REPORT

FINAL REPORT

Implementation of the Teach For America Investing in Innovation Scale-Up

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I. INTRODUCTION

Teach For America (TFA) is a nonprofit organization that seeks to improve educational opportunities for disadvantaged students by recruiting and training teachers to work in low-income schools, and then encouraging these teachers to assume leadership positions from which they can continue to work to reduce educational inequity. The program uses a rigorous screening process to select college graduates and professionals with strong academic backgrounds and leadership experience and asks them to commit to teach for two years in high-needs schools. These teachers, called corps members, typically have no formal training in education but participate in an intensive five-week training from TFA before beginning their first teaching job. TFA then provides them with ongoing training and support throughout their two-year commitment. TFA encourages teachers who complete their two-year commitment, known as TFA alumni, to continue working to improve educational opportunities for disadvantaged students, whether by remaining in the classroom or by assuming roles of educational leadership and advocacy.

TFA was founded in 1989 and placed its first cohort of 384 corps members in classrooms in the 1990–1991 school year. Since that time, the program has launched several major expansion efforts, and in the 2010–2011 school year, TFA had approximately 8,200 first- and second-year corps members teaching in 40 urban and rural regions across the country.[1]

In 2010, TFA launched another major expansion effort, funded in part by a five-year Investing in Innovation (i3) Scale-Up grant of $50 million from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement.[2] This was one of four i3 scale-up grants awarded in 2010. These scale-up grants were intended to fund expansion of programs with rigorous evidence of prior effectiveness in improving student achievement. Through the i3 scale-up project, TFA planned to increase the size of its teacher corps by more than 80 percent by September 2014, with the goal of placing 13,500 first- and second-year corps members in classrooms by the 2014–2015 school year, and expanding from 40 to between 52 and 54 regions across the country, and accounting for approximately 20 percent of new hires in high-poverty schools in these regions (Teach For America 2010).

TFA has contracted with Mathematica Policy Research to conduct a rigorous, independent evaluation of the i3 scale-up project's effectiveness, a requirement for all i3 scale-up grantees. This evaluation includes an analysis of the scale-up's implementation as well as an analysis of the impact of elementary school TFA teachers recruited and selected in the first and second years of the scale-up. This report presents findings from the implementation analysis; the impact findings are presented in a separate report (Clark et al. 2015).

This implementation analysis examines the implementation of the i3 grant during the first and second years of the scale-up. TFA initiated the scale-up in 2010 and began to conduct

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[1] A TFA region is a geographic cluster of school districts, charter schools, and community-based early childhood programs. It may contain a single large urban district, a small number of geographically clustered midsize districts, or a large number of small, geographically clustered rural districts.

[2] TFA's i3 grant application is available at https://www2.ed.gov/programs/innovation/2010/narratives/u396a100015.pdf.

program activities under the i3 grant, including the recruitment, selection, and placement of future cohorts of corps members. Because TFA recruits and selects corps members in the spring before its teachers begin teaching, the first cohort of teachers selected and recruited under the grant began teaching in the 2011–2012 school year, and the second cohort began teaching in the 2012–2013 school year. The implementation analysis examines key features of the scale-up for these first two scale-up cohorts.

A. Previous research on TFA

Because of its unconventional approach to recruiting and training teachers, TFA has generated some controversy. Critics have argued that TFA teachers are underprepared for the challenges of teaching in high-needs schools and that they tend to leave the profession before gaining the experience needed to teach effectively (Darling-Hammond 2011; Ravitch 2013). Proponents argue that TFA's rigorous screening process and intensive training provide an important source of effective teachers to high-needs schools and that many of its teachers continue to work to improve educational opportunity even after they complete their two-year teaching commitment (Rotherham 2009).

The most rigorous evidence available prior to the i3 evaluation suggested that TFA teachers were as or more effective than their non-TFA counterparts. In a large-scale experimental evaluation of TFA elementary school teachers (Decker et al. 2004), students were randomly assigned to TFA teachers or to non-TFA teachers in the same grades and schools. The study found that elementary school students with TFA teachers performed as well as students with non-TFA teachers in reading and scored statistically better in math (by approximately 0.15 standard deviations). The impact on math was larger (0.26 standard deviations) when novice TFA teachers (those in their first or second year of teaching) were compared with novice non-TFA teachers.

Another large-scale experimental evaluation examined the effectiveness of secondary school math teachers from TFA (Clark et al. 2013). The study randomly assigned middle and high school students to math classes taught by TFA teachers or non-TFA teachers teaching the same math courses in the same school. It found that secondary math teachers from TFA were more effective than other math teachers in the same schools, increasing student math achievement by 0.07 standard deviations. TFA teachers in their first two years of teaching outperformed even the most experienced non-TFA teachers (those with more than five years of experience), again increasing student math achievement by 0.07 standard deviations (Chiang et al. 2014).

