

ABOUT TEACH FOR AMERICA

Teach For America is the national corps of top recent college graduates who commit to teach for two years in urban and rural public schools and become lifelong leaders in the effort to expand educational opportunity. Our mission is to build the movement to eliminate educational inequity by enlisting the nation's most promising future leaders in the effort. We currently have over seven thousand first- and second-year

Teach For America corps members teaching in about three dozen regions across the United States, as well as about twenty thousand alumni who are continuing to work from inside and outside the field of education to address the root causes of the problem.

OUR TEACHERS' IMPACT

The impact of Teach For America corps members on student achievement is at least as great as that of other new teachers and often exceeds that of experienced and certified teachers in the same schools. Corps members' positive impact spans subject areas and grade levels, from prekindergarten through high school. The most rigorous study to date found that students of corps members attained greater gains in math and equivalent gains in reading compared with students of other teachers, including veteran and certified teachers. For this experimental study, researchers used random assignment of students to teachers at the elementary school level in multiple regions.ⁱ A team of researchers found similar results based on a review of several years' worth of student achievement data for grades 3 through 8 in New York City. The group concluded that Teach For America corps members are more effective than their traditionally certified counterparts in terms of impact on student achievement in math and just as effective in reading/language arts.ⁱⁱ A study of Teach For America corps members teaching at the high school level in North Carolina found that they were, on average, more effective than non-Teach For America teachers in all subject areas, especially in math and science. That was true even when Teach For America corps members were compared with experienced, fully certified teachers.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Problem of Educational Inequity

In America today, educational disparities limit the life prospects of the 13 million children growing up in poverty. Fourth graders in low-income communities are already three grade levels behind their peers in high-income communities. Half of these students won't graduate from high school. Those who do graduate will read and do math, on average, at the level of eighth graders in high-income communities.

ALUMNI LEADERSHIP

While only one in ten corps members say they were interested in the teaching profession before joining Teach For America, nearly two-thirds of our alumni remain in the field of education, where they are having a significant impact. They are running many of the most successful schools in low-income communities, winning the highest teacher accolades, and pioneering innovative reform efforts. In regions where Teach For America has been placing corps members for fifteen years or more (such as Oakland, California; New Orleans; and Washington, D.C.), alumni within the education system and across all sectors, forming a critical mass, are taking dramatic steps to provide opportunities for all students.

As of 2009, more than 380 alumni lead schools across the country, and more than 20 have founded and continue to lead some of the country's most innovative nonprofits. In addition, a growing number of Teach For America alumni are pursuing careers in public service, including more than 500 who work in government, politics, or advocacy, and over 25 who serve as elected officials. Teach For America alumni include the founders of the highly successful KIPP Network, YES College Prep schools, and IDEA Academies. The chancellor of the Washington, D.C., public schools and key leaders in a number of urban and rural districts are Teach For America alumni. Teach For America's alumni also include elected school board officials in locations such as Los Angeles, Houston, and North Plainfield, New Jersey.

To learn more about Teach For America, visit www.teachforamerica.org.

Our History

In 1989, Wendy Kopp proposed the creation of a national teacher corps in her senior thesis at Princeton University. Inspired by the idea of channeling the nation's top graduates against the educational inequity that she viewed as its most fundamental problem, she set out to make it happen. Within a year, she raised \$2.5 million in start-up funding, hired a skeleton staff, and found five hundred recruits through a grassroots outreach campaign. Since then, she and a dedicated team have built Teach For America into a public-private partnership that is continually growing and improving in its pursuit of building an unstoppable movement to realize the vision that one day, all children in our nation will have the opportunity to attain an excellent education.

ⁱ Decker, P.T., Mayer, D.P., and Glazerman, S. *The Effects of Teach For America on Students*. Princeton, N.J.: Mathematica Policy Research, 2004.

ⁱⁱ Kane, T.J., Jonah E. Rockoff, J.E., and Staiger, D.O. "What Does Certification Tell Us About Teacher Effectiveness? Evidence from New York City." National Bureau of Economic Research, 12155, 2006.

ⁱⁱⁱ Xu, Z., Hannaway, J., and Taylor, C. Making a Difference? *The Effects of Teach For America in High School*. Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute/CALDER, 2008-2009.