

Narratives

Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Teach For America - Kentucky proposes to have 46 professional corps AmeriCorps members who will be responsible for teaching for two years in low-income and disadvantaged schools in Appalachian Kentucky, going above and beyond traditional expectations to help their students achieve at high levels. At the end of the first program year, increasing the academic achievement of the 4,000 students they teach.

This program will focus on the CNCS focus area of Education. The CNCS investment of \$46,000 will be matched with \$787,000: \$370,000 in public funding and \$428,000 in private funding.

Rationale and Approach/Program Design

PROBLEM/NEED: TFA-Kentucky (TFA-KY), and many other organizations are working in partnership with communities to build a better future for their students. TFA-KY works in Appalachian Kentucky communities defined as such by the federal government's Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). The ARC defines this multi-state region as a 205,000 square mile range, including all of West Virginia and portions of twelve other states, including Kentucky. Each year the ARC completes a comprehensive study of three major economic indicators: three-year average unemployment rate, poverty rate, and per capita market income. This study is then used to define economic levels in each county in Appalachia. A county in Appalachia can be defined as a "distressed", "at-risk", "transitional", "competitive", or "attainment" county. A county identified as "distressed" is in the bottom 10% of all U.S. counties. Of the eighty-four counties in Appalachia classified as distressed for Fiscal Year 2017, thirty-seven are in eastern Kentucky. This total is greater than the combined number of distressed counties in the 2nd and 3rd most-distressed states of Tennessee and Mississippi, who have ten and twelve distressed counties, respectively.

Historical fluctuations in the coal market and broader energy sector, along with technology advancements requiring fewer laborers negatively impacted the region, which forced schools and districts to move to larger, centralized areas over the last several decades. This centralization created economies of scale, but greatly disadvantaged many students who had to travel a significant distance through hollows and over rough roads to get to school. Instead of enduring long commutes, many students in previous generations simply stopped attending school when their designated school changed- contributing to a lower educational attainment of previous generations.

Today's landscape reflects this previous reality. The pursuit of educational equity and excellence for all children requires strong leadership and a deep talent pipeline necessary to drive lasting change. In

Narratives

particular, Kentucky has been profoundly impacted by pervasive educational inequity. The legacy of previous generations' lower educational attainment continues to hamper economic progress in the region, where per capita income and salaries are 30 percent below the national average ("Economic Growth in Kentucky: Why Does Kentucky Lag Behind the Rest of the South", Center for Business and Economic Research at the Gatton College of Business and Economics, University of Kentucky, 2008; U.S. Census Bureau, Selected Economic Characteristics DP03, Various Years).

With an economy once again being exposed to the decline in the market for coal, the difficulties faced by students who attend school have increased, but the stakes are higher than ever. In Kentucky, there is a class-based and often geographic gap in these academic outcomes, which are most pronounced in differences of college and career readiness between students in low-income areas like eastern Kentucky and students in the wealthiest Kentucky districts. The Commonwealth mandates every 11th grade student to take the ACT test, and their score in each subject area must meet a certain threshold in order for that student to be considered college or career ready. This threshold for college and career readiness is the attainment of an 18 for English, 20 for reading, and 19 for math. ("College and Career Readiness in Kentucky," Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, 2010). In the four wealthiest public districts in the state, 74% of students reach these benchmarks, compared to only 23% of students in our Appalachian partner districts (Interim Performance Report, Kentucky Department of Education, 2010).

Additionally, an inadequate number of highly qualified and diverse teachers further affect the deficit of excellent educational opportunities for students in Eastern Kentucky. Some teaching positions in the region, particularly in secondary math, science, and world languages, remain vacant well into the school year. Historically, in schools where TFA-KY now places teachers, administrators often struggled to find qualified candidates - per requirements established by Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board - for these vacant positions. As a result, they were forced to leave positions vacant, not offer specialized and higher-level courses.

INTERVENTION: To address the specific subject-area deficits described above, TFA-KY fills vacancies in these high-need subjects, and in the counties where our teachers can have the most impact. Currently, 88% of TFA-KY CMs teach secondary math, science, social studies, English and foreign language, areas identified by the Kentucky Department of Education as shortage areas. ("Monday E-mail", Kentucky Department of Education, March 23, 2015, <http://education.ky.gov/commed/mon/pages/march-23-2015.aspx>.) All CMs are considered highly qualified by the Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board through successful passing of their

Narratives

required certification exams, and by remaining in good standing with Teach for America training requirements.

To ensure that we are serving children in need, we rely on public data around school enrollment in the districts where we partner. We measure need according to the percent of students who receive free and reduced-price lunch, an indicator of family income level, as well as non-graduation rates, guaranteeing that we continue to prioritize the districts where our teachers can have the greatest impact.

