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## Executive Summary

Teach For America-Louisiana (TFA-Louisiana) will have 525 AmeriCorps members (ACMs) who will teach in over 150 high-need schools--including numerous charter schools--in 15 school districts across Southeast Louisiana and the Louisiana Delta. ACMs will have significantly improved the education outcomes for over 35,000 students by receiving effective teacher training and on-going development and by working diligently to provide rigorous and effective instruction. In addition, ACMs will leverage an additional 300 volunteers to support students and classrooms. The ACMs will have an immediate impact in the classroom as they work in partnership with parents and schools to drive student achievement and to expand students' opportunities. This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of Education. With the CNCS investment, TFA- Louisiana will leverage an additional \$13M in private and public funding.

## Rationale and Approach/Program Design

Program Design - Problem/Need: Over the last few years, Louisiana has made significant progress in raising student achievement. Nevertheless, its educational system still ranks near the bottom in the country, placing 48 out of 50 states in student achievement (Education Week, 2013 Quality Count Rankings, January 2013). This ranking is reflected across all grade levels and contents areas. For instance, only 23% of Louisiana's 4th graders and 24% of Louisiana's 8th graders achieved the above-basic "proficient" reading level on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in 2013. While that is a major improvement over 2006's figure of 41%, there are still approximately a quarter million students below grade level in Louisiana.

For the 67% of Louisiana students eligible for free and reduced meals (FARMs, which is a common indicator of poverty), these statistics are amplified which include students across the parishes ACMs teach in. In Tensas Parish, where 96% of students qualify for FARMs, 66% of 8th graders failed to achieve the "basic" level of proficiency on the state's 2013 LEAP assessment. In St. Helena Parish, where 89% of students qualify for FARMs, 51% of fourth graders scored below basic. To meet the needs of our lowest income schools, TFA-Louisiana places ACMs in parishes in which an average 83% of students qualify for FARMs (Agenda For Children).

Last school year, Louisiana became one of nine states that requires all high school graduates take the ACT, a test measuring students' readiness for college. The state's average of 19.5 falls well below the national average of 22; a score of 21 is considered college ready. In the parishes where our ACMs work, the average scores were even lower. For example, seniors at Orleans Parish averaged 18.1, East

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Feliciania Parish averaged 16.5, and Madison Parish seniors averaged just 15.3. Unfortunately, these low ACT scores disqualify students from receiving college scholarships to Louisiana public universities through the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPs).

Despite these harsh realities, Louisiana has, in many ways, been at the forefront of educational reform. Since Katrina, the Louisiana Department of Education, New Orleans Public Schools, and the Recovery School District of Louisiana have worked together to lead a significant transformation in the public education system. These partners have introduced new systems for holding key stakeholders accountable for the academic success of students, and have replaced consistently failing schools with independently-run and managed public charter schools.

Within the communities served by TFA-Louisiana--in which 83% of students qualify for FARMs and over 90% identify as either African American or Hispanic--school leaders have been demanding a huge influx of talent and leadership in order to meet rising academic expectations. TFA-Louisiana, in partnership with AmeriCorps, the Louisiana Department of Education, and other key local stakeholders, has responded to the growing need for high-quality teachers by increasing our corps in the New Orleans region from 85 teachers to nearly 400 in the past seven years. This growth of ACMs parallels significant improvement in the New Orleans public education system. Since 2005, academic growth in Orleans Parish has outpaced that of every other school district in Louisiana. Over a period of time in which scores on state assessments rose statewide by an average of nine points, the growth within Orleans Parish was a stunning 34 points. Likewise, since Katrina the parish's high school graduation rate has increased by 21% and the number of schools deemed "failing" has fallen from 78 to 9. Today, only 5% of New Orleans students attend a failing school, compared to 62% in 2005 (Louisiana Department of Education).

TFA-Louisiana is not the only catalyst for progress in Louisiana, though it undoubtedly has been a leader and major contributor toward the renaissance of the state's public education system. Because of TFA-Louisiana's successes in boosting student achievement, there has been a great increase in demand for TFA teachers across the entire state. For example, as they consider whether the Baton Rouge area is a viable region for expansion, KIPP and various other charter school organizations have asked TFA-Louisiana to double in size. Within East Baton Rouge Parish, the demand for TFA teachers has actually quadrupled, due to concerns that there will be a shortage in high-quality applicants for teacher positions.

Research consistently demonstrates that the quality of teaching is the single most important factor in student learning, and that highly effective teachers can transform the life prospects of the children

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they serve. Over 50% of the schools in which ACMs are placed fall within the Louisiana Department of Education's categories of significant and priority schools. ACMs also concentrate on filling the need for highly effective science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) teachers; currently, a full third of our teachers are certified and teach in these areas. There is a shortage of highly-qualified STEM teachers in Louisiana as such principals and districts seek TFA-Louisiana corps members to fill vacancies. Nationally, we recruit for qualified applicants to meet the demand for STEM corps members. TFA-Louisiana cultivates teachers and school leaders that have a demonstrated track record in enabling students to make rapid and drastic academic improvements, and so a continued expansion of their ranks will hasten the arrival of the day in which every child in Louisiana can achieve a truly excellent education.

ACMs as a Highly Effective Means to Solve Community Problems: Because of their great capabilities and scale in the region, TFA-Louisiana ACMs and alumni provide the backbone for much of Louisiana's education reform movement. TFA teachers are particularly well-suited to addressing the problem of educational inequity for two key reasons. First, we provide schools in low-income Louisiana communities with highly qualified, talented teachers who are chosen because they possess the traits that set apart truly outstanding educators. Second, we are one of the few developers of new teacher talent that offers rigorous, ongoing coaching and pedagogical skills-building opportunities during the school year. These opportunities build on the pre-service teacher training institute that we lead during the summer. Because of our rigorous selection and training model, our ACMs are consistently evaluated as being among the strongest new teachers, as indicated by numerous rigorous independent studies that analyze the extent to which teachers lead their students to greater academic success.

