

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

Teach For America-Memphis provides a critical source of well-trained teachers who are helping break the local cycle of educational inequity. Corps members will teach K-12 students, beginning in August of 2013, for two years in low-income schools in Memphis, Tennessee--going above and beyond traditional expectations to help their students achieve at high levels. By the end of the 2013-2014 school year (June 2014), the CNCS investment of \$600,0000 will assist 300 AmeriCorps members to significantly improve the educational outcomes for nearly 27,000 students. This is a fixed amount grant and requires no match.

## Rationale and Approach

A. NEED: The stunning reality is that today, in a nation that prides itself on equal opportunity for all, children's educational opportunities are largely determined by where they are born and the wealth of their family. The effects of the achievement gap in the Memphis City School (MCS) system -- the largest in the state of Tennessee -- are pronounced and widespread. Compared to students in the neighboring Shelby County school district and state performance averages, those in MCS lag behind in subject proficiencies and state test scores. Only 27% of Memphis students in the 3rd-8th grades scored at levels deemed 'proficient or advanced' on the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) for math, compared to 57% of students in Shelby County. A similar gap is evident in 3rd-8th grade English achievement with only 29% of Memphis students testing at proficient levels on the TCAP, while their peers in Shelby County are doing so at a 61% rate. The trend continues into high school where only 33% of 9-12th graders are Algebra I proficient, compared to 60% of students in Shelby County and 55% statewide. The achievement gap in Memphis is further exacerbated by the fact that 85% of Memphis students are identified by the state of as Economically Disadvantaged, defined as being eligible to receive free and reduced priced meals, and over 94% of schools in Memphis receive federal assistance through Title I (Tennessee Department of Education, 2012).

Among cities in the United States with a population over 500,000, Memphis has the third highest percentage of residents living in poverty -- including 40% of the city's children -- and the second highest violent crime rate. Memphis' high-school dropout rate is also well in excess of the national average of 7.4% (America's Children in Brief: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics 2008).

We choose to serve this population because of the short and long-term repercussions of perpetuating an achievement gap. For example, a less educated person is more likely to earn less; high school

## Narratives

dropouts are twice as likely to be unemployed than those with a college degree (Employment Status Of the Civilian Population 25 Years and Over By Education Attainment, U.S. Department of Labor 2008). Because African-American, Latino, and Native American children are three times as likely to live in a low-income area, children of color are disproportionately impacted by this inequality (America's Children in Brief: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2008," Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics). This disparity is particularly acute in Memphis where large numbers of students are from low-income minority backgrounds- 91% of students in the Memphis City School system are African-American or Hispanic and 85% of them are classified as economically disadvantaged. The gap is striking for Hispanic students, of whom only 60% graduate from MCS compared to 80% statewide and in Shelby County. In contrast, the average graduation rate for white students in Tennessee is 90% and over 93% in Shelby County (Tennessee Department of Education, 2012).

B. AMERICORPS MEMBERS AS HIGHLY EFFECTIVE MEANS TO SOLVE PROBLEM: Teach For America-Memphis (TFA-Memphis) 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 engaging in extracurricular activities. Corps members go above and beyond a normal work day to make significant academic gains with their students. Over 50% of Memphis corps members also teach extended days -- which often means they are in the classroom at 6:30AM and then teach for an extra two hours until 4:30PM. Many also provide instruction to their students regularly on Saturdays.

Along with improved educational outcomes for Memphis --corps members are also providing the city school system with a critical mass of human capital. In 2012, over half of all incoming corps members were placed in subjects deemed as "high need," particularly in secondary science and mathematics education. Nearly 25% were placed as high school math instructors, 15% as high school science instructors, and 9% as special education instructors. This concentrated impact is readily apparent at a place like Raleigh-Egypt Middle School where three of the four TFA-Memphis corps members placed there teach math and make up half of the entire school's instructional staff for that subject.

AmeriCorps membership is a critical component of TFA's recruitment and expansion efforts, particularly in increasing the diversity of our corps. We have seen that when teachers share the same background as their students, they have the potential to have an additional impact because they are uniquely positioned to serve as models of the potential for success. As a result, we place a particular

## Narratives

focus on attracting and fostering the leadership of the individuals who share the racial and/or socioeconomic backgrounds of the students we teach -- 90% of whom are African-American or Latino children living in low-income communities.

The number one barrier to applicants from low-income communities joining TFA is the financial burden, specifically mandatory certification costs, and managing student loan payments on a beginning teacher's salary. The AmeriCorps education award and loan forbearance benefits alleviate these concerns and have thus enabled thousands of outstanding 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.