Several nonexperimental studies have also examined the effects of TFA teachers on student achievement in New York City (Kane et al. 2008; Boyd et al. 2006), North Carolina (Xu et al. 2008; Henry et al. 2014), and Miami (Hansen et al. 2014). The studies collectively spanned grade levels 4 through 12. They used test score data and other student background characteristics to attempt to account for any underlying differences in the types of students assigned to TFA and non-TFA teachers in the same schools. They also used teacher characteristics—especially teacher experience—to account for differences between teachers aside from their entry route into teaching. Because they accounted for teacher experience and school characteristics, these studies implicitly sought to compare the achievement of students of TFA teachers to the achievement of students of other novice teachers in the same schools. The nonexperimental studies have

generally found that TFA teachers perform better than other novice teachers in teaching math. One study—Xu et al. (2008)—found that TFA high school teachers performed better than experienced teachers from other routes; the other studies did not investigate this question. In reading, some studies have found that TFA teachers perform about the same as other novice teachers in the same schools, whereas other studies have found they perform either slightly better or slightly worse.

B. Goals for the evaluation

The i3 grants were awarded in part based on strong evidence of prior effectiveness in improving student achievement discussed above. Nonetheless, program effects may differ under the scale-up from those that were previously estimated. TFA has grown and has continually revised its approaches to recruiting, selecting, training, and supporting its teachers in an effort to improve their effectiveness. At the same time, the quality of non-TFA teachers may have changed, with the growth in other highly selective programs that provide alternative routes to teacher certification such as the Teaching Fellows programs, less-selective programs that provide alternative routes to certification, and charter schools, along with changes in state and federal policies, particularly the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002, which required a "highly qualified" teacher in every classroom by the 2005–2006 school year. Together, these changes may have either increased or diminished the effectiveness of TFA teachers relative to other teachers in the same districts and schools.

In addition, TFA planned an ambitious 80 percent expansion of its teaching corps over the four years of the scale-up grant. The program's effectiveness under the scale-up may differ from its effectiveness at its previous scale. This depends on TFA's ability to attract enough high quality applicants to meet its dramatically expanded placement goals without compromising its selection standards and to expand its staff and infrastructure to keep pace with the growth of its corps. It is therefore important to document how TFA implemented the scale-up and to rigorously examine the impact of teachers recruited and trained during the scale-up period.

The evaluation thus includes two main components. The first, the impact analysis, presented in a separate report (Clark et al. 2015), relied on a within-school random assignment design to estimate the effectiveness of TFA elementary school teachers (grades prekindergarten through 5) who were hired as part of the scale-up relative to non-TFA teachers in the same grades and schools. That analysis found that first- and second-year corps members recruited and trained during the scale-up were as effective in teaching both reading and math at these grade levels as other teachers in the same high-poverty schools. The second, the implementation analysis presented in this report, describes key features of the scale-up implementation. It documents whether the scale-up was successful in increasing the number of TFA teachers and meeting TFA's other specified goals, and examines whether TFA maintained fidelity to its core program model during the first two years of the scale-up (the 2011–2012 and 2012–2013 school years).

Following an overview in Chapter II of the data sources and analysis methods used for the implementation analysis, this report addresses the following key research questions related to the implementation of the TFA-i3 scale-up:

- Chapter III: What was TFA's approach to recruitment, selection, placement, training, and support of its teachers prior to the TFA-i3 scale-up?

- Chapter IV: What were TFA's original goals for expanding its capacity and improving program operations during the scale-up? To what extent did TFA meet its stated goals and maintain fidelity to its scale-up plans during the first two years of the scale-up?

- Chapter V: As TFA began to scale up its program, did it maintain fidelity to the basic standards of its program model? Did other changes occur within TFA's program areas over the course of the scale-up?

II. DATA SOURCES AND METHODS

The implementation analysis relies on both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 17 members of TFA's senior staff and surveys of a random sample of 20 TFA recruiters. Quantitative data include data from surveys TFA administered to all its corps members and other internal program data provided by TFA. The different data sources used in the analysis are summarized in Table II.1.

Table II.1. Data sources for TFA-i3 Implementation Evaluation

Data collection activity	Data source	Dates for data collection
Interviews conducted by Mathematica	President of TFA	Summer 2011, 2012
	Executive Vice President of Recruitment	Summer 2011, 2012
	Vice President of Admissions	Summer 2011, 2012
	Vice Presidents of Institutes (2)	Winter 2012, 2013
	Senior Managing Directors of Institute (9)	Fall 2011, 2012
	Executive Vice President of Teacher Preparation, Support, and Development	Fall 2011, 2012
	Placement strategies team (Executive Vice President of Growth, Strategy, and Development and the Chief Operating Officer) (2)	Winter 2012, 2013
Survey conducted by Mathematica	Surveys of random sample of 20 TFA recruiters	Summer 2011, 2012
Data provided by TFA on 2009–2012 corps member cohorts	Admission data	Spring 2012–Summer 2014
	Pre-service training data	
	Data on ongoing training and support	
	Placement data	
	TFA corps member surveys	

To track the implementation of scale-up activities, we collected information on broad organizational plans and data from key program areas (recruitment, selection, training and support, and placement).

Interviews. Mathematica conducted semi-structured telephone interviews with members of TFA's senior staff in the 2011–2012 and 2012–2013 school years. Interviews with staff focused on TFA's approach prior to the scale-up, scale-up implementation, and fidelity to scale-up plans. Most interviews were conducted by one member of Mathematica's staff, were guided by a detailed protocol, and lasted approximately 30–60 minutes. Responses to questions were documented with detailed notes and audio recordings. Protocols were sent to interviewees before the interviews, and interviewees and their staff typically provided written answers to questions that could easily be answered in writing before the interview, with follow-up as needed during the interview.

