ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Learn about Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute’s (CCAI) Foster Youth Internship (FYI) Program®.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must meet all of the eligibility criteria to be considered for a position in the program.

APPLICATION DETAILS

Read about the components of the application in advance of your submission. All applications due by December 4, 2022.

TIPS FOR WORKING ON AN APPLICATION

Interested applicants are strongly encouraged to fully read this “Application Information + Instructions” document before working on their application. Before applying, please confirm you meet all of the eligibility requirements. It is also recommended applicants write their responses in a separate document - to revise, revisit, and edit - before logging on to complete and submit the online application. If you have questions after carefully reviewing this document and the information available on CCAI’s website, please contact Sara Schleicher at sara@ccainstitute.org.
CONGRESSIONAL INTERNSHIP

Each congressional office placement differs. CCAI does not guarantee that the intern will be assigned projects that are related to child welfare. Office responsibilities will likely include:

- Open, sort, and deliver mail
- Answer phones, greet constituents, run errands, deliver priority letters, and acquire signatures
- Copy, file, fax, data entry, and work on small legislative projects
- Work directly with congressional staff to research issues and compose constituent correspondence
- Attend committee hearings, sit in on meetings, attend press conferences, and take notes
- Provide constituent services and give tours of the U.S. Capitol
- Attend and assist with congressional briefings and meetings, including various events organized by CCAI

POLICY REPORT

By applying to and later agreeing to be a part of the FYI Program, you are agreeing to be fully engaged in the intensive congressional policy report writing process of the program. This involves selecting a topic in a timely manner, performing in-depth research, working closely with an advisor, writing, and extensively editing the report. The process involves, but is not limited to, adhering to all report deadlines set forth by CCAI; attendance at and full participation in all mandatory CCAI meetings and briefings; being respectful toward other interns, advisors and the CCAI staff; being open to new ideas and suggestions; and completion of the report and entire internship program.

ABOUT THE FYI PROGRAM

The FYI Program began in 2003 as an effort to raise awareness to federal policymakers about the needs and unique perspectives of young adults who have experienced the U.S. foster care system. CCAI works with congressional offices to secure a congressional internship for each intern. In addition, CCAI organizes orientation, retreats, advocacy trainings, and various networking opportunities with experts in child welfare, government, and business. These combined experiences allow the interns to create a policy report that is presented at briefings to Congress, White House, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and released to policymakers and advocates across the country. As a result of the program, federal policymakers learn firsthand the experiences of youth in foster care and go on to use their new knowledge to inspire legislative change to federal child welfare and adoption policy. Interns participating in the FYI Program benefit both personally and professionally, gaining experience and skills that will bolster their careers for years to come.

This is an immersive nine-week, educational, and civic experience. Participants are not considered employees of CCAI nor the congressional office where they are placed for an internship. CCAI provides a weekly stipend funded through donations received for interns, as well as covers major expenses such as housing in Washington, D.C., transportation to/from Washington, D.C., and public transportation to/from the congressional office internship. Interns are responsible for some smaller expenses. Interns are required to live in dormitory-style housing assigned by CCAI for the duration of the program and to adhere to the guidance of their Programs and Resident Assistant (PRA), an alumnus/alumna of the FYI Program.
ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must meet ALL of the following eligibility criteria to be considered for a position in the program. The education requirement is due to the skills expected of congressional interns working on Capitol Hill and writing federal policy recommendations.

1) Applicants are expected to have strong writing, grammar, and research skills.

2) Applicants are required to have a strong interest in improving federal child welfare policy.

3) Applicants are required to have spent at least 12 consecutive months and/or at least a total of 20 months in United States foster care during any point in their lives and be willing to share their experiences to raise awareness and effect change.

4) Applicants are required to have completed at least four (4) semesters at an accredited institution of higher learning, such as a college, university, or vocational school by the start of the internship on May 30, 2023.

5) Applicants are required to be currently pursuing a degree at an accredited institution of higher learning such as a college, university, or vocational school prior to the internship (May 30, 2023) OR have attained a degree at an accredited institution of higher learning such as a college, university, or vocational school within the past two years (on or after May 30, 2021).

6) Applicants are required to be in Washington, D.C. for the entire duration of the program and participate in all mandatory weekend and evening events. Because of the unique group dynamic, as well as important orientations, training, and end-of-program events, selected participants will not be allowed to arrive to the FYI Program late or leave early. Those considering applying for the 2023 FYI Program with known conflicts with the program dates are encouraged to apply the following year.

COLLEGE CREDIT

Many colleges and universities allow students to obtain academic credit for internships. Ask your academic advisor to determine if you are eligible to receive academic credit for the FYI Program. Former Foster Youth Interns have been successful in getting appropriate credit for participation in the FYI Program for both bachelor and masters programs.

WANT TO LEARN MORE?

