



Angels in Adoption®

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES Step-by-Step Guide 2026

Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute  
28th Annual Angels in Adoption® Leadership Program & Celebration

### STEP 1 SELECT WHO TO RECOMMEND AS A POTENTIAL ANGEL HONOREE

As a small non-profit organization, we rely on our community to send us Angels in Adoption® recommendations to consider. In the past, Members of Congress and congressional staff have used their personal\* time and capacity to submit these recommendations. CCAI will use information gathered from several sources over the next few months to inform its selection committee of all recommendations and will notify you in July in the event that an individual, couple, or organization from your district is ultimately selected. *Official staff may not use official resources or case files to make Angels in Adoption® recommendations.*

Your office can submit a potential honoree recommendation through the [Angels in Adoption® online recommendation form](#). Recommendations will be reviewed by the Angels in Adoption® Selection Committee, a volunteer committee made up of child welfare professionals, former congressional staff, alumni of the Angels in Adoption® Program, alumni of the CCAI Foster Youth Internship Program®, and other community partners.

CCAI strongly encourages offices to recommend a candidate who has gone above and beyond to support children and families in extraordinary ways. To find an individual, couple, family, or organization to recommend, CCAI encourages you to connect with your district offices to learn more about the work being done in your community. You may also reach out to CCAI's Programs Coordinator, Lisette DuFore Benz, at [lisette@ccainstitute.org](mailto:lisette@ccainstitute.org) for a list of governmental and non-governmental foster care and adoption-related organizations. These agencies have connections with those doing exceptional things in your state. Additional options for identifying a recommendee include (1) calling foster care and adoption-related agencies in your state and/or (2) asking constituents for input on potential candidates. Reminder that any qualifying individuals, couples, families, or organizations may be recommended; however, honorees can only receive the Angels award once. [A list of past honorees \(1999-2025\) is available on the CCAI website.](#)

Please note we strongly encourage *one* recommendation submission per office. Each Member of Congress is ultimately matched with a maximum of one honoree from their state per year. If you have several recommendations in mind, we suggest connecting with other Members from your state's delegation. If any of those offices are interested in participating and still looking for a recommendation, your connection will be helpful and a great way to recognize folks in your state doing extraordinary things.

*Angels in Adoption® is a signature program of the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute (CCAI).*

# STEP 2

## COMPLETE THE ONLINE RECOMMENDATION FORM

Please submit your recommendation via the [Angels in Adoption® online recommendation form](#). The form notifies CCAI of your recommendation and will be sent to the selection committee for consideration. Please reach out to Lisette DuFore Benz with any questions or concerns regarding the recommendation process at [lisette@ccainstitute.org](mailto:lisette@ccainstitute.org) or 202-544-8500 ext. 12. Before opening the form, we suggest gathering the following information to have on-hand as you complete:

- **Name** of the individual/couple/family/organization you are recommending for CCAI to consider as a potential honoree. Please note, if your recommendation is an organization, please provide a contact person for coordination and communication purposes.
- **Contact information** for the submission including: mailing address, phone number (home and mobile), and email address.
- **Recommendee's story** for the Angels in Adoption® Program. Each year our program includes a brief paragraph about each honoree and the reasons they are receiving the Angels in Adoption® award. This should not exceed 350 words and should be written in third person. In the paragraph, please include their journey in becoming an advocate in the adoption or foster care field and the extraordinary, notable work they have done.
- **Congressional office contact information** including: name of your Member of Congress; staff contact(s); and the names, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers of your Member's D.C. Press Secretary and Scheduler.

After the Angels in Adoption® selection committee meets, CCAI will send your office an email in July if your recommendation was or was not ultimately selected as an honoree. About two weeks later, CCAI will let you know if your recommendee has accepted the award and if so, the recommendee is then considered an official 2026 Angels in Adoption® honoree. It is important CCAI receives a signed media release before publicly publishing their name and affiliation with the program.

Please note CCAI sends a congratulatory email and mailed welcome packet to your recommendee on the same day we notify offices of their selection. We suggest waiting at least a few days before you place a follow-up congratulatory phone call or send a letter, so your recommendee has time to read the official information sent by CCAI and accept and confirm their participation in the program.

# STEP 3

## MARK YOUR MEMBER'S CALENDAR

The 2026 Angels in Adoption® Leadership Program events will take place this September and include in-person advocacy and leadership events, such as child welfare policy roundtables, panels, and networking, as well as a Hill Day and Angels in Adoption® Celebration.

There are two events for your Member's participation:

### Angels in Adoption® Hill Day

**Date:** TBD | 20- OR 30-MIN MEETING BETWEEN 9AM-5PM EST

**Location:** D.C. Congressional Offices

Members are highly encouraged to host their Angel for a 20- or 30-minute meeting. Meetings will allow for the Member to meet their Angel to hear their story, learn about their experiences, and help expand their impact. These meetings are very important and highly cherished by the Angels as part of their DC experience. Our pro-bono team at Arnold & Porter will reach out in August to work on coordinating a meeting time, but please save a potential timeslot in the meantime if possible.

### Angels in Adoption® Celebration

**Date:** TBD | 6PM EST

**Location:** TBD

The Angels in Adoption® Celebration brings together advocates and leaders from across the country who are passionate about adoption, family, and permanency. Hosted in Washington, D.C., the evening features a cocktail reception, entertainment, and a brief program. The evening is centered around community, connection, and a shared commitment to ensuring every child experiences the love and stability of a permanent family.



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Questions? Contact CCAI Programs Coordinator, Lisette DuFore Benz, at [lisette@ccaainstitute.org](mailto:lisette@ccaainstitute.org) or 202-544-8500 ext. 12