

CODE SWITCH LEADERSHIP FELLOWS PROGRAM— APPLICATIONS FOR 2020-2021 NOW OPEN!



Code Switch Girls attend Free Minds Free People Conference 2017 (Baltimore, MD)

Each year, the Code Switch: Restorative Justice for Girls of Color Leadership Fellows program will select a group of young womxn to hone their leadership, self-advocacy and community action skills through interactions with former Code Switch participants, Code Switch mentors, professional women, community activists & racial justice advocates. This opportunity is offered at no cost to the Fellows. Fellows are also eligible to receive a small stipend to carry out a leadership action project, as well as travel scholarships to participate in national conferences and other culminating activities.

Action projects are intended to solve a problem or pressing equity issue in the local community. By participating in weekly sessions, Fellows will gain the skills necessary to work across the intersections of race and other social identity dimensions to develop the necessary skills for action project development. Fellows also form meaningful relationships with one another, their restorative circle-keepers, and mentors. It is these relationships that power future work to develop and sustain youth-led movement making and change.

This year's program is seeking girls and young women aged 16-24, who self-identify as Black, are attending high school and/or undergraduate studies at a local college or university, and who have an expressed interest in being the change they wish to see in their community.

Applications are due by 11:59 PM PST on Saturday, September 26, 2020. Applicants under 18 require a nomination from a teacher, family member, mentor, and/or caregiver.

Application & Selection Process

Candidates will be assessed using their application submissions, project proposals, references, and essays. Select candidates will be invited to participate in final interviews. Finalists will be notified if they have been invited to participate in the interview process. Interviews will be conducted via phone and a virtual group panel with final decisions made on or before September 30, 2020. The application process includes the following steps:

Submit Application (and Nomination Form if under 18) - Due by September 18, 2020

Application Review and Phone Interviews – Ongoing through September 26, 2020

Virtual Panel Interviews - Sunday, September 27, 2020

Decision Letters (email) - Wednesday, September 30, 2020

Virtual Orientation Circle – Thursday, October 1, 2020, 4:00 PM – 6:30 PM

Program Details

Q. How is this program different from other leadership programs for local youth? The Code Switch Leadership Fellows program focuses on leadership opportunities that inspire Girls and Young Womxn of Color to create solutions for complex equity challenges in their communities, whether local, national, or international. This program is the only of its kind in the state of Nevada that is centered in the cultural, racial, and social experiences of the very group the actionable solutions are meant to address. Insight is provided by mentors, coaches, and cultural advisors with similar racial, cultural, and social backgrounds and experiences and who will work closely with them, and the resources and cultural value they bring, coupled together with the best minds from leadership studies within the local activist, business, and education community. Our strong emphasis on cultivating a lifelong network of girls and womxn of color committed to racial justice also creates a unique professional development experience for participants.

Q. Where are the meetings and events held? Typically meetups, including the opening session, are held in local community spaces. However, due to COVID-19, this year's meetups will be held virtually using Zoom videoconferencing. Once travel and public gathering restrictions are lifted, we will resume in-person meetups. Potential meeting locations include Nevada Partners and the Pearson Community Center, Doolittle Community Center, The University of Nevada Las Vegas, and other community-based arts and business sites as required and necessary. Culminating experiences will take place in June 2021.

Q. Will former Code Switch participants be involved in this program? To the extent schedules allow, past participants of Code Switch will participate in various program activities. Leadership team members and Code Switch mentors will be actively engaged throughout the program.

Q. Will high school students receive academic credit for participating in this program? No, this initiative is a grassroots, community-based, youth-centered, and philanthropic powered leadership development program for Girls of Color and is not overseen by local schools. High school students will not receive academic credit in any capacity.

Q. Can I receive college credit hours? No, this leadership development program does not qualify for college credit in any capacity, however, as the organization develops partnerships with local colleges, this may change for future program years.

Q. What commitments are expected of alumni? Program alumni are expected to remain involved with Code Switch through a variety of ways. This includes, but is not limited to, recruiting and mentoring new Fellows, sharing leadership experiences with girls who might be interested in future years, and participating in follow-up interviews and surveys. Alumni are also encouraged to stay connected with Code Switch and each other, and provide valued mentorship to future participants, as well as support to the projects and initiatives pursued after their time in the program.

Q. I'm interested in the program, but can't attend this year. How can I receive information about the program in the future? Visit the Contact Us page on the Code Switch website and sign-up to receive email notifications for next year's application.

Q. I have a conflict on one of the scheduled dates. Can I still participate?

Fellows are required to participate in all scheduled program events in their entirety. Please do not apply if you have scheduling conflicts. We take this work serious and would like for Fellows to take it as serious once programs begin.

