Welcome to Massachusetts
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Dear 2020 Corps Member,

It is with great enthusiasm and unbounded optimism that I welcome you to the Massachusetts corps.

By joining Teach For America, you are embarking on one of the most challenging and important experiences of your life. The schools we work with are some of the most challenged and under-resourced in Massachusetts; however, just like students growing up in high-income areas across the United States, your students are capable of achieving at the highest levels. They are smart and motivated. They are our community’s future leaders. They want to succeed. As a corps member, you must ensure that they do.

As we kick-off our second decade in Massachusetts, and as our state reflects on 25 years of education reform, it’s an important moment for our work. Massachusetts is consistently the top state in the nation for education, and the past 10 years have particularly been a time of profound progress as state and educational leaders at so many levels have come together to spark reform and innovation. Newly developed schools like Springfield Prep, that serves entirely low-income students, are now dramatically outperforming the most affluent communities in the state. Schools across the state that just a few years ago were deemed as chronically underperforming, have made dramatic turnarounds. And the entire district of Lawrence, the poorest city in the Commonwealth and mired in years of chronic underperformance, has now emerged as a national model of collaboration, progress and systems change. There are dozens of other examples I could (and will) tell you about, and while we are just one part of this broader effort, in almost every school, system, and organization that are leading the way, you also see our corps members and our alumni as vital partners in that work. But with that progress, comes higher expectations, bigger initiatives, and increased challenges. And while there is real progress, persistent achievement gaps still exist. A recent report “#1 for some” highlights how far we have to go. So, as we launch the second generation of Teach For America’s local efforts, you are simply vital, and have the chance to solidify the expectations and impression of our movement, and consequently, ensure the lasting success of our work in the Commonwealth.

As you embark on this journey, you will not be alone. You are welcomed by visionary superintendents and school leaders who see you as vital partners for improving their districts. You will be met by the community, educational, and philanthropic leaders who have invested for years in increasing educational equity in the Commonwealth. You will have the support of an eager Teach For America staff and the 2,300 Teach For America alumni who are already leading the charge for equity in Massachusetts, including the state Commissioner of Education, Jeff Riley (Baltimore ’93). You will learn from the veteran teachers, parents, and experienced educators who may still be learning about Teach For America, but with whom you will have the potential to build lasting partnerships. And of course, you will have each other, and the 110 second year corps members who are paving the way for your success – and who are very excited to welcome you.

Congratulations on the accomplishments, leadership, and commitment that have brought you to this point. We are so excited, and incredibly fortunate, to have you join our team. Welcome.

With great hope and determination,

Josh Biber (Phoenix ’04), Executive Director
Gabriela Gonzalez
2018 Massachusetts Corps - South Coast cohort
Argosy Collegiate Charter School, Fall River, MA

Why Massachusetts?
Massachusetts is a state well-known for progressive public education, yet there are still educational inequities that marginalized students face. I came to Massachusetts to learn about the impact of the educational opportunity gap, and to understand how I can use my experiences, strengths, and passion to make quality education accessible to every student.

How are your leadership skills developing through your classroom experience?
Teaching is challenging, fast-paced, and exciting endeavor that has pushed me to grow as a leader in a variety of ways. Through my experience I have developed a stronger sense of responsibility, creativity and decision-making capabilities.

Susie Smith
2019 Massachusetts Corps - Greater Boston cohort
Spark Academy, Lawrence MA

Why Massachusetts?
TFA-Massachusetts can be succinctly described as two words: courageous and compassionate. Each person cares deeply about children AND teachers. Corps members, staff, and schools are working together to push teachers and see remarkable student growth. We are dedicated to our mission in the most authentic and supportive way imaginable.

How are your leadership skills developing through your classroom experience?
Teaching skyrockets your leadership skills. Planning lessons, managing licensure classes, creating routines, taking care of yourself, and the daily classroom responsibilities - it sounds overwhelming. I am prioritizing and executing more than I thought possible. I am prepared for anything in the future because of my experience in the classroom.
Chloe Brown  
**2016 Massachusetts Corps, Greater Boston cohort** 
**Emily G. Wetherbee Elementary School, Lawrence, MA**

**Why Massachusetts?**
I’m from Lowell, MA, a city neighboring my placement city of Lawrence, MA. Lowell, like Lawrence, is a post-industrial mill town. Since its establishment, Lowell has become a wonderfully multicultural community, welcoming new generations of immigrants and refugees.

**How has Teach For America impacted your career trajectory?**
Growing up in Lowell inspired me to find a career that would allow me to play a supporting role in my community. My time as a legal assistant shied me away from a career in law and drove me to reflect on how I could be the best support system to my community. After reflecting on the problems facing my community that I wanted to work to address, I realized that a central issue facing my city, and my state, is educational inequity. Teach For America provided me with the best support and training to make a difference close to home.