Surveys of TFA recruitment staff. Mathematica administered online surveys to members of TFA's recruitment staff who worked directly in the field recruiting TFA candidates from distinct portfolios of schools. In 2011, 10 members of the recruitment staff were randomly selected from the full list of 60 recruiters and asked to complete the survey in July 2011, following the annual period in which staff members finish recruitment and reflect on the previous recruitment cycle. Eight of those selected completed the first survey. In 2012,

10 different members of the recruitment staff were randomly selected from a list of 102 to take the survey in September 2012; all those selected completed the survey, yielding an overall response rate across the two years of 18 out of 20, or 90 percent. The survey asked respondents about the numeric goals for recruitment in the regions they oversaw, their strategies for achieving these goals, and the challenges they faced.

TFA corps member survey data. TFA conducts several internal surveys of its corps members, including an End of Institute Survey of all first-year corps members, administered following the conclusion of pre-service training activities; a Mid-Year Survey administered to first- and second-year corps members after the first semester of the school year; and an End of Year Survey administered to first- and second-year corps members at the school year's close. Topics addressed in these surveys include corps members' opinions of key elements of their training, feelings of preparedness for teaching, their commitment to TFA's mission, and their feelings of inclusion within the organization. TFA provided raw data from these surveys for the first two scale-up cohorts as well as two previous cohorts of corps members.

Analysis of fidelity to scale-up plans. To assess whether TFA maintained fidelity to its scale-up plans during the first two years of the scale-up, we examined the extent to which TFA achieved its stated goals. For each numeric goal identified by TFA in its grant application, we collected data for the first two years of the scale-up (2011–2012 and 2012–2013) and measured TFA's progress toward this goal. For instance, if TFA had placed 5,100 corps members in 2011–2012, it would have achieved 96 percent of its goal of placing 5,300 in that year.

As required for all evaluations of i3 scale-up grantees, we also created scores that indicated whether TFA maintained adequate fidelity to its scale-up plans in each year of the analysis. For each goal, we defined "adequate fidelity" as having met or exceeded at least 75 percent of a stated numeric target. For each component in the fidelity score, we awarded an implementation score of 1 if TFA achieved 75 percent of the goal, and 0 if it did not. We then summed the implementation scores for each goal within each program component to create an overall component score, which we used to determine whether TFA maintained adequate fidelity to its scale-up plans related to that component in each year of the analysis.

Analysis of fidelity to program model. The i3 grants also required evaluators of scale-up projects to measure the project's fidelity to the basic standards of its program model over the course of the scale-up. To create our second series of fidelity measures, those designed to measure fidelity to program standards during the scale-up, we worked with TFA to determine quantifiable aspects of program delivery for which TFA held specified standards or targets that were intended to remain stable over time (for instance, that at least 75 percent of corps members be placed in low-income schools, or that at least 90 percent of corps members complete their first year of teaching). These program standards spanned five broad program components—corps member selection, pre-service training, ongoing support, placement, and retention.

For each program standard, we collected data from TFA on all corps members teaching during the 2011–2012 and 2012–2013 school years to determine whether TFA achieved its goal for that standard, and we assigned a program implementation score equal to 1 if the standard was met and 0 if it was not. For each program component, we then summed the implementation scores for all associated standards to calculate an overall fidelity score for that component.

III. TEACH FOR AMERICA'S PROGRAM MODEL

In this chapter, we draw on interviews and documents provided by TFA senior staff to describe TFA's general approach and key elements of its program model during the first two years of the i3 scale-up. We first provide an overview of the program and then describe TFA's approach to recruitment, candidate selection, training and support, and placement.

A. Overview of TFA

TFA seeks to improve educational opportunities for disadvantaged students by recruiting and training high quality teachers to work in high-needs schools and encouraging program alumni to assume leadership positions from which they can continue to advocate for educational improvements. Through its recruitment and selection procedures, TFA seeks to identify and recruit candidates with the potential to become effective teachers, focusing on core competencies it believes to be predictive of corps member success. TFA also places a high priority on recruiting racially and economically diverse corps members, and on recruiting corps members to teach in hard-to-staff areas such as science, math, special education, and early childhood classes, as well as in remote rural communities.

During the spring and summer before their two-year commitment, corps members complete a series of independent work activities and attend an intensive pre-service summer training program that lasts five weeks. During that same period, TFA assigns corps members to regions where corps members will then apply for open positions with TFA's school and district partners (typically school districts, charter schools, or community-based organizations serving low-income students). Once corps members begin teaching, TFA provides corps members with ongoing support throughout their two-year teaching commitments.

Once corps members complete their two years of service and become program alumni, TFA encourages them to continue to work in education-related fields and to advocate for educational improvements. By encouraging alumni to become teacher leaders, school principals, district administrators, policymakers, educational advocates, and leaders in the private sector, TFA aims to expand the pipeline of future leaders working to address educational inequities.

