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Executive Summary

Since 2010, Teach For America-Alabama has placed corps members across Alabama's Black Belt region, providing a critical source of well-trained teachers who are helping break the local cycle of educational inequity. Our corps is comprised of outstanding college graduates who commit two years to teach in low-income public schools and become life-long leaders in the effort to expand education opportunity for students in Alabama.

Rationale and Approach

Problem

Teach For America-Alabama works to close the vast achievement gap that persists between students in low- and higher-income communities in Alabama.

Data shows that the achievement gap starts before students enter kindergarten and worsens over time (McKinsey & Co. "Economic Impact of the Achievement Gap." 2009):

- Low-income children hear, on average, 30 million fewer words than their more affluent peers before the age of 4, leading to low literacy. (Hart, Betty and Risley, Todd. "Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children." 1995)
- By 4th grade, children in low-income communities are on average 3 grade levels behind children in higher income neighborhoods. (U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress 1998-2009 Reading Assessments)
- Approximately 50% of students in low-income communities will not graduate from high school by the time they are 18 years old. Those that do perform, on average, at the academic level of 8th graders in higher income communities. (Diploma Counts," Editorial Projects in Education, Education Week, 2007 & 2009)

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- Only 1 in 10 will graduate from college. (Moretson, Tom. "Family Income and Higher Education Opportunity," 2010)

In Alabama, the reality is even more staggering. This past year at Mountain Brook High School, where 0% of students receive free/reduced lunch, less than 2% of 11th grade students tested below mastery on the reading portion of the Alabama High School Graduation Exam. While just two hours away, where 96.3% of students receive free/reduced lunch, more than 23% of Marengo High School's 11th grade students fell below the state-mandated mastery level and are forced to retake in hopes of passing. ("Accountability Reporting System" Alabama State Department of Education, 2008-2009)

According to 2008-09 Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT) stats published in the State Department of Education Annual Report, 20% of students statewide tested below grade level in 5th grade. However in Livingston Junior High School and York West End Junior High School, two public junior high schools located in Sumter County (where 32.9% of residents are below the poverty line), roughly 43% of 5th graders scored below grade level. In math, 58% of 8th grade students in these schools testing below grade level; the state average was 27%. ("Accountability Reporting System" Alabama State Department of Education, 2008-2009, ARMT)

These disparities severely limit the life choices of the over 15 million children growing up in poverty today. (U.S. Census Bureau, "Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2009," 2010) A less educated person is more likely to earn less; a high school dropout is five to eight times more likely to be incarcerated than a college graduate. (McKinsey & Co "The Economic Impact of the Achievement Gap in America's Schools," 2009) Because African-American, Latino, and Native American children are three times as likely to live in a low-income area, children of color are

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disproportionately impacted by this inequality. (America's Children in Brief: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2008," Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. National SAFE KIDS Campaign (NSKC). Children at Risk Fact Sheet. Washington (DC): NSKC, 2004)

The consequences of the achievement gap are not limited to low-income communities. The achievement gap between students in low-income communities and those in wealthier communities ultimately results in a \$400 billion to \$670 billion loss to the national GDP each year, the equivalent of "a permanent recession." (McKinsey & Co "The Economic Impact of the Achievement Gap in America's Schools," 2009)

We believe that the achievement gap is caused by three cyclical factors. First, while children in low-income communities have the same potential as their high-income peers, they face many extra challenges -- lack of access to high-quality pre-school programs, adequate healthcare and housing. Second, schools and districts don't have sufficient capacity to help students overcome the extra challenges they face. Third, our prevailing ideology hasn't led to the necessary policies and investments. Among other things, we are hampered by societal beliefs that schools cannot make a significant difference in the face of socioeconomic disparities.

TFA-Alabama chooses to address this problem because we believe that the educational inequity that persists along socioeconomic and racial lines is our nation's greatest injustice. In response, TFA-Alabama places corps members as teachers in our state's at-risk schools -- those that are struggling to meet standards set under the No Child Left Behind Act.

Our corps members teach all grade levels and subject areas across nineteen public schools. We work

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with our district partners to identify underperforming schools; 100% of the schools we serve are located in low-income areas of Alabama, more than 87% qualify for free or reduced-price lunches, which is more than 34 percentage points higher than the state average. ("Alabama Education Report Card" Alabama State Department of Education, 2010)

TFA-Alabama currently places corps members in six school districts in the Black Belt of Alabama: Hale, Lowndes, Marengo, Perry, Sumter and the city of Selma. These districts were chosen after carefully examining many similarly challenged public school districts located within the Black Belt. Due to the relatively large distance that many of the potential Black Belt school districts are from one another, TFA-Alabama chose the six districts that were both characterized as high-need and within the closest relative distances to one another as possible. TFA-Alabama was able to cluster an average of five corps members within each school district to maximize the support structure available to each corps member.

Solution: AmeriCorps Member Roles and Responsibilities

As a professional corps program, TFA-Alabama addresses the problem of educational inequity by recruiting and placing qualified participants as teachers in communities that lack an adequate number of such professionals. Our corps members often fill teaching positions in high-need subject areas, which districts often find difficult to fill. For example, 59% of our corps members currently teach math and science. In addition, TFA provides low-income schools with candidates commensurate to those teaching in the world's top performing school systems. We believe that "lacking an adequate number of such professionals" does not just refer to communities that simply do not have enough candidates, but also to communities that do not have a pool of highly-qualified candidates.

