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Executive Summary

Teach For America-Rhode Island, a National Direct Recipient, provides a critical source of well-trained teachers who are helping break the local cycle of educational inequity. Corps members teach for two years in low-income schools in Providence and the Blackstone Valley, going above and beyond traditional expectations to help their students achieve at high levels. At the end of the 2013-2014 school year, 65 AmeriCorps members will have significantly improved educational outcomes for nearly 5,000 students and set in motion their individual careers that will have a long-term impact on expanding educational opportunity for low-income students. With the CNCS investment of \$130,000, Teach For America can deploy more teachers and further its impact in Rhode Island beyond that of its first year of existence.

Rationale and Approach

A. Need: Educational inequity is our nation's greatest injustice. 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 result is that millions of students are denied the educational opportunity they deserve.

Rhode Island celebrates small, yet steady increases in recent years on National Assessment of Academic Progress (NAEP) and New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) scores, and boasts a high school graduation rate of approximately 75 percent- 10 points higher than the national average. These indicators are encouraging; however they only tell the story in aggregate. Tragically, many students in Rhode Island are not receiving the high quality education they deserve. When we look at a more granular analysis, we see that low-income and minority groups, in particular Latinos, are falling behind academically. For example, the state's fourth and eighth grade Latino or Hispanic students are the lowest performing cohort in math in the country (based on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessments), and there is a 20-percentage point difference in the four-year graduation rates between students from low-income backgrounds and students from higher-income backgrounds in Rhode Island. Of 225,000, 17% of Rhode Island children live below the poverty line, and less than one third will meet proficiency levels for math. Given the proportion of economically disadvantaged Rhode Islanders amid this challenging economy and the rapid growth of the Hispanic population in the state, we simply must address these disparities immediately to avoid an educational and talent decline over time.

We serve this population because of the short and long-term repercussions of perpetuating an

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achievement gap between low-income students and their peers in wealthier communities. For example, a less educated person is more likely to earn less and be less civically engaged; a high school dropout is five to eight times more likely to be incarcerated than a college graduate. 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).

B. AMERICORPS MEMBERS AS HIGHLY EFFECTIVE MEANS TO SOLVE COMMUNITY PROBLEMS: While the problem is daunting, Teach For America-Rhode Island (TFA-Rhode Island) addresses the achievement gap by placing members as the teacher of record in classrooms with a majority of students from low-income backgrounds. We see evidence every day in classrooms across Rhode Island that when students in low-income communities are given the educational opportunities they deserve, in particular excellent teachers, they excel.

One example of a corps member is Cara Harrison, a first grade teacher at Blackstone Valley Prep, who begins her day by checking-in with her students' key stakeholders by phone, greeting her students, and leading a morning meeting. Throughout the day she is teaching a full class schedule. When she is not teaching she is lesson planning and pulling smaller groups of struggling students for more targeted instruction. After school, she is engaged in professional development activities and is a BVP middle school track coach. In the evening, she not only checks-in with her students' families, but also leverages that day's formative assessment data to maximize student learning in future lessons. Cara was part of a team that achieved 100% proficiency or higher on the early childhood Development Reading Assessment (DRA2)- a first in Rhode Island's history and recognized as such by the Rhode Island Commissioner of Education. Through these daily actions, corps members influence the prevailing ideology by demonstrating that children in low-income communities can achieve at high levels.

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 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

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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, and increase the number of corps members coming to Rhode Island, TFA-Rhode Island is requesting 65 full-time education award slots. Full-time enrollment in AmeriCorps accurately reflects our members' service as full-time teachers.

C. EVIDENCE BASED/EVIDENCE-INFORMED AND MEASURABLE COMMUNITY IMPACT:

TFA corps member activities work to alleviate the three causes of the achievement gap: (1) additional problems faced by children in low-income communities, (2) the need for additional capacity in schools to combat these challenges, and (3) prevailing ideology that students from low-income communities cannot succeed at the same levels as their wealthier peers. Our theory of change guides corps member activities by addressing the three causes of the achievement gap in three key ways.

We believe that three factors come together in a cycle that perpetuates the problem of underachievement in high-poverty communities, which informs our theory of change and how we approach our work. First, corps members commit to teaching two years in low-income schools throughout Rhode Island, 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 a grounded understanding of problem and solutions. Third, our network of more than 28,000 corps members and alumni -- work to minimize the extra challenges facing children growing up in low-income communities through their examples and their advocacy.

