



2021 SELI Overview and Application Instructions

To meet the challenges of achieving education equity to address the needs of our 21st-century workforce and society demands outstanding young education leaders who are committed to making change. Initiated in 2004, the Southern Education Foundation's Southern Education Leadership Initiative (SELI) provides highly motivated and diverse undergraduate juniors, seniors and graduate students the opportunity to:

- develop as leaders;
- engage with valuable community stakeholders;
- acquire practical job skills;
- and learn about contemporary education issues.

Through the summer fellowship, students receive invaluable training and work experience at 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 225 SELI fellows have worked in more than 107 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 should have the flexibility to relocate for the summer to a new city or town in the southern United States.

Fellows receive:

- Experience: The opportunity to work for 8 weeks in an organization focused on equity and excellence in education e.g., a policy institution, school district, community-based organization, or philanthropic institution;
- Stipend: A living expense stipend of \$4,500 (for undergraduates) or \$5,000 (for graduate students who are currently enrolled and will have completed at least one term by June 1, 2021);
- Travel Expenses: Airfare/car mileage expenses associated with traveling between home, Orientation and Closing meetings in Atlanta, and summer placement site (assistance also provided by SEF in making travel arrangements);
- Training: Fellows will participate in a two-day orientation (May 19-21, 2021) through which they will learn about research in the field, understand the importance of educational equity, learn strategies for making change, and learn from SELI alumni and SEF staff (**attendance in full is required**);

- Fellowship Placement- May 24-July 16, 2021: Fellows will be supervised by seasoned sector leaders as they work on challenging research, education policy, and nonprofit program-related projects (**Full-time 40 hr/week, in-person attendance required**); and
- Opportunities to Share and Reflect on the Experience: During the SELI closing meeting (July 21-23, 2021), 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 the ages of 20-35 years old.
- Must be currently enrolled in a four-year college or graduate level program.
- Must have completed 60 credit hours (equivalent of junior status & above in undergraduate program) or be currently enrolled in a masters, doctoral, or professional program at a college or university. No minimum GPA is required.
- All majors are accepted but you must have demonstrated an 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 **March 1, 2021, 5pm ET**. Please see the following pages for more details on required materials and directions on how to submit them. Deadline extensions may be granted on a case-by-case basis. Please contact Kenita Williams, Director of Leadership Development, directly at kwilliams@southerneducation.org to request an extension.
- Must only work on assigned projects from placement site and SEF during the fellowship months. Students do not design 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, and abstain from taking any kind of coursework, test preparation, or other job opportunities during summer program. Fellows must attend in full the Orientation and Closing Meeting and be physically present at their placement site office during work hours for the duration of the program.

2021 SELI Timeline

<p><u>March 1, 2021 5pm ET</u> All materials must be submitted to SEF</p>	<p><u>April 2021</u> Fellowship recipients notified</p>	<p><u>May 19-21, 2021</u> Fellowship Orientation in Atlanta, Georgia</p>	<p><u>May 24–July 16, 2021</u> Fellowship at placement site</p>	<p><u>July 21-23, 2021</u> Fellowship Closing Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia</p>
--	--	---	--	--

2021 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 **March 1, 2021 (5pm ET)**:

Signed application form: Complete and submit this required form online [HERE](#) (available December 1st): Link also shown here:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfJnHPISdXmDbzEcpQ7ID3LGLL55N6mTns4CrSwdTv6GQtAqw/vi/ewform?usp=sf_link

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

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

Letters of Recommendation: Please have two letters of recommendation submitted on your behalf. Letters should be emailed to seli@southerneducation.org. Reference letters are acceptable from any two people (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 as “Applicant First and Last Name - Recommender First and Last Name - Recommendation Letter”. Example: John Smith- Jane Doe- Recommendation Letter

References: In a Word document or PDF, please list the full name, phone number, and email address of three academic or professional references (supervisor, professor, mentor, advisor, etc.) who may credibly speak to your ability to succeed in the SELI fellowship. Please also note your relationship to this individual and how long you have known them.

Please entitle reference list as “Your First and Last Name- References”. Example: John Smith- References

Short Essay Response: Please submit a written response of no more than 3 pages (single spaced) addressing each of the following (roughly 150 words per question):

1. How do you define equity, and how is it different from equality?
2. What is special, unique, or nuanced about education in the South?
3. What is one education issue in your community, state, the Southern region, or nation that you believe strongly needs to be solved? Why?
4. What are your career goals and how has your background (family, community, education, life/work experiences) influenced those goals?
5. Please share your experience in the field of education/ education equity.
6. 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?
7. Please choose ONE of the following prompts to respond to:
 - 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 essay as “Your First and Last Name - Essay”. Example: John Smith- Essay

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, 2021 (5pm ET)**. Extensions may be granted on a case-by-case basis. Please contact kwilliams@southerneducation.org to request an extension. **Please submit all your application materials (other than the online Google form and reference letters if they are being sent by your recommenders) as Word documents or PDFs in one single email.**

- **Applicants should email all application materials as attachments to seli@southerneducation.org with the subject “Your First and Last Name – SELI 2021 Application”. Example: John Smith- SELI 2021 Application**
- **Last step, Tweet “I just applied for the #SELI2021 Summer Fellowship through @southernedfound!” (Optional).**

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, rjohnson@southerneducation.org, or kwilliams@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>.