

EMPOWERING FEMALE VOICES: MIDDLE SCHOOL

PROGRAM OVERVIEW



Never has there been a more important time for young women to understand the challenges facing our democracy, engage with diverse perspectives, and make their voices heard. This fall, in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, [Close Up](#) and the [Institute for Social Impact](#) will offer **Empowering Female Voices**—a program that will bring together middle school girls from schools nationwide for a series of six online civic engagement workshops following the presidential election.

During the middle school program, students will come together online to build community, investigate important issues, and share their ideas and values. With their peers, they will then consider how to create a more inclusive and representative democracy, and develop plans to involve their classmates and communities in future action.

Program Sessions

All 60-minute sessions will be led by Close Up Instructors:

Session 1 - Building Community: Who we are? In this session, students will develop a set of norms to create an inclusive online learning space, and consider the challenges and opportunities facing young women who seek to make change at home and nationwide. Students will build community by sharing ideas and values, and considering examples of women who have made an impact throughout U.S. history.

Session 2 - Evaluating Laws: What do we value? In order to prepare for election issue discussions and better understand why people disagree, students will explore and discuss a set of values and ideals, including liberty, equality, private interests, and the common good. They will then apply these values to examples of local, state, and national laws.

Sessions 3 and 4 - Current Issues: Close Up will facilitate discussions, helping students to understand the key issues and build a shared vision of a just future. Students will engage with **two** of the following topics:

- **Racial Injustice and Human Rights:** In the wake of nationwide protests, how should we address racial injustice in this country and ensure that all Americans enjoy the same rights and privileges?
- **Gender Equity and Women's Rights:** How do we achieve true gender equity in the United States and close the political and economic gaps that remain for women?
- **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?
- **Environmental Issues:** How can we address both long-term impacts of human beings on the planet and the inequities caused by our energy consumption and material waste?

Session 5 - Elevating Our Voices: Students will take a look at examples of groundbreaking women and young female activists to understand the characteristics and actions needed to create change. Students will also consider various ways girls can advocate for a cause (i.e. through art, writing, social media, public speaking) and amplify their voices.

Session 6 - Advocating and Impacting Our Communities: Students will create an action plan that builds on what they learned and discuss how they can continue to engage with and support each other as they seek to impact their local communities.

The anniversary of the women's suffrage movement offers an unparalleled opportunity to commemorate a milestone of democracy and to explore its relevance to the issues of equal rights today. While this did not grant suffrage to all women, it was an important milestone in the advancement of equality, a journey that we continue on today.

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About Close Up

Established in 1971, [Close Up](#) is a non-profit, non-partisan 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 multi-partisan 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.

About the Institute for Social Impact

The [Hockaday Institute for Social Impact](#) represents a distinctive and innovative approach among K-12 schools, using the power of engaged, hands-on learning to prepare students for leadership in their communities, workplaces, and society. Through both new and longstanding partnerships with Dallas-area organizations, the Institute allows students to engage with diverse partners, learn from civic leaders, tackle projects with community impact, and put their creative ideas into action for lasting social benefit.

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 to *Controversial Issues in the News*, Close Up's digital library of issue discussions, lesson plans, activities, and assessments that take a measured, multipartisan look at current issues.

Eligibility & Cost

The program is intended for girls in middle school and can be integrated into a history class, advisory program, club, or leadership development opportunity like student council. During this time of social distancing, the series can also replace a capstone project, experiential learning trip, or community service opportunity.

Pricing is available for individuals, classrooms, or student groups:

- **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 financial aid opportunities, please email programsupport@closeup.org.

Session Dates and Times

National Program – Empowering Female Voices | Every Monday and Thursday afternoon, November 30 – December 17, 2020, from 1:00-2:00pm (EST) / 10:00-11:00am (PST)

If you are interested in customized dates, please reach out to us at programsupport@closeup.org.

Registration

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