

News Literacy District Fellowship Program

Spring/Summer 2024

Program Overview

Objectives

The News Literacy Project District Fellowship is designed to improve education and civic engagement for students by involving district leaders in the development and implementation of news and media literacy learning.

About the Fellowship

The next generation is at a significant civic disadvantage because they are vulnerable to misinformation, cynical about most information and are not prepared to discern fact from fiction. Education leaders and policymakers across the country already recognize the critical thinking skills necessary for students to combat misinformation and actively participate in civic life. While media literacy mandates gain momentum across the country, the media literacy field in practice lacks both definition and classroom materials that reflect the way students consume information. With your help, we can move toward solving this problem. The News Literacy Project District Fellowship, a two-year commitment, invites proposals from district leaders who wish to partner with NLP to design and execute innovative and sustainable initiatives to embed news and media literacy education into their districts. The NLP Fellowship Program champions the news literacy approach to media literacy education at the district level, providing professional learning, curriculum and community to help fellows meet the requirements of participation.

Fellowship Opportunity

Each year, a new cohort of fellows from around the country are selected to reimagine media literacy learning at the district level, creating a positive and lasting impact in their school communities. During the first year of the two-year fellowship, fellows will spend one year working with NLP to design an action plan for news literacy implementation in their district. Fellows will spend the second year implementing their proposals.

Proposals will include a holistic approach to news literacy teaching and learning, which may involve professional development/learning, developing instructional strategies, a scaffolded curriculum approach, student-centered learning models, or project-based learning addressing ways to develop and expand students' news and media literacy. All fellowship proposals should include a timeline of design and implementation within the span of the two-year fellowship. Proposals should also include a budget to spend the \$10,000 (per year) fellowship stipend.

Year 1: Preparation

- Participate in initial introduction and additional professional learning opportunities to increase understanding of news and media literacy at the local and state levels. (Travel may be required.)

- Perform a needs assessment to identify grades and disciplines best suited for news/media literacy.
- Create an action plan to guide year 2 of the fellowship (aligned to research-based best practices, initiative implementation, coaching and additional support).
- Identify a mentor from the field to support learning and implementation.
- Submit detailed quarterly reports that demonstrate progress to goals, professional learning attendance and budget spent.

Year 2: Implementation

- Identify district implementation team to support action plan, continuous learning, data collection and construction of innovation configuration maps.
- Provide professional learning and support for the leadership team and whole staff.
- Use NLP coaching and on-site visits to ensure fidelity of initiative implementation.
- Submit detailed quarterly reports that demonstrate progress to goals, professional learning attendance, coaching, implementation and budget spent.
- Submit implementation data collected at the end of each semester of implementation.
- Share fellowship experience and student achievement gains in news/media literacy at conferences, including learning opportunities sponsored by NLP.

Application timeline and process

The NLP fellowship is open to public school district leaders in California, Texas, Wisconsin, North Carolina, Florida, Nebraska and Oklahoma. The application allows one administrator and two additional staff members to be part of the cohort. Stipends will be given to the district and managed by the institution's fiscal agent/business manager. **The NLP fellowship is a 2-year commitment, for the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 academic years.** Questions? Contact Shaelynn Farnsworth, Senior Director of Partnership Strategy, at sfarnsworth@newslit.org

- **March 1:** Fellowship application opens.
- **May 3, 11:59 p.m. Central Time:** Application submission deadline.
- **May 6-31:** Review period.
- **June 1:** Fellows notified.
- **July 1:** Introduction to fellowship program in preparation for the 2024–2025 academic year.
- **Fall 2024-May 31, 2025:** Year 1 of fellowship; Preparation.
- **June 1, 2025-May 31, 2026:** Year 2 of fellowship; Implementation.
- **July 1, 2026-May 31, 2027:** Implementation.

Who should apply: Eligible applicants include current public school district leaders, administrators or curriculum directors. Preference is given to applicants in California, Texas, Wisconsin, North Carolina, Florida, Nebraska and Oklahoma but districts from all states are encouraged to apply. Every applicant must secure a commitment signature from the institution's lead administrator.

Start date: July 1, 2024

Duration of fellowship: 2 years

Stipend: Each district receives a \$10,000 stipend per year to implement the proposal and to be managed by the district's business manager.

Application deadline: May 3, 2024 (email finished applications to Shaelynn Farnsworth sfarnsworth@newslit.org)

Application Components

A completed fellowship application includes:

- Approval from the institution's lead administrator.
- A preliminary districtwide plan for news literacy education that includes (finalized plan with details will be created during year 1 of the fellowship):
 - No more than 10, double-spaced pages.
 - A timeline for implementation of the plan.
 - A budget that includes specifics for how the district plans to spend \$10,000 each year.

How Applications Are Evaluated

All applications are screened and reviewed by teams of NLP staff members. The most highly rated applicants may be asked to participate in a virtual interview. All applicants will be notified about their progress in the fellowship application and selection process. All materials within the application are peer-reviewed and will be assessed against the key qualities we seek in NLP Fellows. These key qualities include:

- **Demonstrable contributions to student learning around news and media literacy.**
- **Effective leadership skills.**
- **Strong communication skills.**
- **Commitment to civic engagement.**
- **School system support.**

About NLP

Founded in 2008, the News Literacy Project is a national nonpartisan education nonprofit that empowers educators to teach middle school and high school students how to sort fact from fiction in the digital age. Our central offering is the Checkology® virtual classroom, an online e-learning platform. Since the platform was introduced in 2016, almost 60,000 teachers have registered to use it in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, four U.S. territories and 113 other countries.

Each spring, NLP selects a cohort of fellows to join the program through an open application cycle. NLP chooses fellows based on their innovative approach to expanding and implementing news and media literacy education in their districts. Whatever your idea, its creation should benefit your school district. NLP will work with you to publish regular updates and share outcomes. The final product of your fellowship must be an implementation plan to expand news literacy education in your district.

News Literacy District Fellows Program Application

Questions? Contact Shaelynn Farnsworth, fellowship lead, at sfarnsworth@newslit.org

Send completed applications to Shaelynn Farnsworth at sfarnsworth@newslit.org

Applicant Name:

Title:

District/City/State:

Number of Schools in District:

District Address for Program Materials:

Phone Number:

Supervisor/Manager Name:

Participating Educators (curriculum director, instructional coach, discipline lead)

Participant 1

Name:

Email:

Position Title:

Participant 2

Name:

Email:

Position Title:

Participant 3

Name:

Email:

Position Title:

Questions

1. Why are you applying for the fellowship? Why is news and media literacy learning important to your district faculty, staff and students?
2. How does the fellowship fit into your district's strategic plan?
3. How would you describe your district? (enrollment, staff, buildings, demographics)
4. Year 1 of the fellowship will focus on creating a detailed action plan for implementation. With this understanding, describe your initial ideas to implement news and media literacy learning in your district if selected. Include a budget that provides ideas for how the district plans to spend the yearly \$10,000. (300-word limit)
5. What challenges do you foresee arising during the fellowship? How do you plan to address them?
6. Explain how your district plans to sustain news and media literacy learning beyond the fellowship years. (300-word limit):
7. Describe how the implementation of the action plan will increase access to equitable opportunities for all students, especially historically underserved students (including students from a variety of backgrounds, cultures, socioeconomic classes, etc.)? How will you measure that you are progressing toward higher levels of access? (500-word limit)
8. Additional comments (in this area, please share with us any special circumstances or information specific to your district that would be pertinent for us to consider).

9. How did you hear about the News Literacy District Fellowship Program?