To continue our efforts, TFA-Memphis is requesting 300 full-time education award slots. Full-time enrollment in AmeriCorps accurately reflects our members' service as full-time teachers

C. EVIDENCE BASED & MEASURABLE COMMUNITY IMPACT: Our theory of change guides corps member activities by addressing the three causes of the achievement gap in three key ways. First, corps members commit to teaching two years in low-income schools throughout Memphis, providing a critical source of teachers who help ensure their students have the educational opportunities they deserve, despite compounding socioeconomic factors. Second, our corps members are charged with improving the academic achievement of their students. In succeeding with their students, members gain added conviction that educational inequity is a solvable problem and influence the prevailing ideology by demonstrating that children in low-income communities can achieve at high levels. Third, our network of more than 28,000 corps members and alumni -- work directly for change at every level of our education system, take the pressure off schools, TFA alumni work to minimize the extra challenges facing children growing up in low-income communities and change the prevailing ideology through their examples and their advocacy.

The impact of corps members is evident in individual classrooms, as well as more broadly through external evaluations of our work. TFA 's corps members are on the front lines of our movement and demonstrate inspiring success.

In 2012 Sequoia Shields, an 8th grade history teacher at Freedom Preparatory Academy in South Memphis, and Kaitlin Curry, an 8th grade English teacher also at Freedom Prep., worked together to dramatically improve their students' state exam performance. Due to their efforts 98% of Sequoia's students earned proficient or advanced scores on their TCAP (The Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program) writing exams, and 94% achieved similarly high marks on their US history exam -- 8th graders throughout Memphis on average achieved similar scores on those tests at rates of

## Narratives

89.4% and 59.1% respectively.

In addition to the success that each of our corps members experiences in their individual classroom, a growing body of rigorous research demonstrates that TFA corps members are highly effective classroom teachers. The most rigorous studies have found that corps members' impact on student achievement exceeds that of other teachers in the same high-needs schools. The evidence of corps members' positive impact spans multiple regions and subject areas and all grade levels. Additionally, we are beginning to see robust research on the impact of TFA beyond the classroom.

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; The Urban Institute/CALDER Research Center, 2009). Additionally, pathway studies on the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs have 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 Chapel Hill; 2010, 2011, 2012)

The effectiveness of TFA corps members is also readily apparent in state-level evaluations. In 2012, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) found that on average TFA-Memphis corps members are more effective than veteran and other beginning teachers statewide at producing higher scores for their students on the state standardized TCAP examination administered in 4-8th grades (Tennessee Higher Education Commission, 2012). The THEC reached a similar conclusion in reports published in 2010 and 2011.

By the end of the three year cycle, TFA- Memphis aims to increase the effectiveness and impact of our corps members on student achievement and aims to foster a transformative corps member experience resulting in vision driven leadership in the classroom and dramatic academic outcomes for students. Using data from previous years to improve our model, we hope to make greater progress toward closing the achievement gap each year. For these reasons, we are opting into the following performance measures: ED2, ED5, ED 12-15, and ED 17. The targets for these measures were determined by reviewing past data and in alignment with TFA-Memphis regional student achievement goals.

TFA measures performance based on the impact our corps members have on student achievement. This includes 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 progress

## Narratives

their students at least a year or more of academic growth per school year. For the 2013-2014 school year, we anticipate that 70% of students will make gains of a year or more of academic growth.

Each corps member administers a diagnostic test in the beginning of the year to each student, and is then required to monitor student growth through ongoing and end-of-year assessments.

To ensure that our corps members lead their students to significant academic growth, we rely on high quality student achievement data from rigorous tests to drive program improvements and provide tailored support to corps members. We have designed a new Student Achievement Measurement System (SAMS), which focuses on a continuous measure, whereby corps members are evaluated based on the percentage of goal attained. By measuring average corps member impact on continuous scale, we eliminate the arbitrary focus on thresholds and hold ourselves accountable for the performance of all corps members. SAMS will be used to set classroom goals, guide decision-making, assess student progress, and fuel continuous improvement.

D. MEMBER RECRUITMENT: TFA recruits at more than 350 colleges and universities, with aggressive campaigns focused on over 200 campuses. Through this intensive targeted recruitment effort and mass marketing, more than 48,000 people applied to join the 2012 corps. Among this year's applicants to TFA were: 8% of seniors at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, 6% at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, 10% at Morehouse College, and 9% at the Ivy League schools.

Almost 16% of the Memphis corps were either raised in the city, or attended college in the state of Tennessee. Additionally, TFA-Memphis has developed and begun to implement a Regional Development Initiative (RDI) that seeks to recruit young people who share the backgrounds and experiences of their students. The RDI seeks to have 60% of the Memphis corps be able to identify with the experiences and background of our students by 2015.

