

About Us

Overview

Teach For America is the national corps of top recent college graduates of all academic majors who commit to teach for two years in urban and rural public schools and become lifelong leaders in the effort to expand educational opportunity.

Teach For America teachers (corps members) go above and beyond to help their students achieve dramatic academic gains. Teach For America alumni are a growing force of leaders with the insight and added commitment to effect the systemic changes required to put children in low-income communities on a level playing field with children from more affluent areas.

Teach For America is building the movement to eliminate educational inequity by enlisting our nation's most promising future leaders in the effort. Our vision is that one day, all children in this nation will have the opportunity to attain an excellent education.

Facts at a Glance

1990	Year that Teach For America placed its first corps, which had 500 members	2.5 million	Approximate number of students reached by corps members since 1990
17,000	Approximate number of people who have joined the Teach For America corps since 1990	\$10,000	Annual cost of recruitment, selection, training, and support for each Teach For America corps member
4,400	Total number of Teach For America corps members for the 2006-07 school year	72%	Percentage of Teach For America corps members who stay in education after completing their two-year commitment—28% as teachers*
1,000+	Number of schools nationwide where Teach For America corps members are placed	89%	Percentage of Teach For America alumni who report that their work directly impacts schools or low-income communities*
25	Number of regions in which Teach For America places corps members	\$70 million	Teach For America operating budget, 2006 fiscal year

*Source: Teach For America Alumni Survey, 2005

Frequently Asked Questions

Why Teach For America?

Today in the United States, 9-year-olds growing up in low-income communities are already three grade levels behind their peers in high-income communities. Half of them won't graduate from high school. Those who do graduate will, on average, read and do math at the level of eighth graders in high-income communities.

This academic achievement gap is our nation's most pressing problem—and it can be solved. Teach For America corps members are providing students growing up in low-income communities today with the educational opportunities they deserve, while Teach For America alumni are working from every sector for fundamental change to help close the achievement gap for good.

Who Are Teach For America Corps Members?

Teach For America recruits top college graduates of all academic majors, career interests, and backgrounds. Admission to Teach For America is highly selective, with approximately 12% of the nearly 19,000 applicants entering the 2006 corps. We select corps members who demonstrate achievement, leadership, and a commitment to expanding opportunity for children in low-income areas.

Teach For America 2006 Admissions Statistics

Total applications	18,968
Corps size	2,400
Percentage with leadership experience	96%
Average undergraduate GPA	3.5
People of color	28%

Among the 2006 applicants were 11% of the senior classes at Notre Dame and Amherst; 10% of those at Dartmouth, Spelman, and Yale; and 8% of graduating seniors at the California Institute of Technology. Nearly 20% of the 2006 applicants were math, science, or engineering majors.

How Are Corps Members Trained?

Teach For America corps members attend an intensive summer institute to gain a solid foundation in the skills and knowledge necessary to lead students to significant achievement. They learn the overarching approach utilized by successful teachers as well as specific skills such as instructional planning and classroom management. These courses are combined with extensive hours of student teaching, giving corps members firsthand experience in goal-oriented instruction. We continue to support corps members once they enter the classroom, clustering them in schools with fellow corps members to encourage peer collaboration and providing access to professional-development resources.

How Are Corps Members Paid?

Teach For America corps members are paid directly by the school districts for which they work and generally receive the same salaries and benefits as other entry-level teachers. Teach For America is a member of AmeriCorps, the national service network, so corps members are eligible to receive loan forbearance and interest payment on qualified student loans, as well as an education award of \$4,725 at the end of each year of service, which can be applied toward future educational expenses or to repay qualified student loans.

What Effect Do Corps Members Have on Students?

According to a 2004 independent study by leading research firm Mathematica Policy Research, students of Teach For America corps members make 10% more progress in a year in math than is typically expected and slightly exceed the normal expectation for annual progress in reading.

How Does Teach For America Decide Where to Place Corps Members?

When considering whether to open a new site, Teach For America weighs the need for our corps members and their potential impact, not only as teachers, but also as alumni working to effect the broader changes necessary to increase academic achievement in public schools in the region.

What Do Principals Think of Teach For America Corps Members?

