

INSPIRING CIVIC ACTION: JUSTICE AND EQUITY

2020 PROGRAM OVERVIEW



Never has there been a more important time for young people to understand the challenges facing our democracy, engage with diverse perspectives, and consider solutions to the complex issues of our time. Students will take part in a program that will bring together high school students from communities nationwide for a series of five online civic engagement workshops.

Students will participate in sessions on political values, learn and deliberate about critical policy issues brought forward by young activists across the country, and consider ways to activate members of their communities to take action on the issues that matter most to them. By engaging students from different backgrounds in meaningful dialogue, we aim to help students develop empathy for the perspectives of others and build the skills and confidence to empower a generation of changemakers.

Program Sessions

Session 1 - Building Community & Examining Values: Students will engage in several rounds of facilitated dialogue to build community and understanding. Students will develop a set of norms in order to define and establish their own inclusive learning space online. As part of this process, students will explore and discuss a set of values and ideals, including liberty, equality, private interest, and the common good, to think about how these values can be in tension and to better understand why people disagree.

Session 2-3 - Deliberating Pressing Issues: In these facilitated deliberations, students will develop a deeper understanding of complex policy challenges facing the nation, connect those issues to long-standing values such as equity and justice, and share and engage with multiple perspectives to build tolerance and open-mindedness. During the issue discussions, students will consider how gender and racial disparities influence social and economic outcomes.

- **Health Care and COVID-19:** COVID-19 has shown the ways in which social and economic factors affect health outcomes. How should we address inequalities of access and care in the United States?
- **Law Enforcement Reform:** In the midst of nationwide protests over racial disparities in law enforcement, what actions, if any, should we take to reform police practices?

Session 4 - Advocacy and Effective Storytelling: Students will engage with an activist or community advocate in order to understand the tools of networking, communication, and strategic action that they use to advance their civic and political goals.

Session 5 - Advocating and Impacting Your Community: In small groups, students will develop an action plan to apply what they have learned to make an impact in their own community. Students will also consider how they can continue to engage with and support each other as they seek to create change.

The disparate health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the nationwide protests sparked by the killing of George Floyd compel the nation to grapple with questions about gender, race, class, and equity in political and policy debates in Washington, DC, in state capitals, and in local governments. These challenging issues will not be solved by one election, and young voices must continue to play a pivotal role in our national dialogue.

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About Close Up

Established in 1971, [Close Up](#) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan civic education organization dedicated to helping students develop the knowledge and skills they need to become informed, active, and engaged citizens. Close Up's resources and programs offer students a balanced and bipartisan look at controversial issues by using a selection of primary sources drawn from decision-makers and experts on all parts of the political spectrum. Close Up Instructors have over 120 hours of curriculum and methodology training and are experts in facilitating student discussions around controversial issues. Each year, Close Up helps thousands of students and teachers across the nation engage in civil discourse and take informed action in their communities.

Teacher Resources

To ensure that educators feel confident and prepared to support students throughout the sessions, this program provides teachers with an invaluable professional development training session, as well as balanced, comprehensive resources to use in the classroom:

- **On-Demand Training (Optional):** The 30-minute, on-demand training session will show teachers how to use Close Up's nonpartisan techniques and materials to facilitate respectful classroom discussion.
- **Digital Resources:** Teachers will also receive access through June 30, 2021, to *Controversial Issues in the News*, Close Up's digital library of issue discussions, lesson plans, activities, and assessments that take a measured, bipartisan look at current events.

Eligibility & Cost

The program is intended for grades 9-12 and can be integrated into a current government or civics course, advisory program, club, or leadership development opportunity like student council. During this time of social distancing, the series can also replace an experiential learning trip or community service opportunity.

Pricing is available for individual students, classrooms, student groups, and entire grades:

- **Individual Student (for 1-14 students):** \$175 per student
- **Classroom or Student Group (15-25 students):** \$3,500 per classroom/student group

For questions about scholarships or organizing a program for larger groups, please email programsupport@closeup.org.

Session Dates and Times

National Program 1 | Every Thursday after school November 12 - December 17, 2020, from 4:15-5:45pm (EST) / 1:15-2:45pm (PST)

If you are interested in customized dates for a program that will include participants from your school only, please reach out to us at programsupport@closeup.org.

Registration

For more information or to register a group, please visit our [website](#).