Specifically, we are interested in partnering with school districts located in Eastern Kentucky where at least 70% of students qualify for reduced-price lunch, and the counties are classified as "distressed" by the Appalachian Regional Commission. We currently partner with districts in the following counties in eastern Kentucky: Bell, Breathitt, Floyd, Harlan, Jackson, Knox, Lawrence, Letcher, Leslie, Martin, Perry, Pike, and Pulaski. All told, our corps members and alumni impact over 5,000 middle school and high school students every day in Appalachia.

THEORY OF CHANGE: We are dedicated to shaping the future of Appalachia --our mission is to engage and develop a broad network of lifelong education advocates and ensure our students have the skills and knowledge to lead the greatest economic turnaround our country has seen. Although people living in the region face many challenges, they also have many opportunities.

Our AmeriCorps members (ACMs), alumni, and staff in Appalachia work alongside fellow educators across the region willing to ask, "What will it take to give every student a 21st century education?" and then take the steps to make this happen. We are partnering with those already engaged in challenging educational inequity, complementing their efforts and becoming a force of advocates, leading from inside and outside of the classroom, who are willing to jump in and get to work immediately for kids.

An example of this mindset was present at Besty Lane High School, where corps member Will Bane created the first AP Human Geography course in the school's history. At the time, the county average pass rate for all AP courses was only 17%. In 2014-2015, his first year teaching the course, 50% of his students passed the AP exam. In 2015-2016 they achieved a 77% pass rate, exceeding the national average by 27%. This story, along with many others, motivates us to move forward with optimism and passion.

We recruit outstanding recent college graduates and professionals, like Mr. Bane, who commit two years to teach in high-need schools and become lifelong leaders in pursuing educational excellence and equity. With extensive training and support, these ACMs work relentlessly to ensure that students growing up today in Kentucky are given the educational opportunities they deserve.

Narratives

As alumni, they are a powerful force of leaders who act on the conviction and insight they gain from their teaching experience, working in education and all other sectors to effect the fundamental changes needed to ensure that all children have an equal chance in life. In one extraordinary example, two of TFA-KY alumni who have continued as Spanish teachers in Lynn Camp and Barbourville High Schools, both in Knox County, created the Appalachian Global Service Corps. With the intent of participating in global service, while also providing an immersive experience for their Spanish students, they have taken students to Latin American countries for four of the last five years. In a bold effort to shape their students into problem solvers and global citizens, the work of these two Spanish teachers has already, and will continue to have an incredible impact in their classrooms.

As participants in the professional corps program, TFA-KY's ACMs are particularly well-suited to address the problem of educational inequity for two key reasons. First, we provide low-income school districts with a pool of highly successful 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 provide ongoing support to teachers while they are in the classroom. Because of our rigorous selection model and our training focused on student achievement, TFA ACMs are consistently reviewed as the strongest new teachers with the greatest impact on student achievement in every subject area, as indicated by numerous rigorous independent studies. With the support of the Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism & Service, we can sustain and expand our impact on student achievement for low-income students throughout southeastern Kentucky.

We know when students are given opportunities to realize their potential, they excel. Over the past five years, TFA-KY ACMs have impacted approximately 17,000 students in the classroom, and inestimably more as they continue teaching or take on positions of leadership in education and other sectors. In Appalachia, we have the unique opportunity to work with twenty local districts, twenty-six schools, the Kentucky Department of Education, education cooperatives, parents, communities, and organizations such as the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, Hindman and Pine Mountain Settlement Schools, and area Chambers of Commerce to help meet the growing demand for highly-qualified educators who go above and beyond traditional expectations to provide their students with an excellent education. We will work together to prove what's possible in rural Appalachia.

EVIDENCE BASE: Our proposed intervention is rooted in strong evidence. A robust body of research documents TFA's effectiveness and two of the strongest and most relevant studies are highlighted here. In September of 2013, Mathematica Policy Research released a randomized control trial study of

Narratives

TFA ACMs' effectiveness in 45 high-poverty schools in 11 districts across 8 states. The study compared TFA ACMs to non-TFA teachers in boosting student achievement in secondary math. Students were randomly assigned to the two types of teachers at the beginning of the school year and student test scores were compared at the end of the school year. TFA ACMs were found to be more effective than comparison teachers from both traditional and other less selective alternative routes by 0.07 SD ($p < 0.05$), which roughly translates to 2.6 months of additional math instruction. A second piece of strong evidence comes from a quasi-experimental study that was released in 2015 by the National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research. This study speaks to combined evidence of ACMs' effectiveness and retention in Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) using a relatively new but robust empirical strategy called steady-state analysis. Based on student test scores and longitudinal administrative data from M-DCPS, TFA ACMs were found to exceed the minimum productivity differences required (0.015 SD and 0.006 SD in math and reading respectively) to make the hiring of TFA ACMs advantageous to the district despite their relatively low retention rates. TFA ACMs produced 0.10 SD ($p < 0.01$) of impact on math test scores and 0.022 SD ($p < 0.05$) of impact on reading test scores when compared to other teachers in the district. Although students were not randomly assigned to TFA ACMs and non-TFA teachers in this study, this is a robust design that controlled for teacher, school, and classroom characteristics resulting in a statistically matched comparison. These controls are important since TFA ACMs tend to work in more disadvantaged schools compared to the average teacher in the district.

