

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TEACHFORAMERICA

Contact: Sharise Darby
917.391.6075
sharise.darby@teachforamerica.org

MOST DIVERSE TEACH FOR AMERICA CORPS EVER JOINS LOCAL EFFORTS TO EXPAND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

145 New Teachers Part of Most Diverse Corps Since Local Teach For America Partnership Began in 2004; 58% Identify as People of Color; 46% Are First in Family to Graduate From College; 46% Are Graduate Students or Professionals

LAS VEGAS, August 14, 2014—Teach For America announced today that it will welcome 145 new local teachers as part of its most diverse corps ever. They join 145 second-year teachers for a total corps of nearly 290 who will be working in local schools this coming year.

The organization shares with the Clark County School District (CCSD) and local schools a belief in the importance of engaging talented and committed individuals from all backgrounds and academic interests to bring diverse perspectives and experiences to the classroom. Teach For America also has found that maximizing diversity supports its effort to attract the country's top talent. Among the new corps members, nearly 58 percent identify as people of color, including 28 percent who identify as African American and 15 percent who identify as Latino.

The ongoing changes Teach For America makes to its recruiting and selection efforts contributed to the increase in diverse talent. The organization, an AmeriCorps program, is known for attracting individuals with impressive academic, professional, and leadership experience, and has long recognized the potential of teachers who share students' backgrounds to serve as critical classroom leaders and role models.

"I'm excited that we're making progress in recruiting diverse talent to teach in schools in our community," said Victor Wakefield, executive director of Teach For America–Las Vegas Valley. "We know that teachers with similar backgrounds and experiences as their students can have a meaningful impact on their students' trajectories. We're grateful that our new corps brings tremendous talent, along with a wider range of personal and professional experience than ever before."

The 145 new local teachers are among the 5,300 in Teach For America's 25th national corps, who join second-year corps members for a total corps of 10,600. Among the new corps members nationally:

- 50 percent identify as people of color, compared with less than 20 percent of all teachers nationwide (according to the [National Center for Education Statistics](#)).
- 47 percent received Pell Grants, a reliable indicator of low-income background.
- One-third are the first in their families to attend college.
- 33 percent come to the corps from graduate school or with professional experience.
- 100 are veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces.

- 22 percent identify as African American.
- 13 percent identify as Hispanic.
- 6 percent identify as Asian American or Pacific Islander.
- 6 percent identify as multi-ethnic/multi-racial.
- 1 percent identify as Native.

“At CCSD, we're committed to drawing high-quality teachers to our schools with the highest need. That is why I value the partnership of organizations like Teach For America who help us meet those goals,” CCSD Superintendent Pat Skorkowsky said. “We know teachers with diverse experiences and perspectives enrich our students’ learning and can connect with our families and communities in critical and unique ways.”

Teach For America’s national applicant pool this year was its most diverse to date. Almost half of the more than 50,000 applicants identify as people of color; nearly half received Pell Grants; and more than one-third were the first in their family to attend college. Applicants included 13 percent of graduating seniors at Spelman College; 7 percent at Princeton University and Morehouse College; 6 percent at the University of Michigan–Ann Arbor; 5 percent at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and 3 percent at the University of Texas at Austin.

Teach For America launched two annual recruiting campaigns this year to help build the talent and diversity of its applicant pool. In concert with its support of the DREAM Act, Teach For America partnered with schools and districts to create a path to teaching for individuals with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals status. Some 40 individuals with DACA status joined the 2014 corps and will be teaching across 10 regions. Teach For America’s inaugural [“Dream. Rise. Do”](#) campaign, launched in February, is designed to encourage more African American men to consider teaching. The campaign promotes multiple pathways into the profession, and in its first month, more than 20,000 people signed the campaign pledge.

Teach For America also invested in building the talent and diversity of its applicant pool in other ways, including reaching out to and meeting individually with many more potential applicants, increasing outreach to professionals from all sectors, and developing additional partnerships with diverse organizations.

Teach For America continuously refines its approach to selecting candidates, informed by ongoing observation of the skills and practices of its most successful educators. The selection process is focused on identifying candidate strengths, and Teach For America has seen that educators can succeed with various combinations of skills and experiences. Some of the areas of strength that Teach For America looks for include a deep belief in the potential of all kids, often informed by experience in low-income communities; leadership; past achievement; perseverance in challenging situations; long-term commitment to reaching goals; excellent organization and critical-thinking skills; strong interpersonal skills; and an ability to work with individuals from a variety of backgrounds.

Each year, Teach For America selects areas to study further to better understand its most effective teachers, and this year research was done on the impact of an applicant’s experience in low-income communities and his or her effort and determination to reach goals over time. Findings in these areas led the organization to place more emphasis on gathering insight into these two elements during the admissions process, which has contributed to a more diverse corps this year.

Teach For America’s acceptance rate this year was 15 percent. The incoming national corps has an average GPA of 3.4 and includes alumni of more than 850 colleges and universities. Seventeen percent of incoming corps members have backgrounds in science, technology, engineering or math (STEM) fields.

A growing body of rigorous independent research demonstrates that Teach For America teachers are having a positive impact in the classroom. Most recently, a [report](#) by Mathematica Policy Research found that students taught by Teach For America corps members made gains in math equivalent to an additional 2.6 months of learning annually. The 2013 Tennessee Higher Education Commission [report card](#) identified Teach For America as one of the state's most effective sources of teachers for the third year running. These findings are consistent with similar statewide studies in [North Carolina](#) and [Louisiana](#).

Teach For America corps members develop a lifelong commitment to expanding educational opportunity. Some 200 local alumni, including 130 teachers, eight school or district administrators, and two members of the Nevada State Board of Education, are working across a range of fields to address the root causes of educational inequity.

About Teach For America

Teach For America works in partnership with communities to expand educational opportunity for children facing the challenges of poverty. Founded in 1990, Teach For America recruits and develops a diverse corps of outstanding college graduates and professionals to make an initial two-year commitment to teach in high-need schools and become lifelong leaders in the movement to end educational inequity. This fall, 10,600 corps members will be teaching in 50 urban and rural regions across the country while 37,000 alumni work across sectors to ensure that all children have access to an excellent education. For more information, visit www.teachforamerica.org and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

#