



2026 SELIXCPRL Summer Fellowship Overview and Application Instructions

Fellowship Overview: Building on SEF's century-long legacy of educating Southern leaders, the SELIXCPRL Summer Fellowship is launching its inaugural year to offer continued leadership development exclusively for SELI alumni. In partnership with the Center for Public Research and Leadership (CPRL), this fellowship furthers SELI's commitment to advancing the goals of the Brown v. Board of Education decision. Recognizing the ongoing work needed to ensure all children, regardless of race or class, receive a high-quality education, the SELIXCPRL Summer Fellowship offers exceptional SELI alumni the opportunity to continue:

- **Developing** as leaders in education and civil rights
- **Engaging** with important community stakeholders
- **Acquiring** practical job skills
- **Learning** about contemporary education issues in the South
- **Applying** the knowledge and leadership skills acquired during the SELI fellowship in a new context

SELIXCPRL Summer Associates serve as strategy consultants for client organizations driving structural changes to improve public education, particularly for underserved populations. Associates will define the client's project, develop background knowledge, design strategies for due diligence, and gather qualitative and/or quantitative data. They will collaborate with the CPRL team to draft findings, recommendations, proposals, and reports, iterating with the client, and presenting final deliverables to client leaders. Past interns have worked with public school systems, state departments of education, education-focused philanthropies, charter management organizations, and other education nonprofits across the U.S.

Please note that there are remote and in-person placement sites. These are determined based on client projects available.

What is the Center for Public Research and Leadership (CPRL)? The Center for Public Research and Leadership (CPRL) at Columbia University is an interdisciplinary initiative dedicated to improving education and public sector organizations. It provides graduate students with hands-on consulting experience alongside academic training in leadership, equity, and organizational improvement. Students collaborate on real-world projects with public agencies, nonprofits, and school systems to address critical challenges. CPRL focuses on systemic change, equity, and innovation in public education and social services, preparing future leaders with the skills and experience needed to drive impactful reforms in these sectors.

As participants in the SELIXCPRL Summer Fellowship, Summer Associates will receive:

- **Experience:** The opportunity to work for eight to ten weeks in an organization focused on increasing educational opportunities and excellence in education, such as a public-school system, state department of education, education-focused philanthropy, charter-management organization, and other education-focused nonprofit across the US with a focus on Southern education.
- **Stipend:** Summer Associates are compensated hourly for their work at a rate of \$25 hours/day.
- **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).
- **Fellowship Placement:** Fellows will be supervised by seasoned leaders from the CPRL staff as they work on challenging research, education policy, and nonprofit program-related projects.

Eligibility and Other Requirements:

- Must be a SELI alumnus who has successfully completed the full fellowship.
- Must be currently enrolled in a graduate program. Preference will be given to alumni currently attending or who have attended an HBCU.
- All majors are accepted, but you must have a demonstrated interest in advancing educational opportunity 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 **January 30, 2026, 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 Amber C. Davis with SEF at adavis@southerneducation.org to request an extension.
- Must only work on assigned projects from the placement site, SEF, and CPRL during the fellowship. Students do not design their projects for this experiential learning opportunity but are assigned projects by their placement site supervisor.
- There is flexibility regarding relocation. Remote, hybrid and in-person summer work opportunities are possible, depending on projects that are available.

2026 SELIXCPRL Summer Timeline

<p><u>January 30, 2026</u> 5PM ET</p> <p>All materials must be submitted to SEF</p>	<p><u>Late February 2026</u></p> <p>Fellowship recipients notified of acceptance</p>	<p><u>May – August, 2026</u></p> <p>Fellowship at placement site</p>
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2026 Application Process and Directions

SELI staff will review applications and select the most promising and qualified students for the fellowship opportunity based on commitment to education advocacy-related campus involvement since SELI involvement, community service, and the quality of application materials submitted.

To apply, please complete the following by **January 30, 2026 (5pm ET)**:

- Online Application:** Complete and submit an [online application](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/selixcprl26) (available January 5, 2026): Link also shown here: (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/selixcprl26>). When completed the online application you will be asked to include the following materials:
 - Resume:** Please submit a resume that includes information about the following: education, employment/internships, community service, honors, awards & achievements.
 - Transcript:** Please submit all college or university transcripts (unofficial or official copies accepted). No minimum GPA is required. Please note we cannot access transcripts on web-based portals, they must be electronically attached.
 - Short Essay Response:** Please submit a written response of no more than 3 pages (single spaced) addressing each of the following (roughly 150 words):
 - Since completing SELI, how have you demonstrated your commitment to advancing educational opportunities for students from underserved communities and social justice in the South? Share specific examples of how you've applied what you learned during SELI to your work.
 - In what ways will participating in the SELIXCPRL summer fellowship support your professional growth and help you achieve your career aspirations?
 - What attracts you to this fellowship, and what skills, experiences, interests, and aspirations do you bring to it?
- Recommendation Forms:** Please have **1 or 2** recommendation forms submitted on your behalf. Forms should be submitted by a professional reference (past supervisor, professor, mentor, advisor etc.) whom you feel can speak best to your interests and experience. To ensure your recommenders can submit their form, please share the link to the recommendation form with them directly (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/C9KZPRC>).
All recommendations must be submitted before the application deadline to complete your submission.

How to Submit Application Materials:

- Alumni must submit a completed online application form and all required materials to the Southern Education Foundation no later than **January 30, 2026 (5pm ET)**.
- Please submit all your application materials to the **online application**.
- Share the recommendation **form link** with your recommenders to upload their recommendation on your behalf. All recommendations must be submitted by the application deadline to complete your application.

An SEF staff person will contact you with the status of your application once applications have been reviewed.

Still have questions?

- You may email questions to 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>