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Research consistently demonstrates that high-quality teaching is the most important factor in student learning. ("The Real Value of Value Added" Education Trust, 2004, citing multiple studies) Despite this evidence, low-income students are less likely to get effective teachers in their classrooms than wealthier students; they are far more likely to have teachers who scored poorly on college and licensure exams. ("All Talk, No Action: Putting an End to Out-of-Field Teaching," Education Trust, 2002) Because of the additional challenges facing students in low-income communities and lack of capacity in schools to address these challenges, low-income communities have a higher than average need for highly-effective teachers, but often lack a sufficient supply relative to the level of need.

A recent McKinsey study of the world's top performing school systems reveal that 100% of their teachers come from the "top third+" of college students. In the U.S. only 23% come from the top third; 14% in high poverty schools. McKinsey coined the term "top third+" to refer to those students that are in top third academic cohort, and are rigorously screened for other qualities believed to be predictors of successful teachers -- perseverance, ability to motivate others, and organization and communication skills. (McKinsey & Co "Closing the Talent Gap: Attracting and Retaining top-third graduates to careers in teaching," 2010) TFA brings exactly these types of candidates to low-income schools. The average GPA for 2010 TFA corps members is 3.6, with SAT scores in the 94th percentile; our extensive interview process screens all applicants for these "plus" characteristics.

AmeriCorps is crucial to our efforts as it allows us to bring in qualified corps members from all communities including people that would not otherwise be doing this work. Specifically our growing number of corps members from low-income backgrounds depend on the education award, loan forbearance and interest accrual payments to make joining the corps an economically viable option.

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TFA corps members address the three causes of the achievement gap in three key ways:

First, corps members commit to teaching two years in low-income schools throughout Alabama. Our corps members provide a critical source of teachers who help ensure their students have the educational opportunities they deserve, despite compounding socioeconomic factors. A member's typical day includes teaching a full class schedule, lesson planning, participating in professional development, and often leading extracurricular activities.

Second, our corps members are charged with improving the academic achievement of their students. In succeeding with their students, members gain added conviction that educational inequity is a solvable problem and a grounded understanding of problem and solutions in all its complexity. Corps members influence the prevailing ideology by demonstrating that children in low-income communities can achieve at high levels.

Third, our network of more than 28,000 -- corps members and alumni -- work to minimize the extra challenges facing children growing up in low-income communities, build the capacity of schools and school systems, and change the prevailing ideology through their examples and their advocacy.

TFA-Alabama is requesting 62 fulltime education award slots. Fulltime enrollment in AmeriCorps accurately reflects our members' service as fulltime teachers.

AmeriCorps Member Selection, Training, and Supervision

SELECTING:

TFA conducts internal studies to identify the characteristics that differentiate our top performing corps

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members, resulting in a selection model that enables us to accept applicants who have the greatest likelihood of success. In particular, our highest-performing members show perseverance, strong critical thinking skills, the ability to influence and motivate others, organizational ability, and hold high expectations for children and families in low-income communities.

TFA recruits at more than 350 colleges and universities. We have 54 Recruitment Directors who build relationships with deans, professors, and student leaders to identify prospective applicants and build target lists of potential applicants; as of October 2010 we compiled the contact information of 184,554 seniors. We meet with these students to discuss TFA's role in closing the achievement gap. By highlighting the existence of the achievement gap and its solvability, we are able to recruit many individuals who might not otherwise have applied to become AmeriCorps members.

Through this intensive targeted recruitment effort and mass marketing, more than 46,000 people applied to join the 2010 corps. Among last year's applicants were: more than 5% of graduating seniors at 120 schools and nearly 12% of Ivy League seniors. Our 2010 members represent some of our nation's most promising future leaders. They earned an average GPA of 3.6 and 89% held leadership positions on their campuses.

A large number of TFA-Alabama corps members were either raised in the state or attended one of the state's colleges or universities. Corps members coming from Alabama make up a total of more than 21% of the corps, with the University of Alabama, Auburn University, and Alabama A&M all being represented.

We recruit people of color because we recognize the importance of providing children with role models

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who have similar backgrounds. More than 95% of the students we reach this year are African American and Latino. We recruit heavily at historically black colleges and universities, and work aggressively on our target campuses to recruit top students of color. This year 32% of our corps is people of color and 28% received Pell Grants. TFA has a higher percentage of African American (11% v. 5%) and Latino corps members (7% v. 6%), than the graduating classes in the top 340 universities in the country. (U.S. News & World report; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.)

TRAINING:

TFA provides intensive pre-service training and ongoing professional development to corps members. We aim to ensure that our members are effective in leading their students to significant academic achievement while simultaneously providing an experience that will inspire them to become lifelong leaders to eliminate educational inequity.

The bedrock of our training and evaluation model is a framework we call Teaching As Leadership (TAL), which include the six strategies that we have found drive effective teaching:

- Setting an ambitious vision
- Investing students and families in that vision
- Planning purposefully to meet ambitious goals
- Executing plans effectively
- Working relentlessly to achieve their vision
- Continuously reflecting and improving

Each of these strategies corresponds to a series of 28 teacher actions, which comprise the TAL rubric.

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Our training and support model is based on helping members successfully employ these teacher actions, which happens through the general training timeline listed below.

INDUCTION -- At the beginning of the summer, members spend a week in Alabama learning about the communities in which they will serve. Corps members will be oriented to AmeriCorps and take part in a variety of sessions aimed at equipping them with the fundamental knowledge that will prepare them for success in the classrooms and communities of the Black Belt.

INSTITUTE -- Next, corps members attend a rigorous five-week residential summer training institute in the Mississippi Delta to prepare them for teaching in a low-income classroom. There are two main components of the institute: summer school teaching and curriculum sessions.

Members teach summer school classes as part of a four-person collaborative that is supervised and mentored by both a veteran teacher and TFA staff member. Corps members receive regular feedback about their teaching, reflect and refine their practice to ensure that students meet summer school goals. They also observe one another and videos of themselves teaching, allowing corps members to see which teaching methods are most effective.

