

What we do

Teach For America works in partnership with our local communities to expand educational opportunity for children facing the challenges of poverty. We recruit and develop a diverse corps of outstanding college graduates and professionals to make an initial two-year commitment to teach in high-needs schools and become lifelong leaders in the effort to end educational inequity. Nationally, 8,600 corps members are teaching in 53 urban and rural regions while more than 42,000 alumni work across sectors to ensure that all children have access to an excellent education. Our Twin Cities program trains and develops 45 first and second-year teachers while also supporting over 650 alumni working in all industries empowered by their experience working to close the achievement gap.

Our Students & School Partners

Teach For America – Twin Cities Corps Members and Alumni teach in both district and charter schools across the metro area. At our placement schools, an average of 92% of students receive free or reduced-price lunch and 90% are students of color. Our partner principals consistently rate our first-year teachers as better prepared than other beginning teachers when they step into the classroom.

Our Teachers & Alumni

Our corps members are also increasingly diverse. Among 2015 Corps Members:



Nationwide, 42,000 Teach For America Alumni form an unparalleled leadership pipeline for change in education, working across sectors to improve outcomes for all students. Of the 650 alumni in the Twin Cities:



We support a clear, transparent licensure system

WFA – Twin Cities agrees with the Office of the Legislative Auditor’s findings that our current Minnesota teacher-licensure system is “broken and needs significant changes.” We have particularly felt the impact of this broken system as experienced educators and WFA alumni interested in moving to Minnesota and continuing their teaching career in schools across our state, are being denied licensure for oftentimes unclear or inconsistent reasons from either the Board of Teaching or MDE’s Licensing Office.

We support with the OLA’s recommendations to:

1. Consolidate all teacher-licensure activities into one state entity to ensure clear lines of communication, increase administrative effectiveness, and enable stronger legislative oversight.
2. Restructure the state’s teacher-licensure system to ensure consistency and transparency in the form of a tiered system with clear points of entry and progression based on successful teaching experience and such professional accomplishments as attaining National Board Certification. This consistency and transparency is especially important for out-of-state applicants with alternative training as some of these experienced educators have endured significant and unnecessary difficulty under the current system in becoming teachers in Minnesota after having been successful, licensed teachers in other states.
3. Ensure that if an applicant is denied a license, the licensing body should specifically state the deficiencies it identified in the applicant’s preparation or qualifications. No applicant should be directed to a college or university’s teacher preparation program to identify these deficiencies or missing coursework.
4. Implement a licensure-appeal process that is consistent with the law, and provide accurate and thorough information on how to appeal a licensure decision to every applicant who does not receive a full license.

Additionally, it is essential that any new tiered licensure construct ensure that new teachers who have met the rigorous admissions and testing requirements to participate in a high-quality, state-approved alternative teacher preparation program under Minnesota Statutes 122A.245 — completing no less than 200 pre-service preparation hours and receiving intensive on-going classroom-based support for two years—continue to have a pathway to teaching. Related, it is essential that local school leaders continue to be able to consider freely these new teachers for hire alongside those who have completed traditional pre-service-only preparation programs, without state-imposed restriction.

Finally, we believe WFA Corps Members and Alumni, with their greater rates of socioeconomic and racial diversity than the rest of the Minnesota teaching workforce, provide a high-quality pipeline for schools to hire diverse talent. We trust that a restructured, simplified licensure system will help experienced, out-of-state teachers of color enter the classroom, and serve Minnesota’s diverse students.

We hope the Legislative Study Group, in consultation a wide variety of stakeholders that represent students, parents, and teachers from all backgrounds, will support the recommendations of the Legislative Auditor’s report. WFA – Twin Cities is eager to continue to engage in this discussion over the coming months to ensure every student in our state has access to an amazing teacher who will support them in reaching their full potential.