

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	3 million	Approximate number of students reached by Teach For America corps members since 1990
17,000	Total number of corps members and alumni in Teach For America's network	\$15,000	Approximate annual cost of recruiting, selecting, training, and supporting each Teach For America corps member and fostering each alumnus
5,000	Total number of Teach For America corps members for the 2007-08 school year	67%	Percentage of Teach For America alumni currently working or studying full-time in the field of education*
1,000+	Number of schools nationwide where Teach For America corps members are placed	94%	Percentage of Teach For America alumni who report that they are supporting Teach For America's mission through career, philanthropy, volunteerism, or graduate study.*
26	Number of regions in which Teach For America corps members currently teach	\$70 million	Teach For America operating budget, 2007 fiscal year

*Source: Teach For America Alumni Survey, 2006

Teach For America Regions

Atlanta	Eastern North Carolina	Kansas City	Newark
Baltimore	Greater New Orleans	Las Vegas Valley	New Mexico
Bay Area	Greater Philadelphia-Camden	Los Angeles	New York City
Charlotte	Hawai'i	Memphis	Phoenix
Chicago	Houston	Metro D.C.	Rio Grande Valley
Connecticut	Indianapolis	Miami-Dade	South Dakota
Denver	Jacksonville	Mississippi Delta	South Louisiana
			St. Louis

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 21% of the more than 18,000 applicants being accepted to the 2007 corps. We select corps members who demonstrate achievement, leadership, and a commitment to expanding opportunity for children in low-income areas.

Teach For America 2007 Admissions Statistics

Total applications	18,172
Corps size	2,900
Percentage with leadership experience	95%
Average undergraduate GPA	3.6
People of color	28%

Among the 2007 applicants were 11% of the senior classes at Amherst and Spelman; 10% of those at University of Chicago and Duke; and more than 8% of graduating seniors at Notre Dame, Princeton, and Wellesley. Nearly 20% of the 2007 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 the past 12 years, Teach For America has conducted independent, external surveys of its partner principals, asking them to evaluate the performance of Teach For America teachers in their respective schools. The most recent survey, completed by Policy Studies Associates in June 2007, found the following:

- Nearly all principals (94%) report that Teach For America teachers have made a positive impact in their schools.
- Two-thirds of principals (61%) regard Teach For America teachers as more effective compared with other beginning teachers in their schools 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	Applications to Teach For America triple from the previous year's number as 14,000 young leaders seek to join. 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.
2005	Teach For America receives 17,000 applications, becoming the no. 1 employer of graduates on several college campuses. Teach For America formulates an ambitious growth plan to expand the corps to 7,500 members in more than 30 sites nationwide by 2010. Teach For America creates Katrina Relief Corps to serve students and communities impacted by Hurricane Katrina.
2006	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. Lehman Brothers partners with Teach For America in support of its teacher training and ongoing professional development efforts. 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.
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.