The program logic model (Figure III.1), which we developed based upon interviews with and feedback from TFA staff, provides a conceptual framework for this approach. Through its recruitment, selection, training, placement, and support activities, TFA aims to provide its local education agency (LEA) partners with a diverse pipeline of new teacher candidates who are committed to serving low-income students and who TFA believes have the potential to be effective teachers. The quality of the teachers TFA provides is manifested in the corps members' instructional philosophies, pedagogical practices, classroom management skills, attitudes toward and commitment to teaching, and academic ability. Corps members' practices, attitudes, and ability are in turn expected to positively influence their students' achievement relative to what they would have experienced had the TFA corps members not been hired in these schools. TFA also works to ensure that its program alumni continue to have a sustained impact on education following their two-year commitment by encouraging former corps members to work in

education-related fields and to advocate for educational improvement in low-income communities.[3]

To illustrate the schedule of program activities in a typical year, Figure III.2 shows, as an example, the timeline of program activities for the cohort of teachers who began teaching in fall 2012 (the second scale-up cohort). The recruitment season for this cohort officially began in fall 2011, though recruiters would have already been working to establish TFA's reputation and build relationships on college campuses before then. Selection began in fall 2011, with the review of applications conducted on a rolling basis between August 2011 and May 2012, when the last set of admissions offers from the waiting list was extended. The selected cohort then received pre-service training during summer 2012 and received job offers from schools between spring 2012 and fall 2012. These teachers received ongoing training and support throughout the remainder of their two-year commitment to the program, ending in summer 2014.

In fiscal year 2012, TFA had revenue of $307 million, yielded from both private and public sources. Approximately 70 percent of the revenue came from private donations, and 30 percent came from federal, state, and district revenue. TFA uses its budget to directly fund each of its key program areas (see Table III.1). In that same fiscal year, TFA invested an average of $42,200 in each corps member, which included $9,300 to recruit, select, and place each corps member; $7,500 to train each corps member; and $12,700 per year to provide ongoing support to each corps member. To offset a portion of the total cost to recruit, train, and support corps members, districts that hired corps members pay TFA a fee that in fiscal year 2012 averaged $3,206 per corps member.[4]

In addition to program costs, TFA typically spends 10 percent of its annual budget on fundraising and 7 to 10 percent on management and administrative expenses. As of October 2013, TFA held a cash fund of $97 million (or 3.3 months of annual expenses) to ensure that the organization could provide consistent support to teachers throughout the year, despite fluctuations in the fundraising cycle.

Table III.1. TFA's 2012 budget (by program area)

2012 expenses by program area	Percentage of total
Recruitment and selection	18
Pre-service training	15
Ongoing teacher support	42
Alumni programming	8
Fund-raising	10
Management and administrative support	7

Source: TFA's fiscal year 2012 audited financial statement.

TFA = Teach For America.

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[3] TFA program activities designed to support alumni of the program are not within the scope of the i3 grant, and thus we do not examine them in this evaluation.

[4] TFA's regional staff negotiate with districts to determine the fee the district will pay per corps member as well as the approximate number of corps members that TFA will provide.

Figure III.1. Logic model for TFA's approach to improving student achievement

Background Characteristics of Potential Teachers

Demographics[a]
- Age
- Gender
- Race/ethnicity
- Socioeconomic background

Selection Criteria
- Commitment to reducing educational inequity
- Leadership ability
- Academic achievement and leadership
- Perseverance
- Critical thinking skills
- Organizational ability
- Respect for students and families from diverse backgrounds

Key Components of the Teach For America Program

Recruitment, Selection, and Placement

Recruitment[b]
- Recruit at undergraduate programs through in-person meetings, info sessions, and online marketing
- Recruit professionals and post-graduates

Selection
- Selected corps members typically meet three standard requirements: (1) a bachelor's degree by the first day of summer institute, (2) a 2.5 minimum GPA, and (3) status as U.S. citizen or permanent resident
- Four stage admission process includes online application, a phone interview, web-based writing activity and an in-person interview
- Corps members are evaluated based on selection criteria that TFA finds predictive of effective teachers (listed under background characteristics).

Placement
- Teachers are hired for open positions in schools

Training and Support

Summer Institute
- Minimum of 20 hours of independent work completed prior to summer institute
- Minimum of 85 hours of group learning activities
- Minimum of 20 hours of student teaching

Ongoing Support
- Maintain a 30:1 ratio of corps members to staff or lower to ensure individualized support
- Managers of Teacher Leadership Development provide one-on-one support, including observations
- Professional development through ongoing group meetings
- Corps members are provided with student assessments and online resources

Alumni Support[b]
- Connect former corps members with continuing employment opportunities in education, including roles as teachers, principals, administrators, and policy and advocacy leaders

Mediators
- Instructional philosophy
- Pedagogical practice
- Classroom management
- Attitude toward teaching
- Academic ability
- Commitment to teaching/retention
- Long-term commitment to expanding education opportunity

Student Outcomes
- Reading
- Math
- Other subjects

Social Context
- Student characteristics
- School culture
- Family characteristics
- Community characteristics

[a]To increase the diversity of its corps, TFA conducts recruitment activities that target applications from diverse backgrounds; however, during the selection process, staff apply a fair and equal selection process to all candidates, regardless of age, gender, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

[b]The fidelity of implementation is not measured for recruitment and alumni support activities, as TFA does not set quantifiable standards for annual efforts in those program areas.

