



Dear parents, teachers, principals, and superintendents:

The United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP) has begun its statewide selection process. In March, two Alaskan students will join 104 other delegates for the program's 62nd annual Washington Week—an intensive week-long educational program about the workings of the Senate and the federal government overall. USSYP is sponsored by the US Senate and privately funded by The Hearst Foundation.

The 62nd annual United States Senate Youth Program Washington Week is being planned for **March 2-9, 2024**. The entire week will be planned and coordinated by the Hearst Foundation. It will include many specific functions and events at national landmarks; however, personal free time will be extremely limited. Applicants should take this under consideration when applying.

State delegates will have outstanding leadership abilities and a strong commitment to public service. They generally rank in the top one percent of their states academically. After Washington Week, delegates continue to excel and develop impressive qualities that are often directed toward public service. **Each state delegate will receive a \$10,000 undergraduate college scholarship.** Students must attend the entire program to receive the scholarship.

The program may be held online pending public health guidance and status of large group access to the government venues traditionally visited. **If held in person, all delegates will be required to be fully vaccinated and boosted to attend. A final decision regarding the in-person program will be determined in the fall of 2023**, with adequate time for students to complete the full vaccination series prior to travel. If held online, vaccination status will not be required. Regardless of platform, all student delegates will partake in a comprehensive, interactive leadership program in the stated timeframe.

Student delegates will visit Capitol Hill, the White House, the Pentagon, the State Department, the Supreme Court, and other historic sites in Washington. The agenda routinely includes meetings with Senators, the President, Cabinet Secretaries, a Justice of the Supreme Court, senior members of the national media, and other policy makers.

The delegate selection is administered by each state's chief school officer in cooperation with high school principals. Eligible delegates must be:

1. Current high school **juniors or seniors**
2. An **elected** student officer for the **entire** 2023-2024 academic years (*Please reference the 2024 brochure for a complete list of eligible positions.*)

3. Residents of Alaska

Each student must be a resident of the United States and currently enrolled in a public or private secondary school located in the state (including for these purposes the District of Columbia) in which either one of his or her parents or guardians legally resides. Exceptions to the residency rule are made for the Department of Defense Education Activity and for states with schools operating under interstate education compacts.

Following this announcement are the 2024 brochure, student application, and an essay on the experience by one of last year's delegates. Page 5 of the application includes a detailed checklist of required submission items. Please use this checklist to ensure your application is complete. Incomplete applications will **not** be considered.

The Alaska application deadline is **25 October 2023 at 5pm.**

The candidate selection process is three part:

1. Students who submit complete applications will be initially ranked based on a rubric provided by the Hearst Foundation.
2. The top ten applicants will be invited to take the 2024 United State Senate Youth Program Public Affairs and History Exam. This is a proctored exam that will affect an applicant's total score and potential selection as a USSYP candidate.
3. After performance on the USSYP exam is factored in, the top five applicants may also be asked to sit for a Zoom interview with the selection committee. Performance during this interview will affect the applicant's total score and potential selection as a USSYP candidate.

The names of students selected will be formally announced mid-December. For more information, interested students in Alaska should contact either their high school principal or myself via the contact information below. They may also access information via the DEED Scholarships & Recognition webpage at <https://education.alaska.gov/recognitionprograms/>

Sincerely,

Bjørn Wolter, Ph.D.
Alaska Department of Education & Early Development
P.O. Box 110500
Juneau, Alaska, 99811-0500
907.465.6542 (p)
907.465.3240 (f)
bjorn.wolter@alaska.gov

62ND ANNUAL
WASHINGTON WEEK

MARCH 2-9, 2024

USSENATEYOUTH.ORG

UNITED STATES SENATE ★ YOUTH PROGRAM ★

EDUCATION • LEADERSHIP • PUBLIC SERVICE • RESPECT



104 STUDENTS WILL BE SELECTED FOR A WEEK-LONG GOVERNMENT AND LEADERSHIP EDUCATION PROGRAM AND WILL EACH RECEIVE A \$10,000 UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP.

The United States Senate unanimously passed a resolution in 1962 creating the UNITED STATES SENATE YOUTH PROGRAM (USSYP), a national nonpartisan initiative to provide an annual opportunity for talented high school students with demonstrated leadership abilities to deepen their understanding of America's political processes and strengthen their resolve to pursue careers in public service.