Q. What is the total commitment? The program requires a year-long commitment. It runs from October 2020 – June 2021, however opportunities to lead programs are also available during the summer months. Fellows will meet virtually using Zoom on a weekly basis, likely on a Thursday or Friday from 4:00 PM – 6:30 PM. Occasionally Fellows will have the opportunity to attend local and national events and conferences as a group. Events are not mandatory but strongly encouraged. Fellows will also need to attend and participate in quarterly Code Switch Advisory Board team meetings. These meetings are held digitally using the zoom.us meeting space. As a culminating exercise Fellows will help plan, execute, and facilitate workshops at the annual Youth of Color Restorative Practices Mentorship Summit on Saturday, May 15, 2020. Finally, we may decide to guide Fellows to co-plan a summer leadership institute for Black Girls culminating in a summer excursion if travel restrictions have been lifted. The institute will likely take place in late June and requires fellows to meet for a five-day opening session, which is followed by one extended weekend. A detailed program schedule with all required dates of participation will be provided during the application interview process.

Q. Will I be required to miss any days of school for the program? This program was designed to support and complement each participants' educational experience in local schools. Thus, no school will be missed, however Fellows are required to participate in every meeting in its entirety. We encourage you to discuss the schedule and participation requirements with your family and nominator and ensure their support for the schedule that is required of participants.

Q. Is there an application fee? No.

Q. What is the cost to attend? Code Switch is committed to offering this opportunity to future fellows, regardless of their financial means. To honor this commitment, program fees, housing, meals, and travel during sessions are fully funded. There is no cost to participants.

Q. What specific travel costs are covered? The program provides domestic air transportation (when applicable) ground transportation hotel lodging and

meals during Code Switch approved events (fellows only).

Q. Are there travel costs that are not covered? Fellows may be responsible for the costs of transportation to and from the airport and airport parking, if applicable. Meals consumed before or outside of specific group travel dates and/or activities are not covered. If family members/caregivers travel with fellows, their costs are not covered.

Q. Is there an age minimum or maximum for participants? The required age range for participants is 16-24. All fellows must be enrolled in a public K-12 high school and/or a college/university in the Southern Nevada area. Special consideration is given to girls disproportionately impacted by school suspension and/or expulsion and/or who have in the past and/or are currently involved with the juvenile justice system due to low level infractions.

Q. What are the citizenship requirements to be considered for the program? To participate in travel and various other activities, Fellows will need to have a passport which requires showing proof of United States citizenship and/or a legal residency to live and work in the United States. We encourage applicants to consider this when applying.

Application and Selection

Q. Why should I apply to be a Code Switch Fellow? The Code Switch Leadership Fellows Program intends to take your leadership skills and community-based advocacy to the next level. As a Code Switch Fellow, you will become a part of the growing network of youth organizers that can be future collaborators and advocates for equity for Girls of Color.

Q. What is required in the application? Each applicant is required to complete the application form, upload the required documentation, and submit two references for consideration. Applicants under 18 also need a formal nomination. Applications without both the application and nomination form for applicants under 18 will be considered incomplete and may negatively impact program eligibility.

Q. How many references are required? Two references are required. Recommenders are asked to fill out a short form outlining your leadership experiences and how this program would benefit you. At least one recommender will need to be 21 years of age or over. Recommendation forms are sent by email so it is best to get permission from references before including them as one on the application.

Q. How should I choose my references? Choose people who know you well and can speak to your leadership abilities as well as your commitment and drive for your work and your project. A recommendation from a celebrity, local government leader and/or well-known person that cannot speak about actual experiences with you and your work will not strengthen your application. Please be sure to check with your recommenders to ensure they are willing to write a recommendation before listing them on the application. Additionally, be sure to provide accurate contact information for them as we may contact them throughout the selection process. Applications that do not have two submitted recommendations by the deadline will be considered incomplete and will not be eligible for review.

Q. Am I able to upload a letter of recommendation? We are unable to accept letters of recommendation outside of the application platform. Once the information of your recommender is submitted, we will notify your recommender of your request for their recommendation. They will receive an electronic form to be submitted.

Q. When are Scholars chosen and notified? All applicants will be notified of the decision on their application on or before September 30, 2020. Applicants will be notified via the email address provided on their application. Please be sure to provide accurate contact information so that we can easily correspond with you.

Nominations

Q. Can I nominate a Fellow for consideration? Yes, nominations are required for applicants under the age of 18. Even so, you are encouraged to share information on the program with candidates you believe are well qualified.