TFA provides Louisiana school systems not only with a crucial pipeline of transformational teachers, but also with highly qualified candidates for leadership positions. TFA- Louisiana's 550+ ACMs and 400+ alumni teachers reach over 50,000 students in approximately 150 of the highest-need schools across Louisiana. During the 2012-2013 school year, 80% of ACMs led students to achieve results commensurate with more than a year's worth of academic growth in a single year.

Schools that are led by TFA alumni and/or that employ high numbers of TFA teachers and alumni are consistently among the highest performing in Louisiana. These schools serve as examples of what can be achieved in low-income communities, and they provide a powerful vision of what could be achieved on a statewide scale--and, in time, on a national scale.

Currently, 36 TFA alumni are school leaders across Louisiana. Of particular note are those leaders

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at KIPP and THRIVE. TFA alumni lead eight of the nine KIPP schools in New Orleans. KIPP is the highest achieving charter management organization in the city, and over 60% of the staff at these schools are TFA-Louisiana ACMs or alumni. When viewed collectively as a de facto school district, KIPP schools in New Orleans last year had the third-highest 8th grade LEAP passage rate among all school districts in the state of Louisiana. Similarly high-achieving is THRIVE, Louisiana's first charter boarding school. Founded and led by TFA-Louisiana alumni, THRIVE has become the third highest-performing middle school in Baton Rouge, following two magnet programs.

Evidence-Based/Evidence-Informed and Measurable Community Impact: There is a substantial body of high-quality research on the impact of TFA ACMs on their students' academic achievement. These studies have consistently found that corps members tend to be more effective in promoting students' academic achievement, on average, than the other teachers of math and science in the same schools, and at least as effective in other tested subjects. The most compelling of these studies have employed rigorous statistical methods, examined the impact of corps members and alumni over multiple years, or both.

Recent research on TFA includes several statewide studies that rank teacher preparation programs. In Louisiana (Noell & Gansle, 2009), North Carolina (Henry et al., 2013), and Tennessee (Tennessee Higher Education Commission, THEC, 2013), for example, TFA has consistently been identified as among the most effective teacher preparation programs. An analysis of teacher preparation programs in Tennessee in 2011, 2012, and 2013 identified TFA-Nashville as the number one producer of effective new teachers in each year, and one of only six programs to "have consistently produced teachers that are outperforming other teachers in the state or are on an upward trend in effectiveness scores" (THEC, 2013).

Similarly, a 2013 study by Edvance Research (Turner et al.) examined over 10,000 students of corps members/alumni and non-TFA teachers across 500 campuses and 34 school districts in Texas. They found that TFA had a significant main effect on the math and reading outcomes of students. In addition, a 2012 study conducted by the Harvard Strategic Data Project examined the effectiveness of teachers in the Los Angeles Unified School District from 2004 to 2011. The Strategic Data Project found that corps members have higher math effects, on average, than other novice teachers. Study authors translate this finding as an additional 1 to 2 months of math instruction. These state or regional study findings also manifest at the national level. A 2013 study commissioned by the Institute for Education Sciences (Clark et al., 2013) found that the learning differential between corps members and non-TFA teachers in secondary math translates to 2.6 months of extra knowledge.

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There is not much literature that directly addresses why Teach For America is such an impactful program, though now that there is a compelling body of evidence about the academic effectiveness of TFA corps members, researchers seem increasingly interested in studying why this is the case. Two of the leading hypotheses is that TFA is uniquely capable of (i) identifying exceptionally talented people who otherwise would not have considered a career in teaching and (ii) providing them with high-quality and relevant in-service training and support throughout their time in the classroom. This is supported by evidence from the 2013 Mathematica/IES study that distinguished between teacher certification programs that are highly selective from those that are less selective. TFA is among the most, if it is not the most, selective teacher preparation program in the country.

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Member training: The foundation of our training and evaluation model is a framework called "Teaching As Leadership" (TAL), which includes the six strategies that 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. Induction: At the beginning of the summer, ACMs receive an AmeriCorps pre-service orientation so they can learn about their responsibilities and benefits before beginning their service. In addition, they spend a week in Louisiana. Activities can range from discussing the school-to-prison pipeline with the Juvenile Justice

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Project of Louisiana to participating in an Ashe Cultural Arts Center event that uses art and culture to support community development. ACMs will have identified community partners who are working towards educational equity, and explore their own identity and what it means in to be a leader in community-based education reform. Institute: Following Induction, ACMs engage in a rigorous five-week residential summer institute that provides teacher training while fostering a sense of community and shared experience. In addition to learning pedagogy, lesson planning, and classroom management, each ACM teaches children under the watchful eyes of a veteran teacher and a TFA alum who provide mentorship and continuous feedback. ACMs attend sessions that build their skills in using "diversity competencies" to help reach better outcomes with their students in their schools and communities. In the afternoon and evening, ACMs attend regular training sessions on classroom management and classroom culture, instructional planning and delivery, and student and parent investment planning. Orientation: After Institute, ACMs return to Louisiana for orientation. During this time, ACMs work under the guidance of their Manager of Teacher Leadership Development (MTLD) to create their first unit plans, as well as assessments and other tools for tracking their students' progress. ACMs develop their vision for a transformational classroom which will guide their work and collaborations with other ACMs, alumni, and TFA staff throughout the year. The vision includes ambitious goals that will put their students on a trajectory toward extended life opportunities, and outlines how they will teach students the soft-skills needed to be successful in subsequent grades, college, and the workplace. Ongoing Support: TFA-Louisiana's program team provides intensive training and professional development consistently throughout the year. Each ACM is supported by an MTLD, who was formerly a highly effective classroom teacher, and now manages an average of 35 ACMs. These cohorts are organized by school and content area, providing MTLDs with increased opportunities to engage deeply with the ACMs they support. MTLDs observe their ACMs in their classrooms, reflect with them on their students' progress toward goals, and problem-solve to improve their craft. MTLDs also leverage "Real Time Coaching" through which they provide live feedback via electronic devices to ACMs as they teach. Development sessions additionally include workshops on professionalism, building ACMs' leadership skills and on planning their life after AmeriCorps. To supplement their TFA-based professional development, ACMs enroll in The New Teacher Project's teacher certification program, or alternatively they pursue a Master's degree through Louisiana College or the Relay Graduate School of Education.

