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## Executive Summary

Teach For America-Detroit (TFA-Detroit) proposes to have 160 AmeriCorps members (ACMs) teaching in over 70 high-need schools in Detroit. At the end of the first program year, the ACMs will be responsible for significantly improving educational outcomes for almost 10,000 students and begin their long-term impact on expanding educational opportunity for low-income students. In addition, ACMs will leverage an additional 250 volunteers to support students in the classrooms. This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of education. The CNCS investment of \$0 will be matched with \$5.26 million in private and other public funding.

## Rationale and Approach/Program Design

PROBLEM/NEED: Detroit's schools are not immune from the broader crisis facing the Detroit metropolitan area. In stark contradiction to the tenants of a democratic society, all too often a child's zip code unjustly predicts his or her educational outcomes and life prospects. The resulting class-based gap in academic opportunity manifests itself as early as kindergarten, where students from low-income communities enter the classroom having heard, on average, 30 million fewer words than their peers growing up in more affluent communities (Hart, Betty and Risley, Todd. "The Early Catastrophe: The 30 Million Word Gap by Age 3." 2003, *American Educator*, p 4-9). As children move through the system, this gap continues to widen. While equitable education can change the life trajectory of children in poverty, typically children in poverty complete less schooling and work and earn less as adults (ETS Center for Research on Human Capital and Education, 2013).

In Detroit's schools, nearly four in five students come from low-income backgrounds ("State of the Detroit Child", Data Driven Detroit, 2012). Over the last eight years, the poverty rate among Detroit's children has grown. From 2005 to 2013, the number of Detroit children living below the poverty line rose from 44.6% to 58.6% and the number of children eligible for free or reduced price lunch, a common measure of poverty, rose from 68.3% to 84.6% in 2013 ("Children in Poverty", KIDS COUNT Data Center from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2014). As poverty rates in Detroit continue to rise, the struggles facing Detroit's children are complex and they impact their academic achievement.

According to the 2013 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), Detroit Public School students scored below the national average in both eighth grade reading and math, including a six point decline in math from the previous test in 2011. High school graduation rates and college readiness have also remained stagnant since 2009. In the spring of 2012, 1.6% of Detroit 11th graders - only 80 students - scored a college-ready 21 or higher on the ACT ("State of the Detroit Child", Data

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Driven Detroit, 2012). Nationally, only 47% of African American males graduate from high school, and in Detroit the figure is even more striking with a 27% graduation rate ("Tough Boys," The Skillman Foundation, 2009).

Detroit also faces a critical need for highly-qualified, talented teachers. A wide body of research consistently demonstrates that high-quality teaching is the most important factor impacting student learning. Unfortunately, low-income students are less likely to have highly effective teachers in their classrooms than wealthier peers ("The Economic Impact of the Achievement Gap in America's Schools," McKinsey & Company, 2009). The inadequate number of 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, and under-qualified teachers teaching in high-need subjects such as math, science, and special education. In fall 2014, the Detroit Public Schools faced a teacher shortage with more than 100 teacher vacancies, resulting in classroom sizes of 50 students or more (Michigan Department of Education, 2014). This negatively affects teachers' abilities to effectively teach their students, as research has shown that smaller class sizes can help to shrink the opportunity gap and improve high school graduation rates ("Class Size Reduction", NEA Education Policy and Practice Department, 2008). Historically, in schools where TFA-Detroit places teachers, administrators often struggle to find highly qualified candidates for their vacant positions. As a result, they are forced to leave positions vacant, not offer specialized and higher-level courses or, resort to hiring long-term substitute teachers to fill vacancies.

TFA-Detroit is well positioned to help improve the educational outcomes of Detroit students. Since launching in 2010, TFA-Detroit has recruited and supported over 700 teachers for Detroit's schools, improving the educational outcomes for over 45,000 students. TFA-Detroit AmeriCorps members (ACMs) receive rigorous training and continuous support which allow them to provide high-quality education in a region in desperate need of teachers and to students who need it most. By providing students access to quality educational opportunities, TFA-Detroit can help shrink the economic and educational inequity that persists throughout Detroit.

THEORY OF CHANGE AND LOGIC MODEL: TFA recruits, selects, trains, and supports ACMs to be highly-effective educators in schools serving low-income students And develop ACM skills and mindsets to become lifelong advocates and leaders in education and service. TFA-Detroit will place 200 professional corps members as full-time teachers serving in over 70 high-need schools in Detroit. At least 80% of corps members will remain in education, including teaching, after their two years of

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service with TFA.

TFA-Detroit ACMs are well-suited to address the problem of educational inequity. First, they are a pool of highly qualified, talented candidates who exhibit the traits of highly-effective teachers. Second, in addition to receiving pre-service training, ACMs continue to receive ongoing support while in classrooms

TFA-Detroit ACMs are measured against an ambitious benchmark: the score a high-performing teacher would achieve based on student performance. Last school year, nearly 70% of ACMs led students to achieve results commensurate to more than one grade level of academic growth in a single year. In the coming year, TFA-Detroit aims to train and support ACMs to lead students to, on average, 80% mastery of content standards and 1.5 years of grade-level growth in elementary and secondary grades. We will measure our progress against CNCS Performance Measures ED1, ED2, and ED5. ACMs will serve 12,800 students, of whom 11,520 will finish the year. At the end of the school year, 6,695 students will demonstrate improved academic achievement in math and/or literacy.