For 10 years an independent research firm has asked principals to evaluate the performance of Teach For America teachers in their schools. Its most recent survey, completed in June 2005, found the following:

- Nearly all principals (95%) would hire more Teach For America corps members if given the opportunity.
- Nearly three out of four principals (72%) considered Teach For America teachers more effective than other beginning teachers, with respect to their impact on student achievement.

How Does Teach For America Approach Diversity?

Teach For America strives to enlist individuals who have the characteristics and skills necessary to advance our mission. These leaders will be diverse in ethnicity, race, and socioeconomic background. Their places on the political spectrum and their religious beliefs will be similarly varied, and we seek individuals of all genders, sexual orientations, and physical abilities. Maximizing the diversity of our corps and organization is important in engaging all those who can contribute to our effort and in ensuring our access to and participation in the circles of influence in our tremendously diverse society. Moreover, we seek to be diverse because we aspire to serve as a model of the fairness and equality of opportunity we envision for our nation.

How Is Teach For America Funded?

Teach For America secures local and regional gifts and grants from businesses, foundations, government organizations, and individuals in communities where corps members are teaching. In addition, it receives national funding from corporations and foundations, individuals, and the federal government.

Our Theory of Change

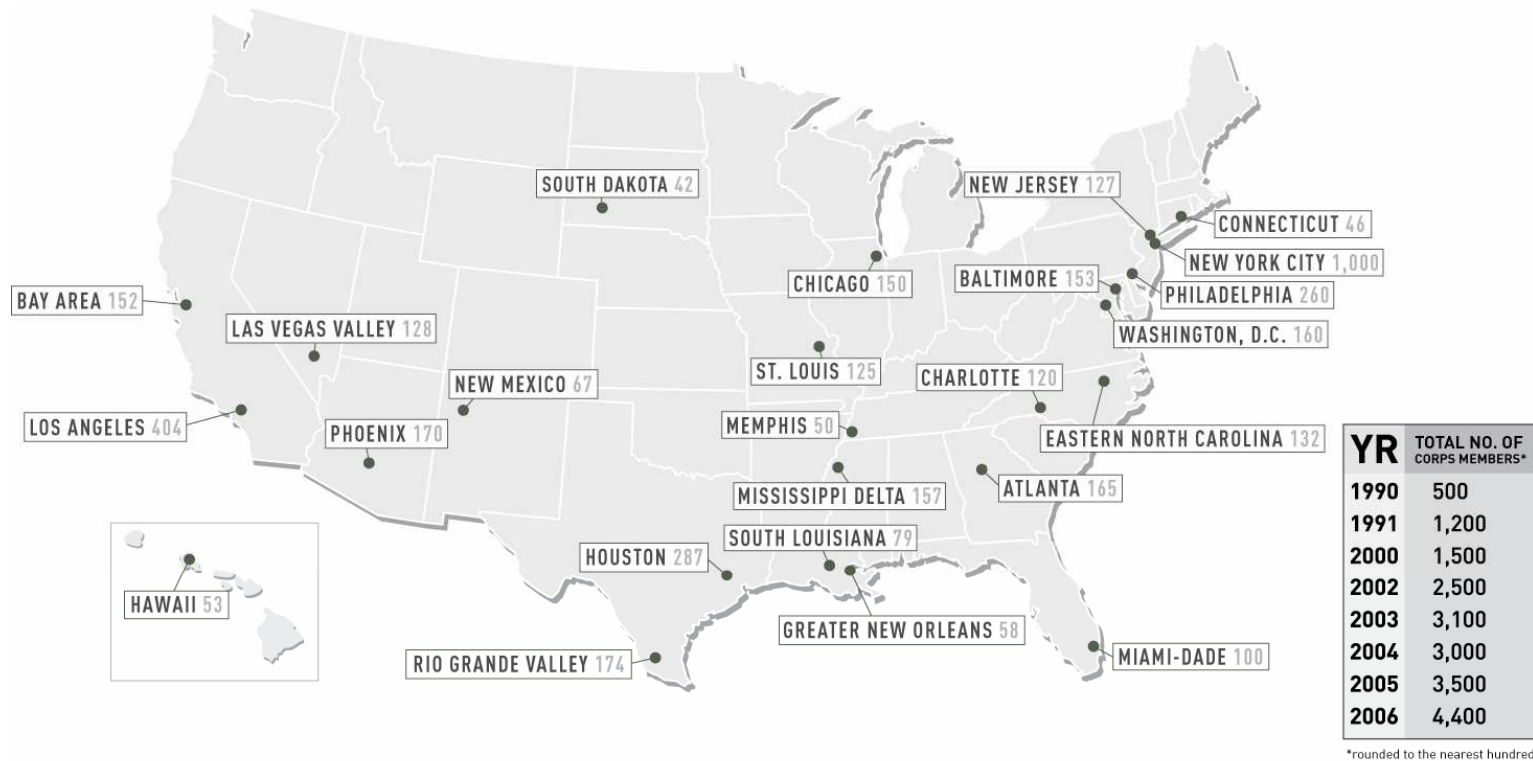
Socioeconomic challenges in low-income communities—such as inadequate housing, healthcare, and preschool opportunities—put added pressure on schools that generally don't have the systems, capacity, and resources to compensate. This does not mean schools in low-income communities are worse than schools elsewhere; it means they need to do more given the additional challenges their students face. Unfortunately, these schools weren't built that way. For example, there are not enough hours in a standard school day to catch up students, and schools may not have access to the social services their students need.