TFA-Louisiana is fostering innovation within its professional development model through two new cohort-based programs. The Transformational Teaching Fellowship engages ACMs in professional

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development sessions and community partnership events that deepen their knowledge of the communities in which they teach and build stronger relationships with families and community members. By including students and parents in their discussions and events, Transformational Teaching Fellows have additional opportunities to invest parents in their students' success. Meanwhile, our Culturally Responsive Teaching cohort explores techniques that enable teachers to connect more effectively with their students through a deeper knowledge of these students' cultures.

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 ACMs at their pre-service orientation to ensure that they have clear and solid understanding of their responsibilities. We continue to enforce compliance during monthly professional development sessions and through regular email blasts. Individual compliance is monitored by MTLDs who receive annual training that includes a comprehensive explanation of prohibited activities, examples and case studies of what these activities encompass, and how to detect and report them. Through regular interaction with ACMs, MTLDs are able to review regulations and verify that they are being followed. Moreover, our placement schools throughout Louisiana receive an AC orientation guide that includes information on policies and prohibited activities, thus enabling principals and other school administrators to enforce AC compliance. School leaders receive online resources help as well, should they have any questions or want clarification or guidance on any activities in which they plan to participate.

Member Supervision: All TFA-Louisiana ACMs are college graduates who complete a rigorous application process designed, in part, to measure their ability to work effectively in a professional setting. Our ACMs work as full-time professional teachers, and are directly supervised by their school principal. Therefore, TFA-Louisiana's supervision plan is oriented around ACM professional development and evaluation. As mentioned previously, every ACM is matched with a MTLT, who is a highly effective TFA alumnus/a who manages a cohort of current ACMs and provides an additional layer of support and supervision for each ACM. Our MTLTs are ACMs' first point of contact. To be hired, MTLTs must have built a consistent track record of success during their time in the classroom. They must be strong critical thinkers, have the ability to influence and motivate other adults, and possess excellent problem-solving skills. MTLTs participate in 20 hours of training modules before working with ACMs and they engage in the following ongoing trainings: weekly check-ins with their manager, bi-weekly skill building sessions, and weekly individualized professional development. In Louisiana, ACMs are purposefully clustered together at schools to increase engagement with school

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leaders and to partner around member supervision.

As a professional corps, TFA-Louisiana ACMs document their time under the same regulations as other teachers in their district or charter schools where each ACM is supervised by principals or department heads. TFA-Louisiana ACMs accrue an estimated 10.92 service hours per day during the school year between hours spent on instruction, prepping lesson plans, grading, TFA and school based professional development sessions. As such, an alternative timekeeping model is a more than adequate measure to document that our corps members achieve their required 1700 service hours during the course of their term of service.

**Commitment to AmeriCorps:** TFA is undergoing an organization-wide rebranding in 2013, giving them the opportunity to further integrate the AmeriCorps (AC) brand in national and regional marketing. This initiative includes integrating the AC logo into letterhead, recruitment brochures and posters, and both regional and national websites. Additionally, TFA will include AC-based postings across social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. TFA-Louisiana will continue to communicate the important role that AC plays in our community. We will: (1) include AmeriCorps material and the AC logo in our local media kit; (2) have ACMs wear AC-branded lanyards or AC lapel pins at school, display AC signs in their classrooms, and discuss the importance of national service with their students. CMs must wear AC branding at all times. TFA-Louisiana will regularly communicate this requirement at pre-service and on-going training sessions.; (3) have ACMs wear AC shirts at service opportunities; and (4) provide an AC orientation to ACMs and partnering principals to ensure that they understand AC and can discuss the program with parents, community organizations, district officials, and donors.

**Compliance and Accountability:** As a long-time AmeriCorps grantee, we have developed systems that enforce our compliance with AC requirements and regulations. The eligibility components of compliance are led nationally by our Admissions and Public Partnerships teams. As ACMs matriculate into the program, they are required to submit eligibility documentation and to go through background checks, thus ensuring that they have met the eligibility requirements prior to beginning their service.

Additionally, our Public Partnerships team trains all regional program staff on acceptable and prohibited AmeriCorps activities, and TFA provides school administrators with a handbook that explains AC rules, regulations, and prohibited activities.

Through site visits, classroom observations, and regular communication with site supervisors, our MTLs provide oversight of ACMs. Due to the frequency of interactions that MTLs have with ACMs and their in depth knowledge of the prohibited activities, they are able to ensure that members are

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operating in accordance with AC regulations. Additionally, all incoming ACMs in are required to sign documents attesting they have read and understand the AC prohibited activities, and at the end of the school year all ACMs are required to sign a form certifying they did not violate any activities prohibited by AmeriCorps. Principals are also required to certify at the end of the school year that no AC policies were violated.

Finally, our Public Partnerships team conducts regular regional site visits and audits ACM activities and files to ensure compliance with AmeriCorps regulations. If a TFA staff member or school administrator suspects that a member is engaging in a prohibited activity, they will notify their regional leadership team. Partnering with our Public Partnership team and legal counsel, the regional leadership team will assess the suspected violation and suspend the ACM until the issue is resolved.

