



# Our Work Across North Carolina

2021

Annual Legislative Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

*One day, all children in this nation will have the opportunity to attain an excellent education.*

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*This report will be submitted to the North Carolina General Assembly's Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, the offices of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Chairs of the Senate Appropriations / Base Budget Committee and the House Appropriations Committee, the Senate Appropriations Committee on Education / Higher Education, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Education, and the Fiscal Research Division on or before January 1, 2022 as required by the North Carolina State Legislature, per S.L. 2019-165, Section 3.6(b); S.L 2013-360, Section 8.21.(b); and S.L 2013-360, Section 8.21.(e).*

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## Summary

Teach For America (TFA) came to North Carolina in 1990. Since then, thanks in part to the strong support we have received from the North Carolina state government, we have trained nearly 4,000 teacher leaders in our great state, impacting more than 250,000 students. The North Carolina Legislature's continued investment in our organization ensures we can place and support 225+ teacher leaders in 12 school districts and charter school networks across Eastern North Carolina, Charlotte, and the Piedmont Triad each year. Moreover, we leverage our State Funding to further develop the leadership of the 2,000+ Teach For America alumni who continue to live, work, and worship across our great state. The North Carolina General Assembly's continued financial commitment in Teach For America North Carolina helps make it possible for us to recruit, train, support, and retain teachers to serve in North Carolina's public schools.

Teach For America North Carolina remains committed to the central tenets of the NC Teacher Corps, but continues to build off of its work through innovative strategies. This includes our "Teach Back Home" initiative, which convinces more North Carolinians to either stay in or make it home to North Carolina to teach. We also see promise from our blossoming "Teach Beyond Two" program, which encourages our corps members to teach at least an additional two years in North Carolina public schools. These partnerships only succeed because of our ongoing collaboration with TFA alumni, school administrators from across our great state, and the elected school board members who graciously serve our communities.

Teach For America North Carolina continues to deliver leaders to the Piedmont Triad region (the area within and surrounding the three major cities of Greensboro, Winston-Salem, and High Point). We also continue to expand our efforts in Eastern North Carolina and throughout Charlotte and Mecklenburg County. In total, we continue to exceed our original goal of placing 225+ teachers throughout these regions, as there are 247 Teach For America North Carolina corps members serving as first-year and second-year teachers in classrooms located across our high-need placement school districts. This includes 76 Eastern North Carolina teacher leaders and 171 Charlotte-Piedmont Triad teacher leaders. Collectively, these teacher leaders impact nearly 19,000 students on a daily basis. This is not to mention the more than 500 Teach For America alumni serving as educators across the Old North State.

Teach For America is committed to partnering with the State to inspire more North Carolinians to teach and lead as educators here. While we know great teachers exist across our great nation, we believe that teachers with personal ties to North Carolina can make a unique contribution to our great state, bringing a special sense of urgency and commitment to educating North Carolina's children. Last year, Teach For America received 16,130 applications from candidates seeking participation in our national program. Of these applicants, 740 were residents of North Carolina. Teach For America found these candidates through a variety of recruitment strategies, including partnerships on college campuses, social media, and word of mouth. Of the 740 applications from North Carolina residents, 417 were recent graduates (including 71 graduate student applications). The majority of candidates came from the nine North Carolina campuses we most frequently partner with, which includes: the University

of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill, Duke University, North Carolina A&T, NC Central, NC State University, UNC Charlotte, UNC Greensboro, Wake Forest University, and Davidson College. We believe North Carolina has the greatest potential

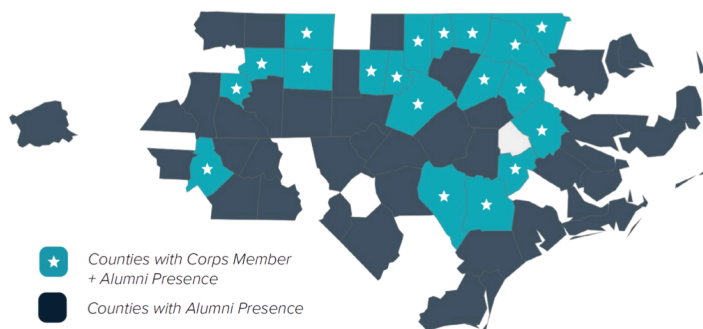
Ultimately, 205 North Carolinians, out of 740 North Carolina applicants, were accepted by TFA last year to be part of the 2021 Corps, which totaled 2237 teachers. Therefore, 27.7% of North Carolinians who applied to Teach For America were accepted, compared to a 13.9% national acceptance rate. Moreover, 9.2% of all corps members are originally from the Old North State. Of the 2237 candidates who were accepted to teach as part of our national program, 60 were placed in North Carolina (2.7% of the total corps). As part of our efforts to ensure all of our corps members obtain licensure from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), all of our corps members will establish North Carolina residency.

Through our State Funding, Teach For America North Carolina continues to increase its targeted recruitment efforts of candidates from backgrounds related to STEM education, candidates who are mid-career level and lateral entry industry professionals, and candidates who are veterans of the United States Armed Forces. Moreover, we continue to leverage State funds to raise the necessary additional private funding to achieve these aims. Teach For America is a nonpartisan organization with bipartisan legislative champions. We know that, together, we can achieve great things for North Carolina's students and communities. We thank you for your continued support.

### Our Network is Stronger Than Ever

Our network is nearly 2,100 members strong. Nearly two-thirds of Teach For America alumni in North Carolina are working in education—approximately 500 of them are K-12 classroom teachers, and another 135 serve as school or school-systems leaders.