To overcome these underlying challenges in the short term, we need as many teachers as possible willing to go above and beyond the constraints of the system to ensure that their students excel. But thousands of hardworking teachers cannot solve the problem on their own. Rather, we must build the capacity of the system to compensate for the broader forces at work. Our alumni address these issues in the classroom and take on the underlying challenges from other sectors like medicine, law, and policy.

It is through the combined efforts of our corps members and alumni, and by working alongside others in the communities that we serve, that we will achieve our vision: One day, all children in this nation will have the opportunity to attain an excellent education.

Year	Our Story
1989	Princeton University senior Wendy Kopp comes up with the idea of Teach For America. She is troubled by the educational inequities facing children in low-income communities and convinced that many in her generation are searching for a way to make a real difference. She develops the idea in her senior thesis and secures a seed grant from Mobil Corporation.
1990	During Teach For America's first year, 2,500 graduates from more than 100 colleges respond to a grassroots recruitment campaign. Of these applicants, 500 are selected and trained before being placed in teaching positions in six regions across the country.
1993	The federal government establishes AmeriCorps, with Teach For America as one of several charter programs.
1997	The first annual Teach For America Week inspires 150 leaders from business, politics, entertainment, and athletics to teach in corps members' classrooms across the country.
2000	Teach For America launches a successful expansion campaign to double the number of corps members teaching each year and expand to more than 20 sites by 2005.
2001	Teach For America secures more than \$20 million in investments toward its five-year growth plan and is named by First Lady Laura Bush as one of five organizations she will actively support.
2002	<p>Applications to Teach For America triple from the previous year's number as 14,000 young leaders seek to join.</p> <p>Teach For America enters its first national corporate partnership with Wachovia Corporation, gaining financial support and management expertise for its capacity-building efforts and becoming the primary beneficiary of proceeds from the Wachovia Championship, a premier event on the PGA Tour.</p>
2005	<p>Teach For America receives 17,000 applications, becoming the no. 1 employer of graduates on several college campuses.</p> <p>Teach For America formulates an ambitious growth plan to expand the corps to 7,500 members in more than 30 sites nationwide by 2010.</p> <p>Teach For America creates Katrina Relief Corps to serve students and communities impacted by Hurricane Katrina.</p>
2006	<p>The Amgen Foundation becomes Teach For America's National Math and Science Partner, establishing the Amgen Fellows program for incoming corps members with math, science, and engineering degrees.</p> <p>Lehman Brothers partners with Teach For America in support of its teacher training and ongoing professional development efforts.</p> <p>Teach For America launches an early childhood initiative with a pilot program in which 18 corps members teach in pre-K and Head Start classes in Washington, D.C.</p>
Today	With a solid foundation in place, Teach For America is building an even more effective force of our nation's most promising future leaders to expand opportunities for children in low-income communities.

Current Corps Numbers & Expansion



*Corps members refers to the number of active corps members in the midst of their two-year commitment.