We have submitted copies of the aforementioned studies as well as a copy of TFA's evaluation, a principal survey that includes results for TFA-KY, which reports 100% of principals are satisfied with their TFA CMs, and 100% believe their CMs are having a positive impact.

NOTICE PRIORITY: TFA-KY will address the CNCS priority areas of: Education - improving student academic performance in Science, Technology, Engineering, and/or Mathematics (STEM). TFA's ACM recruitment, admissions and selection processes are housed within our national office and we place a particular emphasis on recruiting and selecting ACMs who can serve as successful STEM teachers increasing the academic performance of their students. Since 2006, our STEM teaching corps has grown by more than 400% and has grown to be one of our country's largest providers of STEM teachers.

As previously discussed, the region's teacher shortage is particularly acute in the STEM fields, and currently half of our fifty-six ACMs and alumni are teaching a STEM subject. Knowing the placement of our ACMs in these subjects can have a greater impact in our partner districts, we are especially

Narratives

encouraged by our outcomes, where as demonstrated by our internal metrics, our students achieve an astounding average of three points of growth on the math and science portions of the ACT.

This achievement is evident in individual classrooms, where, ACMs like Richard Chou are demonstrating the capability of the region's kids. Of his math seniors, 100% graduated college and career ready based on scoring a 19 on the math portion of the ACT. ("College and Career Readiness in Kentucky," Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education, 2010).

MEMBER TRAINING: Throughout the training and support cycle outlined above, TFA embeds several opportunities to reinforce AmeriCorps compliance. Prohibited activities are reviewed with ACMs at pre-service orientation. We reinforce compliance through email blasts and our internal online training systems. To ensure that generated volunteers are aware of the prohibited activities, ACMs will provide an overview prior to engaging volunteers in any activities. Individual compliance will be monitored by program coaches who are trained annually on prohibited activities. This training includes a comprehensive explanation of the prohibited activities, detecting, reporting, and resolving them. TFA-KY's training begins immediately after admitted applicants accept their offer, and spans the entirety of CMs' two-year commitment. This continuum hinges on the training and support of our corps members, and on the creation of continuous leadership development opportunities for our alumni which are outlined below.

Induction: In preparation for their first week of training, ACMs begin with 40 hours of independent work, which focuses on the regional context of educational inequity and the kind of leadership that is required to make progress. Armed with this knowledge, ACMs gather in Appalachia for one week in June to learn about the region's unique history, assets, and challenges. During this week, they have an opportunity to learn from a wide range of community leaders as well as spend time visiting and serving with a variety of community organizations that work alongside TFA-KY to improve the region. Previous organizations have included Hindman Settlement School, Christian Appalachian Project, Appalachia Service Project, Appalshop, RAMP, and collaborations with AC VISTAs from Pathfinders of Perry County and the Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky. The collective learning that ACMs engage in during induction provides a critical foundation for their ongoing training.

Institute: The core component of our training program is a rigorous five-week, residential summer institute. Appalachia CMs attend a regional Institute in rural Mississippi Delta, in partnership with Cleveland State University. Training at the Mississippi Delta institute is an intentional effort to replicate the experience of teaching in a rural environment in Kentucky.

Narratives

During these five weeks, AMCs attend curriculum sessions led by faculty comprised primarily of TFA's highest-performing alumni. These interactive courses, which include structured reflection sessions, as well as lesson planning and curriculum clinics, are designed to build knowledge, deepen skills, and apply learning to actual teaching.

In addition to pedagogical learning, TFA partners with school districts across the Mississippi Delta to run a summer school program staffed by ACMs in training. Under the close supervision of veteran teachers from the school district and TFA instructional staff, ACMs teach in teams while receiving feedback from experienced teachers with proven track records of success in order to help build their teaching practice.

Through opportunities for practice, observation, coaching and study, as well as careful planning and thoughtful reflection, CMs are prepared to lead their classrooms when they return to Appalachia.

