

IMPACT DC PROGRAM

A Collaboration from Close Up & NNSP



The *IMPACT DC* Program, created in partnership with the National Network of Schools in Partnership (NNSP), is designed to help students build the tools and knowledge to become catalysts for change in their communities. By combining an experiential program in Washington, DC, with a series of pre- and post- civic engagement workshops, students will have the opportunity to discuss pressing national issues, develop empathy and an understanding for multiple perspectives, create action plans, and reflect on their place in the local and global community.

Drawing on 50 years of experience in issue-centered education and nonpartisan instruction, Close Up partners with schools and districts to customize civic engagement programs that empower young people for a lifetime of informed and active citizenship. Close Up and NNSP will work together with your faculty to build this program into your broader curriculum and help meet your school's mission and strategic goals.

Sample Program Sequence

The following outline is intended as an example; programming will be customized to meet your school's specific goals and learning objectives.

PRE-DC PROGRAM SESSIONS

In the pre-program sessions, students will engage in inquiry and deliberation on issues they care about in order to better understand political and structural barriers to equity in our country. Students will investigate the root causes of these issues, identify various approaches taken at the local, state, and national levels, and consider what action steps they would like to take to address the issues they've chosen in their community.

Session 1 – Building Community & Identifying Issues: To foster a sense of community on the program, students will begin by sharing their stories, experiences, and ideas through the creation of a community timeline. The session will then focus on identifying issues that are impacting their community, and consider what systems are in place to support community members, and how those systems can sometimes lead to inequity and gaps in opportunity.

Session 2 – Understanding Political Values: Students will learn how competing values and goals animate American public policy deliberations and begin to understand why it is so difficult for the public to reach agreement. They will identify and begin to evaluate values that are frequently in tension in U.S. political debates and analyze laws on the basis of the values being prioritized.

Session 3 – Root Cause Analysis & Issue Deliberation: In small groups, students will return to the issues they have identified and conduct a root cause analysis of that issue to identify the main reasons why the problem exists, and consider what can be done to address both the root causes and symptoms. Students will then participate in a deliberation on the topic, and examine a range of policy proposals and solutions at the local and national level. Students will then identify an issue they would like to focus on for their group project.

EXPERIENTIAL PROGRAM IN WASHINGTON, DC

During their time in Washington, DC, students will have the opportunity to engage with a policy advocate and decision-makers on Capitol Hill; and learn what efforts are currently being taken to address their selected issue. This program will give students the chance to connect the past to the present, and see how change has been made throughout history by impassioned citizens as inspiration for their own action plans.

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POST-DC PROGRAM SESSIONS

The program will culminate in final presentations of student-created action plans which will address an issue of their choosing, and include plans for continued engagement in their communities.

Session 4 – Project Work: After their time in Washington, DC, students will have the opportunity to reflect on their trip, and consider how their experience in our nation’s capital will influence their final action plans. Students will work to complete and polish their action plans, and prepare for the final presentation to their peers.

Session 5 – Student Showcase & Reflection: Students will present their action plans to one another and members of their community, as well as share feedback and suggestions. Students will have the opportunity to reflect on the program as a whole, and consider how they will continue being active members of their community in the future.

About Close Up

[Close Up](#) is a non-partisan education organization with 50 years of experience. We inform, inspire, and empower young people to become active and engaged citizens.

- **Not just a sight-seeing tour** – Using Washington, DC, as a living classroom, students actively engage with the city and one another through interactive lessons, deliberations, and simulations through our experiential methodology and curriculum.
- **Dedicated full-time teaching fellows** – Close Up instructors are college-educated and receive over 120 hours of training. Each student has a sense of belonging as part of a small activity group led by a dedicated instructor who gets to know them by name, makes sure they are engaged, having fun, and learning!
- **24/7 supervision and instruction** – Close Up offers the academics of a school environment with the supervision of a camp environment. Staffing includes a trip leader, two instructors per bus, and night monitors on every hotel hallway.
- **Over 100 organizational partnerships** – We directly connect students with prominent DC organizations and policy experts to give them a dynamic perspective of DC beyond the monuments.

About NNSP

The [National Network of Schools in Partnership](#) (NNSP) is a non-profit organization where educators and community leaders turn for support in the design, implementation and improvement of high-impact partnerships. Through professional development and student programming, NNSP helps schools create opportunities for students to connect what they are learning in the classroom to what is happening in the real world. Through these experiences, students are empowered with the skills that make them engaged citizens and changemakers in their community.