

Frequently
Asked
Questions

Applicants and Parents

The following information addresses the most commonly asked questions by prospective applicants and their families regarding the Senate Page Program. In addition to this FAQ sheet, please refer to the Teacher and Parent FAQ. You are strongly encouraged to read **both** before starting the application process.

The House Page Program, administered by the House Clerk's Office, is a separate program that requires completion of a different application. In addition, the selection process, program components and protocols for the House Page Program differ from the Senate.

FAQ #1

Q: What is the manner in which a Senate Page is appointed?

A: Pursuant to the Rules of the Senate adopted on January 13, 2016, the members of the Senate elect twenty Pages. In addition, six Senate Pages are appointed by the leadership of the Senate to serve during a legislative session. The Clerk of the Senate may appoint additional Senate Pages.

FAQ #2

Q: What requirements does an applicant need to meet?

A: Applicants seeking admission must be 13 or 14 years of age on the first day of session (second Wednesday in January) and a resident of the Commonwealth of Virginia who resides with their parents or legal guardian (see * below). Applicants should have an A or B average in school at the time of appointment. This average demonstrates an ability to manage a challenging workload and study independently during their term of service as a Senate Page.

**A Senate Page applicant must be enrolled in an accredited public or private school in Virginia or be enrolled in a home school program that meets the requirements specified by the Department of Education.*

All components of the application must be completed by the applicant, with the assistance of parents/legal guardians. Please see FAQ #3 for introductory application information.

FAQ #3

Q: What does the application entail?

A: In addition to standard information, application requirements include the following:

FAQ #3 Continued

- Two letters of recommendation, both of which must be attached to the application. As you consider the people from whom you will request a letter of recommendation, please keep in mind the following:
 - A strong recommendation includes introductory, supporting and concluding paragraphs on a standard 8 ½" x 11" piece of paper or letterhead. Please make sure the person writing a recommendation signs the letter and includes a preferred method of contact.
 - Letters of recommendation from family members are prohibited.
 - The recommendation letter should be addressed to the State Senator who represents the Virginia Senate district in which the applicant is a resident. If your Senate District is vacant, the letter should be addressed to the Clerk of the Senate. **Please note: your State Senator is not one of the two U.S. Senators who represent Virginia in Congress.** In an election year, letters of recommendation should be addressed to the State Senator who currently represents your Virginia Senate district.
- A completed school endorsement form, signed by the appropriate school personnel. That form is located within the application.
- An essay question (applicants will have a choice of questions to answer).
- A short answer question.
- A resume of extracurricular activities and other academic or civic recognitions.

Students admitted to the program will be required to submit their latest report card or transcript with employment forms. The Senate Clerk's Office reserves the right to rescind offers of admission to the program upon receipt of academic standing records.

Senate Pages are selected for a term of one session and are not eligible for reelection or reappointment. In order to provide this opportunity for as many young people as possible, persons who have served as a House Page in the House of Delegates are not eligible to serve as a Senate Page in the Senate of Virginia. Those who served as a Senate Page in the Senate of Virginia are not eligible to serve as a House Page in the House of Delegates. There are no exceptions.

FAQ #4

Q: How does the selection process work?

A: The review process for admission to the Senate Page Program typically takes one and a half months to complete. All applicants will be notified, typically by mid-December. Those who

FAQ #4 Continued

receive admission to the program will be issued a handbook, employment forms and other important information.

Those who receive admission to the program will attend a mandatory Orientation program with their parents. Orientation is typically a four-hour session.

The manner in which applicants are selected to the House Page Program is very different. If you have questions about becoming a House Page, please contact the House Clerk's Office by calling (804) 698-1500.

FAQ #5

Q: How many applications does the Senate receive and how many applicants receive admission?

A: The Senate receives approximately 200 applications for 36 - 40 positions each year. The application opens on August 1 and closes in mid-October of each year. Students who want to be considered for a Senate Page position and admission to the Senate Page Program must submit a complete application by the established deadline.