Corps members attend daily curriculum sessions where they gain the foundational knowledge needed to become highly effective beginning teachers. We have created a 6-textbook curriculum based on years of research and input from education experts: Teaching As Leadership, Elementary/Secondary Literacy, Learning Theory, Instructional Planning and Delivery, Classroom Management & Culture, and Diversity, Community & Achievement.

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ORIENTATION -- After institute corps members return to Alabama to create their first unit plans and assessments. With these elements established before the school year begins, our teachers are better prepared to move their students forward.

ONGOING SUPPORT -- Building on the foundation received during the summer training, TFA-Alabama program team provide intensive training and professional development. There are four main components to our ongoing professional development model.

First, corps members are paired with a Program Director (PD) who conducts observations of the member's class, and provide corps members with feedback and support. Corps members and PDs review student data to identify and find solutions to problems or gaps in student achievement. This approach builds corps members' abilities to independently evaluate student outcomes, identify causes of problems, and seek solutions.

Second, corps members have access to TFAnet -- our private website of resources designed to help members create data-driven, student achievement- focused classrooms.

Third, TFA-Alabama corps members attend monthly, day-long professional development sessions led by the TFA-Alabama staff and external volunteers. Meetings focus on topics such as Effective Time Management in the Classroom, Creating Engaging Lessons, Tracking and Special Education Inclusion.

Finally, members participate in certification programs, through the University of Alabama, designed to ensure that members meet state certification requirements. These programs prepare corps members

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to stay involved in the movement to end educational inequity beyond their two-year commitments.

CREATING LIFELONG ETHIC OF SERVICE:

TFA's mission is to build the movement to end educational inequity by enlisting our nation's most promising future leaders in the effort. Accomplishing our mission requires that we provide corps members with a transformational experience.

Leading students in low-income communities to achieve significant academic outcomes transforms corps members' sense of possibility and urgency regarding closing the achievement gap. Although just 10% of incoming corps members report that they had an interest in teaching prior to joining TFA, 63% of our nearly 20,000 alumni currently work in education. Additionally, 93% report that they support TFA's mission through career, philanthropy, volunteer work, or graduate study.

TFA works to reinforce a culture of service by providing opportunities for members to take on increased responsibility. Corps members have the opportunity to develop and conduct professional development sessions, work at our summer training institute, and recruit at their colleges and universities. During their service, we host discussions designed to help members reflect on the causes of educational inequity and fostering a sense of responsibility to address these issues.

After successfully completing their service, members become part of TFA's alumni network. We employ a two-part strategy to foster the leadership of our alumni base. First, we build community among our alumni and keep them connected to TFA through regional alumni summits and an alumni magazine. Second, we support the career development of our alumni through a series of initiatives that fast track the pathway to leadership in several key sectors--school leadership, teaching

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leadership, political leadership, policy and advocacy leadership, and social entrepreneurship. Our focus on these sectors is based on alumni interest and their potential to have a significant impact on the problem we address. Currently, over 550 alumni are serving as school leaders, over 6000 are still teaching, 45 are elected officials, over 500 alumni work in public policy, and more than 20 are social entrepreneurs.

SUPERVISING:

TFA-Alabama's plan for supervising corps members may differ from other AmeriCorps program because we are a professional corps. Since our corps members work as full-time professional teachers, they are directly supervised by school officials. Additionally, all TFA corps members are college graduates who have gone through a rigorous application process that is designed, in part, to measure their ability to work effectively in a professional setting. Therefore, our supervision plan is concerned with corps member development and evaluation.

Each corps member is matched with a Program Director (PD) -- highly effective alums who manage a cohort of current members to ensure that they achieve ambitious academic goals with their students. Throughout the year, PDs observe and meet with corps members to review student data and strategies for overcoming current challenges. PDs refer corps members to targeted resources based on strengths and weaknesses. At the end of the year PDs and corps members analyze student growth based on final assessments.

PDs go through a multi-step application procedure that includes an initial application, the completion of a comprehensive applicant activity and a final in-person interview with senior staff. Additionally, the majority of PDs have previously showcased their talent and ambition by teaching for two or more

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years as a TFA corps member.

Once hired, PDs are provided with comprehensive trainings during the first one to two weeks of their employment, including site visits with veteran PDs. During site visits, PDs are able to sit in on classroom observations, programming meetings and professional development planning sessions. TFA-Alabama's Executive Director is head of the programming team; they meet weekly as a group and one-on-one. In addition, PDs are supported through the PD community that works together to share resources and best practices.

Outcome: Performance Measures

Throughout the three-year grant cycle, TFA-Alabama expects to effect immediate and long-term change in efforts to expand educational opportunity that further the results described below.

IMMEDIATE IMPACT

In the short-term our corps members must close the gap for their students and they must prove their efficacy through measurable results. Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. released an independent study in 2004 using a research methodology widely regarded as the gold standard. This study found that students of TFA corps members made more progress in a year in both reading and math than would typically be expected. The study also found that corps members were working in the highest-need classrooms in the country, where students begin the year on average at the 14th percentile against the national norm. ("The Effects of Teach For America on Students: Findings from a National Evaluation," Mathematica Policy Research, June 2004)

A 2008-2009 Urban Institute study found that TFA corps members were, on average, more effective

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than non-TFA teachers in all subject areas even when compared with experienced and traditionally certified teachers. Additionally, the study found the positive impact of having a TFA teacher was two to three times that of having a teacher with three or more years of experience. (The Urban Institute/CALDER Research Center, 2009)

LONG-TERM IMPACT:

Our aim is to catalyze system-wide change in Alabama by providing a leadership force at every level that will change the reality for students in our city. Our ever-expanding group of alumni -- now nearly 20,000 strong -- is a powerful force for change by providing key leadership in education and non-profit organizations, and a critical workforce that builds ongoing capacity. For example:

- GERALYN BUFORD (Houston '03) works with the Alabama Math, Science and Technology Initiative -- a statewide initiative aimed at improving the teaching of science and math to Alabama's students.
- CHANELLE HARDY (D.C. '99) serves as chief of staff to Rep. Artur Davis who represented the 7th District of Alabama in the United States House of Representatives.

