

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

Teach For America (TFA) provides a critical source of well-trained teachers who are helping to break the cycle of educational inequity. TFA AmeriCorps members teach for two years in low-income schools throughout the country, going above and beyond traditional expectations to help their students achieve at high levels. At the end of the 2013-2014 school year, 9,578 corps members will have significantly improved educational outcomes for more than 400,000 students, and catalyzing for corps members a lifelong commitment to expanding educational equity in this nation.

## Rationale and Approach

### A. Need

Teach For America (TFA) addresses key needs within American public education in two ways. First, TFA AmeriCorps members are a critical source of public school teachers across all grade levels and subject areas, working relentlessly to ensure that students have the educational opportunities they deserve despite the challenges of poverty. Second, informed and influenced by their corps experience, our alumni work from all sectors for educational equity -- providing critical staffing and leadership for schools, districts, and the nonprofit and policy communities.

By 4th grade, children growing up in low-income communities are on average 2 to 3 grade levels behind children in higher income neighborhoods in math and reading (NAEP study 2003). The 50% who graduate by 18 perform on average at the academic level of 8th graders in higher income communities (Education Trust 2002). These disparities severely limit the life prospects of the 16 million children growing up in poverty. Because African-American and Latino children are three times as likely to grow up in a low-income area, many children of color are denied equal opportunities in life (America's Children in Brief: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2008," Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics).

High-quality teaching is the single most important school-based factor in student learning. Effective teachers have a significant impact on children's life prospects; yet, low-income students are less likely than wealthier students to get effective teachers in their classrooms (The Real Value of Value Added. Education Trust, 2004; "All Talk, No Action: Putting an End to Out-of-Field Teaching." Education Trust, 2002).

We believe this issue -- the achievement gap and the corresponding need for highly effective teachers and leaders dedicated to solving it -- is among the most pressing national needs. TFA meets this need by recruiting, training, and developing exceptional, diverse leaders from across the country

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to serve as corps members, who teach for two years in low-income communities and become life-long leaders in the effort to expand educational opportunity.

We strategically identify communities and schools, where too many students do not have access to the educational opportunities they deserve -- from Los Angeles Unified School District, where the federal government labeled nearly 75% of schools failing in 2011, to the Mississippi Delta, where 8th graders in the country are, on average, 3 to 4 grade levels behind (National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress). These circumstances are representative of all TFA placement sites -- overall, more than 90% of students taught by TFA corps members are African American or Latino, and roughly 80% receive free or reduced-price lunch. We selected this population because of the lasting repercussions of perpetuating an achievement gap between low-income students and their peers in wealthier communities -- high school dropouts are five times more likely than a college graduate to be incarcerated; a less educated person is likely to earn less and be less civically engaged (America's Children in Brief: Key Indicators of Well-Being; Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics 2008).

As an organization with almost 20 years of experience in education and service, TFA also builds capacity for longer-term change by fostering and accelerating the leadership of our alumni. Schools serving high-poverty communities have an ongoing need for mentor teachers and school leaders; and school districts and the policy community need leaders with experience teaching effectively in high poverty areas. During his confirmation hearing Secretary Arne Duncan said: "Not only are there great teachers coming through [Teach For America] but it's a great pipeline of talent, so you get these people with this great vision and this entrepreneurial spirit and a willingness to innovate." We know the powerful role teachers and leaders play in expanding education opportunity for millions of Americans.

### B. AmeriCorps Members as Highly Effective Means to Solve Community Problems

TFA AmeriCorps members will serve as the full-time teacher of record in low-income classrooms. A corps member's typical day includes teaching a full class schedule, lesson planning, participating in professional development, and leading extracurricular activities. Corps members go above and beyond a normal work day to make significant academic gains with their students. TFA AmeriCorps members like Jarell Lee, a second grade teacher at Excellence Boys Charter School in New York City, worked relentlessly to ensure his students would read at a 3rd grade level despite the fact that 70% of his students began the year behind grade level. Jarell spent mornings, evenings, and weekends preparing

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lessons and assessing his students' results. He spent time after school tutoring his students, and engaging with students' families to practice skill-building at home. Additionally, Jarell continued to strengthen his pedagogical skills through TFA's professional development and ongoing training. As a result of his service, Jarell's students averaged more than a year of growth in reading by the end of the school year -- meeting the goal that he had set for his students at the beginning of the year. We are requesting 9,578 full-time slots to bring a growing number of leaders like Jarell to our nation's classrooms.

AmeriCorps support is a vital component of our recruitment efforts, particularly in increasing the diversity of our corps. We have seen that teachers who share the same background as their students may have an added impact because they are uniquely positioned to serve as models of the potential for success. As a result, we place a particular focus on attracting and fostering the leadership of the individuals who share the racial and/or socioeconomic backgrounds of the students we teach.

