



# AARP Foundation Experience Corps:

# Scaling Reading Success



# AARP Foundation Experience Corps

Experience Corps is a literacy tutoring program that:

- Targets schools within high need communities where a significant portion of K-3 students are below grade level in reading
- Provides highly-trained, committed adults who are 50 and older as volunteer tutors
- Employs a structured, evidence-based model that impacts early reading achievement and helps students achieve grade level reading proficiency by the end of third grade



# Problem: Going to Scale

- Strong evidence supports one-to-one tutoring
- One-to-one is a relatively high cost intervention and the number of volunteers needed restricts growth
- There is currently very little rigorous research on the effectiveness of volunteer-led small group tutoring which impedes going to scale



# Scaling Reading Success

## Project Goals

- Replicate the program in five (5) new markets and expand within two (2) current markets
- Rigorously study the efficacy of two small group tutoring strategies
  - Small group tutoring alone
  - Small group tutoring in combination with classroom-wide literacy assistance



# Defining our Strategies

- Sustained tutoring—support provided by volunteer tutors to help students reach *individual literacy goals*. A student or small group of up to four students meets with a volunteer 2 to 5 times per week with sessions lasting 20-40 minutes depending on age and need.
- Literacy assistance—support provided by volunteer tutors to *reinforce literacy skills or concepts introduced in daily lessons*. The tutor receives daily assignments to work with a small group, individual student, or an entire class while the teacher works with other students in the classroom.



# Research Hypotheses

1. Small group sustained tutoring by volunteer tutors is an effective intervention for helping students who are struggling to read when compared to a "business as usual" comparison or control group.
2. Full classroom in combination with small group sustained tutoring by volunteers will a) provide an additional value add to students in small group and b) provide a value add to the full classroom of students when compared to "business as usual" comparison or control group(s).



# Evaluation to Date: The Implementation Evaluation

Currently in implementation phase of evaluation

- Key goals
  - ❖ Refine the EC Program Model
  - ❖ Determine local program fidelity to the model and strengthen where needed
  - ❖ Understand positive variations and innovations in model implementation
  - ❖ Prepare for impact evaluation

Impact evaluation (2018-19 school year)

- Key measures
  - ❖ Student reading growth (GRADE)
  - ❖ Student social emotional growth



# Informing the Literacy Tutoring Sector

- Proving the efficacy of small group tutoring could multiply the 7,000 EC students currently receiving one-to-one tutoring up to four times without a commensurate increase in the number of volunteers or program costs
- Sharing these results with other volunteer-led one-to-one tutoring programs with the potential to adopt this research-based model could lead to exponential growth in the number of students receiving this critical intervention without increased labor and cost



# Why SIF?

## Alignment of SIF and EC Goals

1. Growing capacity and scale of innovative practices—**increasing the footprint of Experience Corps network with new affiliates while going deeper into existing communities**
2. Increasing the evidence-base for effective practices that can be replicated—**proving the impact of small group sustained and literacy assistance tutoring strategies to serve more students without commensurately increasing the number of volunteers**



# Project Status

Five new subgrantee programs and new districts in two expansion sites completed their first school year

- 13 School Districts
- 54 Schools
- 365 Classrooms
- 316 Tutors
- 3,462 Students



# Project Status

- Abt Associates selected as evaluation partner
- First year of implementation evaluation completed
- Implementation on track in terms of numbers of schools, classrooms, and students served
- SIF subgrantee meeting in June focused on lessons learned, plans for implementing next year, new tools for implementing based on evaluation results, sustainability, and impact evaluation planning
- Lessons learned from replicating SIF sites have significantly improved out selection and onboarding process for new programs



# Development Needs Beyond SIF

- AARP Foundation has SIF funds available through the summer of 2018
- Additional funding is requested to maintain subgrantee cohort and to support evaluation costs through the end of the original five-year grants agreement (July, 2020)
- We anticipate approximately \$2.2 million in subgrants and \$800,000 in evaluation completion and dissemination costs that we need to secure funding
- Pending evaluation results, funding for program expansion and adoption into markets and with new partners



# What are the Next Steps?

- Continued technical assistance support to all subgrantees through summer of 2018 at a minimum
- Identify appropriate subgrantees to participate in impact evaluation
- Move all subgrantees towards program sustainability by 2020 (school fees, increased local funding)
- Expand program model across sector (pending evaluation results) in 2020



# What are We Looking For?

To “prove” and “improve”

- **Prove** the impact of small group tutoring strategies to justify scaling within the EC network and across the literacy tutoring sector
- **Improve** based on identification of best practice elements within our program model
- More kids reading on grade level at the end of third grade