The USSYP brings the highest-level officials from each branch of government to meet with this outstanding group of young leaders — two high school juniors or seniors from each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) — for an intensive week-long education and leadership program to be held either in Washington, D.C., or online. The program is merit-based and highly competitive. Each student will also receive a \$10,000 undergraduate college scholarship with encouragement to pursue coursework in history and political science. Now in its 62nd year, the program has been fully funded since inception by THE HEARST FOUNDATIONS as an enduring commitment to preparing young people for civic leadership in our participatory democracy.

Numbering more than 6,100, USSYP alumni serve the country in many ways. They have become leaders in government, law, business, education, journalism, the military, medicine, healthcare, higher education and many other fields. Alumni serve as elected and appointed officials at all levels of government, including a current United States senator, a current cabinet secretary, many congressional staff members, a former governor, former senior political advisors to the president of the United States, former ambassadors and former federal judges. The commonality to all of their success is the desire to serve.

THE PROGRAM

The 62nd Annual United States Senate Youth Program Washington Week is being planned for March 2–9, 2024, in Washington, D.C.

Delegates will hear major policy addresses by senators, cabinet members, officials of the Departments of State and Defense, leaders of other federal agencies and senior members of the national media. Delegates also traditionally participate in a meeting with a justice of the U.S. Supreme Court and the president of the United States. Most speaking events include in-depth question and answer sessions.

The Hearst Foundations will pay all expenses for Washington Week including transportation, hotel and meals. The Department of Defense (DoD) annually provides a team of competitively selected men and women officers to serve as mentors and chaperones for the student delegates, and a registered nurse, licensed physician and professional security team are in place at all times throughout an in-person week.

APPLICATION AND SELECTION

Two student delegates and a first and second alternate will be designated by the chief school officer from each state, the District of Columbia and DoDEA by December 1, 2023.

The Hearst Foundations will provide \$1,000 to each state-level department of education to assist with the selection expenses for the program and will also provide a rigorous public affairs examination that may be used in the selection process. Applications are generally submitted in late summer and early fall and may be obtained from high school principals and school counselors or directly from the state-level selection administrator or their state Department of Education website. **Application deadline dates and processes vary by state, and specific application materials may be found on most state Department of Education websites.** All state contacts, websites and deadlines are accessible on the USSYP website: ussenateyouth.org

HOW TO QUALIFY

Qualified high school juniors or seniors must show demonstrated leadership by serving in elected or appointed positions in which they are actively representing a constituency in organizations related to student government, education, public affairs and community service. They must be actively serving in qualified leadership positions, enrolled in high school and living in the state (and for these purposes, the District of Columbia) that they will represent for the entire 2023–2024 academic year.

The DoDEA central administrative office will select the DoDEA delegates and alternates residing overseas. Military dependents who reside and attend schools in the U.S. shall apply for the program under the RESIDENCY ruling shown below.

Alternate delegates will be selected as replacements if a primary delegate is unable to participate in Washington Week. If the primary delegate is unable to attend, The Hearst Foundations must be notified in advance.

Attendance during the entire Washington Week program is required to receive the financial scholarship; appropriate disposition of scholarship funds will be determined by the program director if a primary delegate is unable to attend the program due to emergency circumstances or is dismissed.

Selection will be based on the student's outstanding abilities and demonstrated qualities of leadership in an elected or appointed student office for the entire 2023–2024 school year. **The primary purposes of the qualifying leadership position must be representation of a constituency and service to others.** A student who graduates high school at the close of the Fall 2023 semester/quarter is not eligible to apply for the program, and students other than DoDEA delegates must be residing in one state of primary residence in the U.S. during the entire 2023–2024 academic year to participate.

1. Any high school junior or senior student is eligible for the program provided they have not previously been a delegate to Washington Week and have not received a USSYP scholarship. **The student must hold a high-level leadership position in any one of the following student government, civic or educational organizations during the entire 2023–2024 academic year:**
 - a. Student Body president, vice president, secretary or treasurer
 - b. Class president, vice president, secretary or treasurer
 - c. Student Council representative
 - d. A National Honor Society officer (including discipline-based Honor Societies such as the National English and Social Studies Honor Societies that include service components)
 - e. Student representative elected or appointed (appointed by a panel, commission or board) to a local, district, regional or state-level civic, service and/or educational organization approved

by the state selection administrator, where the student holds a high-level position of representation to a constituency in a year-round capacity providing service to others.