Figure III.2. Timeline of TFA activities for the second scale-up cohort of teachers

B. Recruitment

Each year, TFA undertakes an extensive recruitment effort to introduce undergraduate students, graduate students, and professionals to the TFA program and persuade them to apply. In 2012, a team of 181 full-time staff conducted recruitment efforts across the country. Most recruitment staff worked in regional teams, which oversaw most recruitment activities within their assigned region. Within each regional team, a regional director oversaw recruitment managers and associates working directly on a portfolio of campuses. In addition, a few recruitment team members worked as a part of a centralized staff that focused on national initiatives, including an initiative to increase the diversity of corps members and an initiative to recruit midcareer professionals.

1. Undergraduate recruitment

Most TFA corps members are recent college graduates. Among incoming corps members in fall 2012, 77 percent had recently graduated from college. On college campuses, TFA recruiters seek to raise student awareness of the program through media campaigns, presentations, and partnerships with student organizations. During the 2011–2012 school year, TFA recruitment teams conducted outreach 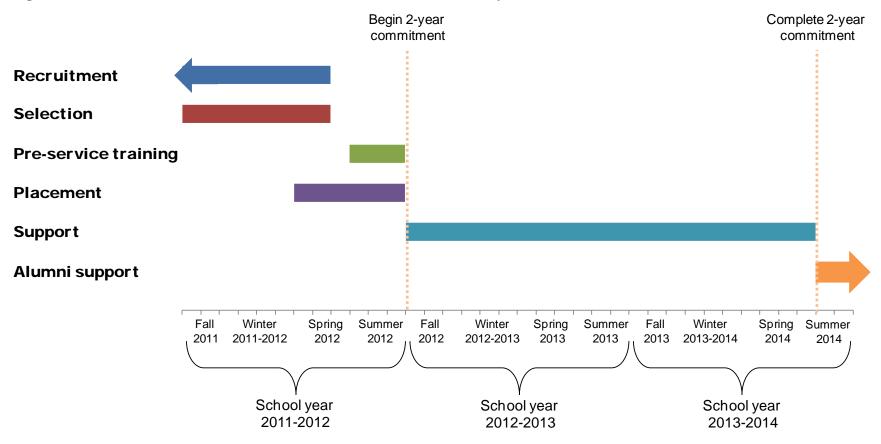on 573 college campuses across the country, meeting with roughly 36,000 prospective applicants through on-campus and online activities. Campus recruitment efforts place a particular emphasis on identifying students of color and students from low-income backgrounds who have demonstrated the potential to be strong TFA candidates. Typically, TFA recruitment teams work with undergraduate "campus campaign coordinators," students working as part-time TFA employees who help TFA conduct publicity campaigns and identify potential applicants on their campuses. TFA hosts a number of online events, such as webinars and information sessions, and communicates with potential applicants via social media outlets such as Facebook and LinkedIn.

During the recruitment process, staff collect information on potential candidates to help TFA prioritize and target recruitment efforts to individuals it believes are best qualified for the program. Candidate information may be provided online by interested candidates themselves or may be based on lists of top students developed by university offices and referrals provided by TFA alumni, professors and administrators, and current students. Through all these sources, recruitment teams collect information on academic achievement and leadership experience, which is recorded in a national database. Throughout the recruitment cycle, recruitment teams work to build relationships with deans, professors, and student leaders to identify and encourage strong applicants to apply and ask TFA staff and alumni to engage their networks to find strong applicants.

Once recruitment staff have identified potential applicants, members of the recruitment team contact them to discuss the program in either one-on-one or group meetings. During these discussions, TFA recruitment team members share information about the program and answer candidates' questions; they also collect information on candidates' background and interest in the TFA program. Following initial contact, recruitment teams continue to communicate with highly qualified candidates via email or text message on a regular basis to encourage them to apply to the program. Recruiters may also arrange for candidates to visit TFA teachers' classes or meet with these teachers to further discuss the program.

Our survey of recruitment staff asked them about different recruiting strategies used by the program and their effectiveness in attracting highly qualified candidates to apply to the program (Table III.2). All respondents (100 percent) said that campus presentations were somewhat effective or very effective approaches for recruiting highly qualified undergraduates; 94 percent said that developing networks with student organizations, referrals from TFA alumni, and referrals from current students were effective or very effective; and 88 percent said that one-on-one meetings were effective or very effective.

Table III.2. TFA recruitment staff's views on effectiveness of various recruiting strategies

Activity	Percentage of respondents who reported strategy was somewhat effective or very effective
Campus presentations	100
Student organization networks	94
Referrals from TFA alumni	94
Referrals from current students	94
One-on-one meetings	88

Source: Recruitment survey responses from 18 TFA recruitment staff.

TFA = Teach For America.

Approximately 48,000 applicants applied to join the 2012 TFA corps, including more than 5 percent of the graduating senior class at 135 colleges and universities. In the 2012–2013 school year, TFA staff estimated that TFA was the largest employer of graduating seniors at 55 colleges and universities, based on reports from university career services offices. For more discussion on recruitment of corps members during the scale-up, see Chapter IV.

2.   Recruiting professionals and graduate students

In recent years, TFA has also expanded the breadth of its recruitment efforts by increasing its recruitment of graduate students and professionals with prior experience in the corporate or nonprofit sector. Among incoming corps members in fall 2012, 17 percent had post-college professional experience and 6 percent were graduate students immediately prior to entering the corps.