EVIDENCE-BASED/EVIDENCE-INFORMED AND MEASURABLE COMMUNITY: TFA proposes a moderate to strong level of evidence. A growing, compelling body of evidence-based research has consistently demonstrated the effectiveness of Teach For America corps members. These studies include independent, randomized controlled trial studies conducted at the national level, independent quasi-experimental and correlational studies conducted at the regional level, and studies commissioned by Teach For America at both the national and regional levels.

In 2013, the Institute for Education Sciences commissioned Mathematica Policy Research to assess the effectiveness of highly-selective alternative teacher certification programs across the country. Mathematica found that students of Teach For America secondary math teachers benefitted from the equivalent of 2.6 additional months of instruction than students in the same schools taught by teachers from traditional and less selective alternative certification programs (statistically significant at the 0.01 level based on a two-tailed test). Additionally, a 2004 study by Mathematica Policy Research found that students of Teach For America elementary teachers learned the equivalent of an additional month more of mathematics content than students in the same schools taught by other teachers (statistically significant at the 0.01 level based on a two-tailed test); TFA teachers were at least as effective as their non-TFA peers in teaching reading. Both the 2013 and 2004 Mathematica studies relied on a random-assignment experimental design, the gold standard methodology in social science research. Given this methodology, they met the What Works Clearinghouse Standards

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without reservations.

Recent quasi-experimental and correlational studies spanning multiple grade-levels and subjects bolster the case that Teach For America corps members produce a net gain in student achievement relative to students of other novice teachers, and sometimes experienced ones. In 2014, the National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research (CALDER) at the American Institutes for Research (AIR) found that Teach For America corps members provided their students with the equivalent of 3 additional months of math instruction, based on analyses of student test score data on state-mandated tests (statistically significant at the 0.01 level based on a two-tailed test). In 2013, Edvance Research, relying on Texas statewide data, found that students of Teach For America corps members had larger gains in middle school math than otherwise similar students taught by novice teachers in middle schools that did not partner with Teach For America. In 2012, the Harvard Strategic Data Project, relying on data from the Los Angeles Unified School District, found that first-year Teach For America corps members led their students to the equivalent of 1½ extra months of academic gains than other first year teachers. The study was focused on teachers in Grade 3 through Grade 9 classrooms; the net boost to student growth attributed to Teach For America was present in both math and reading. In 2011, the Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research, relying on North Carolina statewide data, found that Teach For America teachers were more effective than other teachers, regardless of experience level in a range of high school subjects.

Statewide studies commissioned by state education authorities and legislatures further validate Teach For America's positive impact on student achievement. From 2010 through 2014, the University of North Carolina Institute for Public Policy (UNC) produced an annual evaluation the state's teacher preparation programs. UNC found that compared to other new teachers with less than five years of experience, Teach For America corps members were consistently the most effective in terms of student gains. Similarly, from 2010 through 2014, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and the State Board of Education produced report cards on the effectiveness of teacher training programs. This series of reports found that Teach For America corps members in our Memphis and Nashville regions were consistently among the most effective beginning teachers in the state for students in grades 4 through 8. Teach For America corps members were also found to outperform other novice teachers in some high school subjects. In 2009, the Louisiana Board of Regents analyzed statewide data from the 2004 to 2007 academic years; it found that TFA corps members outperformed other new teachers in the content areas of math, science, reading, and language arts.

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Finally, for the past 18 years, Teach For America has commissioned Policy Studies Associates to administer surveys to every principal that hires and manages Teach For America corps members. In our most recent version of the national principal survey, conducted in 2013, principals overwhelmingly reported satisfaction with corps members. Eighty-four percent said they would hire additional Teach For America teachers if given the opportunity to do so, and 91 percent reported being somewhat (14%), moderately (29%), or extremely (49%) likely they would recommend hiring Teach For America corps members to their principal colleagues, in large part because they perceived Teach For America teachers as having stronger abilities than typical beginning teachers in their schools, and in some cases, even having stronger abilities than typical veteran teachers.

