

# Narratives

## Executive Summary

Teach For America Metro Atlanta (TFA-ATL) will have 275 AmeriCorps Members (ACMs) who will teach for two years in more than 100 Title I, SIG, and priority public and charter schools and community-based organizations throughout Atlanta, Fulton, Clayton, and DeKalb County Public Schools. At the end of the 1st program year (2014-15 school year), the ACMs will increase the academic outcomes for 17,000 students throughout Metro Atlanta. This experience, coupled with ongoing professional and leadership development during their two year commitment, will catalyze ACMs' lifelong commitment to ensuring educational equity for all students. The ACMs will leverage an additional 550 volunteers who will be engaged in supporting students within Metro Atlanta classrooms.

This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of Education. In addition to the CNCS investment of \$13,997,500, \$1M in public funds and \$9.6M in private funds will be leveraged to support our programs.

## Rationale and Approach/Program Design

Community Need: Metro Atlanta is in the middle of an education crisis. By the time they are nine, low-income students attending Atlanta, Clayton, Fulton, and DeKalb County Public Schools are already three grade levels behind their more affluent peers (Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education). These districts average a high school graduation rate of just 62%, a figure below both the state average of 71.5% (GA DOE, 2012 4 year Cohort Graduation Rate) and national average of 75% (America's Health Rankings, 2012). Most starkly, Atlanta Public Schools (APS), where three-quarters of students receive free or reduced-priced lunch, a common indicator of poverty, has an average graduation rate of only 58.6% and SAT scores of 1385 of 2400 (GA DOE, 2013; The College Board, 2013). This educational disparity tracks along racial lines as well: in Georgia, only 49% of black males receive their high school diploma in four years, as compared to 69% of their white male counterparts (The Schott Foundation, The Urgency of Now: The Schott 50 State Report on Public Education and Black Males, 2012).

The individual and societal costs of the achievement gap are profound. For students who drop out of high school or do not attend college, future career prospects and earnings potential are severely diminished. Specifically, they are more likely to become incarcerated, earn less, and have higher rates of joblessness. This epidemic costs Metro Atlanta more than \$350 million annually in gross state product as well as \$18 million in lost tax revenue (Georgia Partnership For Excellence in Education,

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The Economics of Education, Fourth Edition, 2013).

Driving this deficit of excellent educational opportunities for students in Metro Atlanta is a shortfall of excellent teachers. Research shows that high-quality teaching is an important factor in student learning (Linda Darling-Hammond, *Teacher Quality and Student Achievement: A Review of State Policy Evidence*, 1999). Despite this evidence, low-income students are less likely to have effective teachers in their classrooms than their wealthier peers. In Metro Atlanta schools, this shortfall of highly qualified teachers manifests itself in the form of teaching positions that remain vacant well into the school year, an inability to retain the highest-performing teachers in schools with the greatest need, and under-qualified teachers teaching subjects identified by the US Department of Education as teacher-shortage areas, including foreign language and special education for the state of Georgia.

AmeriCorps Members as Effective Means to Solve Community Need: TFA-ATL's mission is to build the movement to eliminate educational inequity in Atlanta by enlisting our nation's most promising future leaders in this effort. We recruit outstanding recent college graduates and professionals who commit two years to teach in urban and rural areas and become lifelong leaders in pursuing educational excellence and equity. With extensive training and support, our ACMs work relentlessly to ensure that students growing up today in low-income communities are given the educational opportunities they deserve. As alumni, they are a powerful force of leaders who act on the conviction and insight they gain from their teaching experience, working in education and all other sectors to effect the fundamental changes needed to ensure that all children have an equal chance in life. Today in Metro Atlanta, we have nearly 300 ACMs and close to 1,000 alumni working both within and outside the system to improve the life prospects of Atlanta's students.