In each TFA site where we have placed corps members over the course of years, we see the significant impact of our alumni.

MEASURING RESULTS:

TFA-Alabama opts into the national performance measure pilot:

- ED1 Number of students who start in an AmeriCorps education program.
- ED2 Number of students who complete participation in an AmeriCorps education program.
- ED12 Number of AmeriCorps members who begin serving as teachers through a Teacher Corps

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program.

- ED13 Number of AmeriCorps members who completed serving as teachers through a Teacher Corps program.
- ED14 Number of individuals teaching in high needs schools.
- ED16 Number of individuals teaching in schools in the year after term of service.
- ED17 Number of teachers remaining the education field, but not teaching in a school after their term of service.

TFA-Alabama will use internal tracking systems to address the above performance measures. Our performance measure targets are determined based on our previous experience in Alabama schools and trends within our larger national corps.

TFA has developed internal metrics to measure the academic growth of our corps member's students, and which will allow us to address optional performance measure ED15 -- number of students in AmeriCorps teacher classrooms with improved academic performance.

TFA measures performance based on the impact our corps members have on student achievement. This includes measuring the growth students make throughout the year and/or students' ability to demonstrate mastery of content at the end of the year. Each corps member administers a diagnostic test in the beginning of the year to each student, and is then required to monitor student growth through ongoing and end-of-year assessments.

To ensure that our corps members lead their students to significant academic growth, progress is tracked by our internal gains measures, in which corps members report students' progress throughout

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the year based on audited and validated performance assessments. Teachers that progress their students 1 to 1.4 academic years are considered to have made "solid gains," and teachers who advance their students 1.5 years or more are considered to have made "significant gains." This year, we anticipate that 55% of our corps members will make at least "solid gains."

Volunteer Generation

TFA uses four methods to recruit volunteers to expand the impact of our program:

1. We strongly encourage corps members to recruit community members to volunteer in their classrooms by reading aloud to students, assisting in completing class projects, and tutoring.
2. TFA-Alabama involves volunteers through its annual Teach For America Week event. Over the course of a week in late February, TFA-Alabama will invite community leaders to present lessons in corps member classrooms.
3. During induction representatives from The Center for The Study of the Black Belt facilitated sessions for corps members that focus on the history and culture of Alabama's Black Belt to help members integrate into the communities of the Black Belt. To supplement these sessions, the final day of our regional induction is set aside for corps members to be taken into the specific community in which they have been placed to teach during the coming school year.
4. We have built significant capacity to engage our nearly 20,000 alumni in taking greater responsibility for the organization's well-being. This year, about 45% of our total alumni base contributed time or money to the organization.

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In addition to creating opportunities for community members to volunteer, we also encourage our members to volunteer. Our members increase the number of clubs, teams, and other activities available to at-risk youth.

Partnerships and Collaboration

TFA-Alabama's impact on closing the achievement gap is dependent upon our ability to form partnerships with local school districts and certifying bodies, in addition to building a large and sustainable base of supporters.

DISTRICT PARTNERSHIPS: We rely on the guidance of our district partners in placing and supporting corps members. Our partner districts identify their staffing needs each spring and request our assistance in meeting them. We foster an ongoing relationship with each partner conducting meetings with principals and the superintendent of each district to ensure that they are satisfied with our teachers' performance. Currently, we place in 19 high-need public schools in the following districts: Hale County, Lowndes County, Marengo County, Perry County, Sumter County and Selma City.

CERTIFYING BODIES: Once placed, our corps members work with the University of Alabama and the Alabama State Department of Education to earn the teaching certification they need to be classified as "highly qualified" under No Child Left Behind.

SUPPORTERS: TFA-Alabama is proud to have a wide array of supporters from across the state of Alabama. Foundations such as Alabama's Daniel Foundation, the Alabama Power Foundation and

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Atlantic Trust have joined a variety of community leaders, members of the region's school systems and corporate and individual donors in supporting TFA-Alabama.

Sustainability

Schools serving high-poverty communities have an ongoing need for mentor teachers and school leaders; school districts and the policy community need leaders with experience teaching effectively in high poverty areas. During his confirmation hearing Secretary Arne Duncan said: "[Teach For America has] done an extraordinary job in bringing the best and brightest from around the country into teaching...Not only are there great teachers coming through the program but it's a great pipeline of talent, so you get these people with this great vision and this entrepreneurial spirit and a willingness to innovate."

Beyond the term of this grant, TFA will continue to meet the needs of our communities through the capacity-building and knowledge sharing efforts of our corps members and alumni. Many corps members assume leadership roles within their schools, often sharing with their peers and school community the training and resources they received from TFA.

While TFA-Alabama corps members have only been serving in their respective schools since the month of August, they have already shown incredible initiative in terms of capacity building. Currently, a total of 23 clubs and organizations from across the region are being supported and/or advised by TFA-Alabama corps members.

Additionally, our staff, corps members and alumni often provide principals and district leaders with technical assistance around the recruitment, training and support of teachers. For example, in 2010

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we released a book -- "Teaching As Leadership: The Highly Effective Teacher's Guide to Closing the Achievement Gap" -- containing our 20 years of knowledge about what distinguishes extraordinarily successful teachers in our nation's highest-poverty schools.

