Staff Starter Kit

Getting started with the Congressional App Challenge

Table of Contents

1. Rules

In October of 2015, the Committee on House Administration passed the rules that govern the execution of the CAC (H.Res 77 from the 113th Congress).

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

1. Sign your office up by **August 31st, 2023** in order to allow your constituents to participate in the challenge.

2. Student competitors must be in either high school or middle school.

3. Students must either live or go to school in a registered district.

4. Students may compete in up to teams of four. At least half of the students must live or go to school within a registered district to compete.

5. Students may create any application they want, on any platform, using any programming language. There is no limit to their creativity!

6. Student applications must be submitted by **12pm EDT November 1st, 2023**.

Timeline of Events

APRIL 1
Congressional Sign-Up period for the App challenge begins. Fill out the sign-up form and assign your points of contact from your office.

JUNE 15
The 2022 Congressional App Challenge officially launches. Students are eligible to register on this day.

AUGUST 31
Last day Congressional Offices can sign up to host an App Challenge.

NOVEMBER 1
Student apps are due at 12pm EST. Offices may now begin judging their submissions.

DECEMBER 2023
Announcement period. Winners must be chosen and publicly announced by the congressional office during this time period.

DECEMBER 6-11
Computer Science Week! This is a great time to announce winners publicly.

JANUARY 15
The Congressional App Challenge website will be updated with winners.

SPRING 2024
#HouseOfCode 2023! This annual event held at the Capitol Building in Washington, DC will honor the winners from each congressional district. Winners will have the opportunity to display their app and hear from Members of Congress.

3. Launch

The Congressional App Challenge is officially launched on June 15th, 2023, which is when students can start registering to submit their applications. Congressional offices can sign up to host an App Challenge until August 1st, 2023.

If you want to host an App Challenge and are unsure how to get started, here are a few steps to help.

1. **Register!**

   a. Visit the Congressional App Challenge [website](#) or reach out to the CAC staff.

   b. Assign staffers as Points of Contacts to communicate with the Congressional AC, and help put on the Challenge in your district.

      i. Usually broken down by a District Point of Contact, a DC point of contact, and a Communications lead ([roles described here](#)).

   c. If you would like to schedule a meeting with our congressional operations director please contact: cad@congressionalappchallenge.org

2. **Post on Social Media**

   a. Use [Twitter, Facebook and Instagram](#) with the hashtag #Congress4CS, and tag @CongressionalAC.

   b. Use links for more information, and graphics (provided on [our website](#) and on this [best practices](#) document).

   c. Tag sponsors and partner organizations to boost participation.

   d. Don't forget to update your website!
      - Add links to the CAC website with information for students and educators.
      - Sample texts are available on our website.

   e. Post at the beginning of the challenge period (June 15th), or as soon as your office signs up.

3. **Outreach**

   a. Issue a [press release](#) to local media about the fact that you're putting on the Congressional App Challenge in your district!

   b. Target schools within your district as well as coding clubs and afterschool centers.

   c. Sample letters for STEM teachers, school administrators, and local clubs can be found on our website under [Congressional Resource Page](#).

d. Look for local chapters from our national partners, where they may be able to recruit students.

You can get more information on our website in the Congressional Resources page.
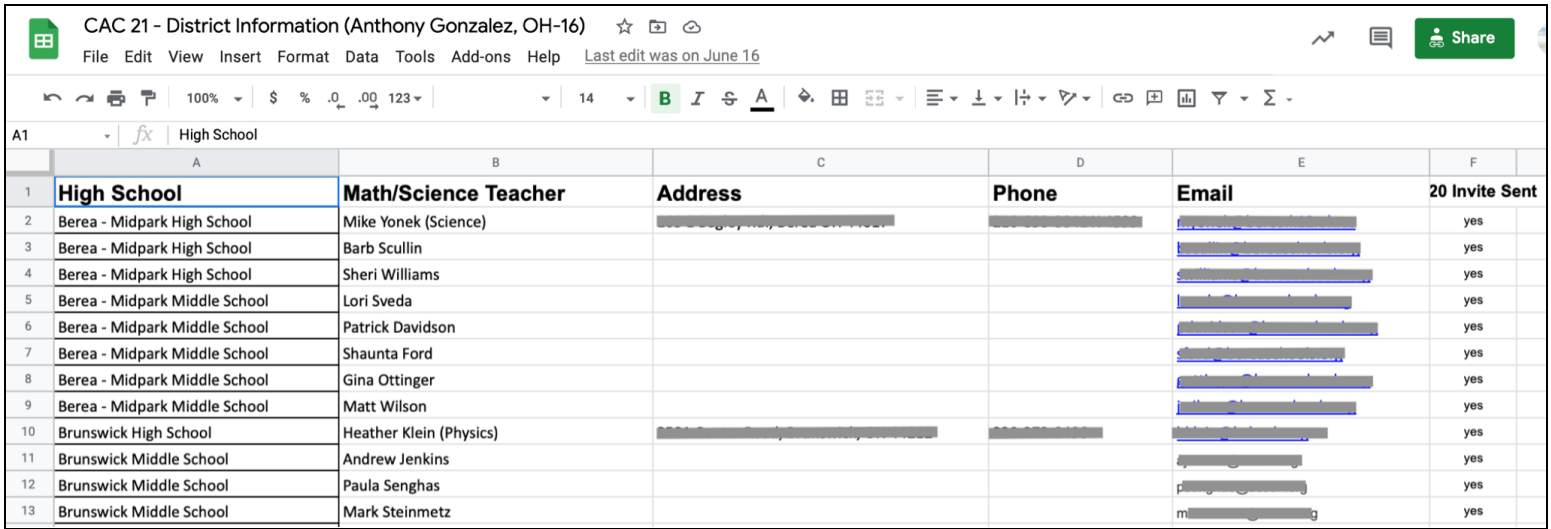
4. District Information Sheets

