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Executive Summary

Teach For America-Greater Nashville (TFA-Nashville) will have 230 AmeriCorps (AC) members teaching in 70 high need schools across Davidson County and Cheatham County, Tennessee. At the end of the 1st program year (June 2015), TFA- Nashville AC members will have significantly improved educational outcomes for over 10,000 students, instilling in AC members a lifelong commitment to expanding educational equity in this nation. In addition, AC members will leverage at least 230 volunteers to engage in tutoring students, supporting classrooms, and providing professional development.

This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of Education. With the CNCS investment of \$184,000 we will leverage an additional \$8M in private and public funding.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

a. Problem/Need: Tennessee's children are our state's greatest assets, but in our capital city of Nashville tens of thousands of students are not performing on grade level in core subjects. Subsequently, these students are graduating from high school unprepared for the rigors of college or a 21st century career.

Approximately three in every four Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (Metro Nashville) students are economically-disadvantaged. Of Metro Nashville students who are economically-disadvantaged, only 31% have the literacy skills appropriate for their grade level. By contrast, 63% of students in neighboring Williamson County who are economically-disadvantaged have the literacy skills appropriate for their grade level. Only 11% of all Metro Nashville students are considered college ready in all four categories of the ACT exam according to ACT college readiness benchmarks. The average ACT score in Metro Nashville is 18.2, and the situation is even worse at our high schools whose student bodies are largely economically-disadvantaged, where average ACT scores are as low as 14.9 (See 2013 Report Card. Tennessee Department of Education, Nashville, TN (2013)). We know these results are not indicative of the potential and talents of Nashville's students.

An inadequate number of highly qualified, talented, and diverse teachers drives this deficit of excellent educational opportunities for students in Metro Nashville. Research demonstrates that teachers are the single most important school-based factor in student achievement (See Wright, S. Paul, Horn, Sandra P., Sanders, William L. Teacher and Classroom Context Effects on Student Achievement: Implications for Teacher Evaluation, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN (1997)). If schools provide effective teachers to students who need them, the life prospects of children are

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significantly improved. TFA-Nashville works closely with the Metro Nashville and public charter school partners to place our AC members in the schools and subject areas with the greatest needs. According to the U.S. Department of Education, Tennessee has a current shortage of teachers for English as a Second Language, special education, and secondary math, science, English, and social studies (See Teacher Shortage Areas Nationwide Listing 1990-1991 through 2013-2014. U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C. (2013)). A study by the University of Tennessee predicted a shortage of nearly 2,500 teachers in Metro Nashville, including a shortage of approximately 1,000 K-4 grade teachers, 600 middle school teachers, and 500 high school teachers (See Bruce, Donald J., Fox, William F., Douglas, Brian M., Reynolds, Melissa O.. Supply and Demand for Teachers in Tennessee. University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN (2009)). In 2013-2014, 99% of TFA-Nashville AC members are teaching in Metro Nashville and 1% teaches in Cheatham County. 100% of TFA-Nashville AC members are teaching in subject areas that have been identified by the state, the school district, or local school principals as having teacher shortages or a lack of qualified candidates. One in three AC members teach math or science.

This shortfall of highly qualified teachers in Metro Nashville manifests itself in the form of teaching positions that remain vacant well into the school year. In 2013-2014, we received 15 different requests from school principals for science teachers after all of our AC members had already been hired by schools, and at the time of this application there were ten Metro Nashville teaching positions still vacant more than 3 months after the school year began, demonstrating an ongoing need for qualified individuals to fill these important positions.

Without TFA-Nashville AC members, positions may remain vacant, be filled with long-term substitute teachers, or be filled with candidates who are not highly-qualified for the subject area. For example, when one of our AC members was moved by her principal to teach high school English during her second semester, her students had until then had only been taught by three different long-term substitute teachers."

b. AmeriCorps Members as Highly Effective Means to Solve Community Problems: As participants in the professional corps program, TFA-Nashville AC members are particularly well-suited to address the problem of educational inequity in our city for two key reasons. First, we provide low-income schools in Greater Nashville with a pool of highly qualified, talented candidates who exhibit the traits of highly effective teachers. Second, in addition to providing pre-service training, we are one of the few teacher providers in the country that continues to give ongoing support to teachers while they are in the classroom. Because of our rigorous selection model and our training focused on student

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achievement, our AC members are consistently reviewed as being among the most effective new teachers in the state and country for impacting student achievement, as indicated by numerous rigorous independent studies.

