

MONTGOMERY YOUTH SUMMIT: History, Storytelling & Civic Action at the Legacy Sites

APRIL 13–16, 2027 | MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

How does the past inform our present aspirations and struggles? How can understanding our layered history empower us to participate thoughtfully and actively in our democratic society, embracing both opportunities and challenges with empathy and courage?

Join the [Close Up Foundation](#) for a three-day summit for high school students and educators, taking them on a transformative journey to Montgomery, Alabama, to engage deeply with our nation's history, the ongoing fight for justice, and the vital practice of civil discourse. By exploring historic sites alongside [Equal Justice Initiative's](#) powerful work, participants will examine the tensions and nuances that shape our democracy and learn to foster spaces where diverse voices are heard and respected.

STUDENT SUMMIT

The student summit is open to high school students in grades 9-12 who have an interest in history and civic engagement, with a cohort of 4-12 students per school recommended. Over the course of three days, students will have an opportunity to:

- **Immerse themselves in EJI Legacy Sites**, including the Legacy Museum, the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, Freedom Monument Sculpture Park, and Montgomery Square.
- **Hear from a member of the EJI team** about their work to fight poverty and injustice, advocate for equal treatment, and protect human rights.
- **Engage in cross-school deliberative discussions** to connect the history they encounter in Montgomery to civic issues in their communities.
- **Explore the power of persuasive communication** and how storytelling can be a catalyst for civic action.
- **Outline their own plans** to bring what they learn back to their communities—connecting themes from the Legacy Sites to present-day civic issues and presenting their plans to audiences they identify.
- **Earn Close Up's [Deliberative Dialogue Badge](#)**, with the option of continuing on to the Advanced Deliberative Dialogue Badge when they return home.

To help prepare for the experience, Close Up will provide a guide for students to build context for what they will see and study in Montgomery.



CALL: 800-CLOSE UP (256-7387) | **EMAIL:** programsupport@closeup.org

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EDUCATOR SUMMIT

Educators are invited to take part in a concurrent exploration and professional development summit of their own, to experience landmarks of the Civil Rights Movement and develop practical skills and strategies for bringing the experience back to their classrooms. Over the course of three days, teachers will have an opportunity to:

- **Discover EJI Legacy Sites**, the Rosa Parks Museum, and the Dexter Avenue King Memorial Baptist Church.
- **Travel to Selma or Birmingham** to explore additional landmarks of the Civil Rights Movement.
- **Engage with a member of the EJI team** to learn more about their work.
- **Explore practical tools for building a civil discourse classroom**, including deliberative discussion structures, strategies for holding difficult conversations, and approaches to using primary sources from the sites visited.
- **Make a personal commitment** at the close of the summit—one concrete action they will take when they return home—and consider how to bring this experience to the students and communities they serve.

ABOUT CLOSE UP

Close Up is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, civic education organization that informs, inspires, and empowers young people to become active citizens. Since 1971, we have partnered with school districts nationwide to serve more than one million students and educators through experiential learning programs in our nation's capital and in local communities, professional development, and curriculum design and consulting. Our goal is to connect what students learn in class to the real world around them and help them articulate their own views, listen to those of others, and engage with people of different backgrounds with tolerance and understanding. To learn more, visit closeup.org.

ABOUT THE EQUAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE

Founded by Bryan Stevenson in 1989, the Equal Justice Initiative is a Montgomery-based nonprofit that has focused on representing death row prisoners, challenging mandatory minimum sentences, and assisting those who may have been wrongly convicted. In addition to its legal work, the group operates the Legacy Museum and the National Memorial for Peace and Justice to provide historical context on the American legal system and civil rights history. To learn more, visit eji.org.



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