Multi-site Programs Only

TFA-Alabama proposed sites include: Hale County School District: Greensboro High School and Greensboro Middle School; Lowndes County School District: Central Elementary School, Central High School, Calhoun High School and Lowndes Middle School; Marengo County School District: Marengo County High School, John Essex High School and Sweetwater High School; Perry County School District: Francis Marion High School and R.C. Hatch High School; Selma City School District: Selma High School, Edgewood Elementary School and Meadowview Elementary School; Sumter County School District: York West End, North Sumter Junior High School, Sumter County High School, Livingston High School, and Livingston Junior High School.

We begin meeting with district officials, in advance of placing members, to identify the highest need schools and teaching positions. We enter into contracts with interested districts; as part of this process, we receive \$3,000 from each school district per teacher we place in their schools. Corps members interview at the school site and compete for open positions along with other new teachers. We work closely with our partners throughout the year to align our pre-service training and ongoing support with district needs, and engage in an ongoing dialogue with school leadership to ensure they are satisfied with our teachers' performance.

Organizational Capability

Organizational Background

The primary contact for this grant will be Taylor Blalock, Regional Operations Associate, and the

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secondary contact will be J.W. Carpenter, Executive Director.

TFA has effectively managed large-scale federal grants through both AmeriCorps and the Department of Education. We have received unqualified A-133 audits every year, and have built significant internal capacity to manage both the financial and programmatic components of a national AmeriCorps program.

TFA's national staff provides support to Alabama in a number of different areas, including finance and grants management. At the national office, a number of well-qualified specialists are available to meet and guide regional staff on AmeriCorps compliance, budget creation, and general grant management. Our finance team reports to the auditing and finance committees of our board, and works closely with our development team and budget trackers to coordinate cash-in and expenses throughout the organization. In particular, our finance team coordinates our A-133 audit, our annual audit and our monthly reconciliation processes, and produces and monitors our projected budgets for each site and the organization. We use our Financial Edge database to help track funding streams and expenses by department and program element. This centralization allows national staff to provide assistance to TFA-Alabama with federal budget requirements, and ensure compliance with programmatic elements. Currently, 11 of Teach For America's 39 regions receive state AmeriCorps funding.

Since TFA members are provided salaries and benefits from the school districts, our costs relate solely to supporting our members. A state AmeriCorps grant will cover a percentage of the costs that enable TFA to place, train, and support corps members so that they are prepared to make academic gains with their students. Our 2011 budget is approximately \$1.4 million. Therefore, we depend on other funding sources to raise the additional funds needed to support our corps members.

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To ensure that our growth plan is both sustainable and feasible, we are employing several targeted strategies to expand and diversify our funding base. Below are some of the strategies we plan to employ in each funding stream:

FOUNDATIONS: In FY 2010, we raised \$40,000 from foundations in Alabama. To raise the remainder of the funds necessary, we are prioritizing forming new partnerships with Alabama foundations. We are also 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: Last year, we raised over \$155,000 from Alabama corporations. This year, to help raise awareness among the corporate community of the achievement gap and TFA's role in closing that gap, we are securing speaking engagements at the Women's Network various Alabama Rotary Clubs, and other similar forums. 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. For example, our new relationship with Christian & Small LLP, a Birmingham law firm that has committed to sponsor and work closely with the five corps members placed in the Sumter County School District.

PUBLIC FUNDING: TFA-Alabama is currently working with the state legislature's appropriation committees in order to acquire funding from the state board of education's special projects fund.

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INDIVIDUALS: In FY 2010, we were able to raise \$69,900 from individuals in the Alabama community. We plan to hold events in FY 2011 to further expand our pool of potential supporters and to increase awareness of TFA among new networks of individuals.

TFA has been an AmeriCorps program since 1994. However, in the past five years, funding from the national AmeriCorps grant has gone to pay for national initiatives -- recruitment, admissions, summer training -- that are not included on our regional AmeriCorps budgets. The only CNCS support TFA-Alabama has received in the last five years has been education awards for our corps members. We are very excited about partnering with state AmeriCorps, as such funding is key to growing our impact in Alabama.

AmeriCorps is a natural fit for our program, since we are a full-time national service program that addresses a serious education issue -- the achievement gap that persists between students in low-income communities and their peers in wealthier communities.

A state AmeriCorps grant will provide crucial assistance in supporting our growing corps fueling future growth of our program in Alabama. Specifically, by partnering with the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, we will be able to:

- Work with the commission's network of supporters to strengthen our ties with the larger Alabama community including collaborating with other state service programs to maximize our impact.
- Increase the sustainability and viability of our growth plan and leverage the commission's support to inspire gifts from other donors.
- Provide corps members with an education award, helping members to become certified teachers through alternative route programs.

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- Increase the socioeconomic diversity of our corps by providing AmeriCorps benefits that offset the costs associated with joining the corps.
- Enable members to become part of a state-wide movement to effect societal change.

By partnering together, we can accelerate the broader education reform movement in our region and demonstrate what is truly possible for students in low-income communities.

TFA-Alabama ensures compliance with all AmeriCorps requirements. All incoming corps members participate in a series of orientation sessions designed to familiarize them with the expectations, requirements, and benefits of being an AmeriCorps member. In addition, we continue to reinforce these requirements for member compliance during monthly email blasts and during corps member general meetings.

Staffing

TFA-Alabama employs four full-staff members and one part-time staff member that work directly in the region to handle the day-to-day programming and operational responsibilities of the TFA-Alabama. In addition, the regional office works closely with various individuals with national TFA to ensure that the regional systems in place are on par with the policies and procedures stipulated by the national administration.

