

Education & Leadership Foundation

1308 E. Olive Ave ☐ Fresno, CA 93728 ☐ www.elfus.org ☐ 559-291-5428



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 various departments of ELF for the three-month period (Quarter) of the Program.

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

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

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

You must 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. A copy of a government-issued ID is required for a live scan, and a TB test might be needed depending on the placement site, such as 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 provided date. Applicants not selected will be notified two weeks after the application closing date.

5. When are the professional development trainings?

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

6. Where will the Fellowship take place?

All programs, except Outreach, will be based at our organization located in 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 required hours must be completed on-site at one of our offices in Fresno or in the listed outreach locations in Tulare, Fresno, and Madera counties.

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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 considered employment. It provides a stipend for students who complete the program to offset costs. Students who fail to meet 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 any form of reimbursement, including mileage.

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 in and completing the fellowship. You should contact an accountant for guidance on adequate reporting to the IRS. You may need to self-report the stipend on IRS Form 1040 and make estimated tax payments directly to the IRS. Check with your tax accountant about 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 stipend directly from ELF. Fellowship stipends are not reported on a year-end tax form (W-2 or Form 1099).

13. What happens if I drop out of my classes?

Before stipends are processed, the Education Program Coordinator will verify class enrollment and academic standing for 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?

The stipend is distributed on the 15th of the month following the completion of the Cohort. For example, stipends for the January to March Cohort will be distributed on April 15th. The stipend is provided upon completion of the Cohort and all fellowship agreement requirements, including the minimum required hours.

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

No. However, you must be able to complete tasks and required 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?

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