



2026 CAC RULES

1. Eligibility

- **AGE:** Students must be enrolled in middle school or high school on October 26th, 2026. Middle school varies by region but typically encompasses 6th-8th grades.
- **LOCATION:** Students are only allowed to compete in a Congressional District which is hosting an App Challenge. Students may compete in either the district in which they reside, or the district in which they attend school. Participants are only allowed to submit an app in one district. They cannot compete in multiple districts.
- **TEAMS:** Students can compete as individuals, or in teams of up to four (4) students.
 - Any team with more than four (4) students is not eligible to compete.
 - At least *half* of teammates on any team must live **or** attend school in **the same Congressional District**.
- **PRIOR PROJECTS:** Students may submit any app they've created after October 30th, 2025. If submitting a 2.0 version of an app, only the new coding should be highlighted for consideration.
- **ONE ENTRY PER PERSON PER YEAR:** Students may only submit ONE app per year. Multiple entries across multiple teams is not allowed.

2. Online Registration

To register as an **individual**, students need:

- a personal email address that is not their school email account
- Home address including 9-digit zip code, Congressional District, and Member of Congress
- School address including 9-digit zip code, Congressional District, and Member of Congress
- A parent or guardian's contact information (name and email address).
- Name and email of student's coding teacher or mentor (optional)

To register as a **team**, you'll need:

- The above information for *each* team member.
- One team may participate ONCE as a group.



3. App Parameters

- **TOPIC:** The app can be about any topic.
- **PLATFORM:** The app can be developed for any platform, including but not limited to web apps, desktop/PC apps, mobile apps, web browser extensions, robots, augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), wearable devices, smart devices, and embedded systems.
- **PROGRAMMING LANGUAGE:** Participants may use any programming language, including but not limited to C, C++, Objective C, C#, Java, JavaScript, Python, Ruby, PHP, Swift, and block-based coding languages.
- **FUNCTIONALITY:** The app must demonstrate some degree of functionality to be considered competitive.
- **CONTENT SUITABILITY:** The app must adhere to standards of decency and respect. It must not be indecent, defamatory, in obvious bad taste, or demonstrate a lack of respect for public morals or conduct. The app must not adversely affect the reputation of Congressional districts, depict hatred, defame, or threaten any specific community, or incite violence. Apps containing pornography, obscenity, or sexual activity are strictly prohibited. Additionally, the app must not violate any Intellectual Property, common law, or privacy rights of third parties.
- **ORIGINALITY:** The app must be original and solely created by the contestant. All coding and technical development must be done by the student or student team. While participants may use open-source libraries, frameworks, and external tools, they must clearly document any such usage and ensure their project reflects significant personal effort and technical understanding. No other party should have any rights or interest in the app, whether known or unknown.
- **AI USAGE:** The use of AI tools in app development for the Congressional App Challenge is permitted, provided that all AI usage is fully disclosed in the submission materials. AI may only be used to support specific aspects of the project and must not constitute the entirety of the technical development. Participants are expected to demonstrate significant individual contributions and technical understanding of their app.

4. Online Submission

Consult the Submission Checklist for guidance. After the Submission Period has ended, the Submission cannot be modified in any way.

Students can register for the 2026 Congressional App Challenge at congressionalappchallenge.us. If competing as a team, one teammate should create the team profile, which will allow for that user to invite up to three other team members to edit the application. Students will need to complete a personal profile and eligibility quiz. If the team is eligible, they will receive an email allowing them to proceed with their



application. The application is made up of a number of questions regarding their app. The most critical component is the demonstration video, which is detailed below.

DEMONSTRATION VIDEO (max 3 min)

Students must create a demonstration video with the following information:

- The name(s) of each participant
- The name of the app
- Clearly explain the purpose of the app (Students should do this in one, clear sentence)
- Explain the app's target audience (who the app is intended for?)
- The tools and coding languages used to create the app
- Showcase the functionality of the app

The video should be 1-3 minutes long. Video submissions which do not adhere to the time constraints may be penalized by the judges at their discretion. **This is not a video-creation competition.** However, the judges view the demonstration video to learn about the app. The video should be as clear and compelling as possible.

Upload the completed video to YouTube or Vimeo. **The video must be set to "public".**

QUESTIONS

In addition to the demonstration video, the team will need to answer a series of questions similar to the following:

1. What is the title of your app?
2. Explain the app's purpose.
3. What inspired you to create this app?
4. What technical/coding difficulty did you face in programming your app, and how did you address this technical challenge?
5. What did you learn while participating in the CAC? What was your biggest takeaway?
6. What would you change about your app if you were to create a 2.0 version?

5. Deadline

The Congressional App Challenge will accept submissions from May 2026 – October 26th:

12:00 pm EDT, Monday, October 26th, 2026.

