

# PART I - FACE SHEET

<b>APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE</b>		1. TYPE OF SUBMISSION: Application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Construction															
Modified Standard Form 424 (Rev.02/07 to confirm to the Corporation's eGrants System)																	
2a. DATE SUBMITTED TO CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE (CNCS): 04/23/13		3. DATE RECEIVED BY STATE:															
2b. APPLICATION ID: 13ED150233		4. DATE RECEIVED BY FEDERAL AGENCY: 04/23/13															
		STATE APPLICATION IDENTIFIER:															
		FEDERAL IDENTIFIER: 13WEHNY006															
<b>5. APPLICATION INFORMATION</b>																	
LEGAL NAME: Teach For America DUNS NUMBER: 621404383		NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION FOR PROJECT DIRECTOR OR OTHER PERSON TO BE CONTACTED ON MATTERS INVOLVING THIS APPLICATION (give area codes): NAME: Shalini Lall															
ADDRESS (give street address, city, state, zip code and county): 315 West 36th Street 7th Floor New York NY 10018 - 6404 County: New York		TELEPHONE NUMBER: (213) 489-9272 FAX NUMBER: INTERNET E-MAIL ADDRESS: shalini.lall@teachforamerica.org															
6. EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (EIN): 133541913		7. TYPE OF APPLICANT: 7a. Non-Profit 7b. Local Education Agency National Non-Profit (Multi-State)															
8. TYPE OF APPLICATION (Check appropriate box). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NEW <input type="checkbox"/> NEW/PREVIOUS GRANTEE <input type="checkbox"/> CONTINUATION <input type="checkbox"/> AMENDMENT If Amendment, enter appropriate letter(s) in box(es): <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> A. AUGMENTATION      B. BUDGET REVISION C. NO COST EXTENSION D. OTHER (specify below):		9. NAME OF FEDERAL AGENCY: <b>Corporation for National and Community Service</b>															
10a. CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE NUMBER: 94.006 10b. TITLE: AmeriCorps Fixed Amount Grant		11.a. DESCRIPTIVE TITLE OF APPLICANT'S PROJECT: Teach For America--School Turnaround															
12. AREAS AFFECTED BY PROJECT (List Cities, Counties, States, etc): Corps members will be placed in Tier I and Tier II schools receiving School Improvement Grant funds in CO, ILL, NC, and TN.		11.b. CNCS PROGRAM INITIATIVE (IF ANY):															
13. PROPOSED PROJECT: START DATE: 09/01/13      END DATE: 06/30/14		14. CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF:    a.Applicant <input type="text" value="NY 008"/> b.Program <input type="text" value="NY 008"/>															
15. ESTIMATED FUNDING: Year #: 1		16. IS APPLICATION SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS? <input type="checkbox"/> YES. THIS PREAPPLICATION/APPLICATION WAS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE STATE EXECUTIVE ORDER 12372 PROCESS FOR REVIEW ON: DATE: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO. PROGRAM IS NOT COVERED BY E.O. 12372															
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20%;">a. FEDERAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 68,800.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b. APPLICANT</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>c. STATE</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>d. LOCAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>e. OTHER</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>f. PROGRAM INCOME</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 0.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>g. TOTAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$ 68,800.00</td> </tr> </table>		a. FEDERAL	\$ 68,800.00	b. APPLICANT	\$ 0.00	c. STATE	\$ 0.00	d. LOCAL	\$ 0.00	e. OTHER	\$ 0.00	f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00	g. TOTAL	\$ 68,800.00	17. IS THE APPLICANT DELINQUENT ON ANY FEDERAL DEBT? <input type="checkbox"/> YES if "Yes," attach an explanation. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	
a. FEDERAL	\$ 68,800.00																
b. APPLICANT	\$ 0.00																
c. STATE	\$ 0.00																
d. LOCAL	\$ 0.00																
e. OTHER	\$ 0.00																
f. PROGRAM INCOME	\$ 0.00																
g. TOTAL	\$ 68,800.00																
18. TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF, ALL DATA IN THIS APPLICATION/PREAPPLICATION ARE TRUE AND CORRECT, THE DOCUMENT HAS BEEN DULY AUTHORIZED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF THE APPLICANT AND THE APPLICANT WILL COMPLY WITH THE ATTACHED ASSURANCES IF THE ASSISTANCE IS AWARDED.																	
a. TYPED NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: Shalini Lall		b. TITLE:	c. TELEPHONE NUMBER: (213) 489-9272														
d. SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:			e. DATE SIGNED: 04/23/13														

# 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 school turnaround AmeriCorps members teach in low-income schools throughout the country (starting in Aug. 2013), going above and beyond traditional expectations to help their students achieve at high levels. At the end of the 2013-2014 school year (ending June 2014), the CNCS EAP investment of \$68,800, will drive 86 corps members to significantly improve educational outcomes for more than 2,000 students throughout the states of Colorado, Illinois, North Carolina, and Tennessee, catalyzing for corps members a lifelong commitment to expanding educational equity in this nation.