2. Participation or holding an officer position in academic clubs, educational competition programs/conferences or organizations designed primarily for the student's personal development and enrichment do not qualify a student for the USSYP, although many students who qualify participate in these activities. The positions listed below DO NOT qualify the student for the program:

- Attendance or officer position at Boys/Girls Nation or State summer conference
- Member of a National Honor Society (serving as an elected officer for the organization for the entire school year is acceptable)
- Member or leader of the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts or a sports team
- A founder or chairperson of a self-created group
- A participant, captain or officer in Mock Trial, Debate Team, Model UN or other academic club, mock legislature, conference or competition where the primary engagement is for individual educational benefit.

RESIDENCY: Each student must be a legal permanent resident or citizen of the United States at the time of application. Students must be enrolled for the entire academic year in a public or independent high school located in the state (and for these purposes, the District of Columbia) in which at least one of their parents or guardians currently resides. Home-educated students must be approved by their state department of education to apply.

Exceptions to the residency requirement will only be made in the following cases:

- a. Students from DoDEA overseas will represent the state(s) of which the parents/guardians are U.S. legal voting residents. Students attending DoD schools in the U.S. or students enrolled through U.S. military bases in local schools must be residing in the state in which their school is located for the entire academic year.
- b. Students may reside in a state other than the state in which they attend school if they are enrolled in the only designated public high school available to them in a school district that crosses contiguous state borders through legal interstate agreement. Students in these schools shall make application to the program through the state where the high school is located and shall represent that state if selected.

PROGRAM RULES

- 1. All delegates must agree to fully block both arrival and departure travel days to participate in Washington Week.**

2. NO TOURS OR TRIPS WILL BE PERMITTED BY INDIVIDUAL DELEGATES WHILE TRAVELING TO OR FROM WASHINGTON, D.C. OR WHILE IN WASHINGTON, D.C. THIS POLICY INCLUDES ANY OTHER OUTSIDE ACTIVITY, CONFERENCE, SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION OR EVENT OF ANOTHER ORGANIZATION THAT IS CONDUCTED IN WASHINGTON, D.C. OR THE SURROUNDING AREA DURING THE TIME FRAME OF THE USSYP WASHINGTON WEEK, AND INCLUDES ANY OUTSIDE APPOINTMENT OR EVENT DURING THE PROGRAM WEEK.

All travel provided by The Hearst Foundations is round-trip only and scheduled within the time frames listed below:

ARRIVAL D.C.: Saturday, March 2, between 6:00 AM and 5:00 PM

DEPARTURE D.C.: Saturday, March 9, between 5:00 AM and 9:00 AM

- 3.** The chief state school officer from each state, the District of Columbia and DoDEA must submit in writing to The Hearst Foundations by **DECEMBER 1, 2023**, the names of the two delegates and two alternates. Upon confirmation of qualifications, the program requires each delegate to submit a statement of participation including a code of conduct agreement to be signed by students and parents/legal guardians. All program rules apply to the group as a whole, defined as minors.
- 4. Code of Conduct:** Delegates will be the guests of the United States Senate and The Hearst Foundations throughout the program, whether in-person or online, and are required to conduct themselves with civility, dignity and professionalism. Debate and discussion are actively encouraged in an environment of tolerance, respect and inclusion. Students selected to the program are serving as at-large public representatives of their states, communities and schools, and attend the program to learn from the speakers and from one another. Students are prohibited from engaging in lobbying, petitioning, protest or overt political activism during Washington Week. Cyber bullying and bullying of any kind will not be tolerated. Delegates must comply with all program health and safety policies.
- 5.** It will be the responsibility of the parents/legal guardians to transport (at their expense) each delegate to the nearest commercial airport or train station that provides round-trip travel to Washington, D.C. from their hometown. **All itineraries will be designed for the least amount of travel time and most direct routing.**
- 6.** No arrangements for individual religious practices or services other than dietary guidelines will be made during an in-person Washington Week. This policy will be strictly observed from the time the student delegates arrive at the Washington area airports, train station and program site until they return home.