And, our teaching force mirrors the identities of the broader North Carolina student population.



# Teach For America's National Approach & Impact

Nationally, Teach For America works in partnership with communities to expand educational opportunities for children facing the challenges of poverty. Today, Teach For America is represented in 50 regions nationwide. Currently, over 60,000 members of the TFA network are driving toward equity and excellence for all, including over 20,000 corps members and alumni working in classrooms; nearly 3,000 principals, assistant principals, and deans; more than 550 system leaders; and over 100 school board members. There currently are 2237 Teach For America corps members serving as first-year teachers and 2495 Teach For America corps members serving as second-year teachers (4732 total) across the country.

## Mission

Teach For America finds, develops, and supports a diverse network of leaders who expand opportunity for children from classrooms, schools, and every sector and field that shapes the broader systems in which schools operate.

## A Theory of Systems Change

Solving this problem will take many interventions from many directions over a prolonged period of time: no single solution is sufficient to bring about an equitable and excellent education for all children. Our mission and approach draws on three lessons from enduring systems-change efforts throughout history. First, change requires sustained leadership inside and outside of the system challenging conventional wisdom and the status quo by demonstrating what's possible. Second, change requires a broad and diverse coalition of people united around common purpose and shared values, working together to translate insights from proof points of possibility into policy and practice. Third, the effort must be shaped by those most directly impacted by the injustice, and led by those with personal proximity to the problem and its complexity.

## Our Approach

1. **We find promising leaders:** The questions underlying educational inequity demand the imagination and sustained focus of our nation's most promising leaders. We recruit outstanding and diverse leaders early in their careers, who have demonstrated evidence of the values and leadership necessary to expand opportunity and access for all children inside and outside of the classroom. We ask leaders to make a lifelong commitment that begins with two years' teaching in a public school, partnering with children and families most acutely impacted by educational inequity.
2. **We develop and cultivate the leadership skills and mindsets necessary for systems change through classroom teaching:** We develop leaders who go beyond traditional expectations to advance the academic and personal growth of their students and help to strengthen their schools. In doing so, they expand their perspectives, knowledge, and skill as educators,

advocates, and systems change leaders. Great teaching is necessary to ensure children realize their potential and have the full agency they need and deserve in life. Teaching is also a profound act of leadership, and foundational for courageous individual and collective leadership in the long fight for educational equity and excellence. In partnership with schools, parents, families, local universities, other organizations, and businesses in the community, we provide initial training, ongoing professional development, and access to an unparalleled resource and support network.

3. **We support the individual and collective leadership, relationships, and learning of those in our network throughout their lifetime:** Throughout their lives, as their careers take shape, we help alumni connect with each other and with high-impact opportunities to continue to grow and learn in pursuit of collective impact. Informed and inspired by their students, many alumni choose to teach in high-need schools and communities beyond their two-year commitments. Others lead from many sectors that shape the context and conditions in which schools operate. They are school and district leaders; policy makers; founders of advocacy organizations; social entrepreneurs; and business, philanthropic, and civic leaders working to make change.

### 2030 Goal

*By the year 2030, twice as many children in communities where we work will reach key educational milestones indicating they are on a path to economic mobility and co-creating a future filled with possibility.*

### A National Network That Delivers For North Carolina

Teach For America North Carolina continues to benefit from the full strength of the entire TFA organization that consistently supports our North Carolina network and team. Together, we are leading the way for accelerated network impact.

For example, as TFA North Carolina enhances its efforts to develop alumni leadership through improved and expanded programing, we are more effectively working towards the promise of every North Carolina student receiving an excellent education. This includes *both* TFA alumni who served in the corps in North Carolina who we successfully retained through our “Teach Beyond Two” program, and those TFA alumni who we successfully recruited to the Tar Heel State from other TFA regions through our “Teach Back Home” initiative. This robust alumni programming supports TFA teachers who continue to teach in the classrooms that need them the most. In total, there are nearly 2,000 Teach For America alumni who live, work, and worship in the Old North State. Through engaging our alumni in new ways, whether they live in Charlotte, Greensboro, Eastern North Carolina, the Triangle, or somewhere else in North Carolina, we can demonstrate that our promise to North Carolina’s students is unwavering.

We have been working with members of our national team to determine what the education system needs to do differently to really achieve better outcomes for our kids in the next decade, and how Teach For America itself needs to change to have the greatest possible impact on students. That is why we set a new goal for ourselves to double the number of students in our communities who are on a

path toward achieving greater economic mobility. We have launched into our new 10 year strategic vision to make the next decade transformational for students growing up in low income communities.

This work began long before the pandemic, but has taken on new urgency now. We are stronger because Teach For America set an ambitious goal to guide our next 10 years. And we know this goal is attainable because we have seen it's possible right here in North Carolina: in Northampton County where the KIPP Gaston network doubled the number of college graduates in that region (Whitmire, 2019). Reaching our ambitious new goal will require us to do more and work differently to have the greatest impact on students. This is only possible because of the ongoing support we receive from the North Carolina General Assembly and the collaboration taking place.

## Shifting to a Statewide Model

Right now we work with our teacher leaders who are placed in 12 school districts and charter schools across North Carolina. We are expanding the number of communities we are engaged in across North Carolina. At the core of this expansion is moving to a statewide operating model and engaging our 2,000 TFA alumni in new ways.

