WELCOME TO
Charlotte-Piedmont Triad

OPPORTUNITY BEGINS WITH EDUCATION

TEACHFORAMERICA
Welcome to Charlotte-Piedmont Triad

Joining our diverse network
» Fellow corps members
» Alumni spotlight

Preparing to lead your classroom
» Overview of onboarding
» Onboarding timeline and expectations

Financial transition
» Overview of costs
» Need-based transition grants and loans

Frequently asked questions
Dear 2019 Corps Member,

Congratulations! I am thrilled to welcome you to the 2019 Charlotte-Piedmont Triad Corps. You should be enormously proud of your accomplishments! You have been selected from thousands of applicants because of your commitment to our mission, proven record of results in leadership, perseverance in the face of obstacles, and more. I know these contributions will help you be a successful classroom leader.

You will join a diverse group of nearly 800 local corps members and alumni who are working from every sector in our community to realize our vision that one day, all children in this country will have the opportunity to attain an excellent education. We’ve been at this work here since 2004, when the charter corps in Charlotte set out to prove that the kids we love so dearly can achieve at the highest of levels, despite what societal barriers exist to their success; despite what low expectations our systems set for them; and despite the real capacity challenges in our schools.

We have leaders at every level working on behalf of our kids and communities. We have alumni leading as community organizers, alumni serving as school leaders, alumni who work in the medical field, alumni who work on social justice initiatives, hundreds of alumni teaching in the classroom, and so much more. All of this is in service of reimagining a Charlotte-Piedmont Triad where all kids can succeed and lead lives of choice and dignity and where barriers to their success don’t exist.

We believe firmly that you, alongside our alumni, will step up to lead in a way that ensures our students are getting an excellent education. Joining the corps and teaching will be the hardest thing you’ve ever done. It will also be the most important work of your life. You will change, your kids will change, and together, we will all be stronger because of your decision to join us.

Of course, I want your decision to be an informed one, and I know there’s lots for you to consider. This guide includes information about our community, the corps, what the next two years (and beyond!) might entail, and more. You will also be hearing from someone on our team soon who can answer your questions, connect you with local corps members and alums, and guide you throughout this decision process.

These next two years are the beginning of what I hope is your life-long commitment not necessarily to just Teach For America, but to the communities, families, and children we have the privilege to teach, influence, and love.

Yours in service,
Crystal Rountree (Atlanta 2003)
Executive Director, Teach For America Charlotte-Piedmont Triad
MEET THE CORPS MEMBERS YOU’LL BE WORKING WITH

JOINING OUR DIVERSE NETWORK

Jessica Hernandez, 2019 Charlotte-Piedmont Triad Corps

Why Charlotte-Piedmont Triad?
After 6 years of college, internships, and grad school in the Northeast, I was eager to move back to North Carolina. I love being close to my parents. I also love living and working in a city where it’s not weird for people you don’t know to treat you like family. The community I’ve found through TFA, at my apartment complex, and at my school has been warm, welcoming, and a great example of southern hospitality. I particularly appreciate the warm temperate climate. It’s sunny more often than not, and when the sun is out it’s never less than 50 degrees Fahrenheit. (But we still get all four seasons.)

How are your leadership skills developing through your classroom experience?
The opportunity to grow and develop as a leader and manager in a supported and structured environment is exactly what I was looking for out of my TFA teaching experience, and that’s what my experience has been so far. Within TFA there are opportunities to grow as a leader among leaders. In the classroom this week the biggest thing that clicked for me was realizing the difference between lecturing to present and lecturing to engage students such that their participation and contribution becomes the driving force behind the transfer of knowledge and understanding. It’s the difference between trying to carry the team yourself (and falling short because you can only do so much) and empowering your teammates to leverage their strengths, talents, and passions to go above and beyond where any of you thought you could go (individually or collectively). I want to be the kind of leader that does the latter someday, and it is the guidance and support of my TFA coach, CMS instructional coach, teaching mentor, and other teachers in my professional learning community that are growing me closer towards that goal one step, one day, one student, and one class at a time.

Jamie Binns, 2018 Charlotte-Piedmont Triad Corps

Why Charlotte-Piedmont Triad?
Being from a rural town, I wanted to relocate to a diverse, metropolitan city that was not too big – but just right. From there, I realized that Charlotte was a Teach for America region and my mind was instantly made up. I thought of Charlotte as a progressive city that was welcoming to new residents and home to many ambitious millennials.

