



Ozarks Teacher Corps FAQ

The Ozarks Teacher Corps encourages extremely capable and passionate education students to return to their rural hometowns as teacher-leaders. The program was launched as a component of the Rural Schools Partnership in 2010, with an initial cohort of 16 teaching candidates. The Corps has grown to include more than 160 teachers who serve as a network of educator-activists that recognize the importance of rural education to a sustainable society.



WHAT IS THE RURAL SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP?

The Rural Schools Partnership is a program established by the Community Foundation of the Ozarks in 2009. The RSP holds these fundamental beliefs:

- Education is a linchpin issue in rural economic development.
- Schools are critical to the well-being of small communities by serving as hubs and providing a focal point of activity, a sense of civic pride and a reason for families to stay in place.
- Schools are an integral thread in the community fabric — they provide a sense of purpose.

WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF THE OZARKS?

The CFO is a public foundation that provides philanthropic resources to donors, nonprofits and communities in central and southern Missouri. Founded in 1973, the CFO has grown to include 55 regional affiliate foundations and about 700 nonprofit and school partners. As of June 30, 2025, the CFO holds more than 3,700 charitable funds with assets of 549 million.

WHO PROVIDES THE FUNDING FOR THE OZARKS TEACHER CORPS?

The Corps is made possible by the Chesley and Flora Lea Wallis Trust, a \$2 million endowment held by the CFO.

WHO QUALIFIES FOR THE OZARKS TEACHER CORPS?

The program is open to students attending Missouri State University, Drury University, Southeast Missouri State University and Missouri Southern State University. Applicants must have graduated from a high school in a rural district, preferably in the Missouri Ozarks.

WHAT ARE THE COMMITMENTS?

Those selected to the Ozarks Teacher Corps must commit to teaching in a rural school, typically their hometown, for at least three years. Corps members must also attend and participate in two rural education workshops. If recipients do not complete their teaching certification or program or honor their commitment to teach in a rural school, the scholarship will be revoked.

To learn more about the Ozarks Teacher Corps, contact Beth Hersh, director of scholarships, at bhersh@cfozarks.org or 417-864-6199.