Eastern North Carolina, Charlotte, and the Piedmont Triad have benefited from Teach For America's presence for years. Those benefits are the direct result of the North Carolina General Assembly's consistent investment in our organization. Now, that investment is allowing us to grow our impact not only in those regions, but across all of North Carolina.

This year, we are continuing to learn about the impact of COVID-19 on school districts' and the necessary changes to meet the needs of our school communities. Additionally, our organization's new strategic direction presented a unique opportunity for statewide collaboration and strategic alignment in North Carolina. As Teach for America moves forward on our 10 year goal, having one leader over our North Carolina regions will help unify educational equity efforts across our state while ensuring each region moves forward implementing strategies that will distinctly serve individual communities and our network of corps members and alumni. We are excited to work towards a shared vision for education in North Carolina with one leader. We believe this shift is a natural evolution and will create important efficiencies in our work and more effectively empower our network through the creation of an aligned statewide long-term plan and strategy. This decision was made after considerable reflection from our regional staff members and extensive counsel from our Advisory Boards and organizational leaders. With centralized leadership within each distinct site—ENC, Charlotte, and the Piedmont Triad—we can best meet the needs of our stakeholders, achieve financial sustainability, and maximize our impact across our existing communities. This model sets us up in the long-term to potentially expand our presence to other regions in North Carolina where our footprint has not previously been as pronounced.

Our separate local regional boards will remain autonomous. We are, however, eager for board members to connect, collaborate, and learn from one another. As Executive Director for both regions, Dr. Monique Perry-Graves will engage with each board, while ensuring operations and priorities remain clearly aligned to maximize impact. Eastern North Carolina, Charlotte, and the Piedmont Triad will continue to operate as their own distinct local program regions, with Dr. Perry-Graves at the helm. Our aim is to both foster meaningful statewide collaboration while also distinctly serving individual communities and our network of corps members and alumni in both regions. Throughout this fiscal year, we will work to shape an inclusive, community-responsive long-term strategic plan that will inform our approach at all three of our sites moving forward.

We plan to maintain a corps member presence throughout Eastern North Carolina, Charlotte, and the Piedmont Triad. We will continue to prioritize our current school district partners regarding corps member placement. Additionally, our corps members will continue to be assigned to specific sub-regions (Charlotte, Eastern North Carolina, and the Piedmont-Triad). Throughout the next fiscal year TFA North Carolina will maintain autonomous program regions, with Eastern North Carolina program



staff focused on supporting corps members assigned to that sub-region and Charlotte-Piedmont Triad program staff focused on supporting corps members in Charlotte and the Piedmont Triad.

We are undergoing a team restructure designed to maximize collaboration and efficiency across the state. While uncertainty is always present amid transition and change, this remains clear: as we transition back to a statewide model, the Teach For America North Carolina team still aims to support the priorities of the State of North Carolina in our work and presence. Since Teach For America arrived in North Carolina in 1990, we have served the students, parents, and families of our great state. While our specific roles may be connected to a particular community, our path forward is accountability to the life outcomes of communities throughout the state. Dr. Perry-Graves will maintain a statewide presence. She holds a multitude of personal and professional ties across North Carolina. She grew up in the Raleigh area, where her parents still reside. She has family in the Nash and Wilson County areas, and her son lives in Greensboro. While her home residence is in Charlotte, she plans to make frequent trips to all of our sites on a regular basis. Moreover, Dr. Perry-Graves, alongside other staff members, will prioritize a regular dialogue between Teach For America North Carolina and the esteemed members of the North Carolina General Assembly. Teach For America recognizes North Carolina state legislators as an invaluable partner in our pursuit of educational equity for every North Carolina student.

This is not a formal merger so much as a statewide strategic alignment and unification. We recognize that the three sites where we place corps members in North Carolina—Eastern North Carolina, Charlotte, and the Piedmont-Triad (and all the different counties and communities therein)—all hold beautifully unique and disparate identities. With that, our ultimate aim is to meet the distinct needs of the individual communities and our network of corps members and alumni. We will take an inclusive and community-responsive approach.

In light of our 10 year goal, we are moving toward a greater focus on leveraging alumni to accelerate impact. We are going to expand our reach and impact, not only galvanizing a new generation of diverse leaders to enter the classroom as corps members, but by also cultivating a stronger, and even more impactful alumni network to deliver for our students and community. Our alumni are leaders working in every sector in education—as teachers, school counselors, school and district leaders, and education non-profit leaders. They also take on inequity from outside the classroom as well, in community, nonprofit, and government service. More than two-thirds of our alumni are in education or working in low-income communities, working to advance the cause of excellence and equity.

We will have staff members supporting our communities where there are corps members and where there is a high density of alums, including Charlotte, the Piedmont-Triad, Eastern North Carolina, and the Triangle. These staff members will be dedicated to corps members and alumni engagement work. They are excited to foster connections among our 2,000 network members currently living in North Carolina. We continue to provide our corps members and alumni training and resources on a variety of topics that include best practices on leadership, wellness, student social-emotional learning, data-driven instruction, relationship-building, and more. With this strategic shift, we will leverage our alumni network to pursue and achieve systems change by developing, supporting, and tracking the

degree to which our alumni are making purposeful impact. As a result of our alumni development strategy, we will be on a path to realize:

1. an increased number of alumni in key systems roles, and those alumni having sustained impact;
2. a network that is continuously spreading knowledge in ways that accelerate student learning;
3. and the introduction of innovative learning, school, and systems transformation models that yield breakthroughs in outcomes.