### **Organizational Capability**

Organizational Background and Staffing: To enable ACMs and alumni to receive support that is tailored to their local circumstances, TFA-Louisiana is structured into three collaborative regions: Greater New Orleans, South Louisiana (Greater Baton Rouge), and the Louisiana Delta. Kira Orange Jones, the Executive Director of the Greater New Orleans team, has broadened the scope of her responsibilities and she now leads TFA-Louisiana at the statewide level. Ms. Orange Jones brings a wealth of multiregional knowledge and locally-rooted relationships to her position, so her expanded role enables TFA-Louisiana collaborate more effectively with local movements and communities across the state. Ms. Orange Jones now manages Michael Tipton, Executive Director for South Louisiana; James Bacon, Director for the Louisiana Delta; and Jack Carey, Vice President for Greater New Orleans.

TFA-Louisiana recently created a leadership cabinet that streamlines our statewide strategy planning processes and our capacity for innovation. This cabinet will hone and expand our statewide partnerships and investments, improve our ability to identify and pursue new site development opportunities across the state, and accelerate the development of education leadership pipelines across rural and under-resourced parts of Louisiana.

The senior leaders directly manage staff and oversee ACMs placed in their collaborative region. The Greater New Orleans team has 31 additional team members and 330 projected ACMs. South has 13 additional staff members and 219 projected ACMs. The Louisiana Delta collaborative team has 3 additional staff members and 40 projected ACMs. These staff members work on six functional teams: (1) the Teacher Leadership and Development team is charged with achieving TFA's vision of universal excellence in the classroom and is comprised of 25 staff members; (2) the Alumni Impact team

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empowers TFA alumni to be transformational teachers, school leaders, and champions for education reform and is comprised of 5 staff members; (3) the District and School Partnerships team drives our collaborations with school districts and community organizations and is comprised of 7 staff members; (4) the External Relations staff member builds community relationships and aligns our goals and priorities to community movements; (5) the People, Operations & Diversity team manages administrative responsibilities, oversees the regional budget, and recruits and cultivates talented staff and is comprised of 3 staff members; and (6) the Development team evangelizes TFA's vision, values, and programs among potential donors, and secures the resources that fuel TFA's operations and is comprised of 6 staff members.

TFA-Louisiana receives guidance and oversight from the national co-CEOs of TFA, Matthew Kramer and Elisa Villanueva Beard, who work with a national Board of Directors to set TFA's overall strategy and direction. The national Board is charged with exercising fiduciary stewardship, and with ensuring that the organization is run effectively and in accordance with all laws and regulations.

Our finance functions are managed by a national Finance Team that collaborates closely with our national and regional development teams and budget trackers. It reports to the auditing and finance committees of the Board, and abides by a system of checks and balances that ensures accurate financial accounting, coordination of fundraising and spending, and the accurate tracking of all finances.

TFA has effectively managed large-scale federal grants through AmeriCorps, the US Department of Education (SEED grant, I3 grant), the Louisiana Department of Education, and federal block grant programs administered regionally by the Louisiana Department of Education. As our federal funding portfolio has grown, TFA has built the internal capacity needed in order to manage the financial and programmatic components of an AmeriCorps program. At TFA's national office, our Public Partnerships Team has a number of well-qualified specialists available to meet and guide regional staff on AmeriCorps compliance, budget creation, and general grants management. In addition, this team partners with our Research and Evaluation team, our Student Achievement Measurement team, our Technology and Legal teams, and our Teacher Preparation, Support and Development team to provide ongoing trainings, assistance, and guidance for all regional staff. These teams' conference calls, regional and national conferences, and online tutorials ensure TFA's compliance with all grant requirements and regulations.

Past Performance: TFA-Louisiana has partnered AmeriCorps and the Volunteer Louisiana Commission since their founding. In the years after Hurricane Katrina, TFA was called upon to

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expand its presence in Louisiana. In 2005, TFA's total presence was less than 200 ACMs and 200 alumni statewide. Today, we have more than 550 ACMs and 1,000+ alumni throughout the state. They are a driving force behind the dramatic positive change that is happening in Louisiana education. As our presence has grown, we have succeeded in meeting more challenging and meaningful performance measures on student achievement. Moreover, we have continually retained over 95% of our ACMs, a rate markedly higher than estimated average retention for first-year teachers in low-income communities (82%) and the overall average for all 1st year teachers regardless of school setting (86%). These successes, coupled with the academic improvement seen in communities with ACMs, indicate how our region leverages the strengths and talents of our ACMs to improve the lives of Louisiana students. We have successfully managed our corps across competitive, formula, and national AC grants. TFA-Louisiana has administered as many as 626 MSYs before as a state, and in 2012-2013 we managed grants totaling 525 MSYs. This year, TFA-Louisiana manages 550 CMs; 70 ACMs are covered on our competitive grant along with 128 ACMs at no-cost and 220 AMCs are enrolled on a national grant. Unfortunately, 132 corps members did not have the opportunity to enroll in AC. As a grantee, TFA-Louisiana has shown that it is well equipped to manage and build the leadership skills of a projected corps size of 589.

During the 2012-2013 school year, TFA-Louisiana met all of our student-oriented and enrollment metrics goals. We enrolled 100% of the competitive grant slots and retained 95.7% of our ACMs. Improved structures that allow quick interventions for struggling ACMs such as Real Time Coaching continue to help us improve our retention rate. The 70 enrolled ACMs on the competitive AC grant reached 4,270 students at the start of the program year, and thus exceeded our goal. The 67 retained ACMs reached 4,087 students at the end of the school year. Our ACMs proved their effectiveness with 2,759 students achieving 1+ year of growth.

On aggregate, about 80% of our entire alumni base remains in the field of education. Teaching is the most common role for ACMs to assume after completing their commitment to the corps. The number of second-year ACMs on the competitive grant in 2012-2013 who remained in educational roles exceeded our goals significantly; while we had aimed for 22 ACMs to stay in education, 33 did so. Moreover, of the 211 second-year ACMs across both the competitive and formula grants, 130 remained teaching (62%) and 64 remained in education but not teaching (30%). The large percentage of ACMs choosing to remain in education provides strong indication that our theory of change works and that ACMs will exert long-term leadership in education.