The primary barrier that applicants from low-income communities face in joining TFA is the financial burden, specifically mandatory certification costs and managing student loan payments on a teacher's salary. The AmeriCorps education award and loan forbearance benefits help to alleviate these concerns and have thus enabled thousands of outstanding diverse corps members to serve who might not have been able to do so without AmeriCorps. These corps members have positively impacted the lives of hundreds of thousands of students in low-income communities.

AmeriCorps support is instrumental in increasing the size and diversity of our corps. In 2012, 13% of our corps identified as African American, 10% as Latino, and 35% identified as Pell Grant recipients. These statistics are especially notable when compared to those of the campuses where we recruit. According to U.S. News and World Report, only 5% and 6% of the graduating classes from the nation's top 340 colleges and universities are African American and Latino respectively, and an estimated 5% of students come from the bottom 25% of the income spectrum. In addition to being mission critical, attracting corps members with diverse backgrounds can be uniquely challenging, given pressures to pursue more lucrative career options. AmeriCorps membership provides added financial security and credibility that applicants and families need to choose service over other career opportunities.

TFA's identity as an AmeriCorps program attracts applicants with a strong ethic of service. We have two full-time recruiters who work with the service community, establishing formal partnerships with other AmeriCorps programs to create a continuum of service, including co-recruiting with Habitat for Humanity, and recruiting on NCCC campuses. As a result, nearly 5% of TFA corps

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members serving in 2012-13 are AmeriCorps alums.

AmeriCorps enables us to bring in thousands of corps members annually who are having a positive impact on the lives of hundreds of thousands of children in low-income communities.

### C. Evidence Based & Measurable Community Impact

Our intervention is both evidence-informed and evidence-based. In order to eliminate the achievement gap and address the related socioeconomic factors that widen this gap, our nation's leaders need to believe that this is a solvable problem, have an informed understanding of the causes of the achievement gap, and hold insight into potential solutions. Our work is guided by this theory of change -- we recruit a diverse group of leaders with a record of achievement who work to expand educational opportunity, starting by teaching for at least two years in a low-income community; providing meaningful and effective service to children and families in low-income communities while gaining first-hand knowledge of the gap's causes, solutions, and solvability. In succeeding with their students, corps members gain added conviction that educational inequity is a solvable problem, and deepen their understanding of the problem and solutions. We also provide intensive training, support and career development that increases corps members' impact and deepens their understanding of what it takes to close the achievement gap. As a result, our more than 28,000 alumni are a powerful force of leaders who work at every level of education, policy, and other professions to ensure that all children can receive an excellent education. Being a TFA AmeriCorps member markedly influences corps members' future career choices and pathways (Dobbie, Will, Fryer, Roland "The Impact of Voluntary Youth Service: Evidence from Teach For America," 2011). For example, nearly two-thirds of our alumni remain in education despite the fact that only 15% considered a career in education before entering the corps.

Our AmeriCorps project centers around the recruitment, training, and support of corps members that commit to teaching for two years in low-income schools. The most rigorous studies have found that corps members' impact on student achievement exceeds that of other teachers in the same high-needs schools, including veteran teachers. ("The Effects of TFA on Students: Findings from a National Evaluation," Mathematica Policy Research, June 2004; Urban Institute/CALDER Research Center, 2009). Pathway studies on the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs in North Carolina, Tennessee, and Louisiana concluded that TFA corps members are among the strongest new teachers with the greatest impact on student achievement over the course of multiple years. ("Impacts of Teacher Preparation on Student Test Scores in North Carolina: Teacher Portals," UNC at Chapel

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Hill/Carolina Institute for Public Policy, 2010, 2011, 2012; Report Card on the Effectiveness of Teacher Training Programs: State Board of Education and Tennessee Higher Education Commission, 2010, 2011; Noell, George, "TFA Teachers' Contribution to Student Achievement in Louisiana in Grades 4-9").

By the end of the three year cycle, we aim to increase the number of corps members teaching in low-income schools; develop and hone their teaching and leadership skills; and increase academic outcomes for students. We are opting into national performance measures ED2, ED5, ED12-15 and a self-determined measure focused on teacher training.

TFA measures performance based on the impact our corps members have on student achievement -- measuring the growth students make throughout the year and/or students' ability to demonstrate mastery of content at the end of the year. Our corps members are expected to make at least a year of academic growth with students per school year. For the 2013-14 school year, we aspire that 70% of students will make gains of a year or more of growth.