As a professional corps program, TFA-ATL ACMs are particularly well-suited to address the problem of educational inequity for two key reasons. First, we provide low-income schools and districts throughout Atlanta with a national pool of highly qualified, talented candidates who exhibit the traits of highly effective teachers. We specifically partner with schools that are identified as high-need. Schools that are high-need are Title I, identified as Priority, Focus, or Alert schools according to the Governor's Office of Student Achievement List, have at least fifty percent of its students receiving free or reduced price lunch (a common indicator of poverty), and/or have a College and Career Readiness Performance Index under 80. By utilizing this criteria, we are confident our ACMs are serving in high-need schools. Currently, we place ACMs in 48 elementary schools, 30 middle schools, and 31 high schools across Atlanta, Fulton, Clayton, and Dekalb County Public Schools. Second, in

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in addition to providing pre-service training, we are one of the few teacher providers in the country that provides ongoing support to teachers once they enter the classroom. We also track student outcomes to ensure our ACMs are on target to achieve ambitious goals.

Over the last 13 years, we have gathered clear evidence that demonstrates that children living in poverty can and do learn and achieve on an absolute scale, and that TFA-ATL is playing an integral role in scaling that progress. During the 2012-2013 school year, 80% of ACMs led students to achieve results commensurate to more than a year's worth of academic growth in a single year. TFA-ATL ACMs achieve tremendous results with their students. For instance, Sheena Varghese, who teaches 6th, 7th, and 8th grade Special Education at Harper Archer Middles School in Atlanta Public Schools, led 100% of her students to pass the Georgia Alternative Assessment, raising the passage rate for her students by 80 percentage points from the previous year.

Armed with their corps experience, our alumni continue to impact education in Metro Atlanta. One example of this impact is Peter McKnight's work at the South Atlanta School of Law and Social Justice (SASLSJ), one of four small schools at the South Atlanta High Educational Complex. As founding principal, Peter opened that high school in 2007 and, serving one of the most educationally at-risk populations in the Atlanta Public Schools system, led students to significant improvement in graduation rates and an 80% college acceptance rate for his seniors in 2011-2012. Based on his success at SASLSJ, Peter is now the founding principal of Drew Charter High School in Atlanta Public Schools. Peter's story is one of many that demonstrate the leadership of our alumni. Currently, 60% continue to work in education, including more than 200 alumni teachers impacting thousands of students in Metro-Atlanta every day. Additionally, this year, four TFA-ATL alumni were elected to Atlanta Public School's Board of Education, who will be responsible for choosing the district's next superintendent in the spring.

Evidence Based: There is a strong body of research on the effectiveness of Teach For America, including two large, well-designed and well-implemented random-assignment studies that meet the What Works Clearinghouse Standards. A 2013 study by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. found that students of TFA secondary teachers learned 2.6 months more math in a year than students in the same schools taught by teachers from traditional and less selective alternative certification programs. Additionally, a 2004 study by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. found that students of TFA elementary teachers learned the equivalent of a month's more math in a year than students in the same schools taught by other teachers, and that TFA teachers were at least as effective as their

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counterparts in teaching reading.

Recent quasi-experimental and correlational studies spanning multiple grade-levels and subjects bolster the case that TFA ACMs produce a net gain in student achievement relative to students of other novice teachers, and sometimes experienced ones: In a 2011 article using data from North Carolina, scholars at the Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research, found TFA teachers to be more effective than other teachers, regardless of experience level, in a range of high school subjects. In a 2013 study using data from Texas, Edvance Research Inc. found that students of TFA ACMs score higher in mathematics than otherwise similar students taught by novice teachers in middle schools without ACMs. In a 2012 study using data from the Los Angeles Unified School District, the Harvard Strategic Data Project found first-year TFA ACMs more effective than other first year teachers in teachers of both math and reading in grades 3 through 9. Statewide studies ranking teacher preparation programs in terms of their participants' impact on student achievement further validate TFA's logic model and operational strategy. In Louisiana, North Carolina, and Tennessee, TFA ranks consistently among the most effective teacher preparation programs.

