

EMPOWERING GIRLS' VOICES: GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

PROGRAM OVERVIEW



A major focus of education is to prepare young people for their roles as global citizens in a democracy. During the 2021-2022 school year, Close Up and the National Coalition of Girls' Schools will bring together high school students (ages 14-18) from across North America to build the tools and knowledge to meaningfully engage with complex global problems and become catalysts for effective local change. Over 1,000 students from more than 65 girls' schools participated in *Empowering Girls' Voices* last year, and we hope to continue to expand this network in 2021-2022.

Over the course of the school year, students will deliberate on pressing global issues, explore political and structural barriers to equity, deepen their understanding of existing campaigns for change, and work together to create meaningful solutions. By engaging girls from communities worldwide in meaningful dialogue, we aim to help them develop empathy for the perspectives of others and build the skills and confidence needed to empower a generation of changemakers.

2021-2022 Program Sessions

SERIES 1: DELIBERATING SYSTEMIC ISSUES

How can you engage on controversial issues that matter to you and build empathy for diverse ideas and perspectives?

Six online synchronous 75-minute sessions starting October 25, 2021

Students will develop a deeper understanding of the complex policy challenges facing North America, connect those issues to long-standing values and tensions, and come to appreciate the value of deliberation in a democracy. They will examine three major policy issues, evaluate proposals that represent a range of viewpoints, and consider, as a group, how to best address those issues. After developing a better sense of their own values and priorities, students will participate in a training to develop facilitation skills to lead controversial issue discussions in their own school communities.

SERIES 2: JUSTICE, EQUITY, AND BELONGING

How can you create positive, systemic change in your school or local community?

Six online synchronous 75-minute sessions starting January 24, 2022

Now more than ever, young people want to play a pivotal role in addressing inequities and developing solutions in their schools and local communities. Students will engage in inquiry and deliberation on an issue of their choice in order to understand the political and structural barriers to equity in education, health, and criminal justice. They will investigate the root causes of their issue, identify various approaches taken at the local and national levels, engage with a policy advocate, and create a proposal that incorporates their personal experiences and the tangible action steps they can take at home. Past proposals have included recommendations regarding faculty diversity, representation in school curricula, and awareness campaigns promoting COVID-19 vaccination in low-income communities.

INSTITUTE FOR DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY

What if, instead of looking to others for leadership, young people stepped up to communicate and compromise across differences in an effort to address societal challenges?

In-person, Washington, DC, June 2022

Join us this summer in Washington, DC, at the Institute for Deliberative Democracy! Deepen your understanding of the characteristics and causes of pressing national issues, participate in a program-wide deliberation led by Stanford's Center for Deliberative Democracy, work in small groups to create meaningful solutions, develop a cohesive Youth Agenda for Action, and meet with public officials to advocate for your proposals. Please [click here](#) for additional program details and to apply.

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PROGRAM DETAILS

Program Eligibility

The programming is open to students in grades 9-12 (ages 14-18). Each school will have an opportunity to nominate a cohort of 10 students to represent their school in an examination of today's most pressing issues with students from across North America. We recommend that students participate in both online programs; however, we understand that students have many commitments and that it may only be possible to participate in one series.

In order to be eligible for the Youth Policy Summit in Washington, DC, students must attend at least one of the online series.

If you are interested in custom dates for an entire grade or course, please email us at ncgs@closeup.org.

Opportunities for Educators

Close Up will offer a series of one-hour professional development workshops to ensure that educators feel confident and prepared to support students both before and after the Close Up-led issue discussions. The workshops will also provide strategies and resources that teachers can incorporate into their classrooms and use with all students. Workshops may include:

- **Building an Inclusive Community for Civil Dialogue:** How can you establish a community that accounts for a diversity of student experience, interest, and learning profiles?
- **Navigating Challenging Scenarios:** Explore a set of scenarios on topics such as criminal justice, COVID-19, and protests, and learn actionable techniques to keep students on track when discourse breaks down.
- **Making Your Classroom More Deliberative:** Why is it critical to address controversial topics with students through issue-centered education? What resources and facilitation techniques foster informed and constructive in-class deliberation?