The impact of our corps members is evident in individual classrooms. These teachers have exceeded expectations for first and second year teachers and have helped their struggling students catch up and exceed grade level. We look forward to the point when the Rhode Island Department of Education can issue competitive reports on teacher preparation programs like Teach For America. Two examples demonstrate the impact of TFA teachers: 2011 Rhode Island corps member, James Kim, a graduate of Yale University, led his Algebra I students at Sanchez High School to grow, on average, by 260 points on the SAT. Typical growth for students enrolled in math SAT prep courses, like Kaplan, is 120 points (based on available data). 2010 Rhode Island corps member, Kate Bubrick, a graduate of Cornell

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University led her students at Gilbert Stuart Middle School to achieve one of the top five highest gains for math intervention, using the district-wide math intervention program, in the Providence Public School District. Eighty-six percent of her students in the intervention program exceeded their end of year exam.

Given the small size of Rhode Island and common ambitions to improve our public education system, Teach For America focuses on building open and respectful lines of communication and deep partnerships with a diversity of stakeholders and institutions. The following testimonials are just a sample of the feedback from community partners across the state: "Teach For America corps members and alumni have been essential for our schools' success. From significant, double-digit gains on NECAP reading and math to 100% of our scholars scoring proficient or higher on the early childhood Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2). TFA has been and continues to be an important, if not the most critical, partner with Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy." -Jeremy Chiappetta, Executive Director, Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy. "Teach For America's work in Rhode Island is crucial to our goal of attracting and certifying teachers who are laser-focused on serving our state's neediest populations, especially math and science." -Lisa Foehr, Director, Educator Quality and Certification Rhode Island Department of Education.

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, 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 in North Carolina, Tennessee, and Louisiana concluded that TFA corps members are among the strongest new teachers with the greatest impact on student achievement over the course of multiple years. ("Impacts of Teacher Preparation on Student Test Scores in North Carolina: Teacher Portals," The University of North Carolina 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"). of experience (The Urban Institute/CALDER Research Center, 2009).

By the end of the three year cycle, TFA-Rhode Island aims to increase the effectiveness and impact of our corps members on student achievement and aims to foster a transformative corps member

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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, ED12-15, and ED17. The targets for these measures were determined by reviewing past data aligned with TFA's student achievement goals. Corps members, in consultation with TFA-Rhode Island staff members, develop ambitious goals for what they hope their students will accomplish academically by the end of the year. As corps members chart how students perform do on beginning and end year assessments, as well as unit assessments, we are able to track this progress. TFA-Rhode Island then calculates what this progress represents as a percentage of the original goal set by the corps member. TFA-Rhode Island can then assess how many corps members achieved their goals and can assess progress to goal for the entire cohort. TFA has an entire team devoted to student achievement evaluation and analysis and the work to develop the tools and benchmarks for our corps member to track student achievement. Teach For America corps members use a variety of assessment tools and instruments based on what is available in school and in districts.

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 their students at least a year or more of academic growth per school year.

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. Our internal student achievement measurement system focuses on a continuous measure, whereby corps members are evaluated based on the percentage of goal attained. SAMS will be used to set classroom goals, guide decision-making, assess student progress, and fuel continuous improvement.

D. MEMBER RECRUITMENT: 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 ("The Real Value of Value Added' Education Trust, 2004, citing multiple studies). 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 ("All Talk, No Action: Putting an End to Out-of-Field Teaching," Education Trust, 2002). Low-income communities have a higher than average need for highly-effective teachers; these communities often lack a sufficient supply relative to the level of need.

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A recent 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 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 ("Closing the Talent Gap: Attracting and Retaining top-third graduates to careers in teaching," McKinsey & Company, Social Sector Office, 2010). TFA brings exactly these types of candidates to low-income schools. The average GPA for 2011 TFA corps members was 3.6, with SAT scores in the 94th percentile, and our extensive interview process screens all applicants for these "plus" characteristics.

TFA employs a rigorous recruitment campaign to develop a robust pool of candidates of top performing students who are in the top third academic cohort and high achieving professionals, who 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.