Citation (in order of mention in the above paragraph): Clark, M. A., Chiang, H. S., Silva, T., McConnell, S., Sonnenfeld, K., Erbe, A., & Puma, M. (2013). The effectiveness of secondary math teachers from Teach For America and the Teaching Fellows programs. ( No. NCEE 2013-4015). Washington, DC: Institute of Education Sciences and Mathematica Policy Research, Inc; Decker, P. T., Mayer, D. P., & Glazerman, S. (2004). The effects of Teach For America on students: Findings from a national evaluation. ( No. 8792-750). Princeton, NJ: Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.; Xu, Zeyu, Jane Hannaway, and Colin Taylor. "Making a Difference? The Effects of Teach for America in High School." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 30.3 (2011): 447-469; Turner, H. M., Goodman, D., Adachi, E., Brite, J., & Decker, L. E. (2012). Evaluation of Teach for America in Texas schools. San Antonio, TX: Edvance Research, Inc.; Strategic Data Project. (2012). SDP human capital diagnostic: Los Angeles unified school district. Cambridge, MA; Noell, G.H., & Gansle, K.A. (2009). Teach For America teachers' contribution to student achievement in Louisiana in grades 4-9: 2004-2005 to 2006-2007. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana Board of Regents.; Henry, G.T., Purtell, K.M., Bastian, K.C., Fortner, C.K., Thompson, C.L., Campbell, S.L., & Patterson, K.M. (2013). The effects of teacher entry portals on student achievement. *Journal of Teacher Education*. doi:10.1177/0022487113503871; Tennessee Higher Education Commission and the State Board of Education. (2013). 2013 Report Card on the Effectiveness of Teacher Training Programs. Nashville, TN.

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Member Training: Professional development and ongoing training and support are critical to producing highly effective teachers. TFA-ATL provides intensive pre-service training and ongoing professional development to all of our ACMs, in addition to the training and professional development they receive as employees of our various district and school partners. The bedrock of our training and evaluation model is a framework called Teaching As Leadership (TAL), which include six strategies that we have found drive effective teaching: (1) setting an ambitious vision; (2) investing students and families in that vision; (3) planning purposefully to meet ambitious goals; (4) executing plans effectively; (5) working relentlessly to achieve their vision; and (6) continuously reflecting and improving. With TAL as our framework, we have implemented a training structure that consists of four major components:

INDUCTION- ACMs complete over 40 hours of pre-work and attend a week-long initiation in Atlanta to learn about and begin to partner with the communities they will serve. ACMs spend time in and with the communities they will teach, gaining an understanding of the history of the civil rights and educational equity movement in Atlanta. During this time, AmeriCorps (AC) pre-service orientation is conducted, so members learn about the responsibilities and benefits of AC membership before they begin serving.

INSTITUTE- ACMs attend a rigorous five-week residential summer training institute in Atlanta to prepare them to teach in a low-income classroom. ACMs teach summer school in APS, a community in which many will go on to teach full-time, as part of a four-person team that is supervised and mentored by both a veteran teacher and a TFA staff member. ACMs also attend daily curriculum sessions that are grounded in years of research and input from education experts. In these sessions, ACMs gain foundational knowledge necessary to become highly-effective beginning teachers.

ORIENTATION- After institute, ACMs work in subject and grade level cohort groups to create their first unit plans, assessments, and tools to track their students' progress, aided by our Teacher Leadership Development (TLD) staff and veteran mentor teachers. They work to set visions for their classrooms and students, and receive professional development that cultivates their positions as leaders within their classrooms.

ONGOING SUPPORT- TFA-ATL's TLD team builds on Institute's foundation to provide ongoing, intensive training and professional development, beginning with teacher coaching. Each corps member is paired with a Manager of Teacher Leadership Development (MTLD), who observes each ACM bi-monthly and works one-on-one to provide feedback and coaching. ACMs are matched with

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MTLDs based on subject matter and grade level. TLD also provides content-specific cohort support. TFA Directors of Content provide additional specialized training around developing, planning, and delivering engaging and rigorous lessons for specific subject areas and lead mandatory bi-monthly content retreats. Our Real Time Coaching© initiative enables Trained Real Time Coaches develop corps member's skills related to classroom management and culture by providing real-time prompts and strategies during instruction. Twice annually, TFA-ATL brings together our entire cohort of ACMs for a full-day professional development session. During All Corps Events, ACMs have the opportunity to hear from community members and district and school veterans, collaborate on lesson planning, and receive specialized content and classroom management support. Finally, TFANet, a proprietary website for ACMs and alumni, includes a searchable database of resources designed to help ACMs create data-driven, student-achievement-focused classrooms.