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, 90 percent of whom are African-American or Hispanic children living in low-income communities. We recruit heavily at historically black colleges and universities. Applicants included 10% of seniors at Morehouse College, 8% at Howard University and at the Ivy League schools, one in seven African-American seniors and one in seven Latino seniors applied. As a result of our recruitment efforts, 38% of our 2012 corps are people of color and 35% received Pell Grants in college.

In pursuit of our diversity vision and goals, we are implementing several important initiatives to ensure members from underrepresented populations have a positive experience. We offer and encourage staff, corps members and alumni to form resource groups to come together around

## Narratives

common identity areas and to network, build community, strengthen skills and support one another.

We recently launched a diversity and inclusiveness committee on our national board. We also incorporate diversity and inclusiveness into manager training for staff and corps member training.

**E. MEMBER TRAINING:** 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 drive effective teaching: (1) setting an ambitious vision; (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. Each of these strategies corresponds to a series of 28 teacher actions, which comprise the TAL rubric. **INDUCTION**

-- At the beginning of the summer, members spend a week in Memphis learning about the communities in which they will serve. AmeriCorps pre-service orientation is conducted, so members learn about the responsibilities and benefits of AmeriCorps membership before they begin serving.

**INSTITUTE** -- Regional Institute: This year TFA-Memphis is one of two TFA regions to launch a Merged Program Pilot (MPP). This means that TFA-Memphis will host its own regional institute, merging what has traditionally been a national training program with our regional teacher development program. Corps members teach as part of a four-person collaborative that is supervised and mentored by both a veteran teacher and a TFA staff member who provide frequent feedback to develop corps member's skills. Corps members will train in the communities where they will serve during the year and teach summer school in the Achievement School District (ASD). Corps members will also attend regular training sessions. Training topics include classroom management and culture, instructional planning and delivery, and student and parent investment planning. **ORIENTATION** --

After Institute, corps members return to Memphis to create their first unit plans, assessments and tools to track their students' progress. **ONGOING SUPPORT** -- Building on the foundation received during the summer training, TFA-Memphis program team provide intensive training and professional development. Corps members are paired with a Manager of Teacher Leadership Development (MTLD). MTLDs conduct observations of the member's class, and provide corps members with feedback and support. They work with corps members to review student data to identify and find solutions to problems or gaps in student achievement. This approach builds corps members' abilities to independently evaluate student outcomes, identify causes of problems, and seek solutions. Also, corps members meet regularly in content- or grade-level-specific learning teams led by experienced teachers to discuss ongoing challenges and share best practices. In partnership with TFA-Memphis, Christian Brothers University offers interested corps members the option to obtain a masters in education and a

## Narratives

streamlined admission process and deeply discounted tuition.

Throughout the training and support cycle outlined above, we have embedded several opportunities to reinforce key issues of AmeriCorps compliance. Prohibited activities are reviewed with corps members at TFA-Memphis pre-service orientation to ensure that they have clear and solid understanding of their responsibilities. We continue to enforce collective compliance at monthly professional development sessions and email blasts. Individual compliance will be monitored by MTLDs who are trained annually on prohibited activities. This training includes a comprehensive explanation of the prohibited activities, examples and case studies of what these activities encompass, and how to detect and report them. Through their regular interaction with corps members, MTLDs are able to review regulations with members and verify that corps members are not engaging in them. Our placement sites will be provided with an AmeriCorps orientation guide, which includes information on AmeriCorps policies and prohibited activities. Ensuring that our principals and other school administrators are aware of these activities provides another system to ensure corps members are not engaging in this activities, as well as an onsite resource, should they have any questions or want clarification or guidance on any activities they plan to participate in. Corps members also provide supervision and instruction to their classroom volunteers to ensure they have clear expectations, goals are met, and that no volunteer is engaging in prohibited activities. Additionally, each corps member signs a statement on our mid and end of year surveys affirming that they have managed and supervised their recruited volunteers at a level that they can ensure that no volunteer has engaged in prohibited activities.

F. MEMBER SUPERVISION: TFA-Memphis' plan for supervising corps members may differ from the majority of AmeriCorps programs because we are a professional corps. All TFA corps members are college graduates who have gone through a rigorous application process that is designed, in part, to measure their ability to work effectively in a professional setting. Therefore, our supervision plan is concerned with corps member development and evaluation. Additionally, since our corps members work as full-time professional teachers, they are directly supervised by their school principal and other school administration.

As mentioned previously, every corps member is matched with a MTLD -- highly effective TFA alums or former teachers who manage a cohort of current members, which provides an additional layer of support and a high level of supervision to corps members. Our MTLDs are corps members' first point of contact with TFA. They perform regular observations of member classrooms, regularly meet with corps members to review student data with a focus on progress to date, and provide

## Narratives

strategies for overcoming current challenges. MTLDs refer corps members to targeted resources based on strengths and weaknesses. At the end of the year MTLDs and corps members analyze student growth based on final assessments.

