offices with five or more entries should host a reception to which they invite student participants, family and friends, STEM stakeholders, teachers etc, and announce the winner there.
- **Demo Day.** Offices with 10+ teams might choose to do a demo day (like a science fair) where the students will pitch their app and a winner is named at the event.

(If offices plan to have an in person event with judging to take place on that day, we advise the offices to circulate the submitted app info with link to video to the judges prior to the event so that the judges have some familiarity with the content. This timeframe gives judges ample time to review the material and submit their scores to the Congressional office for final review.)

BEST PRACTICES FOR ANNOUNCING WINNER(S)

Rep. Tony Cárdenas
@RepCardenas

Congrats Evelyn Gomez and Bryan Rocha, winners of the 2016 @CongressionalAC for CA's 29th! bit.ly/CA29AppComp
3:31 PM - 11 Mar 2016

Susan W. Brooks
@SusanWBrooks

Congrats @FishersHS student Grayson Faircloth on creating the winning #IN05 #CAC15 App!
10:35 AM - 9 Feb 2016

Rep. Hank Johnson
@RepHankJohnson

I was humbled by all the talented students who participated in this year's AppChallenge .@HouseCAC15 #CAC15 #GA04
4:54 PM - 19 Feb 2016

Hal Rogers
@RepHalRogers

Prestonsburg High School Students Win First Congressional App Challenge in E. Ky. #CAC15 goo.gl/yw8Qmt
6:50 PM - 5 Feb 2016

While your office should inform the winner personally, we highly recommend you take the opportunity for community engagement by publicizing the choice. Your office should:

- Issue a press release with a quote from the Member about the student(s)
- Announce the winner(s) on social media and share pictures (see examples below)

RULES FOR MEMBER OFFICES

REGULATIONS FOR MEMBERS AND IEF

In October of 2015, the Committee on House Administration passed the rules that govern the execution of the CAC. (See the Appendix for the full text of these rules.)

While we emphatically recommend reading the full text of the rules, here's a summary of several key points:

- The Congressional App Challenge will be operated by an external, non-governmental entity. That entity is the Internet Education Foundation, a 501(c)3 non-profit.

- As this is an officially-sanctioned competition, Congressional Offices may use the following resources to support the CAC, as long as they are compliant with the House Ethics Handbook regulations:

  o The Frank
  o Advertisements
  o Food and Beverage expenses
  o Rental of rooms, chairs, and audio systems
  o Gifts and donations
  o Staff time and the use of incidental resources
  o Use of letterhead and official seal of the House by the Member Office, provided such letterhead and seal are not used for solicitations
  o Mileage
  o The Member official website

IMPORTANT NOTE:

The Congressional App Challenge is exempt from election blackout dates.

SOLICITING DONATIONS

Offices may solicit donations, but only under very specific conditions:

"A Member may only solicit donations (including in-kind) on behalf of the officially-sanctioned competition if the Member first receives written approval from the Committee on Ethics." (Pg. 4 of Committee Resolution 114.). You can find this form on pg. 43 of the Appendix, and on the House Ethics Committee website:

http://ethics.house.gov/sites/ethics.house.gov/files/STEM%20Competition%202016_0.pdf

DONATIONS OF PRIZES

Private institutions may donate prizes for your Challenge within the rules outlined below:

Donations worth $50 or less: Organizations may offer to donate prizes worth less than $50 to the student participants and/or winners of the Congressional App Challenge. IMPORTANT: Prizes shall *not* be directed to the Member's office; instead, it should be directed to the entrants and winners of the competition.

Examples of such prizes might include:

- o A $50 gift certificate donated by a local business to the winner of the Congressional App Challenge in a specific district.

- o Three gift certificates worth $25, $15 and $10 gift are donated by a local organization to the first, second and third place winners of their district's App Challenge. (Totaling $50).

- o A tour of a local business organized and hosted by that organization.

- o *NOT ALLOWED:* An organization donates three $50 gift certificates (Totaling $150) for the top three winners. This would violate the $50 limit.

Donations worth more than $50: Offices must direct any donations (in the form of (a) technical assistance with the competition, or (b) prizes for the entrants and winners of the competition), to the Sponsor (IEF) if the value of the donation(s) from any single source is more than $50.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

If you have questions or concerns about soliciting prizes, please feel free to contact the Ethics Committee. When contacting Ethics, please be sure to clarify that you are calling specifically about the CAC, as the rules around the Challenge may differ from other events.

For example: if you want to donate tickets (valued over $50) to an event for the winner, you must be willing to make that prize available to **all** the winners from **every district** which host a Challenge.