Throughout the training and support cycle outlined above, we embed several opportunities to reinforce key issues of AC compliance. Prohibited activities are reviewed with ACMs through TFA-ATL pre-service orientation, All Corps Events, content-specific cohort groups and email blasts. Individual compliance is monitored by MTLTs, who are trained annually on prohibited activities. Our placement school administrators in Atlanta are also provided with an AC orientation guide, including information on AC policies and prohibited activities. MTLTs cultivate relationships with school administrators over the course of each year and through regular interactions with both ACMs and administrators, are able to ensure AC compliance.

ACMs 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 ACM 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 ensures that no volunteer has engaged in prohibited activities.

Member Supervision: As a professional corps, TFA-ATL's supervision of ACMs differs from that of traditional AC programs. All TFA ACMs are college graduates who have undergone a rigorous application process that is designed, in part, to measure their ability to work effectively in a professional setting. Additionally, since ACMs work as full-time professional teachers, they are directly supervised by their school principal and other school administration. In Metro Atlanta, our ACMs are purposefully clustered together at schools, providing our MTLTs increased opportunities to engage with school leaders and partners around corps member supervision. To be hired, MTLTs must possess

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a consistent track record of success during their time in the classroom and display the characteristics needed to be successful teacher coaches, such as strong critical thinking, the ability to influence and motivate other adults and excellent problem-solving skills.

**Commitment to AmeriCorps Identity:** TFA recently underwent an organization-wide rebranding in 2013, giving us an opportunity to further integrate the AC brand in our national and regional marketing efforts. This included integrating the AC logo on our recruitment brochures and posters, letterhead, and both regional and national websites. Additionally, we will be including AC-focused postings across social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. We believe this rebrand will help increase awareness of our affiliation with AC members among our network.

TFA-ATL is committed to communicating the important role AC plays in our organization and community in multiple ways. Prior to their summer pre-service training, ACMs receive written materials designed to provide foundational information and history about AC as it relates to both TFA and the broader AC network. We also proudly incorporate the AC brand and logo in all internal- and external-facing materials. TFA-ATL distributes official apparel and accessories that bear the AC logo and our regional website contains the logo and link to the Commission for Service and Volunteerism's website. Finally, each ACM must participate in a minimum of two all-corps AC days of service. During these events, we work with schools and external community partners, and aggressively brand the event as an official AC day of service. All ACMs are required to wear or display the AC logo, and we document participation for distribution to partners and funders, citing AC impact.

### **Organizational Capability**

**Organizational Background and Staffing:** TFA is co-led by Chief Executive Officers, Matthew Kramer and Elisa Villanueva Beard, who work with a national Board of Directors and our eight-member national leadership team to set TFA's overall strategy and direction.

TFA has effectively managed large-scale federal grants through both AC and the Department of Education (SEED grant, I3 grant, Race To The Top). As our federal funding portfolio has grown, TFA has built significant internal capacity to manage both the financial and programmatic components of a national AC program. At the national office, our Public Partnerships Team has a number of well-qualified specialists available to meet and guide regional staff on AC compliance, budget creation, and general grants management.

Currently, TFA-ATL's is led by interim Executive Director (ED), Taylor Ramsey. For the last nine years, Taylor led the Atlanta Institute team and now serves as Interim ED and Vice President of

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Teacher Leadership Development. Our region remains actively engaged in search for a permanent ED and to that end, has engaged a non-profit-focused executive search firm, BoardWalk Consulting, to source candidates for the role.

Our ED leads our regional Management Team, comprised of a cabinet of senior functional regional leaders, including our Vice President of External Affairs, Vice President of Teacher Leadership Development, Managing Director of Alumni Affairs, and head of Strategy and Operations. Our region is also supported by a volunteer advisory board comprised of influential community members and current and retired business leaders from companies including Bank of America, Wells Fargo, BellSouth/AT&T, and AGL Resources. These individuals work very closely with our Management Team to ensure that our regional vision and priorities are aligned with the community's needs and are truly driving student impact. The Management Team and our Government Relations staff member, Jamina Cole DAmico, will be tasked with administering this grant.