- 7.** The program does not allow any individual or group athletic activities outside of the hotel facility.
- 8.** Failure to abide by rules and requirements of the program will result in dismissal from the program and forfeiture of the \$10,000 scholarship award. Rules related to the USSYP and scholarship award shall be construed, interpreted and applied by The Hearst Foundations, whose action and determination shall be final and binding.

SCHOLARSHIP

The Hearst Foundations believe it is in the public interest to encourage these outstanding young people to continue their educational development. The \$10,000 undergraduate college scholarship award is subject to the conditions and requirements specified below. Additional detailed scholarship information will be provided to the delegates after Washington Week. Certificates representing the award will be presented to the delegates during their visit to Washington, D.C., often personally signed by their senators.

SCHOLARSHIP RULES

- 1. The \$10,000 college scholarship and attendance at the Washington Week program are one, inseparable award.** Delegates must participate in the Washington Week program in accordance with all program rules and policies in order to receive the financial scholarship.
- 2. The USSYP scholarship is designated for undergraduate college study only** at an accredited United States college or university. All students are encouraged to include history, political science or related subjects in their undergraduate program.
- 3.** The \$10,000 scholarship is designated for the specified student's education expense and must be used within four years after enrollment. Funds are paid directly to the college or university in the student's behalf. No funds may be given directly to a student. The scholarship will be issued in either one payment of \$10,000 or increments of \$5,000 or \$2,500.
- 4.** Students attending military academies (U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force and U.S. Coast Guard) may draw the USSYP scholarship per the guidelines to purchase required military uniforms, books, computer equipment and other educational materials.
- 5.** A student will automatically forfeit eligibility for a scholarship award by failure to abide by all rules and requirements pertaining to the program and the scholarship or in the event of misconduct as a delegate to the United States Senate Youth Program.



UNITED STATES SENATE
★ YOUTH PROGRAM ★

EDUCATION • LEADERSHIP • PUBLIC SERVICE • RESPECT

THE WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST FOUNDATION

DIRECTORS

WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST III
President

JAMES M. ASHER
ANISSA B. BALSON
DAVID J. BARRETT
FRANK A. BENNACK, JR.

JOHN G. CONOMIKES
LISA H. HAGERMAN
GEORGE R. HEARST II
GILBERT C. MAURER

MARK F. MILLER
VIRGINIA H. RANDT
MITCHELL I. SCHERZER
STEVEN R. SWARTZ

PAUL “DINO” DINOVTZ
Executive Director

DONNA KALAJIAN LAGANI
Vice President, Eastern Director

RAYNE B. GUILFORD
Program Director

LYNN DE SMET
Deputy Director

CAROLINE BERVER
Program Liaison

DENISE COHN
Program Manager

SARAH T. MISHUROV
Social Media Manager

SPONSORED BY THE UNITED STATES SENATE • FUNDED AND ADMINISTERED BY THE HEARST FOUNDATIONS • USSENATEYOUTH.ORG

UNITED STATES SENATE RESOLUTION 324

In 1962, Senate Resolution 324, submitted by Senator KUCHEL (for himself and Senators MANSFIELD, DIRKSEN, and HUMPHREY), was referred to the Committee on Rules and Administration, and, subsequently, unanimously approved by the United State Senate as follows:

WHEREAS the continued vitality of our Republic depends, in part, on the intelligent understanding of our political processes and the functions of our National Government by the citizens of the United States; and

WHEREAS the durability of a constitutional democracy is dependent upon alert, talented, vigorous competition for political leadership; and

WHEREAS individual Senators have cooperated with various private and university undergraduate and graduate

fellowship and internship programs relating to the work of Congress; and

WHEREAS in the high schools of the United States, there exists among students who have been elected to student body offices in their junior or senior year a potential reservoir of young citizens who are experiencing their first responsibilities of service to a constituency and who should be encouraged to deepen their interest in and understanding of their country's political process: Now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate hereby expresses its willingness to cooperate in a nationwide competitive high school Senate youth program which would give several representative high school students from each State a short indoctrination into the operation of the United States Senate

and the Federal Government generally, if such a program can be satisfactorily arranged and completely supported by private funds with no expense to the Federal Government.

RESOLUTION 146. To amend S. Res. 324 of the Eighty-seventh Congress to provide for the participation of the Department of Defense education system for dependents in overseas areas in the Senate Youth Program.