After corps members apply and are accepted to Rhode Island, they then apply for open positions in specific regions through a competitive process called placement. Placement with schools and districts happens in two ways based on the size and needs of a school or district- proactively and reactively. Proactive partnership means that the district or school projects vacancies in the areas our corps members are eligible (Secondary core subjects, except for history or social studies, and elementary positions) and therefore they can sign a partnership agreement up front so Teach For America can plan and work collaboratively to align hiring and training timelines and processes. Reactive partnership means that the district or school does not know exact vacancies and would like to consider applicants from Teach For America, and if hired, they enter a partnership agreement with Teach For America. TFA identifies partner schools and districts based on the student demographics. We seek to serve mostly students from low-income communities. So, if there is more than 50% of the student population identified as low-income, that is a school we prioritize for corps member placement. Over the past 3 years, Teach For America corps members have served as teachers of record at over 20 schools.

We value the unique backgrounds of every corps member, and have seen the positive impact that individuals from a variety of backgrounds can have on the students they teach. We know from our

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research that any corps member with the right motivations and capabilities, regardless of race, ethnicity, or socio-economic status, has the potential to significantly expand the academic and life prospects of the students he/she teaches. At the same time, 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. Last year, 38% of our 2012 corps were people of color and 35% received Pell Grants.

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 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. Finally, we conduct an internal culture audit and review existing research to enhance our understanding of our organizational strengths and opportunities relative to diversity and inclusiveness that help inform our strategy.

Additionally, while the TFA-Rhode Island corps is enriched by its diversity, its corps members are united in their long-term commitment to the state of Rhode Island and its students from low-income communities. Regionally, 20 of 24 (83% of 2010 CMs) of Teach For America's first class of alumni (corps members who completed two years of teaching in Rhode Island) continued to work in education in Rhode Island.

E. MEMBER TRAINING: TFA provides intensive pre-service training and ongoing professional development to corps members. We aim to ensure that our members are effective in leading their students to significant academic achievement while providing an experience that will inspire them to become lifelong leaders to eliminate educational inequity. As teachers employed in school districts, our corps members participate in all professional development and community orientations offered by their school and district.

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

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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. 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 in Rhode Island 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-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 the institute: summer school teaching and curriculum sessions. Members teach as part of a four-person collaborative that is supervised and mentored by both a veteran teacher and TFA staff member who provide regular feedback about their teaching, reflect and refine their practice to ensure that students meet summer school goals. They also observe one another and videos of themselves teaching, allowing corps members to see which teaching methods are most effective.

ORIENTATION-After Institute, corps members return to Rhode Island to create their first unit plans, assessments and tools to track their students' progress. With these elements established before the school year begins, our teachers are better prepared to move their students forward.

ONGOING SUPPORT-Building on the foundation received during the summer training, TFA-Rhode Island program team provide intensive training and professional development. There are four main components to our ongoing professional development model.

First, 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. Second, corps members have access to TFAnet, our private website for corps members and alumni. The site includes a searchable database of resources designed to help members create data-driven, student achievement-focused classrooms. Third, members meet regularly in content- or grade-level-specific learning teams led by experienced teachers to discuss ongoing challenges, share best practices, and work together on professional development. Finally, members participate in certification and/or

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master's degree programs designed to ensure that members meet state certification requirements. These programs prepare corps members to stay involved in the movement to end educational inequity beyond their two-year commitments.

Throughout the training and support cycle outlined above, we have imbedded several opportunities to reinforce key issues of AmeriCorps compliance. Prohibited activities are reviewed with corps members at TFA-Rhode Island's 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 on site resource, should they have any questions or want clarification or guidance on any activities they plan to participate in.

F. MEMBER SUPERVISION: TFA-Rhode Island's plan for supervising corps members may differ from the majority of AmeriCorps programs because they are full-time teachers. All TFA corps members are college graduates who have gone through an 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 also directly supervised by their school principal and other school administration. This joint supervision creates a meaningful opportunity to discuss corps member effectiveness and student academic learning.

As mentioned previously, every corps member is matched with a MTLT, highly effective TFA alums who manage a cohort of current members, which provides an additional layer of support and a high level of supervision to corps members. Our MTLTs are corps members' first point of contact with TFA. They perform regular observations of member classrooms, regularly meet with corps member to review student data with a focus on progress to date, and provide strategies for overcoming current challenges. MTLTs refer corps members to targeted resources based on strengths and weaknesses. At the end of the year MTLTs and corps members analyze student growth based on final assessments.

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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'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.

TFA-Rhode Island 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.

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.