Compliance and Accountability: As a long-time AC grantee, we have developed systems to ensure compliance with AC requirements and regulations. First, ACM eligibility components of compliance are housed nationally by our Admissions and Public Partnerships teams. As ACMs matriculate into the program, they are required to submit eligibility documentation and go through background checks. Next, trained regional staff provides pre-service training to ACMs, which engenders in ACMs a deeper understanding of their role as AC members. TFA provides school administrators with a handbook that communicates AC rules and regulations and outlines prohibited activities. MTLDs cultivate relationships with school administrators over the course of the year and through regular interactions with both ACMs and administrators, are able to ensure AC compliance.

All incoming TFA ACMs 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 AC. Principals are also required to certify at the end of the school year that no AC policies were violated. Additionally, TFA-ATL was granted an Alternative Search Protocol for Georgia to use state teaching credentials as documentation that TFA teachers had cleared the required criminal history checks for eligibility to become ACMs. Our Public Partnerships team conducts regular regional site visits and audits ACM activities and files to ensure compliance with AC regulations. If a TFA staff member or school administrator suspects that a member is engaging in a prohibited activity, they will notify their regional leadership team. Partnering with our Federal Grants team and legal counsel, the regional leadership team will assess

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the suspected violation and suspend the AC member until the issue is resolved.

Past Performance: 2014 marks TFA-ATL's 14th year of placing ACMs in Atlanta. Over the past 13 years, we have grown our corps to nearly 300 and our alumni base to approximately 1,000. Collectively, our ACMs and alumni are reaching more than 25,000 students annually.

During the 2012-2013 school year, TFA-ATL projected a total corps of 184 competitive grant ACMs in Title I schools would teach 10,408 students. We placed a total of 160 ACMs, missing our placement target. We did, however, reach the projected number of students. Moreover, of the 160 slots fulfilled, 156 completed the year, equaling a 97.5% retention rate. 80% of TFA-ATL ACMs successfully pushed their students to achieve at least one year of growth. This level of student growth mirrors the results of the last two program years of service as well. Additionally, our alumni have been impacting inequity from both within and outside the education system. Of the close to 1,000 alumni in Atlanta, 312 are still teaching and a total of 665 are working within the education field in Atlanta. This includes 36 state and school district leaders, 164 non-profit leaders, and 14 school leaders.

ENROLLMENT- In 2012-2013, TFA-ATL received 184 competitive slots and filled 160. Several factors contributed to an 87% enrollment rate. We requested a total of 184 competitive slots in anticipation of continuing our growth, as set forth by our strategic plan. In the spring of 2012, an unprecedented ACM placement crisis unfolded in Metro Atlanta. Within a few short months, all of our placement districts were forced to cut 2,200 teacher positions due to massive budget shortfalls and district reorganizations. DeKalb County, one of the more serious and high-profile cases, faced a \$73 million shortfall in its 2012-2013 school budget. To combat these unfortunate circumstances, we worked in tandem with our district partners (principals, HR departments, and district officials) to ensure as many ACMs as possible were able to impact students in Metro Atlanta during the 2012-2013 school year; and as a result, we were still able to grow our overall corps, just not as significantly as we had hoped.

To ensure we are able to place our ACMs going forward, our team is working with districts to secure placement commitments earlier in the year and have implemented additional structures to ensure ACMs are prepared for their teacher certification exams. We are also providing added professional development resources and interview preparation so that more ACMs secure positions before the first day of school. In 2013, 90% of the corps -- up 5% from 2012 -- passed their teacher certification exams and we hope to improve this in the future. We have also suspended growth for the coming year in response to the volatility that exists regionally. By focusing on deepening our

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relationships with districts, we feel that we are setting the necessary foundation to work more closely to predict their needs and determine appropriate corps sizes year over year.