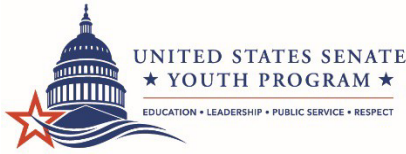
Resolved, That S. Res. 324, Eighty-seventh Congress, agreed to May 17, 1963, is amended by adding at the end thereof the following new section:

Section 3. For the purpose of this resolution, the term "State" includes the Department of Defense education system for dependents in overseas areas

THE HEARST FOUNDATIONS

90 NEW MONTGOMERY STREET • SUITE 1212 • SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94105-4504 • 415.908.4540 • 800.425.3632 • (F) 415.243.0760 • USSYP@HEARSTFDN.ORG

2024 United States Senate Youth Program Alaska Department of Education & Early Development Student Application Form



Contents

ALASKA USSYP 2024 APPLICATION.....	2
School Information	2
Parent/Guardian Information	2
Applicant Information.....	2
Elected office.....	2
Letters of Recommendation.....	3
Written Persuasive Essay.....	3
Résumé or Curriculum Vitae.....	3
Biographical Sketch	3
Video Presentation for Application Submission	3
Parent/Guardian Confirmation	4
Principal Confirmation	4
Qualifying Position Organization Leader (QPOL) Confirmation.....	4
CHECKLIST OF APPLICATION MATERIALS	5
IMPORTANT REMINDERS.....	5
SELECTION PROCESS.....	5
APPLICATION SUBMISSION ADDRESS.....	5

ALASKA USSYP 2024 APPLICATION**School Information**

Public High School Private High School (any school other than public)

School District: _____ High School: _____

School phone: _____ Full address: _____

Principal's name: _____ Email: _____ Phone: _____

Student must attend high school in the state at least one parent/guardian resides for the entire school year.

Parent/Guardian Information

Parent/Guardian #1 full name with prefix: _____

Phone - cell/home: _____ Email: _____

Full home address: _____

Parent/Guardian #2 full name with prefix: _____

Phone - cell/home: _____ Email: _____

Full home address: _____

Applicant Information

Students legal first, middle, last names: _____

Preferred name: _____ Email: _____ Contact phone: _____

Full mailing address: _____

Birthdate: _____ Age: _____ Grade: _____ Gender identification: _____

Applicants must be U.S. citizens or have permanent residency at the time of application.

YES I am a U.S. citizen.

NO I am not a U.S. citizen, but I am a permanent resident in possession of my official Green Card at the time of this application. Having applied for a Green Card, but not in possession, means you cannot apply for USSYP.

Elected office

Mark the ELECTED office you now hold for the **entire 2023-2024 school year** in one of the following student government, civic, or educational organizations:

Student Body President Class President Student Body Vice President

Class Vice President Student Body Secretary Class Secretary

Student Body Treasurer Class Treasurer Student Council Representative

Officer in a National Honor Society chapter Other (explain below)

Other explanation: _____

The positions listed below DO NOT qualify the student for the program:

- Attendance or officer position at Boys/Girls Nation or State summer conference
- General Member of a National Honor Society (serving as an elected officer is acceptable)
- Member or leader of the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts or a sports team
- A founder or chairperson of a self-created group
- A participant, captain or officer in Mock Trial, Debate Team, Model UN or other academic club, mock legislature, conference, or competition where the primary engagement is for individual benefit.

What do you do to serve your community and support your constituency year-round in this position:

What is your rank in scholastic standing of your class?

Upper 1% Upper 5% Upper 10% Upper 15% Upper 25%

Your principal's signature here certifies the above percentage.

Letters of Recommendation

Submit two letters of support and recommendation. One from either the high school principal or school counselor, and one from the adult representative of the organization where the student is currently holding a qualifying leadership position for USSYP.

Written Persuasive Essay

Your essay must be titled, typed in 12-point font, double-spaced, and not to exceed two pages in length with one-inch margins. Your works cited page for the persuasive essay is not included in the maximum page length.

Submit a persuasive essay researched and written on a topic of social significance related to a contemporary state, national, or world event. Select a topic important to you, take a stand, relate its import to you, and defend your position. The essay will be judged on organization, ideas and content, evidence of personalization, and writing conventions ***including citation of sources***.

All essays will be checked for AI writing. Using Chat-GPT or other AI interface to write your essay will result in automatic disqualification from the USSYP program.