Why now? We have an opportunity - and obligation - to respond to this urgent moment and to reimagine a different future for our students that is more equitable, just, and fair. A world where all students can lead, learn, and thrive. Teach For America is working intentionally and in innovative ways to best support our students and families. We are working fast to be responsive to the changing needs of our communities in alignment with our 10-year goal. Our shift to a statewide operating model is just one example of this. We deeply believe in the work of our organization in shaping what new realities may exist for education not only in North Carolina, but across our nation.

Our teachers are still absolutely central to the work we do. Placing and supporting corps members in high-need vacancies remains the bread and butter of our work. We know our kids are counting on us and our mission is more critical than ever. That is why we are focused this year to ensure students have educational opportunities in an extraordinarily difficult year, and that teachers can do so safely and effectively. Furthermore, that is why we cannot wait any longer as a country to take on the big systemic problems that hold kids back. This next decade will need to be transformational, so these barriers are finally knocked down and we never return to a system where students are left out and left behind.

We will be spending FY22 gaining clarity on our 10 year-goal and identifying the strategies and priorities that will help us achieve said goal. This will be a year of learning, strategizing, shaping, and dreaming. We will be intentionally seeking input from our stakeholders—parents, students, legislators, donors, corps members, alumni, community partners—to reimagine what needs to happen to ensure that twice as many children in communities where we work in North Carolina will reach key educational milestones indicating they are on a path to economic mobility and co-creating a future filled with possibility.

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## We're Starting on a Bold New Direction

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Over the course of the next year, our new statewide operating model will galvanize our network in innovative ways while positioning our staff to accelerate our impact in the communities in which we work. Here are three key themes guiding our path forward.

1

**Expand our Reach Across NC in Support of Economic Mobility & our 2030 Goal**

We will build deeper connections with our communities while expanding partnerships with other K-12 organizations in order to support, recruit and train as many new teachers as possible.

2

**Broaden and Strengthen our TFA Network Experience**

Our corps members and alumni programming is the backbone of our organization, and principals prefer our teachers because of their leadership. We will deepen and strengthen that support to provide an excellent corps member experience and ongoing alumni programming and engagement that meets our leaders at every stage of their development in the classroom and beyond.

3

**Amplify our Story of Impact**

The impact is what we are about, and we will exponentially increase our storytelling of our impact quantitative and qualitatively. We won't be shy about sharing our outcomes.

# Delivering North Carolina Talented Teacher Leaders

## We Are Achieving Impact

### #1 Early-Career Teachers

According to a [report](#) from the Education Policy Initiative at Carolina, TFA Corps Members are the most effective early-career teachers in the state,

### 1.3 & 2.6 Additional Months

Our Corps Members lead students to [1.3 additional months](#) of learning in reading classrooms, and [2.6 additional months](#) in math classrooms.

### 98 Percent

The vast majority of principals tell us that they are satisfied with the contributions and abilities of Teach For America network members.

## Teacher Diversity

Our teachers reflect the diversity of the communities we serve. Nationally, about 50% of our Teach For America teachers identify as people of color, compared to the national average of 20%. In North Carolina, 52% of our Teach For America teachers are white and 48% of our TFA teachers identify as a person of color, compared to the state averages of 79% and 21%, respectively. When teachers share the background of their students, there is a measurable, positive impact on student achievement. We know that teachers of color not only have a better cultural understanding of students of color, but they also hold them to higher expectations, often leading to better academic marks and increased chances of graduating. Moreover, research shows that learning from a teacher of color benefits all students.

## High-Quality & Award-Winning Teachers

Teach For America North Carolina remains committed to focusing on the quality of the individual leaders in the classroom. Principals across North Carolina continue to be satisfied with the performance of our Corps Members and Alumni. 98% of Principals are highly satisfied with the corps members in their buildings, and 100% are highly satisfied with the alumni in their building.

We are proud to share that 22 of our corps members and alumni classroom leaders were recognized as Teachers of the Year this past school year in our placement regions, including CeCe Sizoo-Roberson who was a finalist for North Carolina Teacher of the Year and LaKeia Colquitt who was named Rookie Teacher of the Year for Guilford County Schools. The 2021 North Carolina Principal of the Year is also a TFA alum; prior to serving as principal at Broughton High School in Raleigh, Elena Ashburn got her start in teaching as a 2007 TFA corps member in Eastern North Carolina.

Teach For America focuses on filling vacancies with the nation's best leaders. Anything less would be unacceptable for the students and communities we serve. As a result of the North Carolina General Assembly's investment in our organization, we continue to deliver on this promise.

We included below some testimony from a few of our partners about the exceptional leaders Teach For America brings to North Carolina:

***“I appreciate the exceptional support Teach For America has provided and look forward to our continued partnership”***

*-said Kendra Davis, Principal at Mariam Joy Elementary School in Warrenton, NC*

***“Teach For America is vital in helping to fill vacancies. I wish we could quadruple the number of TFA teachers in our schools in Charlotte.”***

*-said Jeffrey Cook, TFA Alum Principal, Wilson STEM Academy, Charlotte, NC*

*“Teach For America North Carolina is **a source for students to receive instruction from highly motivated and successful individuals** that may become career teachers. TFA provides Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools with outstanding individuals who fill vacancies in hard-to-fill content areas and in schools with students that come from a lower socioeconomic status. TFA has recruited teachers to fill STEM vacancies and mid-career individuals through national partnerships and networks. Individuals with training in particular areas, but do not have educator training, can still transition to a classroom teacher because they have strong content knowledge and Teach For America opens the door for them. Their pedagogy is strong because of TFA support and experience in the classroom. Teach For America impacts our community in a positive way. **Students’ educational experiences are enhanced when they receive instruction from someone who looks like them and from someone who has strong content knowledge, which TFA makes possible.**”*

