

Updated May 2, 2024

Career Programs for Veterans, Gold Star Families, and Active-Duty Spouses in the House and Senate

House Green & Gold Congressional Aide Program

Origin

In 2008, the leadership of the House of Representatives and the Committee on House Administration established a House aide program designed to provide career opportunities for veterans. The program was originally known as the House Wounded Warrior Program.

Another aide program, originally named the SFC Sean Cooley and SPC Christopher Horton Congressional Gold Star Family Fellowship Program, was established pursuant to H.Res. 107 (116th Congress), which was agreed to on October 29, 2019. The resolution was amended by H.Res. 812 (116th Congress), agreed to on February 5, 2020, which modified eligibility to include parents. The Committee on House Administration promulgated regulations for the aide program (Committee Resolutions 116-15 and 116-17).

The FY2022 legislative branch appropriations act included a provision combining the veterans and families programs and changing the name from the Wounded Warrior and the Congressional Gold Star Family Fellowship Program to the Green & Gold Congressional Aide Program (G&G CAP, P.L. 117-103; 2 U.S.C. §5514).

This G&G CAP is facilitated by the House Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). Aides may serve for two years from the date of hire.

Operation

Green & Gold (G&G) congressional aides are employed by the House CAO, although they are assigned to work for Members, committees, or House officers. They may work either in Washington, DC, or in district offices, with the majority located in Member district offices. The specific job duties may vary by office and are determined by the Member, although many aides serve as caseworkers in district offices and focus on military and veterans' issues.

Funding for salaries for G&G aides is separate from office budgets provided to Members through the Members' Representational Allowance (MRA). The MRA can be used to cover otherwise allowable expenses or bonuses for the G&G aides that are not covered by the CAO. G&G aides do not count against the employment ceiling for Member offices. Employment beyond the two-year period is not guaranteed, although some aides have transitioned to full-time employment with the House.

According to the House CAO's semiannual report for July-December 2023, "By the end of December, more than 70

Aides were employed by Members and House Officers in both the D.C. and Member offices across the country. Of the Aides departing the program [in 2023], more than a third continued employment with the House of Representatives. Since the program's inception in 2008, more than 500 Aides have participated in the program." The CAO report also stated that "the program implemented several programmatic changes, including adding active-duty spouse participation in the program, allowing Members to request up to a six-month extension for their Aides after completing two years of service, and expanding the eligibility for potential Gold Star family participants." The G&G CAP currently has 160 authorized positions.

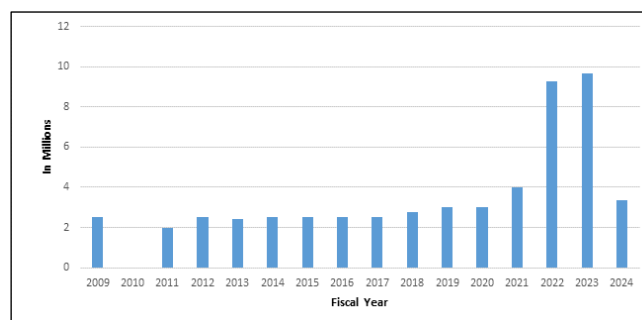
Funding History

The House G&G CAP is funded in the "Allowances and Expenses" portion of the appropriation for the House of Representatives in the annual legislative branch appropriations acts.

Funding for the House G&G aides (including under former program names) since FY2009 is listed in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1. Appropriations for the House Green & Gold Congressional Aide Program by Fiscal Year

in millions of dollars



Source: CRS analysis of legislative branch appropriations acts.

Notes: Includes funding provided under former names (the Wounded Warrior and the Congressional Gold Star Family Fellowship Programs). Includes any rescissions and sequestration. For an explanation of the planned use in FY2010 of prior year unobligated funds, see the report accompanying the FY2010 legislative branch appropriations bill (H.Rept. 111-160).

The House request, the FY2024 House-passed legislative branch appropriations bill (H.R. 4364), and the FY2024 act (P.L. 118-47) all included \$3.356 million for FY2024 for the G&G CAP.

Additional support for the program may be provided through other House accounts. For example, as with other House employees, any government contributions for employee benefits are paid through the "Government

Contributions” line in the “Allowances and Expenses” portion of the appropriation for the House of Representatives, and not through the line-item for the aide program.

All expenditures related to the House G&G CAP are reported online in the quarterly *Statement of Disbursements of the House*.

Qualifications for Eligibility

Participants may qualify based on status as veterans, Gold Star family members, or active-duty spouses.

Veteran applicant requirements include all of the following:

- served on active duty in the last six years;
- have a terminal rank of E5, O-3, or W-2 and below (or have been promoted to E-6, O-4, or W-3 within 6 months of separation from active duty and meet all other eligibility requirements); and
- received an honorable discharge.

Additionally, the House has stated that veterans who are in receipt of a 20-year or temporary early retirement are not eligible for the program, and that no waivers will be granted.

Gold Star family applicant requirements include the following:

- Candidates must be the spouse, child/step-child, parent/step-parent, or sibling/step-sibling of a veteran who died
 - in the line of duty while serving in the Armed Forces or
 - of a service-connected disability.

Active-Duty spouse applicant requirements include the following:

- Being the spouse of an active-duty servicemember who works for the military full time and is subject to permanent change of station, or permanent change of assignment orders, upon completion of each tour of duty.
- Those subject to Title 10 mobilization are not eligible.

Pay for House Green & Gold Congressional Aides

Salaries for G&G aides follow the House Employees Schedule (HES), which is a classification system that applies to many employees of officers of the House. The HES, including revisions to the pay scale and position standards and descriptions, is subject to the oversight of the Committee on House Administration. The pay range for 2024 is \$54,000-\$66,000 per year (HES 4-5).

Selection and Placement of House Green & Gold Congressional Aides

Available positions are listed on <https://www.usajobs.gov/>. As stated in the *Members’ Congressional Handbook*, positions are allocated equally between majority and minority House Members.

Applicants do not need to be residents of the Member’s district. Relocation expenses, however, cannot be reimbursed.

Contact Information

For additional information, see the House CAO’s website, email GreenAndGold@mail.house.gov, or call 202-226-1965.

U.S. Senate Stars of Valor Fellowships Program

The Senate is in the process of implementing a fellowships program.

Regulations for the program were adopted by the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration and printed in the *Congressional Record* on March 7, 2024. The regulations “describe the administration, eligibility criteria, selection, and placement procedures of the programs.”

The Senate action follows agreement on November 4, 2021, to two resolutions:

- S.Res. 442 (establishing the SFC Sean Cooley and SPC Christopher Horton Congressional Gold Star Family Fellowship Program for the Senate) and
- S.Res. 443 (establishing the McCain-Mansfield Fellowship Program for the Senate).

Pursuant to the regulations adopted by the committee, the Senate program will be collectively referred to as the Stars of Valor Fellowships Program. The program will be administered by the Senate Sergeant at Arms, in consultation with the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration.

Initial funding was provided in the FY2023 legislative branch appropriations act (P.L. 117-328), which included a provision establishing a Sergeant at Arms Fellowships Fund to contain amounts for the fellowships programs (2 U.S.C. §6519). The act also provided \$6.277 million for this account.

The Senate version of the FY2024 legislative branch appropriations bill and the FY2024 act (P.L. 118-47) did not provide additional funding for the fellowships programs. The report accompanying the Senate bill, however, expressed continued support and requires a briefing from the Senate Sergeant at Arms on implementation efforts (S. 2302, S.Rept. 118-60).

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