



SELI Frequently Asked Questions

- **What is the 2024 SELI timeline?** **Applications** will be available Dec. 1, 2023 and are due Feb. 1, 2024 (by 5 pm ET). Other key events: Orientation (May 15-17, 2024); Placement with Partner organization (May 20-July 12, 2024); Closing Meeting (July 17-19, 2024).
- **What does the Orientation entail?** The training covers a range of education issues/strategies with panels and group discussions. Topics may include: background on the movement for educational equity in the South, critical levers for change in education, advancing racial equity in education, and improving education across each point of the pre-K-through-college continuum. Fellows will engage with SEF partners, local alumni, and SEF staff. **Participation in full by all fellows is required.**
- **What are the typical SELI placements and assignments?** Each SELI fellow will have a specific work plan to follow during the eight-week placement and reflection-based assignments from SEF. Placements are full-time (40 hours a week, in-person at the placement site) for the entire fellowship. Fellows' assignments are likely to include conducting research, convening stakeholders, and developing communication tools on topics such as racial equity in education, early education access, the role of afterschool and summer programming, school disciplinary practices and juvenile justice issues, college access and success, higher education policy, and the quality of teacher-education programs.

In addition, fellows will complete small assignments for SEF throughout the summer. Before the Orientation, they will read a selection of articles and reports in preparation for the kickoff seminar and panelist discussions. They will also develop a communications tool, interview stakeholders in their placement site community, and make presentations on their lessons learned through the fellowship at the Closing Meeting. Fellows often use their portfolio of work to request course credit from their universities.

- **How are placements made? Do fellows choose their own placements/locations?** Placements are determined by a number of factors. We use responses to short-answer questions, interviews, our general experience, and the background of each fellow to understand fellows' individual interests in education equity issues. At the same time, school districts, education agencies, and nonprofit organizations apply to host a fellow each year, and part of their application process is to submit work plans describing the short- and long-term projects to which the fellows may contribute during the summer.

We make pairings based on the alignment of the projects and skills required, and the fellows' interests and capacities. SEF chooses the placement organization and location for each fellow. Fellows do not select their own placements, locations, or projects. Those are determined by their placement site and SEF. Students should only apply if they are willing to potentially relocate to a different state for the summer and work on a variety of issues. **We will not know exact placements or projects available until fellows are selected in March.**

- **Do I need to relocate for the fellowship?** Yes, fellows must demonstrate a willingness to relocate to their summer assignment location (though may not always be necessary). All fellows should assess and evaluate their ability to relocate for the fellowship prior to applying.
- **What does the Closing Meeting entail?** Fellows will give presentations to their peers and SEF staff on their work over the summer and their new knowledge and insights on impacting education policy and practice. They will also think collectively about how they can continue to work together to make change. **Participation in full by all fellows is required.**
- **How do the stipend and travel expenses work?** Students will receive \$5,000. The stipend payments are broken into three parts through the 10-week experience (including Orientation and the Closing Meeting). Fellows are expected to cover their own living expenses, housing, and daily transportation costs using the stipend and their own individual resources during the placement. SEF will pay and arrange for fellows' travel to Atlanta for the Orientation, from the Orientation directly to their placement site city, from the placement city to Atlanta for the Closing meeting, and then home at the end of the summer. Fellows who drive rather than fly will be reimbursed for car mileage using the standard federal rate, up to \$250. ***SEF cannot cover expenses for shipment of cars or car rentals during the summer placements.**
- **What are the eligibility requirements and key attributes of a successful fellow?** There is no required college major or grade-point average for the program. Students should have completed 60 credit hours by June 2024 or reach the equivalent of junior status in an undergraduate program or be currently enrolled in a graduate-level or professional program. **Students who will graduate in May 2024 as seniors with no plans for graduate school will be considered on a case-by-case basis.** We have had a range of academic majors represented each year, often including social work, law, public policy, sociology, and education, among other disciplines. Fellows must be between the ages of 20 and 35 years old to be eligible.

Our core criteria for a fellow is that they demonstrate an interest in education equity issues and making change at a systems level. Most fellows have had some prior experience researching education issues and/or working in the education or nonprofit sectors. All are expected to have a strong interest in becoming a leader in their communities on these issues and a strong commitment to improving education in the South. For a more complete list of eligibility requirements, please review the 2024 application instructions on our website.

- **What does the application entail? Required application materials are due by Feb. 1, 2024 (5 pm ET).** Required materials include the online [Google form](#), resume, responses to our short-answer questions, transcripts from all institutions attended, one or two letter(s) of recommendation, and a video response. Applicants also will complete an interview by phone or video call with SEF. **Please see the 2024 application instructions for more information on the required materials.**

- **When are selections announced?** Announcements will be made in March 2024. Shortly after selection, the SEF team will work to determine appropriate placements and finalize work plans, which will be finalized in April.
- **Are fellows provided housing during placements?** With the assistance from their placement sites, fellows are responsible for securing their own housing. The placement site is responsible for collaborating with fellows to determine the safest and most convenient housing options. In the past, summer housing at local universities has been a good option for many fellows. Also, stipends are often used to cover summer housing costs.
- **What kind of expertise or skills/skillsets have previous fellows gained through their placements?** It varies by assignment. Fellows have conducted needs assessments of communities, completed grant proposals and final reports, built out plans for community outreach events, created and administered survey instruments, and contributed to plans and actions to increase racial equity and improve education across the pre-K-through-college continuum. Many fellows have gained experience in presenting and explaining research to different audiences and community stakeholders.
- **Do fellows' experiences vary in complexity, based on their experience or education levels?** Yes. The work plan for each fellow is unique and aligns with their skill set, experience, interests and education level, and varies in difficulty and intensity based on these criteria. Each placement is different, and we work with each site before and during the summer to confirm the fellow is being challenged appropriately.

For additional information, please visit [our website](#). If you have any questions, please e-mail us at seli@southerneducation.org.