

# EMPOWER YOUTH VOICES: CLOSE UP & MALONE SCHOOLS

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW



A major focus of education is the preparation of young people for their roles as citizens in a democracy. Now more than ever, young people want to play a pivotal role in confronting and developing solutions to the pressing challenges facing our democracy, including political polarization, mistrust of institutions and fellow citizens, and an information crisis caused by hyperpartisanship and a fractured media landscape.

During the 2021-22 school year, Close Up will bring together students from across Malone Schools to deliberate about pressing national issues, explore the political and structural barriers to change in our country, deepen their understanding of existing campaigns for change, and create solutions across geographical and ideological divides. As a nationwide network of 28 schools in different states, Malone Schools Online Network is uniquely positioned for participating in this type of learning experience. MSON students regularly “learn across difference” in their classes, developing trust with peers from different communities and with different lived experiences.

## Program Sessions

### Series 1: Deliberative Democracy

**How can young people engage on issues that matter to them and create a space for an informed exchange of ideas and perspectives?**

*Six online, synchronous, 75-minute sessions starting October 26, 2021*

Through a series of six online workshops facilitated by Close Up, students will develop a deeper sense of the complex policy challenges facing the nation, connect those issues to long-standing values and tensions, and gain a rich understanding of the value of deliberation in a democracy. Students will examine three major policy issues, evaluate proposals that represent a range of viewpoints, and consider, as a group, how to best address these issues. After deliberating and developing a better understanding of their own values and priorities, students will participate in a training to build the facilitation skills needed to lead controversial issue discussions with peers in their own school communities.

### Series 2: Critical Issue Inquiry

**As a country, why can't we reach consensus on pressing issues such as environmental regulation, gun control, and immigration? What is it about the way that different groups communicate that causes decision-making to break down?**

*Six online, synchronous, 75-minute sessions starting January 25, 2022*

Most Americans agree that our institutions are not functioning properly, leading to little progress on important challenges facing the nation. In a series of six online workshops facilitated by Close Up, students will engage in inquiry and deliberation on an issue of their choice and investigate the ways in which dialogue and deliberation on that issue break down along partisan, ideological, and cultural lines. Students will identify talking points, rhetorical moves, and discursive behaviors that make deliberation and perspective-sharing challenging, and consider questions such as: What individual behaviors and structural changes could make deliberation around this issue more productive? What ideas, perspectives, and resources are needed to make deliberation about this issue fruitful and sufficiently representative? At the end of the program, students will present a vision statement on their issue designed to constructively engage diverse audiences in their school community and in the public sphere.

### Youth Policy Summit

**What if, instead of looking to others for leadership, young people stepped up to communicate and compromise across differences in an effort to improve society and address societal challenges?**

*Five-day in-person, Washington, DC, summer 2022*

The five-day Youth Policy Summit in Washington, D.C., equips students with the tools and knowledge needed to become catalysts for change in their communities. Students will network with diverse peers nationwide, hear inspiring stories from young activists about strategies and models of advocacy and activism, deepen their understanding of community issues and their root causes, work in national teams to create meaningful solutions and craft policy proposals, and have a chance to present their proposals to decision-makers on Capitol Hill.

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## PROGRAM DETAILS

### Program Eligibility

The program session and special rate is exclusively for students enrolled at Malone Schools in 9th and 10th grade. Each Malone School will have an opportunity to nominate a cohort of six students to represent their school in an examination of today's most pressing issues with students from across the country. We recommend that students participate in both online programs; however, we understand that students have many commitments and that it may only be possible to participate in one session.

In order to be eligible for the Youth Policy Summit, students must attend at least one of the online sessions.

If you are interested in custom dates for an entire grade or course, please email us at [programsupport@closeup.org](mailto:programsupport@closeup.org).

### Program Dates & Cost

#### Series 1: Deliberative Democracy

Tuesdays & Thursdays after school | October 26 - November 9, 2021 | 8:00-9:15pm (EST) / 5:00-6:15pm (PST)

On Tuesday, December 14, 2021, a final reflection and debrief will take place following student facilitated discussions at their schools.

- **Cohort of 6 Students:** \$1350
- **Individual Student Price:** \$250

#### Series 2: Critical Issue Inquiry

Tuesdays & Thursdays after school | January 25 - February 10, 2022 | 8:00-9:15pm (EST) / 5:00-6:15pm (PST)

- **Cohort of 6 Students:** \$1350
- **Individual Student Price:** \$250

#### 5-Day Youth Policy Summit

Summer 2022! Dates coming soon.

- Approximately \$1800 + Airfare per student

Close Up and MSON are deeply committed to equity and inclusion. If you require financial assistance, please contact us at [programsupport@closeup.org](mailto:programsupport@closeup.org).

### Registration

To register, please visit our [website](#).

### About Close Up

Established in 1971, [Close Up](#) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan civic education organization dedicated to helping students develop the knowledge and skills they need to become informed, active, and engaged citizens. Close Up's resources and programs offer students a balanced and bipartisan look at controversial issues by using a selection of primary sources drawn from decision-makers and experts on all parts of the political spectrum. Close Up Instructors have over 120 hours of curriculum and methodology training and are experts in facilitating student discussions around controversial issues. Each year, Close Up helps thousands of students and teachers across the nation engage in civil discourse and take informed action in their communities.

### About Malone Schools Online Network (MSON)

The [Malone Schools Online Network](#) provides motivated, upper-level students at participating Malone Schools with a variety of academically challenging courses beyond what would normally be available to them. These interactive seminars bring students together from across the United States with dedicated teachers in real time. MSON joins the best of independent school education with the latest video conferencing technology to chart new territory in online learning.