Performance measure targets were determined by reviewing past data to set an ambitious goal that ensures corps members are having a significant impact on student achievement and our program is continuously improving. Corps members administer a diagnostic test in the beginning of the year, and monitor student growth through ongoing and end-of-year assessments to measure their impact. TFA has created an online Program Tracker system that collects student achievement data. Corps members' progress in relation to their student achievement goals is entered into the Program Tracker by program coaches, rolled up and analyzed nationally to determine our impact on student achievement.

### Current Grantee

We exceeded all of our performance measure targets in the 2011-12 program year. Over 5,700 TFA AmeriCorps members completed the program year serving as full-time teachers in high-needs schools, reaching more than 420,000 students. We focused our reporting on our impact in our New York and Tennessee regions, where our corps members led more than 31,000 students to improved academic achievement of at least one year's growth.

### D. Member Recruitment

Our Recruitment Team (RT) employs multiple strategies to recruit a growing, diverse corps of transformational teachers. During the 2011-12 project year, TFA recruiters met with roughly 36,000 prospective applicants to discuss the realities of the achievement gap and the role TFA plays in

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expanding educational opportunity. The RT also invests members of the broader TFA network in helping to grow the corps -- building and strengthening relationships with deans, professors, and student leaders to identify and encourage strong applicants to apply; and asking staff and alumni to engage their networks to find strong applicants across a variety of sectors. As a result of the RT's efforts, the 2012 corps had over 48,000 applicants, including more than 5% of the graduating class at over 600 colleges and universities.

To increase corps diversity, we recruit heavily at HBCUs, present to campus-based student organizations (e.g. black and Latino student unions, minority Greek organizations), and seek referrals from influential staff. We have supplemented our campus-based efforts through relationships with national organizations such as the Hispanic Heritage Foundation and the National Urban League. We have dedicated a recruiter to engage with tribal colleges and organizations to increase the number of Native American corps members. We have strengthened local recruiting efforts by giving priority placement to individuals from low-income backgrounds who ask to be assigned to their hometowns. Finally, through our recently launched "You Served For America, Now Teach For America" initiative, our recruiters are partnering with the military and veterans' organizations to ensure that more veterans apply for and are admitted to TFA.

We employ a rigorous selection process that ensures the quality of our corps remains consistently strong. Internal and external research suggests applicants with the greatest likelihood of success have: a proven record of achievement, evidence of perseverance in the face of challenges, strong critical thinking and organizational skills, the ability to influence and motivate others, high expectations for students and families in low-income communities, and a desire to work relentlessly in pursuit of educational equity. The 2012 corps represent more than 1,500 colleges and universities across the nation; corps members earned an average GPA of 3.54; and 95% of corps members had some college leadership experience.

### E. Member Training

TFA provides intensive pre-service training and ongoing professional development to corps members to ensure that they are effective in leading their students to significant academic achievement while providing an AmeriCorps experience that will inspire them to become lifelong leaders to eliminate educational inequity. As teachers employed by school districts, our corps members also participate in professional development offered by the districts.

The bedrock of our training and evaluation model is a framework we call Teaching As Leadership

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(TAL), which include the six strategies that we have found, through our own research on the most effective corps members, drive effective teaching: (1) setting an ambitious vision for academic and personal growth for students; (2) investing students and families in that vision; (3) planning purposefully to meet ambitious goals; (4) executing plans effectively; (5) working relentlessly to achieve their vision; and (6) continuously reflecting and improving. Our training and support model is based on helping members successfully employ these teacher actions, which happens through the general training timeline listed below.

**INDUCTION** -- At the beginning of the summer, members spend a week living in and learning about the communities in which they will serve. A key component of induction is AmeriCorps pre-service orientation where members learn about the AmeriCorps network, their role in the national service movement, and the responsibilities and benefits of membership before they begin serving.

**INSTITUTE** -- Next, corps members attend a rigorous five-week residential summer training institute to prepare them for teaching in a low-income classroom. There are two main components of institute: curriculum sessions and summer school teaching. Curriculum sessions are designed to help corps members learn essential teaching frameworks and lesson planning skills. Our summer institute curriculum is based on years of research and input from education experts; topics include teaching literacy, learning theory, instructional planning and delivery, and classroom management. Equipped with the foundational knowledge and understanding of effective teaching, corps members teach as part of a collaborative that is supervised and mentored by both a veteran teacher and a TFA staff member, who provide regular feedback about their teaching and help them to reflect and refine their practice to ensure that students meet summer school goals.

**ORIENTATION** -- Corps members return to their regional placements after institute and, building on their institute training, create unit plans, assessments, and tools to track their students' progress. With these elements established, our teachers are better prepared to move their students forward.