To be hired, MTLDs must have a demonstrated track record of success during their time in the classroom and had to display the characteristics needed to be a successful in this role, such as critical thinking, influencing and motivating, and problem solving. Upon joining staff, MTLDs attend a new staff conference and independently participate in 20 hours of online modules before working with corps members. Once MTLDs complete their on-boarding process and begin working with members, they engage in the following 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-Memphis works to reinforce a culture of service by providing opportunities for members to take on increased responsibility. For example, second year members have the opportunity to mentor first year members, and develop and conduct professional development sessions. Additionally, all members are encouraged to work at our summer training institute, welcome new members, and recruit at their colleges and universities. During their service, we host discussions and panels designed to help members reflect on the causes of educational inequity and fostering a sense of responsibility to address these issues.

Also, reflection is a major component of our teacher development model. Our teachers are regularly observed by teacher coaches with whom they debrief to reflect on the successes and challenges of their work in an out of the classroom. End of year meetings between teachers and coaches are usually the most powerful as they reflect on the arc of their experiences over the course of the year and celebrate their impact on the communities that they proudly serve. Additionally, our corps members reflect and discuss best practices with other members throughout the Professional Learning Community (PLC) groups.

TFA-Memphis values its relationship with AmeriCorps. In instances where there are national or community service projects that bring together members of service programs across our region, we encourage our members to participate and provide support to programs. Further, through their direct access to students, our teachers provide information, encouragement, and support for students to join local youth volunteer programs, thus creating a culture and legacy of civil responsibility and service in the next generation.

There is also ample opportunity for TFA-Memphis to engage directly with existing AmeriCorps

## Narratives

efforts in the city. It is our hope to collaborate with other AmeriCorps programs throughout the state in order to provide more resources to our students and parents. Specifically, TFA-Memphis is interested in partnering with other AmeriCorps programs to bring robust service learning opportunities to the students that we serve. Corps members are heavily involved in bringing service learning to their students. An example of this is Emily McMillen, a 3rd grade teacher at Peabody Elementary School worked with her class this year to plant a community garden. With help from GrowMemphis, her students completed their first harvest and are planning to sell their wares at the local farmers' market.

During the 2011-2012 school year corps members in the cohort teaching in the North Memphis neighborhood of Frayser worked together to stage a large scale service project for their students. Partnering with Streets Ministries, a local non-profit that specializes in providing extracurricular activities for at-risk youth, these corps members provided activities and values based instruction for over 100 of their students. Similar cohort-wide service projects in other parts of the city involved large scale neighborhood clean-ups, and providing neo-natal instruction to community members. As the full-time teacher of record in the classroom, our corps members view service learning and participation in service projects as integral components of their experience, as it helps integrate them into the community in which they serve and provides rich experiences for their students to learn. Our corps members will continue to engage in community service projects with their students in 2013.

TFA-Memphis strategically reinforces the AmeriCorps identity and brand with corps members and community members. Prior to their summer pre-service training, corps members receive written materials designed to provide foundational information and history about AmeriCorps as it relates to both TFA and the broader AmeriCorps network. These materials enable corps members to gain a basic understanding of AmeriCorps prior to the start of their term of service.

To build upon this information, all TFA-Memphis corps members participate in an AmeriCorps Pre-Service Orientation, led by our program staff, which familiarizes them with the benefits and responsibilities of being an AmeriCorps member. During this pre-service orientation, corps members are provided with numerous materials and resources that they can utilize to: (1) gain more information about AmeriCorps; (2) provide information to others about AmeriCorps; and (3) help them to clearly identify as an AmeriCorps member. We continue to reinforce these ideas during regular email blasts and during periodic member general meetings. 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

## Narratives

movement.

To further foster esprit de corps and a sense of connection with the AmeriCorps identity TFA-Memphis will work to make AmeriCorps a more visible component of their service in Memphis. Starting in the classroom corps members will display the AmeriCorps logo and wear a AmeriCorps lapel pin to communicate this connection to their students. Efforts will also be undertaken to organize a service committee of corps members to develop service opportunities outside of the classroom that can be used to further integrate our program with AmeriCorps -- and to coordinate service events to coincide with AmeriCorps week. TFA-Memphis will also take further steps to involve non-TFA service members by inviting AmeriCorps members to participate in professional development opportunities.