Citation (in order of mention above): Clark, M. A., Chiang, H. S., Silva, T., McConnell, S., Sonnenfeld, K., Erbe, A., & Puma, M. (2013). The effectiveness of secondary math teachers from TFA and the Teaching Fellows programs. (No. NCEE 13-15). Washington, DC: Institute of Education Sciences and Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.; Decker, P. T., Mayer, D. P., & Glazerman, S. (2004). The effects of TFA on students: Findings from a national evaluation. (No. 8792-750). Princeton, NJ: Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.; Hansen, M., Backes, B., Brady, V., & Xu, Z. (2014). Examining spillover effects from Teach For America corps members in Miami-Dade County Public Schools. Washington, DC: The CALDER Center at the American Institutes for Research; Turner, H. M., Goodman, D., Adachi, E., Brite, J., & Decker, L. E. (2012). Evaluation of TFA in Texas schools. San Antonio, TX: Edvance Research, Inc.; Harvard Strategic Data Project. (2012). SDP human capital diagnostic: Los Angeles Unified School District. Cambridge, MA; Xu, Zeyu, Jane Hannaway, and Colin Taylor. (2011). Making a difference? The effects of Teach for America in high school. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 30, 447-469; Patterson, K. M., & Bastian, K. C. (2014). UNC teacher quality research: Teacher portals effectiveness report. Chapel Hill, NC: Education Policy Initiative at Carolina; Henry, G. T., Purtell, K. M., Bastian, K. C., Fortner, C. K., Thompson, C. L., Campbell, S. L., & Patterson, K. M. (2014). The effects of teacher entry portals on student achievement. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 65, 7-23; Henry, G. T., Thompson, C. L., Bastian, K. C., Campbell, S. L., Patterson, K. M., & Chapman, A. (2012). UNC teacher quality research: Teacher portals effectiveness analysis. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Carolina Institute for Public Policy; Henry, G. T., Thompson, C. L., Bastian, K. C., Fortner, C. K., Kershaw, D. C., Purtell, K. M., & Zulli, R. A. (2010). Portal report: Teacher preparation and student test scores in North Carolina. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Carolina Institute for Public Policy; Tennessee Higher Education Commission and

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Tennessee State Board of Education. (2014). 2014 report card on the effectiveness of teacher training programs. Nashville, TN; Tennessee Higher Education Commission and the State Board of Education. (2013). 2013 Report Card on the Effectiveness of Teacher Training Programs. Nashville, TN; Tennessee Higher Education Commission and the State Board of Education. (2012). 2012 Report Card on the Effectiveness of Teacher Training Programs. Nashville, TN; Tennessee Higher Education Commission and the State Board of Education. (2011). 2011 Report Card on the Effectiveness of Teacher Training Programs. Nashville, TN; Tennessee Higher Education Commission and the State Board of Education. (2010). 2010 Report Card on the Effectiveness of Teacher Training Programs. Nashville, TN; 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; McCann, C. E., Turner, T. T., White, R. N. (2013). Results from the Teach For America 2013 National Principal Survey. Washington, DC: Policy Studies Associates, Inc.

NOTICE PRIORITY: TFA-Detroit will address the CNCS priority area of Education. Our focus is on increasing student achievement in schools that serve students from low income communities. As mentioned above, we will track outcomes for performance measures ED1, ED2, and ED5 as well as Teacher Corps measures ED12, ED13, ED14, and ED17.

MEMBER TRAINING: Two key pieces make up TFA's training model: 1) pre-service summer training, and 2) ongoing coaching and professional development of corps members over the course of their two-year commitment. Pre-service training includes pre-institute work (Induction) followed by an intensive six-week training focused on developing ACMs' skills as teachers and leaders, then a week-long regional orientation to prepare for their first days in the classroom. Ongoing support includes coaching from TFA staff, professional development opportunities, and graduate education courses.

INDUCTION -- ACMs participate in a week-long community immersion pre-service experience in June. They engage in a variety of sessions and experiences to learn the context of their students, communities, and school districts they will serve by visiting cultural and historical landmarks. Meeting with local non-profits and community leaders, for example Punita Thurman of the Skillman Foundation and Alice Thompson of Black Family Development Inc.; hearing from school principals and students about the school and community needs; and performing community service projects in

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the communities they will be serving. In addition, ACMs receive a pre-service orientation to AmeriCorps including responsibilities, benefits, and prohibited activities for both members and volunteers. INSTITUTE -- ACMs serving in Detroit attend a rigorous six-week residential pre-service training institute in Tulsa designed to develop ACMs into ambitious teachers who will affect greater change in the classroom. Institute includes two main components: summer school teaching and curriculum sessions. In the mornings, ACMs teach as part of a four-person collaborative that is supervised and mentored by a veteran teacher and TFA staff member who provide regular feedback and coaching. ACMs film their teaching each day in order to review, analyze, and improve for future instruction. Throughout the course of the summer, ACMs reflect on and refine their practice to ensure students meet summer learning goals and attend daily curriculum sessions where they gain the fundamental knowledge needed to become highly effective beginning teachers. During institute, ACMs will attend a new seminar focused on social justice leadership and equity in order to help them better understand the context in which they will be teaching and strategies to deeply connect with their new communities. Additional training topics throughout the institute program include classroom management and culture, instructional planning and delivery, student investment, and parent/family engagement. ORIENTATION -- After institute, ACMs return to Detroit to participate in a week-long regional orientation where they create their first unit plans, assessments, and tools to track their student progress. ACMs further engage in community experiences, meet with TFA-Detroit staff, receive training in data-driven instructional decision-making, and supported in crafting classroom vision and goals.

ONGOING SUPPORT: Building on the foundation of pre-service training, the TFA-Detroit program team provides intensive ongoing training and professional development. ACMs are matched one-on-one with a Manager of Teacher Leadership Development (MTLD). MTLDs are experienced educators (many of whom are Teach For America alumni) who serve as teacher coaches for the ACMs. Specifically, MTLDs perform observations of ACMs' classrooms, coach ACMs on how to effectively review and act on student data, and provide strategies for overcoming current classroom challenges. MTLDs also provide differentiated support through bi-weekly professional developments sessions directed towards ACMs' classroom needs. In addition to the in-person coaching and support provided by MTLDs, ACMs can access to TFANet, our private website for corps members and alumni that includes a searchable database of lesson plans and other resources designed to help members create data-driven, student achievement- focused classrooms. Additionally, members meet regularly in content/grade-level specific learning teams led by experienced teachers to discuss ongoing challenges,

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share best practices, and work together on professional development. Finally, ACMs participate in certification and/or master's degree programs through Oakland University or the University of Michigan designed to ensure that members meet state certification requirements and further their professional development.

