

Office of the Clerk
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-6601
INFORMATION ON THE HOUSE PAGE PROGRAM

WHAT IS THE PAGE PROGRAM?

Pages are young people who are hired to serve as support staff for the U.S. House of Representatives. They are students in their junior year of high school, who come to Washington D.C. to live, work, and study as Pages. This Program, which includes the House Page Residence Hall, the House Page School, and work responsibilities within the House of Representatives, is administered by the Office of the Clerk, pursuant to direction from the Majority and Minority leadership and the U.S. House of Representatives Page Board. Pages have served the House for over 200 years.

There are regularly 72 Page positions in the House of Representatives, with the possibility of over 400 Members of Congress wishing to recommend young people. This creates considerable competition for Page positions. All students must be sponsored by a Member of Congress to become a Page. Thus, the first step is to ask a Member of Congress for sponsorship. That Member will then contact the proper hiring authority to start the application process. Obviously, not every Member can sponsor a Page every time.

ELIGIBILITY

Page eligibility is limited to juniors in high school only. All applicants must be at least sixteen years old on the date they begin their Page term. No exceptions.

Members use their discretion when nominating a student to serve as a Page. The individual Members may have certain standards on which they rely as they select the student they would like to sponsor.

Students must have at least a 3.0 GPA to be eligible for the House Page School. Although a fully accredited school, the size of the House Page School, and therefore its curriculum, may pose some limitations.

PAGE WORK EXPERIENCE

Pages are employees of the House and the work they perform is important. The work aspect is one of the most unique components of the Page experience. Pages work as a team and not in individual Members' offices. Page duties consist primarily of delivery of correspondence, legislative material and small packages within the Congressional complex. A few Pages are assigned to answering phones in the Members' Cloakrooms, taking messages for Members, calling them to the phone if they are in the House Chamber and preparing the House Floor for sessions. Still others monitor a telephone bank of incoming requests for Page service. A rotation system is practiced so that every Page has an opportunity to experience the various areas of service.

The work experience is supervised by full-time adult employees who manage the Page work responsibilities on a daily basis. Pages sponsored by the Majority report to the Majority Chief Page, and those sponsored by the Minority report to the Minority Chief Page. Pages report

to work after classes and work until 5 PM or when the House adjourns for the day, whichever is later.

THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES PAGE BOARD

In 1982 the **Speaker's Commission on Pages** recommended that "responsibility for the administration of the Page program be centralized in a **Page Board**, established by statute...". The statute reads, "Until otherwise provided by law, there is hereby established a board to be known as the House of Representatives Page Board to ensure that the Page program is conducted in a manner that is consistent with the efficient functioning of the House and welfare of the Pages." The statute was adopted by the 97th Congress. The first Members of the House Page Board were appointed in November of 1982. The Board consists of two Members from the Majority party selected by the Speaker, one Member from the Minority party selected by the Minority Leader, the Clerk of the House and the Sergeant-at-Arms of the House.

APPOINTMENT

Academic year Pages are asked to serve at least one full semester, and may be asked to serve for two semesters. Academic semesters are considered to be Fall and Spring and require attendance at the U.S. House of Representatives Page School. The Summer Program starts approximately the second week of June each year with termination determined by the legislative work schedule. This schedule also determines whether or not there will be one or two terms of the Summer Page Program.

Appointment to the Page Program is on an at-will basis and may be terminated at any time, with or without cause and with or without notice.

DRESS CODE

A Page in the U.S. House of Representatives is expected to maintain a neat appearance and conservative hairstyle at all times and adhere to the Page Dress Code while working in the Capitol Complex during business hours. Dress requirements for work and school include, for young men, navy blue wool or acrylic jackets, dark grey slacks, a uniform tie, a white long-sleeved, permanent press dress shirt, solid black shoes and socks. Young women wear navy blue wool or acrylic jackets, white long-sleeved, permanent-press oxford type blouses, a uniform tie, dark grey slacks or knee length, non-slit, dark grey skirts, solid black shoes and nylons. Navy blue or white sweaters may be worn in the winter months under the jacket. Usually jackets are not worn from May through Labor Day, except when working on the House Floor. Shoes may be either a comfortable dress style or a non-canvas low cut athletic type. Shoes must be solid black.

The uniform tie will be provided by the Clerk's Office after arrival in Washington. Required clothing may be purchased at a department store or specialty store in your area. Pages will be charged for any uniform tie that they request over the one allotted.