*-said Robert Ellyson, Executive Director, Talent Acquisition, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools*



**HAYLEY GEARHEART (ENC '17)**  
District Teacher of the Year  
Edgecombe County Public Schools



**CECE SIZOO-ROBERSON (CPT '12)**  
District Teacher of the Year  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools  
*Finalist North Carolina Teacher of the Year*



**LA'KEIA COLQUITT (CPT '19)**  
District Rookie Teacher of the Year  
Guilford County Schools



**MARCIA MOYD-WILLIAMS (CPT '17)**  
*Finalist, District Teacher of the Year*  
Guilford County Schools



**NEHA MURALY (CPT '20)**  
*Finalist, District Rookie Teacher of the Year*  
Guilford County Schools



**PARIS HARRELL SPEIGHT (CPT '16)**  
*Finalist, District Teacher of the Year*  
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

**ASHLEI GENTRY (CPT '17)**  
Teacher of the Year  
Tuckaseegee Elementary

**KAITLYN BROWN (CPT '20)**  
Rookie Teacher of the Year  
Eastern Middle School

**MAZELLA SLOAN (ENC '16)**  
Teacher of the Year  
Kinston High School

**ASHLEY FRYE (ENC '19)**  
Beginning Teacher of the Year  
Phillips Middle School

**KATELYN BURRELL (CPT '17)**  
Teacher of the Year  
Nations Ford Elementary

**MOLLY NAYLOR (CPT '12)**  
Teacher of the Year  
McClintock Middle

**BRIGID MCCLUSKY (ENC '20)**  
Teacher of the Year  
Warren County Middle School

**KATIE KELLER ALAR (CPT '17)**  
Teacher of the Year  
Devonshire Elementary

**SADIYA STRONG (CPT '20)**  
Rookie Teacher of the Year  
Gillespie Park Elementary

**GEORGIA HAYNES-COX (CPT '17)**  
Teacher of the Year  
Westerly Hills Academy

**KENYA RAYNOR (ENC '16)**  
Teacher of the Year  
Phillips Middle School

**SARAH SCOTT (ENC '20)**  
Beginning Teacher of the Year  
Southwest High School

**JALAN GUNNING (CPT '20)**  
Beginning Teacher of the Year  
Movement Charter (Freedom Drive)

**LIZ MOORE (ENC '20)**  
Rookie Teacher of the Year  
Vance County High School

**SHAWNA FIELDS (CPT '13)**  
Teacher of the Year  
West Mecklenburg High

**MATT WESTBROOK (CPT '15)**  
Teacher of the Year  
Mendenhall Middle School

## A Multitude of Universities

Teach For America has a rich history of recruiting the nation's top talent to teach in the schools that need them most. This includes over 1000 graduates of our country's Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs) and 4000 Ivy League graduates.

We recently invested capacity and energy into a multi-year plan towards mobilizing our most positive influencers to advocate on behalf of Teach For America. We have found that by working with influencers on college campuses, we are able to steward relationships that endure year over year, provide reciprocity, and ultimately shape a more positive ecosystem to attract top prospects to our mission and organization. Results of our Fall 2019 Brand Health survey showed that campus word-of-mouth is the primary driver of brand awareness at most-selective campuses, accounting for roughly 60% of introductions to Teach For America. Last year, we created new roles that were charged with designing, executing, and continually improving a set of influencer-led experiences to steward and convert mission-aligned candidates throughout their journey. This role was also in charge of developing and executing a set of rigorous experiments to generate learning outcomes for quality lead generation. These roles were able to deliver a series of innovative and high-quality experiences to maximize the recruitment of mission-aligned leaders.

## STEM Educators

Teach For America North Carolina continues to increase its targeted recruitment efforts of candidates who majored in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). These graduates, alongside the traditionally trained educators we recruit and place, are uniquely-educated to teach STEM subjects. Additionally, we utilize targeted recruitment efforts to attract early-career and mid-career level professionals from industries related to STEM. Collectively, those who studied and/or are working in areas related to STEM education are best positioned to serve as teachers in K-12 STEM subjects. That is why we are hyperfused on recruiting them to serve as part of Teach For America North Carolina. In fact, since 2002, we've recruited 500 graduates of STEM programs to teach in North Carolina. We recruited 53 STEM graduates to teach in North Carolina as part of the 2019 Corps (most recent alumni group). This year, Teach For America North Carolina placed 180 STEM teachers in high-need classrooms across North Carolina. These educators deliver quality instruction in science, math, and other STEM-related subjects. With 73% of our corps members teaching science or math, our organization has reaffirmed its commitment to leveraging our State Funding to recruit STEM educators to teach in North Carolina's public schools.

