



USMC CONGRESSIONAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1: What is the Congressional Fellowship Program (CFP)?

The Marine Corps Congressional Fellowship Program offers Marines the opportunity to work within the Legislative branch of the Federal government for one year (Jan-Dec), and to apply their experiences from Capitol Hill in post-Fellowship legislative billets within HQMC.

Q2: What ranks are eligible for CFP selection?

Lieutenants through Major are screened by the Commandant's Career-Level Education Board (CCLEB) and Commandant's Professional Intermediate Level Education Board (CPIB). LtCols/LtCol Selects and Majors in zone for the pending fiscal year promotion board are still eligible to apply and need to contact MMOA-3 with their intent via email correspondence at: SMBMANPOWEROFFICERPAR@USMC.mil.

SNCO's in the grade of E-7 through E-9 are eligible for the Congressional Fellowship Program. Gunnery Sergeants who designate "F" on their fitness reports will be considered on a case-by-case basis only.

Q3: Which MOSs are eligible for the CFP?

The CFP is open to all MOSs. The priority of the Office of Legislative Affairs (OLA) is to select the right Marine, with the right mix of experience and personality, to represent the Marine Corps and communicate effectively with Members of Congress, Professional Staff Members, and the general public.

Q4: How do I apply for the USMC Congressional Fellowship Program?

Officers must be screened and nominated by either CCLEB or CPIB to become eligible for the CFP. The first step is to speak with your monitor to ensure you are eligible for either Board. If eligible, complete the questionnaire provided by your monitor and list the CFP as your first preference. Applicants who fail to list the Congressional Fellowship Program as their first choice will not be considered.

The Office of Legislative Affairs Senior Enlisted Legislative Advisor will publish an ANNUAL MARADMIN soliciting applications from SNCOs and coordinate with the MMEA-85 to determine qualified SNCO's for consideration.

Q5: Are career designated Active Reserve Marines and Reserve Marines eligible to apply for the CFP?

Active Reserve Marines are not screened for CCLEB or CPIB and are ineligible for the Congressional Fellowship Program.

Q6: Are Restricted Officers eligible to apply for the CFP?

Restricted Officers have served previously as Congressional Fellows but are currently not eligible for the CFP.

Q7: I was nominated by the CCLEB/ CPIB for the CFP. What happens next?

If nominated by the CCLEB/CPIB, your nomination details will be forwarded by MMOA to OLA. OLA will pre-screen nomination packets and inform MMOA of the Marines they wish to interview for final selection to the CFP.



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Q8: What can I do to prepare for the Interview Panel?

Nominees for the CFP are not expected to be experts in legislative affairs. Personality and the ability to effectively communicate and represent the Marine Corps are essential components of a successful Congressional Fellowship; applicants should prepare as they would for a professional civilian interview. Marines selected for interviews are encouraged to become familiar with key Marine Corps policy and programs, to include such topics as the F-35, ACV, Pacific Realignment, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response, and the expansion of the role of females in the Ground Combat Element.

Q9: What does the Congressional Fellowship Interview Board look for in a Candidate?

Effective communication and building relationships with Members, office staff, and Professional Staff Members are essential for a successful assignment. The Interview Board focuses on those Marines who can use their background and experience to speak about the Marine Corps writ large, but also have their own personal interests that contribute and shape the overall individual.

Q10: How many Marines are selected each year for the CFP?

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs (OSD(LA)) establishes a minimum number of Congressional Fellows based on individual Service requirements and requests. HQMC OLA typically selects 15 fellows each year (10 Officers, 4 SNCOs, and 1 USMC civilian).

Q11: What happens if I am selected to interview but not accepted into the CFP?

If a Marine Officer is not selected for the CFP, then MMOA will assign these Marines to either an appropriate level resident PME, or a FAO/RAO billet if eligible.

Q12: How long is the Congressional Fellowship Program?

The CFP tour is approximately 39 months in duration, and consists of an initial three month training period, twelve month assignment to a Congressional Office or Committee, and a 24 month utilization tour.

A successful applicant will report to the Office of Legislative Affairs in early October for a three month education and orientation program. This program includes legislative familiarization courses conducted by the Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University, information on USMC specific policy and programs, and interaction with other Service Fellows. At the completion of this initial training, Fellows will report in early January at the start of the second Congressional Session to their assigned Congressional Office for twelve months. This assignment may be with a Representative or Senator, or a Committee (Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, House Homeland Security, Senate Foreign Relations, House Foreign Affairs, and Senate and House Veterans Affairs).

At the conclusion of this twelve month tour, Fellows will complete a 24 month utilization billet designed to leverage the experience gained from working on Capitol Hill and apply their legislative knowledge within HQMC.

Q13: What type of work can Congressional Fellows expect in a Member's Office?

Marines are assigned to the Office of a Representative or Senator for twelve months from January through December. Each Member's Office is a unique environment and experiences will vary considerably according to the needs and desires of the Congressman or Senator. As a member of the Congressional Office, Fellows may expect to work on multiple portfolios (Defense, Veteran's Affairs, Trade, Foreign Affairs, Homeland Security, Intelligence, Transportation, Environmental/Space Science,



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Technology, or Welfare/ Social Security), coordinate travel, draft correspondence of proposed legislation, and meet with constituents and concerned interest lobbying in the above portfolio areas.

Q14: What billets are available for the Utilization Tour?

HQMC-OLA will coordinate with MMOA/MMEA to ensure Marine Fellows are assigned to an appropriate legislative utilization tour, while balancing the needs of all HQMC equities. OLA will begin to identify utilization billets in February of a Marine's Fellowship year and will complete coordination with MMOA/MMEA by August of the Fellowship year. The Congressional Fellowship Program Manager will work closely with the Directors of the House and Senate liaison to ensure that Fellows are assigned to appropriate utilization tours. The Legislative Assistant to the Commandant will provide final approval of utilization assignments. Potential Billets for utilization tours include:

- House / Senate Liaison Officers, Legislative Liaison for Office of Financial Management and Budget Execution (FMBE), HQMC-OLA Legislative Affairs Action Officer
- Legislative Affairs Action Officer, Deputy Commandant for M&RA, I&L, AVN, PP&O, CD&I, and P&R.
- Legislative Affairs Action Officer, Other HQMC Billet (Intelligence Department, SYSCOM, CL/SJA, etc.)
- Legislative Liaison, Miscellaneous DoD/Joint/Interagency Billet
- Legislative Liaison, Combatant Command
- As directed by the Legislative Assistant to the Commandant

Q15: What about promotion and selection for command during Fellowship assignment?

Promotions are not affected by a Fellowship assignment. Please contact your monitor for specific details on potential for Command Selection during your assignment.