H. VOLUNTEER GENERATION: Volunteers are an integral part of our program, as volunteers provide an extra layer of support to our teachers, students and parents. Many corps members manage or collaborate with other teachers and school administrators on school based volunteer programs. Additionally, they are also encouraged to build relationships with their students' families and invite them to volunteer. We also involve volunteers through our annual TFA Week event. Over the course of a week in mid-April, TFA-Memphis invites community leaders to present lessons in corps member classrooms. TFA-Memphis has welcomed high-level executives from the locally-headquartered FedEx, including their senior vice president for human resources & diversity as some of our volunteers in the past. Thirdly, our advisory board is a diverse volunteer body of community leaders and is responsible for advising the organization's development, program implementation and visibility initiatives. Finally, we have built significant capacity to engage our nearly 273 TFA-Memphis alumni in taking greater responsibility for the organization's well-being. This year, over 66% of our regional alumni base contributed time or money to the organization.

Corps members are given guidance by on how to properly manage their relationships with parents or classroom volunteers. Corps members also provide supervision and instruction to their classroom volunteers to ensure they have clear expectations, goals are met, and that no volunteer is engaging in prohibited activities. Additionally, each corps member signs a statement on our mid and end of year surveys affirming that they have managed and supervised their recruited volunteers at a level that they can ensure that no volunteer has engaged in prohibited activities.

I. ORG COMMITMENT TO AC IDENTIFICATION: TFA is 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 brand in marketing touch-points across social media, web, and print collateral. We believe the re-brand and the

## **Narratives**

implementation of these guidelines will further strengthen the TFA brand and help increase awareness of our affiliation with AmeriCorps among our network.

To this end, TFA-Memphis will develop materials to be posted in the regional office to clearly indicate our partnership with AmeriCorps. To provide information about AmeriCorps to our supporters in the community we will develop information on the organization to present to our regional board members, as well as seriously explore the creation of a communications plan that can be used to inform and engage individual donors about AmeriCorps and their partnership with TFA-Memphis. The region will also utilize its intranet -- TFANET -- to recognize outstanding individual service achievements through an 'AmeriCorps Member of the Month' program. Corps members will also display the AmeriCorps logo in a visible location in their classrooms.

### **Organizational Capability**

A. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING: In 1990, a charter corps of 500 committed recent college graduates joined TFA and began fueling the movement to eliminate educational inequity. Since then, nearly 37,000 participants have reached more than 3 million children nationwide during their two-year teaching commitments. TFA-Memphis was launched in 2006 and welcomed a corps of 48 members. Since our first year, we have experienced tremendous growth. In the 2012-13 school year, 293 corps member are teaching approximately 27,000 students throughout the city.

TFA has effectively managed large-scale federal grants through both AmeriCorps and the Department of Education. As a recipient of AmeriCorps funding since 1994, TFA has built the systems and tools to successfully manage AmeriCorps grants and ensure compliance. Additionally, TFA receives other federal sources of funding and continuously updates our systems accordingly to successfully manage these grants. We have received unqualified A-133 audits every year, and have built significant internal capacity to manage both the financial and programmatic components of a national AmeriCorps program. At the national office, a number of well-qualified specialists are available to meet and guide regional staff on AmeriCorps compliance, budget creation, and general grant management. Our Managing Director of Federal Grants & our Managing Director of Grants and Contracts have been leading their teams' work in relation to our AmeriCorps grant for over five years and have a comprehensive knowledge of the regulations and policies that govern these grants. Additionally, TFA uses our Financial Edge database to help track funding streams and expenses by department and program element. 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

## Narratives

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. Additionally, the national team provides on-going trainings and assistance for all regional staff positions via conference calls, regional and national conferences, and on-line tutorials.

In addition, TFA values research and internal and external evaluations and understands its place in refining and evolving our program model, and has a team devoted to this field of work. The Research Partnerships team has developed both internal capacity and a team culture that enables the following efforts: shape internal research agenda, field and manage external research inquiries, studies, and surveys, translate research and respond to studies and work to improve data quality. Through this focus on research, TFA seeks rigorous independent evaluations to measure our impact and continually improve our program - at any given time there are nearly a dozen studies underway evaluating these areas.

Regionally, TFA-Memphis has 30 full time staff members who work directly in the region handling programming and operational responsibilities. The Memphis region is also supported by an eight member regional board of directors. The individuals who constitute the board are leaders in the city's philanthropic and business communities and provide critical guidance on our strategic direction. Athena Turner has served as the Executive Director for TFA-Memphis since 2010. A graduate of the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, Athena was a member of the 2006 charter corps in Memphis and taught anatomy, ecology, and chemistry at Kingsbury High School. In her role as Executive Director, Athena is responsible for maximizing the organization's impact in the region by working to establish TFA's presence in the community, ensuring effectiveness of corps members, and building a broad and sustainable base of financial support. Tiffany Needham is the Senior Managing Director for Teacher Leadership Development setting the direction and vision for work with student and the Memphis community. Tiffany is a 2003 alumna of TFA in Houston where she was a 5th grade science teacher. Dave Goode, Lars Nelson, ChaKia Howard, Andy Garden, Samuel Kuttner, Madison Major, Karen Ware, Jessica Folk, Jordan Barnhill, Elana Cole, Jessica Ball, and Amanda Harless work as Managers of Teacher Leadership Development to manage and develop corps members to ensure that they achieve ambitious academic goals with their students. All of MTLDs in the region have extensive teaching experience and 7 of them were TFA-Memphis corps members. Kori Hamner and Aubrey Nelson serve as Managing Directors of Teacher Leadership Development each supervising 6 MTLDs and ensuring that the region achieves its vision for student achievement. Both Kori and Aubrey are