On average, TFA-Nashville AC members are more effective at growing student achievement (calculated using student value-add data) than other beginner and veteran teachers in 4th-8th grade TCAP composite scores, math, reading, science, social studies, and high school Algebra I (See 2013 Report Card on the Effectiveness of Teacher Training Programs, Tennessee Higher Education Commission and the State Board of Education. Nashville, TN(2013)). On average, TFA-Nashville AC members perform in the top 20th percentile of teachers in Tennessee in 4th-8th grade science and social studies and high school Algebra I. Additionally, more than one in three TFA-Nashville AC members perform in the top 20th percentile of teachers in Tennessee in 4th-8th grade reading and high school English I.

A wealth of evidence demonstrates that TFA-Nashville AC members address educational inequity in Greater Nashville in an effective way, teaching a wide range of subjects and grade levels and achieving strong results in schools across the county. Four of the five schools serving low-income communities in Davidson County that were named Tennessee "reward schools" in 2012-2013 -- defined as performing in the top 5% of schools in the state for student progress -- have more than half their teachers made up of our AC members and alumni. In large part due to the leadership of TFA-Nashville AC members, numerous other Metro Nashville schools have experienced dramatic improvement. For instance, Cane Ridge High School, a public high school serving South Nashville, experienced the greatest Algebra I student growth of any school in Davidson County in 2012-2013, and the 4th greatest of any school in Tennessee. Their Algebra faculty was made up entirely of TFA-Nashville AC members and alumni.

c. Evidence-Based Findings: A strong research base demonstrates the impact of Teach For America AC members on student achievement, including several statewide studies ranking teacher preparation programs. In Louisiana (Noell, G.H., & Gansle, K.A. Teach For America teachers' contribution to student achievement in Louisiana in grades 4-9: 2004-2005 to 2006-2007. Louisiana Board of Regents. Baton Rouge, LA (2009)), North Carolina (Henry, G.T., Purtell, K.M., Bastian, K.C., Fortner, C.K., Thompson, C.L., Campbell, S.L., & Patterson, K.M. "The effects of teacher entry portals on student achievement." *Journal of Teacher Education*. (2013)), and Tennessee (2013 Report Card on the Effectiveness of Teacher Training Programs. Tennessee Higher Education Commission and the

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State Board of Education. Nashville, TN (2013)), Teach For America ranks consistently 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" (Tennessee Higher Education Commission, 2013).

Additionally, two large, well-designed and well-implemented random-assignment studies meeting the What Works Clearinghouse standards without reservations further validates Teach For America's logic model and operational strategy. A 2013 study by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. found that students of Teach For America secondary teachers learned 2.6 additional months of math in a year compared to students in the same schools taught by teachers from traditional programs and less selective alternative certification programs (Clark, M. A., Chiang, H. S., Silva, T., McConnell, S., Sonnenfeld, K., Erbe, A., & Puma, M. The effectiveness of secondary math teachers from Teach For America and the Teaching Fellows programs. Institute of Education Sciences and Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. Washington, D.C. (2013)). Additionally, a 2004 study by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. found students of Teach For America elementary teachers learned the equivalent of one additional month of math in a year than students in the same schools taught by other teachers, and that Teach For America teachers were at least as effective as their counterparts in teaching reading ((Decker, P. T., Mayer, D. P., & Glazerman, S. The effects of Teach For America on students: Findings from a national evaluation. Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. Princeton, NJ (2004)).

Recent quasi-experimental and correlational studies spanning multiple grade-levels and subjects bolster the case that Teach For America AC members produce a net gain in student achievement relative to students of other novice teachers, and sometimes produce a net gain compared to experienced teachers. In a 2011 study using data from North Carolina, scholars at the Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research found Teach For America teachers to be more effective than other teachers in a range of high school subjects, regardless of experience level (Xu, Z., Hannaway, J., & Taylor, C. "Making a Difference? The Effects of Teach for America in High School." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*. (2011)). In a 2013 study using data from Texas, Edvance Research Inc. found that students of Teach For America AC members score higher in mathematics than otherwise similar students taught by novice teachers in middle schools without our AC members (Turner, H. M., Goodman, D., Adachi, E., Brite, J., & Decker, L. E. Evaluation of Teach for America in Texas schools. Edvance Research, Inc. San Antonio, TX (2012)). In a 2012 study using

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data from the Los Angeles Unified School District, the Harvard Strategic Data Project found first-year Teach For America teachers are more effective than other first year teachers of both math and reading in grades 3 through 9 (SDP human capital diagnostic: Los Angeles Unified School District. Strategic Data Project. Cambridge, MA (2012)).

d. Member Training: This summer, TFA-Nashville will launch a summer school for Metro Nashville students that will also serve as a 7-week intensive residential training institute for our AC members, where they will develop practical experience teaching under the guidance of veteran teachers. The school will provide summer learning opportunities to more than 1,000 Metro Nashville students, representing a 500% increase in the number of students currently provided summer school through Metro Nashville Public Schools.