Résumé or Curriculum Vitae

Attach a professional résumé or CV that details your experience and leadership roles. It must be typed in 12-point font and not exceed two pages in length with one-inch margins. Your résumé/CV should include, but is not limited to:

- A statement of how your participation in USSYP will enhance your understanding and interest in the political and governmental process of the United States.
- Current elected student position held and all past involvement in student government.
- Activities and achievements that demonstrate leadership in your school and community.
- Involvement in community service initiatives or programs outside of school.
- Future goals.
- Relevant work experience

Biographical Sketch

Write a short paragraph detailing your important leadership positions, public service, and accomplishment other than the primary position noted on the application form. (150-word limit)

Video Presentation for Application Submission

Public speaking is a core component of the USSYP. Each student applicant should prepare a short video presentation, no more than three minutes in length, as part of the 2024 application, to be judged for public speaking skill, vocabulary, originality, organization of presentation, knowledge of any material or content presented, clarity of artwork (charts, graphs, slides if used) and overall presentation.

Video essay topic: Imagine that you are a newly elected Senator for Alaska. Describe who you are, why you are proud to represent Alaska. Tell us the personal characteristics you feel will make you an effective leader in Washington. Note what legislative initiatives you will champion and why they are important to you and your constituents. Note any historical leadership figures you would like to emulate.

Your video file **must** follow these rules:

- Name your video file as "lastname.firstname.school"
- Acceptable formats are .MP4, .AVI, and .MOV.

- If you do not follow these guidelines, your video will not be reviewed, and your application deemed incomplete.

UPLOAD YOUR VIDEO AT:

<https://form.jotform.com/232055488915160>

**Parent/Guardian Confirmation**

Parents or guardians **must** sign below to approve for the applicant to go to Washington, D.C. for a week to attend the United States Senate Youth Program under the conditions set forth in the rules and regulations of the program brochure: <https://ussenateyouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/USSYP-2024-Official-Brochure.pdf>

Parent/Guardian #1 Name: _____

Parent/Guardian #1 Signature (REQUIRED): _____

Date (MM/DD/YY): _____

Sole guardian? Yes No

Parent/Guardian #2 Name: _____

Parent/Guardian #2 Signature (REQUIRED): _____

Date (MM/DD/YY): _____

Principal Confirmation

In addition to my letter of recommendation, I verify this student is holding the leadership position noted and is endorsed to represent our school and state if chosen:

Principal's Name: _____

Principal's Signature (REQUIRED): _____

Email: _____

Date (MM/DD/YY): _____

NOTE: Each high school may recommend only one student.

Qualifying Position Organization Leader (QPOL) Confirmation

QPOL Name: _____

QPOL Signature (REQUIRED): _____

Email: _____

Date (MM/DD/YY): _____

CHECKLIST OF APPLICATION MATERIALS

Materials received after 5:00pm on October 25, 2023, will be automatically declined for submission for the 2024 program.

- Completed USSYP 2024 application PDF form
- Official academic transcript with non-weighted GPA
- Resume or Curriculum Vitae
- Biographical Sketch
- One essay on a contemporary issue
- Video essay submission
- Two letters of support. One from either the high school principal or counselor, and one from the adult advisor to the organization or student body entity that they represent confirming the student's leadership position, their leadership qualities, and personal attributes.
- Signatures of:
 - **Principal** (twice, page 3 & 4)
 - **Parent(s)/guardian(s)** (page 4)
 - **Qualifying Position Organizational Leader** (page 4)

All above items must be submitted with the application package. Do not send extra materials. They will not be considered.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- Submit all complete application as a single Adobe Acrobat (.PDF) file. If you do not know how to do this, ask for help from a local source.
- Make sure any scanned pages are completely legible.
- All signatures must be original and in blue ink.
- Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.
- The letters of support **must accompany** the application.
- Be sure to upload your video at the designated site using the required naming conventions.
- Have your registrar submit your official transcript as an encrypted .PDF file directly to the DEED program officer.
- Do not send photos or certificates or awards. No materials will be returned.

