

# TNTP Teaching Fellows

#1 in a series of ERN issue briefs on innovative approaches to teacher preparation

By Charles Barone and Heather Cope



 **Teaching Fellows** Transforming teaching. Changing lives.

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

TNTP was founded as The New Teacher Project in 1997 by teachers who believed that all students should have a great teacher. Over the years, TNTP has published many influential reports including “The Widget Effect” (2009), which pointed out the public education system’s massive failure to acknowledge and act on differences in teacher effectiveness, and most recently, “The Opportunity Myth,” a report based on the experiences of 4,000 students whose schools were found to be falling short in setting high expectations for students. TNTP Teaching Fellows operates as a one-year teacher licensure program in Baltimore, Nevada, and New Orleans, where TNTP awards certification. In Indianapolis, TNTP operates a two-year master’s degree program through Marian University.



*TNTP’s mission is to end the injustice of educational inequality by providing excellent teachers to the students who need them most and by advancing policies and practices that ensure effective teaching in every classroom.*

## TNTP TEACHING FELLOWS:

- Serve as full-time, paid classroom teachers;
- Complete coursework in the evening and on weekends; and
- Earn an initial teaching license after successfully completing the program.

Over two decades, TNTP Teaching Fellows has trained over 3,500 teachers. While not a traditional college or university preparation program, TNTP is able to certify teachers in states that approve alternate providers and in which TNTP meets the same requirements as other teacher preparation programs. In Baltimore, Nevada, and New Orleans, TNTP is an approved teacher preparation program through those cities' respective state departments of education. In Indianapolis, the program is approved by the state department of education through its higher education partner, Marian University.

<b>Location</b>	Baltimore, Indianapolis, Nevada, New Orleans
<b>Program Length</b>	1 year in most locations 2 years in Indianapolis
<b>Credential Awarded</b>	Initial teacher license Master's degree in Indianapolis only
<b>Cost to Participants</b>	\$4,400 to \$11,010
<b>Annual Enrollment</b>	369
<b>Total Program Graduates</b>	3,644
<b>Completion Rate</b>	78%

TNTP has also worked with nine districts or regions — including Boston, Charlotte, Dallas, New York City, and San Francisco — to design and launch customized teacher fellowship programs. District partners draw on TNTP's experience to develop programs and, ultimately, manage them on their own. Together, these programs prepare an additional 1,500+ teaching fellows each year.

**Selectivity.** Criteria for admission to and standards for completion of the Teaching Fellows program are highly selective. Only 10% of applicants meet all standards. TNTP has a completion rate of about 78%. Of those admitted, 87% pass the pre-service training, and of those, 90% successfully complete their first year of teaching.

At minimum, applicants must:

- Have a bachelor's degree and an undergraduate GPA of 2.5;
- Meet content knowledge requirements through state-required assessments and/or college coursework;
- Show a commitment to educational equity and a belief that all students can succeed; and
- Complete interviews with Teaching Fellows faculty and staff.

Approximately 64% of Teaching Fellows identify as people of color.

**I** “I know of teachers who have never done a day of science, who have just been put into that position. It’s twice as hard. They not only have to learn science, but they have to do lesson planning. They’re doing double the work.”

AMIT REDDY (RIGHT) TNTP TEACHING FELLOW, WASHINGTON, DC, WHO ENTERED TEACHING AT AGE 37 WITH AN UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE IN ENGINEERING.



## SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

**Pre-service.** Pre-service training begins in the summer before fellows start teaching and takes place over about six weeks, five days a week, 10-12 hours per day. Fellows learn the fundamentals of teaching, including classroom management, instructional techniques, and curriculum development. Fellows also have repeated practice opportunities in summer school or a year-round school classroom setting and receive direct feedback from expert coaches, all of whom are experienced teachers with a solid record of success.

**Induction and In-service.** After pre-service training, fellows serve as full-time classroom teachers and, as in the pre-service program, are coached by experienced and effective teachers. Coaches regularly observe participants either through classroom visits or video review and provide actionable guidance and concrete strategies to apply in future lessons. Coaches may also pull participants into small skill-building sessions to address development needs. During their teaching year, participants also complete certification coursework in the evening and on weekends. Coursework is conducted in-person, online, or a combination of both, depending on region.