**MEMBER SUPERVISION:** TFA's supervision plan focuses on ACM development and evaluation. Since our corps members work as full-time professional teachers, they are directly supervised by school principals and administrators. Placement sites are provided with an AmeriCorps orientation guide, an on-site resource that includes information on AmeriCorps policies and prohibited activities, to ensure that principals and other administrators are aware of these activities.

As mentioned previously, every ACM is assigned to an MTL, highly effective veteran teachers who manage a cohort of 25 ACMs. These individuals provide an additional layer of support and supervision. MTLs are part of comprehensive Teacher Leadership Development team and are supervised by a Managing Director of Teacher Leadership Development who provides a high degree of oversight and support. MTLs are trained annually on prohibited activities through case studies that describe prohibited activities and identify how to detect and report on them. At the beginning of the school year our MTLs receive extensive training on how to best work with school administration and resources to ensure that all ACMs and their students benefit from a united team. MTLs then meet formally with principals three times a year to discuss ACMs' progress and areas for growth.

**MEMBER EXPERIENCE:** ACMs gain invaluable skills through their service experience. As classroom leaders, ACMs implement effective management skills such as organizing and leading small and large group instruction and activities. In addition, delivering high-quality instruction requires them to plan and prepare lessons and projects effectively and efficiently. TFA-Detroit deliberately builds in time for ACMs to reflect on their service experience throughout the year. During Induction and at regular all-corps events, ACMs reflect on their identity and where they are coming from, as well as their vision for their classrooms and for Detroit. Throughout the year, MTLs ask ACMs to reflect on their purpose and progress both during professional development coursework and in one-on-one sessions. The corps member experience is powerful one, changing the life-direction of many corps members including the many ACMs who remain in the classroom beyond their two-year commitment. The majority of our corps members (64%) continue to work in education. Others effectively transition to roles outside of the classroom and implement these skills in other sectors, but the commitment of our

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alumni to serving communities is long-standing and deep, with 86% of our alumni working in jobs that impact low-income communities.

Our corps members and staff regularly work with a wide range of community partners. If ACMs serve in the same schools as ACMs from other programs, collaboration is regular and fruitful. For example, we partner with City Year Detroit to develop and host joint professional development programming for our corps members. Also, during Induction many ACMs serve with the Detroit Parent Network, an AmeriCorps school turnaround grantee, to become acquainted with their program, staff, and how to access DPN resources as teachers. To connect our corps members to the larger national service movement and other AmeriCorps programs in Detroit, we engage in a number of community service activities throughout the year including MLK Day of Service and community walks with the Brightmoor Community Center. TFA-Detroit has also partnered with The Greening of Detroit, an AmeriCorps sponsored program, to participate in the restoration of several urban areas, and Gleaners Community Food Bank, which works closely with other ACMs. We plan to continue these partnerships both as part of our National Day of Service and other all-corps service projects this year.

TFA is extremely committed to diversity, and we work to recruit diverse ACMs who represent the communities where we serve. In 2014-15 about 24% of Detroit's incoming corps was from the Detroit area. TFA's recruitment and admissions process is led centrally by the national organization, but in Detroit we have increased focus on recruiting at local universities including Wayne State, Detroit Mercy, and Oakland University. As a result of these efforts, we hope to increase the number of native Detroiters and Detroit Public School graduates serving as ACMs in the years to come.

COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION: TFA-Detroit is committed to promoting its AmeriCorps identity. TFA currently promotes the AmeriCorps identity in pre-service training and at ongoing professional development sessions, then reinforces this throughout the year through regular email blasts, periodic all-corps meetings, and ongoing discussions with program staff. Specifically, ACMs attend AmeriCorps orientation prior to service that prepares them to articulate the history, mission, and values of AmeriCorps as well as understand that it is an integral part of their work in Detroit classrooms. TFA-Detroit also promotes its AmeriCorps identity in the following ways: 1) ACMs will place AmeriCorps signs in their classrooms and wear an AmeriCorps lapel pin during service to reinforce the AmeriCorps identity with their principals, colleagues, and students; 2) ACMs will wear t-shirts with the AmeriCorps logo during service projects; 3) we will provide AmeriCorps

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signs to schools to place at the entrance or in the office; and 4) we will continue to include the AmeriCorps logo in all official TFA collateral and communications including recruitment brochures, posters, and national and regional websites. Additionally, TFA includes AmeriCorps-focused postings across social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

### Organizational Capability

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING: TFA is co-led by Chief Executive Officers, Matthew Kramer and AmeriCorps alumna Elisa Villanueva Beard, who work with a national Board of Directors and an 8-member leadership team to set TFA's national strategy and direction. The national Board is charged with exercising its fiduciary duties to ensure that the organization is run effectively and within all relevant laws and regulations. TFA's financial functions, housed nationally, report to the auditing and finance committees of the board and work closely with national and regional development and budget teams to coordinate revenue and expenses throughout the organization. This structure allows for the appropriate breakdown of responsibilities and a system of checks and balances needed to ensure accurate financial accounting, coordination of fundraising and spending, and the accurate tracking of all finances.