A centralized team of recruitment staff conducts most professional recruitment across the country. Most communication with graduates and professionals is by telephone or online, and most meetings are conducted via webinar or video call. As with undergraduates, recruiters collect information on applicants during the recruitment process to better target their outreach to those who they deem best qualified in terms of leadership experience, academic achievement, interest in the program, and other background characteristics.

3.   Diversity in the corps

TFA places a high priority on corps member diversity, as measured by the percentage who are racial and ethnic minorities and the percentage from low-income backgrounds (measured by the percentage of corps members who received Pell Grants as undergraduates). In particular, TFA seeks to attract applicants to the program who share the racial and economic backgrounds

of the students that TFA considers to be underserved by public schools, placing a significant focus on the recruitment of African American and Latino candidates, while also seeking to recruit candidates from other racial and ethnic minorities.

In an effort to increase corps member diversity, TFA recruitment teams partner with both campus-based and national organizations across the country that serve students of color on college campuses, the United Negro College Fund, and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute. TFA also places special emphasis on recruiting students from historically black colleges and universities; Hispanic serving institutions, including institutional members of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities; and public university systems known for their racial and ethnic diversity, including the University of California, the University of Texas, and Rutgers University in New Jersey.[5]

Recruiters also target applicants from low-income backgrounds by recruiting candidates who attended programs that serve low-income communities such as Posse, Prep for Prep, INROADS, KIPP charter schools, and Summer Search. During the recruitment process, recruiters seek to raise awareness of TFA's financial package, including salary, transitional funding, AmeriCorps benefits, and grants and scholarships available to low-income students, in an effort to encourage low-income applicants who might be concerned about the costs associated with the program, such as relocation and certification costs and forgone wages during the summer training.

During the first two years of the scale-up, TFA also hosted ongoing events to increase awareness of the TFA program among diverse communities. For example, TFA hosted the Rising Leaders Fellowship, which offered racially and ethnically diverse college students the opportunity to lead a project focused on educational opportunity, and the Rising Leaders Summit, a national leadership training forum for diverse students.

C. Selection

TFA relies on an intensive, data-driven admissions process to select the candidates who it predicts are most likely to succeed in the classroom. The process includes four stages: an online application; a web-based writing activity; a phone interview (which the most promising applicants are allowed to bypass); and a daylong, in-person interview. At each stage of the admissions process, TFA prioritizes the selection of candidates with the following attributes:

- Commitment to reducing educational inequality

- Demonstrated leadership ability and interpersonal skills to motivate others

- Achievement in academic, professional, extracurricular, and/or volunteer settings

- Perseverance in the face of challenges, ability to adapt to changing environments, and a strong desire to improve and develop

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[5] As discussed in Chapter IV, as part of its scale-up efforts, TFA created a recruitment team in 2011 focused on recruitment at historically black colleges and universities. In that same year, TFA also increased efforts to track the number of corps members of color recruited from those campuses targeted for diverse outreach.

- Critical-thinking skills, including the ability to accurately link cause and effect and to generate relevant solutions to problems

- Organizational ability, including planning well and managing responsibilities effectively

- Respect for and ability to work with individuals from diverse background and experiences

TFA uses most information collected through each stage of the selection process, with the exception of demographic data such as sex, race/ethnicity, income level, and age, to determine whether a candidate will move forward in the selection process.[6] At each stage of the process, TFA's selection committee considers the opinion and judgment of TFA staff who have either reviewed the application or spoken with the applicant to determine whether a candidate will continue to the next round. In 2013, TFA staff devoted more than 100,000 hours to the admissions process. In addition, a mathematical selection model helps guide decisions about whether applicants will progress to the next stage. This model, which TFA updates annually, uses recruitment, selection, and student achievement data from previous cohorts of corps members to determine the factors associated with corps member effectiveness and then uses these factors to predict the effectiveness of each new applicant. For qualitative components of the selection process, such as sample lesson observations that occur during the final round of interviews, TFA staff use scoring rubrics to rate candidate performance, and those quantified values are also entered into the selection model. All corps members must also meet three basic requirements to be selected by the TFA program: obtain a bachelor's degree by the first day of summer institute, hold a 2.5 minimum grade point average (GPA), and have either U.S. citizenship or permanent resident status.[7]

1. Application process

For the first stage of the TFA selection process, candidates submit an online application, which collects five categories of information:

- **Personal information.** Candidates list contact information, gender (optional), and race/ethnicity (optional), citizenship/residency status, any existing criminal charges or convictions, professional misconduct or academic deficiencies, and parents' income and highest level of education completed (also optional).

- **Academic experience.** Candidates identify undergraduate and graduate schools attended, areas of study, degrees awarded, cumulative GPA, failing grades, and course withdrawals.

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[6] TFA officials said that these factors have no bearing on admission decisions. TFA has internal goals concerning the diversity of its corps members on these and other characteristics, but officials work toward those goals through targeted recruitment efforts to attract a diverse applicant pool as opposed to adjusting admissions criteria for candidates from particular demographic groups.

[7] In rare circumstances, TFA will waive the GPA requirement for otherwise outstanding candidates. In addition, in a few recent cases, TFA has waived the citizenship requirement—it has recently sought to expand eligibility to applicants who have received temporary status through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrival program (DACA). DACA allows certain undocumented immigrants who entered the United States before age 16 and before 2007 to receive a two-year work permit and exemption from deportation. In the 2014 recruitment season, TFA admitted 40 such individuals, and program staff anticipate that they will continue to consider applicants who qualify under this provision.