From the moment AC members arrive in Nashville for training, they will be immersed in learning about the community in which they'll live and work, and challenged to understand and leverage their personal leadership. To build community and provide context for our work, AC members will participate in community events throughout the city in locations that hold special historical or present day significance, such as community centers and the Civil Rights Room in the Nashville Public Library. We believe this immersion in our local communities and an exploration of the historic diversity of Nashville will provide AC members with a deeper sense of the systems and institutions that impact our students and their families, and galvanize their commitment to the challenging work of achieving educational equity in Nashville.

In addition to diversity and community, our summer training is focused on classroom preparation. Our new member training institute in Nashville will include three school sites: an elementary school, a secondary humanities academy for AC members teaching English and social studies, and a secondary STEM academy for AC members teaching math and science.

During this phase of their training, AC members will both teach summer school classes and attend workshop sessions. Workshop sessions include a training on AmeriCorps membership and requirements, which demonstrates the responsibilities and benefits of serving through AmeriCorps. They will also attend workshops tailored to prepare them for their first day, week, and semester of teaching. AC members will develop assessments to diagnose at what level their students currently perform and gauge the effectiveness of their instruction. While teaching summer school, AC members will work with a master teacher who will act as a coach in planning lessons and giving feedback. In total, AC members will receive over 300 hours of professional development during their summer

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training program that will empower them to lead students from the first day of school onward.

Our summer training program will also be a time to continue developing AC members' identity as service-learners and leaders within the Nashville community. Each week, AC members will participate in a community activity such as a public service project or a local AmeriCorps event. As part of these activities, they will participate in group discussions led by TFA-Nashville staff or members of the community to reflect on their service-learning. Our goal is to instill in our corps members the sense that the community is at the center of expanding educational opportunities for students in both the short-term and long-term.

Throughout the school year, AC members will be provided ongoing support and leadership development. In addition to their school leader and grade level or department head at their school, each AC member is paired with a Manager, Teacher Leadership Development (MTLD) on TFA-Nashville's staff. MTLDS are former classroom teachers with proven success records in teaching students from low-income communities. They work with AC members to define a vision and goals for their classrooms, devise effective behavior management strategies, and collect and analyze student achievement data. Our MTLDS also utilize "Real Time Coaching" -- a strategy based on Lee Canter's research at The Center for Transformative Teacher Training - where they provide real time feedback via electronic devices to AC members as they teach. This initiative is used in a variety of settings, from AC members looking to improve on facilitating a Socratic seminar (a collaborative dialogue among students using open-ended questions about a text) to those learning how to best give positive and negative consequences for student behavior. Our MTLDS also guide AC members in continuously developing their own leadership and reflecting on their experiences to deepen their belief in the solvability of the problem of educational inequity. We also partner with Lipscomb University's College of Education to provide graduate-level coursework for AC members aimed at increasing their effectiveness in the classroom and enabling them to work towards a full teaching license. Our partnership with Lipscomb also gives our AC members the option of completing a Master's degree in education during their two year commitment with TFA-Nashville.

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 AC members at TFA--Nashville's pre-service orientation to ensure that they have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. We continue to enforce collective compliance at monthly professional development sessions and via email blasts with AC members. Individual compliance is monitored by MTLDS who are trained annually on prohibited activities. This training includes a

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comprehensive explanation of the prohibited activities, examples and case studies of what these activities encompass, and how to detect and report them. Through their regular interaction with AC members, MTLDs are able to review regulations with members and verify they are not engaging in prohibited activities. Our partner schools in Greater Nashville will be provided with an AmeriCorps orientation guide, which includes information on AmeriCorps policies and prohibited activities. Ensuring that our principals and other school administrators are aware of these activities provides another system to ensure our AC members are not engaging in these activities, as well as an onsite resource should they have any questions or want clarification or guidance on any activities in which they plan to participate.

Our AC members also provide supervision and instruction to their classroom volunteers to ensure they have clear expectations, goals are met, and that no volunteer is engaging in prohibited activities. Additionally, each AC member signs a statement in our mid-and end-of-year surveys affirming that they have managed and supervised their recruited volunteers at a level that they can ensure that no volunteer has engaged in prohibited activities.

e. Member Supervision: All TFA-Nashville AC members are college graduates who have gone through a rigorous application process that is designed, in part, to measure their ability to work effectively in a professional setting. Therefore, our supervision plan is concerned with AC members' development and evaluation. Additionally, since our AC members work as full-time teachers in a professional corps program, they are directly supervised by their school principal and other school administration. Every AC member is assigned an MTLT, who manages a cohort of AC members and provides an additional layer of support and high level of supervision. To be hired, MTLTs must possess a consistent track record of success during their time in the classroom; they must also display characteristics required for success in the MTLT role, such as strong critical thinking skills and the ability to effectively influence and motivate adults.