Regionally, TFA-Detroit employs 28 full-staff members who work in Detroit and run the day-to-day programming and operations. TFA-Detroit's Executive Director, Tiffany Taylor, is responsible for maximizing the organization's impact in the region. A native of Detroit, Tiffany graduated from Detroit Public Schools and served in the TFA corps as a sixth grade Special Educator in Philadelphia. Her diverse work experience, from her most recent position as Vice President of Regional Operations at TFA to an Associate Development Project Manager for The Community Builders Inc., has afforded her a unique insight on the policies and strategies that lead to sustainable education reform.

Twelve Managers of Teacher Leadership and Development (MTLDs) manage and develop ACMs to ensure that they achieve ambitious academic goals with their students. MTLDs are managed by a Managing Director of Teacher Leadership Development who has extensive classroom experience.

TFA-Detroit's School and Community Partnership team plays a critical role in strengthening our work across Detroit's neighborhoods. Our Senior Managing Director of Communications and Partnership helps to build strong, meaningful relationships with community members and partner organizations.

TFA-Detroit solicits data and feedback from students, corps members, partners, and community stakeholders to inform program changes and strategies. Internally, we conduct surveys with ACMs and collect formative assessment data on student achievement to inform professional development

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strategies. Externally, TFA-Detroit conducts principal surveys and meets regularly with district leadership. Our Executive Director is currently engaged in a 2020 Vision Tour in which she meets with community stakeholders to collect their feedback on our strategic direction this school year and beyond. We have letters of support from multiple community partners in our application materials on file with our state commission.

TFA has effectively managed large-scale federal grants through both AmeriCorps and the Department of Education (2 SEED grants, 1 i3 grant, and 23 AmeriCorps grants). As their federal funding portfolio has grown, TFA has built significant internal capacity to manage both the financial and programmatic components of a national AmeriCorps program. At the national office, the Public Partnerships Team has a number of well-qualified specialists available to meet and guide regional staff on AmeriCorps compliance, budget creation, and general grants management. Additionally, this team works in close partnership with the Research and Evaluation, Student Achievement Measurement, Technology, Legal, and Teacher Preparation, Support and Development teams to provide ongoing trainings, assistance, and guidance for regional staff via conference calls, regional and national conferences, and online tutorials to ensure compliance with all grant requirements and regulations.

COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY: As a long-time AmeriCorps grantee, TFA has developed systems to ensure compliance with AmeriCorps requirements and regulations. The national Admissions and Public Partnerships teams ensure ACM compliance and eligibility; as ACMs matriculate into the program, they are required to submit eligibility documentation and complete background checks. This ensures that ACMs have met eligibility requirements prior to beginning service. The Public Partnerships team conducts regular monitoring of regions, including TFA-Detroit, through desk audits, member file checks, and monitoring visits. Any evidence of non-compliance is documented within 30 days of discovery, and TFA-Detroit will then have 30 days to respond with documentation of correction and/or a corrective action plan.

TFA-Detroit's program staff is trained by the national Public Partnerships team on both acceptable and prohibited AmeriCorps activities to equip them to educate ACMs and monitor ACMs' activities. The Public Partnerships team is also available for consultation with regions, ACMs, and site supervisors. MTLDs and school administrators provide oversight of ACMs through frequent site visits, classroom observations, and maintain regular communication with ACMs and site supervisors. Additionally, all incoming TFA ACMs are required to sign documents attesting they have read and understood the AmeriCorps prohibited activities, and at the end of the school year all ACMs are

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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.

Finally, if a TFA staff member or school administrator suspects that an ACM is engaging in a prohibited activity, they will notify a member of TFA-Detroit's leadership team. Partnering with the federal grants team and legal counsel, the regional leadership team will assess the suspected violation and suspend the ACM until the issue is resolved. The Public Partnerships team conducts regular regional site visits and audits ACM activities and files to ensure compliance with AmeriCorps regulations.

PAST PERFORMANCE FOR CURRENT GRANTEES AND FORMER GRANTEES: TFA-Detroit has a strong record of compliance and partnership with AmeriCorps and the Michigan Community Service Commission. The program punctually submitted thorough and accurate progress reports, maintained strong enrollment rates, and successfully enrolled and exited ACMs in eGrants within the 30-day requirement. In addition, our commission conducted a monitoring site visit in April 2014 and there were no major findings.

TFA-Detroit met or exceeded all performance measures over the last two years. In 2013-14, we filled 100% of our slots and retained 92.2% of corps members. In order to maintain our corps members' sense of possibility, resilience, and determination in the face of challenges, we have instituted a number of initiatives geared toward corps member satisfaction and development, including group dinners and informal meetings between corps members and senior leadership to maintain open feedback channels and build stronger interpersonal relationships. We also established a retention committee made up of staff members to monitor and plan intervention for at-risk corps members, helping them to sustain their work and maintain support for them throughout the school year.