JOIN US FOR A FYI INFO SESSION!

Three 60-min informational sessions will be hosted virtually this fall to help candidates learn more about the program and application process. No registration required. Mark your calendar and join here.

2023 FYI Info Session #1: September 8, 2022 at 3PM EST
2023 FYI Info Session #2: October 6, 2022 at 1PM EST
2023 FYI Info Session #3: November 2, 2022 at 4PM EST

If you have questions after carefully reviewing this application and the information available on CCAI’s website about the Foster Youth Internship Program®, please contact Sara Schleicher at sara@cccainstitute.org or (202) 544-8500 ext. 12.
APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

COMPLETED APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY CCAI NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 4, 2022

To be considered as an applicant for the 2023 FYI Program, you must complete ALL seven parts of the application in their entirety, including both letters of recommendation.

APPLICATION FORM

The application is an online form available here or at https://bit.ly/2023fyiapp. To complete, it is necessary to fill out each of the main seven sections. The form will first ask for general information such as your name, age, state, academic status, policy interests, foster care status, etc. The form will then ask you to upload your resume and outline your past work/volunteer experiences. Next, there will be a section to upload an essay covering your interest in this internship program, how this program fits with your goals, and a legislative change you would like to make to the child welfare system at the federal level based on your experiences and supporting research. Next, you will answer four short response scenarios. Then, you will upload your academic transcript. Following, there are instructions and information on the letter of recommendation requirement. Finally, there are a series of acknowledgments that must be agreed upon as a potential participant in the program.

GENERAL INFORMATION

This section of the application is designed to gather information on the applicants including their general background information (name, pronouns, age, etc.), academic information (status, name of institution, graduation date, etc.), congressional member information, policy interests, information related to experience in foster care, and more.

RÉSUMÉ

All applicants should highlight relevant academic, work experience, and community involvement, and the dates involved. You will be asked to fill in the following questions with information from your resume. If a section is not applicable, please write n/a:

- Work/Intern Experience
- Volunteer Experience
- Skills
- Awards and Honors
- Activities and Leadership
- Other

For the resume, do not submit more than one page. Only the first page of resumes will be reviewed. Please submit in PDF format with the file saved as: Last Name, First Name_Resume.

RESEARCH ESSAY

Essays must be double-spaced, use 12-point Times New Roman font, use proper spelling and grammar, numbered pages, research citations in APA, and saved in PDF format as Last Name_Essay. Your essay must include all three of the following: (1) how your life experiences have shaped your interest in and skills for this specific internship program, (2) how this experience fits with your goals and future aspirations, and (3) based on your personal experience in foster care, what is one legislative change you would want to make to the child welfare system that addresses a significant barrier for children reaching permanency with a family? Supporting research is required, and applicants must cite sources in APA format. Essays submitted without research and/or not in APA citation form, will be disqualified. Do not submit more than four pages; only the first four pages will be considered. ALL essay guidelines must be followed. CCAI has a zero-tolerance policy for plagiarism. Plagiarized applications will result in automatic dismissal of consideration for the program. Please submit in PDF format with the file saved as: Last Name, First Name_Essay.
**SHORT RESPONSE SCENARIOS**

Answer each of the following questions in 1,000 characters or less, approximately 140-250 words:

- CCAI is the nonprofit of the largest bipartisan, bicameral caucus in the U.S. Congress. Bipartisanship is deeply important and at the core of CCAI and its programs and understanding bipartisanship is critical to success in the Foster Youth Internship Program®. CCAI works with all political parties – ranging from very conservative to very liberal, and all offices in between. It is not atypical for Foster Youth Interns to be placed in a congressional office that does not align with their personal ideologies and/or political party. Please explain what bipartisanship means to you and how you would handle interning in an office with congressional staff and interns may have different views than you do.

- In your congressional office, you are among interns who are well-connected and come from different backgrounds and cultures. How would you manage yourself in this diverse setting? Please explain how you would adapt and resolve any conflict you feel or experience.

- The Foster Youth Internship Program® is a highly collaborative program. Working in a team setting allows for innovation from diverse perspectives, increased productivity, effective problem-solving, inspired creativity, and learning opportunities as each member utilizes their own and others’ skills. Tell us about what you consider to be your biggest strengths and weaknesses.

- The Foster Youth Internship Program® is a competitive congressional internship that demands high motivation and commitment from interns. As part of the program, CCAI also organizes retreats, advocacy trainings, and various networking opportunities with experts in the child welfare field. Though these are all amazing opportunities, you find that you are becoming overwhelmed by living in a new environment, the number of commitments and the workload of the summer. Discuss your time management, ability to implement corrective measures to stay on track, and maintain professionalism in this scenario.