J.W. Carpenter (Executive Director) is responsible for maximizing the organization's impact in the region by working to establish TFA's presence in the community, ensuring effectiveness of corps members, building a broad and sustainable base of financial support, and raising community awareness. A graduate of Boston College, J.W. Carpenter was a 2001 Mississippi Delta corps member

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who taught math in Marianna, Arkansas. He returned to Birmingham to practice law; during that time, J.W. worked in conjunction with both TFA and Alabama community leaders to bring TFA to Alabama.

Betsy Hoback (Program Director) manages and develops corps members to ensure that they achieve ambitious academic goals with their students and works directly with corps members to increase their effectiveness and maximize their impact both in the classroom and beyond their corps experience.

Betsy Hoback is a 2008 Magna Cum Laude graduate of Boston University, with a B.A. in Foreign Policy and Islamic Studies. After graduation, she completed two years of teaching 2nd grade as a Teach For America corps member at a Navajo Reservation in New Mexico. While there, she served as a coach, a member of the school's leadership team, and chair of the 2nd grade teachers.

Krystal Hardy (Program Director) manages and develops corps members to ensure that they achieve ambitious academic goals with their students and works directly with corps members to increase their effectiveness and maximize their impact both in the classroom and beyond their corps experience.

Krystal taught 4th grade in TFA's South Louisiana region. Krystal's class was recognized by the Governor Bobby Jindal for their outstanding performance on Louisiana's 2009 state standardized exams. Prior to joining our staff, Krystal taught in Montgomery County schools.

Tosha May (Manager of Teaching and Learning) develops corps members to ensure that they achieve ambitious academic goals with their students and works directly with corps members to increase maximize their impact in their classroom. Tosha taught 7th and 8th grade science in TFA's Phoenix region. In her third year of teaching Tosha transitioned to a local high school where her students moved from the lowest scores to top in the district on the state standardized science exam.

Narratives

Taylor Blalock (Operations Associate) manages the operations of the Alabama team to maximize the team's effectiveness and enables the region to reach its ambitious goals.

TFA's national staff provides support to Alabama in a number of different areas, including finance, grants management, and program support. At the national office, a number of well-qualified specialists are available to guide regional staff on AmeriCorps compliance, budget creation, and general grant management. In addition to these specialists, our national server is constantly being updated with document resources and tutorials on these same topics. Additionally, the national team provides on-going trainings and assistance for all regional staff positions via conference calls, regional and national conferences, and on-line tutorials.

The national office of TFA also includes a well-staffed technology department that is available to assist with any technical problems that should arise at the regional level. Our staff in Alabama reaches out to the technology team via email and telephone and have the capacity to interface with our personal computers in Alabama. As part of standard new staff training, TFA-Alabama personnel are trained on all software and programs that enable and improve work function.

Budget/Cost Effectiveness

Cost Effectiveness

TFA-Alabama is requesting 62 full time member slots at \$2,000/MSY.

A fixed amount grant, combined with commitments from foundations, corporations and individuals, will allow us to continue and further our work.

Narratives

As a professional corps, our members are provided salaries and benefits from the school districts. Therefore, our costs relate solely to recruiting and supporting our members. These expenses are directly linked to outputs and outcomes -- the AmeriCorps grant will cover a percentage of the costs that enable TFA to recruit, place and support corps members so that they are prepared to make academic gains with their students and engage community members in their classrooms. Our 2011 budget is \$1.4 million; with \$2000/MSY we depend on other funding sources to raise the additional funding necessary to support our corps members.

We will raise the resources necessary to operate a successful program from a variety of sources: foundations, corporations, individual donors, events, and public sources. We will actively seek to grow funding across all sources going forward. Less than one quarter into the fiscal year we currently have over \$150,000 in commitments towards goal. Our goal is to have diverse base of funding across several different giving streams: foundation, corporation, individual, and public.

Budget Adequacy

Our corps members are charged with the ambitious task of significantly improving the academic performance of students who traditionally enter the classroom 2-3 grade levels behind their peers in wealthier communities. It is imperative that we invest in providing the training and support necessary to be transformative teachers. Our regional costs are those associated with our training and support models, which have proven to be critical to maximizing our impact. A growing body of research shows that our corps members are more effective than other teachers, including certified and veteran teachers. ("The Effects of Teach For America on Students: Findings from a National Evaluation," Mathematica Policy Research, June 2004; The Urban Institute/CALDER Research Center, 2009) Additionally, TFA corps members are more likely than other new teachers to return for a second year

Narratives

of teaching. Overall, 92% of our 2009 corps returned for a second year of teaching. In contrast, about 83% of new teachers in low-income communities return for a second year. ("No Dream Denied: A Pledge to America's Children" (2003) National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. Washington, D.C)

By 2015, 200 corps members will be reaching more than 13,000 of Alabama's most disadvantaged students. Corps members' efforts will change students' lives and produce a new pipeline of diverse leaders for college campuses and our nation at large. At the same time, a force of 350 TFA alumni will provide new leadership in Alabama and our nation. Funding is the only barrier to achieving this goal. The financial support and education awards provided by a fixed amount state AmeriCorps grant will enable us to collectively move the needle in closing the achievement gap, changing the conversation about what is possible and how to achieve it, and rapidly move our nation toward the tipping point at which the movement to end educational inequity becomes unstoppable.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

N/A

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

1. Changes to Other Sections

- We have adjusted the budget to reflect a lower number of MSYs and lower cost/MSY
- We have removed current and proposed numbers from the executive summary

2. Labor Union concurrence

Labor union concurrence forms are required for program applicants who:

Narratives

- (1) Propose to serve as the placement site for AmeriCorps members; and
- (2) Have employees engaged in the same or substantially similar work as that proposed to be carried out by AmeriCorps members; and
- (3) Those employees are represented by a local labor organization, must include in their application the written concurrence of the local labor organization representing those employees. Written concurrence can be in the form of a letter or e-mail from the local union leadership.