RETENTION- TFA-ATL retained 97.5% of the ACMs enrolled on our competitive grant, a rate markedly higher than the estimated average retention for first-year teachers in low-income communities in general (82%) and the overall average for all first-year teachers regardless of school setting (86%) ("No Dream Denied: A Pledge to America's Children" [2003], National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. Washington, D.C.). Historically, TFA-ATL has boasted high retention rates (98.4% in 2011 and 97.5% in 2012). This is, in part, due to the strong regionalized support ACMs receive prior to and during their commitment. As we continue to improve our programming, we believe that our retention will remain strong.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT: TFA-ATL is very focused on strong partnerships with internal and external stakeholders, and is motivated by continuous feedback and improvement. Our District Strategy team works with principals and centralized district personnel to place ACMs and regularly solicits feedback through informal interactions and an annual principal satisfaction survey. Our MTLDs also work with principals throughout the year to ensure ACMs are adequately equipped and supported to increase student achievement. In tandem, our Community Partnerships and Development teams work with external partners including funders, government officials, parents and students, and partner organizations to build trust and support within the community. These relationships are invaluable for gaining community perspective and insight, as well as soliciting input on operations and approach to the work. Additionally, these teams work to ensure that all of our strategies and actions align with the long-term plans of both the State Department of Education, as well as each district's strategic plan. Recently, we hired a Vice President of External Affairs to oversee our District Strategy, Community Partnerships, and Development teams to create continuity of experience for our stakeholders and drive efficiencies in our work.

Throughout the year, we ask ACMs to complete surveys that provide information regarding their experiences and level of satisfaction. This information is reviewed regularly by the TLD team to inform future decisions and support improvements. ACMs are surveyed at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year and more informally during classroom observations, content retreats and professional development events, such as our All Corps Events. This year, we also ran a student-survey pilot with 20 ACMs across all of their classroom sections to gain authentic student-derived insight into our teaching practice and impact. The TLD team will use the data to improve

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programming for the coming year and cultivate best practices for effectively surveying more students in the future.

### **Budget/Cost Effectiveness**

Cost Effectiveness: TFA-ATL is requesting 275 full-time member slots at \$1750/MSY through a professional corps fixed amount grant. This request is below the maximum amount for this type of grant, and is lower than the previous amount awarded.

Our program design is a particularly cost effective model for increasing student achievement. First, we provide low-income school districts with a national pool of pre-screened talent they would not reach otherwise. Second, our administrative costs for doing so are substantially less than those of organizations engaged in similar activities. Our recruitment costs are less than \$4,000 per ACM, much lower than recruiting a McKinsey first year associate (\$35,000) or an army recruit (\$22,898). Third, multiple studies have demonstrated that the impact of having a TFA ACM as a teacher is greater than other education interventions. TFA yields a greater return on investment than investing in class size reduction efforts, National Board certification, and teachers who hold master's degrees (The Urban Institute 2009; Nye, B., Hedges, L.V. & Konstantopoulos, S., 2000. The Results of the Tennessee Class Size Experiment. American Educational Research Journal; Improving Student Achievement: What State NAEP Scores Tell Us, RAND Corporation; Rivkin, S., Hanushek, E, & Kain, J., 2005).

Our 2014-2015 budget is approximately \$10,600,000; with \$1,750/MSY, the majority of our funding comes from other sources. TFA-ATL has had significant experience raising the necessary resources to run our program from a variety of sources: foundations, corporations, individual donors, and public sources. In order to raise the revenue needed, TFA-ATL is working both locally and nationally to meet our development needs. Locally, we seek to cultivate relationships with individuals, corporations and foundations interested in advancing the needs of Atlanta through education. We develop partnerships with potential donors in order to build a shared understanding of the work to be done and the role we play in advancing education in Metro Atlanta. As a large urban region, we also work with our national development team to grow and execute against cause-marketing partnerships with corporations that have footprints in Atlanta. Given our proven record of success and strong program and development operations, we are confident that we will be able to raise the funds necessary to effectively run our program. In 2010, Worth Magazine named TFA one of the 10 most cost-effective charities in the country. Additionally, in 2013, Charity Navigator gave TFA a perfect four star rating for the twelfth straight year. Less than 1% of all nonprofits nationwide have received

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similar consecutive four star ratings, putting us in the 99th percentile of among nonprofits. As a professional corps, ACMs do not receive an AC living allowance or healthcare. Additionally, ACM criminal history checks are centrally conducted upon admissions to TFA. As such, these costs are paid for through our national budget.