f. Commitment to AmeriCorps Identity: At TFA-Nashville, our members are proud of their affiliation with AmeriCorps and we are dedicated to implementing ways to celebrate our partnership with AmeriCorps. Our AC members will proudly display their AmeriCorps identity daily with AmeriCorps lanyards or pins. They will also be provided with co-branded TFA-Nashville and AmeriCorps t-shirts when they arrive in Nashville, which they will wear during community outreach events. We will communicate with our AC members about all local AmeriCorps-organized service events, including

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the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service and the September 11th Day of Service, and encourage their participation in these days to build community and camaraderie among their fellow AC members from other organizations. Our AC members will also promote AmeriCorps in coordination with our local AmeriCorps office, including speaking with their students about AmeriCorps opportunities. We will also have AmeriCorps branded posters and logos for our corps members to display in their classrooms at the discretion of school administration. In our office, we recognize our AmeriCorps affiliation on our official letterhead and stationary for communicating with all external audiences, including our supporters in Nashville. Some service gear costs will be incurred through other regional budgets, so are not present on this AC budget.

Organizational Capability

a. Organizational Background and Staffing: TFA-Nashville is led by Executive Director Shani Dowell, who earned a B.A. from Howard University and an M.B.A. from Stanford University prior to first joining Teach For America as an AC member herself in 2006.

The TFA-Nashville team is composed of several functional teams, the largest of which is our Teacher Leadership Development team which provides ongoing training and support for AC members throughout the school year. Other functional teams include: the Pre-Service Training team, which creates and coordinates our intensive 7-week pre-service residential training program for AC members; the Alumni Leadership team, which fosters a sense of community and supports the leadership development of our local alumni network; the School Partnerships team, which partners with school district and principal partners to ensure we provide AC members who best fit their needs and vacancies; the Diversity and Community team, which leads diversity training initiatives for our staff and AC members; and our Operations, Talent, and Development teams. Also supporting TFA-Nashville is our regional advisory board of directors, who provide strategic guidance, assist in fundraising, and invest other local leaders in our mission.

TFA-Nashville is also supported by Teach For America's national office, which is led by co-CEOs Matt Kramer and Elisa Villanueva Beard, who work with our 8-member leadership team and national board of directors to set Teach For America's overall strategy and direction. Our national board meets 4 times annually and is charged with exercising fiduciary duties. Our finance functions are also housed nationally, reporting to the auditing and finance committees of our national board and working closely with the TFA-Nashville region to coordinate revenue and expenses. This structure allows for the appropriate breakdown of responsibilities and a system of checks and balances to ensure accurate financial accounting.

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Teach For America has effectively managed federal grants through both AmeriCorps, including the School Turnaround AmeriCorps grant for one year, and the Department of Education (SEED grant--two year, i3 grant--four years, and Race to the Top grants--2 years). As our federal funding portfolio has grown, we have built significant internal capacity to manage both the financial and programmatic components of a national AmeriCorps program. At our national office, our Public Partnerships Team has a number of well-qualified specialists to guide the TFA-Nashville staff on AmeriCorps compliance, budget creation, and grant management. This team works in close partnership with our national Research and Evaluation, Student Achievement Measurement, Technology, Legal, and Teacher Preparation, Support and Development teams to provide on-going trainings and assistance for TFA-Nashville staff via conference calls, conferences, and on-line tutorials to ensure compliance with all grant requirements and regulations.

b. Compliance and Accountability: As a national AmeriCorps grantee of 20 years, we have developed systems to ensure compliance with AmeriCorps requirements and regulations. First, member eligibility components of compliance are housed nationally by our Admissions and Public Partnerships teams. As members matriculate into our program, they are required to submit eligibility documentation and go through background checks. This approach to compliance management ensures participants have met the eligibility requirements prior to beginning their service.

Additionally, our national Public Partnerships team trains our TFA-Nashville staff on both acceptable and prohibited AmeriCorps activities, so they are equipped to educate our AC members and monitor member activities. Moreover, our TFA-Nashville staff also provides pre-service training to corps members, which engenders in participants a deeper understanding and pride in their role as AC members. We also provide school administrators, who are the site supervisors, with a handbook to communicate AmeriCorps rules and regulations and outline the prohibited activities.

Through site visits, classroom observations, and regular communication with site supervisors, our MTLs will provide oversight of AC members. Due to the frequency of interactions they have with AC members and their in-depth knowledge of the prohibited activities, MTLs will be able to ensure that members are operating in accordance with AmeriCorps regulations. Additionally all incoming AC members are required to sign documents attesting they have read and understand the AmeriCorps prohibited activities, and at the end of the school year all AC members 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 AmeriCorps policies were violated.

