

RACE, JUSTICE, AND EQUITY: 8TH GRADE CIVIC AMBASSADORS PROGRAM

PROGRAM OVERVIEW



The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the nationwide protests sparked by the killing of George Floyd compel the American people to grapple with questions about race, class, gender, and equity in policy debates in Washington, D.C., in state capitals, and in local governments. Now more than ever, young people want to play a pivotal role in our national dialogue about these challenging issues.

This March, Close Up and NNSP will launch *Race, Justice, and Equity: 8th Grade Civic Ambassadors*, a special opportunity to nominate three 8th graders to represent your school in an examination of today's most pressing issues with students from across the country. Through this series of four online civic engagement workshops, students will connect their experiences and personal stories to ongoing conversations about race, justice, and equity in our society; develop the skills needed for active citizenship; and return back home to share what they have learned as civic ambassadors of their school communities.

Program Sessions

Each 75-minute synchronous session will be led by Close Up facilitators:

Session 1 – Building an Inclusive Community and Exploring Perspectives: Students will share their stories, experiences, and ideas about race, gender, equity, and justice as they create a community timeline. Facilitators will help students make connections between the themes that emerge in the community timeline and the broader political, social, and economic issues that exist in our country.

Session 2 – Understanding a Pressing National Issue that Matters to You: To lay the groundwork for a deliberation about a key issue, students will participate in a root cause activity and think specifically about the parts of the issue they might want to address. Students will choose from one of the following deliberation topics:

- **Educational Equity:** How should we address inequalities of access and opportunity for students in the United States?
- **Environmental Justice:** How can we address the long-term impacts of human beings on the planet and the inequities caused by our energy consumption and material waste?
- **Criminal Justice:** How should we reform systems of criminal justice and law enforcement?
- **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 this country?

Session 3 – Pathways for Creating Change: Students will consider how people make an impact by examining case studies of young activists who have affected change in their communities. Through these stories, students will learn that there are many pathways to change, and they will consider what strategies they might use to address an issue they care about.

Session 4 – Civic Engagement in Your Community: In the final session, students will reflect on their experiences of meeting students from across the country, and consider how they, as civic ambassadors, can bring civic engagement tools back to their school communities. Facilitators will help students consider which of these approaches—the community timeline, the root cause analysis, or the case studies of change-makers—would have the greatest impact on their peers or their broader communities.

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Session Dates and Times

Race, Justice, and Equity: 8th Grade Civic Ambassadors | Monday and Thursday, March 1 - March 11, from 6:00-7:15pm (EST) / 3:00-4:15pm (PST)

If you are interested in customized dates, for a program that will include participants from individual schools only, please reach out to us at programsupport@closeup.org.

Eligibility & Special Rate

This program is intended for 8th grade students. Please nominate three students to represent your school in this national session.

NNSP & Close Up Member rate: \$150 per student

Standard Rate: \$200 per student

Registration

Space is limited to 120 students! Please complete this [interest form](#) or contact programsupport@closeup.org to reserve your spot in the program.

Note: Final student names are not due until February 19, 2021

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.

About NNSP

The [National Network of Schools in Partnership](#) (NNSP) serves its members by providing implementation support, thought leadership, and advocacy. NNSP believes collaboration and partnerships are central to a strategy for improving equity in educational opportunities. NNSP thrives on the diversity of its members, which include organizations such as: public, charter and private schools; educational access and enrichment programs; and policy and education reform groups.