## “5 TIPS FOR A GREAT APPLICATION” FROM THE TNTP TEACHING FELLOWS WEBSITE<sup>1</sup>

---

- 1. Set yourself apart:** The students we serve come from diverse backgrounds and experiences and we're looking for the same in our Teaching Fellows. The best way to set yourself apart from the thousands of other applications we receive is to share a personal story about what makes you unique. Use simple, direct language and include details about real-life experiences that have inspired you to pursue a teaching career.
- 2. Do your research:** We don't expect candidates to have in-depth knowledge of education issues or our teaching strategies when applying; that is why we have a rigorous pre-service training program. But the more context you have, the stronger your application will be. So we encourage you to read up on our unique approach to teacher training and the needs of the students we serve by reviewing our website, perusing the education section of local newspapers, or researching online. This will also set you up for success if you move on to the phone interview portion of the application process.
- 3. Leverage your transferable skills:** Are you a math or computer whiz? Do you have experience mentoring youth in your local community? Have you previously served as a committee or program chair? If so, we want to know more about how these skills and experiences will position you for success as a first-year teacher in one of our high-need schools.
- 4. Spell-check is your friend:** Solid communication skills are essential to becoming an effective teacher. We want to see the diligence and care you would put into training young minds reflected in this application, so there's no excuse for spelling and grammatical errors and you should take special care to follow directions and answer according to word minimums and limits. Your application should be thoroughly reviewed before you submit so ask a friend or family member to double check your work.
- 5. Don't let the essays intimidate you:** Don't let a slight case of essay phobia dissuade you from pursuing this opportunity for a rewarding career as a teacher. We consider all applications holistically and essays are just one part of the whole picture. If you are unsure of the strength of your responses reach out to a friend or family member for a second opinion.

In Baltimore, Nevada, and New Orleans, participants complete coursework, led by experienced educators, through TNTP Academy. Course topics include classroom management, creating and analyzing assessments, differentiating instruction for diverse learners, and child development. Fellows also receive continued coaching and targeted feedback. Some regions utilize professional learning communities to provide fellows with small-group coaching sessions. In Indianapolis, participants complete a two-year master's degree program through Marian University. In addition to the above, coursework for Teaching Fellows in Indianapolis, where the number of English language learners has tripled over the past two decades, also includes teaching English as a second language.

To earn their certification, all participants must successfully pass the Assessment of Classroom Effectiveness (ACE). The ACE incorporates a variety of evidence from participants' classrooms, including:

- **Observation-based evaluations** through a standardized rubric focused on seven key skills, including lesson delivery, checking for student understanding, maintaining high expectations, and maximizing instructional time;
- **Principal feedback**, focused on participants' performance compared to other first-year teachers;
- **Student surveys**, measuring students' perceptions of participants on topics such as classroom environment, caring for students, and ability to challenge students; and
- **Student achievement**, such as value-added data, largely grade and subject dependent, when available.

## **COST**

Tuition charged to participants ranges from \$4,400 in New Orleans to \$11,010 in Indianapolis. Financial aid is typically not available to participants, although they may qualify for AmeriCorps education awards. TNTP also raises funds through philanthropic sources and government grants.

Participants serve as full-time classroom teachers earning a typical teacher's salary plus benefits. Participants in Nevada are also eligible for cost-of-living stipends, funded by the State of Nevada.

## **OUTCOMES**

Over 40% of program completers earn certification in elementary education, 24% earn a secondary subject certification, 21% earn certification in special education, 6% earn certification in bilingual/ELL, and 5% earn certification in early childhood.

A 2009 study by the Urban Institute found that the Teaching Fellows program helped narrow the teacher effectiveness gap between high-poverty and low-poverty schools in New York City between 2000 and 2005.<sup>2</sup> A 2013 study by Clark et al. found that the students of TNTP Teaching Fellows had higher math achievement as compared to students of teachers from less selective alternative certification programs and that, among teachers with three years or less of teaching experience, students of TNTP Teaching Fellows outperformed their peers.<sup>3</sup> A 2017 study by the American Institutes for Research found no differences in outcomes between TNTP Teaching Fellows and a control group but did find that a greater percentage of TNTP Teaching Fellows continued teaching for a second year.<sup>4</sup>

*The National Council on Teacher Quality ranked the Baltimore TNTP Teaching Fellows program (secondary certifications) as a top program nationally (97th percentile) in its 2018 Teacher Prep Review.*

## SOURCES

TNTP (<https://tntp.org>)

1. Retrieved from: <https://tntp-teachingfellows.org/toolkit/completing-the-application/5-tips-for-a-great-application>
2. Boyd, D; Lankford, H.; Loeb, S.; Rockoff, J; Wyckoff, J. (2009). *The Narrowing Gap in New York City Teacher Qualifications and Implications for Student Achievement in High-Poverty Schools*. Urban Institute: Washington, DC. Retrieved at: <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/narrowing-gap-new-york-city-teacher-qualifications-and-implications-student-achievement-high-poverty-schools>
3. Clark, Melissa A.; Chiang, Hanley S.; Silva, Tim; McConnell, Sheena; Sonnenfeld, Kathy; Erbe, Anastasia; Puma, Michael. (2013). *The Effectiveness of Secondary Math Teachers from Teach For America and the Teaching Fellows Programs*. Institute for Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education: Washington, DC. Retrieved at: <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED544171>
4. Gerdeman, R.D.; Wan, Y.; Molefe, A.; Bos, J.M.; Zhu, B.; Dhillon, S. (May 2017). *Impact of TNTP's Teaching Fellows in Urban School Districts*. American Institutes for Research: Washington, DC. Retrieved at: <https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/TNTP-Teacher-Fellows-Evaluation-Summary-May-2017.pdf>