### **Budget/Cost Effectiveness**

TFA-Detroit is requesting a fixed amount grant to support 200 full time professional corps members at \$1,000 per MSY for a total of \$200,000. This reflects a 50% reduction in cost per MSY from the 2014-15 award.

Supporting TFA-Detroit's program is a cost-effective model for increasing student achievement. We provide low-income schools with a national pool of pre-screened talent they would not reach otherwise, and our administrative costs are substantially less than those of organizations engaged in similar activities. For example, the Peace Corps' cost per member to recruit, select, train and support is

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over \$67,000, while those same activities cost TFA \$58,182. Our recruitment costs are less than \$4,000 per corps member-much lower than recruiting a McKinsey first year associate (\$35,000) or an army recruit (\$22,898).

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, RAND Corporation; Rivkin, S., Hanushek, E, & Kain, J., 2005). In addition, TFA yields a strong return on investment through our force of alumni leaders who continue to push for educational equity after their corps commitment. Before joining the corps, only 8% of corps members say they considered a career in education, but their time in the classrooms changes their mindsets and career trajectories resulting in nearly two-thirds of corps members staying in education. This investment will accelerate the rate of change for our Detroit community.

TFA-Detroit's 2016 budget is estimated at \$6.54 million and we have significant experience raising resources from diverse sources, including local foundations, corporations, individual donors, and public support. In FY14 year, TFA-Detroit was supported with \$460,000 in public funds, comprising 7% of total funds raised. Valuing the local resources raised, TFA-Detroit works hard to ensure the efficient use of these funds; for every public dollar received, TFA-Detroit leverages nearly \$13 in private investments. The region raised more than \$4 million from foundations, comprising 70% of the regional budget, and over \$1 million from partner districts, comprising 18% of the regional budget. TFA-Detroit plans to pursue new funding opportunities primarily through individual donations and corporate contributions. TFA-Detroit plans to host at least three fundraising events throughout the year and leverage current partners in order to expand our network within the region. Six months into TFA-Detroit's current fiscal year, the program has received over \$4 million in commitments towards a \$6.54 million fundraising goal, representing 61% progress to goal.

Part of our cost effectiveness is through our designation as a professional corps. Because our members receive salaries and benefits from the school districts, and not from AmeriCorps, our AmeriCorps costs relate solely to training and supporting our members. The budget for TFA-Detroit represents costs directly related to personnel such as MTLDs who support corps members and an Operations Coordinator who manages compliance. It also includes quarterly AmeriCorps meetings where ACMs participate in professional development and teambuilding. AmeriCorps funds also help

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cover the costs of grant requirements such as criminal history checks (state and FBI). The AmeriCorps relationship and funding is critical to both growing the program's impact in the region and ensuring that service within TFA-Detroit is a financially viable option for candidates who depend on ACM benefits, particularly those from underrepresented racial and economic backgrounds.

While we are confident in our ability to raise the non-CNCS resources necessary to support our share of the program, we also face unique fundraising challenges in Detroit. Our funding environment has become increasingly constrained due to Detroit's bankruptcy, which has shifted the focus of philanthropy away from education. This is an historic moment for Detroit and one in which TFA's presence is ever-important. Detroit is on the path to exit the largest municipal bankruptcy in history, shedding over \$7B in debt from its balance sheet. At the heart of this settlement was "the Grand Bargain" where the foundation community (most of which supports our program with major gifts) pledged \$365 million to fund pensions in order to ensure that none of the Detroit Institute of Art's (DIA) city-owned collection was sold to settle debts. It was a welcome move from the foundation community, but it has left them with less funding to allocate to other organizations, including TFA. Moreover, the DIA is also fundraising \$100M from the same corporate, individual, and foundation donors we target in order to hold up its end of the Grand Bargain.

As a result of this challenging context, our fundraising efforts have encountered resistance from funders who are being asked for money by the DIA and other financially strained organizations. Given the foundation community's role in the Grand Bargain, corporations and individuals are increasingly being asked to fill the gap that decreased foundation funding has caused. This creates a hyper-competitive funding environment that makes fundraising incredibly difficult. While we were able to steward most of our foundation funders into continued gifts for FY15, those renewals occurred at much lower amounts. The Kellogg Foundation for example, which previously provided \$1 million in support each year, decreased their funding support to \$500,000.

In addition, greater diversification of funding streams has proved to be slow. In FY14, individual giving efforts yielded \$103k while corporate efforts led to \$139k in funding. This year, we are working hard to yield \$235k and \$400k from each of these streams, respectively, in order to offset a possible shortfall from foundation funding, which would mean more than doubling revenues in both areas.

Given the fundraising challenges in Detroit, operating grant funds from AmeriCorps are critical to our ability to diversify our funding map and to ensure adequate resources to support ACMs and grant requirements.

### Evaluation Summary or Plan

## Narratives

Short-Term Expected Outcome: Teach For America (TFA) aims to attract and select highly motivated individuals with a record of success and place them in schools where they are needed the most. We anticipate 200 AmeriCorps members (ACMs) exhibiting characteristics that are predictive of success in high-needs schools in Detroit. 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 survey administered in the middle and at the end of the academic year for each of their two years in the program. This allows TFA regional and national staff members to assess the types of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and opinions that corps members gain through the TFA experience. These surveys will cover data from all 200 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.

