



WHAT'S THE STORY?

The Young Filmmakers' Social Action Team Fellowships - 2026 for Public School Teachers

What's the Story?: WTS is a year-long experience that empowers secondary school students to become informed, strategic, and empathic change agents through filmmaking. Students work in teams to conduct research into and make documentary films about social issues of their choice. Now in its eleventh year, WTS runs from mid-September to early June and includes site leaders and youth from around the country. Each year, WTS attracts outstanding teachers who are interested in undertaking intensive graduate study at the Bread Loaf School of English and who are eager to join the WTS instructional team as local site mentors. Find out more about WTS at www.whatsthestoryvt.com.

Fellowships: The Middlebury Bread Loaf School of English will offer a limited number of WTS fellowships of \$11,000 for teachers in public schools. The fellowship will support summer study (two graduate courses) at the School of English in 2026 and year-round professional development. Fellows will become active members of the Bread Loaf Teacher Network (BLTN), an innovative professional development network fostering pedagogical collaboration, teacher research, and social action. Fellows will attend Bread Loaf in summer 2026 and will join the instructional team of the What's the Story? (WTS) program for the 2026-2027 academic year. This includes meeting with Tim over the summer, attending regular virtual program gatherings roughly every month from September through May, and holding weekly meetings to mentor a handful of youth leaders participating in WTS. If you live in Vermont, you will be expected to attend any in-person events. WTS fellowship applicants may also qualify for additional Middlebury financial assistance.

Eligibility: All fellowship applicants must be full-time middle or high school teachers. They must have completed a minimum of one year of teaching by June 2026 and must be teaching during the 2026-27 academic year in a public school. Applicants must also apply for admission to the Bread Loaf School of English.

Fellowship Obligations:

- Fellows may attend any of Bread Loaf's campuses and will take two units of graduate credit. New fellows are encouraged to enroll in a Group 1 course on writing, pedagogy, literacy, or creative practice.
- All fellows must participate in weekly BLTN meetings during the summer.
- Fellows must submit three detailed reports during the forthcoming academic year reflecting on their BLTN projects and activities, including participation in *What's the Story? The Young Filmmakers' Social Action Team*.
- Fellows will serve as members of the WTS instructional team during the 2026-27 academic year, headed by director Tim O'Leary. This includes meeting with Tim over the summer, attending regular virtual program gatherings roughly every month from September through May, and more closely mentoring a handful of youth leaders participating in WTS. Cohorts are highly encouraged to participate in an end-of-year film showcase, typically in July.

Award notifications: Fellowship applications will be reviewed, and awards announced, in two rounds: the first in early March and the second in early May. Priority will be given to students in the first round. Students who wish to be considered in the first round should submit their fellowship and financial aid applications by February 16; those who wish to be considered in the second round should submit their fellowship and financial aid applications by April 20.