- **Nonacademic activities.** Candidates list the names of the organizations in which they were involved (including part- and full-time employment), position and responsibilities, recognitions received, and the length of their membership/employment. Applicants also indicate if they have experience in low-income communities.

- **Postgraduate professional experience.** Candidates list the name of the company or organization in which they worked, position and responsibilities, most significant contribution, recognitions received, and reasons for leaving (if applicable).

- **Supplementary information.** All candidates submit a résumé and a 500-word letter of intent that explains their purpose in seeking to join TFA. Applicants who progress to the next stage of the selection process also provide three references, two letters of recommendation, subject and grade preferences, transcripts, and proof of U.S. citizenship or residency, along with their regional preferences.

2. Phone screening and web-based activity

Candidates who progress beyond the application stage are invited to complete a web-based writing activity and, in some cases, a brief telephone interview. In the web-based activity, corps members respond to a series of free-response questions based on two articles, a task that requires approximately two hours to complete. During the telephone interview, corps members are asked to provide supplementary information related to responses submitted during the application stage, such as further discussion of previous accomplishments, their approach to managing tasks and challenges, and their opinions on topics of educational inequity. The telephone interview, which lasts approximately 30 to 60 minutes, is led by TFA staff, alumni, or second-year corps members who follow a scripted protocol.

3. In-person interview

Applicants who progress to the final stage of the selection process are invited to participate in a daylong interview event. Each year, there are four rounds of final interviews, which are each conducted in approximately 150 to 200 locations nationwide and typically take place on university campuses, in TFA's regional offices, or at major business locations (such as McKinsey & Company or the New York Times Building in New York). TFA invites approximately 10 to 12 candidates to participate in each interview session. The final interview consists of three components:

- **One-on-one interview.** All candidates participate in a formal one-on-one interview with a TFA staff member that lasts approximately 45 minutes. TFA staff may ask candidates to reflect on events that occurred earlier in the day or may follow up on information provided in the application or phone interview.

- **Sample teaching lesson.** All interviewees present a five-minute sample teaching lesson in front of TFA staff and other candidates. The candidates may choose the grade level and subject of their sample lesson, and they receive general preparation tips on how to approach the lesson prior to the day of the interview.

- **Group discussion.** Candidates gather in small groups to discuss articles assigned to them prior to the interview day on educational policy and practice. TFA observers again evaluate candidates using a standardized rubric.

D. Pre-service training

Once corps members are accepted into the program, they are required to participate in a series of pre-service training activities, the main component of which is a five-week, full-time residential summer program known as summer institute. Prior to summer institute, corps members are asked to complete a series of independent study activities and attend a regional induction session. Following summer institute, they attend a post-institute training located in their region. The hours of pre-service activities assigned to corps members fluctuate from year to year, depending on regional and subject-area assignment.[8] TFA officials estimated that corps members were assigned between 299 and 311 hours of pre-service work in 2012 (Table III.3).

Table III.3. 2012 Average assigned hours of pre-service formal learning activities

Pre-service component	Assigned hours
Pre-training assignments	42.5–46.5
Elementary and secondary	42.5
Special education	43.5
Early childhood	46.5
Induction[a]	16–24
Summer institute	240.5
Group curriculum and literacy sessions	52
Small-group sessions led by corps member advisors[b]	33
Corps member teaching	34.5
School and institute-specific activities	50
Independent work	71
Total hours	**299–311 hours**

Source: TFA pre-service training data.

[a]TFA does not directly track at a national level the number of hours assigned in each region, though typical regional induction programs last two to three days.

[b]Corps member advisor sessions include workshops, clinics on effective lesson planning, and advisory sessions held with advisors (known as "corps member advisors").

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1.   Pre-institute work

Prior to beginning the summer institute program, all new corps members must complete a series of activities designed to introduce TFA's overall approach and the Teaching As Leadership rubric, a framework that guides all TFA training activities offered before and during a corps member's two-year commitment.[9] Corps members complete a set of eight required activities as part of their independent study, including reading curriculum texts, watching video clips of classroom instruction, and providing written responses to pre-service materials. They must also conduct two in-person observations of a veteran teacher (each lasting 60 to

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[8] General program standards pertaining to corps member training, selection, and placement are discussed further in Chapter V.

[9] The Teaching As Leadership rubric is a framework of six principles and 28 discrete teacher actions that TFA believes to be the road map to effective teaching. The six principles included in the rubric are (1) set big goals, (2) invest students and their families/influencers in working hard to reach the big goals, (3) plan purposefully, (4) execute effectively, (5) continuously increase effectiveness, and (6) work relentlessly.

90 minutes) and respond to a series of questions regarding the teacher observations they conducted. For key independent study exercises related to literacy and classroom instruction, TFA provides differentiated texts for lower elementary, upper elementary, and secondary teachers. TFA also provides additional reading and exercises to be completed by early childhood and special education teachers. Assigned hours for pre-institute work vary annually and are based on the corps member's expected teaching assignment (both subject and grade), but corps members complete at least 20 hours of pre-institute work. The actual amount of pre-institute work assigned each year typically exceeds this requirement. For example, in 2012, pre-institute activities required a total of 42.5 to 46.5 hours to complete, depending on the grade level in which the corps member was to be placed (Table III.3).