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If a TFA-Nashville staff member or school administrator suspects that an AC member or a partner school is engaging in a prohibited activity, they will notify the TFA-Nashville leadership team. Partnering with our Public Partnerships team and legal counsel, our regional leadership team will assess the suspected violation and suspend the AC member until the issue is resolved; if an AC member is found to be noncompliant with AmeriCorps policies, they will be removed from AmeriCorps. Partner schools suspected of engaging in prohibited activities will be discussed on a case-by-case basis in partnership with our TFA-Nashville leadership team, our Public Partnerships team, and our legal counsel in order to determine our next steps.

The TFA-Nashville Executive Director and regional leadership team assumes full responsibility for ensuring internal compliance with AC requirements. Our national office will support us at all levels to guide us through compliance and will schedule regular check-ins to ensure we are compliant with all requirements and on progress towards full compliance.

d. Continuous Improvement: As part of TFA-Nashville's internal processes, we regularly solicit quantitative and qualitative feedback from our participants and stakeholders.

Internally, we survey AC members four times during the year to measure their leadership development, their effectiveness as teachers, and our staff's effectiveness in supporting and developing AC members' leadership. We also collect qualitative feedback from AC members through regular one-on-one conversations, classroom observations, and conversations with school principals and other school-based colleagues.

Externally, we solicit feedback from school principals, our university partner, our school district partners, and our students. Our principal partners are surveyed on the preparedness, effectiveness, and impact of our AC members. Similarly, we solicit feedback from our school district and university partners through regular one-on-one meetings. This year, we are also collecting formal feedback from students on the effectiveness of their TFA-Nashville teachers; research has found that student feedback can be a predictive measure of effective teaching (See Kane, Thomas J., Staiger, Douglas O. *Gathering Feedback for Teachers*. Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Seattle, WA (2012)). Once student feedback is gathered, our program team analyzes this data and identifies patterns. At the individual ACM level, program team members take this feedback and differentiate support accordingly. Overall patterns in data are addressed at all corps events, where sessions are designed based on student feedback.

To ensure that the feedback we collect informs our strategies and decisions, TFA-Nashville goes

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through quarterly step-backs and an annual goal-setting process where we use data collected to adjust our strategies and plans. We also share feedback and incorporate it into our plans during weekly regional leadership team meetings and biweekly all-staff meetings.

Budget/Cost Effectiveness

a. Cost Effectiveness: TFA-Nashville is requesting 235 full-time member slots at \$1,276/MSY through a professional corps fixed amount grant, which falls the maximum amount that can be requested. A grant of \$1,276 will cover one-fourth of the direct regional costs for supporting, coaching, and developing the leadership of one TFA-Nashville AC member throughout the course of the school year.

Our program design is a particularly cost effective model for increasing student achievement. First, we provide low-income schools with a national pool of pre-screened talent they would not reach otherwise. Second, our administrative costs are substantially less than those of organizations engaged in similar activities. For example, the Peace Corps' cost to similarly recruit, select, train and support one member is over \$67,000 (this cost does not include travel, housing, and other costs incurred by Peace Corps due to the nature of the international work that their members participate in), while those same activities cost TFA-Nashville \$46,111. Our recruitment costs are less than \$4,000 per AC member -- much lower than the cost incurred by McKinsey to recruit a first year associate (\$35,000) or by the Army to recruit a new member (\$22,898), both of whom are pulling from a similar pool of college graduates demonstrating strong leadership. Additionally, it costs Vanderbilt University \$83,856 to train a new teacher and it costs the University of Tennessee \$22,388 to train a new teacher (this is the tuition costs for two years, which is the approximate amount of time that a student is enrolled in coursework towards becoming a licensed teacher). By comparison it costs TFA-Nashville \$19,620 to train one new AC member (this also includes the costs of recruitment and selection). According to the Tennessee Higher Education Report Card referenced earlier, of the 126 new teachers in Tennessee produced by Vanderbilt University and the 751 new teachers produced by the University of Tennessee, 3 Vanderbilt University-trained teachers and 32 University of Tennessee-trained teachers had a statistically significant positive impact on Tennessee students. By comparison, 41 of 102 TFA-Nashville trained teachers had a statistically significant positive impact on students. Therefore, TFA-Nashville spends approximately \$48,810 per each positive impact teacher ($\$19,620 \times 102 / 41$), whereas Vanderbilt University spends \$3,521,952 and University of Tennessee spends \$525,418 for every teacher who has a statistically significant positive impact on Tennessee students." Third, TFA yields a greater return on investment than investing in class size reduction efforts, National Board certification, and teachers who hold master's degrees (See "The Urban

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Institute 2009," Nye, B., Hedges, L.V., 2000; The Results of the Tennessee Class Size Experiment. Improving Student Achievement, RAND Corporation; Rivkin, S., Hanushek, E, & Kain, J., 2005).