- District Information Sheets (DIS) contain all the information your district needs to host a successful App Challenge, in addition to this toolkit.

- These are created manually by the CAC and will be shared with you during the course of the summer.

- Each DIS sheet is unique to *your* district.

  - You should never share access to the DIS with anyone who isn't working on the CAC in your office.

  - It holds information from all *past* events your district has hosted.

- It holds 5 tabs
  - Instructions
  - Review Portal
  - Judges
  - Contacts
  - Schools
  - Feel free to add more to your convenience!

- Read the instructions provided on the first page of the DIS sheet for more information on how to use it, or please check our website.

5. Judging Phase

The judging phase of the App Challenge starts on **November 1st, 2023**, after all the applications for your district have been submitted.

- **How the judging process works**
  - It is up to the discretion of the office as to how to judge the submissions.
  - Offices can select third-party judges from the tech or education industry, while others can assign staff to select the winners.
  - A judging rubric is provided on our website.

- **Who to select as judges**
  - If you decide to select judges, offices have traditionally chosen from these categories:
    - STEM teachers in middle or high schools.
    - Local STEM professors.
    - Tech professionals.
    - Other tech experts in the area.
  - Ask for the people you contact to volunteer.
  - It is the responsibility of the office to find the judges.
    - You may use your DIS sheet to find past judges, if applicable.

- **Judging rubric**
  - Did the students use CS skills to code their app?
  - Quality of the idea.
  - How creative is the app?
  - How original is the app?
  - Implementation of the idea.

- You can find a more detailed rubric in the toolkit, located on the Congressional Toolkit page on our website.

6. Winner Announcement

- Each Congressional Office has final say on their district winner.

- It is your responsibility to announce the winner of the App Challenge in your district **before December 31st, 2023**.

    - The Congressional App Challenge will then post winners on our website on January 15th, 2024.
    - We cannot post if you have not previously announced your winner.
    - Offices will often announce winners during #CSEdWeek, December 5th - 11th 2023.

- Announce your winner on social media, such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.

- Winners can also be honored through an Award Ceremony.

    - See the Case studies on the Congressional Resources page of our website.
    - Each Member of Congress is highly encouraged to meet at least once with the winner of the App Challenge for their district.

speakerpelosi

♡ Liked by **congressionalappchallenge** and **3,379 others**

speakerpelosi Congratulations to India Poetzcher, the House Of Code Congressional App Challenge winner for my Congressional district... more

stevescalise
Metairie, Louisiana

♥ Liked by **elisestefanik** and **868 others**

stevescalise Great to visit Haynes Academy for Advanced Studies to congratulate our 2022 Congressional App Challenge winner—Julien Bourgeois—on his incredible new app that allows basketball players use the latest technology to improve their shot. So exciting to see firsthand Louisiana students turning their ideas into real-world applications!

7. Expectations

1. Fill out your **District Information Sheet**.

2. Post on **social media** to advertise the App Challenge on these dates:

   a. You join the Congressional App Challenge (until August 1st)

   b. Launch of the CAC (June 15th).

   c. Beginning of the school year.

   d. The deadline for student submissions (November 1st).

   e. Winner Announcement in December.

3. **Outreach** to the local community in your district

   a. Middle school and high school math and science teachers can be great tools to recruit more students.

   b. Local chapters of our partner coding organizations, such as Code.org or Black Girls Code.

   c. Libraries and after school programs.

   d. Outreach should preferably be done at the beginning of summer as well as the beginning of the school year.

4. **Appoint** judges to **review** the applications and **determine** a winner.

5. Submit your chosen winner to the **CAC** by the end of December.

6. Read the weekly App Alerts for direction from the CAC staff..

7. Welcome the #HouseofCode in the Spring.

You can find more information about how to organize an App Challenge in your district by looking at our complete toolkit under
Congress → Congressional Toolkit on our website.