There are several different strategies the Teach For America Recruitment Team employs to enlist STEM majors and minors from underrepresented backgrounds to join Teach For America, but one strategy that has gained traction in recent years is our intentional pursuit of establishing meaningful partnerships with student-led campus organizations. This has been particularly successful with organizations that include higher volumes of students coming from historically underrepresented groups. A few examples of this type of partnership are the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE), Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE), and Minority Association of Premedical Students (MAPS). At



times, Teach For America will partner with other mission-aligned organizations, such as the Peace Corps and City Year, to host a joint event and draw a larger crowd. We also host STEM-based events and webinars featuring Teach For America alumni who are working in tech, medicine, engineering, etc. to make explicit connections between education and these career paths. Finally, we illustrate through our marketing that gaps in STEM education are greater for the students we serve (compared to non-STEM subjects) to more explicitly state the need for STEM educators, in an attempt to attract more folks with backgrounds in STEM to rise to the occasion and meet this challenge.

Since STEM students often solidify post-grad plans (whether that be graduate school or highly-selective job opportunities, particularly for engineering students) on an earlier timeline than some of their non-STEM peers, we work to engage them as early as their freshman year through these events. We begin actively recruiting them early in their junior year to effectively compete with graduate school and other highly-selective work opportunities as well. While strategic partnerships may look different campus to campus, they are designed to be ongoing – with continued communication, engagement, and programming year over year between the campus recruiter and student leaders (and faculty, if relevant.) While specific programming may only take place 1-2 times a semester, partnerships often take the form of student leaders promoting application deadlines, internship opportunities, etc. for all students – keeping Teach For America top of mind for students over the course of the entire year (and a student’s undergraduate career.)

Partnerships are typically assessed on a campaign (or campus) level. We track: all touchpoints between the recruiter and program/event participants; the degree of ‘success’ this program/event achieves (i.e. % of program attendees who started an application/submitted an application/received an offer to join TFA/ultimately joined TFA (or participated in other TFA programs, if an underclassman.) Ultimately, this data determines effectiveness of strategy and informs future engagements for this campaign (or those similar.)

We’ve learned the importance of helping our recruiters better understand our program offerings, so that they can be pitched to a partner in a way that best serves the needs of our partners. For example: Proposing that we ‘push in’ to a meeting already scheduled by the partner (i.e. such as visiting a chapter meeting to talk about TFA) is much more effective in regards to attendance than trying to schedule an ‘outside’ event with the partner (i.e. an additional time commitment for participants who are part of this organization.) We’ve gained a better understanding of when STEM prospects make decisions about post-grad paths, and thus, when we need to begin engaging with them. Our approach ensures that by the time senior year rolls around, committing to teach for two years sounds less ‘out of the blue’ and more aligned with a path to achieving their long-term personal and professional goals. This ultimately strengthens our organization and delivers positive results for North Carolina’s public-school students.

Due to a disparity in access to excellent STEM educators, programs, and opportunities, Blacks, Latinos, Native Americans, women, and individuals from low-income backgrounds are under-represented in STEM and computer science fields. Research shows that high-quality teachers in STEM classrooms are critical to closing the STEM opportunity gap, yet school districts across the country, especially those in low-income communities, find it difficult to fill open STEM teaching positions each year. Teach For America is one of the largest and most diverse providers of STEM teachers in the country. Approximately 3,000 of our corps members are teaching an elementary or secondary STEM subject. Nearly 40% of these educators identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Color, or Hispanic. Knowing that today’s students



are the innovators and pioneers of the future, Teach For America has invested in the recruitment and training of diverse STEM educators and has partnered with organizations like [Cognizant U.S. Foundation](#), [Texas Instruments](#), [Kode With Klossy](#), [100Kin10](#), and [3M](#) to ensure that all students have access to meaningful STEM and computer science learning opportunities. In addition, [our alumni are building innovative models inside and outside of the K-12 system](#) to create new pathways for students from all backgrounds to pursue STEM and computer science careers. With exposure to diverse STEM educators and equitable access to learning opportunities, we can inspire the next generation of STEM innovators and pioneers and ensure that a diverse set of leaders are empowered to solve the challenges of tomorrow.

Teach For America North Carolina won't rest until every child receives an exceptional education. This means we must ensure every child has the opportunity to learn from knowledgeable STEM educators, which we will continue to strategically recruit to fulfill our mission.

### Mid-Career Level & Lateral Entry Industry Professionals

Teach For America North Carolina continues to increase its targeted recruitment efforts of candidates who identify as mid-career level and lateral entry industry professionals. For example, last year Teach For America recruited 323 of these candidates from North Carolina to teach in the classrooms that need them the most. Teach For America delivered 36 mid-career professionals to North Carolina in 2018 and 25 mid-career professionals statewide in 2019. These individuals bring professional experiences to the classroom that expose our students to a world of possibilities. Moreover, in addition to teaching theories outlined in state and federal standards, these mid-career level professionals provide students with real-world examples of how what they learn in school connects with the jobs they seek after graduation.

### Veterans of the United States Armed Forces

Leadership. Integrity. Commitment. These are just a few of the skills that our military veterans develop during their years of service to our country. They're also the skills that our greatest teachers exemplify in the classroom every day.

Teach For America North Carolina continues to increase its targeted recruitment efforts of candidates who identify as veterans of the United States Armed Forces because our veterans are heroes. Last year, Teach For America received 39 applications from veterans of the United States Armed Forces from North Carolina.

Teach For America's "Military Veterans Initiative" focuses on supporting our veterans, members of the guard and reserve, and military spouses as they put their leadership power and skills to work in our nation's highest-need classrooms through Teach For America. TFA's "Military Veterans Initiative" was formed in 2012 to support veterans and military spouses who want to serve their country yet again by putting their leadership skills to work in the classrooms that need them most. Through partnerships with key veterans support organizations, we train military professionals as teachers in high-need schools, assist them in finding teaching positions, and support them throughout their careers as leaders in the movement for educational equity. The "Military Veterans Initiative" helps to connect our military

veterans and military spouse corps members and alumni with professional development opportunities that will help their unique leadership skills. We work to transition these corps members and alumni into career paths that will place them in lead roles that directly affect educational inequity.

