WELCOME TO
CHARLOTTE
OPPORTUNITY BEGINS WITH EDUCATION
TEACHFORAMERICA
IN THIS SECTION:

Welcome to Charlotte

Joining our diverse network
» 2017 corps profile
» 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 2018 Corps Member,

Congratulations on your acceptance into Teach For America’s 2018 Charlotte corps! It is with great enthusiasm and unbounded optimism that we welcome you to the Charlotte Corps. You have been selected for your accomplishments, leadership, and commitment to ending educational inequity.

By joining Teach For America (TFA), you are making a commitment to a group of students, a school district, and a community that deserves the very best that you have to offer. You are also embarking on one of the most challenging experiences of your life. Throughout Charlotte, students attending under-performing schools face tremendous challenges on a daily basis. Despite their daily hurdles these students are capable of achieving at high levels. They are smart and motivated. They want to succeed. Your dedication and commitment to join other teachers, administrators, parents, and community members will ensure that they do.

In Charlotte, we aim to have an impact on students by ensuring that corps members are successfully teaching and leading their students to earn expanded opportunities due to major academic and personal growth. We are also committed to impacting corps member leadership and cultivating alumni who lead bold, sustainable change with communities and in our nation. In order to realize this impact students and corps member leadership that we desire, we will ensure our work stays centered on People (the heart of our work), Courage (to act humbly, speak up for justice and partner with communities to make desired changes for students), and Excellence (in classrooms and beyond).
In the coming years, you will spend an enormous amount of time teaching, lesson planning as well as collaborating with parents, administrators, fellow corps members, and alumni to ensure your students achieve significant academic gains. Dramatically changing the educational futures of your students will not be easy; it will require constant hard work and a tremendous amount of personal responsibility. Just as you push your students to achieve their maximum potential, this experience will push you to meet your own.

This is not a challenge for you alone. Right now, corps members are working relentlessly to eliminate educational inequities so that all children, regardless of where they live, have an equal chance in life. Our 172 current corps members, along with our alumni, staff, and partners in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools look forward to working with you and providing you with a network of support throughout your two years and beyond.

Congratulations on the accomplishments, leadership, and commitment that have brought you to this point. We expect you to channel all that you have been, and all that you will be, towards increasing equity and opportunity for our students, schools, and communities. We are so excited, and incredibly fortunate, to have you join our movement. Welcome! One Day starts today.

Sincerely,
The Charlotte Regional Staff
JOINING OUR DIVERSE NETWORK

MEET THE CORPS MEMBERS YOU’LL BE WORKING WITH

**CODY IMPTON**
2016 Charlotte Corps, Vance High School

Why Charlotte?
I chose Charlotte because it's a forward thinking city with diversity within the southern US. Charlotte is a long drive from where I grew up (Central Florida) but still less than a day's drive. It is also a city that experiences all four seasons without a really harsh winter. Lastly, I researched to find that Charlotte is an LGBTQ friendly city with supportive leadership from the mayor all the way to the school district level - which was something important to me.

How are your leadership skills developing through your classroom experience?
My leadership skills have grown immensely since moving to Charlotte. From the less thought of skills such as the ability to facilitate discussion and get a group's attention, to finding my 'teacher voice' and ability to manage emotions and behaviors. Some strong transferable skills I have grown are my ability to get organized, manage my time, how to advocate and lastly how to encourage others to be leaders. Yes, all of this and more takes place within the classroom.

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**BRIA FOSTER**
2017 Charlotte Corps, Highland Renaissance Academy

Why Charlotte?
I chose Charlotte because it is my hometown and I am a product of CMS Title I schools. For me, in remembrance of my experiences in grade school, I absolutely could not pass up the opportunity to be an advocate for Charlotte's students. My choosing to return to Charlotte means that I am investing in youth that will, in turn, invest in themselves and their surrounding community – my community.

How are your leadership skills developing through your classroom experience?
Teaching is the ultimate responsibility in which you can’t prepare yourself enough for until the day you meet your scholars. This is why my leadership in the classroom has really taken off. I show I am a leader in the classroom by constantly modeling how we should treat others, not denying students of relevant discussions, and furthering my teaching strategies any chance I get. My students became a part of me the day I was named their teacher. No matter what it takes I am willing and ready to go the extra mile for them.
CARLA CLEMENTS
2007 Charlotte Corps, stay at home parent

Why Charlotte?
Charlotte is a wonderful place for both the young professional (me while teaching) and to raise a family (me now!). There's almost everything a major city has to offer with concerts, professional sports, the arts, yummy food and breweries, and it's actually affordable! From an education perspective, the student need is high and there is absolutely a place for education advocates to make a difference. I fell in love with the international community in East Charlotte where I taught. My school had immigrant students from all over the world!

How has Teach For America impacted your career trajectory?
Teach For America had a direct impact on my career trajectory. After meeting my incredible students, I knew I wanted to be a lifelong advocate for students like mine. This vision initially took me to law school so that I could understand the policies and barriers facing my students. When it came time to help them with their college applications, I came to the realization that I wanted to focus my career on college access work. I now focus my time on helping students navigate the college admissions process, and run a business to fund my work.