## Rationale and Approach

A. AC MEMBER AS HIGHLY EFFECTIVE MEANS TO SUPPORT AND SUSTAIN EFFORTS: 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).

TFA, believes this issue --educational inequity and the corresponding need for highly effective teachers and leaders dedicated to solving it -- is among the most pressing national needs. TFA meets

## Narratives

this need by recruiting, training, and developing exceptional, diverse leaders from across the country 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.

In partnership with local educational agencies, we strategically identify communities and schools that have been identified as tier I or tier 2 II schools that receive school improvement grants (Illinois: Harper High School, Fenger Academy High School, Marshall Metropolitan High School, Phillips Academy High School, North Lawndale Charter, Tilden Career Community, Chicago Vocational Academy, Raby High School; North Carolina: West Mecklenburg High, West Charlotte High, Warren County High; Tennessee: Churchwell Museum Magnet Elementary; Colorado: Hanson Elementary School, Gilpin K-8 School, Greenlee K-8 School, Lake Middle School, Lake International School, Strive Prep-Lake, North High School, Phillips Elementary School, Rishel Middle School, Montbello High, Collegiate Prep Academy, Noel Middle School, Noel Community Arts School, Skyland Community High School, Fort Logan Elementary School), where too many students do not have access to the educational opportunities they deserve -- from Chicago, where by fourth grade, the average low-income child in Chicago is already three years behind grade level. Only 50% of all Chicago Public Schools students graduate from high school, and less than 8% go on to and graduate from a four-year college, to Eastern North Carolina, where today, 25% of children in the state--over 500,000 in number--live in poverty, and the rural communities of Eastern North Carolina are home to the highest concentrations of impoverished families. As a result, there are huge disparities in educational opportunities for the kids in the region: 47% of African American students, 52% of Hispanic students, and 48% of economically disadvantaged students in grades 3-8 are performing below their grade levels. (National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress). These circumstances are representative of all TFA placement sites that we are requesting schools turnaround AmeriCorps members for (Colorado, Illinois, North Carolina, and Tennessee).

TFA AmeriCorps members will serve as the full-time teacher of record in low-income classrooms charged with increasing overall academic achievement and accelerating students' acquisition of reading and mathematics knowledge and skills. 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 Sarah Durrin, a second grade teacher Chicago corps member in the Archer Heights neighborhood, worked relentlessly to ensure her students were mastering and engaging with rigorous physics concepts as freshman in order to

## Narratives

increase their score on the Explore exam, and eventually the ACT. Sarah spent mornings, evenings, and weekends preparing lessons and assessing his students' results. She spent time after school each day tutoring her students, and engaged students' families to help them practice skill-building at home. Sarah's work days often extended to 12 or more hours. As a result of her service, Sarah students averaged more than 4 points growth on the Explore exam, meeting the goal that she had set for his students at the beginning of the year.

We are requesting 86/\$800 MSY full-time education award program slots to bring a growing number of leaders like Sarah to our nation's classrooms.

**B. EVIDENCE BASES & 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 SIG 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,

## Narratives

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 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 to increase academic math and literacy academic outcomes for students. We are opting into national performance measures ED2 and ED 5.

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.

In collaboration with our placement partner schools, 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.

In our last full program year, TFA 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.

C. 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

## Narratives

role TFA plays in 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.

Once corps members are accepted to TFA through TFA's internal selection model, our regional teams work in collaboration with school leadership to ensure corps members are placed at schools in which they will thrive in--leading their students to increased academic achievement. Because TFA works with school district leadership to fill new and vacant positions through the district's routine hiring processes, our teachers operate within the structures set up by each districts. Our corps members adhere to all hiring practices and processes that all teachers go through and school leadership ultimately makes the final decision (based on resume review and an in person interview), as it pertains to which TFA corps members will be serving at their school.

## Narratives

**D. 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 (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

## Narratives

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; 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.

E. 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 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

## Narratives

development.

F. 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.

TFA recognizes the importance of structured time for corps members to reflect on their experience and how their experience fuels their life-long commitment to service. Throughout the year, corps members participate in debrief discussions with their program coaches and other corps, where they reflect on the state of their classroom and how their actions drive it, as well as their personal leadership and how their experience makes them view their long-term impact on the community. These experiences allow corps members to hone their skills and also share best practices with corps members to ensure success in the classroom.

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

## Narratives

classrooms, and create an AmeriCorps resource page on our internal private website, so corps members can post stories of service, connect with other TFA corps members, and access information about AmeriCorps.