TFA-Nashville's 2015 budget is projected to be \$7,087,000. To meet district demand for corps members, TFA-Nashville has successfully increased and met our fundraising goals in each of the last five years. Our approach to fundraising centers on developing personal connections between our supporters and the AC members and students they impact. We regularly meet one-on-one with our donors and prospective supporters to invest them in our theory of change and record of success. We set up many personalized group events to give supporters and prospective supporters the chance to meet AC members and get a first-hand look at their classrooms in action. We also have an annual "Sponsor A Teacher" campaign targeted at \$5,000-level donors. These donors are paired with AC members who send periodic updates from their classrooms to our local supporters.

TFA-Nashville also has a regional advisory board of directors who are deeply involved in our local fundraising. Our board members have already committed more than \$700,000 in personal contributions towards our 2015 budget and are creating a targeted committee of local TFA-Nashville supporters to lead a campaign to meet our 2015 funding needs.

TFA-Nashville was also a recipient of a Race to the Top grant from the State of Tennessee, and was one of the first awardees of a School Turnaround AmeriCorps grant, which is subsidizing a portion of TFA-Nashville's costs of recruiting, training, and developing corps members specifically at Robert Churchwell Museum Magnet.

In 2010, Worth Magazine named TFA one of the 10 most cost effective charities in the country. In 2013, Charity Navigator gave TFA a perfect 4-star rating for the eleventh straight year. Less than 1% of all nonprofits nationwide have received similar consecutive 4-star ratings, putting us in the 99th percentile of among nonprofits.

b. Budget Adequacy: TFA-Nashville's budget supports our program and reflects our priorities. 77% of the budget is spent on costs related to recruiting, selecting, training, and supporting our CMs -- our key program activities. An additional 8% of our budget supports our work with our alumni, and the remaining 15% supports of general management and fundraising costs. These allocations reflect the emphasis we place on offering schools a diverse pool of qualified candidates, and providing the training, ongoing support, and professional development that enables them to lead their students to make significant academic gains. We will use AmeriCorps funds to cover the costs of the criminal history checks for our first year corps members, as our second year corps member have already passed

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these checks this program year. As a professional corps our AC members do not receive a stipend through AmeriCorps.

TFA-Nashville has secured \$1,580,000 in commitments to date for our 2015 budget. The sources of these funds are Thomas and Julie Frist (\$700,000), Race to the Top grant via the State of Tennessee (\$560,000), the Joe C. Davis Foundation (\$200,000), and the James Stephen Turner Family Foundation (\$125,000). Additionally, we have nearly \$600,000 in outstanding proposals with corporations, foundations, and the federal government from which we are awaiting decisions at the time of this application. We aim to raise 44% of our 2015 budget from individual donors, 22% from public sources, 20% from foundations, and 14% from corporations. The majority of our fundraising efforts will be targeted towards our current donors, who we expect to account for approximately two-thirds of our funding needs. We will also host our first large fundraising event in the coming year to cultivate new corporate and individual supporters to support our 2015 budget.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

N/A

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

Date of Response: 4/10/2014

A. BUDGET

1. The budget has been reduced to reflect 230 MSYs @ \$800/MSY for a total grant cost of \$184,000. This adjustment reflects the anticipated number of corps members we will be able to enroll based on current recruitment and admissions data. This section has been updated.

- a. Performance measures have been adjusted to reflect 230 MSYs. This section has been updated.
- b. The Executive Summary has been adjusted to reflect revised amounts.

B. PROGRAMMATIC

1. The grant start date and member enrollment period start is 9/1/2014.

2. TFA's partnership with AmeriCorps is pivotal to recruiting and retaining high-quality, diverse corps

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members to serve in our communities' highest-needs schools. TFA is committed to ensuring that AmeriCorps slots are available to all eligible corps members to ensure that we are recruiting and retaining the highest achieving, most effective teachers. Additionally, AmeriCorps membership promotes national service and all-corps identity among all TFA corps members. At the start of the grant application process, TFA projects the total number of corps members for the following year based on anticipated retention rates of current corps members 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 230 slots requested by TFA-Nashville 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 the National Direct slots will be required for TFA-Nashville. If TFA-Nashville is awarded 230 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.

C. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

1. Although specific assessment tools utilized may vary by school or classroom, all are designed to measure student progress and meet the requirements of pre-/post-tests as outlined in ED5. We take several steps to ensure the quality of the assessments administered. We recommend, and in many cases provide, our corps members with access to rigorous and standardized pre-/post-assessments like the ACT, Corrective Reading, Developmental Reading Assessment, DIBELS - Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills, Gates-MacGinitie Readings, Northwest Evaluation Association's Measures of Academic Progress, Scholastic Reading Inventory, STAR Assessments, and Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress Literacy. In addition, many corps members use their state standardized exams to measure impact, and we expect that number will grow as states utilize assessments aligned with the Common Core. Program staff also review and audit assessments for rigor and alignment. Experts from our national Teacher, Preparation, Support, and Development Team provide training to regional staff and our corps members on the properties of rigorous and aligned assessments, and our regional

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staff recommend assessments to corps members for use in common subjects and grades.