Orientation: Upon their return to Appalachia from institute, ACMs attend an orientation facilitated by TFA-KY staff consisting of rigorous workshops that enable ACMs to apply the skills and knowledge they acquired at institute to their work in their classrooms. During orientation, they engage with curriculum resources that are specific to Kentucky state standards and graduation requirements. Additionally, they utilize these resources to build long-term and unit plans, unit assessments, and lesson plans for their specific classrooms. At orientation, TFA-KY staff help to build regional context for ACMs and provide them with a framework to set meaningful goals for their students. Through engaging with curriculum and instructional resources that are specific to teaching in Kentucky, ACMs leave orientation prepared to begin teaching successfully.

Ongoing Support: Building on the foundation received during pre-service training, TFA-KY's program team provides intensive and individualized training and professional development. ACMs are paired with a Manager of Teacher Leadership Development (MTLD), who leads a cohort of approximately twenty ACMs clustered by the geographic location of schools. MTLDs conduct regular observations of ACM classrooms, providing personalized coaching and support. They work with ACMs to review student data in order to identify and find solutions to problems or gaps in student achievement, as well as track progress to their student achievement goals. This approach builds ACMs' abilities to independently evaluate student outcomes, identify causes of problems, and seek solutions. Also, ACMs meet regularly in groups for content- or grade-level-specific learning teams, led by experienced AmeriCorps alumni teachers, to discuss ongoing challenges and share best practices.

Throughout the training and support cycle outlined above, we embed several opportunities to invest ACMs in the broader AmeriCorps community of service, as well as reinforce key issues of

Narratives

AmeriCorps compliance. Prohibited activities are introduced to CMs at Induction and reviewed at Orientation to ensure that they have clear and solid understanding of their responsibilities. We continue to enforce collective compliance at professional development sessions and via email blasts. Individual compliance will be monitored by staff members who are trained annually on prohibited activities. This training includes a 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 ACMs, staff can review regulations with members and verify that ACMs are not engaging in prohibited activities. Our placement schools in Appalachia are provided with an AmeriCorps orientation guide, which includes information on AmeriCorps policies and prohibited activities.

MEMBER SUPERVISION: All TFA CMs 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. Since our ACMs work as full-time teachers in a professional corps program, they are directly supervised by their school principals and other school administrators. TFA's national Public Partnerships team, who are TFAs in-house subject matter experts, will train all program coaches on AmeriCorps regulations, priorities and expectations. At the beginning of the school year, program coaches train school administrators AmeriCorps rules and regulations. These trainings ensure that supervisors will be adequately trained and prepared to follow AmeriCorps and program regulations, priorities, and expectations.

Every ACM is matched with a program coach - a highly effective TFA alum and/or veteran teacher - who manages a cohort of current members, and provides ongoing support and supervision for them. Program coaches are ACMs' first point of contact. They perform regular observations of member classrooms, model instructional or leadership techniques, review student data with a focus on progress to date, and provide strategies for overcoming current challenges. Coaches refer ACMs to targeted resources and opportunities based on strengths and weaknesses, and assist in analyzing student growth based on final assessments.

To be hired, program coaches must have a demonstrated track record of success during their time in the classroom and demonstrate the characteristics needed to be a successful in this role - critical thinking, ability to influence and motivate, and problem solving skills. Upon joining staff, coaches attend a new staff conference and independently participate in twenty hours of online modules before working with corps members. Once coaches complete their on-boarding process and begin working with members, they engage in ongoing training's - weekly check-ins with their manager; bi-weekly

Narratives

group professional development and skill building sessions; and weekly individualized professional development.

MEMBER EXPERIENCE: ACMs gain invaluable skills through their service experience that prepare them for future employment. As classroom leaders, ACMs must exhibit effective management skills such as organizing and leading small and large group instruction and activities. Teaching in a classroom requires incredible creativity, excellent communication skills and persistence. In addition, delivering high-quality instruction requires planning and preparing lessons and projects effectively and efficiently. According to a recent article, graduates of TFA acquire two traits that Google feels are important to succeed: the ability to "think on one's feet", and the ability to achieve success in a challenging new environment (A. Taube. "Why Google Loves Teach For America," Business Insider. October 21, 2014).

Additionally, AmeriCorps members have access to meaningful service experiences, including opportunities for reflection and connection to the broader National Service network. Personal and group reflections are essential, as ACMs are required to measure not only the academic achievement of their students, but their own progress. This dedicated reflection time at pre-service Institute and regular all-corps events serves also to strengthen their AC experience. During this time, ACMs also reflect on their identity and background, as well as their vision for their classrooms. In addition to centrally driven reflection, teacher coaches ask ACMs to reflect on their purpose and progress both during professional development coursework and in one-on-one sessions throughout the year.

The corps member experience is a powerful one, changing the life-direction of many corps members. While only 10% of applicants said they were committed to education long-term when joining TFA, over 80% of all TFA alumni either continue to work in education or in jobs that impact low-income communities. In order to orient the mindset and skills of our members, we focus specifically on "Lead Beyond Two" events during ACMs' second year in our program. Our staff, alumni, and partner school districts engage our members in values based reflection on how to leverage their AmeriCorps and TFA experience towards long-term impact for children growing up in low-income communities, whether it be inside or outside the classroom.