**ON-GOING SUPPORT** -- Building on the foundation corps members receive during the summer programming, we provide robust on-going professional development, including: observation and support from program coaches, regional learning communities, and certification programs through university partners. Each TFA corps member is assigned a coach who helps to problem solve throughout the year and connect the teacher to targeted professional development and resources, as well as providing direct support at times. Corps members also meet regularly in content- or grade-level-specific learning teams led by experienced teachers, including TFA alumni. Corps members discuss ongoing challenges, share best practices, and work together on professional development;

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training topics include developing classroom culture, instructional planning, and investing students and families. Additionally, differentiated sessions for corps members help them develop the pedagogical skills necessary to teach their specific content/grade-level placement. Finally, corps members may participate in teacher certification and/or a master's degree program at local universities, which meet state certification requirements.

Throughout the training and support cycle outlined above, we have embedded several opportunities to reinforce AmeriCorps compliance. Prohibited activities are reviewed with corps members at pre-service orientation. We re-enforce compliance through monthly professional development sessions, email blasts, and our internal online training systems. To ensure that generated volunteers are aware of the prohibited activities, corps members will provide an overview prior to engaging volunteers in any activities. Individual compliance will be monitored by program coaches who are trained annually on prohibited activities. This training includes a comprehensive explanation of the prohibited activities-detecting, reporting, and resolving them.

### F. Member Supervision

TFA's plan for supervising corps members may differ from other AmeriCorps programs because we are a professional corps. All TFA corps members are college graduates who have completed a rigorous application process that is designed, in part, to measure their ability to work effectively in a professional setting. Additionally, since our corps members work as full-time professional teachers, they are directly supervised by their school principal and other school administration. As a result, our supervision plan is primarily concerned with corps member development, evaluation, and to monitor member compliance with AmeriCorps regulations.

Every corps member is matched with a program coach -- a highly effective TFA alum and veteran teacher -- who manage a cohort of current members, and provide an additional layer of support and supervision for them. Our coaches are corps members' first point of contact with TFA. They perform regular observations of member classrooms, review student data with a focus on progress to date, and provide strategies for overcoming current challenges. Coaches refer corps members to targeted resources and opportunities based on strengths and weaknesses, and assist corps members in analyzing student growth based on final assessments.

To be hired, program coaches must have a demonstrated track record of success during their time in the classroom and demonstrate the characteristics needed to be a successful in this role -- critical thinking, ability to influence and motivate, and problem solving skills. Upon joining staff, coaches

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attend a new staff conference and independently participate in 20 hours of online modules before working with corps members. Once coaches complete their on-boarding process and begin working with members, they engage in ongoing trainings -- weekly check-ins with their manager; bi-weekly group professional development and skill building sessions; and weekly individualized professional development.

### G. Member Experience

TFA's mission is to build the movement to end educational inequity by enlisting our nation's most promising future leaders in the effort. Accomplishing our mission requires that we provide corps members with a powerful service experience. As such, we provide opportunities for members to reflect on their service through selected readings, training exercises, discussions and panels; and opportunities for corps members to take on increased responsibility -- work at summer training institute, welcome new members, recruit at their alma maters, mentor corps members, and conduct professional development sessions. Our Alumni Affairs team creates opportunities -- mentorship programs and events -- to further foster a sense of connectedness for corps members and opportunities for alumni to continue to engage with TFA.

We connect our corps members with the broader AmeriCorps community by encouraging our members to participate and provide support to local service programs and projects. Additionally, our corps members encourage students to engage in local service efforts, thus creating a culture and legacy of civic responsibility and service in the next generation.

We reinforce the AmeriCorps identity and brand with corps members and community members. Beginning with our recruitment campaign where we discuss the role AmeriCorps plays within our program. Upon acceptance to TFA, corps members receive an overview of TFA's relationship with AmeriCorps and the broader AmeriCorps network. All corps members participate in an AmeriCorps Pre-Service Orientation, which familiarizes them with the benefits and responsibilities of being an AmeriCorps member. Corps members are provided materials and resources that describe their role in the AmeriCorps network and identity as an AmeriCorps member. Orientation sessions and ongoing discussions with program staff help members develop a deeper understanding of what it means to be an AmeriCorps member, including viewing their service commitment as part of a much larger movement. To further foster a sense of connection with the AmeriCorps identity, we will provide all corps members with an AmeriCorps lapel pin, provide an AmeriCorps sign for corps member classrooms, and create an AmeriCorps resource page on our internal private website, so corps

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members can post stories of service, connect with other TFA corps members, and access information about AmeriCorps.