Continuous Improvements: We continually solicit and analyze feedback from stakeholders, both

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external and internal. Our MTLDs lead an open feedback cycle with principals, administrators, and non-TFA teachers on effective coaching supports and on areas in which we can improve. Our District and School Partnerships team fosters relationships with our school partners to identify teacher shortages and to determine student needs. Following our conversations with principals and superintendents, we adjust the subject areas for which we recruit, and make sure that we are placing our ACMs at the highest-need schools. Meanwhile, our executive directors have ongoing touch points with all key stakeholders, including school leaders, families, funders, and community leaders, and they share our successes, challenges, and organizational learnings with regional advisory boards that provide feedback on our vision and structure. In addition, we survey our ACMs throughout the year on their experiences-- specifically after professional development events--to ensure that our resources are meeting their needs.

TFA-Louisiana incorporates internal and external feedback into our vision, regional priorities, and goals through our annual goal-setting process and quarterly meetings. Each functional team annually undergoes a month-long process of analyzing the feedback and data we have compiled throughout the year. Teams devise strategies, plans, and priorities by determining how we can better fulfill our mission and core values, in order to ensure that more students can achieve an excellent education. In addition, TFA-Louisiana also holds monthly leadership team meetings and all-staff meetings in order to share and alter strategies in a timely manner. Throughout all of these strategic planning processes, we work hard to incorporate the voices and opinions of our partners, students, families, and local communities.

### **Budget/Cost Effectiveness**

Cost Effectiveness: TFA-Louisiana is requesting 589 full-time ACM slots at \$675/MSY through a professional corps education award program grant. This falls below the maximum eligible amount. TFA-Louisiana ACMs receive the criminal background checks required by AmeriCorps.

Funding from AmeriCorps has been critical to building a coalition for change in Louisiana. For the broad base of stakeholders who fund us, it signifies a vital public commitment to our work. The rapid improvements in Louisiana schools following Katrina--for which investments by AmeriCorps deserve much credit--have motivated many national funders to invest in the region, thus empowering us to grow the scale of our impact. Moreover, AmeriCorps' education awards and loan forbearance benefits have played a critical role in our ability to recruit the most effective and diverse applicants. Our partnership with AmeriCorps enables us to maintain the rapid progress that is moving Louisiana toward the day in which all students have excellent academic opportunities that open pathways to

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success.

As we look to the future and assess long-term sustainable funding levels from national sources, we realize that we must grow our base of public and private local dollars in Louisiana. We know that the stakes are incredibly high for students in Louisiana's high-need districts. Generating new funding streams is essential in order for us to meet the demands of the Orleans charter school market, the Achievement Zone in Baton Rouge, and school districts in the Louisiana Delta and other rural locations.

TFA-Louisiana's program design is a cost effective model for increasing student achievement and developing long-term educational talent. We provide low-income school districts with a national pool of pre-screened talent that could otherwise not be reached, and our administrative costs are substantially less than that of organizations engaged in similar activities. For example, the Peace Corps' cost per member to recruit, select, train and support is over \$67,000, while those same activities cost us \$44,270. Likewise, our recruitment costs are less than \$4,000 per ACM, which is much lower than the cost of securing an army recruit (\$22,898) or a McKinsey first year associate (\$35,000). Meanwhile, multiple studies have demonstrated that the impact of having a TFA-Louisiana ACM as a teacher is greater than other education interventions. TFA-Louisiana yields a greater return on investment than class size reduction efforts, National Board certification, and hiring teachers who hold Master's degrees (The Urban Institute 2009; Nye, B., Hedges, L.V. & Konstantopoulos, S., 2000. The Results of the Tennessee Class Size Experiment. American Educational Research Journal; Improving Student Achievement: What State NAEP Scores Tell Us, RAND Corporation; Rivkin, S, Hanushek, E, & Kain, J, 2005).

Part of the cost effectiveness of our program is its nature as an AmeriCorps professional corps program. ACMs do not receive a living allowance or healthcare from AmeriCorps or TFA; instead, they are provided salaries and benefits from the school districts in which they are employed. Hence, the costs of our program relate solely to training and supporting ACMs.

TFA-Louisiana's 2015 programmatic budget is \$13,996,036. Our team has significant experience in raising the necessary resources to run its program in Louisiana, and we draw from diverse sources, including local foundations, corporations, individual donors, and public support. TFA-Louisiana actively seeks to grow funding across all sources. Our staff meets one-on-one with potential donors to build their understanding of our model and to give them insight into TFA-Louisiana's vision. They also continuously cultivate relationships with existing donors, providing timely updates, inviting them to classrooms, encouraging them to volunteer, and facilitating meetings between donors, ACMs, and

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alumni.

Given our record of success and strong program and development operations, we are confident that we will be able to raise the funds necessary to match the investment of an AmeriCorps grant. In 2012, Charity Navigator gave TFA a perfect 4-star rating for the tenth straight year. Less than 1% of all nonprofits nationwide have received similar consecutive four-star ratings.

**Budget Adequacy:** TFA-Louisiana's budget is mission-aligned and program-centric. 75 percent of our costs are directly related to ACM recruitment, selection, training, and support, including the ongoing support and professional development that enables ACMs to lead their students to significant academic gains. The remaining 25% of the budget is allocated for alumni development and support services. TFA-Louisiana will use AmeriCorps funds to cover the costs of the National Service criminal history checks.