THE HOUSE PAGE RESIDENCE HALL

Staffing and Accommodations. The Page Residence Hall is staffed by a Director and five assistants, all of whom are adults and reside within the quarters. The Residence Hall is located at 501 First Street, SE, three and one-half blocks from the Capitol and the Library of Congress, where the school is located. Each room provides ample space for three occupants, with twin beds, desks, chairs, chest of drawers, and adequate closet space. Each room has a private bath shared by the occupants and a telephone which is also shared.

Pages are responsible for providing their own twin sheets and pillow cases, towels, pillows, hangers, and any small accessories such as desk lamps, book ends and photographs, which may make life more comfortable and pleasant.

One floor is designated for young men and the other for young women. The first floor has a day room and game room and a study hall is located on the second floor. Three staff people reside on each floor. Residents are responsible for maintenance of their personal quarters, and common areas are maintained by the House custodial personnel. Weekly inspections are made by the Residence Hall staff to assure that quarters meet standards of cleanliness and health necessary for proper group living. Free laundry facilities are provided within the building.

Security. Security measures include foot patrols of the building by U.S. Capitol Police, a lobby desk manned by U.S. Capitol Police 24 hours a day, and requiring residents and visitors to sign in after 6 PM. There are strategically placed alarm phones, fireproof stairwells, a ceiling sprinkler system, emergency fire fighting tanks, fire escapes, and other measures required by the District of Columbia in community life structures.

Agreement and Costs. A Residence Hall Agreement, delineating payment requirements, responsibility for damage, uses of the Residence Hall, and similar pertinent matters must be signed before taking residence.

THE HOUSE PAGE SCHOOL

The House Page School is located in the Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress and offers a typical junior year course of study only. The School is accredited through Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. Classes begin at 6:45 AM and include Mathematics, English, Social Studies, Science, French / Spanish and Computer Technology.

To assure each pupil's participation and exposure to the unique educational and cultural opportunities existing in this historical seat of government, the Washington InSiders Program (WISP) offers field trips and hosts guest speakers. The courses offered in the disciplines mentioned are those typically offered to high school juniors in a college prep program. Saturday classes are sometimes required. **ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY FOR ALL WISPs.**

The series of speakers focusing on "How Congress Works" give the Pages an inside look at the legislative process.

COMPENSATION AND FEES

Salary. Pages are paid at an annual rate of \$16,136.00 with a monthly gross salary of \$1,344.64 from which automatic deductions are made for federal and state taxes, Social Security, and the Residence Hall fee. Pages are paid on the last working day of the month, as are all House employees.

Residence Hall fees. Page Hall residents must make an initial security deposit of \$100 when checking in, refundable within 60 days of termination, when it has been determined that the individual is not responsible for any damage to premises or other charges. Payment should be made by personal check, bank check, or money order made payable to U.S. Treasury. The cost of residence life is \$400 per month which includes five breakfasts, five lunches and seven dinners per week and is automatically deducted from the Page's monthly paycheck, as mentioned above. All charges will be deducted from the initial security deposit. However, if charges exceed the amount of the deposit, the Page will be billed for the excess amount.

Banking. School year pages are allowed to open a House Credit Union account (\$25

deposit required) and can have their paychecks deposited directly into their account. Summer Pages should make their own arrangements with a bank in their home town.

Spending money. It is recommended that Pages bring approximately \$250 in travelers checks to cover the expenses of the first month, such as lunch, weekend activities, and other miscellaneous expenses.

BEFORE MAKING YOUR DECISION

Pages are employees of the U. S. House of Representatives, and an important part of the legislative process. **Before making your decision to become a Page**, it is imperative that you understand that all family activities, as well as home school and community activities, which would interrupt your Page school and or work activities, must be put on hold until you are no longer a Page. You will not be permitted to return home to attend family reunions, parent promotion ceremonies, family trips, home school activities such as conferences, sports events, proms, etc., if they occur during the school and or work week.

If you make plans to return home for any reason other than family illness or scheduled federal and school holidays, you must leave **after** work on Friday and return by curfew Sunday night.

It is imperative that you and your parents understand that the House legislative calendar is never set in stone. It changes frequently without regard to vacation or holiday plans. Your plans and airline tickets may have to be changed or canceled if the House calendar dictates it. **Never purchase non-refundable tickets** based on the **tentative calendar** in the Page Handbook. It is a safe bet that the calendar will change.

It is our goal to make your Page experience both educational and exciting. This can be accomplished by your understanding of what is expected of you and the important role you play as a Page in the U. S. House of Representatives.