In addition to TFA-specific resources, we also direct our members to utilize the AmeriCorps alumni network online, and to participate in annual events such as the MLK Day of Service, which serve to connect our members with other national service programs in our local communities.

COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION: TFA-KY is committed to communicating the important role AmeriCorps plays in our community by taking specific steps to promote

Narratives

AmeriCorps. TFA-KY will continue to brand all locally-based publications, including our formal letterhead, as well as provide an AmeriCorps orientation to partner principals to ensure they understand AmeriCorps and can identify with the brand and program to external constituents such as parents, community organization, district officials, and donors. Additionally, ACMs will display AmeriCorps signs in their classrooms and will be provided with AmeriCorps gear such as a lapel pin or lanyard to wear daily, as well as a t-shirt that identifies TFA and AmeriCorps which is worn at several events. TFA staff, with help from the Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism & Service, will help facilitate connections between TFA teachers and other Kentucky AmeriCorps members, thereby fostering greater collaboration and community building through partnership. Finally, ACMs will participate in AmeriCorps' national days of service and TFA will promote and participate in AmeriCorps Week each year.

Organizational Capability

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING: Teach for America has 26 years of experience executing our proposed program. Wendy Kopp proposed the idea for Teach For America in her Princeton University undergraduate thesis in 1989. In 1990, a charter corps of 500 committed recent college graduates joined Teach For America and began fueling the movement to eliminate educational inequity. Since then, nearly 43,000 participants have reached more than 4 million children across our 53 regions during their two-year teaching commitments. They have sustained their commitment as alumni, working within education and across all sectors to help ensure that children growing up in low-income communities get an excellent education. Over the past 26 years, TFA has used our body experience to refine our model and ensure we are meeting the evolving needs of our students and communities across the country.

TFA is led by Chief Executive Officer and TFA AmeriCorps alumna Elisa Villanueva Beard, who works with a national board of directors, a four member management team and thirty-five member senior leadership team to set TFA's national strategy and direction. Elisa started working with TFA 18 years ago in Phoenix, where she taught first and second grade bilingual education as a 1998 ACM. She joined TFA's staff in 2001 to lead the organization's work in her hometown of McAllen, Texas, as regional Executive Director (ED). Four years later, she stepped into the role of Chief Operating Officer, leading TFA's field operations.

Additionally, TFA-KY is led by a founding Kentucky staff member, Josh Sparks, who serves as Executive Director, managing the operations of the regional site, setting regional vision, and overseeing execution of our program to ensure that we are meeting the unique needs of specific

Narratives

communities. TFA-KY has four functional teams; Teacher Leadership Development, Operations, Alumni Affairs, and Development.

As a recipient of AmeriCorps funding since 1994, we have built systems and tools to successfully manage AmeriCorps grants and ensure compliance. We have managed large-scale federal grants through the US ED, NASA, and the National Science Foundation. We have built significant in-house federal grants and finance teams to administer federal funding and train and support regional staff on AmeriCorps compliance, budget creation, and grants management. Our AmeriCorps team is our in-house experts on AmeriCorps grants management and administration. In this capacity, they provide ongoing trainings and technical assistance for regional staff via conference calls, regional and national conferences, site visits and online tutorials. This team also conducts internal audits to ensure compliance. Our finance team reports to the auditing and finance committees of our national board, and works closely with our development team and regional budget trackers to coordinate cash-in and expenses throughout the organization. Our risk and compliance team is responsible for developing organization-wide risk and compliance strategy, and serves as a center of excellence for internal policy development, monitoring and reporting, and performs internal audits. 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 compliance with federal and state laws and regulations.

In addition, Teach For America values research and internal and external evaluations and understands its place in refining and evolving our program model; and has a team devoted to this field of work. The purpose of our organization wide learning team is to improve the quality and reach of internal and external research gauging the impact of Teach For America or informing programmatic improvement by building and maintaining relationships with all stakeholders including: ACMs, placement partners, students, parent of our students, and the broader communities in which we serve. We survey all these stakeholders annually to ensure we understand our areas of success and areas of improvement. The Organization wide learning team has developed both internal capacity and a team culture that enables the following efforts: shape internal research agenda, field and manage external research inquiries, studies, and surveys, translate research and respond to studies and work to improve data quality. Through this focus on research, Teach For America seeks rigorous independent evaluations to measure our impact and continually improve our program.

COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY: TFA-KY will comply with AmeriCorps rules and regulations including those related to prohibited and unallowable activities.