**G. ORG COMMITMENT TO AC 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.

**H. STRAT CONSIDERATION:**TFA is requesting 86 MSYs to serve in tier I and tier II schools receiving SIG funds in Colorado, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Illinois--working to accelerate the students' acquisition of reading and mathematics knowledge and skills. Corps members will be serving in both urban and rural schools and will be teaching in Elementary, Middle, and High Schools.

TFA is committed to recruiting and engaging traditionally underrepresented populations, as a diversified corps is pivotal in driving student achievement. 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. 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.

### Organizational Capability

## Narratives

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

## Narratives

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 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.

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 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.

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

## Narratives

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 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 we are in alignment with their hiring needs and student achievement goals, and that they are satisfied with our teachers' performance. We begin our placement site selection process by meeting with district officials to identify the highest need schools and teaching positions in 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.

If TFA were awarded a school turnaround AmeriCorps grant, these funds would be focused on target

## Narratives

SIG schools where our corps members serve. Our goal is to create an even more collaborative environment with school leaders to share and access knowledge and resources to further develop or intervention methods around increased student academic achievement, and further align our work with school based turnaround efforts in a more meaningful and robust manner. This increased coordination, collaboration, and communication between TFA and our placement sites will only further both parties goal to increase student academic achievement, changing the life trajectory of the students that we serve. If TFA were awarded this grant it would comprise less than .5% of our overall budget.

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.

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 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.

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

## Narratives

(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.

**ENROLMENT:** 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.

**D. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT:** As mentioned above, TFA works closely with our placement 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. Additionally, strong relationships with our placement partners provides opportunities for ongoing feedback and knowledge sharing to ensure our corps members are achieving and high levels and that their goals are in alignment with school and district goals.

This collaboration occurs through a few different avenues. First, our regional District Strategy teams and Executive Directors cultivate relationships at the highest level of the districts in which we place, to ensure that there is alignment between our program model and district needs. Second, our District Strategy Team meets with schools leaders throughout the summer to ensure that there is an agreement in place at each placement site that speaks to the specific needs that TFA will meet at each site. Lastly, once these agreements are in place and strong relationships are solidified at all levels of the system, our program coaches build relationships with school leadership where their corps members are placed to ensure that there is an open dialogue regarding corps members progress, successes and challenges.

## Narratives

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. Corps members set benchmarks that are roughly equivalent despite the wide range of grades and subjects in which we place. We enable them to do this by calculating a benchmark score for the assessment each corps member uses (e.g. mastery, reading growth, state test) that is based on the learning gains that high-performing teachers in the same grade and subject have been able to achieve. Our corps members are expected to average at least a year of academic growth with students per school year.

TFA has created an online Program Tracker system that collects student achievement data at regular intervals throughout the year. Corps members' progress in relation to their student achievement goals is entered into the Program Tracker by program coaches. Program coaches use this data to drive their actions and interactions with corps member and school leaders to develop individualized plans and interventions throughout the year that will drive student academic success. Additionally, this data is rolled up and analyzed nationally to determine our overall impact on student achievement and to determine patterns in data to inform best practices and to further develop and enhance our program interventions.

### **Budget/Cost Effectiveness**

A. COST EFFECTIVENESS : The vast majority of our organizational 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.

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

## Narratives

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 Educational Research Journal; Improving Student Achievement: What State NAEP Scores Tell Us, RAND Corporation; Rivkin, S., Hanushek, E, & Kain, J., 2005).

The requested resources will supplement the existing school funding streams at the school in which we place our corps members. As mentioned above, if awarded this grant, TFA would utilize these funds to support the training and development of corps through an integrated and collaborative effort with our placement partners. Our training and ongoing support structure ensures that each 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 and work closely with schools leaders to ensure and integrated and individualized intervention for each corps member to approach their work with . Program coaches 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. Ultimately, this intensive support structure will enhance our corps members' ability to drive student achievement and meet school and district goals.

**B. BUDGET ADEQUACY:** As mentioned above, 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 raised \$294 million in FY12; regions raised \$228 million, growing more than 16% over 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. TFA values the federal resources we receive, and to that end work hard to ensure we use

## Narratives

these funds efficiently -- for every public dollar that we receive, we raise \$7 in private investments.

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. Our estimated FY14 budget is \$340 million -- our national school turnaround AmeriCorps grant would comprise approximately less than .5% 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 that 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.

### **Evaluation Summary or Plan**

N/A

### **Amendment Justification**

## Narratives

N/A

### Clarification Summary

1. We plan to manage the cost per corps member through (a) our established annual budgeting process that focuses on cost-savings and (b) our endeavors to maximize private funding opportunities. Regarding the multi-year realization of cost-savings, we have and will continue to reduce our overhead expenses through adopting deliberate cost-saving measures. We and we anticipate the benefits of such measures to be realized through year two and three of the grant.

