



The Food Education

FELLOWSHIP

Food Education Fellowship FAQ

This is a live document, check back for updated questions!

We hosted Office Hours on May 7th from 4-5p CST with our Alumni: [Lisa Ernst '22-23 \(San Francisco, CA, 6th grade Humanities\)](#) and [Nikita LaCour '21-22 \(Baton Rouge, LA, MS Science\)](#), and our program and our Food Education Fellowships Director - recording here: <https://vimeo.com/1085858768?share=copy#t=0>

Commitment

What does the Summer Institute look like for Fellows?

- Each Fellow will be expected to attend Summer Institute for two half-day sessions on August 11th & 12th (either 9-1 or 12-4 Central Time). After the 2025-26 Fellowship cohort is selected you will have the opportunity to indicate if an AM or PM session would be better for your schedules. We know that some teachers are already back to school at that time, if you are selected we will work with you to make sure that you get the professional development necessary to plan a successful year of Food Education!

What do the community partnerships and advocacy projects entail?

- We encourage and support teachers in thinking about a food issue that is relevant to them and their community (this might be food waste or food sovereignty) and then think of a partner in your school or community who can work with students on a project that brings food education beyond the classroom - we support you with this process but [here's a sample](#) of what one of those looked like for reference!

How long of a commitment would I be making if I joined the program?

- The Fellowship is a year-long program (August - June), and we have an [Alumni network](#) that teachers are invited to join afterwards if they choose.

Roles

Can I participate if I have a co-teacher?

- Yes you can! Make sure your co-teacher is on board with supporting your food education implementation. However the stipend/PD will be for the teacher that applies and is accepted to the Fellowship.

Can I participate as a classroom associate, paraprofessional or aide?

- This would be something we discuss on an individual basis, as each school/district structures their support models differently. One of the most important things to consider is that you have time for a lesson with the same group of students at least one time per week. Ideally, this would be a classroom of students, rather than a pull out or push in



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small group. It also helps when these are students you see on a daily basis so that you can build connections and community.

I teach Culinary Arts/FACS and/or teach a class that is a semester-long, am I eligible?

- Yes! We welcome all content areas and durations! You'll be able to iterate on your lessons for your second semester with ideas you learn along the way, and we will have each group of students conduct surveys at the beginning and end of each semester.

Do I have to write lessons?

- Not anymore! If you are a former Pilot Light teacher, welcome to the new Food Education Fellowship! Teachers are given support in integrating our Food Education Standards into their grade level content but are not required to formally write up and submit their lessons. We do share lesson ideas with one another every month as a part of our commitment to peer and collaborative learning!

I've applied before, should I apply again and/or do you provide feedback?

- We always welcome folx to apply again as our cohort is only 25 teachers every year! Please feel free to email Caitlin (caitlin@pilotlightchef.org) if you would like some feedback from your previous year if you are considering applying again - she is happy to provide that for you!

School Food/Allergy policies

Can I participate if my school has an allergy policy?

- Yes! Please adhere to your school allergy policy as it applies. You will never be expected to utilize any materials that do not apply to your school and/or allergy policies.

Do I have to use food in my classroom?

- You do not! There are plenty of examples of lessons that do not include food in our FEC. We also know food is expensive and also a process, so totally up to you how often and/or if you do it!

Implementation Frequency

Do I have to implement Food Education once a week? What happens if I skip a week?

- Yes - to the best of your ability! We have found that weekly frequency really allows it to become authentic in classrooms. We are aware that there are some weeks where other responsibilities take priority and that things may not go according to plan and Food Ed doesn't happen. We ask to do the best you can.



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Do I have to attend all the professional development sessions?

- Yes! You have one excused absence because we know that life happens, but we ask to please try to contact us ahead of time if you know you will be out.

What does one-on-one coaching and support look like?

- We try to provide multiple opportunities for you to brainstorm and troubleshoot with peers and Pilot Light staff during PD and outside of PD. In addition to individualized support from our Food Education Fellowship Director and Fellowship Alumni Network Manager, we also build in time for Fellows to connect with one another in different cohorts through alumni buddies.

Admin

What do you need from my admin?

- We want everyone to feel successful during the Food Education Fellowship and we've found that when Fellows are upfront with their admin about the requirements it makes for easier implementation. We can also help support you if any questions arise during your Fellowship year when we have admin support documented through the admin form: https://pilotlight.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dpC7nS5WrMxakzI . The form will automatically email to whoever you list as your reference after you submit your application, but definitely let your admin know it's coming their way and to check their spam folder!

What if my admin is changing or might be changing?

- We know admins can move schools or move out of the school setting, so don't worry if that might be the case! If you are accepted and your admin changes, we will have them fill out a new admin form prior to the beginning of the Food Education Fellowship.

Who can my admin reach out to if they have questions?

- Caitlin Arens, Food Education Fellowships Director: caitlin@pilotlightchefs.org

Stipend

Is the stipend directed towards the teacher or is the stipend for the school to fund the cost of food?

- The stipend is for your work in the program but of course you can apply it towards food! We also have a materials reimbursement of \$300 for the year (we process receipts each semester) that can be used for food too! The money will come to you either way and the 2,000 stipend comes at the end of the year upon completion.



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Oversight

The program was shared with me by the USDA or another organization's newsletter. What kind of influence would the USDA or another organization expect to have on the curriculum I teach?

- The USDA does not dictate the curricula being taught - that will always remain in teachers' capable hands. We do often share resources from them as tools to enrich lessons, but no one requires those to be used. They have invested in Pilot Light because they believe in the use of Pilot Light's [Food Education Standards](#) (designed to be holistic and interpreted broadly by teachers) as a method for weaving food into lessons teachers are already teaching. We don't have a set group of lessons that teachers need to execute but do offer our resources (including [our lesson library](#)), training, and peer learning to enrich what is already working in classrooms. We take that approach for a few reasons: 1. We know that every school and classroom is unique 2. Teachers are experts in their craft.