**ACADEMIC TRANSCRIPT**

The academic transcript can be official or unofficial but must reflect your most recent semester from your current or most recent institution of higher learning. Please submit in PDF format with the file saved as: Last Name, First Name_Transcript.

**TWO RECOMMENDATIONS**

Each application needs two recommendations - one professional and one personal. Your recommenders are asked to complete an [online recommendation form](https://bit.ly/2023fyirecommendationform) which includes some skill evaluations as well as an upload for a letter of recommendation. All recommendation forms are due by December 4, 2022, and it is the applicant’s responsibility to both (1) send the online recommendation form to each recommender and communicate the deadline and (2) confirm with their recommenders that their recommendation has been submitted to CCAI. Allow plenty of time for the recommenders to write the letter, as well as time to follow up with them directly.

1. **PROFESSIONAL RECOMMENDATION**
   
   This reference should be from a mentor, advisor, coach, etc.

2. **PERSONAL RECOMMENDATION**
   
   This reference should be from a professor, faculty member, current or former supervisor, etc.
AFFIRMATIONS

Please initial statements that apply

- I am available to be in Washington, D.C. from May 30 - July 28, 2023 in its entirety, including weekends and understand that to qualify for a position in the 2023 FYI Program, I must commit to be present for these dates.

- I will have completed at least four semesters of higher education by May 30, 2023.

- I understand that my application will not be considered complete until I have submitted all the required documentation, including resume, essay, short answer questions, transcript and confirmed with my recommenders that two letters and the recommendation forms have been submitted on my behalf.

- I understand it is my responsibility to confirm with both of my recommenders that they have submitted an online recommendation form on my behalf to CCAI by December 4, 2022.

- I understand the awareness-raising mission of CCAI and the power of sharing personal stories in educating federal policymakers in child welfare. If selected, I will give CCAI and the participating congressional offices permission to use my name, biography and photograph in online and print materials. I am also willing to participate in interviews, videography, and other related awareness-raising aspects of the about the Foster Youth Internship Program®.

- I understand that this is an immersive nine-week, educational, and civic experience. Participants are not considered employees of CCAI nor the congressional office where they are placed for an internship. CCAI provides a weekly stipend funded through donations received for interns, as well as covers major expenses such as housing in Washington, D.C., transportation to/from the congressional office internship. Interns are responsible for some smaller expenses. Interns are required to live in dormitory-style housing assigned by CCAI for the duration of the program and to adhere to the guidance of their Programs and Resident Assistant (PRA), an alumnus/alumna of the FYI Program.

- I understand that this is a full-time commitment. This means required attendance for events and programmatic events held after business hours, including evenings and weekends.

- By submitting this application, I understand that I am providing CCAI with my consent to perform a criminal background screening. This is a necessary requirement by CCAI in order to secure a congressional internship. Please note that arrests, convictions, and lawsuits will not automatically disqualify a candidate from being considered as a Foster Youth Internship Program® participant.

- I certify by my electronic signature below that ALL information presented in this CCAI Foster Youth Internship Program® application is accurate to the best of my knowledge and all work is my own and has been completed solely by me, the applicant.

- Today’s Date

When CCAI receives a completed application in its entirety, CCAI will send a confirmation email to the applicant within two business days to notify that the application has been received.

Applicants will be notified the evening of January 11, 2023 whether the selection committee has chosen to move forward with their application. The next step in the application process will be an interview via Zoom. Interviews will only be conducted with the top 20 applicants during January 17-19, 2023. The 2023 class of Foster Youth Interns will be notified by January 23, 2023 of their acceptance into the program.
APPLICATION FORM

GENERAL BACKGROUND
- Full legal name
- Preferred first name
- Phonetic pronunciation
- Pronouns
- Date of Birth
- Age at start of program (5/30/2023)
- Email
- Phone number
- Current mailing address
- Have you applied to the Foster Youth Internship Program® before? If yes, in which year(s)? Are there any updates you’d like to share since the last time you applied? 600-character max, approximately 90-150 words.
- How did you learn about the Foster Youth Internship Program® and CCAI?

ACADEMIC
- Are you currently a student
- Academic Status for the FALL 2023 semester
- Name of undergraduate college, university, or institution of higher education
- Location of school
- (Anticipated) Graduation date
- Major
- Minor
- Cumulative GPA
- Explanation for low GPA or concerning transcript (optional)
- General academic areas of interest

CONGRESS
- Are you a citizen of the United States? Some Members of Congress have broad discretion to determine who interns in their offices, including the circumstances under which noncitizens may be eligible.
- If not a U.S. citizen, of what country are you a citizen?
- State you are registered to vote in
- Declared political party affiliation (if your state gives you the opportunity to declare your political party affiliation on your voter registration card)
- Zip code of the address for where you are registered to vote
- Name of congressional representative for the address where you are registered to vote. To find your representative, type in your zip code at https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative. Please type your answer as U.S. Representative First Name Last Name (STATE-DISTRICT). Example: DC's first congressional district would be U.S. Representative Jane Doe (DC-01).
- How would you describe your political ideology?