## Narratives

TFA-Memphis alums. Rob France is the Director of Teacher Leadership Development. In this role he develops a cohort of corps members as well as designing curriculum for TFA-Memphis' regional institute. Rob was a 2006 Memphis corps member. Christine Galbreath works as the Managing Director for Continuum Design in Memphis and is a 2007 Eastern North Carolina corps member. Christine manages the content of the regions certification programs and corps member professional development. Marilyn Stotts is TFA-Memphis' Director of Leadership Programming and a former corps member in the New Mexico region. She is charged with creating the leadership development component for new corps member training. Carly Pass serves as the Managing Director of Operations and is leading the efforts to TFA-Memphis' first regional teacher training institute for the summer of 2013. Carly is a 2005 Charlotte alumna. Kina Champion is the Director of Teaching and Learning in Memphis and is responsible for the design and implementation of corps member's professional development experiences. Kina is a 2008 Atlanta alumna. Mireille Hartley works as the Manager of Operations for TFA-Memphis and is responsible for managing operations at professional development events.

As outlined above, our regional and national staff capacity is such that it enables us to provide each TFA corps member comprehensive training. Each corps member completes a 5-6 week intensive training program prior to entering the classroom. Once in the region, each corps member is assigned a Manager, Teacher Leadership Development--a one-on-one coach--who works closely with corps members to further develop teaching and leadership development. In addition, corps members also attend TFA led professional development opportunities throughout the year, many of which are specific to the content and grade level that they teach.

As a recipient of AmeriCorps funding since 1994, TFA has built the systems and tools to successfully manage AmeriCorps grants and ensure compliance. Additionally, TFA receives other federal sources of funding and continuously updates our systems accordingly to successfully manage these grants.

B. SUSTAINABILITY: TFA-Memphis has had significant experience raising the necessary resources to run our program from a variety of sources: foundations (The Hyde Family Foundation's, The Assisi Foundation of Memphis), corporations (FedEx, Medtronic), individual donors, and public sources (The State of Tennessee). We actively seek to grow funding across all sources going forward and expanding across Tennessee where both funding and placement opportunities exist.

TFA-Memphis is committed to further developing its already robust base of corporate, foundation, and individual support throughout the Memphis community. This summer the Memphis region created a position for a Manager of Corporate and Foundation relations to expand our network into those two

## Narratives

critical fundraising constituencies. In individual giving we already have a large network of large and small donors both in and outside of the Memphis metropolitan region. To expand this revenue source, the TFA-Memphis region plans to hold up to 4 fundraising events during the 2013 fiscal year and expand the number of community constituencies we traditionally conduct development outreach in. The Memphis region is also further leveraging the networks and advocacy efforts of our outstanding eight member board to help us retain our high impact donors from the previous fiscal year, and elicit increased commitments from them for FY13 and beyond.

TFA-Memphis will also be receiving support until FY2015 from a portion of \$501 million in Race To The Top funding awarded to the state of Tennessee by the United States Department of Education in 2010. We anticipate receiving \$1.2 million as our FY13 portion of these monies.

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 local school districts, charter networks, certifying bodies, universities, and community leaders. To this end, TFA-Memphis has two teams dedicated to cultivating community support and seeking guidance from these supporters to drive our work. Partnerships with community leaders have led to the creation of our regional board, a significant amount of funding, and have raised 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 partner by conducting meetings with principals and the superintendent to ensure that they are satisfied with our teachers' performance. Once placed, our corps members work within the region and in partnership with local university partners and certifying bodies to earn the teaching certification they need to be classified as "highly qualified" under No Child Left Behind.

TFA-Memphis is also committed to ensuring that the aggressive efforts the region is taking to close the achievement gap are sustainable beyond the presence of federal funding. A critical piece of this effort is making sure that once corps members complete their 2-year commitment with TFA, they can grow into leadership roles within the city's education community. To that end, 72% of TFA-Memphis alumni have remained in the field of education, with 12 leading schools in the city, 10 working as school administrators, and 2 leading school systems.

C. COMPLIANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY: As a long time AmeriCorps grantee TFA has developed strong systems to ensure grant compliance internally, with corps members, and at their placement sites. TFA's national AmeriCorps Team will provide training and technical assistance to all regions, which includes ongoing technical assistance and communications around AmeriCorps rules and

## Narratives

regulations including those related to prohibited activities. TFA-Memphis will also check-in with the national team regularly to norm on all member service activities. To ensure compliance at our placement sites, TFA-Memphis will provide extensive pre-service and ongoing training to both corps members and school administrators. These trainings will be designed to communicate AmeriCorps rules and regulations, as well as assist corps members and site supervisors make well informed decisions regarding the members' activities to successfully maintain compliance. Additionally, TFA-Memphis' program team will be trained on both acceptable and prohibited AmeriCorps activities so they are equipped to reinforce these ideas to corps members, as well as monitor member activities.

Through sites visits, corps member classroom observations, and regular communication with site supervisor's our Managers of Teacher Leadership Development (MTLDs) will provide strict oversight of corps members and the activities that they engage in. Due to the frequency of interactions that MTLD's have with members and their in depth knowledge of the prohibited activities, they will be able to detect if members are in violation of AmeriCorps regulations. Additionally all incoming TFA corps members in regions that receive AmeriCorps support are required to sign documents attesting they have read and understand the activities prohibited by AmeriCorps, and at the end of the school year all corps members are required to sign a form certifying they did not violate any activities prohibited by AmeriCorps. Principals who administer corps members receiving AmeriCorps support are also required to certify at the end of the school year that no AmeriCorps policies were violated.

If an MTLD or school administrator suspects that a member is engaging in prohibited activities, they will notify our regional leadership team. Partnering with our national AmeriCorps team and legal counsel, the regional leadership team will assess the suspected violation and suspend the corps member until the issue is resolved.

Currently, all TFA-Memphis corps members are teaching in high needs schools, as defined by free and reduced lunch rates. For the 2012-13 school years the Memphis region secured commitments to place 303 corps members in schools across the city. 56% of TFA-Memphis corps members teach in one of 76 schools in the Memphis City School system, while 104 teach in 31 charter schools. 9% are teaching in the 5 schools under the purview of the state-run Achievement School District (ASD).

As TFA-Memphis determines service sites for the 2013-2014 school year, the region is working with its existing district and charter partners as well as building new relationships to ensure corps members are placed into schools where they can maximize their impacts at reducing the achievement gap.

### **Budget/Cost Effectiveness**

A. COST EFFECTIVENESS: TFA-Memphis is requesting 300 full-time member slots at \$2000/MSY

## Narratives

through a fixed amount grant. The \$2,000 cost per MSY does not exceed the maximum amount that can be requested for a professional corps fixed amount grant. A fixed amount grant, combined with other commitments, will allow us to continue and further our work in Memphis.

As a professional corps, our members are provided salaries and benefits from the school districts in which they teach. Therefore, our costs relate solely to training and supporting our members. These expenses are directly linked to outputs and outcomes -- the AmeriCorps grant will cover a percentage of the costs that enable TFA to recruit, place and support corps members so that they are prepared to make academic gains with their students and engage community members in their classrooms. Our 2013 budget is \$4.35 million; with \$2,000/MSY, we depend on other funding sources to raise the additional funding necessary to support our corps members.

In total, we raised \$5,907,825 in FY12, which comprised dollars from: FOUNDATIONS: TFA-Memphis raised \$2,272,500 from foundations in around Memphis, including the Kemmons Wilson Family Foundation. Foundation represents 38% of our regional budget. Maintaining and expanding our relationships with local foundations remains a major priority for TFA-Memphis.

CORPORATIONS: In FY12 TFA-Memphis raised over \$306,000 from corporations based in Memphis, including Medtronic and FedEx. Corporate giving represented 5% of our regional budget last year. In FY 13, TFA-Memphis will be making a concerted effort to increase outreach and stewardship efforts in the business community and has created a position specifically to work on donor cultivation. INDIVIDUALS: With 277 individuals contributing \$782,187 to regional operations in FY12, individual giving made up 13% of the regional budget in the past fiscal year, and efforts are being taken in the current fiscal year to increase that number by holding additional fundraising events and utilizing our existing robust donor network to attract support from across the Memphis community. SCHOOL PARTNERS: We received \$908,000 in FY12 from our school partners to help offset the training and recruitment costs of the TFA-Memphis teachers working in their schools. These funds comprised 15% of our regional budget. PUBLIC: TFA-Memphis received \$1.7 million from the state of Tennessee in FY12. This was a portion of a \$501 million Race To The Top grant awarded to the state of Tennessee by the United States Department of Education in 2010. Monies from the public funding stream comprised 29% of our regional budget in FY12

Should TFA-Memphis be awarded the full amount of requested support from AmeriCorps, that funding would represent 8% of our regional budget.

