



SURGE ACADEMY

PHILADELPHIA

2025 Application Guide

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surge fellowship mission

Surge is a movement, made up of emerging leaders of color in education.

The Surge Academy is a best-in-class program for emerging leaders of color in education. For this program, the Institute identifies and accelerates promising education talent of color to enhance their expertise and aptitude, empowering them to transform the education ecosystem.

The fellowship encompasses a combination of content areas and learning experiences to broaden exposure and accelerate skill and leadership development. High-profile leaders in education and other industries are faculty members and informal advisors to the network of Surge Academy Fellows. Upon completing this one-of-a-kind program, Fellows have the skills necessary to accelerate their trajectory in leadership, along with a new understanding of the authenticity and power they bring to the education leadership table.

Ultimately, Academy Fellows consistently leave this program having developed competency in organizational management, relationship management, strategic planning and problem-solving, navigating complex environments, and expertise in the history and structure of public education.

“A lot of times you do these Fellowships or convenings and it’s a waste of time. But Surge does what they do extremely well. It’s a rich, thoughtful program that caters to the group and the individual. Not one second has been wasted.”

Geoffrey Fenelus INDY21

description

The Surge Academy empowers a cohort of 12-15 promising African-American and Latinx education leaders to transform the education ecosystem.

The Academy is a rigorous and time-intensive program. We hold fellows to high expectations regarding preparation, attendance, and engagement. We encourage applicants to apply at a time when they can be fully present and invest deeply, in order to gain the full benefit of the experience.

Surge Academy program content is administered over a series of 7 sessions that are one to two and a half days in duration. The sessions are a mixture of professional learning and personal development, including case discussions, text based discussions, collaborative and individual projects, and formal presentations. The Surge Academy trademarks include courageous conversations about leading toward race and class equity, and executive skills development through exposure, reflection, practice and coaching.

More than 95% of Surge Alumni say that, because of their experience with Surge, they have expanded their personal vision. Selina Rios, Learning & Evaluation Director at City Year Kansas City, recently shared about her Surge

experience: “Surge has helped me to understand more deeply that my mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style.”

Candidates for the Surge Academy are African American or Latinx education leaders passionate about serving high-needs communities. They must have earned a Bachelor’s degree and have six or more years of work experience, including an education or youth serving role at the time they begin the Fellowship. These prospective Fellows have demonstrated an ability to achieve, have experience leading projects, and may have experience leading teams.

program schedule

The Surge Academy will address personal leadership and professional skills for high-capacity leaders.

The Academy begins in October 2024 and concludes in March 2025. The Academy kicks off with a two-and-a-half-day opening retreat, and culminates in a two-and-a-half-day closing retreat and graduation celebration. We will also have a 2 day and a half mid fellowship retreat. From November through February the cohort participates in monthly full-day sessions that begin at 9:00 AM and end at 5:30 PM. Fellows are required to attend all retreats and monthly sessions in their entirety, complete all pre-work assignments and meet with their executive coaches two times per month.

month	themes
October 24-26, 2024**	Onboarding & Opening Retreat Focusing Inward: We are The Ones We Have Been Waiting For
November 15, 2024	Focusing Inward: Our Origins are Our Assets
December 20, 2024	Dreaming Big: Our Interdependence, Our Freedom, Our Power
January 23-25, 2025**	Mid-Fellowship Retreat: Surge Academy Fireside Chat Know the Landscape: The Power of Community Driven Leadership
February 21, 2025	Know the Landscape: The Courage To Lead
March 20-22, 2025	Closing Retreat Make an Impact : Our Voice, Our Power, Our Time to Lead

* Dates listed above are confirmed, but content is subject to change. Schedule does not include supplemental recommended activities, which will likely be added throughout the year

** October 24th, January 23rd, and March 20th programming is evening only.

candidate criteria

- African-American or Latinx leader between the ages of 28 and 40, based in the Philadelphia area for the duration of the academy
- Bachelor's degree (minimum)
- Minimum of six years work experience
- Employed in education or youth-serving role (district, charter, early childhood, college and career access, higher education, workforce development, advocacy/public policy, philanthropy, government or non-profit) for the duration of the Fellowship
- Ability to attend all sessions and participate for the duration of the program
- Candidates must complete the Surge application, which includes supervisor approval to participate

financial requirements

- Sponsoring organizations are expected to pay a tuition of \$2,500 per fellow for the six-month program.
- Limited scholarships are available for accepted candidates with financial needs. Fellows who receive a Surge scholarship must give a personal contribution of \$250.

application requirements

The application for the Surge Fellowship can be found at: surgeinstitute.org/academy

To be considered, applications must include the following:

- Completed Application, including responses to four essay questions
- Résumé
- Two recommendation letters, including one from current organization
- Memorandum of Understanding signed by applicant and applicant's supervisor

The deadline for application submission is **11:59 PM CST on July 26st, 2024**. The application must be completed and submitted online. Incomplete or late applications will not be considered. Contact The Surge Institute's administrative team at academy@surgeinstitute.org with specific questions.

the surge academy timeline

May 1st, 2024 | application is available

July 26th, 2024 | applications are due (by 11:59 p.m.)