FAQ #6

Q: Are there any upfront costs?

A: Applicants who receive admission to the program will be required to submit a \$50.00 activity fee at orientation. They are also responsible for purchasing uniform attire and a binder for program materials.

FAQ #7

Q: Are parents required to attend orientation with their Senate Page?

A: Attendance is **mandatory** for the page class and parents/legal guardians. There are no exceptions.

FAQ #8

Q: In what manner does a Senate Page dress for work?

FAQ #8 Continued

A: Senate Pages are required to wear a standard-cut, wool or polyester, navy blue blazer at all times while on duty. Girls must wear white blouses or turtlenecks, gray slacks, and coordinating socks. Boys must wear white shirts, gray slacks, and ties that coordinate with gray and navy. Comfortable, black walking shoes and a warm coat to go over the blazer are required. Hair must be neatly groomed and should not cover the name badge. Bangs must be trimmed above the eyebrows. A Senate Page must also adhere to a strict business casual dress code outside of work hours.

FAQ #9

Q: What is the code of conduct?

A: Each Senate Page is held to a **strict code of professional conduct at all times**, and details will be covered during orientation and training. Those who do not follow the program handbook shall be subject to suspension or dismissal from the program. Upon suspension or dismissal from the program, their school will be notified.

FAQ #10

Q: What are some responsibilities of a Senate Page?

A: Duties: Senate Pages work 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday - Thursday and 8:30 a.m. - Noon on Friday. Senate Pages are expected to work the entire session. Each Senate Page will be tasked with various job assignments such as staffing committee meetings (in a backup clerk capacity), answering telephone calls, providing basic concierge services and speaking to the public or visiting delegations about their experience and role in the legislative process.

Please do not apply if you are a member of a sports team, band, orchestra or other organized activity from which you cannot be excused during the legislative session.

Senate Pages will not be excused for sports team games/championships, band concerts, or other organized activity functions. Consider all activities and personal/team commitments carefully before applying to the Senate Page Program.

FAQ #11

Q: What is a typical day-in-the-life?

FAQ #11 Continued

A: It is important to recognize a day in the legislature is constantly changing, regardless of a set schedule. A typical day-in-the-life of a Senate Page will resemble the following:

Sunday

- 4:00 p.m.: The designated hotel opens for Senate Page arrival
- 9:30 p.m.: Deadline to report to the designated hotel for the week
- 10:30 p.m.: Curfew/lights out

Monday - Thursday

- 6:30 a.m.: Wake up/breakfast/report to work
- 8:15 a.m.: Roll call and morning class
- 8:30 a.m.: Teams report to work areas (*note: teams rotate team assignments each week, and most assignments are delegated on a weekly basis. Therefore, a Senate Page who receives a “fixed” work assignment at the start of the week will likely have the same assignment for five consecutive days to instill consistency, responsibility and a better understanding of how that task supports the overall legislative operation*).

Depending on the team to which a Senate Page is assigned, a day may include the following: pulling or filing bill copies, answering telephones, assisting visitors with directions on Capitol Square, working a Senate floor session, visiting a historical site, attending a program class or engaging with a guest speaker on a designated topic of interest. All Senate Pages are afforded an opportunity to work in committee meetings, too.

- 5:00 p.m.: Three team system ends/dismissal
- 5:15 p.m.: Dinner
- 7:00 p.m.: Mandatory study hall
- 9:00 p.m.: Social time begins/pack for the weekend trip home on Thursday night
- 10:30 p.m.: Social time ends/curfew/lights out

Friday

- 6:30 a.m.: Wake up/breakfast/report to work
- 8:15 a.m.: Roll call and morning class
- 8:30 a.m.: Teams report to work areas (*note: teams rotate work areas each week*)
- Noon: Dismiss for the weekend/return home

FAQ #12

Q: Is the hotel residency requirement mandatory?