One of the ways we support the professional and personal growth of our military veterans and military spouse corps members and alumni is through our “Military Veterans Initiative Council”. The council is composed of veterans and military spouse corps members and alumni who act as consultants to the Managing Director of the initiative. These council members work to ensure there is substantial support in place for veterans and military spouse corps members and alumni, as well as access to leadership mobility pathways that will sustain military involvement in the fight to end educational inequality.

“The Mission Continues,” “Leadership for Educational Equity,” and Columbia University’s “Center for Veteran Transition and Integration” are just some of the partners who work with TFA’s “Military Veterans Initiative” to support the professional development of our military veterans and military spouse corps members and alumni as they continue to lead in the movement for educational equity.

“I retired after 30 years of [military] service to my country, but this commitment is far from over...I want my students to recognize that a life dedicated to caring about and helping others is a life worth choosing.”

**Sequoia Aldridge**

Retired Chief Warrant Officer-5, U.S. Marine Corps  
Eastern North Carolina Corps Member 2015

## Retaining Our Teacher Leaders

15% of Teach For America applicants planned to work in education before joining TFA. Then, 66% of TFA alumni remain in the education profession, and 85% of TFA alumni continue serving in low-income communities, after they finish their corps commitment. Through our blossoming “Teach Beyond Two” program, more of the teacher leaders we place in North Carolina communities continue to teach in North Carolina’s public schools beyond their initial two-year commitment with Teach For America. For FY21, 91% of corps members remained in their placement region, further symbolizing the success of our “Teach Beyond Two” initiative, a program that is a direct result of the North Carolina General Assembly’s strong investment into Teach For America North Carolina.

Teach For America teachers remain committed to leading in North Carolina’s classrooms. Teachers entering the profession in North Carolina through Teach For America are staying at the same, or even higher, rates compared to other beginning teachers across the state. According to the most recent State of the Teaching Profession Report, beginning teachers had an attrition rate of 12.34%. Teach For America regularly tracks and monitors its corps members retention numbers, and for the same year, reported an attrition rate of about 10%. The attrition rate for Teach For America in the report is stated to be 20.05%. The report states that data collection processes to identify and track Teach For America teachers is inconsistent, and once a teacher converts their license, they are no longer considered a TFA teacher - both of which can “skew attrition rates higher.” Retention and attrition is monitored consistently and regularly across Teach For America. Each year, in the first few months of the school year, the organization collects information on all corps members across the country. The following year, each corps member is referred to and if they are still in the classroom, they are considered an active corps member. If not, they are removed from internal systems.

One of the key elements of our “Teach Beyond Two” initiative is the Leroy “Pop” Miller Fellowship. This is a 15-month fellowship opportunity for Teach For America alumni. We offer this fellowship because we want to build leaders who are people-centered, system-focused, and hopeful. Fellows have already proven themselves to be leaders in the classroom and we hope to expand their impact. We will deepen our connections across the network and create learning lab opportunities. This will ensure everyone in our network feels seen, known, heard, pushed, and celebrated at every step of their journey. These fellows exemplify leadership that is dynamic, outcomes-driven, proximate, and equity-centric. During the first summer of the fellowship, fellows attend development and planning sessions to grow their capacity (self-identified) and renew their contribution to the common good. Throughout the school year, fellows mentor corps members based on assets and expertise. Fellows focus on changing systems during the second summer of the fellowship, as they take part in an internship with a community change agent that is working towards the mission. 65 Teach For America corps members have completed the Leroy “Pop” Miller Fellowship since its inception. 68% of them are either teaching or working full-time in a school-based administrator role in North Carolina public schools. TFA North Carolina now accepts 8 new corps members to this distinguished fellowship each year. It is just one of the tools we are using to ensure more of our teachers continue to serve in North Carolina’s public schools beyond their initial 2-year commitment.

## Financial Report

Last year, Teach For America North Carolina leveraged our \$6 million allocation from the North Carolina General Assembly in innovative ways. We continue to make publicly available all documents related to the execution of our program and the expenditures of State funds. This section of our annual report provides an overview of our program costs and private sources of revenue. Moreover, this section of our annual report includes a regional breakdown of the costs related to our mission of finding, developing, and supporting a diverse network of leaders who expand opportunity for children from classrooms, schools, and every sector and field that shapes the broader systems in which schools operate. We continue to utilize our funding to build off of the successes of the NC Teacher Corps and place promising teacher leaders in hard to fill vacancies.

We have been moving toward a statewide fundraising team and strategy over the past year. Our team will continue to steward our long term partners in Charlotte, the Piedmont Triad, and Eastern North Carolina, while also maximizing funding opportunities and resources across the state that we have not yet pursued. This is an exciting opportunity to better leverage our State Funding to increase the private revenue we generate, which will ultimately help us serve more of North Carolina's students.

### Program Costs & Regional Breakdown

In compliance with S.L 2013-360, Section 8.21.(b).8.b, and S.L 2013-360, Section 8.21.(b).8.a, below you will find details on our program costs from the last fiscal year. This includes costs associated with recruitment, candidate selection, corps member placement, the preparation and effective execution of the preservice training of teacher leaders, operational and administrative costs, development and fundraising expenses, alumni support, management costs, and investments made in marketing and research.