After successfully completing their service, members become part of TFA's alumni network. We employ a two-part strategy to foster the leadership of our alumni base. First, we work to build community among our alumni and keep them connected to TFA. We host regional alumni summits and publish an alumni magazine to keep alumni engaged in our mission. Second, we support the career development of our alumni through a series of initiatives that fast track the pathway to leadership in several key sectors-school leadership, teaching leadership, political leadership, policy and advocacy leadership, and social entrepreneurship. Currently, over 570 alumni are serving as school leaders, over 5,500 are still teaching, 45 are elected officials, over 500 alumni work in public policy, and 14 are recognized as social entrepreneurs.

Leading students in low-income communities to achieve significant academic outcomes transforms corps members' sense of possibility and urgency regarding closing the achievement gap.

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Although just 15% of incoming corps members report that they had an interest in teaching prior to joining TFA, 65% of our nearly 28,000 alumni currently work in education. Additionally, 87% report that they support TFA's mission through career, philanthropy, volunteer work, or graduate study. A 2011 study, conducted by a Harvard University research team, found that corps members are 48 percent more likely to believe that teachers are the most important determinant of success (The Impact of Voluntary Youth Service: Evidence from Teach For America, Will Dobbie and Roland G. Fryer, Jr., 2011).

TFA-Rhode Island 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.

Teach For America-Rhode Island corps member already engage a great deal with other AmeriCorps service members through their in-class collaboration with CityYear representatives and Rhode Island Teaching Fellows. They regularly share information about service learning opportunities with other AmeriCorps members. In fact, one former CityYear corps member is now a TFA corps member. Given the overlapping passion and orientation to serve, corps members from other AmeriCorps programs are natural candidates for TFA. We expect to see similar transitions in the future.

TFA-Rhode Island 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-Rhode Island 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

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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 a sense of connection with the AmeriCorps identity, we will take the following steps to ensure that our corps members identify as AmeriCorps members: 1) Corps members will wear an AmeriCorps lapel pin and have the logo in a visible place in the classroom; 2) we will create an AmeriCorps committee of corps members to brainstorm and implement ideas that will assist and further identify other AmeriCorps members; 3) we will hold service events and invite other AmeriCorps members; 4) our corps members will participate in small service projects that benefit other AmeriCorps programs; and 5) we will invite other AmeriCorps members to professional development and alumni development opportunities.

H. VOLUNTEER GENERATION: TFA uses three methods to recruit volunteers to expand the impact of our program. First, we strongly encourage corps members to recruit and involve volunteers in their classrooms. Many of these volunteers are school-wide volunteers that are recruited through school based volunteer programs, which corps members manage or collaborate with other teachers and school administrators. Our corps members are also encouraged to build relationships with their students' families and invite them to volunteer in the classroom. Second, we involve volunteers through our annual Teach For America Week event. Over the course of a week in late March, TFA invites community leaders to present lessons in corps member classrooms. Teach For America Week volunteers bring real world lessons into schools and encourage students to set high goals for themselves. Finally, we have built significant capacity to engage our nearly 28,000 alumni in taking greater responsibility for the organization's well-being. This year, about 45% of our total alumni base contributed time or money to the organization.

Corps members 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. ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION: Teach For America has two specific teams, Marketing and Communications, that function to build and strengthen the Teach For America's brand among our most crucial constituencies, including corps prospects, corps members, alumni, staff members, donors, and all media outlets. We will leverage the

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experience and expertise of these two teams to develop clear strategies and plans to co-brand Teach For America and AmeriCorps. In 2013-2014, we will incorporate an AmeriCorps communication plan for senior leaders at Teach For America. We will work with our Marketing and Communication team to develop and implement a plan that will highlight the importance of our partnership with AmeriCorps and focus on essential speaking points that define our role as an AmeriCorps partner, so senior leaders can clearly communicate about the partnership in aligned way across the organization. Additionally, our Communication Team will be working with regions to ensure all press kits have the AmeriCorps language present. Our Marketing Team is working to ensure that all stationary, email signatures, signage, and marketing materials have the AmeriCorps logo clearly displayed.

Organizational Capability

A. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND & STAFFING: Wendy Kopp proposed the idea for Teach For America in her Princeton University undergraduate thesis in 1989. In 1990, a charter corps of 500 committed recent college graduates joined Teach For America 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. They have sustained their commitment as alumni, working within education and across all sectors to help ensure that children growing up in low-income communities get an excellent education.

