

The Gem Project Fellowship

2026–2027 School Year | October 13, 2026 – June 2027 | National · HQ in Newark, NJ

About the Fellowship

The Gem Project develops the next wave of youth leaders through organizing, service, and direct civic engagement. Fellows take on the issues that matter most in their communities, hold decision-makers accountable, and build the skills to lead change in their schools, cities, and beyond.

Since 2006, The Gem Project has invested in more than 3,500 youth and young adults through mentoring, organizing, and social justice initiatives.

Our mission: Boost high school and college student engagement and on-time graduation through peer-based mentoring, youth organizing, employment, and service-learning, all grounded in a social justice approach.

Our vision: A world where every young person, regardless of background, is equipped with the tools and resources to catalyze positive change in their communities.

Focus for 2026–2027: Building Youth Democratic Power

This year, The Gem Project grows youth power and voice across Newark and, for the first time, across the country. Fellows build democratic power through organizing, community convenings, and direct civic action, while advancing a youth-led accountability campaign focused on the Newark Board of Education and its ten-year strategic plan. As an election year unfolds, Fellows put organizing into practice: registering and mobilizing young voters, canvassing on the issues they care about, and elevating youth voice in the decisions that shape their lives.

Youth-Led Accountability Scorecard

Fellows co-create and present scorecards that track how elected officials respond to student needs, including mental health, educational equity, and youth priorities.

Policy Drafting from Lived Experience

Fellows draft and refine policy proposals rooted in community input, data, and lived experience, in partnership with elected officials.

Direct Civic Engagement

Fellows meet with elected officials, present their findings, and advocate for changes that improve student and community life.

Two Ways to Join

Cohort 1: The Organizing Fellowship

Build the skills to organize, lead, and move people toward change alongside a cohort of Newark organizers.

Who: Ages 16–24, Newark and the surrounding area.

Format: Tuesdays 4–6 PM online and Thursdays 4–6 PM in person near the Rutgers University Newark campus.

Term: October 13 – December 8, 2026, continuing into the spring.

Support: Service stipend plus transportation support for in-person programming.

Cohort 2: Youth Power Action Ambassadors

Design and lead your own project to change something you care about, with funding, training, and a coach in your corner.

Who: Ages 14–24, anywhere in the country.

Format: Self-paced online trainings and modules with regular coaching check-ins.

Term: Launches February 2027.

Support: Ambassador stipend plus up to \$500 in project funding to put the idea into action.

What Fellows Gain

- Service stipend of up to \$1,000, based on participation and deliverables
- Hundreds of hours of civic engagement and organizing experience
- Hands-on work with accountability tools, policy briefs, and civic advocacy
- Mentorship, college and career readiness, and a polished digital portfolio
- Pathways to summer employment and continued movement-building

Key Dates

Cohort 1 priority deadline	Sept 29, 2026
Cohort 1 kickoff	Oct 13, 2026
Fall term	Oct – Dec 2026
Spring term	Feb – June 2027
Cohort 2 deadline	Dec 8, 2026
Cohort 2 launch	Feb 2027

How to Apply Apply online at thegemproject.org. Cohort 1 priority deadline: September 29, 2026 (rolling until seats are filled). Cohort 2 deadline: December 8, 2026. Questions? Email HQ@thegemproject.org or call (973) 506-9275.