Where are you seeing your students grow?
As a teacher, I am committed to improving my practices. Self-reflection and commitment towards student growth have been my key resources to develop my leadership skills in the classroom. I knew that I wanted to make a change in the lives of my students. I am grateful that TFA-Charlotte-Piedmont Triad provided me with a skilled coach, Stacy Perzinski, who helped me work towards that charge. With that said, I see my leadership in the classroom grow through my students. They are my main priority. When I want to assess my effectiveness, I observe my students to reason where I can perform better and to determine areas of self-growth.
Kim Cochran, 2008 Charlotte Corps  
Attorney at Wells Fargo Bank  
Why Charlotte-Piedmont Triad?  
I love Charlotte for so many reasons. Charlotte is a perfect medium-sized city. It is big enough that there is always something new to try — from restaurant openings to dog parks to Broadway shows. Yet it is small enough to drive your car down the middle of uptown. As a native Ohioan, I appreciate that Charlotte is full of transplants. I have built wonderful relationships with people from all walks of life who now call Charlotte home. Lastly, I love Charlotte’s accessibility to the beach and the mountains. Weekend getaways are so easy.  
How has Teach For America impacted your career trajectory?  
Teach For America showed me the power of advocacy. Many of my students never had someone willing to stand up and fight for them. Although I left the classroom, I knew that I wanted to remain an advocate. I now leverage the skills I acquired in Teach For America as an attorney in Charlotte. As part of my practice, I serve low-income clients through pro bono legal services. Teach For America prepared me for this work and shifted my perspective on what meaningful work looks like.

Nemal Patel, 2011 Charlotte Corps  
Assistant Principal at North Mecklenburg High School  
Why Charlotte-Piedmont Triad?  
As a native North Carolinian, I was excited to learn that I would be working to close the achievement gap near my home in eastern North Carolina. While friends at the Mississippi Delta Institute joked that Charlotte was the “Country Club” of Teach for America regions, I learned that the city is not without its challenges. In my mind, these challenges turned to opportunities. After immersing myself in the community first around my school, and later in the greater Mecklenburg area, my roots are firmly planted with hopes of working with others to create the change we all want for young people in this city.  
How has Teach For America impacted your career trajectory?  
Teach for America served as the catalyst for my career in education. My years in the classroom helped me realize a passion that otherwise may have remained unfulfilled. I leverage the leadership skills, instructional toolbox, and the relationships I developed as a Corps Member as I continue my pursuit of closing the achievement gap as a school leader. Even as an alumnus, the relationships and learning opportunities provided through Teach for America continue to refine the way in which I approach daily scenarios to support students to the best of my ability in my role as an assistant principal.
OVERVIEW OF ONBOARDING

WHAT ONBOARDING MEANS TO US

Onboarding spans from when you accept your spot in the corps until you arrive in Charlotte-Piedmont Triad for Induction. During this time, all incoming Charlotte-Piedmont Triad corps members come together to learn about Teach For America, the local school systems and transition into life in the Charlotte-Piedmont Triad corps. 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 your specific institute’s policies and procedures will be released and communicated throughout the year leading up to institute.

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 include learning experiences and summer school teaching.

- **Where is it?** Induction will take place in Charlotte-Piedmont Triad and Institute will be in Atlanta, Georgia.

- **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 room with one or more of their fellow corps members.

- **Should my family come?** The training schedule is very busy, and in some cases, corps members prefer to find alternate arrangements for children and families during training. Family accommodations are available at each of our sites - corps members are responsible for the family member’s travel, lodging, meals, and childcare costs.
## 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Estimated Time Commitment</th>
<th>Action Items</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Within 2 Weeks Of Accepting Your Offer</strong></td>
<td>6 hours</td>
<td>• Onboarding and Test Prep Calls</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Create your personalized timeline to meet requirements &amp; transition to Charlotte-Piedmont Triad</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Join <a href="#">GroupMe</a></td>
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<td>• Bookmark our <a href="#">regional Google Doc</a></td>
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<td><strong>Months Leading Up To Pre-Service</strong></td>
<td>70 hours</td>
<td>• Meet testing requirements (diagnostic, registration, study, pass test(s), etc.)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Book travel</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Complete Institute pre-work and logistics action items</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1 Month Before Pre-Service</strong></td>
<td>15 hours</td>
<td>• Enroll in DSU to earn Institute credits</td>
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<td>• Complete hiring action items (transcripts, hiring application, get TB test/physical)</td>
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<td>• Complete fingerprinting, background checks, and other required AmeriCorps forms</td>
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<td>• Join Institute prep group call</td>
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**FINANCIAL TRANSITION**

- **Praxis or Pearson:** $120-$330 (depending on subject area)
- **Book Travel to Induction and Institute:** ~$350
- **ESTIMATED TOTAL:** $470-$680

- **TB Test & Physical:** 0-$100
- **Transcripts (4 copies):** 0-$75
- **Clothing for Institute:** 0-$250
- **ESTIMATED TOTAL:** $0-$425

- **Moving Costs:** $300-$600
- **Furniture:** $600
- **Setting up your classroom:** $200
- **Housing Costs:** $1000-$2,000 *(First & Last Month's Rent and Security Deposit)*
- **Utilities:** $200-$300
- **Food:** $300
- **ESTIMATED TOTAL:** $2,600-$4,000

- **Supplemental Food:** $300
- **ESTIMATED TOTAL:** $300

- **Certification and Masters:** Click [here](#) for more detailed information regarding certification and masters.