Teach For America-Rhode Island welcomed its first corps of 30 teachers in 2010 at the request of community leaders- at that time there were 40 alumni living in the state. Since then, we have grown to 50 corps members and 100 alumni who continue to affect change at the school and the classroom level in both district and public charter schools. Notably, Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy, a network of schools where we have placed 24 corps members to date, boasted 100% of students proficient or higher on the early childhood Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), a first in Rhode Island history. Utilizing a math curriculum developed exclusively by a 2010 corps member and a TFA alumnus, Blackstone Valley Prep Mayoral Academy also had the greatest gains in math in the state from 2010-2011. Teach For America can play a critical role in reinforcing the momentum that has been started, and accelerating the pace by which more citizens are invested in and care about the role that education can play in transforming students' lives. Our alumni remain committed to this movement as 23 of the 24 first generation of corps members have decided to stay in education for a third year.

TFA has effectively managed large-scale federal grants through both AmeriCorps and the Department of Education. We have received unqualified A-133 audits every year, and have built

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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 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.

The national office also includes a well-staffed technology department that is available to assist with any technical problems that should arise at the regional level. Our staff in Rhode Island reaches out to the technology team via email and telephone and have the capacity to interface with our personal computers in Rhode Island. As part of standard new staff training, TFA-Rhode Island personnel are trained on all software and programs that enable and improve work function.

In addition, Teach For America 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 purpose of our Research Partnerships team is to improve the quality and reach of internal and external research gauging the impact of Teach For America or informing programmatic improvement by building and maintaining relationships with all stakeholders. For example, we are currently working with Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. to conduct an experimental study on the impact on secondary student math achievement of teachers trained through highly selective routes to alternative certification, such as Teach For America and The New Teacher Project.

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, Teach For America seeks rigorous independent evaluations to measure our impact and continually improve our program. Ultimately, we are in a position to use such diverse research methods to generate insights that inform decisions.

Regionally, TFA-Rhode Island employs six full-staff members that work directly in the region to handle the day-to-day programming and operational responsibilities of the TFA-Rhode Island. In addition, the regional office works closely with TFA national staff to ensure that the regional systems in place are on par with the policies and procedures stipulated by the national administration.

Heather Tow-Yick (Executive Director) 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, building a broad and sustainable base of financial support, and raising community

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awareness. After joining the corps in 1998, she taught 7th and 8th grade English Language Arts and social studies in the South Bronx. Heather returned to Rhode Island to launch Teach For America in 2010. She holds an MBA from the MIT Sloan School of Management and a MAT in English from Columbia University Teachers College. Jonathan Santos Silva and Genevieve Schultz (MTLDs) manage and develop corps members to ensure that they achieve ambitious academic goals with their students and work directly with corps members to increase their effectiveness and maximize their impact both in the classroom and beyond their corps experience. All of our MTLDs have spent a minimum of two years in the classroom. Osvaldo Marti, Director of Teacher Leadership Development, ensures that the region achieves its vision for student achievement and corps member effectiveness. Osvaldo served in the corps as a high school math teacher two years in Philadelphia, PA.

As outlined above, our regional and national staff capacity is such that it enables us to provide each Teach For America corps member comprehensive training. Each corps member completes a 5-6 week intensive training program prior to entering the classroom. This training program is designed to give corps members hands on experience by actually teaching in a classroom, as well as to learn the skills and values that will prepares them to be leaders and excel in 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.

AmeriCorps is a natural fit for our program, since we are a full-time national service program that addresses a serious education issue- the achievement gap that persists between students in low-income communities and their peers in wealthier communities. A state AmeriCorps grant will provide crucial assistance in supporting our corps, fueling future growth of our program in Rhode Island. By partnering with the Director of the Rhode Island state office, we will be able to work with the commission's network of supporters to strengthen our ties with the larger Rhode Island community, increase the socioeconomic diversity of our corps by providing AmeriCorps benefits that offset the costs associated with joining the corps and help members become certified teachers through alternative route programs, and enable members to become part of a state-wide movement to effect societal change. By partnering together, we can accelerate the broader education reform movement in our region and demonstrate what is truly possible for students in low-income communities.

B. SUSTAINABILITY: TFA-Rhode Island has had significant experience raising the necessary resources to run our program from a variety of sources: foundations, corporations, individual donors,

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and public sources. We actively seek to grow funding across all sources going forward and expanding across Rhode Island where both funding and placement opportunities exist.