TFA has been an AmeriCorps program since 1994. However, in the past five years, funding from the national AmeriCorps grant has gone to pay for national initiatives -- recruitment, admissions,

## Narratives

summer training -- that are not included on our regional AmeriCorps budget.

We are confident that we will be able to raise total program costs. In fact, TFA is recognized by outside groups for its efficiency. In 2010, Worth Magazine named TFA one of the 10 most cost effective charities in the country.

In the six years since our charter corps came to Memphis in 2006 we have been able to grow a robust base of support from local corporations, foundations, and individuals. Our corporate supporters range from large Fortune 500 companies with an international impact like the Memphis based FedEx or Medtronic, to small businesses like Diversified Trust -- a local investment firm. TFA-Memphis has also managed to cultivate a broad and sustained base of foundation support, attracting long term funding commitments from many of the largest philanthropic organizations in Western Tennessee like the Hyde Family Foundation and the Kemmons Wilson Family Foundation. The individual donor base that supports TFA's operations in Memphis is similarly diverse, comprising some of the most prominent individuals in Memphis including the founders of prominent businesses as AutoZone Inc. , senior executives with FedEx and International Paper, as well as many dozens of small scale donors from as far away as New York, Washington DC and California who believe in the work being done in Memphis to close the achievement gap.

During the first three months of FY13 TFA-Memphis has already raised or received commitments for \$2,655,000, nearly 61% of the region's total anticipated budget for the fiscal year.

BUDGET ADEQUACY: TFA-Memphis will work to further augment its already robust sources of individual, corporate, and foundation giving through a number of different avenues. The region has already added capacity through a dedicated staff member to work with corporate and foundation supporters in securing long term funding commitments at increased amounts. The development staff in the region is also increasing the number fundraising events to secure new individual donor contributions, and leveraging the resources of their eight member board of directors to retain high-value donors who have supported the region in the past, and identify those individuals who are able and willing to significantly increase their contributions.

We set ambitious funding goals and are currently working in fiscal year 2013 towards raising a total of \$4.35 million. Less than one quarter into the fiscal year, we currently have over \$2.65 million in commitments towards goal.

Although there is no budget required for fixed award grants, our internal budget is designed to adequately support our program and to align with our mission. Over 50%of our budget represents costs directly related to corps member development and support -- which includes costs related to

## Narratives

personnel, trainings, and corps member meetings. These allocations are reflective of our programs needs for ongoing support and professional development, which enables them to lead their students to make significant academic gains. The remaining portion of the budget is allocated for placement and support services. Expenses within this allocation are associated with placement staff and regional office operations.

TFA will be using non-AmeriCorps funds to cover the costs of the National Service criminal history checks.

As a low-cost professional corps program, TFA's program design is a particularly cost effective model for increasing student achievement and closing the achievement gap. First, we provide school districts who serve predominantly low-income students with a pool of highly successful candidates who exhibit the traits of highly effective teachers. Research consistently demonstrates that high-quality teaching is the most important factor in student learning; yet, low-income students are far less likely to get effective teachers than their wealthier peers. As part of TFA's program model, our intense recruitment process selects the brightest corps members, who consistently demonstrate the characteristics that have been found in successful teachers. Second, our corps members commit to teach for at least two years and many remain in their classrooms after their commitment. School districts who serve predominantly low-income students often face high teacher turn over annually. Thus, TFA not only provides a strong candidate pool of highly effective teachers, but also a more stable pool of candidates to our districts. This drastically decreases the amount of resources they spend annually to recruit teachers and attracts high level talent that they may not otherwise attract. Finally, in addition to providing pre-service training, we are one of the few teacher providers in the country who continue to give on-going support to teachers throughout their two year commitment. Because of our rigorous selection model and student achievement focused training, TFA corps members are consistently reviewed as the strongest new teachers with the greatest impact on student achievement in every state that runs the data and in the most rigorous independent studies.

TFA has also been found to be more cost efficient in training educators than other comparable programs. In 2012 the average cost to train a TFA corps member during the course of a 5-week summer institute was \$4,873; this cost was significantly less than comparable programs utilized by other organizations -- \$7,720 for the Middlebury Language Immersion program, \$9,800 for Tuck Business Bridge, and \$53,100 for the Harvard Graduate School of Education (TFA Internal Data, 2012).

### Evaluation Summary or Plan

## Narratives

N/A

### **Amendment Justification**

N/A

### **Clarification Summary**

N/A

### **Continuation Changes**

N/A