

SOUTH CAROLINA TEACHING FELLOWS

Short Summary

The South Carolina Teaching Fellows program was founded in 1999 by the state's General Assembly and is administered by the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA) at Winthrop University. According to the CERRA web site, the mission of the program is to "recruit talented high school seniors into the teaching profession and help them develop leadership qualities."

The Teaching Fellows program provides enrichment opportunities for promising future teachers, in addition to making available to these students a forgivable loan of **up to** \$6,000 per year of college. Students must pursue a teaching degree and the loan is forgiven when the Teaching Fellow teaches at a South Carolina school for the duration of time that they received the loan (one year of service for every year they have received funds).

In addition, Teaching Fellows participate in advanced enrichment programs at their home institution, professional development during the summer, and are involved in communities and businesses throughout the state. Currently, there are Teaching Fellows enrolled at 11 Universities across South Carolina.

Demographics

- *Target Settings:* Any South Carolina high school
- *Target Groups Served:* Talented high school seniors interested in pursuing teaching as a profession
- *Schools/Districts Served:* Information about the Teaching Fellows program is shared with all 86 school districts through multiple avenues. High school principals and guidance counselors receive information packets, reminder emails from CERRA, and information is shared through their respective professional organizations. Various high school teachers in every school district also receive information about the program and the application process. Last year, CERRA recorded a short video about the program and shared it with all of the districts as well. The video was intended to be played on the school's morning new show. Teaching Fellows partner with districts and individual schools for various professional development, service, classroom observation, and practice teaching experiences during their college careers. Finally, CERRA provides information about the Teaching Fellows graduates to the personnel directors in all of the SC public school districts. Teaching Fellows self select the district(s) they teach in and can be found working in classrooms all across the state.

Research and Evaluation

The development of program/initiative is based on/grounded in what research? Describe the evidence that shows the program/initiative works. Description of data collection and analysis should be included.

As of June 30, 2011, a total of 909 Teaching Fellows from the 2000-2006 cohorts had graduated from the program. Of these graduates, 649 (71.4%) were employed in a South Carolina public school district during the 2010-2011 school year. Over half (53.2%) of these Fellows were teaching in a Geographical Critical Need School that meets at least one of the three following criteria: an at-risk or below average absolute rating, a teacher turnover rate of 20% or higher for the past three years, and/or a poverty rate of 70% or higher.

Another 135 (14.9%) of the graduated Fellows are in deferment, meaning they are in graduate school or the military, have been granted a grace year, or had a special request approved and are still eligible to teach and receive forgiveness for this loan. Two hundred sixty-one (261) Fellows have already satisfied

their loans through service, and 85% of these Fellows are still teaching. Of the Fellows who have satisfied their loans through service, only 40 are no longer teaching. Finally, 85 (9.4%) of the graduated Fellows are repaying their loans through monetary means.

In May 2011, CERRA released a Teaching Fellows report (<http://cerra.org/teachingFellows>) which took an intensive look at the Teaching Fellows Program. Two Teaching Fellows, one a senior at the time the report was written and the other a practicing teacher who was serving as her district's Teacher of the Year, provided insight into the Program. Both Teaching Fellows agreed that the professional development provided through their respective Teaching Fellows Programs was a significant part of their overall preparation. The practicing teacher also stated that the continuous development of her leadership abilities has given her the confidence and preparation to become an effective leader in the classroom with her students and outside the classroom with her peers. The report also looked at the data collected by CERRA.

Program Resources

- *Annual Cost:* Currently funded at \$2.9 million
- *Funding Sources:* All funds provided through the Education Improvement Act (EIA) of 1984
- *Staffing Needs:* N/A
- *Infrastructure/Equipment Needs:* N/A
- *Partner Organizations:* CERRA and 11 colleges in South Carolina: Anderson University, Charleston Southern University, College of Charleston, Columbia College, Furman University, Lander University, Newberry College, SC State University, USC Columbia, USC Upstate, and Winthrop University.

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<http://cerra.org/TeachingFellows>

