

## APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

### 2014 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Teach For America  
Program Name: Teach for America – Miami (state)

Application ID: 14AC156473

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

#### Reviewers' Summary Comments:

##### Strengths:

The applicant provides persuasive arguments to justify the need for the proposed Teach For America (TFA) program: a teacher preparatory program staffed by AmeriCorps Members, referred to as Corps Members, and sponsored by a large college.

The program is well-organized and involves helping poor students enrolled in public schools in a sprawling urban area.

The case to assist at-risk city students is well-supported and includes providing AmeriCorps members to help 125,000 poor elementary and secondary students, 49% of whom are unprepared for college core subjects, and 20% who have limited English language proficiencies.

AmeriCorps members will be placed in schools in clear need of instructional help. Members will be assigned to low-performing schools, 80% of whose students are eligible for the federal free and reduced lunch program.

AmeriCorps Members will be placed in 47% of the district's low-performing schools which qualify for School Improvement Grants, another compelling reason for the TFA program.

The applicant provided students' statistics (e.g., 60% of free and reduced lunch eligibility, 20% limited English language proficiency) to show the need to place highly qualified teachers to address education inequality in the school district.

The applicant showed that there is a shortage in the number of high-quality candidates available to hire. This problem leads to placing teachers that are not certified to teach at the proper grade level and/or subject.

The applicant identified the lack of highly qualified teachers as the problem for students not performing at grade

level.

The applicant clearly outlines the need for services to help increase the academic ability of many of its targeted students.

The applicant provides data to show the disparity in academic achievement between students of low-income background and their higher income peers. The applicant also provides data which describes the teacher shortage in the targeted area.

In 2013, it is demonstrated that 77% of Members helped advance their students to one or more years of academic growth, and the projection for the proposed grant is 80%.

The applicant cited several articles that have studied the effectiveness of the TFA model and its positive impact on students' academic growth.

The applicant detailed the framework used for professional development (Teaching as Leadership—TAL) that teachers/Members go through which provides the knowledge, skills, and strategies to affect students' academic performance.

The applicant presents a Theory of Change model that exhibits a successful relationship between input, activities, outputs and outcomes.

TFA, in its 14th year, demonstrates clearly its successes in reaching program targets and achieving outcomes.

The program illustrates its superb record of educational achievements. Targets of students completing the AmeriCorps program greatly exceeded expectations.

The applicant indicated that the results from last year's efforts have shown an improvement of academic performance for Core Members' students. In addition, the current year goals are progressing as desired.

Data is provided which indicates positive results for the schools in the TFA-Miami-Dade target area. For example, Norland's overall literacy proficiency rate increased by 11%, which matched the state's increase and surpassed the district's increase of 9%.

Weaknesses:

There is the lack of a specific plan to address the anticipated outcomes of the proposed Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics Leadership Academy.

There are no significant weaknesses found for the AmeriCorps Members as Highly Effective Means to Solve Community Problems Evidence Base and Measurable Community Impact section.

There are no significant weaknesses found for the Past Performance section.