SELECTION PROCESS

The selection panel will assess indicators of leadership ability, high scholastic achievement, ability to think logically and communicate clearly, and community and school involvement. The top ten finalists may be asked to complete a civics examination and/or participate in a Zoom interview during the selection process.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION ADDRESS

Email your complete application to the DEED program officer: Dr. Bjørn Wolter (bjorn.wolter@alaska.gov). Make sure to put your name and program in the subject line. Have your registrar or principle send your official transcripts directly to the program officer in a separate email.

Callia Fielding, AK – 2023

I originally applied for the United States Senate Youth Program as a junior, after receiving an email from my Superintendent that it was a “good opportunity.” When I first applied, I had no idea just how much of an opportunity it truly was. As I scrolled through photos and researched the program, I became increasingly more intrigued and excited about the possibilities that it presented. In the end, I wasn’t selected as a delegate that year. But I had become so interested in the program from my research that I was determined to apply again the following year, and when February came around, I suddenly found myself preparing for a trip to Washington, D.C.

As Washington Week began to approach, I was terrified of what I would be met with. I felt like I had gotten in based off pure luck and was sure that I was going to struggle to interact and become friends with students who I worried outshined me, in knowledge, passion, and achievements. But as I sat down at a table in the beautiful Grand Ballroom Saturday morning, and got to know the other delegates, I realized quickly that I had it wrong. Everyone I met was easy to interact with, excited, and just as scared as I was. By the time Saturday dinner approached, as we sat in the ballroom listening to our first speaker, I could feel myself surrounded by a kind and welcoming community of delegates.

The full week feels like a dream. Every morning we would wake up before the sun rose, ready for another packed schedule. We spent our days walking around the nation’s capital, having the opportunity to meet with astounding speakers, while having our meals in some of the most beautiful, and famous, places in the capital. I can remember hurriedly writing everything down in my notebook, not wanting to miss a single piece of advice. Senate Secretary Ann Berry encouraged us to focus on ourselves and the journey to our goals, and said that with that, we would eventually find ourselves at success. The U.S. Surgeon General, Vivek Murthy, advised us to not lose sight of the people around us while we work towards our goals, saying: “Strength is about our ability fundamentally to give and receive love, kindness, and generosity.” Being able to sit just feet away from people such as Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona, and watch them truly listen and answer the questions and concerns of youth was a life-altering experience. Not only were our speakers at the top of their respective fields, but when listening to them, they genuinely cared about our questions and concerns. Whether a delegate asked for advice about a career field, or whether they were curious about a political event or process, each question was thoughtfully answered by our speakers.

One of the highlights of the program was our visit to the Supreme Court. Wanting to remember every part of it, I wrote down every detail I could remember, from the clock that hung above the seats of the justices, to the beautiful flower tiles that covered the ceiling. When Justice Sotomayor entered the room, the room was electrified with excitement. It’s impossible to describe the feeling that went through each of us, as she walked the Courtroom, coming close to give an in-depth answer to each delegate’s question. She gave us two pieces of advice that I know will stick with me for years. First, she encouraged us to ask questions. “There is a big difference between ignorance... and stupidity.” She said when you ask others for help with something, they’ll feel proud that you came to them, and pushed us to ask someone when we don’t understand something, so that we’ll have the chance to learn, instead of remaining in the dark. The second piece of advice she gave us was to try and find commonality with other people, especially those who we disagree with. She advised us to listen to viewpoints of others, and try to understand them, and even if we couldn’t, try to get along with them through something that we both agreed on. As the hour ran out and she began to leave, she said one last thing: “...I know someone is going to replace me. I just hope it’s someone like you. That would be enough for me.”

In the end, despite the growing inspiration I gained from every speaker, what stuck out most from the week was the people I was with. I have never felt more motivated and encouraged from a group of people than I did from the other delegates. Despite being sleep-deprived and exhausted, laughing and talking with them would keep me energized throughout each day. When the final day came around, and we had to say our goodbyes, I knew I had made connections I would carry with me throughout my college career, and my life.

It truly is impossible to encompass such an astonishing week in a matter of two pages. It's hard to even encompass it in over a thousand pictures, dozens of pages of notes, and long stories to my friends and family describing the experience. I came out of the week not only more knowledgeable, but with a revitalized hope and motivation for the future. I am extremely grateful for the staff, mentors, and speakers who made the entire week possible, as well as for the wonderful opportunity I was given. I cannot express enough how much I would encourage this program for any determined student passionate about public service. Washington Week truly was, as they all tell you, absolutely life-changing.