



The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation's Leonore Annenberg Teaching Fellowships

MEETING NATIONAL EDUCATION NEEDS

The Woodrow Wilson National Teaching Fellowships seek to address an urgent need for excellent teachers in high-need schools. Although a steady drumbeat of research in recent years has defined the scope of this challenge, no national program has emerged to develop and retain excellent teachers for the neediest schools. The Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowships fill this gap while responding to the most pointed problems of the national teacher shortage. Top graduates and career changers from around the nation who apply to select education schools will be offered one-year graduate teaching fellowships and other benefits that, when combined, will help meet the pressing educational need outlined here.

What are some of the national challenges that the Leonore Annenberg Teacher Fellowship will address?

- **The nation will need to replace a significant proportion of its teacher workforce.** A historic turnover is taking place in the teaching profession. While student enrollments are rising rapidly, more than a million veteran teachers are nearing retirement. Over the next decade, experts predict that the United States will need two million new teachers nationwide, and more than 750,000 in urban schools.
- **Many students in high-needs schools do not get teachers of the quality they deserve,** a key factor in exacerbating pervasive achievement gaps between rich and poor and white and minority students. Nationally, in secondary schools with more than half of students living in poverty, 34 percent of teachers are out-of-field; the same is true for only 19 percent of students in low-poverty schools. The Annenberg Fellowships recruit students with subject-area undergraduate degrees for master's degrees in teaching. In this way, the fellowships will increase the number of new teachers with strong grounding in the subject they are teaching, and solid understanding and skills for teaching it to diverse learners..
- **Hard-to-staff schools suffer from even higher turnover because new teachers often lack preparation and mentoring.** Nationally, almost half (46 percent) of teachers leave the field in their first five years, according to the American Federation of Teachers. This number is even higher for high-poverty urban schools, which lose 22 percent of their teachers *each year*, compared with only 12.8 percent in low-poverty schools. A recent report by Public Agenda and the [National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality](#) finds new teachers in middle and high school feel most vulnerable to challenging teaching conditions typically faced in high-needs schools. Compared to new teachers in elementary schools, high school and middle school teachers are much more concerned about administrative support, more frustrated by student motivation and behavior, less likely to see teaching as a lifelong career choice and less likely to believe that all students can achieve in school than new teachers in elementary schools.
- **Teacher preparation programs are highly uneven.** Too few of the nation's teachers are being prepared in teacher education programs where high standards, relevant courses, and close connection to school practice and effective practitioners are the norm. The four

institutions participating in the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation's Leonore Annenberg Teaching Fellowships are exemplars high quality preparation, the integration of theory and practice, and collaboration among arts and science and education faculty along with accomplished practitioners from the classroom.

- **The cost of replacing teachers who leave their schools is high.** Small and large school districts spend much-needed resources when teachers leave. A 2007 report by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future found that in one small rural district the cost any time a teacher leaves was about \$4,400 while the cost reached nearly \$18,000 per departing teacher in Chicago. The report estimates that the total cost of turnover in the Chicago Public Schools is more than \$86 million per year. The funds used to hire and replace teachers would be much better spent to meet student academic needs.

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