September 16-18, 2024 | selection interviews

October 2024 | cohort announced

October 2024 | opening retreat

October 2024 - March 2025 | monthly program sessions

March 2025 | closing retreat and graduation

frequently asked questions

1. BEYOND THE CRITERIA LISTED ABOVE, WHAT MORE CAN YOU SHARE ABOUT THE IDEAL SURGE ACADEMY CANDIDATE?

The selection process for Surge Academy Fellows, and the curation of a cohort, is both science and art, and there are a number of considerations involved. Beyond the baseline qualifications shared above, there are other qualities and characteristics ideal Surge Fellowship candidates embody. The following are some of the core beliefs, qualities, and characteristics we look for:

- An unwavering belief in the brilliance and genius of BIPOC young people. Anyone who thinks our youth are the things that need to be fixed is probably not going to be a fit.
- Strong Surge candidates know what they know AND what they don't know. They are low ego and high impact. They have a vision for their future and know they need additional skills to get there—and ideally they can name some of them.
- A recognition that we can not lead others, children or adults, to breakthrough from a place of brokenness. Academy Fellows have to be committed to doing the work necessary to walk in the fullness of their purpose and power—shedding masks and limiting beliefs that inhibit their wholeness and effectiveness.
- An understanding and belief that we are stronger together. Surge is about a community of amazing leaders, not individual superheroes. None of us can transform these intractable systems alone. A Surge Academy Fellow needs to understand that and be fully committed to the power of the collective, while knowing what they offer and bring to the community.

Additionally, ideal Academy candidates are at an inflection point in their careers and seeking a step change in their influence and impact. Regarding level in their organization, it is difficult to put specific criteria around this because each case is different, but we prioritize leaders who are no more than 2-3 levels removed from the top decision-making positions in their organizations. Examples include but are not limited to: a school leader or member of a school leadership team; non-profit manager or director; a social entrepreneur who has an established venture and strong potential to expand their impact.

2. IS THE PHILADELPHIA ACADEMY ONLY AVAILABLE TO AFRICAN AMERICAN AND LATINX CANDIDATES? IF SO, WHY?

Yes, the Surge Academy in Philadelphia is currently only available to African-American and Latinx candidates. This is an intentional decision driven by the fact that close to 75% of public school students in Philadelphia are African-American or Latinx, and our goal is to increase leadership representation of these large populations.

3. I HAVE A CONFLICT WITH THE SELECTION DAYS, COULD I SCHEDULE AN INTERVIEW FOR ANOTHER TIME OR PARTICIPATE VIRTUALLY?

Unfortunately, candidates must interview during one of the Selection Interview Days in order to be considered for the fellowship. This is due to the fact that the interview process includes multiple interview activities, including a small group activity. Applicants for the fellowship should make sure they are available on the designated dates.

4. WHAT IS THE TIME COMMITMENT FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE SURGE ACADEMY?

The Academy begins in October 2024 and concludes in March 2025. The Academy kicks off with a two and-a-half-day opening retreat and culminates in a two-and-a-half-day closing retreat and graduation celebration. We will also have a 2 day and a half retreat, mid fellowship. From November through February the cohort participates in monthly full-day sessions that begin at 9:00 AM and end at 5:30 PM.

Fellows are required to attend all retreats and monthly sessions in their entirety, arriving on time for each session and departing at the conclusion of the scheduled programming. Fellows are also required to complete pre-work assignments and meet with their executive coach two times per month. Additionally, there are supplemental activities and community events scheduled throughout the year that are highly recommended but not required.

5. ARE THERE ANY EXCEPTIONS TO THE SURGE ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT?

Fellows are required to attend all sessions and participate for the duration of the program. In the event that extenuating circumstances arise, exceptions are made on a case-by-case basis. Each cohort is intentionally curated, and it is important for all fellows to uphold a high standard of attendance and engagement to meet our design for a transformative learning environment and experience. Applicants for the Academy should make sure they are available on the designated dates for the entire day.

6. IS THERE CONTINUED ENGAGEMENT WITH SURGE AFTER THE ACADEMY?

Yes, it is important to us to continue to cultivate the relationships and professional development of Surge alumni. We have an active alumni community and a national alumni committee that partners with Surge staff to design and lead alumni programming.

7. IS THE AGE RANGE A STRICT REQUIREMENT?

The age range is more of a guide to signify the life stage of Surge Academy Fellows and is not used as a hard cut-off for selection. We review each application on a case-by-case basis and look at each applicant holistically when making decisions regarding fit and readiness for the fellowship experience.

8. IS THE BACHELOR'S DEGREE A STRICT REQUIREMENT?

We review each application on a case-by-case basis and do give consideration to special cases in which an individual's trajectory as an emerging leader has not been impacted by them not having a Bachelor's degree.

9. WILL THE 2024 SURGE ACADEMY FELLOWSHIP BE HELD VIRTUALLY OR IN-PERSON?

We review each application on a case-by-case basis and do give consideration to special cases in For the 2025 Surge Fellowship year, we anticipate virtual and in-person sessions. We have identified the opening retreat, mid-retreat, and closing retreat as our in-person sessions. To ensure the safety of all in our community through the COVID-19 pandemic, we will continue to follow all federal, state, and local government policies, in addition to following the wisdom, needs, and risk-tolerance of our community. Updated Surge COVID-19 Protocols for In Person will be provided.