### H. Volunteer Generation

Our corps members build strong relationships with parents and community members to ensure their students' entire networks are invested in their success. To this end, corps members engage family members as classroom volunteers -- assisting in class projects, field trips, and tutoring. Many corps members also recruit and manage one-time volunteers to help in the classroom, serve as guest speakers, and help with extracurricular activities. We also maintain national and regional advisory boards made up of community leaders. Finally, we engage our nearly 28,000 alumni -- about 52% of our alumni contributed time or money to the organization last year.

Corps members provide supervision and instruction to their classroom volunteers to ensure they have clear expectations, and that no volunteer is engaging in prohibited activities. Corps members sign a statement twice a year affirming that they have managed and supervised their recruited volunteers, assuring that no volunteer has engaged in prohibited activities.

### I. Organizational Commitment to AmeriCorps Identification

We are undergoing an organization-wide rebranding in 2013, which will give us an opportunity to further integrate the AmeriCorps brand in national and regional marketing efforts. This will include integrating the AmeriCorps logo in marketing touch-points across social media, web, and print collateral. We will create an AmeriCorps page on our website, in addition to the logo, that will include an overview of the AmeriCorps support we receive and its impact. Additionally, we will provide links to CNCS and other AmeriCorps programs site pages. We will include the AmeriCorps logo and/or recognition language on marketing materials -- posters, brochures, templates, letterhead, trainings, presentations. These materials are used to educate and invest individuals in our work and help recruit candidates. Long-term, we will develop video content on the impact AmeriCorps has on corps members and alum, a profile in our alumni magazine, and work with our regions to add the AmeriCorps logo to materials they produce, particularly for regional events. Collectively, these touch-points will reach hundreds of thousands of people in our network.

## Organizational Capability

### A. Organizational Background and Staffing

STAFFING: Wendy Kopp proposed the idea for TFA in her undergraduate thesis in 1989. In 1990, a

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charter corps of 500 recent college graduates joined TFA and became part of the movement to eliminate educational inequity. Since then, nearly 33,000 participants have reached more than 3 million children nationwide during their two-year teaching commitments. Our alumni have sustained their commitment -- as school and district leaders, state senators, and policy leaders -- working within education and across all sectors to expand educational equity.

The organization continues to be led by Wendy Kopp (CEO) who works with a national Board of Directors and leadership team to set our overall strategy and direction. The national Board meets four times annually, and is charged with exercising its fiduciary duties to ensure that the organization is run effectively and within all relevant laws and regulations.

Our leadership team has extensive experience in program design and management. Matthew Kramer (President) is responsible for TFA's overall performance, operations, and effectiveness. Prior to joining TFA, he was a partner at McKinsey & Company. Elissa Kim (Executive Vice President (EVP) for Recruitment & Admissions), has produced a 26% compound annual growth rate in applications since joining staff in 1999 after serving as a TFA corps member. Susan Asiyambi and Jeff Wetzler (EVPs, Teacher Preparation, Support and Development) are responsible for ensuring corps members have the necessary training and ongoing program support to lead their students to success as highly effective teachers. Asiyambi joined staff as a program coach in 2003 after serving as a TFA corps member, and Wetzler joined TFA after working at Monitor Group, an international consulting firm. Eric Scroggins (EVP, Growth, Development, and Partnerships) leads our efforts to secure funding and placements for corps members. Previously, Eric served as the Executive Director of our St. Louis and Bay Area regional sites. Josh Griggs (Chief Administrative Officer) is responsible for supporting TFA's infrastructure, including finance, administration, and tech. Previously, Josh has held leadership roles on our admissions and recruitment teams.

Additionally, each region has an Executive Director (ED) who manages the operations of the regional site, sets regional visions, and oversees execution of our program to ensure that we are meeting the unique needs of specific communities. Many EDs establish regional advisory boards that provide guidance, assist in fundraising, and invest other community leaders.

**GRANTS MANAGEMENT:** As a recipient of AmeriCorps funding since 1994, we have built systems and tools to successfully manage AmeriCorps grants and ensure compliance. Additionally, we have managed large-scale federal grants through the Department of Education and NASA. At the national level, we have built significant in-house Federal Grants and Finance teams to administer federal funding -- train and support regional staff on AmeriCorps compliance, budget creation, and

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grants management. These teams are led by Kate Kavouras (Managing Director, Federal Grants) and Doug Stay (Managing Director, Grants & Contracts) who have managed our AmeriCorps grants for five years and have a comprehensive knowledge of the regulations and policies that govern these grants.