## Narratives

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

## Narratives

research questions and proposed evaluation methodologies of our short-term and medium-term objectives. The second prong -- to build a movement that addresses the structural roots of educational inequality from both within and outside of the classroom -- is addressed by our long-term objective: we expect to see that TFA alumni remain involved in education at all levels in various sectors, such as 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 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**

Year 1 Clarifications - 9/1/2015 - 6/30/2016

ADDITIONAL CLARIFICATIONS: 5/18/2015

This application will be approved for funding for a grant in the amount of \$0, 160 Member Service Years (MSYs), and 160 slots.

The budget and executive summary have been revised to reflect these amounts.

## Narratives

Please revise Performance Measure ED5 targets to only count unduplicated count of students demonstrating improvement.

Per the performance measure instructions, the target set for ED 5 includes students who will receive specific instruction in literacy and/or math. This number is duplicative, as students, specifically those in middle and high school classes, may be served by more than one corps member. For example, a student who is in one corps member's English class and in another corps member's math class is counted twice, as they improved in each respective subject.

We believe this is within the guidance written in the performance measure instructions, which states that we should be tracking students that in improve in math AND/OR literacy. Whereas other measures, such as ED1 and ED2, specifically state the counts must be unduplicated, ED5 does not. In addition, ED5 allows programs to collect data on the group of students served instead of individual student data.

Clarifications April 2015:

This application is under consideration for a grant in the amount of \$200,000, 200.00 Member Service Years (MSYs), 200 slots, at \$1,000 cost per MSY.

We are amending our request and propose to have 160 AmeriCorps members (ACMs), 160 slots, at \$1,000 per MSY for a total of \$160,000. We have updated our budget and performance measures to reflect this change. As efforts to recruit and select the 2015 incoming TFA corps are almost concluded, it is clear that there are external recruitment challenges that have yielded a lower number of total corps members nationally. Nationwide, from 2004 to 2012, there has been a steep drop in overall enrollment in teacher preparation programs (Sawchuk, Stephen. "Steep Drops Seen in Teacher-Prep Enrollment Numbers." Education Week, October 21, 2014). In our own recruitment efforts, we are seeing a mirroring trend - with an improving economy and a polarized education climate, there has been a drop in the number of applications and the decision to teach is becoming more challenging for the people we are recruiting. However, the potential decrease in the total number of the corps does not reflect overall demand for corps members across partner schools and districts - indeed, the demand from our local partners outstrips our supply of corps members. As we work to ensure that we continue to select a high-quality and diverse corps, on the national and regional levels, we are analyzing data and developing strategies to maximize our recruitment and admissions efforts.

## Narratives

A. Programmatic clarification items:

1. Please clarify how the program will recruit and support 315 community volunteers as part of the program model.

TFA AmeriCorps members engage community volunteers to support their classroom efforts. As teachers, TFA AmeriCorps members know that working alongside the community is essential for long-term student success and engage volunteers in numerous and varied activities. Volunteers may tutor students before or after school or on weekends, conduct supply drives, or lead reading groups or special projects in the classroom. TFA-Detroit also leverages community volunteers for one-day service projects such as MLK Day of Service.

To recruit volunteers, TFA-Detroit's Communications and Partnership team plays a critical role in building strong, meaningful relationships with community members and partner organizations. Our team members regularly meet with organizations such as Black Family Development, Inc. and Brightmoor Community Center to recruit community members to volunteer, provide volunteer training, and match these individuals with an AmeriCorps member's classroom.

Both TFA staff and AmeriCorps members ensure that volunteers are only engaged in assigned activities and are not participating in any prohibited activities while volunteering. Corps members also ensure volunteers have the resources, support, and guidance they need while they are serving in their classrooms.

2. The application proposes to place AmeriCorps members at site where they will be engaged in the same or substantially similar work as employees represented by a local labor organization, but did not provide a labor concurrence. Please submit a written description of how the program will ensure that: i) AmeriCorps members will not be placed in positions that were recently occupied by paid staff; ii) No AmeriCorps member will be placed into a position for which a recently resigned or discharged employee has recall rights as a result of a collective bargaining agreement, from which a recently resigned or discharged employee was removed as a result of a reduction in force, or from which a recently resigned/discharged employee is on leave or strike.

## Narratives

As a professional corps program, TFA AmeriCorps members are paid staff. Therefore, our corps members are not displacing paid staff, but are filling vacancies that are opened to the general public and that the district is interested in hiring qualified persons to fill. 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 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 collective bargaining agreement. We do not receive any special hiring arrangement beyond those permissible by collective bargaining agreements.

### B. Budget Clarification

1. The dollar amount provided in the "Other Revenue Funds" field of the Funding/Demographics section of the application should include any funds used to run the program EXCEPT CNCS share and budgeted match. This field is intended to capture additional revenue that supports the program but is not included as match in the budget. The number provided in this field appears high based on the size of your program. Please confirm that this number is correct and correct the number if it is not correct.

