



Florida House of Representatives Page and Messenger Program

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who can participate in the program?

This program is for any student who has an interest in state government and falls within our age requirements.

2. How old do you have to be to participate?

Pages are 12 to 14 years of age.

Messengers are 15 to 18 years of age.

3. What if my 12th birthday is coming up soon or during session? Can I still come?

Yes. If your birthday is within 2 weeks, either before or after the date you have chosen to attend, it is permissible.

4. What is the difference between a Page and a Messenger, other than the age?

Pages serve in the House Chamber when the representatives are convened in session. Messengers work throughout the entire Capitol Complex within a two block radius; not in the Chamber.

5. How do I apply to the Page or Messenger Program?

Fill out the application in full and submit a copy to the program coordinator. This includes gathering signatures from your Parent/Guardian, your School's Principal, and a Representative/member of the Florida House of Representatives. You will also need to select three (3) weeks you may be available to serve as a Page or Messenger.

6. Why does my school's Principal need to sign the application?

Even though this is an educational experience, participating in the Page or Messenger Program does not automatically excuse you from school. Having your principal or counselor sign the application makes them aware of your intention to miss a week of school. Most schools do allow the students to participate and even encourage it. Some require an added assignment, such as a report on what you've learned. Each district has its own requirements.

7. What if I'm homeschooled?

The person responsible for your education would sign the application where it says School Principal signature. That could be your parent/guardian.

8. Why do I need a Representative to sign my application?

Each Representative can choose one Page and one Messenger to participate for one week during the 60 day Regular Session. If you are selected, your sponsor will sign your application and submit it to the Page & Messenger Office, notifying us that you were the first choice. Please keep a copy of the signed application.

9. How do I find out who my Representative is?

Go to myfloridahouse.gov and look for the "Contact Your Representative" link in the top left corner. Follow this link and connect to the "Find Your Representative" link which will ask you to enter your home address. Once you know who your representative is, you can locate their contact information on the same page. **Please be sure to contact the district location first.** Even during session, the district office is still manned by staff. Their Capitol office is not staffed all year.

10. What if I can't find a Representative to sponsor me?

Having a representative sponsor you is the only way you are guaranteed placement. Fill out the application and submit it to the Page & Messenger Program without a sponsor's signature and your application will be placed on a wait list. Each application is time stamped and alternate applications are reviewed in the order received. Making yourself available for any week increases your chances of participating. Often times, alternates may not receive very much advance notice. In the meantime, keep trying to find a sponsor and if you do, contact the program coordinator immediately.

11. Does the Representative have to be from my district?

No. Any Florida House Representative can sponsor you.

12. How does the Representative choose who comes?

This is a member sponsored program. That means only the representatives can determine who participates in the program. Some representatives conduct essay contests in their school districts. Others may conduct interviews or use a first-come basis. They may even want to bring a relative or friend of the family. It is their prerogative. Sometimes members will submit alternate applications. Even though he has signed the application, an alternate is not considered "accepted" into the program until a spot becomes available. Only the program coordinator can determine when there is a need for alternates.

13. When is Regular Session?

Our State Constitution requires our Legislature to meet for 60 days each year beginning on the first Tuesday, after the first Monday, in March. **For 2017, Regular Session convenes March 7 and concludes May 5.**

14. Why is it called Regular Session?

Sometimes catastrophic events will cause the Governor to request a Special Session. Those sessions are usually very short and Pages and Messengers are not required.

15. Why do I have to choose three different weeks?

When the program coordinator receives an application, it is time stamped. The weeks are assigned on a first come basis. If your first choice week is already filled, we try to place you in your second choice, and so on.

16. How will I know if I have been selected and which week I am coming?

The program coordinator will send you an acceptance letter telling you which week you have been selected to serve. Follow the instructions on the letter to find out when and where you are to report. Along with your letter you'll receive the Informational Guidebook with forms to fill out and return. This book will explain the dress code and guidelines you must follow while here.

17. Where will I stay and how will I get to Tallahassee if I am chosen?

Travel, transportation and lodging are your responsibility. The House does not provide any type of financial assistance or funding.

18. Does this work qualify as earning community service hours?

Yes. If you are missing school though, check with your guidance counselor to make sure they will recognize the hours. Quite often a school may require the student to do a report on the experience. Remember, this is your civics class in real life!

19. Will I be paid for my time in the program?

An option of a stipend is offered to the Pages and Messengers on the application. You will not receive both the stipend and Service Hours Credit.

20. How much money is the stipend?

Pages receive a stipend of approximately \$100. The stipend for Messengers is calculated at the rate of \$5.15 per hour based on the amount of hours worked.

21. How many hours do the Pages and Messengers work?

Messengers work from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Because Pages work in the Chamber, working hours vary day to day depending on the session schedule. However, Pages do not work in the Chamber past 5 p.m.

22. Why do the Pages not have a regular work schedule?

Pages only work in the Chamber when the House is convened in session to consider bills. The Speaker of the House decides when the representatives will convene. In order for the bills to reach the floor, they must go through the committee process. Sometimes bills do not make it out of the committee when expected and there is no need to be in session. The Speaker usually does not make his intentions public until the committee meetings for the prior week are complete. At that time the Page schedule is planned. Periodically, session may be cancelled for the entire week. When that happens, the program coordinator will call you as soon as possible and try to reschedule your week of participation.

23. What do the Pages do when they are not in the Chamber working?

The program coordinator schedules several educational activities each week, as time permits. They may include a tour of the Historic Capitol, the Supreme Court, and the Governor's Mansion. We also may observe a live committee meeting and/or participate in a mock committee meeting. These activities are optional and can be viewed on the weekly schedule when it becomes available. Parents and family members are encouraged to participate.

24. Do Messengers do other things besides deliver messages?

Yes. Messengers assist the members during committee meetings. They also write a bill and try to pass it out of a mock committee meeting. When the House Chamber is available, the students conduct a mock session to debate and vote on their legislation. Also, if time permits, they will tour the Supreme Court and possibly participate in a mock oral argument.

25. What is the difference between the House of Representatives and the Senate?

The House and Senate are separate entities that make up the Legislature. The House is governed by the Speaker and the Senate is governed by the Senate President. The programs that are offered by the House of Representatives may vary from the Senate. Be sure to check them both out.

26. Can I apply to both programs, House & Senate?

The House Page & Messenger Program does not place restrictions on participation with the Senate. However, you would need to check with the Senate regarding any restrictions they may have.

27. When should I turn my application in?

Spaces fill up quickly, so you are more likely to get one of your first choice weeks the sooner we receive it. Keep an eye on our website, myfloridahouse.gov, and when the applications are available online, you'll know it is time to apply. It is helpful for you to keep a copy of your application.