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RULES FOR STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

- Students are only eligible to compete in districts that have signed up for the Challenge.

- Any given student may only compete in *one* district.

- Students may compete in either:
    - the district in which they reside, or
    - the district in which they attend school.

- Students must be in middle or high school at the time of app submission
    - Students may *not* participate after having graduated from high school.

- No limits on application theme or topic.

- Students can use any programming language (list: C, C++, Java, JavaScript, Python, Ruby, etc.) or "block code".

- Students may use any platform (PC, web, tablet, robot, Raspberry Pi, mobile, etc.)

STUDENT AND TEAM ELIGIBILITY

- Students may compete as individuals or in teams of up to four.
    - Teams with five or more students are NOT eligible.
    - If competing as a team: at least two of the teammates must be eligible to compete within the district in which they are submitting.

The district-related rules are not flexible. Please see examples:

TEAM CONFIGURATION ELIGIBILITY TABLE	
Teammate 1 lives/attends school in District A Teammate 2 lives/attends school in District A Teammate 3 lives/attends school in District A Teammate 4 lives/attends school in District B ✓ PARTICIPATE IN DISTRICT A.	Teammate 1 lives/attends school in District A Teammate 2 lives/attends school in District A Teammate 3 lives/attends school in District B Teammate 4 lives/attends school in District B ✓ PARTICIPATE IN DISTRICT A or B.

Teammate 1 lives/attends school in District A Teammate 2 lives/attends school in District A Teammate 3 lives/attends school in District B Teammate 4 lives/attends school in District C ✓ PARTICIPATE IN DISTRICT A	Teammate 1 lives/attends school in District A Teammate 2 lives/attends school in District B Teammate 3 lives/attends school in District C Teammate 4 lives/attends school in District D ✗ This team is not eligible
Teammate 1 lives/attends school in District A Teammate 2 lives/attends school in District A Teammate 3 lives/attends school in District B ✓ PARTICIPATE IN DISTRICT A	Teammate 1 lives/attends school in District A Teammate 2 lives/attends school in District B Teammate 3 lives/attends school in District C ✗ This team is not eligible
Teammate 1 lives/attends school in District A Teammate 2 lives/attends school in District A ✓ PARTICIPATE IN DISTRICT A	Teammate 1 lives/attends school in District A Teammate 2 lives/attends school in District B ✗ This team is not eligible.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- Students may submit their apps any time between the launch and the student submission deadline.

- The app students create may cover any topic, but they must:
    - Be original and appropriate.
    - Have been created within the calendar year prior to the Challenge closing date

- To complete a submission, students must submit the following:

    - **Sign-up Form**. Students must fill out a sign-up form so their eligibility can be verified.
        - If students are competing as part of a team, the sign-up form must include the relevant information from each student.

- o **App Information.** Students will be asked to answer a series of questions including:
  - ▪ Title of the app
  - ▪ The coding language used
  - ▪ What they were trying to accomplish and why
  - ▪ An explanation of a difficulty they faced in programming the app and how it was overcome
  - ▪ What improvements the students would make if they were going to create a version 2.0 of their app.

- o **Demonstration Video.** Students must create a 1 - 3 minute video, post it on YouTube or Vimeo, and submit the link on the CAC submission form. The video must be set up to public view. Videos that are longer than 3 minutes will be penalized per the judges' discretion.

- o **Exit Questionnaire.** The exit survey will be emailed to all students following the submission of their app.

The full text of the rules for student participants are included here:
<http://www.congressionalappchallenge.us/info-and-resources/rules >

RESOURCES

GENERIC TEMPLATE FOR PRESS RELEASE/ PRESS PITCH

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

[DATE]

Contact: [POINT PERSON NAME], [PHONE NUMBER]

[OFFICE OF REP. …]

ANNOUNCING [CONGRESS MEMBER]'s 2018 CONGRESSIONAL APP CHALLENGE

WASHINGTON, DC – [CONGRESS MEMBER]'s office is excited to announce that the [MOC NAME] will be hosting a Congressional App Challenge (CAC), an app competition for students in middle and high school.

The CAC accepts computer programs (or apps) written in any programming language, for any platform (desktop/PC, web, mobile, raspberry Pi, etc.)

The Challenge launches June 4th. Students are encouraged to register online by September 10th before submitting their app by October 15. The competition is open to all students who meet the eligibility requirements, regardless of coding experience.