Our Federal Grants team provides on-going trainings and technical assistance for regional staff via conference calls, regional and national conferences, site visits and on-line tutorials. This team also conducts internal audits to ensure compliance with grant requirements. Our Finance team reports to the Auditing and Finance committees of our Board, and works closely with our Development team and budget trackers to coordinate cash-in and expenses throughout the organization. This structure allows for the appropriate breakdown of responsibilities and a system of checks and balances needed to ensure accurate financial accounting, coordination of fundraising and spending, and the accurate tracking of all finances.

**ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY:** We have the capacity necessary to provide training and skills development to corps members, engage independent evaluators to inform program development, and integrate and support our AmeriCorps program within our organization.

As outlined in the "member training" section, each TFA corps member receives comprehensive pre-service training and on-going support, including completing a 5-6 week intensive training program prior to entering the classroom. This training program is designed to equip corps members with the skills and mindsets that will prepare them to be leaders and excel in the classroom. We run nine training institutes that are designed and executed by full-time staff, and part-time summer staff that lead training sessions, manage corps members, and manage institute logistics. During their service, each corps member is placed with a program coach and supported by a Regional Program team that further develops corps members' teaching and leadership skills. Regional and institute teams are supported by a national Teacher, Preparation, Support, and Development team that designs training and curriculum.

TFA regularly engages in independent evaluations. Our Research Partnerships team works with independent evaluators to effectively gauge the impact of TFA, continuously improve the quality and reach of research, and use this research to improve programmatic design. Currently, TFA is supporting more than 75 external research studies undertaken by various research firms, universities, academic faculty, and graduate students.

To ensure AmeriCorps is integrated and supported within our organization, our Federal Grants team has created systems and tools to ensure compliance with AmeriCorps regulations and the

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successful execution of our program. The Federal Grants and Finance teams provide ongoing training, technical assistance, and oversight to staff and corps members to ensure compliance across all regions. This management structure has allowed us to standardize our grants management systems across region, which has allowed for successful management of our AmeriCorps grant. In addition to grants management, the Federal Grants team engages with other functional teams to evaluate project progress, and ensure that AmeriCorps is fully integrated into project activities; such as working with the Marketing team to further integrated AmeriCorps branding into recruitment and other marketing efforts.

### Current Grantee

This management structure has contributed to the success of our program. In the 2011-12 school year, we met or exceeded our performance measure targets. We maintain a strong record of impact, compliance, and responsiveness while expanding from 39 to 46 sites throughout the three year grant cycle. We refined internal policies and procedures in response to CNCS guidance to ensure our corps members met the eligibility criteria and requirements to serve as AmeriCorps members. We met deadlines for financial and progress reports, and we responded to all CNCS requests, such as the recent position description audits, with the appropriate documentation in the time allotted.

### B. Sustainability

We believe the best way to ensure sustainability is to build a strong local presence -- community-specific visions for students and families, and a plan for realizing that vision supported by strong local partnerships and a robust regional team. This model puts the onus on regional teams to develop pathways to sustainable funding to realize their visions. As a result of this structure, nearly 80% of funds raised in FY12 were raised by Regional Development teams.

Knowing that not all funding landscapes are equal, we provide national funding to subsidize regions with a dearth of local philanthropy, those that are experiencing a volatile funding environments, or those that have unique windows of opportunity to grow more quickly than their current funding base can support; however, each region must have a strong plan and vision for long term financial sustainability. Additionally, national funding supports program activities that all regions benefit from -- nationwide recruitment and centralized pre-service training institutes. National funding also supports program innovation, research and evaluation, and other special initiatives. This national-regional funding model, including strategic subsidies and tight management

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of annual fundraising progress and goals, has proven highly effective in securing the support necessary to fuel our growth, yielding a 27%% CAGR over the last 5 years.

Our current funding portfolio represents a wide distribution of sources -- comprised of 70% private funding (27% individuals; 30% local and national foundations; 13% corporations) and 30% public dollars (18% public school partners; 12% local, state, and federal partners). This diversity mitigates risk and provides the inroads necessary to sustain and grow investments from each stakeholder group, which helps ensure sustainability beyond the grant period.

In addition to building a large and sustainable base of supporters, our program's impact and sustainability is directly attributable to the strength of our partnerships with school districts, charter networks, universities, and community leaders. To this end, we have both national and regional teams dedicated to cultivating community support and seeking guidance from supporters to drive our work. These partnerships have resulted in the creation of our national and regional boards, securing resource to improve and grow program operations, and raising the profile of the achievement gap as a solvable problem. For example, we rely on the guidance of our district partners in placing and supporting corps members. We foster an ongoing relationship with each school and district partners to ensure that they are satisfied with our teachers' performance, and provide opportunities for feedback and knowledge sharing.