As stated above, the labor concurrence requirement applies to programs that are serving as both program applicant and service site. This requirement does not apply to Teach For America-Alabama because we do not serve as the placement site for AmeriCorps members.

3. Taylor Blalock (Operations Associate) manages the operations of the Alabama team to maximize the team's effectiveness and enables the region to reach its ambitious goals. The Operations Associate is charged with to managing and establishing effective operations for the office as well as serving as the region's administrative, technological and financial contact. In addition to ensuring an efficient office for all staff members based in Alabama, the operations associate will drive several key projects that are critical to our programmatic and development goals, designing and managing the operations of the Alabama team in a way that maximizes the team's effectiveness. The operations associate will also provide administrative support to the executive director and will play a pivotal role in shaping corps culture and strengthening our position in the local community.

4. School site monitoring

TFA-Alabama will continue to execute a two-fold approach for monitoring school sites for member progress and communicating with school site supervisors. The first part of our approach dictates that

Narratives

a TFA-Alabama Program Director visits each school site at minimum on a bi-weekly basis. During these visits, individual program members are observed for member progress and key areas for future development. In addition to these classroom observations, the Program Director will dedicate a portion of each school site visit to check-in with the school site supervisor in order to ensure that we receive high-level feedback from each of our school partners on a regular basis. The second portion of TFA-Alabama's school site communication plan, involves TFA-Alabama's Executive Director meeting with the superintendent of each district partner on a bi-monthly basis. The Executive Director's efforts will culminate with an end-of-year principal satisfaction survey, which will provide our organization with quantitative measurements regarding our programs strengths and growth potential.

5. Teach For America submitted an ASP to CNCS on December 23, 2010 in preparation for the new requirements to the criminal history check regulations outlined by the Serve America Act effective on April 21, 2011. In our ASP, we propose a continuation of our current criminal history check procedure, in which NSOPR and FBI fingerprint checks are conducted on all corps members prior to the start of our enrollment in AmeriCorps. The Teach For America Alabama site was included in this ASP request. We are awaiting a response from CNCS on our ASP for 2011. Given our admissions cycle we have already begun conducting Criminal History Checks on our incoming 2011 corps members (we have 5 application deadlines: 1DL, 2DL, 3DL, 4DL, 5DL) . Our 2011 Criminal History Check policy states that all corps members must be checked against the National Sex Offender Public Registry (NSOPR) database prior to AmeriCorps enrollment. In addition, an FBI fingerprint check must be initiated on all corps members no later than their enrollment in AmeriCorps. Any corps member with a pending FBI check at the time of our 30-day AmeriCorps enrollment will be prohibited from AmeriCorps enrollment until their check is completed. Alternatively, any corps member enrolled in AmeriCorps with a pending FBI check must be accompanied by a supervisor while teaching students until their

Narratives

check is returned and cleared. Supervision must be well documented to ensure full compliance with AmeriCorps regulations.

Regarding staff background checks, we are applying for a Professional Corps fixed amount grant and as such checks are not required for staff per CNCS' Frequently Asked Questions National Service Criminal History Checks (updated April 15, 2010).

6. Cost/MSY

Teach For America's cost per corps member is essentially constant across the country (with a few differences between regions). The main variable in need is the private fundraising opportunity in each region, which causes the variance in cost/MSY between multi-state and single state applications. - Our regions work to raise as close to 100% of their regional costs locally. State AmeriCorps is a valuable funding resource in this context, and some regions do so by requesting a higher cost/MSY. - For example, the proposed cost/MSY in our Alabama, New Mexico, Texas and South Dakota grants are higher than the multi-state grant because these regions are in rural areas with limited funding opportunities. - Teach For America's cost per corps member is approximately \$22,000. Therefore in either the multi-state or single-state instance, AmeriCorps funding only covers a portion of the cost associated with supporting our corps members, and regions raise the rest through a combination of public and private grants. Given the difficult funding landscape in rural Alabama, we respectfully ask the Corporation to consider Teach For America-Alabama's grant at our requested level of 62 MSYs @ \$2000/MSY.

Continuation Changes

N/A

Performance Measures

SAA Characteristics

- AmeriCorps Member Population - None c Geographic Focus - Rural
 Geographic Focus - Urban Encore Program

Priority Areas

- | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Opportunity | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Stewardship | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Selected for National Measure</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Selected for National Measure</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Healthy Futures | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Selected for National Measure</i> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <i>Selected for National Measure</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Veterans and Military Families | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <i>Selected for National Measure</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Selected for National Measure</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disaster Services | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| <i>Selected for National Measure</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

Grand Total of all MSYs entered for all Priority Areas 62

Service Categories

Other Education

National Performance Measures

Priority Area: Education

Strategy to Achieve Results

Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)

Teach For America-Alabama uses an internal tracking system to track the number of students each corps member teaches.

Result: Output

Result.

Teach For America-Alabama estimates that 4,030 students will start the year in our corps members' classrooms.

Indicator: ED1: Students who start in an AC ED program.

Target :Teach For America-Alabama estimates that 4,030 students will start the year in our corps members' classrooms.

Target Value: 4030

Instruments: Teach For America-Alabama uses an internal tracking system to track the number of students each corps member teaches.

PM Statement: Teach For America-Alabama will use an internal tracking system to track the number of students being taught by Teach For America-Alabama corps members, estimating that this will be 4,030 students.