We strongly encourage students of all skill levels to participate, to learn how to create their own apps. Winners will be selected by panels of judges, drawn from the local community, and honored by their Member of Congress. Their apps are eligible to be featured on a display in the U.S. Capitol building, on house.gov, and on the Congressional App Challenge website.

The CAC was created because Congress recognized that STEM and computer-based skills are essential for economic growth and innovation, and that the U.S. has been falling behind on these fronts. By some estimates, the U.S. may be short by many as a million programmers by 2020. These are high-paying, high-demand jobs. To maintain American competitiveness, it's crucial that the United States invests in our youth now, and helps them acquire these valuable skills. The CAC encourages students to pursue those skills and recognizes them for their efforts.

Recognizing the racial, gendered, and other disparities in the tech sector, the CAC also focuses on inclusivity and making the Challenge as accessible as possible to people from all backgrounds. Deliberate efforts will be made to include students from all backgrounds, including those traditionally underrepresented in tech.

The Internet Education Foundation will be serving as the operational "sponsor" of the CAC. For further information about the Congressional App Challenge, please visit www.CongressionalAppChallenge.us

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Example 1

We are pleased to announce that the Congressional App Challenge (CAC), a competition designed to encourage student participation in computer science and coding. Students are encouraged to register online by Sept 10th before submitting their app by October 15.

Officially launched by the U.S. House of Representatives in 2015, this nationwide effort allows students to compete against their peers by creating and an application or "app," for desktop/PC, web, tablet, mobile, or other devices. The Challenge is designed to promote innovation and engagement in computer science.

The Congressional App Challenge is open to all middle and high school students in the [NUMBER] Congressional District of [STATE]. Students entering the competition must submit their app to Challenge.gov during the Competition Submission Period between 12 PM (noon) Eastern Time on JUNE 4TH, 2018, and 12:00 PM (noon) Eastern Time on OCTOBER 15th, 2018.

The winner from the [DISTRICT NUMBER] Congressional District, chosen by a panel of expert judges, will be featured on CongressionalAppChallenge.us, and the winning app will also be eligible to be on display in the U.S. Capitol, honoring the winners from across the country.

For more information, please visit the official Congressional App Challenge website at CongressionalAppChallenge.us, email StudentSupport@CongressionalAppChallenge.us, or contact [DISTRICT POINT PERSON] at [POC's CONTACT INFO].

Example 2

I am pleased to announce that my office is hosting a 2018 Congressional App Challenge.

The Congressional App Challenge is a competition aimed at encouraging middle and high school students to learn how to code by creating their own applications. The Challenge is intended to highlight the value of computer science and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) education.

The House of Representatives knows how crucial these skills are and wants to encourage students to engage in these fields. By encouraging and recognizing our nation's young programming talent, Congress hopes to shine a light on the growing importance of these skills.

This competition is open to all students who meet the eligibility requirements, regardless of coding experience. We strongly encourage students of all skill levels to participate, to learn how to create their own apps. Students are encouraged to register online by Sept 10th.

To learn more about the competition or to submit an app go to the CongressionalAppChallenge.us website.

[DATE]

Dear [Principal and Teachers]:

I am writing to invite all middle and high school students from the [STATE #] Congressional District to participate in the 2018 Congressional App Challenge.

Officially launched in 2015, this competition is a nationwide event intended to engage students' creativity and encourage their participation in STEM fields. This competition allows students to compete with peers in their own district by creating and exhibiting their software application, or "app", for web, PC, tablet, mobile, or other platform of their choice.

Students may compete as individuals or in teams of up to four, as long as two of the teammates are eligible to participate in our district. Students are encouraged to register online by Sept 10th, before submitting their app by the October 15th deadline.

The apps will be evaluated by a panel of local judges who work within the academic, software, and entrepreneurial fields. The winning app from each congressional district which hosted a Challenge will be featured on the U.S. House of Representatives' website (www.house.gov), and displayed in a U.S. Capitol exhibit.

For additional details, you can visit www.CongressionalAppChallenge.us.

I hope that you will participate in this exciting event. Should you have any questions or concerns, please call my District Office at [PHONE NUMBER] or email StudentSupport@CongressionalAppChallenge.us.

Sincerely,

[NAME]

Member of Congress

Online outreach is one of the most effective ways to engage the types of students who might participate in a competition such as the Congressional App Challenge. We will share more sample social media materials throughout the course of this Challenge via the bi-weekly emails.