### C. Compliance and Accountability

As a long-time AmeriCorps grantee, we have developed systems to ensure compliance with AmeriCorps requirements and regulations at service sites. First, our Federal Grants team trains all regional program staff on both acceptable and prohibited AmeriCorps activities, so they are equipped to educate corps members and monitor member activities. Second, trained regional staff provides pre-service training to corps members, which engenders in corps members a deeper understanding of their role as an AmeriCorps member. Additionally, TFA will provide school administrators with a handbook that will communicate AmeriCorps rules and regulations and outline the prohibited activities. The Federal Grants team is also available for consultation with site supervisors.

Through site visits, classroom observations, and regular communication with site supervisors, our program coaches will provide oversight of corps members. Due to the frequency of interactions that coaches have with corps members and their in depth knowledge of the prohibited activities, they will be able to ensure that members are operating in accordance with AmeriCorps regulations. Additionally, our Federal Grants team conducts regular regional site visits and audits corps member

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activities to ensure compliance with AmeriCorps regulations.

If a TFA staff member or school administrator suspects that a member is engaging in a prohibited activity, they will notify their regional leadership team. Partnering with our Federal Grants team and legal counsel, the regional leadership team will assess the suspected violation and suspend the AmeriCorps member until the issue is resolved.

### Current Grantee

**DEMONSTRATED COMPLIANCE:** In 2011-12 our biggest compliance challenge was meeting the 30 day enrollment requirement in eGrants. Our enrollment timing overlaps with major program operations at our regional sites (induction and orientation), resulting in enrollments beyond the 30 day window. To ensure compliance we moved towards a centralized enrollment model in 2012-13, whereby our Federal Grants team managed the enrollment process for all of our regional sites. In preparation for this grants management shift, we expanded team capacity by adding one new full-time staff member and several part-time staff members. Our increased capacity has allowed us to provide more direct support to our newer operating sites and better monitoring of our veteran sites.

**ENROLLMENT:** In the last completed program year (2011-2012) we filled 100% of the slots on the national grant.

**RETENTION:** Our retention rate for the 2011-12 school year was 95.4%, a rate markedly higher than the estimated average retention for first-year teachers in low-income communities in general (82%) and the overall average for all first-year teachers regardless of school setting (86%) ("No Dream Denied: A Pledge to America's Children" (2003) National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. Washington, D.C.). Although our retention rate is higher than the national average, we are constantly working to improve our retention rates, including improving our selection process to make sure we are selecting members who will relentlessly pursue our mission in the face of steep odds. Additionally, we regularly survey our members as to their satisfaction with their service experience, and provide an opportunity to reflect and provide feedback.

**COMMISSION CONSULTATION:** We utilized the state commission consultation process proposed by the Combined Competition Working Group convened by CNCS, and have had calls/meetings with several commissions to introduce our program and its local impact.

**OPERATING SITES & MEMBER SERVICE SITES:** TFA has identified and partnered with over 600 placement partners (districts and charter school networks). We begin our placement site selection process by meeting with district officials to identify the highest need schools and teaching positions in

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the region in advance of placing members. Once placement sites have been selected, corps members interview and compete for open positions along with other new teachers. We work closely with our partners throughout the year to ensure that they have the programmatic capabilities and resources to support our corps members, align our pre-service training and ongoing support with district needs, and engage in an ongoing dialogue with school leadership to ensure they are satisfied with our teachers' performance.

Currently, all TFA corps members are teaching in low-income schools as defined by free and reduced lunch rates. In the 2012-13 school year, we secured commitments to place 1,100 corps members in schools throughout our 46 regions including some of our nation's largest school districts and charter management organizations (due to space constraints, we are unable to list all our placement partners): Los Angeles Unified School District, New York City public schools, District of Columbia Public Schools, Green Dot Charter Public Schools, Alliance College-Ready Charter Public Schools, and KIPP Public Charter Schools. We are currently working with our existing district and charter partners and building new relationships to secure service sites for 2013-14, with most placements secured by mid-summer 2013.

As a professional teacher corps, our placement sites are the full-time employer of our corps members, and thus provide members with salaries and benefits. Additionally, placement sites pay a fee to cover a portion of the costs related to recruiting, training, and supporting members.

REPLICATION: TFA currently operates in 46 regions, each developed around one national program model and adapted to fit a particular regional context. We hope to expand to a total of 48 regions in 2013-14. In 1997, TFA helped launch The New Teacher Project (now a separate entity) to meet districts' long-term hiring needs. TNTP works with districts to bring in more than 2,000 locally recruited teachers each year in high need areas.

### **Budget/Cost Effectiveness**

#### A. Cost Effectiveness

We are requesting 9,578 full-time member slots at \$1,722/MSY through a professional corps fixed amount grant, which falls well below the maximum amount that can be requested. Please note that if we are awarded new/recompete state competitive grants, it will decrease the overall number of MSYs we will need on this national grant.