Further, we anticipate diversifying and expanding our funding base to ensure that our private funding sources increase. TFA has had significant experience raising the necessary resources to run our program from a variety of sources: foundations, corporations, individual donors, and public sources. We actively seek to grow funding across all sources going forward, particularly our private funding streams. In Fiscal Year 2013, our fundraising goal is \$340 million, for which we have already secured commitments of over \$100 million. 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).

As we continue to increase our private fundraising, the cost per MSY will decrease due to the multiple sources of funding, outside of AmeriCorps funds that will go toward supporting each corps member and our overall program. As a professional corps, our members are provided salaries and benefits from the school districts; therefore, our costs relate to training and supporting our members. This allows TFA to maintain a very low cost per MSY without affecting the quality of our program.

2. Teach For America's desired start data is August 20, 2013, with a member enrollment period from August 20th-Sept. 19th

3. School start and end dates vary according to state; however, with an August 20th start date and June 30th end date, the term of service of service is in general alignment with the school year across all 3 states that we are proposing to serve in.

4. Labor union concurrence forms are required for program applicants who:

(1) Propose to serve as the placement site for AmeriCorps members; and

(2) Have employees engaged in the same or substantially similar work as that proposed to be carried out by AmeriCorps members; and

(3) Those employees are represented by a local labor organization, must include in their application

\*the written concurrence of the local labor organization representing those employees. Written

## Narratives

\*concurrence can be in the form of a letter or e-mail from the local union leadership.

As stated above, the labor concurrence requirement applies to programs that are serving as both program applicant and service site. This requirement does not apply to Teach For America because we do not serve as the placement site for AmeriCorps members.

5. As a professional corps program, TFA addresses the problem of educational inequity by recruiting and placing high-quality participants as teachers in communities that lack an adequate number of such professionals. We do this in two ways:

First, our corps members often fill teaching positions in high-need subject areas and schools, which districts often find difficult to fill. For example, according to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) placement districts such as those in North Carolina have faced persistent teacher shortages, particularly in math, science, history, special education, and English subject areas, which are placement subjects that our corps members teach. In addition to these geographic shortage areas, over 90 percent of current TFA AmeriCorps members are teaching in specific subject areas and/or grade levels where the state has identified teacher shortages.

Second, we provide low-income schools access to a national pipeline of candidates commensurate to those teaching in the world's top performing school systems who have are participating in our proven-effective teacher training program. We believe that "lacking an adequate number of such professionals" does not just refer to communities that simply do not have enough candidates, but also to communities that do not have a pool of high-quality candidates from proven-effective sources.

Research consistently demonstrates that high-quality teaching is the most important factor in student learning; effective teachers have a significant impact on children's life prospects. Despite this evidence, low-income students are less likely to get effective teachers in their classrooms than wealthier students; they are far more likely to have teachers who scored poorly on college and licensure exams. Low-income communities have a higher than average need for highly-effective teachers, yet these communities often lack a sufficient supply relative to the level of need.

A 2010 McKinsey study of the world's top performing school systems reveal that 100% of their teachers come from the "top third+" of college students. In the U.S. only 23% come from the top third; 14% in high poverty schools. The "top third+" refers to those college students that are in top third academic cohort, and are rigorously screened for other qualities believed to be predictors of successful teachers -- perseverance, ability to motivate others, passion for children, and organization and communication skills. These skills form the "plus" in the "top-third+" term coined by McKinsey. TFA provides low-income schools with a national pipeline of exactly these types of candidates. The

average GPA for 2012 TFA AmeriCorps members is 3.54, and our extensive interview process screens all applicants for these "plus" characteristics.

The effectiveness of our national teacher pipeline is further reinforced by independent studies -- in every state that use student achievement data to analyze the relative effectiveness of teacher pathways

As a professional corps program, TFA AmeriCorps members are paid staff. Therefore, our corps members are not displacing paid staff, but are filling vacancies that are opened to the general public and that the district is interested in hiring qualified persons to fill. In districts where there are collective bargaining agreements in place, these agreements govern the ways in which districts hire new teachers, including TFA teachers. Because TFA works with school and district leadership to fill new and vacant positions through the district's routine hiring processes, our teachers operate within the structures set up by the collective bargaining agreement. We do not receive any special hiring arrangement beyond those permissible by collective bargaining agreements.

6. TFA can confirm that there is a commitment from eligible partner schools and the local education agency to develop a written partnership agreement.

7.

8. TFA is in the process of collecting the necessary signatures from school leadership; however, school leaders are busy closing out the school year and have been difficult to reach and in some cases school staff are out on abbreviated schedules for the summer. TFA is confident that we will be able to get the outstanding signatures.

## Required Documents

**Document Name**

**Status**

Evaluation

Not Applicable

Labor Union Concurrence

Not Applicable