Best Practices for Using Social Media

To engage in the online conversation and get the latest updates, please be sure to follow us:

- **Facebook:** https://www.facebook.com/AppChallengeCoalition/
- **Twitter:** @CongressionalAC
- **Instagram:** @CongressionalAppChallenge

> **#Congress4CS**
>
> For all social media, be sure to use this hashtag:
> **#Congress4CS.**

Facebook: Facebook is nearly ubiquitous as a social media platform, and we highly recommend using it to share the word about the CAC.

Facebook Best Practices:

- Use the hashtag #Congress4CS so that others can find your posts when looking up the Challenge
- Tag us in your posts
- Tag the people you are referencing, so they can see your posts. Examples of people you can tag include:
  o Local schools
  o Local tech businesses
  o Local STEM and CS organizations
  o IEF
- Use links or pictures; posts with media in them get greater levels of interaction. This can include things like:
  o The link to your challenge.gov page (which you can find here.)
  o The link to the description of the challenge on your House page
  o The link to IEF's page with more details (CongressionalAppChallenge.us)

Sample Facebook posts:

- The 2018 Congressional App Challenge will launch on June 4th. The Challenge is open to students of all levels of coding experience. Visit the website to learn more about the rules at CongressionalAppChallenge.us #Congress4CS.

- The Congressional App Challenge is now open! The CAC is a nationwide event that allows U.S. students to compete against their district peers by creating and exhibiting a software application, or "app," for mobile, tablet, or computer devices on a platform of their choice. Learn more at CongressionalAppChallenge.us. #Congress4CS

- We are proud to host a Congressional App Challenge! The CAC is a nationwide event, open to middle and high school students in our district. Students can work as individuals or on teams to create an application, or "app," for mobile, tablet, or computer devices on a platform of their choice. Learn more at CongressionalAppChallenge.us #Congress4CS

- In full support of STEM education, we are proud to host a Congressional App Challenge. The Challenge is a nationwide event, open to students in our district. Students can choose to work together or compete against their peers by creating an "app." Learn how you can participate by visiting CongressionalAppChallenge.us #Congress4CS #STEM

Twitter Best Practices:

- Tweet regularly. There's nothing wrong with tweeting several times a day.
- Use the hashtag **#Congress4CS**, so that others can find your post and retweet it.
- Be concise; there's a character limit on twitter, so be as clear, but succinct as possible.
- Tag the people you are referencing, so they can see your tweets
- Use pictures; tweets with photos get greater levels of interaction
- Retweet others who are tweeting about the Congressional App Challenge.

Sample tweets:

- Proud to host a Congressional App Challenge and support STEM and coding education @CongressionalAC #Congress4CS
- Supporting CS and coding education by participating in the 2018 Congressional App Challenge @CongressionalAC #Congress4CS
- Any middle and high school student coders out there? If so, check out the 2018 Congressional App Challenge @CongressionalAC #Congress4CS
- Calling all middle and high school students interested in coding! Submit an app for the 2018 Congressional App Challenge #Congress4CS

Instagram: This web tool is focused on visual images. Examples include:

- Pictures from local CS classrooms
- Pictures of kids coding from your partners
- Pictures from last year's recognition ceremonies (if your office hosted a Challenge last year)
- Pictures of the CAC display in the Capital building

Be sure to follow tag the Congressional App Challenge instagram account in your posts! (Our handle is: @CongressionalAppChallenge.)

APPENDIX

ETHICS WAIVER

If your office is interested in seeking prizes for the Congressional App Challenge, you can submit a waiver to the Ethics Committee. Waiver below or can be found on the House Ethics website. Go to Forms > STEM Competition > Waiver

CONTEST PRIZES

1. Each district may provide prizes to district winners. A Member office may provide authorized gifts or awards of nominal value as part of the app competition. Gifts authorized by the Members' Handbook include certificates, folders, and frames of a nominal value.

2. If the participating Member decides to host an awards ceremony, finalists will get the chance to present their apps to Judges, Congressional staffers and community leaders. The winning app in each district will be featured on the House.gov website and the CongressionalAppChallenge.us website.

3. If the winner is not able to attend the district awards ceremony, the prize will be mailed to the winner's address within 45 days of receipt of the signed affidavit(s) of eligibility and liability/publicity release(s) form(s).

JUDGING RUBRIC

Sample Rubric: <http://www.congressionalappchallenge.us/congressional-offices/guidance-for-judges/>

RULES ISSUED FOR THE CAC BY THE COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION (2015)

Link: http://www.congressionalappchallenge.us/about/committee-resolution-114-to-approve-the-cac/

H.Res.77 - Academic Competition Resolution of 2013: https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-resolution/77