Cinique Weekes  
**2015 Massachusetts Corps** 
**Manager, Teacher Leadership Development, Teach For America - Massachusetts**

**Why Massachusetts?**
As a born native of Boston Massachusetts (specifically Dorchester) I have grown deep and enriched roots in my hometown, communities and intentions to the greatness that is Massachusetts educational system. I am a product of public schools and private institutions and I know a lot of people say their city is the best but Massachusetts’ values and honor speak for itself.

**How has Teach For America impacted your career trajectory?**
Coming into this opportunity, I had no desire to be a teacher. My main focus was going into school counseling; however through trials, tribulations and various avenues of support, Teach for America has instilled a lot of self-value and joy in being in the classroom and working with teachers and students. So much that I stepped into a role as an MTLD, and I’m now working towards becoming a principal.
What to expect during summer training.

- **What is it?** Teach For America hosts training that takes place for 5-7 weeks during the summer and includes learning experiences and summer school teaching.

- **Where is it?** Depending on your assignment, your training may be held in your placement region or in another city with corps members from multiple regions.

- **Am I paid?** Teach For America provides corps members’ housing and meals, as well as some transportation. Corps members do not receive a salary during this time.

- **Where do I live?** During training, corps members typically share a dormitory with one or more of their fellow corps members.

- **Should my family come?** Family accommodations are available at each of our sites for dependents and caregivers. Teach For America covers some lodging costs for dependents and a single caregiver. Corps members are responsible for all other expenses, including family members’ travel, meals, and childcare. Corps members are responsible for securing reliable childcare for dependents during all programming.

What onboarding means to us.

Onboarding spans from when you accept your spot in the corps until you arrive in Massachusetts for Institute. During this time, you will be working towards earning your Massachusetts Provisional Teaching License. We will work with you to make sure that you have all you need to successfully take and pass your Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTELs), navigate the hiring process, and get ready for Institute. Your transition is important and we want you to feel supported every step of the way, but you are the driver of your own experience. You will be in contact with Teach For America staff during Onboarding who will assist you in creating a personalized plan to meet all requirements and feel prepared to arrive!

Please refer to the Teach For America Corps Member Handbook for information on the policies and expectations for all corps members. Please note that additional information about our regional Institute’s policies and procedures will be released and communicated throughout the year leading up to Institute.
Onboarding action items and timeline.

There are three major chunks of time during your Onboarding into the corps. While you won’t begin teaching your students until the fall, your commitment to them begins over the next few months as you prepare for the corps.

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<tr>
<th>Within 2 Weeks of Accepting Your Offer</th>
<th>Estimated Time Commitment: 6 hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Personal MTEL Consult Call &amp; register for your MTEFLs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Enroll in Google Classroom to navigate your transition to the Massachusetts corps</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Join community Facebook group</td>
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<tr>
<th>Months Leading up to Institute</th>
<th>Estimated Time Commitment: 90 hours</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Meet testing requirements - including studying and communicating closely with the Massachusetts team</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Complete hiring action items - including calls, mock interviews, and creating a hiring profile</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Complete Institute logistics action items &amp; pre-work</td>
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<tr>
<th>1 Month Before Institute</th>
<th>Estimated Time Commitment: 15 hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Enroll in BU &amp; AmeriCorps</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Complete fingerprinting &amp; background checks</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Apply for teaching license</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Submit paperwork to school for onboarding</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Watch Institute training &amp; submit pre-work</td>
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Begin Licensure Application and Testing:
- Communication & Literacy MTEL: $112
- Subject-Specific MTEls: $139 per test (most corps members take at least 2 of these)

AmeriCorps Fingerprints: $50
Apply for Provisional License: $100

ESTIMATED TOTAL: $400

YOU'RE A 2020 CORPS MEMBER

ONBOARDING

MTEL retakes (if necessary): $139 per test
Transcripts (3 copies): $0-$75
Book Travel to Institute: “$350

ESTIMATED TOTAL: $600

MONTH BEFORE INSTITUTE

Housing Costs: $3,000 (First & Last Month’s Rent and Security Deposit for your post-Institute lodging)
School District Fingerprints: $50
Supplemental Food during Institute: $300

ESTIMATED TOTAL: $3,400

URING INSTITUTE

Post Institute

Managing Your Personal Transition
Moving Costs: $300
Furniture: $500
Setting up your classroom: $200

ESTIMATED TOTAL: $1,000

POST INSTITUTE

FIRST YEAR TEACHING

BU Tuition*: $1,179 - $9,117 (depends whether using AmeriCorps funds and whether enrolled in the Licensure or Master’s track)