Narratives

As a long-time AmeriCorps grantee, TFA has developed systems to ensure compliance with AmeriCorps requirements and regulations. In charge of overall, broad monitoring and compliance is our Public Partnerships team who conducts regular regional site visits and audits ACM activities and files to ensure compliance with AmeriCorps regulations. The monitoring and compliance process commences as ACMs matriculate into the program, they are required to submit eligibility documentation and complete background checks, which the Public Partnerships and Admissions team reviews. This ensures that ACMs have met eligibility requirements prior to beginning service. TFA-KY program staff is trained by the 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. Teacher Coaches provide oversight of ACMs through frequent site visits, classroom observations, and maintain regular communication with ACMs and principals. Additionally, all incoming ACMs are required to sign documents attesting that they have read and understood the AmeriCorps prohibited activities, and at the end of the school year all ACMs are required to sign a form certifying they did not violate any activities prohibited by AmeriCorps. Additionally, TFA-KY staff communicates AmeriCorps policies and prohibited activities to principals who 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 the TFA-KY Leadership Team. Partnering with the Public Partnerships team and legal counsel, the regional leadership team will assess the suspected violations and suspend the ACM until the issue is resolved. As a professional corps program, TFA AmeriCorps Members are paid staff who are filling vacancies open to the general public. 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 structure set up by the collective bargaining agreement. We do not receive any special hiring arrangement beyond those permissible by collective bargaining agreements.

Budget/Cost Effectiveness

COST EFFECTIVENESS: TFA-KY is requesting 46 full-time member slots at \$1,000/MSY through a professional corps fixed grant. While we continue to grow and diversify our funding, we also face unique fundraising challenges given the region's economic contraction in recent years due to a severe decline in the market for coal. This has made an already limited source of individual and corporate

Narratives

donors even smaller, and in some instances our fundraising efforts have encountered reticence from donors who are unable to continue giving at previous levels. For example, a coal operation company that was once a significant prospective donor is now out of business, and a property company who was a multi-year donor was not able to award their pledged gift, citing profitability due to coal market conditions.

An increase in funding per MSY will help TFA-KY enhance and improve our model of support for ACMs, as well as continuing to provide low-income school districts in Appalachia with a pool of pre-screened talent they would not reach otherwise.

While we maintain a robust training and support program for our corps members through a rigorous pre-corps training institute and ongoing MTLTD support, additional funding would help us meet fundraising goals to achieve enhancements to our program, like continued in-classroom support for ACMs into alumni-hood. As such, this expansion of programming will have a direct influence on teacher impact in the classroom and improving student achievement, as well as increasing the likelihood of alumni participation in our program.

BUDGET ADEQUACY: TFA-KY's budget supports our program and reflects our priorities; 88% of the budget is spent on costs related to recruiting, selecting, training, and supporting our ACMs - our key program activities. Another additional 4% of our budget supports our work with our alumni. These allocations reflect the emphasis we place on offering schools a highly-qualified, diverse pool of qualified candidates, and providing ACMs with the training, ongoing support, and professional development that enables them to lead their students to make significant academic gains. As a professional corps, our ACMs do not receive a stipend through AC.

In our most recent fiscal year, FY16, we raised \$1,436,309, which includes dollars from:

- **FOUNDATIONS:** In FY 2016, we raised \$447,608 from foundations, which comprised 31% of our regional revenue. We continue to prioritize forming new partnerships with both national and Kentucky foundations. Additionally, we are utilizing our network of current supporters to identify connections, to secure meetings with new foundations, and to create opportunities for TFA to share our work with a broad range of foundations through various organizations.

- **CORPORATIONS:** In FY 2016, we raised \$24,128 from corporations, which comprised 2% of our regional revenue. To ensure that prospective corporations understand that TFA can provide a significant return on their investment, we are creating unique partnership opportunities that align with individual corporations' strategic plans and philanthropic priorities, enabling them to view our partnership as mutually beneficial.

Narratives

- INDIVIDUALS: In FY 2016 we were able to raise \$31,692 from individuals in the Kentucky community, which total comprises 2% of our regional revenue. We plan to hold events throughout the remainder of the year to further expand our pool of potential supporters and to increase awareness of TFA among new networks of individuals.

- SCHOOL PARTNERS: In addition to the fundraising efforts noted above, we received \$115,500 from our school partners to help offset the training and recruitment costs of the TFA-KY teachers working their schools. These funds comprised 8% of our regional revenue.

- PUBLIC: In FY 2016, we were granted \$293,843 in public funds in Kentucky, which comprised 20% of our regional revenue. If TFA-KY were to be granted a state AC grant of \$46,000, it would comprise approximately 3% of our regional budget in FY 2017.

As our ACMs have already begun their school year, we only budget travel for our AC Coordinator to attend the annual "Launch" event.