In the most recent fiscal year, TFA-Louisiana raised \$9,135,610. To become more sustainable, TFA shifted its fiscal year to align with our program cycle's completion on May 31st. To accommodate this change, our most recent fiscal year was shortened to nine months. Last year TFA-Louisiana raised more than \$4,924,568, or 54% of the regional budget, from foundations. Organizationally, we continue to build new partnerships with foundations across the state, and to strengthen our partnerships with national foundations that view Louisiana as a national model. TFA-Louisiana raised nearly \$750,215 from corporations and \$1,343,637 from individual donations, representing roughly 8% and 15% of the regional budget, respectively. We plan to hold events in FY15 to further expand the pool of potential supporters and to increase awareness of TFA-Louisiana among new networks. Likewise, we will continue our stewardship of local donors through round-table discussions, school visits, coalitions, and regular communications. About 9% of our regional budget, or \$861,750, came from partner districts to help offset the training and recruitment costs of TFA-Louisiana ACMs working in its schools. Finally, we received \$1,255,440 public funding, or 14% of our budget, from a combination of AmeriCorps and Louisiana Department of Education funds.

TFA-Louisiana has built a solid foundation of diverse funders from across the state. Six months into TFA-Louisiana's current fiscal year, the program has received commitments for \$8,335,689 toward our \$13,996,036 fundraising goal. This represents 60% progress to goal.

### **Evaluation Summary or Plan**

Short-Term Expected Outcome: Teach For America (TFA) aims to attract and select highly motivated individuals with a record of success and place them in schools where they are needed the most. We anticipate 589 AmeriCorps members (ACMs) exhibiting characteristics that are predictive of success in

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high-needs schools in Louisiana. Furthermore, we expect to see these individuals gaining knowledge and skills to teach in low-income schools while also developing the conviction that the educational inequity problem is solvable and that all children can achieve at high levels.

Research Questions: 1. Does TFA successfully identify and select individuals who are predicted to be most successful in the classroom? 2. Does TFA successfully train individuals to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes and opinions that will make them most effective in the classroom at a high-needs school?

Evaluation Methodology: research question 1: TFA employs a rigorous selection methodology that screens applicants for 7 characteristics that are predictive of classroom success and assigns a fit score to assess whether an applicant will be an effective match with TFA's work and mission. This assessment is based on information supplied by the applicants in their application (e.g., academic records, leadership experience) along with multiple rounds of interviews and sample teaching sessions. The data collected from this 2-4 month process will be converted into a fit score, which will show that those who are ultimately selected by TFA to teach in high-needs schools are those who are most likely to succeed in the classroom. Research question 2: ACMs who are selected to teach are required to complete an administered in the middle and end of the academic year for each of the two years of the program. This allows TFA national staff members to assess the types of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and opinions that corps members have acquired through the TFA experience. These surveys will cover data from all 355 ACMs and the results will be analyzed to assess whether TFA's various training and support mechanisms successfully prepared ACMs to teach in high-needs schools.

Implementation of Evaluation Results: Results from both the selection model and the ACM surveys will be used to reflect and improve upon TFA's existing practices. For instance, if the evaluations find that individual or groups of ACMs do not achieve academic growth from their students at a reasonable and ambitious rate, extra support and mentoring will be made available to ACMs, while TFA's training model will be reassessed and improved for the next cohort of ACMs.

Medium-Term Expected Outcome: Although the majority of TFA ACMs enter the classroom without a background in education, through intensive training and ongoing support, they become effective teachers who impact student achievement. Based on historical data records of TFA's success in

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Louisiana and the comprehensive training and support afforded to ACMs, we expect to see ACMs consistently increase the academic achievement.

Research Question: of their students, often by upwards of 1.5 years or more of grade growth in one school year. Research Question: To what extent -- directionality and magnitude -- do TFA ACMs have a positive impact on student achievement?

Evaluation Methodology: TFA tracks the progress of its ACMs and their students using an internal system called the Student Achievement Measurement System (SAMS). Student achievement data included in this evaluation are collected in collaboration with state and district partners. Members of TFA's national SAMS team records and analyzes whether ACMs meet subject and grade level-specific benchmarks. Effectiveness will be measured in terms of student academic gains produced by the ACM by the end of the school year. A second evaluation method that will be employed to measure the effectiveness of TFA ACMs is the biennial National Principal Survey that is commissioned by TFA and is conducted by an external evaluator, Policy Studies Associates, Inc. in 2011 and 2013, for example, principals who have one or more TFA ACMs working in their school include were asked about ACMs' impact on student achievement in comparison to other teachers, both novice and experienced. The principals' insights provide an additional measure of ACM effectiveness in the classroom.

Implementation of Evaluation Results: By analyzing the student achievement data for all ACMs and reviewing principals' ratings of ACM performance, we will be able to discern whether TFA teachers have a positive impact in the classroom. Furthermore, we will be able to see which ACMs might need additional support to improve their performance. For those who need additional support, TFA will work with them and provide additional resources on an ongoing basis to improve their classroom effectiveness. Data from these evaluations will also be incorporated into decisions about programmatic improvements for upcoming years.

Long-Term Expected Outcome: TFA has a two-prong theory of change. The first prong -- to increase student achievement of the nation's most academically vulnerable students -- is addressed by the research questions and proposed evaluation methodologies of our short-term and medium-term objectives. The second prong -- to build a movement that addresses the structural roots of educational inequality from both within and outside of the classroom -- is addressed by our long-term objective: we expect to see that TFA alumni remain involved in education at all levels in various sectors, such as

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policy and system leadership, beyond their 2-year corps commitment.

Research Question: Does the TFA experience impact the lifelong trajectory of its corps members so that they continue to work towards solving educational inequity?

Evaluation Methodology: Every year, TFA sends out a survey to all of its alumni in order to collect Methodology information about their career trajectories after completion of their 2-year corps commitment. By analyzing the results of this survey, we will be able to discern what percentage of our alumni work directly in the field, or in related fields, of education and in what capacity. This is one indicator of whether TFA is successful in fostering lifelong leaders in education.