ESTIMATED TOTAL: $5,000

Please note: You will not be asked to pay BU costs until after your first year teaching (not at the beginning of the year)

ESTIMATED TOTAL UP-FRONT CREDENTIALING COSTS: $900
ESTIMATED TOTAL HOUSING/TRANSITIONAL COST: $4,500
ESTIMATED TOTAL BU COSTS: $1,179-$9,117

Please note that transitional costs can vary considerably from individual to individual
Transitional Funding

In addition to testing and certification, one of the most important pieces of your transition is planning for the financial transition of joining the corps. While Teach For America is not able to provide financial advice, as we are not financial advisors, we have pulled together resources and alumni tips that will assist you in planning for your transition.

Teach For America covers many of your major expenses during summer training (e.g. food, housing) for all corps members. We also offer a Need-Based program to help you with some of your transition expenses. Packages are granted based on a corps member’s demonstrated need and the cost of transitioning to your assigned region.

Please check your Applicant Center under the Transitional Funding tab to learn more about Need-Based Transitional Funding and how to apply. The deadlines for applying and other helpful information related to your transition can be found at the following link. Please copy/paste the link into your browser: https://teachforamerica.box.com/s/51iai03d4q33jc0vrsvpvqfb072yhcyr
When should I find housing?
Teach For America provides housing during Institute (June 15-July 30). Ideally, your lease would begin immediately following the conclusion of Institute (August 1) so you have a place to stay once you are done at Institute. If landlords need to see proof of employment, Teach For America will provide you with a letter stating that you will be employed as a teacher in Massachusetts.

When should I move my belongings?
Some corps members opt to bring their belongings to Massachusetts before the Institute begins, as the school year begins just a few weeks after Institute concludes. If they choose this route, it is important that they secure summer storage and/or housing before or during institute.

Other corps members may prefer to bring their belongings and move the week after Institute and before continued programming in Boston. We will not be providing housing during post-Institute programming and expect corps members to have housing by this point. You may also choose to have your belongings shipped to you once you have arrived in Boston and have a general sense of where you will be living.

Will I be living with or near other corps members?
If you choose to, we highly recommend it. Living with another corps member can help not only to keep costs down, but also to provide a social support network. It is especially common for corps members to live together in the South Coast and Western Mass! Most corps members who now live together connected first at Institute, in June, when you will be given time to look for housing on the weekend. We also recommend reaching out via Facebook beforehand.
When will I find out my school and grade?
The hiring process begins in late January and continues throughout the summer. Our hiring process is designed around meeting school need, which means we don't kick off the process until schools know what roles they have available for the coming school year. School principals are the key decision makers in the hiring process as they determine which roles are available, who they would like to interview, and who they would like to make offers. As such, hiring timelines and experiences will vary considerably for each corps member.

Please note that you will be interviewing for real teaching jobs that are posted live and competitively for other, non-TFA candidates! That said, it is expected that non-local candidates will interview via phone or web platform.

We will provide MUCH more information about the hiring process in our Hiring Training during Onboarding, and we will work closely and collaboratively with you throughout the process.

Will I need a car?
Yes - in all three of our subregions! While there is a public transportation system (the MBTA, better known as the “T”) in Boston and closer suburbs, we highly recommend that corps members bring a car or plan to purchase one at the beginning of the school year. Some of our district partners can be up to a 45 minute commute from central Boston, and we will not take access to a car into consideration when determining hiring with schools and districts. Cars are also important in Western Mass and the South Coast, though you will likely face considerably shorter commute times.
What are some differences in corps experience across the state?
Massachusetts corps members are spread across nine distinct communities statewide. Corps members are clustered together in three “subregions”: Greater Boston (Boston, Chelsea, Lynn, Salem, & Lawrence), Western Mass (Springfield & Holyoke), and the South Coast (Fall River & New Bedford). Each subregion has an office and staff, and corps members will be supported by an "MTLD" (TFA teacher coach) who is specifically focused on their geographic area.

Corps members in Western Mass and the South Coast take their BU courses online, whereas those in Greater Boston will attend them in-person. Cost of living is significantly lower outside of Boston. You will likely grow close with corps members, alumni, and staff in your subregion, but have the benefits of a large statewide network as well!

None of our subregions are rural or remote places - all are thriving communities with lots to do, lots of places to live, and many alumni who chose to stay (or move to) each community beyond their two years! We encourage corps members to operate with curiosity to learn more about the students and need for great teachers in each of our partner communities as they imagine how they might fit in there.
Thank You!

We believe your potential for impact is great and look forward to your leadership here in Massachusetts!