Since the time of our initial application, TFA-Detroit's 2016 budget has changed to an estimated \$5.42 million. With support from CNCS of \$160,000, our "Other Revenue Funds" will total \$5.26 million. This amount reflects the costs associated with the entire TFA program, not strictly AmeriCorps. For example, it includes personnel in multiple departments such as recruitment and matriculation, corps member training and support, and school and community partnerships. It also includes staff and resources for our robust alumni programming efforts. The number reflected in the "Other Revenue Funds" in eGrants accurately reflects the additional funds TFA-Detroit will receive and invest in its program for 2015-16.

2. Funding is extremely competitive and limited this year. Having a low Cost Per Member Service year (MSY) is a competitive advantage. Applicants submitting with a low cost per MSY will receive higher priority for funding. Please consider decreasing the application's proposed cost per MSY by revising the CNCS share of the program budget, or provide a compelling explanation for why the cost/MSY cannot be decreased. CNCS will review both the individual program cost per MSY and the aggregate cost per MSY after the clarification period and may elect to make further decreases in cost per MSY and/or may be only able to partially fund applicants.

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TFA-Detroit's 2015-16 cost per MSY request already reflects a 50% decrease from the current cost per MSY in 2014-15. We are maintaining our request for \$1,000/MSY.

The AmeriCorps relationship and funding is critical to both growing the program's impact in the region and ensuring that service within TFA-Detroit is a financially viable option for candidates who depend on AmeriCorps benefits, particularly those from underrepresented racial and economic backgrounds. The budget for TFA-Detroit's represents costs directly related to corps member training and support.

While we are confident in our ability to raise the non-CNCS resources necessary to support our share of the program, we also face unique fundraising challenges in Detroit. Our funding environment has become increasingly constrained due to Detroit's bankruptcy, which has shifted the focus of philanthropy away from education. Detroit recently exited the largest municipal bankruptcy in history, shedding over \$7B in debt from its balance sheet. At the heart of this settlement was "the Grand Bargain" where the foundation community (most of which supports our program with major gifts) pledged \$365 million to fund pensions in order to ensure that none of the Detroit Institute of Art's (DIA) city-owned collection was sold to settle debts. It was a welcome move from the foundation community, but it has left them with less funding to allocate to other organizations, including TFA. As a result of this challenging context, our fundraising efforts have encountered resistance from funders who are being asked by the DIA and other financially strained organizations in the city for money. Given the foundation community's role in the Grand Bargain, corporations and individuals are getting asked by all organizations looking to fill the gap that decreased foundation funding has caused. This creates a hyper-competitive funding environment that makes fundraising incredibly difficult.

Given the fundraising challenges in Detroit, operating grant funds from AmeriCorps are critical to our ability to diversify our funding map and to ensure adequate resources to support corps members and grant requirements.

### C. Performance Measure Clarifications

1. MSYs should be allocated only to objectives and performance measures that measure beneficiary outcomes. Please enter zero (0) MSYs for the Teacher Corps objective and 0 MSYs for the Teacher

## Narratives

Corps performance measure. Allocate remaining MSYs to beneficiary objectives and performance measures as appropriate.

The MSYs have been adjusted in the Performance Measure section in eGrants to reflect the revised request for 160 MSYs and to allocate the MSYs to the beneficiary outcomes.

2. ED2 (Teacher Corps PMs): ED2 cannot be paired with Teacher Corps outputs and outcomes and is a duplicate Output already recorded in your K-12 Success measures. Please delete.

This output has been deleted in eGrants.

3. ED2 (K-12 Success PMs): Please provide a definition for how the program completion will be defined in order to qualify a student to be captured under this measure.

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.

4. Please confirm all counts are unduplicated.

All counts in ED2 are unduplicated; each student in a corps member's classroom is counted only once.

5. For ED5, describe the pre/post instruments that will be used to measure progress in reading and math. Describe how each assessment meets the CNCS definition of "standardized test" outlined in the performance measure instructions. Also specify whether students must make gains in reading and math in order to be counted, or if improvement in one subject is sufficient. Explain how the program will ensure that students improving in both reading and math are counted only once.

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

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members are working in 46 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.

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 assessments like the NWEA MAP and DRA2. 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.

Different school districts use different standard assessments, such as NWEA, MAP, DRA2, and Performance Series testing. In a few districts, TFA-Detroit is not able to access individualized data because of the school district's student privacy policy. However, TFA-Detroit is able to access the average data for all the students in a teacher's class in such districts. Teachers in these districts also individually track student progress on pre-post assessments and individually report the results to TFA-Detroit, removing student names.

Students are counted for ED5 if they make gain in math or literacy or both. When possible, students are counted only once. However, if a student is in one corps member's math class and another corps member's English class and improves in both, it is possible that this student is counted twice. Our ability to prevent this duplication is limited as we only access classroom-level data, not individual student-level data, which makes it difficult to know if or when duplication occurs.

### A. Strategic Engagement Slots

1. What percentage of your slots will be targeted to recruiting members with disabilities? What is your program's plan, if any, for outreach and recruitment of members of the disability community?

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

## **Narratives**

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 corps diversity and an inclusive selection and recruitment process. Our recruitment team does meet with disability offices at numerous colleges and universities throughout the country.

### **2. Strategic Engagement Slots**

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

### **B. MSYs with No Program Funds Attached Clarification:**

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

### **Continuation Changes**

N/A

### **Grant Characteristics**