ED2 targets include all students served by corps members in all subject areas. Since not all corps members provide math and/or literacy instruction, only students who receive math and/or literacy instruction from members, estimated to be 6,946 students, will be measured toward ED5.

2. All grades served by corps members will be tested with grade-appropriate assessments.

3. The description of the instrument in ED2 has been revised to reflect student completion.

4. 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.

5. TFA-Nashville corps member placements are conducted under the auspices of a contractual agreement with our placement partners known as a Professional Services Agreement (PSA). We work closely with our placement partners to ensure that corps members will be placed in schools that are considered high poverty relative to the student population elsewhere in the placement district and/or have poor academic performance relative to other school districts. Of the schools TFA-Nashville currently places in all but three have over 50% of students receiving free and reduced priced lunches; 80% of our partner schools have more than 80% of students receiving free and reduced priced lunches. For next year, all AmeriCorps CMs will be placed in schools where a majority of students come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and/or have special or exceptional needs, and the students they serve will be measured in ED2.

6. Teach For America uses an internal system, Student Achievement Measurement System (SAMS), to track student academic progress. SAMS is not an assessment itself, but rather a system we use to aggregate results across all of the assessments that our corps members administer. Because our corps members are working in 48 different regions, in over 600 school districts/charter networks, and teach every subject area/grade level, we must be able to aggregate results to evaluate our corps member impact over time and across regions.

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Although specific assessment tools utilized may vary by school or classroom, all are designed to measure student progress and meet the requirements of pre-/post-tests as outlined in ED5. We take several steps to ensure the quality of the assessments administered. We recommend, and in many cases provide, our corps members with access to rigorous and standardized pre-/post-assessments like the ACT, Corrective Reading, Developmental Reading Assessment, DIBELS - Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills, Gates-MacGinitie Readings, Northwest Evaluation Association's Measures of Academic Progress, Scholastic Reading Inventory, STAR Assessments, and Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress Literacy. In addition, many corps members use their state standardized exams to measure impact, and we expect that number will grow as states utilize assessments aligned with the Common Core. Program staff also review and audit assessments for rigor and alignment. Experts from our national Teacher, Preparation, Support, and Development Team provide training to regional staff and our corps members on the properties of rigorous and aligned assessments, and our regional staff recommend assessments to corps members for use in common subjects and grades.

SAMS is designed to enable us to aggregate and combine onto a single continuous scale all the results on these assessments; we refer to it as a continuous measure because we use it to assess average performance across all corps members rather than the percentage meeting a particular threshold.

Improvement is defined as the equivalent of at least one year's worth of growth. Targets include only students who will receive specific instruction in literacy and/or math, which makes of a sub-set of our entire teaching corps. This target is not inclusive of our corps members teaching subjects other than math or literacy.

7. The performance measure instrument in ED12 has been revised to reflect number of national service participants serving as teachers.

8. The performance measure instrument in ED13 has been revised to reflect number of national service participants who complete serving as teachers.

9. Exiting corps members are surveyed during exit interviews about their post-service plans. In addition, alumni complete an email survey through TFA's national alumni office in late fall/early

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winter and we receive data specific to Nashville alumni.

10. & 11. We have deleted ED 15, as it is duplicative of ED 5. Our target for ED 5 includes only the number of students with improved academic performance in literacy and/or math.

12. The MSYs have been adjusted so that 0.01 MSYs are allocated to the Teacher Corps performance measure and 229.99 MSYs are allocated to the K-12 Success measure.

13. At this time we are not adding an applicant-determined performance measure.

D. STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT SLOTS

1. As a professional corps, TFA does not have ultimate hiring authority and therefore we do not set a percentage of slots to recruiting members with disabilities. However, we do have targeted recruitment campaigns to ensure core diversity and an inclusive selection and recruitment process. Our recruitment team does meet with disability offices at numerous colleges and universities throughout the country. 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.

2. At this time, TFA does not wish to request additional MSYs to fund AmeriCorps members with disabilities.

E. MSYs WITH NO PROGRAM FUNDS ATTACHED

We are not interested in opting-in to the No-Cost MSY option.