TFA-ATL's budget for FY14 is \$10.6M. Half way through the current fiscal year, we have raised 3.4M, which is 32% toward our goal, with \$7.2M more to raise.

**Budget Adequacy:** The budget for TFA-ATL is designed to adequately support its programming and to align with its mission. 75% of the budget represents costs directly related to ACM recruitment, selection, training, and support - which include costs related to personnel, trainings, and ACM meetings. These allocations are reflective of the program's needs for ongoing support and professional development, which enables ACMs to lead their students to make significant academic gains. The remaining 25% of the budget is allocated for alumni development and support services. Expenses within this allocation are associated with alumni-related activities and regional office operations.

During fiscal year 2013, we raised \$10,700,000. Funding sources included \$4,500,000 in foundation gifts (42 % of income), \$573,000 in corporate contributions (5 % of income), \$228,000 in private individual donations (2 % of income), \$1,200,000 in district contracts/earned revenue (11 % of income), and \$4,200,000 in state and federal contracts, including AC and Race to the Top (39 % of income) TFA-ATL continues to prioritize diversifying our donor base, and will place an added emphasis on developing new individual and corporate partnerships this year. This will be accomplished by creating unique cause-marketing and sponsorship opportunities for potential investors and building out our development team's capacity to more effectively steward individual champions. We will also add a signature event to our programming in FY15, which will be used as a mechanism to bring together all of our supporters and funders.

TFA-ATL has built a solid foundation of diverse funders from both inside and outside the state of Georgia. Our current donors include: the Goizuetta Foundation, The James C. Cox Foundation and The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, as well as corporations including Wells Fargo, Belk, Coca-Cola, Georgia Pacific and Equifax. For fiscal year 2013 (and recognizing that we are only half-way through our fiscal year), TFA-ATL has raised or received commitments for approximately \$3,400,000.

### Evaluation Summary or Plan

Short-Term Expected Outcome: Teach For America (TFA) aims to attract and select highly motivated

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individuals with a record of success and place them in schools where they are needed the most. We anticipate 275 AmeriCorps members (ACMs) exhibiting characteristics that are predictive of success in high-needs schools in Atlanta. 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 a 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 275 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

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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 Atlanta 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

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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 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

CLARIFICATION FY'14:

A. Budget and Performance Measure Clarification:

1. The budget has been reduced to reflect the funding levels under consideration.

B. Programmatic Clarification items:

1. As a professional corps, TFA-Metro Atlanta addresses educational inequity by recruiting and placing high-quality teachers in communities that lack the number of such professionals to help increase student achievement. This is accomplished in the following ways:

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Our corps members fill teaching positions within districts that have schools and corresponding feeder patterns that been identified by the Georgia Department of Education Division of School Improvement as Priority Schools, Focus Schools, Alert Schools, and Race to the Top Lowest Achieving Schools. The overwhelming majority of our teaching corps teaches in these very schools. For a school to receive one of these designations, it must either: 1) have subject achievement below the state's "meets" and "exceeds" standard for each subject; or 2) be a Title I school with the lowest achievement of the "all students" group in terms of proficiency on the statewide assessments and have demonstrated a lack of progress on those assessments over three years ("Georgia Department of Education College and Career Ready Performance Index," Georgia Department of Education. 2013). Furthermore, to match district need, we place corps members in subject areas that the United States Department of Education has identified as "teacher shortage" areas for the State of Georgia ("Teacher Shortage Areas Nationwide Listing 1990-1991 through 2014-2015," US Department of Education. 2014). 100% of TFA- Metro Atlanta's AmeriCorps members are placed in high-needs subject areas or in geographic priority areas, as determined by Georgia Department of Education Division of School Improvement.

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" does not just refer to simply not having enough candidates, but also not having a pool of high-quality candidates from proven-effective sources.

Research consistently demonstrates that high-quality teaching is the most important factor in student learning; effective teachers have a significant impact on children's life prospects. Despite this evidence, low-income students in Metro Atlanta are less likely to get effective teachers in their classrooms than their wealthier peers. 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. Staffing classrooms with qualified teachers is so persistently challenging and important in Metro Atlanta, that in addition to TFA, other strategies exist, such as multiple alternative routes to certification and teach residency programs such as TNTP and the Atlanta Urban Teacher Residency, to help increase the pool of strong candidates.