Implementation of Evaluation Results: Depending on the specific needs of the region, the results of the alumni survey can be used to start or improve initiatives such as "Teach Beyond Two" (where ACMs are encouraged to and given support to stay in the classroom beyond two years), LEE (Leadership for Educational Equity -- a sister organization of TFA that assists alumni in developing leadership capacity to get involved in education policy work), and recruiting and training alumni to become principals in high-needs schools through our Principal Leadership initiative.

### Amendment Justification

n/a

### Clarification Summary

2014 CLARIFICATION:

A. Budget and Performance Measure Clarification:

1. The budget has been reduced to reflect the funding levels under consideration.
2. TFA-Louisiana is decreases our ask fro 589 to 525, which is reflected in the budget.
3. Performance measures have been updated to reflect the adjusted ask.

B. Executive Summary Clarification:

1. The Executive Summary has been updated to reflect the the adjusted ask

C. Programmatic Clarification:

1. TFA-Louisiana is requesting a 9/1/2014 start date
2. TFA's partnership with AmeriCorps is pivotal to recruiting and retaining high-quality, diverse corps

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members to serve in communities' highest-needs schools. TFA is committed to ensuring that AmeriCorps slots are available to all eligible corps members to ensure that it is recruiting and retaining the highest achieving, most effective teachers. Additionally, AmeriCorps membership promotes national service and all-corps identity among all TFA ACMs. At the start of the grant application process, TFA projects the total number of ACMs for the following year based on anticipated retention rates of current ACMs and recruitment targets for new members. TFA determines the number of slots to request on its National Direct grant based on allocation of slots across regions and the likelihood of a specific region receiving state AmeriCorps funding. TFA does not assume that all state AmeriCorps applications will be successful, so some state grant slots are duplicated in the National Direct grant application.

Therefore, the 525 slots requested by TFA-LA may be duplicated on the National Direct grant currently under continuation review. However, the final award decisions regarding each state AmeriCorps grant will ultimately determine how TFA utilizes any additional National Direct slots that will be required for TFA-MD. If TFA-LA is awarded 525 slots through the state grant, it does not necessarily mean the corresponding slots on the National Direct grant are duplicative; these National Direct slots may ultimately be allocated to another region that was unsuccessful in securing a state grant.

### D. Performance Measure Clarification:

1. As the full-time teacher of record, our corps members are charged with increasing the academic achievement of all students in their classroom, regardless of what point in the year a student becomes a member of their class. As such, all students that are in our corps members' classroom on the last day of school will be counted toward ED 2.
2. Improved academic performance is the equivalent of one year or more of grade growth
3. For ED13, "completion" is defined as serving as the full-time teacher of record through the last day of the schools year.
4. ED17: We request to modify ED17 from 20 to 70 TFA-Louisiana ACMs in the year after their term of service that chose to remain in education but not teaching, or 13% of the 522 requested TFA-Louisiana ACMs for the 2014-2015 grant cycle.

It is our goal that every corps member chooses to remain in an education field after their term of

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service, but specifically our program strives to cultivate effective teachers. We aim to maximize the number of corps members who chose to continue teaching in the highest need schools in Louisiana after both their first and second year-of-service. Other pathways include remaining in education but not teaching, as measured by ED17, or entering another field outside of education. The performance measure ED17 measures only the pathway of remaining in education, but not as a classroom teacher. Fields that we consider remaining in education but not teaching include school administrators, school operation managers, education non-profit employees, and government employees working on education policies.

Overall we project that 77% of our TFA-Louisiana ACMs -- nearly all outgoing first-year ACMs and two-thirds of second year ACMs - will remain in education as a classroom teacher after their year-of-service. We also project that an additional 13% of total ACMs (or one-quarter of outgoing second-year ACMs) will remain in education but not teaching, as measured by ED17. This would be a total of 90% of TFA-Louisiana ACMs who remain in the field of education overall. ED17 only measures non-teaching education professions, and the primary pathway for TFA-Louisiana ACMs is to remain teaching in the classroom and impacting student outcomes directly in Louisiana.

### E. Strategic Engagement Slots Clarification:

1. TFA is committed to providing equal access and opportunities to candidates with legally recognizable disabilities, and prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in the application process in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and similar state laws. We will make our best effort to provide reasonable accommodations for our differently-abled applicants at every stage of the application process. Disclosing a disability or requesting a need for accommodations is a separate and distinct process from admissions and will have absolutely no bearing on a candidate's application status. To further demonstrate our commitment to recruiting and accommodating members with disabilities, TFA has a Disabilities Accommodations Officer who is responsible for ensuring that a qualified individual with disabilities can be a part of our movement. TFA is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to differently-abled corps members through the application process and in the training we provide during the corps experience. As a professional corps, TFA does not have the ultimate hiring authority. However, we do have targeted recruitment campaigns to ensure core corps diversity and an inclusive selection and recruitment process.
2. At this time, TFA does not wish to request additional MSYs to fund AmeriCorps members with

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disabilities.

### F. No-Cost MSY Clarification:

1. At this time, TFA-LA does not wish to request no-cost MSYs

### G. Professional Corps Applicants Clarification:

1. As a professional corps program, Teach For America-Louisiana's AmeriCorps members (TFA CM) are paid staff employed by school districts and charter schools throughout the state. Similar to any other employment opportunity, our corps members apply and compete for open positions. Over the past couple of years, on average, the state of Louisiana has hired over 3,000 new teachers. TFA is just one avenue for our partner schools to fill vacancies; staffing classrooms with qualified teachers is so persistently challenging and important in Louisiana that in addition to TFA, other strategies are utilized including alternative routes to certification, and teacher fellowship and residency programs such as TNTP. Therefore, our corps members do not displace paid staff, but fill vacancies opened to the general public and that the district is interested in hiring qualified persons to fill.

