



# The Congressional Award

## 2017 GOLD MEDAL CEREMONY

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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**GOLD MEDAL CEREMONY | WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 2017**

#### **HOW IS THE GOLD MEDAL CEREMONY ORGANIZED?**

The Gold Medal Ceremony will occur in the United States Capitol Visitor Center (CVC) Congressional Auditorium on Capitol Hill. We have two ceremonies in order to accommodate guests and family members in the Congressional Auditorium. The ceremonies are divided by state. Once we notify medalists of their appropriate ceremony time in May, 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 45 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 and enter the room 20 minutes before start time. The ceremony includes a color guard presentation, invocation, speakers, and a brief introduction of each Medalist as they receive their medals.

#### **WHEN WILL I LEARN MY CEREMONY TIME?**

**You will be informed of your ceremony time in May.** 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 web site, generally one month before the ceremony date.

#### **CAN I REQUEST A SPECIFIC CEREMONY TIME?**

**No.** We do not take requests for specific ceremony times as we cannot accommodate everyone. While we understand that a specific ceremony time may be preferred, we must be conscious of Congressional Office schedules as well as other Medalists from your state.

#### **CAN I CONTACT MY CONGRESSIONAL OFFICE TO LET THEM KNOW ABOUT MY AWARD?**

**Yes.** You may reach out to your Congressional Office. 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 your contact information. It is imperative that we have your accurate contact information, including a means for contacting you while you are in Washington, D.C., 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 cannot 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 45 minutes before their assigned start time.

## WHEN DO GUESTS CHECK IN FOR THE CEREMONY?

Guests of medalists may check-in for the Ceremony 20 minutes before start time. We request this time for a rundown of the proceedings with our Medalists. **Parents and guests will not be allowed to check-in for the Ceremony or enter the room until 20 minutes before start time.** We ask that guests remain quiet if they choose to wait to check-in as the Capitol Visitor Center holds many offices that are doing normal business during our Ceremonies. After checking in guests will be asked to wait in a specific room before being let into the auditorium. **Guests will not be admitted into the auditorium early.**

## 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. Each Medalist will receive either a physical picture or electronic proof 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 (information to be provided). 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 interfere with our professional photographer and may obstruct the view of other families.

## WHERE ARE THE GROUP PHOTOS TAKEN? WHAT IF THE LOCATION CHANGES?

Group pictures of all 2017 Gold Medalists will be taken at the [Capitol Reflecting Pool](#) located west of 1<sup>st</sup> Street NW, in between Maryland and Pennsylvania Avenues.

Immediately following the first Ceremony, Medalists will be led to group pictures. Medalists from the second Ceremony should arrive at the picture location no later than 11:45 AM. Please look for The Congressional Award staff who will have signs. **The group pictures will begin promptly following the first Gold Medal Ceremony on Wednesday, June 21, 2017 (tentative start for pictures – 12:00 p.m.).** A large group shot will be taken of all Gold Medalists followed by smaller group shots based on partnerships (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 email address included 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.

## WHAT IS THE DRESS CODE FOR THE CEREMONY?

Please keep in mind that the Gold Medal Ceremony is a business formal event. **Business attire** should be worn by all participants (coat and tie for men, business suit/dress for women). Formal gowns or prom dresses will not be appropriate. Participants are encouraged to make conservative clothing choices. Please do not wear flip flops or tennis shoes for the Ceremony (although you may bring for walking shoes). Also, young ladies should keep a conservative heel height as you will be walking.

## HOW DO WE GET TO THE CEREMONY? CAN WE DRIVE TO THE CAPITOL?

The Capitol Visitor Center is located beneath the East Front plaza of the U.S. Capitol at First Street and East Capitol Street. You will be required to go through security to enter the Capitol Visitor Center. Please allow 15-20 minutes to enter. There will be staff members holding signs after you pass through security to direct Medalists and their families to the check-in area and auditorium.

Before your visit please check out the list of [Prohibited Items](#) that are not able to pass through security and into the Capitol Visitor Center.

Parking is VERY limited around the Capitol. We recommend taking Metro (Washington, D.C.'s subway system) into the city for the day of the Ceremony. The Capitol Visitor Center is between two metro stops - Union Station on the Red Line and the Capitol South on the Blue/Orange/Silver Lines. Please visit [www.wmata.com](http://www.wmata.com) for details about the Metro System. You may also look into other ground transportation options like taxis.

## CALL FOR PHOTOS!

We will also be highlighting all of our 2017 Gold Medalists throughout the week of the Gold Medal Ceremony, including the day of the ceremonies. If you would like to submit pictures for the event, please email them to [gold@congressionalaward.org](mailto:gold@congressionalaward.org) by June 16, 2017. These should be high resolution photos of your pursuit of the Gold Medal, headshots, candid-action photos, etc.

## I CANNOT ATTEND THE GOLD MEDAL CEREMONY

### IF I'M NOT ATTENDING THE CEREMONY IN WASHINGTON, DC, DO I HAVE TO SUBMIT MY RSVP FORM & BIOGRAPHY?

**Yes.** We ask that you complete your [RSVP Form online](#) even if you are not planning on attending the Ceremony in Washington, D.C. We also request information from you regarding your choice of presentation if you cannot attend, your t-shirt size, and your 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 2017 Gold Medal Program Book. If we do not hear from you by the due date (**May 1**), we make attempts to confirm your attendance. This takes resources away from the ceremony as well as planning local presentations. Please be considerate and RSVP on time.

## IF I REQUEST A LOCAL PRESENTATION, WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

Following the Gold Medal Ceremony, if you have not already 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 2017 t-shirt and Program Book. If you have questions about your local presentation, please contact us. 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 in July, including your Gold Medal and any of your lower levels, your Gold 2017 t-shirt, and copies of the Gold 2017 Program Book. If you move, we request that you update your contact information with us. If you decide that you would actually like a local presentation, please let us know.

## CAN I COME TO NEXT YEAR'S GOLD MEDAL CEREMONY IF I CAN'T MAKE THIS ONE?

**Probably not.** You may request a deferral via email ([gold@congressionalaward.org](mailto:gold@congressionalaward.org)) before **April 10, 2017**. We offer deferrals to those who have extenuating circumstances that would not allow them to travel to Washington, D.C. 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 before April 10, 2017, and include the reason for deferral. We cannot accept deferral requests if you simply want to change the year of your presentation or if you have a sibling that you would like to wait for. We will respond to your deferral request by April 20, 2017.

If you have any questions about the ceremony, please contact us at (202) 226-0130 or [gold@congressionalaward.org](mailto:gold@congressionalaward.org).

For additional ceremony details, please visit [www.congressionalaward.org/2017gold](http://www.congressionalaward.org/2017gold).