Program Dates & Cost

Series 1: Deliberating Systemic Issues

Mondays & Wednesdays | October 25-November 8, 2021 | 8:00-9:15pm (EDT) / 5:00-6:15pm (PDT)

On Monday, December 13, 2021, a final reflection and debrief will take place following student facilitated discussions at their schools.

- **Cohort of 10 Students:** \$2000 per NCGS member school
- **Individual Student Price:** \$250

Series 2: Justice, Equity, and Belonging

Mondays & Wednesdays | January 24-February 9, 2022 | 8:00-9:15pm (EDT) / 5:00-6:15pm (PDT)

- **Cohort of 10 Students:** \$2000 per NCGS member school
- **Individual Student Price:** \$250

Institute for Deliberative Democracy

Monday, June 20 - Friday, July 1, 2022

- **Individual Student Price:** \$4,750

Close Up and NCGS are deeply committed to ensuring that Close Up programs are available to students of all backgrounds. For Online Series #1 and Series #2, Close Up and NCGS will offer need-based financial aid for students that qualify. Close Up is committed to fundraising for the Youth Policy Summit and will provide a limited number of scholarships for students who qualify.

Registration

To register, please visit our [website](https://www.closeup.org).

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PROGRAM INSIGHTS

Hear what participants have to say about their Empowering Girls' Voices experience!

"The **collaboration between students** from different schools was such an important learning experience! It was such a fun way to **increase engagement on serious issues.**"

– Teacher, Hockaday School (TX)

"I absolutely loved **learning about topics I am passionate about** with girls from across the country who feel the same way. The environment was so welcoming, fun, and collaborative, even over Zoom. I cannot even express how grateful I am for this experience."

– Student, Sacred Heart Greenwich (CT)

"The most impactful thing about the Empowering Girls' Voices Program was that it **shaped me to be more confident** and to ask myself "What can I do?" instead of "Wow, I wish there was something I can do." I felt more empowered and more confident as we did each session."

– Student, Irma Lerma Rangel Young Women's Leadership School (TX)

Survey Data

Surveys of middle and high school students who participated in Empowering Girls' Voices programs revealed dramatic increases in the students' civic knowledge and attitudes.

- 100% of girls said the program helped them better understand current issues.
- 95% of girls said the program helped them feel empowered to use their voice to make change.
- 99% of girls said they would recommend this program to a friend.
- Pre-program, 31% of girls felt comfortable discussing their ideas about government with others; post program, 87% of students replied in the affirmative.

What makes Close Up a unique civic education organization?

Facilitation Experience: Our methodology is informed by our 50 years of experience facilitating conversations about complex social and political issues with students from all over the United States. While many civic education organizations provide training and curriculum for educators, Close Up is unique in that we implement and adapt our approach based on working directly with over 20,000 diverse students from across the U.S. each year.

Learning through Deliberation: In a strong democracy, citizens digest and use information, debate, hold each other and political representatives accountable, and work together to solve problems. Close Up provides students with the opportunity to learn through experience by modeling and practicing democratic dispositions such as openness, understanding and respectfully engaging with multiple perspectives, and civic leadership.

Teaching with Controversial Issues: All of our work is designed to help students grapple with current issues, draw connections between past and present-day events, and be informed, engaged, and inspired to advocate for their own beliefs. Our resources and instructional approach help students explore the values and worldviews that animate debates and tensions, and expose students to a broad array of political ideologies.

Opportunities for Continued Civic Engagement: Throughout the school year, Close Up will host monthly deliberations on controversial policy issues open to high school students across the country. Students will have the opportunity to engage with diverse perspectives, evaluate proposals that represent a range of viewpoints, and consider, as a group, how to best address the issue of the month.