GREG SCHERMBECK
2008 Charlotte Corps, Founder and Principal, SchermCo Consulting

Why Charlotte?
Charlotte has always felt like a special city to me. From the moment I began teaching at West Charlotte High School, I was able to learn so much about the history of Charlotte and its people. The story of how Charlotte evolved and the people that helped lead the way is quite remarkable. Charlotte is a rapidly growing city that is becoming more diverse, cultured, and aware of who it is. I've been fortunate to work alongside so many great people and community members in Charlotte - that's why I'm proud to call it my home.

How has Teach For America impacted your career trajectory?
Teaching and being part of Teach For America was a game-changer for me. I leverage many of the lessons learned from my early days of teaching even now as we continue to build our organization. TFA prepared me to teach but also helped me question the status quo from both inside and outside of a school. The lessons, experiences, and network of TFA have been an incredible foundation for my career.
OVERVIEW OF ONBOARDING

WHAT ONBOARDING MEANS TO US

Onboarding spans from when you accept your spot in the corps until you arrive in Charlotte for Induction. During this time, all incoming Charlotte corps members come together to learn about Teach For America and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and transition into life in the Charlotte 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? 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 housing and meals. 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.
PREPARING TO LEAD YOUR CLASSROOM

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.

Within 2 Weeks Of Confirming

- Onboarding and testing call
- Create your personalized timeline to meet requirements and transition to Charlotte
- Complete pre-test(s)
- Begin pre-test activities
- Join the community Facebook group
- Sign up for Remind and GroupMe

Estimated Time Commitment: 6 hours

Months Leading Up To Pre-Service

- Meet North Carolina Department of Public Instruction’s testing requirements
- Forward all certification test registrations and official score reports to cltconnect@teachforamerica.org via email
- Book travel to induction in Charlotte, institute in Atlanta, and kick-off in Charlotte

Estimated Time Commitment: 70 hours

1 Month Before Pre-Service

- Enroll in DSU to earn institute credits
- Complete hiring action items (transcripts, hiring application, complete TB test and medical physical)
- Complete fingerprinting, background checks, and other required AmeriCorps forms
- Join institute prep group call

Estimated Time Commitment: 15 hours
**FINANCIAL TRANSITION**

**YOU'RE A 2018 CORPS MEMBER**
- Praxis or Pearson: $120-$327 (depending on subject area)
  - Book Travel to Induction and Institute: ~$350
  - **ESTIMATED TOTAL: $1,000**

**ONBOARDING**

**MONTH BEFORE INSTITUTE**
- TB Test & Physical: 0-$100
- Transcripts (4 copies): 0-$75
  - **ESTIMATED TOTAL: $175**

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

**POST INSTITUTE**

**FIRST YEAR TEACHING**
- Moving Costs: $300
- Furniture: $500
- Setting up your classroom: $200
- Housing Costs: $1000 (First & Last Month’s Rent and Security Deposit)
- Supplemental Food: $300
  - **ESTIMATED TOTAL: $2,300**

**UNCC**
- Tuition (Optional): $8,000-$10,000*
- Application Fee: $60
- NCDPI License process: $85
  - **ESTIMATED TOTAL: $8,200 - $10,200**

**HELPFUL RESOURCES**
- Charlotte Onboarding Hub
- Testing Timeline
- Carolina CORE: Test Prep Resources

**ESTIMATED TOTAL UP-FRONT CREDENTIALING COSTS: $380 - $587**

**ESTIMATED TOTAL HOUSING/TRANSITIONAL COSTS: $3,000**

**ESTIMATED TOTAL UNCC COSTS (Optional): $8,060-$10,060**
In addition to testing and certification, one of the most important pieces of your transition 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 the 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. You can find office hours here.
WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO MOVE?
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.

WHEN SHOULD I FIND HOUSING?
Corps members usually find housing during summer training. You can wait until you receive your school placement, as many corps members find that it 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. Although these are suggestions, you are welcome to begin looking for housing as early as you like, especially if you have family commitments that you will need to take into account.

WILL I BE LIVING WITH OR NEAR OTHER CORPS MEMBERS?
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.

WHAT ARE SOME WAYS I CAN GET INVOLVED WITH THE CHARLOTTE COMMUNITY?
There are many different ways for you to get involved with the Charlotte community. Many of our corps members are able to become active members of the community by getting involved in extracurricular activities such as 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 550+ alumni and current corps members who are excited to help you plug in to the Charlotte community in any way that they can!
IS IT POSSIBLE TO LIVE COMFORTABLY ON A TEACHER SALARY IN CHARLOTTE?
Absolutely! Rent and other living costs in Charlotte are relatively low compared to other urban areas of comparable size. The starting teacher’s salary in Charlotte 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 in Charlotte. 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 in Charlotte.

WHEN WILL I RECEIVE MY FIRST PAYCHECK?
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools pay teachers once each month, and teachers receive their salary on a 10 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-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.

This document reflects some of the most common questions about joining the Charlotte corps, but we realize you may have many more. We are happy to answer your questions or concerns as they arise. Please send inquiries to cltconnect@teachforamerica.org