



OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

The [CAELI COE Fellowship](#) is an eight month fellowship that supports County Office of Education (COE) employees to develop actionable plans for integrating Environmental Literacy and Sustainability into COE initiatives across districts' and schools' curriculum, campuses, community, and culture. Through a series of workshops and learning activities, fellows are provided with the tools for identifying an entrypoint for action and developing an impact project, program, or service that aligns to their current job function. Outcomes of the program include each fellow drafting an action plan and initiating implementation with guided support.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS AND REQUIREMENTS

The CAELI COE Environmental Literacy Initiative Fellowship is a knowledge to action program that is built around the following professional learning components:

- **Increased Capacity** through knowledge and skill building for leading an environmental initiative or action project at the county-level. The principles and practices explored include: environmental and climate literacy, sustainable and climate resilient schools leadership, systems thinking and change management, environmental and climate justice, environment-based trauma informed practices, and the primary role of equity and community health in these initiatives.
- **Networking and Mentorship** in a professional learning community with County Office of Education leaders, as well as statewide leaders from the [California Environmental Literacy Initiative \(CAELI\)](#).
- **Strategic Planning and Guided Implementation:** Fellows receive support to draft a vision and plan, start early implementation, as well as support for navigating leadership and change management in their current context.

The program is designed with the following structural elements:



Opening Retreat: The purpose of the retreat is to provide the foundation for the fellowship in regards to content and building community. Fellows will come with a preliminary analysis of their current context, and will then be immersed in learning and networking, and provided time to start a vision and initiative plan.



Virtual Workshops: Following the opening retreat, fellows will meet virtually at monthly interactive workshops (from 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM) that will follow this general structure:

- Community building with cohort
- Content: concepts, tools, and stories from the field
- Time for processing content within one's own COE context - this includes small group breakout sessions
- Time for identifying next steps for action, such as developing and implementing capacity building programs, networks, and services, as well as integrating a process for measuring impact



Mentoring: Every fellow will have virtual mentoring and networking opportunities with senior fellows and program leaders. The purpose of these sessions is to provide structured peer support to participants when developing a project plan and initiating implementation.



Final Reflection: Each fellow will complete a reflection write-up that includes their key learnings from participating in the program, highlights from their action plan and next steps.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

This fellowship is designed for all passionate COE staff who are in a position to create actionable plans for advancing environmental literacy, sustainability or climate resilient schools within the work of a COE. Participants may apply as an individual or as a team. Teams can include folks from multiple departments within a COE, such as early childhood education, health and wellness staff, curriculum and instruction, expanded learning, career technical education (CTE), emergency services, business and facilities, and county agencies who work in partnership with COEs. Applicants who serve students who have previously lacked access to environment-based learning experiences are encouraged to apply.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

The following dates outline the schedule for the 2026-27 cohort. Note that the program kicks-off with a one-day in-person retreat in August; however, the rest of the program will be completed virtually. Fellows will access video segments from the [COE Fellowship Toolkit](#), webquests and other resources to engage in pre-learning so that synchronous meeting time can prioritize participant discussion, application and reflection as a learning community. There will also be optional meetups at two statewide conferences.

DATES

- **Opening retreat:** Thursday August 20, 2026
- **Workshop 1-5 (9AM- 12PM):** September 18, October 30, December 4, January 15, February 5, and March 5
- **Capstone Showcase/Fellowship Reunion:** April 16, 2027

COMMITMENT EXPECTATIONS AND OUTCOMES

Fellows who participate in this program can expect a time commitment of up to 8 hours per month, including workshops. For educators who work a 40 hour work week, this program will take about 4-5% of their time each month.

First Time Fellows Have the Following Expectation and Outcomes:

- **Expectations:** Attendance and participation in the retreat and workshops; pre-learning tasks; completing the Action Plan Workbook, Presentation Slide Deck, and Case Study Reflection
- **Outcomes:** Knowledge and skill building for leading a high impact change initiative focused on environmental and climate action in TK-12 schools; guided Implementation and mentorship support from experts in the field for developing a draft a plan for the integration of environmental literacy into existing initiatives as well as action steps for the first year; insight on how to gain access to funding opportunities for COE and districts; and structured peer networking and learning opportunities within program sessions.

Senior Fellows Have the Following Expectations and Outcomes

- **Expectations:** Attendance and participation in the retreat and workshops, including sharing one story at one workshop from your own county or region. Support with peer mentoring.
- **Outcomes:** More time to work through knowledge and skill building resources, further development of strategic plan, expansion of network, and the opportunity to mentor first time fellows.

APPLY HERE. There is no registration fee for the program but please note that fellows will be responsible for their own travel expenses related to the Opening Retreat. Meals will be provided at the Opening Retreat and optional conference Dinner Meetups. More information to come.

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