Currently, the only CNCS support TFA-KY AC members receive is education awards for our ACMs. All operating dollars from our national direct grant go to national grant costs, such as recruitment, selection, and training. As a result of fundraising challenges described earlier, operational support from AmeriCorps is especially critical. Although we are currently focused on growing our base of individual and corporate donors, a sum of \$46,000 would be an incredible challenge to plan for in the coming fiscal year.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

EVALUATION PLAN: TFA-KY's theory of change holds that rigorous selection of teachers, coupled with thoughtful and supportive training, can produce well equipped teachers who can make a profound impact on their students and eventually on the overall education justice space. ACMs are first recruited based on their strong records of past achievement. Those with the greatest potential to affect student achievement are selected to teach. Once ACMs join the TFA program, they are provided with intensive pre-service training as well as ongoing support and professional development. ACMs are placed to teach in high-needs schools and therefore students who are experiencing the greatest disadvantage when it comes to accessing high quality education will benefit from ACMs' service as teachers. The short-term intended outcome of the program is that ACMs will gain the necessary knowledge and skills to be successful teachers in low-income schools through TFA's support and training. In the medium-term, we expect these ACMs to take the knowledge and skills to produce academic gains for the students they teach. Finally in the long-term, we hope to see ACMs taking their experience as teachers to become lifelong leaders and advocates in education. Our proposed evaluation

Narratives

will be focusing on the short- and medium-term outcomes.

Research Questions to be addressed in the Study: 1. Based on the assessment of principals that employ ACMs, do the ACMs demonstrate a level of knowledge and skill that is appropriate for their position when compared to other teachers in the school who were not selected and trained through TFA? 2. Based on the assessment of principals that employ ACMs, do the ACMs make a positive impact on the academic achievement of their students? How does this compare to the performance of other teachers in the school who were not selected and trained through TFA?

Evaluation Design and Rationale: The design chosen for this study is a descriptive study of ACM knowledge, skill, and performance based on principal assessments. Although this study is not a rigorous experimental design, there are merits to this chosen design for a number of reasons. First, there is already a substantial body of studies on ACMs' effectiveness using experimental and quasi-experimental methods. This study aims to supplement the existing body of research through a different lens. Also, the study is designed so that principals can make comparisons between TFA ACMs and other teachers in the same school who were recruited and trained through other means. Although this is not a true control group, principals' perspectives on situating our ACMs in the context of other teachers can be a valuable way to think about what the absence of TFA might mean for certain schools and communities. Lastly, this descriptive design is a cost-effective way to obtain useful feedback and build on the evidence-base we already have.

This proposed evaluation plan builds on past iterations of the National Principal Survey. The most recent version conducted by the RAND Corporation and released in September 2015, laid the groundwork for understanding how principals' responses change over time. Also, the proposed evaluation will seek to measure and explain differences in views between groups of principals with different characteristics. For example, in the 2015 survey, 12% of responding principals are TFA alumni. We are eager to understand whether this group has higher expectations of ACMs employed in their school.

There are several limitations to this design. First, given that this is a descriptive study without a true comparison group, it is impossible to draw causal conclusions from the results. We also can't necessarily pinpoint which aspect of the TFA program is making a difference in ACM performance -- in other words, is TFA recruiting and selecting talented and diverse individuals to begin with or are the training and support the ACMs receive playing a role on their performance? Second, given that most principals employ more than one ACM in any given school year, we anticipate some principals will have to reconcile and assess the performance of multiple ACMs as they will be asked to provide a

Narratives

single rating for all ACMs in their school. Third, as with all surveys, there are potential concerns regarding response rates and whether there might be systemic differences between those who choose to respond versus those who choose not to. While these limitations will certainly pose a challenge, we believe that this evaluation plan sufficiently meets our needs, which is to supplement our existing robust evidence-base in a reasonably reliable manner. It is also a way for us to gather insights about our practice from one of our key group of partners (i.e., principals) and this survey design will fulfill that purpose. Furthermore, we will be working with external evaluators with the technical expertise to help us think through potential challenges and limitations throughout the process.

Sampling Methods, Measurement Tools, and Data Collection: For the last twenty years, TFA has engaged external researchers to survey principals that employ ACMs. As in past years, we will work with an external evaluator for this evaluation and they will conduct all aspects of the research including sampling, survey instrument development, and data collection. In an effort to cut down on time and cost, we have decided to go with a sampling approach rather than conducting a census of all principals that employ ACMs for the current evaluation. With the right sampling approach, we believe we will be able to obtain reliable results without going through the labor and time intensive census approach. Among meeting many other sampling concerns, we will make sure that there is fair representation from a variety of school leaders TFA ACMs work with. For instance, it'll be necessary to make sure principals from all school levels (early childhood, elementary, secondary), school governance types (traditional public, charter, BIA), and school location (rural, urban) are represented. In terms of survey instrument development, the evaluators and TFA will review previous iterations of the survey and determine what should be modified and what will stay the same. Given that our evaluation partners for the 2015 principal survey have set up mechanisms to be able to track certain principal responses over time, it will be important to keep in mind which questions must remain the same for longitudinal analysis. As was the case with previous iterations, the surveys will be distributed electronically to principals via email.