- **ESTIMATED TOTAL HOUSING/TRANSITIONAL COST:** $2,100-$3,500
- **ESTIMATED TOTAL UNCC CERTIFICATION COSTS:** $800
- **ESTIMATED TOTAL UNCC MASTERS COSTS (optional):** $8,060-$10,060

**HELPFUL RESOURCES**
- [Regional Google Doc](#)
- [Testing Timeline](#)
- [Carolina CORE: Test Prep Resources](#)
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 offered 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 all be found here.

If you have questions after checking out our resources, please attend an office hours to ask your questions. Please sign up for an appointment, and you will receive updates and reminders before your call. Register for Office hours here.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO MOVE?

Charlotte: We recommend that you move most of your belongings prior to or immediately following training. If you are unable to move your belongings at this time, another option is to have your belongings shipped to you once you move into your new housing. Corps members usually find housing during summer training. You can wait until you receive your school placement, as many corps members find that is makes more financial sense to live close to their schools, but in Charlotte everything is pretty much in close proximity to each other. Also, many corps members choose to live with one another as roommates. By waiting until summer training, you will be able to meet some of your fellow corps members and decide if shared housing is the right decision for you.

Piedmont Triad: The best time to move the majority of your belongings to Greensboro is July—during the break after summer Institute training and before the start of regional Orientation, after you have found permanent housing. This is also a safer time to move because school placement assignments will not finalize until during or after Orientation, allowing you to stay near your placement school/school community. We strongly recommend bringing only what is necessary for Induction and Institute on your initial trip to Greensboro, and wait to move larger items that you will not need at Institute until after you have found housing.

WILL I BE LIVING WITH OR NEAR OTHER CORPS MEMBERS?

Charlotte: Yes, if you choose to. Due to the likelihood of placement in the same school or subject area as other corps members, living together can be very sensible and cost-effective.

Piedmont-Triad: Many of our corps members live alone. Most corps members reside in zip codes: 27407, 27408, and 27409. About half our partner schools are located in Greensboro, NC. The others are located in Gibsonville, High Point, and McLeansville. Greensboro is centrally located and offers a thirty-minute or less commute to our placement communities.

WHAT ARE SOME WAYS I CAN GET INVOLVED WITH THE CHARLOTTE-PIEDMONT TRIAD COMMUNITY?

There are many different ways for you to get involved with the Charlotte – Piedmont Triad community. Many of our corps members are able to become active members of the community by getting involved in extracurricular activities such a recreational sports league or house of worship. Many corps members also take an active interest in what is happening in their students’ communities. Also, by joining our corps, you will join a network of 680+ alumni and current corps members who are excited to help you plug in to the Charlotte-Piedmont Triad community in any way that they can!
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

IS IT POSSIBLE TO LIVE COMFORTABLY ON A TEACHER SALARY IN CHARLOTTE-PIEDMONT TRIAD?
Absolutely! Rent and other living costs in Charlotte-Piedmont Triad are relatively low compared to other urban areas of comparable size. The starting teacher’s salary in Charlotte-Piedmont Triad is approximately $40,000 and this allows corps members to live comfortably. In addition, some corps members are able to put savings toward graduate study or other professional or personal goals.

WILL I NEED A CAR? IF I DO NEED A CAR, WHEN/HOW SHOULD I GET ONE?
A car is absolutely necessary. Most corps members who do not own a car prefer to buy one prior to induction and the summer institute. Since corps members are very involved in locating housing, finding their schools, and setting up bank accounts along with other commitments after institute, we recommend that corps members without a car try to purchase one prior to arriving.

WHEN WILL I RECEIVE MY FIRST PAYCHECK?
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and Guilford County Schools pay teachers once each month, and teachers receive their salary on a 10 month cycle with an option to opt into a 12 month cycle. You should receive your first paycheck at the end of July if you teach at a year-round school and August for traditional schools.

WHAT KIND OF BENEFITS WILL I RECEIVE?
Charlotte: Charlotte-Mecklenburg teachers have a comprehensive benefits package. Teachers are covered under the state health plan, State Employees Blue Cross Blue Shield, which provides hospital and medical coverage to full-time employees, beginning in August. Full-time employees are also provided with life insurance and a retirement plan and are eligible for vision and dental insurance and long-term care programs in on events.

Piedmont-Triad: Guilford County Schools offers comprehensive and cost-sensitive benefits to employees and their families. Some of the benefits are mandatory, such as the Teachers’ and State Employees’ Retirement System(TSERS) and basic life insurance. Other plans are optional – for example, health and dental insurance, flexible spending accounts, tax deferred and tax sheltered plans, long-term care insurance, and other supplemental plans.