A: Yes. Hotel residency is required for all program participants beginning on Sunday evening. The entire class will check out for the week on Friday mornings. Housing arrangements are made for Senate Pages at a hotel within walking distance of the Capitol. The Senate Clerk's Office makes the reservations, roommate assignments, and provides a couple to chaperone. The cost of the hotel room is billed to the Senate Clerk's Office.

FAQ #13

Q: How much is a Senate Page paid?

A. Senate Pages are paid a weekly salary and receive a weekly per diem. Chapter 879 of the 2008 Acts of the General Assembly directs the Commonwealth of Virginia to disburse payroll and per diem checks through direct deposit to a checking or savings account. This is a mandatory requirement for all persons on state payrolls.

FAQ #14

Q: How are school assignments handled and is study hall mandatory?

A: **It is extremely important to discuss the program expectations with your school before applying!** Senate Pages and their parents are responsible for obtaining their schoolwork and making sure it is returned to their school.

Senate Pages are required to attend a monitored study hall on Monday through Thursday nights from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. These sessions are held at the assigned hotel.

Schoolwork assignments are to be obtained by the Page from his/her teachers. The Senate tutors do not make school/homework assignments. They are available to assist the students with the assignments from their schools.

Only the Clerk of the Senate can excuse a Page from study hall. There are no exceptions.

Again, please do not apply if you are a member of a sports team, band, orchestra or other organized activity from which you cannot be excused during the legislative session. Senate Pages are prohibited from practicing for extracurricular activities that may include, but shall not be limited to, the following: the use of musical instruments, other band equipment, exercise equipment and/or facilities in any physical space (professional, hotel or otherwise) utilized by

FAQ #14 Continued

Senate Pages). Arrangements need to be made with teachers/coaches for practice to occur outside of their time in Richmond. If you have a specific circumstance, please ask before applying!

Please refer back to FAQ #10, in addition to the Teacher and Parent FAQ Guide for additional information.

FAQ #15

Q: Who is responsible for transportation arrangements each week?

A: Transportation arrangements to and from the Richmond are the responsibility of each page family. Once the Senate and House class lists are finalized, a copy will be furnished to parents for the purposes of arranging carpools. Senate Pages are not allowed to ride in motor vehicles driven by anyone other than a member of his/her family, a Senator or Delegate, or a member of the Clerk's staff unless written authorization from a parent or guardian is on file in the Senate Clerk's Office.

FAQ #16

Q: What happens if a Senate Page gets sick?

A: The Senate Clerk's Office has an agreement with the Pediatrics Department of Virginia Commonwealth University Medical Center to provide emergency medical service for Senate Pages. Parents are responsible for the cost of treatment and will be billed by VCU. Parents will be required to submit completed medical forms and insurance information to have on file during session.

FAQ #17

Q: Is a Senate Page allowed to have a personal cell phone?

A: Cell phones must be turned in during work hours and at the beginning of study hall (to be returned the following morning). **Refer to the Parent and Teacher FAQ Guide for additional information.**

FAQ #18

Q: When does the legislature convene and adjourn?

A: By order of the Constitution of Virginia, the legislature convenes on the second Wednesday in January each year for **46 calendar days in odd-numbered years (seven total weeks)** and **60 calendar days in even-numbered years (nine total weeks)**. **Service as a Senate Page is a session-long commitment!**

FAQ #19

Q: Does the Senate afford an opportunity for prospective applicants to “shadow” a current Senate Page for the day?

A: No. This guide, along with the material for prospective families and teachers, will answer most of the commonly asked questions.

FAQ #20

Q: Am I allowed to apply to both the Senate and House programs?

A: Yes. However, applicants are not allowed to serve in both programs concurrently or in subsequent years. For example, if an applicant serves as a Senate Page during a regular legislative session, they are not allowed to serve as a House Page in the subsequent regular legislative and vice versa.

FAQ #21

Q: If I have further questions?

A: Please call (804) 698-7410 or e-mail pageinfo@senate.virginia.gov

Last updated on 09/02/2022