Analysis Plan: Because we plan to work with external evaluators, all analyses and presentation of results will be handled by our evaluation partners. They will use programs and statistical packages that are most suitable for the design of this study. We expect the analysis to show basic descriptions of the principals that participated in the survey, how the responding principals rate ACMs when comparing them to non-ACM teachers' knowledge, skills, and performance as well as how the responding principals' ratings of ACMs may have changed from the 2015 iteration of the survey. We will also aim to determine possible correlations between various principal and school characteristics

Narratives

where appropriate (e.g., is there a relationship between principals' years of experience and how they rate ACMs?). All of these results will help TFA determine whether ACMs are being equipped with the necessary level of knowledge and skills to be successful teachers and whether ACMs are making an impact on students' academic achievement. Qualification needed for the Evaluator: TFA will go through a rigorous competitive process to determine the best qualified evaluation partner. We will look for evaluators who have a track record of success especially when it comes to conducting large scale surveys and we will also seek to work with an evaluator who is mission aligned and familiar with TFA's work. For our past principal surveys we worked with Policy Studies Associates and the RAND Corporation. We believe that research firms of similar caliber will be best suited to carry out this work for this evaluation. Also, we have found from recent experience that it is crucial for the evaluation partner to be able to work with school district personnel in working through technical issues such as email filters and firewalls. Through recent experience, we have determined that those were some of the reasons we've had response rate challenges in the past. As such, an evaluator who has experience in and is comfortable working with technical staff of districts will be a plus.

Timeline and Budget June-August 2016: Identify appropriate evaluation partner through a competitive process; September-November 2016: Once evaluator has been hired, determine sample, refine survey instrument, align on a detailed plan of execution, and prepare for survey launch; December 2016: Educate staff on what they can expect while the survey is in the field including what is new and different with this iteration of the survey; December 2016-March 2017: Survey is in the field; April-June 2017: Clean and analyze data; July 2017-August 2017: Sharing of preliminary results and go through drafting process of final report; September 2017: Share final results with TFA community as well as partners and funders; October-December 2017: Reflect on results and devise ways to make program improvements based on findings. The estimated budget for this project is between \$100,000 and \$200,000. This does not include TFA staff time for managing the evaluation and it is the allotted amount we will devote to contracting with an external evaluator. We will be relying on funding from other sources apart from CNCS to carry out this study.

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

FY17 CNCS Clarification

Narratives

1) Teach For America is anticipating corps size growth in the 2017-18 school year in order to meet the consistent and growing demands of our placement partners. To ensure we have the ability to meet our recruitment needs, we restructured our corps member recruitment team, adding more staff capacity to engage with prospective applicants across the country. We changed our prospect communications and simplified our application submission process. We're doubling down on our recruiting investment by putting more resources toward appealing to prospects who will be competitive in our process. We are already seeing these strategies succeed. Given our recruitment goals and our current applicant pool, our MSY request is not duplicated. Our request reflects our best thinking at this time given the upward trends we are seeing in our national recruitment and admissions numbers.

2) As a professional corps program, Teach For America AmeriCorps members are paid staff who are filling vacancies open to the general public. 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 structure set up by the collective bargaining agreement and/or the structures set up by the district or charter management organizations. We do not receive any special hiring arrangement beyond those permissible by collective bargaining agreements.

As a long time AmeriCorps grantee, Teach For America has developed strong systems to ensure grant compliance internally, with corps members, their placement sites, and our staff members. TFA program staff, including all Teacher Coaches, are trained by the Public Partnerships team on both acceptable and prohibited AmeriCorps activities to equip them to educate AmeriCorps members (ACMs) and monitor ACMs' activities. The Public Partnerships team is also available for consultation with regions, ACMs, and site supervisors. Teacher Coaches provide this same guidance to both school administration, as well as to the AmeriCorps members. In addition, during their AmeriCorps orientation and through ongoing professional development, our ACMs are instructed on prohibited activities related to union organizing. Teacher coaches and principals, who supervise our members, work closely with them to monitor their time and ensure that they are in no way assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing while serving on AmeriCorps time. TFA's Executive Leadership Team and the Public Partnership team monitor staff activities through bi-weekly regional check-ins and site visits to ensure staff compliance. All training and monitoring is reiterated through information provided in weekly corps member and staff email newsletters.

Narratives

Continuation Changes

N/A

Grant Characteristics