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To further illustrate this point, a 2010 McKinsey study of the world's top performing school systems revealed that 100% of the teachers in those schools come from the "top third+" of college students. In the U.S. only 23% come from the top third; 14% in high poverty schools. The "top third+" refers to those college students that are in top third academic cohort, and are rigorously screened for other qualities believed to be predictors of successful teachers -- perseverance, ability to motivate others, passion for children, and organization and communication skills. These skills form the "plus" in the "top-third+" term coined by McKinsey. TFA provides low-income schools throughout Metro Atlanta with a national pipeline of exactly these types of candidates. The average GPA for 2012 TFA AmeriCorps members is 3.54, and our extensive interview process screens all applicants for these "plus" characteristics. In fact, a recent third-party study from Will Dobbie at Harvard EdLabs found that our selection model successfully identifies teachers who will have a positive impact on student achievement. The study also found that our selection model is helping to predict which teachers will be most successful in their first year of teaching. The effectiveness of our national teacher pipeline is further reinforced by independent studies -- in every state that use student achievement data to analyze the relative effectiveness of teacher pathways (Tennessee, North Carolina, and Louisiana), TFA AmeriCorps members are consistently shown to be as or more effective at promoting student achievement at statistically significant levels compared to other new teachers. These results are confirmed by large-scale experimental and quasi-experimental studies.

While there does not need to be a proven shortage for TFA to place throughout Metro Atlanta, having an inadequate number of professionals has led to a shortage of teachers. For example, in 2013, approximately 365 new vacancies were identified during TFA's placement period, while we only had approximately 100 new placement-ready first-year corps members to meet district needs. This means that, even when in partnership with the TFA -- Metro Atlanta, school districts still have to aggressively recruit qualified teachers to fill open positions, some of which remain vacant well into the school year.

In districts 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. If and when our corps members are selected, it is because these individual

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decision-makers believe our corps members are the most qualified for the vacant teaching position. To date, the principals in our partner schools throughout Metro Atlanta overwhelmingly indicate they are satisfied with corps members and that they would recommend hiring a corps member to a colleague.

### C. Grant Enrollment Clarification:

1. TFA-ATL is requesting a 9/1/2014 start date

### D. Performance Measures Clarification:

1. ED 15 has been deleted. The target for ED 5 only includes the number of students with improved academic performance in literacy and/or math

### 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 disabilities.

### F. No-Cost MSY Clarification:

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

### G. Professional Corps Applicants Clarification:

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1. As a professional corps program, Teach For America-Metro Atlanta's AmeriCorps members are paid staff employed by Atlanta school districts and charter schools. Similar to any other employment opportunity, our corps members apply and compete for open positions. In 2013, throughout the metro Atlanta region, there were approximately 365 new teacher vacancies, while we assigned approximately 100 first-year corps members to the region. TFA is just one avenue for our partner schools to fill vacancies; staffing classrooms with qualified teachers is so persistently challenging and important in Atlanta that in addition to TFA, other strategies are utilized including alternative routes to certification, and teacher fellowship and residency programs such as TNTP and the Atlanta Urban Teacher Residency. 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 Metro Atlanta, TFA works with district and school leadership to fill new and vacant positions through districts' standard 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. Our Professional Services Agreement(s) (PSA) with school districts and placement sites, 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

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 AmeriCorps members participate in districts' standard hiring processes. Our corps members are just one of many avenues that school leaders access to fill their vacancies.

Because TFA works with school and district leadership to fill new and vacant positions through the district's routine hiring processes, our teachers operate within the structures set up by the school

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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 the Metro Atlanta area, TFA works with hiring decision-makers to ensure that we are matching our efforts with district needs. For example, in each of our placement districts in Metro Atlanta, over 65% of students receive free or reduced-priced lunch, with many schools exceeding the 75% threshold. 73% of current corps members teach in Priority Schools, Focus Schools, Alert Schools, and Race to the Top Lowest Achieving Schools, as identified by the Georgia Department of Education Division of School Improvement..

### **Continuation Changes**

N/A

### **Grant Characteristics**