Our funding portfolio represents a wide distribution of sources: we are funded 27% by individuals, 30% by local and national foundation, 13% by corporations, 18% school partners and 12% by public funding. We raised \$294 million in FY12; regions raised \$228 million, growing more than 16% over

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FY11. Nationally, we raised nearly \$30 million in private national funds from corporate, foundation and individual donors, a 15% increase over last year. Additionally, we were awarded \$36 million in federal funds -- including a \$9.6 million national AmeriCorps grant, which comprised 3% of total funds raised. We value the federal resources we receive, and to that end work hard to ensure we use these funds efficiently -- for every public dollar that we receive, we leverage \$7 in private investments.

Our estimated FY14 budget is \$340 million; this AmeriCorps grant would comprise approximately 5% of this budget; coupled with our state AmeriCorps grant applications, AmeriCorps funding represent 9% of this budget.

To ensure we raise the additional funds necessary to operate, TFA has taken a two-pronged approach -- investing in both regionally based and national development efforts. Regional Development staff identifies donors that share an interest in the community and our mission, and cultivate these relationships by designing and implementing donor engagement plans. Regional Development teams are supported by our National Development team, who provides guidance on setting goals and creating strategic and operating plans that allow regions to grow the size of their corporate, individual, foundation, and public funding portfolios.

In addition to supporting Regional Development teams, our National Development team cultivates relationships with large-scale donors whose interest is not necessarily tied to a particular community. Our Individual Giving team targets individuals who have giving-priorities focused on the specific demographic, impact area, and locations that we serve, as well as those committed to building a national movement for educational equity. Once we isolate those individuals that identify with our mission, we inform them of our vision and work, both nationally and specifically in communities of interest to them. Our Foundation and Corporate Relations team identify foundations and corporations that have a philanthropic focus on education or in areas that we place corps members. Our Federal Grants team works to identify and explore federal grant opportunities that are in alignment with our organizational priorities.

Given our proven record of success and strong program and development operations, we are confident that we will be able to raise the funds necessary to effectively run our program. In 2010, Worth Magazine named TFA one of the 10 most cost effective charities in the country. Additionally, in 2012, Charity Navigator gave TFA a perfect 4-star rating for the tenth straight year. Less than 1% of all nonprofits nationwide have received similar consecutive 4-star ratings, putting us in the 99th percentile of among nonprofits.

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### B. Budget Adequacy

Although there is no budget required for fixed award grants, our organizational budget is designed to adequately support our program. The vast majority of our budget (71%) is spent on costs related to recruiting, selecting, training, and supporting our corps members -- our key program activities. An additional 11% supports our work with our alumni. These allocations are reflective of the emphasis we place on offering districts a diverse pool of qualified candidates who are motivated to go above and beyond traditional expectations to increase the academic outcomes of the students that they serve, and providing corps members with the training and ongoing support and professional development that enables them to lead their students to make significant academic gains. We will be using non-AmeriCorps funds to cover the costs of the National Service criminal history checks.

We set ambitious funding goals -- we have already raised nearly \$100 million in FY13. As we have done in prior years, our goal is to have a diverse base of donors across several different giving streams: foundation, corporation, individual, and public. In FY13, we are building our base of \$5,000 donors through a national matching campaign. Additionally, we expect our New Campaigns team, focused on engaging a broad base of supporters and lower capacity donors (parents, alumni, employees, etc.) will yield benefits in the near term.

Our program design is a particularly cost effective model for increasing student achievement. First, we are providing low-income school districts with a national pool of pre-screened talent they would not reach otherwise. Second, our administrative costs for doing so are substantially less than those of organizations engaged in similar activities. For example, the Peace Corps' cost per member to recruit, select, train and support is over \$67,000, while those same activities cost TFA \$40,270. Our recruitment costs are less than \$4,000 per corps member -- much lower than recruiting a McKinsey first year associate (\$35,000) or an army recruit (\$22,898). Third, multiple studies have demonstrated that the impact of having a TFA corps member as a teacher is greater than other education interventions. TFA yields a greater return on investment than investing in class size reduction efforts, National Board certification, and teachers who hold master's degrees (The Urban Institute 2009; Nye, B., Hedges, L.V. & Konstantopoulos, S., 2000. The Results of the Tennessee Class Size Experiment. American

### Evaluation Summary or Plan

For our previous grant cycle, TFA employed Policy Studies Associates to conduct an evaluation, which has been sent to our program officer at CNCS.

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### Amendment Justification

N/A

### Clarification Summary

N/A

### Continuation Changes

N/A