POLICY
- In ten words or less, what ONE policy topic do you hope to research and write federal child welfare policy recommendations on during the FYI program? Note: Once applicants are accepted into the FYI program, topics of interest must be approved and confirmed by CCAI staff.
- Please select your preferred federal child welfare research topic track: (1) permanency, (2) safety, or (3) well-being.
- Total length of time in United States foster care
- List all states and the associated U.S. counties in which you were in U.S. foster care (NOTE: the application is asking for counties, not countries - the country is United States for all eligible applicants)
- Foster Care Status (please select as many as apply): (1) Still in foster care / extended foster care, (2) emancipated / aged out, (3) reunified with parent, (4) kinship care, (5) adopted, (6) other: please list.
- Please elaborate in 150 words or less

RESUME
- All applicants should highlight relevant academic, work experience, and community involvement, and the dates involved. If a section is not applicable, write n/a.
- For the resume, do not submit more than one page. Only the first page of resumes will be reviewed. Please submit in PDF format with the file saved as: Last Name_Resume.
- Please fill in the following questions with information from your resume.
  - Work/Intern Experience
  - Volunteer Experience
  - Skills
  - Awards and Honors
  - Activities and Leadership
  - Other
ESSAY
- Essays must be double-spaced, use 12-point Times New Roman font, use proper spelling and grammar, numbered pages, research citations in APA, and saved in PDF format as Last Name_Essay. Your essay must include all three of the following:
  - (1) how your life experiences have shaped your interest in and skills for this specific internship program,
  - (2) how this experience fits with your goals and future aspirations, and
  - (3) based on your personal experience in foster care, what is one legislative change you would want to make to the child welfare system that addresses a significant barrier for children reaching permanency with a family?
- Supporting research is required, and applicants must cite sources in APA format. Essays submitted without research and/or not in APA citation form, will be disqualified. Do not submit more than four pages; only the first four pages will be considered. ALL essay guidelines must be followed. CCAI has a zero-tolerance policy for plagiarism. Plagiarized applications will result in automatic dismissal of consideration for the program.

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- Answer each of the following questions in 1,000 characters or less, approximately 140-250 words.
  - CCAI is the nonprofit of the largest bipartisan, bicameral caucus in the U.S. Congress. Bipartisanship is deeply important and is at the core of CCAI and its programs. Understanding bipartisanship is critical to success in the Foster Youth Internship Program®. CCAI works with all political parties – ranging from very conservative to very liberal, and all offices in between. It is not atypical for Foster Youth Interns to be placed in a congressional office that does not align with their personal ideologies and/or political party. Please explain what bipartisanship means to you and how you would handle interning in an office with congressional staff and interns that may have different views than you do.
  - In your congressional office, you are among interns who are well-connected and come from different backgrounds and cultures. How would you manage yourself in this diverse setting? Please explain how you would adapt to and resolve any conflicts you feel or experience.
  - The Foster Youth Internship Program® is a highly collaborative program. Working in a team setting allows for innovation from diverse perspectives, increased productivity, effective problem-solving, inspired creativity, and learning opportunities as each member utilizes their own and others' skills. Tell us about what you consider to be your biggest strengths and weaknesses.
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  - 1. Professional: this reference should be from a professor, faculty member, current or former supervisor, etc.
  - 2. Personal: this reference should be from a mentor, advisor, coach, etc.
AFFIRMATIONS

- Please initial by each statement.
  - I am available to be in Washington, D.C. from May 30 - July 28, 2023 in its entirety, including weekends and understand that to qualify for a position in the 2023 FYI Program, I must commit to be present for these dates.
  - I will have completed at least four semesters of higher education by May 30, 2023.
  - I understand that my application will not be considered complete until I have submitted all the required documentation, including resume, essay, short answer questions, transcript and confirmed with my recommenders that two recommendation forms have been submitted on my behalf.
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  - I certify by my electronic signature below that ALL information presented in this CCAI Foster Youth Internship Program® application is accurate to the best of my knowledge and all work is my own and has been completed solely by me, the applicant.
  - Today’s date

NEXT STEPS

- Applicants will be notified the evening of January 11, 2023 whether the selection committee has chosen to move forward with their application. The next step in the application process will be an interview via Zoom. Interviews will only be conducted with 20 applicants through January 17-19, 2023 (NOTE: Please hold this time on your calendar). The 2023 Foster Youth Interns will be notified on January 23, 2023 of their acceptance into the program.
- If you have questions after carefully completing and reviewing this application and the information available on CCAI’s website about the Foster Youth Internship Program®, please contact Sara Schleicher at sara@ccainstitute.org or 202-544-8300 x 12.

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