



2015 SEL I Overview and Application Instructions

Recognizing the need for new outstanding leaders in education and the nonprofit sector, the Southern Education Foundation initiated in 2004 the Southern Education Leadership Initiative (SEL I). SEL I provides current highly motivated and diverse upperclassmen and graduate students opportunities to develop as leaders, engage in their communities, acquire practical job skills, and learn about contemporary education issues. Students spend the summer in trainings and working at an assigned leading nonprofit sector organization. During this experiential learning opportunity, they examine strategies for improving education, addressing community needs, and putting theory into practice. Over the last decade, SEF has placed 185 students in approximately 83 nonprofit organizations throughout the Southern region focused on providing advocacy, grant-making, policy analysis, research, community organizing, and direct service in education. Students are assigned summer placements that pair well with their experience, educational interests, career paths, and developmental needs. Students will be asked to relocate for the summer to a new city or town.

Fellows receive:

- Experience: an opportunity to work for eight weeks in an organization concerned with equity and excellence in education e.g., a policy institution, community-based organization or philanthropic institution;
- Stipend: a living expense stipend of \$4,000 (for undergraduate students), or \$4,500 (for graduate students who will have completed at least one term by June 1, 2015);
- Travel: all airfare/car mileage expenses associated with traveling to and from SEF trainings to summer placement site (assistance also provided by SEF in making travel arrangements);
- Orientation: training that exposes students to research in the field, stresses the importance of civic engagement, teaches strategies for making change, and provides opportunities to meet and learn from inspiring leaders involved in education policy and practice (attendance required);
- Fellowship Placement: guidance and supervision provided by seasoned sector leaders to work on challenging research, education policy, and nonprofit program related projects; and
- Closing Meeting: the opportunity to present their work to their peers, reflect, brainstorm how to take the lessons learned from this experience back to their communities, and become part of a network of emerging leaders in the sector. (Attendance is required).

Eligibility Requirements

- Must be between the ages of 20-32 years old to qualify for the program.
- Must be currently enrolled in a four-year college or graduate level program in or outside the South.
- Must have completed 60 credit hours (equivalent of junior status & above in undergraduate program) or be currently enrolled in a masters, law, or doctoral program at a college or university. No minimum GPA is required.
- All majors are accepted but you must have demonstrated an interest in social justice and/or education policy and practice.
- Excellent interpersonal, writing, and critical thinking skills, with flexibility to respond well to diverse people, settings, and tasks.
- Submission of a complete application by **March 1, 2015, 5pm ET**. Please see the following pages for more details on required materials and directions on how to submit them. (No exceptions can be made on late applications).
- Must be willing to work on assigned projects from placement site and SEF only through course of summer. Students do not design projects for this experiential learning opportunity but are assigned them by the placement site supervisor.
- Must be willing to relocate to another city or town, not take any kind of coursework, test preparation, or other job opportunities during summer program, and attend in full the Orientation and Closing Meeting.

2015 SELI Summer Timeline

<u>March 1, 2015</u> <u>5pm ET</u>	<u>April 1, 2015</u>	<u>May 27-29, 2015</u>	<u>June 1–July 24,</u> <u>2015</u>	<u>July 29-31, 2015</u>
Application deadline: all materials must be submitted to SEF	Fellowship recipients announced	Fellowship Orientation in Atlanta, Georgia	Fellowship at placement site	Internship Closing Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia

2015 Application Process and Directions

Applications will be reviewed, and the most promising and qualified students for the fellowship opportunity will be selected based on education advocacy related campus involvement, community service, and quality of materials submitted. To apply, please complete and return the following materials electronically to SEF by **March 1, 2015 (5pm ET)**:

Signed application form: Complete and submit this required form online [here](#): Link also shown here:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1hfl39PdE5tLhD_Szgn4oOvNXJKv7Ut8hoCZ4nZ8G4js/viewform?c=0&w=1

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 Last and First Name - Resume”.

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 your transcript on web-based portals and you must submit them electronically as an attachment or by hard mail.

Please entitle the transcript attachment as “Your Last and First Name - Transcript”.

Letters of reference: Please have two letters of reference submitted on your behalf with each person filling out the online form [here](#) and emailing their letter of reference to seli2015@southerneducation.org. Reference letters are acceptable from any two people of your choosing (past supervisor, professor, mentor, teacher etc.) you feel can speak best to your interests and experience. The applicant may also email these letters into SEF on their references behalf (if needed) along with their application materials.

Please entitle reference letters as “Your Last and First Name - Reference Last and First Name - Reference Letter”.

Personal Statement: Please submit a statement of purpose no more than 3-4 pages (single spaced) addressing each of the following:

1. What is one education issue in your community, state, the Southern region, or nation that you believe strongly needs to be solved? Why?
2. Your career goals and how your background (family, community, education, life/work experiences) has influenced those goals.
3. How you think participating in the Southern Education Leadership Initiative will help you build the necessary skills/experience to achieve those goals, especially in relation to low income and/or minority students in the South.

Please entitle the personal statement as “Your Last and First Name - Personal Statement”.

Short-Answer Question: Please respond to one of the following questions (maximum 300 words):

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

Please entitle the short-answer question response as “Your Last and First Name - Short Answer”.

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 **March 1, 2015 (5pm ET)**. Incomplete applications or submissions beyond the deadline will not be accepted. Please submit all your application materials (outside the online form and reference letters) in one single email. (SEE DIRECTIONS CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE).

- Applicants should email all application materials as attachments to seli2015@southerneducation.org with the subject "Your Last and First Name - SELI2015application".
- Last step, Tweet "I just applied for the #SELI2015 Summer Fellowship through @southernedfound!" (Optional).

Once all your application materials have been received, a SEF staff person will email you to let you know your application is complete and next steps in the process.

Still have questions?

- SEF will be conducting a conference call for applicants on **Wednesday, January 7 from 1pm-2pm ET**. To register for this call and to suggest specific questions be addressed, please email vmeyer@southerneducation.org.
- You may also email questions to vmeyer@southerneducation.org or tweet questions with the hashtag #SELI2015 to @southernedfound. (Please note the submission of questions will not have an impact on your acceptance into the program.)

Please also know many questions can be answered by reviewing the instructions and details listed above and visiting our website: www.southerneducation.org >Our Strategies >Leadership Development Efforts>Southern Education Leadership Initiative>Prospective Fellows