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

150 New Teachers Part of Most Diverse Corps Since Local Teach For America Partnership Began in 1992; 50% Identify as People of Color; 45% Come From a Low-Income Background; 29% Are First in Family to Graduate From College; 35% Are Graduate Students or Professionals

BALTIMORE, August 15, 2014—Teach For America, an AmeriCorps program, announced today that it will welcome 150 new local teachers to local schools this fall. The organization shares with its local partners 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 local corps members, almost 40 percent identify as African American or Latino, and 16 percent grew up in the Baltimore area.

The ongoing changes Teach For America makes to its recruiting and selection efforts contributed to the increase in diverse talent. The organization 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. Over 85 percent of students at the more than 115 public schools across Baltimore that partner with Teach For America identify as African American or Latino, and more than 80 percent are eligible for the federal lunch program.

"In our third decade partnering with Baltimore City and County public schools, we are invested in engaging even more deeply with our community," said Courtney Cass, executive director of Teach For America–Baltimore. "It's important that corps members bring a diversity of perspectives to their classrooms, which helps them to form relationships based on common experiences with students and their families and expands students' understanding of different ideas and perspectives."

The 150 new local teachers are among 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.

“I value the partnership of organizations like Teach For America because they recognize the importance of dedicated teachers who reflect the diverse backgrounds of our Baltimore students,” said Shantay McKinily, principal of Walter P. Carter Elementary Middle School. “We know that teachers who bring a diversity of experiences and perspectives to their work enrich our students’ learning, as well as connect with our families and communities in critical 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. This year’s corps includes 115 graduates of local colleges and universities, including 37 from the University of Maryland, College Park; 13 from Loyola University Maryland; 12 from Johns Hopkins University; and 11 from Towson University.

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 admissions remained highly selective, with an acceptance rate this year of 15 percent. The incoming national corps has an average GPA of 3.4 and includes alumni of more than 850 colleges and universities. Corps members include more than 30 student-body presidents, more than 30 Posse Foundation scholars, 10 Hispanic Scholarship Fund recipients or finalists, and nine Gates Millennium Scholars. 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. Over 700 local alumni—including Liberty Elementary School Principal Joe Manko; Zeke Cohen, executive director of The Intersection; and Yasmene Mumby, KIPP Baltimore's director of community engagement—are working across a range of fields to address the root causes of educational inequity. Seventy-eight percent have made education their career—40 percent as classroom teachers and 38 percent in other roles, including principals, deans, and superintendents.

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](#).

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