



## 2024 SELI Overview and Application Instructions

**Fellowship Overview:** A continuation of SEF's legacy of educating leaders in the South, which spans more than a century, the Southern Education Leadership Initiative (SELI) launched in 2004 to mark the 50th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. Recognizing that much work remains to ensure that all children, regardless of race or class, receive an excellent education, SELI provides highly motivated and diverse undergraduate juniors, seniors and graduate students the opportunity to:

- **Develop** as leaders in education and civil rights
- **Engage** with important community stakeholders
- **Acquire** practical job skills
- **Learn** about contemporary education issues in the South

SELI fellows receive invaluable professional experience in an assigned school district, education agency, higher education institution, or nonprofit organization in the southern region of the United States. During this experiential learning opportunity, they explore strategies for improving education, addressing community needs, and putting theory into practice. Students are assigned summer placements that pair well with their experience, educational interests, career paths, and developmental needs. To date, more than 270 SELI fellows have worked in more than 110 nonprofit organizations, school districts, state agencies, and higher education institutions that provide advocacy, grant-making, policy analysis, research, community organizing, and direct service in education.

*\*Applicants must be willing to relocate for the summer to their placement sites in the southern United States\**

### **As members of the Southern Education Leadership Initiative, fellows will receive:**

- **Experience:** The opportunity to work for eight weeks in an organization focused on equity and excellence in education, such as a policy institute, school district, community-based organization, or philanthropic institution.
- **Stipend:** A living expense stipend of \$5,000 for undergraduate and graduate students.
- **Travel Expenses:** Airfare/car mileage expenses associated with traveling between home, Orientation, and Closing meetings in Atlanta, and the summer placement site (assistance also provided by SEF in making travel arrangements).
- **Training:** Fellows will participate in a three-day orientation, (May 15-17, 2024) during which they learn about research in the field, the importance of educational equity, strategies for making change, and interact with SELI alumni and SEF staff. **\*Attendance in full is required**
- **Fellowship Placement-** (May 20 to July 12, 2024): Fellows will be supervised by seasoned leaders as they work on challenging research, education policy, and nonprofit program-related projects. **\*Full-time 40 hours a week, in-person attendance required**
- **Opportunities to Share and Reflect on the Experience:** During the SELI Closing meeting (July 17-19, 2024), fellows will come together to share lessons learned, reflect, and brainstorm on how to continue making change as part of a network of emerging leaders in the sector. **\*Attendance in full is required**

**Eligibility and Other Requirements:**

- Must be between 20 and 35 years old.
- Must be currently enrolled in a four-year college or graduate program.
- Must have completed 60 credit hours (the equivalent of junior status or above in an undergraduate program) or be currently enrolled in a master's, doctoral, or professional program at a college or university. No minimum GPA is required.
- All majors are accepted, but you must have a demonstrated interest in education equity and/or social justice.
- Must have excellent interpersonal, writing, and critical thinking skills, with flexibility to respond well to diverse people, settings, and tasks.
- Deadline for the submission of a complete application is **February 1, 2024, at 5 pm ET**. Please see the following pages for more details on required materials and instructions for submitting them. Deadline extensions may be granted on a case-by-case basis. Please contact Asley Gulaid with SEF at [agulaid@southerneducation.org](mailto:agulaid@southerneducation.org) to request an extension.
- Must only work on assigned projects from the placement site and SEF during the fellowship. Students do not design their projects for this experiential learning opportunity, but are assigned projects by their placement site supervisor.
- Must be willing to relocate to another city or town for the summer, and refrain from any coursework, test preparation, or other jobs or internships during the summer program. Fellows must attend in full the Orientation and Closing Meeting and be physically present at their placement site for office hours and for the duration of the program.