6. Exit Questionnaire

Once the deadline passes, students will receive a link to the Exit Questionnaire. The data helps us improve the Congressional App Challenge.



Teams: ALL MEMBERS of your team must complete the Exit Questionnaire individually. Teammates can use the same link, but must complete the form individually.

7. Winner Selection

1. Demonstration Videos and Submission Answers will be reviewed and evaluated by the Member of Congress and their office. Members of Congress may opt to use a panel of judges to evaluate applications.
2. Apps can be judged based on the following criteria:
 - a. Quality of the idea (including creativity and originality)
 - b. Implementation of the idea (including user experience and design)
 - c. Demonstrated excellence of coding and programming skills.
3. The Judges have the right to request access to the App and source code in person or via any reasonable manner to verify that the App functions and operates as stated in the Submission Form. Failure by a Contestant to honor such a request will result in the Submission's immediate disqualification.
4. Members of Congress and their staff reserve the right to substitute or modify the judging process or criteria at any time for any reason. Judging is to be fair and impartial but left entirely to the discretion of the Member of Congress.
5. Odds of winning depend on the number of eligible Submissions received and the quality of the Submissions.

8. Winner Announcements

All winner announcements are made directly by the hosting Member of Congress. The Congressional App Challenge team cannot announce or disclose the results of any 2026 App Challenge prior to the embargo date of January 15, 2027. Any questions regarding the results of an individual Congressional App Challenge must be directed to the hosting Member of Congress.

9. Prizes

1. The winning app in each district will be featured on the House.gov website and the CongressionalAppChallenge.us website.
2. The winning app in each district will also be able to receive a copyright fee waiver provided through the ARTS ACT. Please visit the [ARTS Act information page on the copyright office's website for more information](#).



3. The Program Administrator (the Internet Education Foundation) may distribute additional prizes equally to all participating Congressional Districts.
4. Each district may provide prizes to district winners. A Member of Congress' office may provide authorized gifts or awards of nominal value as part of the app competition. Gifts authorized by the Members of Congress' Handbook include certificates, folders, and frames of a nominal value.

10. Entry Conditions and Release

By entering, participants agree to the following conditions and release:

Each Contestant agrees to comply with and be bound by these Official Rules and the decisions of the Administrators, and/or the Competition judges which are binding and final in all matters relating to this Competition.

11. Publicity and Intellectual Property

Except where prohibited, participation in the Competition constitutes participant's consent to Congress', Administrators' and their agents' use of winner's name, likeness, photograph, voice, opinions and/or hometown and state for promotional purposes in any media, without further payment or consideration.

Contestants will own the intellectual property rights to their Submission, but will grant to Congress and the Administrator a royalty free license, without limitation, to:

- Post the Submissions online;
- Make the Winners available for the course of the Competition and 1 months after the conclusion of the Competition Submission Period; and
- Utilize the Submissions for noncommercial purposes after the conclusion of the Competition Submission Period.

12. General Conditions

1. Administrators reserve the right to cancel, suspend and/or modify the Competition, or any part of it, if any fraud, technical failures or any other factor beyond Administrator's reasonable control impairs the integrity or proper functioning of the Competition, as determined by Administrators in their sole discretion. Administrators reserve the right in their sole discretion to disqualify any individual or Competitor they find to be tampering with the entry process or the operation of the Competition or to be acting in violation of these Official Rules or any other promotion or in an unsportsmanlike or disruptive manner.
2. Any attempt by any person to deliberately undermine the legitimate operation of the Competition may be a violation of criminal and civil law, and, should such an attempt be made, Administrators reserves the right to seek damages from any such



person to the fullest extent permitted by law. Administrators' failure to enforce any term of these Official Rules shall not constitute a waiver of that provision.

13. Limitations of Liability

The Administrators are not responsible for:

1. Any incorrect or inaccurate information, whether caused by entrants, printing errors or by any of the equipment or programming associated with or utilized in the Competition;
2. Technical failures of any kind, including, but not limited to malfunctions, interruptions, or disconnections in phone lines or network hardware or software;
3. Unauthorized human intervention in any part of the entry process or the Competition;
4. Technical or human error which may occur in the administration of the Competition or the processing of entries; or
5. Any injury or damage to persons or property which may be caused, directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, from entrant's participation in the Competition or receipt or use or misuse of any prize.

If for any reason an entrant's Submission is confirmed to have been erroneously deleted, lost, or otherwise destroyed or corrupted, entrant's sole remedy is to provide another Submission.

14. Privacy

Administrators collect personal information from you when you enter the Competition.

The information collected is subject to the privacy policies located at <http://www.congressionalappchallenge.us/privacy-policy/> and <https://www.house.gov/privacy-policy>

15. Administrators

The Internet Education Foundation, Washington, DC, 20005