In Louisiana, approximately 5% of our corps members are placed in public schools where collective bargaining agreements govern the hiring of all new teachers, including TFA teachers. TFA works with school and district leadership to fill new and vacant positions through the district's routine hiring processes and our teachers operate within the structures established by the collective bargaining agreements. We do not receive any special hiring arrangement beyond those permissible the collective bargaining agreements. Our Professional Services Agreement (PSA) with our School partners, in part, reinforces that expectation with the following language:

[School District] and Teach For America will collaborate in good faith to facilitate the efficient hiring of individual Teachers, in accordance with the School District's established District hiring practices.

For example, in cases when there is a reduction in force, our corps members, under their respective school district contracts, receive the same protections as other teachers and would be subject to that reduction in force in the same manner as other first- and second-year teachers.

For the 95% of corps members who that are placed in charter schools or in parishes, where a collective

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bargaining agreement does not exist, our corps members are subjected to the charter management organization or district's' hiring regulations and protocols in the same manner as all other individuals.

Similar to our expectations for hiring with our district partners, we have language in those agreements underscoring the obligation to work within the Charter School's established hiring practices:

Charter School and Teach For America will collaborate to facilitate the hiring of individual Teachers, in accordance with Charter School's established hiring practices.

2. We believe that it is appropriate for us to sign the certification because in districts where there are collective bargaining agreements in place, these agreements govern the ways in which districts hire new teachers, including TFA teachers. Because TFA works with school district leadership to fill new and vacant positions through the district's routine hiring processes, our teachers operate within the structures set up by the collective bargaining agreement. We do not receive any special hiring arrangement beyond those permissible by collective bargaining agreements.

3. TFA Louisiana's AmeriCorps members participate in districts' and charter management organizations' (CMOs) standard hiring processes. Our corps members are just one of many avenues that school leaders access to fill their vacancies.

Because TFA works with district, CMO, and school leadership to fill new and vacant positions through the district's routine hiring processes, our teachers operate within the structures set up by the school district. We do not receive any special hiring arrangements beyond those permissible by school district officials and school boards.

Furthermore, there are no special incentives for hiring decision-makers, typically individual principals, to favor our corps members over other qualified candidates. If and when our corps members are selected, it is because these individual decision-makers believe that the individual corps member is the most qualified candidate for the vacant teaching position at their school.

To ensure that we are serving the highest need students populations in Louisiana, TFA works with

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hiring decision-makers to ensure that we are matching our efforts with district needs. For example, 100% of TFA- Louisiana AmeriCorps members are placed in high-needs areas, as determined by the communities' respective poverty levels. Additionally, 100% of TFA-Louisiana CMs teach in subject areas that have a statewide teacher shortage according to the U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education.

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

First, our corps members fill teaching positions in high-need schools, subject areas, and geographic locations, which districts are often unable to fill. Within the communities served by TFA-Louisiana, 83% of students qualify for free and reduced lunch, an indicator of poverty, and over 90% identify as either African American or Hispanic. 100% of TFA- Louisiana AmeriCorps members are placed in high-needs areas, as determined by the communities' respective poverty levels. While there does not need to be a proven shortage for TFA to place in Louisiana, in this region having an inadequate number of professionals has led to a shortage of teachers. 100% of TFA-Louisiana CMs teach in subject areas that have a statewide teacher shortage according to the U.S. Department of Education Office of Postsecondary Education. One third of our teachers teach in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) classrooms.

Second, we provide low-income schools access to a national pipeline of candidates commensurate to those teaching in the top performing school systems who are participating in our proven-effective teacher training program. We believe that "lacking an adequate number of such professionals" refers to lacking an adequate number of high-quality candidates from proven-effective sources.

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

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The parishes that TFA-Louisiana reaches across the state struggle to staff schools with highly qualified and certified teachers. For example, Tensas Parish hires CMs for positions they cannot fill across all grade levels and content areas, yet we cannot provide them with as many teachers as they need to have 100% certified staff. Presently, Tensas Parish still has between 10-30% of positions occupied by non-certified teachers. TFA-Louisiana CMs allowed Madison parish to go from roughly 60% to nearly 100% certified teachers last year, and our maintained presence is vital to ensure classrooms maintain staffed with certified teachers. The Assistant Superintendent and Human Resource Director of Madison Parish sites cites that TFA-Louisiana is critical to their ability to staff positions with highly-qualified and certified teachers. Staffing classrooms with qualified teachers is so persistently challenging and important in Louisiana, that, in addition to TFA, the Louisiana Department of Education and the Louisiana's Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) have prioritized counteracting the state's teacher shortage through multiple strategies, such as multiple alternative routes to certification.

In the under-served parishes where TFA-Louisiana serves, classrooms go without highly-qualified teachers each year, and TFA-Louisiana has experienced a demand for corps members that outweighs supply. For the upcoming year, Jefferson Parish requested 100 corps members, and we are currently able to provide 20. Concordia Parish hires us for positions that they cannot otherwise fill with certified personnel, especially in areas of Spanish, math, and science. Prior to the presence of TFA-Louisiana, the parish had to use an online platform for Spanish in many schools and was unable to offer certain sections of science and math in all their schools. Paul Nelson, the Superintendent of Concordia Parish Schools stated, "TFA has been a blessing for us and helped to bring in quality young people to teach our students in the areas of math and science. These areas are especially hard for us to locate quality teachers in." Without the presence of TFA- Louisiana AmeriCorps Members, many classrooms would be staffed by long-term substitutes, and many parishes could simply not offer certain courses.

As such, in parishes where we place, hiring- decision-makers, typically individual principals, have a choice of who to hire for vacant teaching positions. TFA works with school district leadership to fill new and vacant positions through the district's routine hiring processes, thus our corps members are competing for open positions with other non-TFA- affiliated applicants. We do not receive any special hiring arrangement beyond those permissible by collective bargaining agreements. If and when our corps members are selected, it is because these individual decision-makers believe our corps members

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are the most qualified for the vacant teaching position.

### **Continuation Changes**

n/a

### **Grant Characteristics**