## 2024 SELI Summer Timeline

<u>February 1, 2024 5pm ET</u>	<u>March 2024</u>	<u>May 15-17, 2024</u>	<u>May 20–July 12, 2024</u>	<u>July 17-19, 2024</u>
All materials must be submitted to SEF	Fellowship recipients notified for an interview	Fellowship Orientation in Atlanta, Georgia	Fellowship at placement site	Fellowship Closing Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia

## 2024 Application Process and Directions

SELI staff will review applications and select the most promising and qualified students for the fellowship opportunity based on education advocacy-related campus involvement, community service, and the quality of application materials submitted. To apply, please complete and return the following materials electronically to SEF by **February 1, 2024 (5pm ET)**:

1. **Signed application form:** Complete and submit this required form online [HERE](#) (available December 1<sup>st</sup>):  
Link also shown here: (<https://forms.gle/QJgKZy6jZQVUo2Hv8>)
  
2. **Resume:** Please submit a resume that includes information about the following: education, employment/internships, community service, honors, awards & achievements.
  - **Please entitle the resume attachment as “Your First Name and Last Name- Resume”.**  
**Example: John Smith- Resume.**
  
3. **Transcript:** Please submit all college or university transcripts (unofficial or official copies accepted). No minimum GPA is required. These can be sent as an email attachment with other application materials or directly from the institution by mail. Please note we cannot access transcripts on web-based portals, they must be electronically as an attachment.
  - **Please entitle the transcript(s) attachment as “Your First and Last Name - Transcript”.**  
**Example: John Smith- Transcript**
  
4. **Letters of Recommendation:** Please have **1 or 2** letter(s) of recommendation submitted on your behalf. Letters should be emailed to [seli@southerneducation.org](mailto:seli@southerneducation.org) . Letters are acceptable from any person (past supervisor, professor, mentor, advisor etc.) whom you feel can speak best to your interests and experience. Letters may be emailed to SELI by the references or the applicant.
  - **Please entitle recommendation letters(s) as “Applicant First and Last Name - Recommender First and Last Name - Recommendation Letter”.** **Example: John Smith- Jane Doe- Recommendation Letter.**
  
5. **Short Essay Response:** Please submit a written response of no more than 3 pages (single spaced) addressing each of the following (roughly 150 words):
  - a. How do you define equity, and how is it different from equality? Please share your experience in the field of education/ education equity.
  - b. What is special, unique, or nuanced about education in the South?
  - c. What is one education issue in your community, state, the Southern region, or nation that you believe strongly needs to be solved? Why?

d. How do you think participating in the Southern Education Leadership Initiative will help you build the necessary skills/experience to achieve your career goals, especially in relation to low-income and/or minority students in the South?

- **Please entitle the essay as “Your First and Last Name – Essay”. Example: John Smith-Essay**

6. **Video Essay Response:** Please choose **one** of the following prompts to respond to via video of no more than 2 minutes long:

- Describe a change you would propose in education policy or practice, and why.
- Describe a project you would design to address issues of education inequity and inadequacy and how it might benefit the South. (Please note if selected, your work during the summer will not necessarily be focused on further development of this project).

- **Please entitle the video as “Your First and Last Name – Video”. Example: John Smith- Video**

### **How to Submit Application Materials:**

- Students must submit a completed online application form and all required materials to the Southern Education Foundation no later than **February 1, 2024 (5pm ET)**.
- Please submit all your application materials (other than the online Google form and reference letters if they are being sent by your recommenders) as PDFs in **one single email**. *\*If the video is too big to attach, please send a separate email with the video.*
- Applicants should email all application materials as attachments to [seli@southerneducation.org](mailto:seli@southerneducation.org) with the subject “Your First and Last Name – SELI 2024 Application”. Example: John Smith- SELI 2024 Application.

**Once all your application materials have been received, an SEF staff person will email you to let you know your application is complete. Successful applicants will receive instructions to schedule a phone interview.**

### **Still have questions?**

- You may email questions to [seli@southerneducation.org](mailto:seli@southerneducation.org) (Please note that submitting questions will not have an impact on your acceptance into the program.)

**Please also note that many questions can be answered by reviewing the instructions and details listed above and visiting our website: <http://www.southerneducation.org/seli>**