

# EMPOWERING GIRLS' VOICES: MIDDLE SCHOOL CIVIC LEADERS

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW



Never has there been a more important time for young women to understand the challenges facing our democracy, to engage with diverse perspectives, and to make their voices heard. *Empowering Girls' Voices: Civic Leaders* is a special opportunity for middle school girls to build the tools and knowledge they need to become catalysts for change in their communities. Over the course of a 5-day Summit, students will build relationships; connect their experiences and personal stories to community issues; consider how to create a more inclusive and representative democracy, and develop plans to involve their communities in future action. By engaging girls from different backgrounds in meaningful dialogue, we aim to help them develop empathy for the perspectives of others and build the confidence needed to empower a generation of change-makers.

## Program Sessions

Each three-hour, synchronous session will be led by Close Up facilitators:

**Session 1 – Building Community, Sharing Perspectives, and Establishing Purpose:** Students will begin by sharing their stories, experiences, and ideas through the creation of a community timeline. After getting to know each other, students will participate in a series of activities aimed at helping them to develop their sense of purpose and consider what leadership skills and advocacy strategies they can employ to make change in their communities.

**Session 2 – Creating Just Communities:** Students will take part in an interactive simulation of several decision-making organizations that are responding to pressing community issues. Students will reflect on the themes of justice, equality, and democracy that emerge from the simulations, and consider the role of citizens in advancing those ideals.

*Sample Scenario (Simulated Student Advisory Committee Meeting): How should a school district respond to a string of racist incidents on and near middle school campuses?*

**Session 3 – Root Causes of Injustice:** In small groups, students will identify the issues that matter to them and engage in a root-cause analysis to identify ways in which citizens can work to resolve those issues. Students will examine proposals for local and national policies and deliberate about their priorities.

*Sample Topic (Health Care): COVID-19 has shown the ways in which social and economic factors affect health outcomes in the United States. How should we address inequalities of access and care?*

**Session 4 – Storytelling and Community Change:** Students will consider the roles that stories and identity play in advocating for change, and engage with a young organizer or activist in order to learn more about the processes of advocacy and making community change.

**Session 5 – Pathways for Creating Change:** Students will consider how they can make an impact in their communities by examining case studies of young activists who have affected change at home. Together, students will reflect on the program, consider and commit to everyday actions they can take to advance justice, and discuss how they can continue to act as an informal network of support for each other.

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## PROGRAM DETAILS

### Program Dates

**Middle School Program** | Monday, July 26 – Friday, July 30, 2021 from 1:00-4:00pm (EST) / 10:00am-1:00pm (PST) each day.

### Program Tuition & Eligibility

This program is intended for middle school students.

**Student Price:** \$250

### Registration

If you have any questions, please email [programsupport@closeup.org](mailto:programsupport@closeup.org).

### 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.