



2021 Summer Innovation Fellowship

For more than 25 years, [the National Summer Learning Association \(NSLA\)](#) has improved the lives of America's most vulnerable students by addressing the cumulative effects of summer learning loss and closing the achievement and opportunity gaps which research shows grow most significantly between lower and higher income students over the summer months. NSLA works to ensure all students, regardless of background and zip code, can access and afford to participate in a high-quality summer learning experience every year.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and exacerbated these educational challenges and divides. Research from a recent McKinsey & Company report titled [COVID-19 and learning loss—disparities grow and students need help](#), projects substantial additional learning loss from COVID-19 and inequitable and disproportionate negative impacts on low-income students and students of color.

NSLA also recognizes we are living in a time of tremendous racial injustice and inequality in America's society and education system. Too often, leaders of youth serving non-profit organizations, government agencies and public schools do not reflect the students and communities they serve. For example, according to Generation Teach, while 52% of public-school students are students of color, only:

- 21% of Teachers are of color
- 22% of Principals are of color
- 7% of Superintendents are of color
- Black students are expelled and suspended 3x more often than white students
- 90% of books on elementary book lists are written by white authors

It is often said that “necessity is the mother of invention.” NSLA believes summer learning programs provide a unique and flexible opportunity for leaders to try out and measure the effectiveness of new ideas and strategies, creative partnerships and policies before scaling. The severity and enormity of the societal challenges we are facing in America requires entrepreneurial leaders pursuing innovative solutions. NSLA is launching a new **Summer Innovation Fellowship** for leaders of color which will offer:

- \$25,000 towards implementing an in-person, virtual or hybrid summer learning program;
- A personal NSLA Coach to work with them regularly in their planning;
- Access to NSLA tools, resources, and convenings to support their work;
- Mentoring opportunities with experienced role models and leaders in the field
- Free registration to NSLA's annual “Summer Changes Everything” national conference

We aim to support emerging leaders of color who are:

- Looking to launch, modify or expand a new program serving low-income students;
- Model and promote unique and innovative practices, partnerships, or policies;

- Address an unmet need and offer students some combination of academic, enrichment, and physical and social emotional supports.
- Interested in measuring their success and joining the NSLA Community.

Applicants should be sponsored by or apply in conjunction with a fiscal sponsor such as school district, nonprofit or government agency. To apply for this Fellowship, please complete the [online application](#) by Friday, **February 12, 2021**. Winners will be notified by **February 26**. Please contact, NSLA Director of Program and Systems Quality, [Leslie Gabay Swanston](#) for more information and any questions.