

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) – Empowerment Fellowship Program

1. What is defined as a Cohort under the Empowerment Fellowship Program?

A Cohort is a group of students accepted and placed in the various departments of ELF for the 3 month period (Quarter) of the Program.

2. Who can apply, and what do I need?

Any student enrolled in an education program from a private or four-year public university, community college, for-profit college, or educational program such as vocational training can apply and complete an application.

3. What must I provide after being accepted into the Cohort?

You will need to provide proof of enrollment or active student status (class schedule) and proof of good academic standing (school transcripts/grades) at the beginning and end of the Cohort. We will require a copy of a government-issued ID to submit a live scan, and a TB test might be needed depending on the placement site, such as for FUSD schools.

4. When is my application due? How soon can I expect to hear back from the ELF Fellowship Program?

All applications are due by the date provided. Applicants NOT selected will be notified two weeks after the application closing date.

5. When are the professional development trainings?

There will be ongoing professional development workshops offered by ELF staff and community partners. If selected, the workshop dates will be listed in your fellowship agreement.

6. Where will the Fellowship take place?

All programs except Outreach will be placed at our organization located in the city of Fresno. Fellows in the outreach project will conduct outreach and canvassing activities in various areas such as Tulare, Fresno, Madera, and Kings Counties.

7. Can I participate in the Fellowship remotely?

No. Most tasks and hour requirements are to be done on-site at one of our offices in Fresno or the above-listed Tulare, Fresno, and Madera counties.

8. What will be my schedule?

Participation hours are based on your availability and each department's work or

ongoing projects. It is up to the individual fellowship students to complete the required hours per cohort.

9. Do I receive sick time, vacation, or retirement benefits?

No. The fellowship is not employment. It provides a stipend for students who complete the program to offset costs. Students who fail to meet the fellowship requirements will not be eligible for the stipend.

10. Will I get mileage reimbursement for the cost of the commute?

No. Fellows are not eligible for reimbursements (mileage or otherwise).

11. Is the Stipend taxable?

ELF will provide the stipend to students who complete all the terms of the fellowship agreement. The stipend helps offset your cost-of-living expenses while participating and completing the fellowship. Each student should contact an accountant for guidance on adequate reporting to the IRS. However, you may still be required to self-report them on IRS Form 1040 and may need to make estimated tax payments directly to the IRS. Please check with your tax accountant regarding the need to make estimated tax payments.

12. Is the stipend a scholarship or payment for work?

No. The stipend is neither a scholarship nor wages (no tax withholdings will be made). You will receive your fellowship stipends directly from ELF. Fellowship stipends are not reported on a year-end tax form (W-2 or Form 1099).

13. If I dropped out of my classes, what would happen?

Before stipends are processed, the Education Program Coordinator will verify the class enrollment and good academic standing of all Fellows participating in the cohort. If students are disenrolled from their classes, they are disqualified from completing the fellowship and will not be eligible to receive a stipend.

14. When will I receive my stipend?

Upon completion of the cohort and all fellowship agreement requirements and the hours minimum.

15. To participate, Do I have to reside in Fresno or Tulare County?

No. However, you must be able to complete the tasks and hours in person at one of our Fresno locations or various outreach locations.

16. do I still receive the stipend if I fail my classes?

Depends. If you fall on academic probation, you may no longer be eligible for the fellowship. Fellows participating must maintain a 2.0 GPA or better to meet good academic standing upon completing the cohort.