

Young people are showing a passion for civic learning, with newfound urgency to have a say in their communities. As educators, we must meet their passion with relevant civic education that teaches students about their rights and responsibilities—how government works and how to have an impact. When every student understands what’s at stake in democracy and believes their voice and their vote matter, then civic education delivers on its promise.

What’s key to cultivating young minds—hands-on inquiry, critical thinking, and collaboration around real-world issues—is also vital to meaningful participation in our democratic institutions. What does this look like in civic education and civic life?



A robust civics program

- equips students with knowledge of the principles and system of government at all levels
- harnesses media literacy skills for evaluating information, discerning bias, and communicating effectively
- empowers students to take action on issues they care about

**Education Development Center (EDC)** works with educators and young people in both classroom settings and out-of-school time, using what we know about how students learn to build skills and knowledge and foster civic participation.

With our approach, students learn by engaging actively with civic issues in their lives and communities. For example, students role-play early debates about whether to ratify the Constitution, in order to understand the trade-offs and compromises it sought to achieve. They analyze data about laws related to school safety and explore how media influence public perceptions, then work with advocacy organizations on the issue. And they create short films about a social injustice they see or experience, such as a music video to counter stereotypes about people with disabilities, building media literacy skills and connection to their community.

EDC highlights the critical roles of the free press and news/media literacy in civic readiness, leveraging the creativity and innovation young people demonstrate in their lives and in their use of media for personal growth and skills development. Civic engagement stems directly from students’ own experiences and ideas. Teachers spark inquiry by asking:

- What happens in your community that is fair or unfair?
- Why is this issue important to you?
- Who benefits from the way stories are told in the media?

Student-centered learning, based in real-world contexts, is not only more interesting and engaging, it also equips students with the tools to become engaged, informed citizens. Not every young person feels that their voice matters. In our programs (see reverse), they learn that civic participation is both their right and their duty.



#### EDC supports civic education through:

- Program design
- Professional development
- Curriculum, tools, and resources
- Research and evaluation

## Sampling of EDC Programs



**Law and Justice (L&J)** comprises curriculum and professional development, geared for secondary schools and adaptable for after-school programs, community colleges, juvenile centers, and community-based settings. L&J strengthens civic education and improves student achievement by empowering young people to understand systems of rules and power, identify and solve problems, develop innovative solutions, and take civic action.

## YouthLearn

**YouthLearn at EDC** offers curriculum and designs professional development in project-based learning, media literacy, and civic engagement. Our program model for integration across K-12 core curriculum or in out-of-school time trains educators how to support students in developing creative projects to address real issues in their lives—and inspires them to be active learners and problem-solvers in their communities.



**Adobe Youth Voices (AYV)** includes training resources for teachers and afterschool educators and youth media curriculum around issues of social justice, as well as a media gallery of student work. AYV was designed to empower young people to harness creativity and digital skills to create change in their lives and their communities.



As a member of the Library of Congress's **Teaching with Primary Sources** consortium group, EDC is helping to bring historical documents and inquiry to the nation's classrooms. EDC is conducting collaborative research projects to support the development of curriculum and professional development, and aid teachers and students as they explore historical artifacts to make sense of our nation's past, present, and future.

## Zoom In

EDC's Zoom In is a research-based online tool that helps students develop arguments on important social questions. With **Zoom In to US History**, students delve into compelling human conflicts throughout history, and argue with evidence about what the past means and why it matters. **Zoom In! Learning Science with Data** is creating curriculum modules on core topics in biology and earth science to build high school students' data literacy—the ability to solve problems and support arguments using data.

## SDLC Strengthening Data Literacy across the Curriculum

The **SDLC** team has been funded by the National Science Foundation to develop and study high school curricular materials, in collaboration with statistics and social studies teachers, to support students in conducting statistical investigations of social inequality and social justice issues using U.S. Census and large-scale social science data sets.

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Education Development Center (EDC) is a global nonprofit that advances lasting solutions to improve education, promote health, and expand economic opportunity. Since 1958, we have been a leader in designing, implementing, and evaluating powerful and innovative programs in more than 80 countries around the world.



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