This is the regional breakdown of how we invested our State Funding last fiscal year:

Category	Eastern North Carolina	Charlotte Piedmont Triad
Funds expended by region of the state	3,229,287	3,435,590
Recruitment (includes candidate selection) and placement	1,497,258	1,682,561
East Carolina University: Education preparation program and licensure partner	34,200	56,400

Preservice training and preparation costs	481,237	807,587
Professional development and support (corps members)	889,502	1,000,795
Alumni Support	327,090	258,247

We leverage our public and private funding for the costs associated with the selection, placement, and retention of our corps members. Expenses associated with selection include various recruitment costs. These costs include finding potential corps members, pushing them to apply, deciding who to admit, yielding admitted folks to Teach For America, and placing them with one of our charter school or district partners. Therefore, the funding we receive from the North Carolina General Assembly helps ensure more candidates apply for, and interview with, Teach For America. It also helps ensure more leaders ultimately enter the classroom to serve the students who need us most.

For recruitment, we have recruiters across the country that work with universities and other organizations - HBCUs and Veterans Affairs, as examples - who work to highlight strong candidates from their prospective institutions and communities and encourage them to apply to Teach For America. Here in North Carolina, we have a recruitment director specifically assigned to North Carolina A&T University and North Carolina Central University, as these two HBCUs have historically yielded a high number of strong candidates for Teach For America. We also have recruitment managers who support candidates that apply from all other HBCUs in North Carolina. Our commitment to bringing more talented folks from all walks of life into this movement is unwavering.

In addition to recruitment efforts, part of our funding is used to support the interview and admissions work that takes place to ensure only the strongest leaders with the greatest potential to teach and lead are selected. This process helps ensure we hire teachers who can effectively connect with students, partner with parents, and remain committed to North Carolina's public schools for not only the two years they initially sign up for, but for years to come. All candidates are reviewed and interviewed by Teach For America staff members. Following interviews, our admissions team works to ensure that candidates meet all eligibility requirements needed for acceptance to Teach For America. Once completed, the admissions team identifies what regions candidates are best suited for, which takes into account both candidate preference, as well as the specific needs of Charlotte, Eastern North Carolina, and the Piedmont Triad.

The second part of this larger spending category is placement. Placement for Teach For America North Carolina includes everything from the time we confirm an accepted applicant in North Carolina, to their first day in school with students. Throughout this period of time, our North Carolina Onboarding Team supports the matriculation, onboarding, and preparation of corps members.

Specifically, testing and licensure are two key aspects of getting a corps member in front of students in North Carolina. The majority of our districts in North Carolina require teachers to be on a residency license, meaning they have to pass certification exams, as well as be affiliated with an education preparation program. Our Onboarding Team guides corps members through the testing process, as all North Carolina teachers have to pass a certification exam. Teach For America North Carolina covers the cost of our corps members' certification exams, such as the Praxis and Pearson exams, so we can lower the cost of entry to teach in the state. This is another way we leverage public and private dollars to diversify North Carolina's teaching force and deliver strong academic results for North Carolina's public school students.

In addition to expenses related to testing, licensure for our corps members is another cost associated with placement. All of our teachers are required to be affiliated with an education preparation program. Over 90% of our corps members are affiliated with East Carolina University (ECU), who constructed a special education preparation program specifically for Teach For America North Carolina. Teach For America North Carolina covers the initial cost of this education preparation program at ECU. The costs of ECU's education preparation program are included in this report. This investment of \$90,600 (\$34,200 for Eastern North Carolina corps members and \$56,400 for corps members from Charlotte and the Piedmont Triad region) provides our corps members with a path to licensure. These investments ultimately ensure our corps members are effective educators, ready to make a difference in students' lives from the first day of school, but also committed to the continuous learning necessary to ensure every student in North Carolina receives a quality education.

### Revenue Generated by Private Fundraising

In compliance with S.L 2013-360, Section 8.21.(b).8.c, we outlined the funds that we received through our private fundraising efforts. Additionally, we categorized our sources of private funding by the various regions of our great state.

Funds received through private fundraising, specifically by sources in each region of the state		
	Eastern North Carolina	Charlotte-Piedmont Triad
Foundation	718,000	551,500
Individual	77,855	718,596
Corporate	60,000	111,000

## References

Whitmire, R. (n.d.). *How opening a high school on a rural peanut field altered the arc of a NC town - and doubled the college degrees in 5 Years*. How Opening a High School on a Rural Peanut Field Altered the Arc of a NC Town - and Doubled the College Degrees in 5 Years. Retrieved December 1, 2021, from <https://www.the74million.org/article/how-the-opening-of-a-high-school-on-a-rural-peanut-field-altered-the-educational-arc-of-a-nc-town-and-doubled-the-number-of-college-diplomas-in-5-years/>.

## Appendix A - Contact List for Report Submission

This report will be submitted to the North Carolina General Assembly's Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee, the offices of the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Chairs of the Senate Appropriations / Base Budget Committee and the House Appropriations Committee, the Senate Appropriations Committee on Education / Higher Education, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Education, and the Fiscal Research Division on or before January 1, 2022 as required by the North Carolina State Legislature, per S.L. 2019-165, Section 3.6(b); S.L 2013-360, Section 8.21.(b); and S.L 2013-360, Section 8.21.(e).

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