Beyond the term of this grant, TFA will continue to meet the needs of our communities through the capacity-building and knowledge sharing efforts of our corps members and alumni. As teachers, school leaders, social entrepreneurs and elected officials, TFA alumni are building the capacity of their communities to take on the root causes of educational inequality. Additionally, our staff, corps members and alumni often provide principals and district leaders with technical assistance around the recruitment, training and support of teachers.

TFA-Rhode Island's impact on closing the achievement gap is dependent upon our ability to form partnerships with local school districts, charter networks, and certifying bodies, in addition to building a large and sustainable base of supporters. There are partnership agreements with Providence Public Schools, Centrals High School and four charter schools.

We rely on the guidance of our district partners in placing and supporting corps members. Our partner districts and schools identify their staffing needs each spring and request our assistance in meeting them. We foster an ongoing relationship with each partner conducting meetings with principals and the superintendent of each district to ensure that they are satisfied with our teachers' performance. Currently, we place in high-need public schools in Providence and the Blackstone Valley.

Once placed, our corps members work with The New Teacher Project or Rhode Island College to earn the teaching certification they need to be classified as 'highly qualified' under state law. Additionally, corps members have the option of continuing a Master's in Education at Rhode Island College, pursuing a Masters in Urban Education Policy through Brown University, or earning a Master's in Education for Urban Teaching at Providence College.

C. COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY: As a long time AmeriCorps grantee Teach For America has developed strong systems to ensure grant compliance internally, with corps members, and at their placement sites. Teach For America's national AmeriCorps Team will provide training and technical assistance to all regions, which includes ongoing technical assistance and communications around AmeriCorps rules and regulations including those related to prohibited activities. TFA-Rhode Island will also check-in with the national team regularly to norm on all member service activities. To ensure compliance at our placement sites, TFA-Rhode Island will provide extensive pre-service and ongoing training to both corps members school administrators. These trainings will be designed to communicate AmeriCorps rules and regulations, as well as assist corps members and site supervisors

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make well informed decisions regarding the members' activities to successfully maintain compliance. Additionally, TFA-Rhode Island's 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 supervisors, 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.

If a MTLD or school administrator suspects that a member is engaging in prohibited activities, they will notify our regional leadership team. Partnering with our national legal counsel and the state commission as needed, the regional leadership team will assess the suspected violation and determine next steps.

Budget/Cost Effectiveness

A. COST EFFECTIVENESS: TFA-Rhode Island is requesting 65 full time member slots at \$2000/MSY 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 totaling \$130,000 combined with commitments, will allow us to continue and further our work in Rhode Island.

As a professional corps, our members are provided salaries and benefits from the school districts. 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 \$1.4M with \$2000/MSY, we depend on other funding sources to raise the additional funding necessary to support our corps members.

Teach For America-Rhode Island has built a solid foundation of diverse funders from both inside and outside Rhode Island. To ensure that the region is sustainable financially, we actively employ strategies to expand and diversify our funding base. Teach For America secures support from the public sector (city, state and federal agencies) and private sector (corporations, foundations and individuals). Our top five funders last year included: Rhode Island Race to the Top Grant (\$213k), John and Letitia Carter (\$200k), Norman and Dorothy McCulloch (\$100k), Paul and Joan Sorensen

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(\$100k), and the Rhode Island Foundation (\$100k). Building a broad network of contributors corroborates demand for our talent across the community, and builds in contingencies in the case of an interruption in funding from one particular stream. Teach For America has secured significant sources of funding from Rhode Island's public sector, totaling more than 25% of our total projected revenue for the current fiscal year. The Rhode Island Department of Education has committed \$1.25M in Teach For America through Race To The Top and our district and charter partners pay a fee of \$3,000 per corps member basis.

B. BUDGET ADEQUACY: Although there is no budget required for a fixed amount grant, our regional budget is designed to adequately support our program and to align with our mission. Over 60% of our budget represents costs directly related to corps member development and support-- which includes costs related to 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 our budget is allocated for placement and services, which align with our objective of placing all corps members as full-time teachers in schools that serve low-income students. Expenses within this allocation are associated with personnel, transportation, communications, management, operations, and development of our regional office and ensuring all staff are continually developed and highly effective. TFA has budgeted 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

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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.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

N/A

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

N/A

Continuation Changes

N/A