Priority Area: Education

Strategy to Achieve Results

Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)

Teach For America-Alabama uses an internal tracking system to track the number of students each corps member teaches.

Result: Output

Result.

Teach For America-Alabama estimates that 3,627 students will complete the year in our corps members' classrooms.

Indicator: (PRIORITY) ED2: Number of students who complete an AC ED program.

Target :Teach For America-Alabama estimates that 3,627 students will complete the year in our corps members' classrooms.

Target Value: 3627

Instruments: Teach For America-Alabama uses an internal tracking system to track the number of students each corps member teaches.

PM Statement: Teach For America-Alabama will use an internal tracking system to track the number of students who complete the year being taught by Teach For America-Alabama corps members, estimating that this will be 3,627 students.

Priority Area: Education

Strategy to Achieve Results

National Performance Measures

Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)

Teach For America-Alabama uses an internal tracking system to track the number of corps members placed as teachers.

Result: Output

Result.

Teach For America-Alabama will place 62 AmeriCorps members as teachers.

Indicator: ED12: AmeriCorps members who begin serving as teachers.

Target :Teach For America-Alabama will place 62 AmeriCorps members as teachers.

Target Value: 62

Instruments: Teach For America-Alabama uses an internal tracking system to track the number of corps members placed as teachers.

PM Statement: Teach For America-Alabama will use an internal tracking system to track the placement of 62 AmeriCorps members as teachers.

Priority Area: Education

Strategy to Achieve Results

Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)

Teach For America-Alabama uses an internal tracking system to track the number of corps members who complete serving as teachers.

Result: Output

Result.

Teach For America-Alabama estimates that 59 AmeriCorps members complete their service as teachers.

Indicator: ED13: AmeriCorps members who complete serving as teachers.

Target :Teach For America-Alabama estimates that 59 AmeriCorps members complete their service as teachers.

Target Value: 59

Instruments: Teach For America-Alabama uses an internal tracking system to track the number of corps members who complete serving as teachers.

PM Statement: Teach For America-Alabama will use an internal tracking system to track the number of corps members who complete their year of service as teachers, estimating that 59 will do so.

Priority Area: Education

Strategy to Achieve Results

Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)

Teach For America-Alabama uses an internal tracking system to track the number of corps members who teach in high-need public schools.

Result: Output

Result.

National Performance Measures

Result.

Teach For America-Alabama will place 62 AmeriCorps members as teachers in high-need public schools.

Indicator: ED14: Individuals teaching in high-need schools.

Target :Teach For America-Alabama will place 62 AmeriCorps members as teachers in high-need public schools.

Target Value: 62

Instruments: Teach For America-Alabama uses an internal tracking system to track the number of corps members who teach in high-need public schools.

PM Statement: Teach For America-Alabama will use an internal tracking system to track the placement of 62 AmeriCorps members as teachers in high-need public schools

Priority Area: Education

Strategy to Achieve Results

Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)

Teach For America-Alabama uses an internal tracking system to track the number of alumni (former AmeriCorps members) who continue teaching in public schools in the year after their term of service.

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

Teach For America-Alabama estimates that 20 former AmeriCorps members will remain teaching in the year after term of service.

Indicator: (DELETED) ED16: Teachers in schools in the year after service

Target :Teach For America-Alabama estimates that 20 former AmeriCorps members will remain teaching in the year after term of service.

Target Value: 20

Instruments: Teach For America-Alabama uses an internal tracking system to track the number of alumni (former AmeriCorps members) who continue teaching in public schools in the year after their term of service.

PM Statement: Teach For America-Alabama will use an internal tracking system to track the number of alumni (former AmeriCorps members) who continue teaching in public schools in the year after their term of service, an estimated 20 members.

Priority Area: Education

Strategy to Achieve Results

Briefly describe how you will achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)

Teach For America-Alabama uses an internal tracking system to track the number of alumni (former AmeriCorps members) who continue remain in the education field after their term of service.

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

Teach For America-Alabama estimates that 20 former AmeriCorps members will remain in the education field after

National Performance Measures

Result.

their term of service.

Indicator: ED17: Teachers remaining in education field but not teaching after service.

Target :Teach For America-Alabama estimates that 20 former AmeriCorps members w ill remain in the education field after their term of service.

Target Value: 20

Instruments: Teach For America-Alabama uses an internal tracking system to track the number of alumni (former AmeriCorps members) w ho continue remain in the education field after their term of service.

PM Statement: Teach For America-Alabama w ill use an internal tracking system to track the number of alumni (former AmeriCorps members) w ho remaining in the education field in the year after their term of service, an estimated 20 members.

Priority Area: Education

Strategy to Achieve Results

Briefly describe how you w ill achieve this result (Max 4,000 chars.)

TFA-Alabama uses an internal system to track the academic achievement that is made by the students taught by TFA corps members.

Result: Intermediate Outcome

Result.

TFA-Alabama estimates that 2,216 students w ill make improved academic achievements of at least one year's w orth of grow th in one academic year or grade-level sufficient mastery of content standards.

Indicator: ED15: Students w ith improved academic performance.

Target :TFA-Alabama estimates that 2,216 students w ill make improved academic achievements of at least one year's w orth of grow th in one academic year or grade-level sufficient mastery of content standards.

Target Value: 2216

Instruments: Teach For America-Alabama uses an internal tracking system to track the academic achievement that is made by the students taught by Teach For America corps members.

PM Statement: Teach For America-Alabama w ill use an internal tracking system to determine students that w ill make either at least one year's w orth of grow th or grade-level sufficient mastery of content standards, w ith 2216 students.

Required Documents

Document Name

Status

Evaluation

Not Applicable

Labor Union Concurrence

Not Applicable