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F. PROFESSIONAL CORPS

1. As a professional corps program, Teach For America-Nashville AmeriCorps members are paid staff employed by the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) or charter management organization(s). Similar to any other employment opportunity, our corps members apply and compete for open positions. 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. Annually, Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools hires between 500 and 600 new teachers, and school principal demand for TFA corps members has consistently outweighed our supply. TFA AmeriCorps members participate in the MNPS's standard de-centralized hiring process, whereby individual school principals are responsible for interviewing and hiring new teachers for their schools. Our corps members are just one of many avenues that school leaders access to fill their vacancies; TFA corps members represent only two percent of new teachers in a state with 40 teacher training programs, including Nashville Teaching Fellows and many university programs within Nashville.

Because TFA works with school and district leadership to fill new and vacant positions through the district's routine hiring process, our teachers operate within the structures set up by the school district. Our Professional Services Agreement (PSA) with Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools (MNPS), in part, reinforces this expectation with the following language:

MNPS has the right to thus refuse any teacher candidate that it feels is not a good fit for employment with the district. (Nashville PSA, pg. 5, effective 1/15/2014)

We do not receive any special hiring arrangements beyond those permissible by school district officials and the school board.

2. We believe that it is appropriate for us to sign the certification because TFA works with school district leadership to fill new and vacant positions through the district's routine hiring regulations and protocols. Our teachers operate within the structures set up by the school district. We do not receive any special hiring arrangement beyond those permissible by school district officials and school boards.

3. TFA AmeriCorps members participate in the Metropolitan Nashville Public school's (MNPS)

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standard hiring process, whereby individual school principals are responsible for interviewing and hiring new teachers for their schools. 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 district. We do not receive any special hiring arrangements beyond those permissible by school district officials and school board.

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 Nashville, TFA works with hiring decision-makers to ensure that we are matching our efforts with district needs. Researchers at the University of Tennessee predict a shortage of nearly 2,500 teachers in Metropolitan Nashville while the US Department of Education has identified six subject areas with teacher shortages in Tennessee. One hundred percent of corps members are placed in subject areas and/or grade levels identified as having a teacher shortage .

4. As a professional corps program, TFA 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 often fill teaching positions in high-need subject areas and schools, which districts often find difficult to fill. One way an inadequate number of professionals manifests itself is through specific teacher shortages. This is the case in Tennessee, where, according to the U.S. Department of Education, there is a current shortage of teachers for English as a Second Language, special education, secondary math, secondary science, secondary English, and secondary social studies . More specifically, researchers at the University of Tennessee predict a shortage of nearly 2,500 teachers in Metropolitan Nashville, including a shortage of approximately 1,000 K-4th grade teachers,

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600 middle school teachers, and 500 high school teachers (See Bruce, Donald J., Fox, William F., Douglas, Brian M., Reynolds, Melissa O. Supply and Demand for Teachers in Tennessee. University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN (2009)). One hundred percent of current TFA AmeriCorps members are teaching in specific subject areas and/or grade levels identified as having teacher shortages by the U.S. Department of Education or the University of Tennessee. Persistent teacher shortages in English as a Second Language and secondary core subjects have resulted in a growing number of TFA AmeriCorps members being placed in these subject areas.

Second, we provide low-income schools access to a national pipeline of candidates commensurate to those teaching in the world's top performing school systems who have are participating in our proven-effective teacher training program. We believe that "lacking an adequate number of such professionals" does not just refer to communities that simply do not have enough candidates, but also to communities that do not have 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 are less likely to get effective teachers in their classrooms than wealthier students; they are far more likely to have teachers who scored poorly on college and licensure exams. 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.

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. Specifically, TFA-Nashville AmeriCorps members were found by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and State Board of Education to be "more effective than veteran teachers in the following areas: 4th-8th grade TCAP composite, math, reading, science, and social studies, and high school Algebra I" (See 2013 Report Card. Tennessee Department of Education, Nashville, TN (2013)). TFA is the only provider of teachers that was found to be more effective for three years. These results are confirmed by large-scale experimental and quasi-experimental studies.

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In Nashville, hiring decision-makers, typically individual principals, have a choice of who to hire for vacant teaching positions at their schools. TFA works with school and district leadership to fill new and vacant positions through the school's routine hiring process; thus our CMs are competing for open positions with other non-TFA affiliated applicants. If and when our corps members are selected, it is because these individual decision-makers believe our corps members are the most qualified for the vacant teaching position at his or her school. To date, the principals in our partner schools in Nashville overwhelmingly indicate they are satisfied with corps members and that they would recommend hiring a corps member to a colleague.

Clarification Response 4/15/2014

As the full-time teacher of record, TFA AmeriCorps 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, and use appropriate tools to assess progress throughout the year. However, for ED5 only students who have been present in the class for 6 months or more will be counted toward the target of students making at least one year's worth of growth. Students who enter the class significantly after the beginning of the school year will not be assessed for improved academic performance through the pre-/post-test under ED5.

Continuation Changes

N/A

Grant Characteristics