

# RACE, JUSTICE, AND EQUITY: EMPOWER YOUTH VOICES

## 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, DC, 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.

In February, Close Up and NNSP are launching a special opportunity for you to nominate three students from your school to join a diverse national cohort of high school students for *Race, Justice, and Equity: Empower Youth Voices*. This group of motivated students will come together to consider the changes they would like to see in our society; deliberate about the barriers to equity in our systems of education, health, and justice; hear from policy and advocacy experts about the work that is needed to make change real; and consider methods of activating members of their communities to take action.

## Program Sessions

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

**Session 1 – Building an Inclusive Community and Connecting the Personal to the Political:** Students will share their personal stories, experiences, and ideas in a community timeline. Students will connect the themes and patterns that emerge in the community timeline to broader political, social, and economic issues, and consider the role of young people in addressing those issues.

**Sessions 2 & 3 – Critical Issue Inquiry:** 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 our systems of education, health, and justice. Students will investigate root causes; identify various approaches taken at the local, state, and national levels; engage with a policy expert; and create a vision statement that incorporates their personal experiences and what they have learned in an effort to communicate with a public audience. Topics may include:

- **Justice System:** In the wake of nationwide protests, how should we address racial injustice and reform the criminal justice system?
- **Health Care:** 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?
- **Educational Equity:** How can we address inequalities of access and opportunity for students in the United States?
- **Environmental Justice:** How should we address issues arising from climate change and the disparate impact of energy policy on poor people and people of color?

**Session 4 – Collaborating and Identifying Obstacles:** Students will share with their peers their visions for achieving equity, and deliberate about the barriers and structures that can make change difficult (such as partisan media, voter suppression, and a lack of public engagement, knowledge, or education). Students will build out their vision statements to incorporate action steps they can take within their school or local community.

**Session 5 – Pathways for Creating Change:** Students will engage with a community organizer or activist who has led a successful campaign for change in order to understand the tools of networking, communication, and strategic action that can advance civic and political goals. Students will then reflect on how these strategies and approaches can help them advance the ideas and actions laid out in their vision statements.

**Session 6 – Advocating and Impacting the Future:** Students will present their vision statements to advance justice and equity to educational professionals devoted to this work. After receiving and incorporating feedback, students will commit to tangible action steps within their own school communities and consider how they can all continue to act as an informal network of support for each other.

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### Session Dates and Times

**Race, Justice, and Equity: Empower Youth Voices** | Every Monday and Thursday, Feb. 22 - Mar. 11, from 7:30-8:45pm (EST) / 4:30-5:45pm (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](mailto:programsupport@closeup.org).

### Eligibility & Special Rate

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

- **NNSP & Close Up Member rate:** \$200 per student
- **Standard Rate:** \$250 per student

### Registration

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

### 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.