2.   Regional induction

Prior to summer institute, corps members attend an induction program in the region where they will teach. Induction serves to introduce corps members to the curricula and policies specific to the region and to familiarize corps members with the overall mission of the TFA program. Several regions offer optional small-group orientation sessions in addition to those required. During regional induction, corps members also often search for housing for the upcoming school year, and, in some cases, are interviewed by principals seeking to fill teacher vacancies. During the first two years of the i3 scale-up, TFA granted its regions greater autonomy to tailor the content and length of regional inductions to the schools and districts where corps members in that region would teach. Therefore, the content and length of the inductions varied across regions, but in 2012, they typically required 16 to 24 hours (two to three days) of training.

3.   Summer institute

As the main component of its pre-service training, TFA provides corps members with a five-week training during the summer institute. TFA typically holds summer institute programs on university campuses and runs summer school programs in partnership with local school districts. In 2012, corps members attended summer institutes in nine locations: Atlanta, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, the Mississippi Delta, New York, Philadelphia, Phoenix, and Tulsa. Each regional program is run by a senior managing director of institute, who oversees between 100 and 150 part-time staff members who work during summer institute and a smaller full-time staff of four to five individuals who plan summer institute programming and logistics (housing, summer teaching placements, daily schedules) during the year. Part-time summer staff include corps member advisors, who provide ongoing training and guidance to small groups of corps members throughout the course of their training; faculty advisors, who provide in-classroom observations and support to corps members in their student teaching assignments; school directors, who oversee operations on specific school campuses where summer teaching occurs; curriculum specialists, who lead large-group instruction; and operations staff, who coordinate daily logistics of the summer institute. More than 90 percent of summer staff are former corps members, and most have two to three years of teaching experience.

Once at summer institute, corps members participate in a full day of training every day for five weeks. They attend group instruction activities, teach summer school students under the supervision of experienced teachers, observe other teachers, receive written and oral feedback on

their teaching from advisors, attend small-group sessions to reflect on their teaching practice, and participate in clinics designed to improve their lesson-planning skills.

- **Curriculum and literacy sessions.** Every day while at the institute, corps members attend curriculum sessions, where they gain the foundational knowledge TFA believes they need to become highly effective beginning teachers. In 2012, corps members spent approximately 52 hours within these sessions. Curriculum and literacy sessions are led by curriculum specialists and literacy specialists, who are typically former corps members with at least three to seven years' experience as a teacher or coach. Based on a curriculum that is standard across all summer institutes, the sessions include topics on lesson planning, classroom management, assessment, how to structure time for students to practice the day's objective, how to tailor instruction to the different performance levels of individual students in the class, literacy, and the principles of the Teaching As Leadership rubric. In the final three weeks of summer institute, corps members can choose classes based upon areas they select for their own professional development needs and the focus of their upcoming teaching position (for example, the grade level of students or whether they will be teaching English as a second language or special education students).

- **Diversity, community, and achievement sessions.** Corps members participate in group discussions about TFA's overall approach to creating a diverse organization and a community that values diversity. During these sessions, corps members participate in group discussions about how social biases may affect academic expectations for students and strategies to compensate for the negative impact of these biases. The sessions also provide time for corps members to discuss how broader systemic inequality can affect students' educational opportunities.

- **Corps member advisor-led workshops and advisory meetings.** Corps members also attend small-group workshops and advisory sessions directed by their summer institute advisors (corps member advisors). In 2012, corps members spent an average of 33 hours in these sessions, which included small-group workshops, clinics on effective lesson plans, and advisory sessions. Corps member advisors evaluate corps members based upon their teaching performance one to three times a week and provide written and oral feedback during one-on-one sessions.

- **Practice teaching and observations.** Working under the supervision of faculty advisors—experienced teachers in district or charter school summer programs—corps members work in small teams of three or four to instruct a whole class of students and complete group work with smaller groups of students. TFA estimates that in 2012 most corps members were assigned about 34.5 hours of practice teaching depending on the summer institute site and corps member specialization. Corps members also observe other teachers, mostly through reviewing video recordings of exemplary lessons or by observing other corps members training in their schools.

- **Corps member independent work.** To prepare for classroom instruction, corps members prepare lesson plans, grade student work, track progress, rehearse lessons, and review video recordings of their teaching. TFA scheduled approximately eight hours of such work as a part of their programmed activities, though corps members typically spend many more hours outside of the regular day preparing their work. TFA staff estimate that the average corps member spent a total of 71 hours completing independent work in 2012.

- **Other activities.** TFA holds several institute-wide events, including opening and closing ceremonies, diversity discussions, tours, and social gatherings. Corps members also participate in activities specific to the summer schools in which they teach, including corps member assemblies and administering the Developmental Reading Assessment to summer school students prior to and following their period of summer school teaching.

Most institutes also provide specialized training for early childhood education, special education, and English as a second language teachers, though the structure and duration of this additional training varies by summer institute. Most early childhood education corps members teach in prekindergarten classrooms during the summer and participate in small-group sessions focused on prekindergarten instruction; early childhood education corps members in Chicago teach at one centralized school and receive daily support from prekindergarten specialized curriculum instructors. Special education and English as a second language teachers also attend small-group sessions, although because of the constraints of district summer programs, they typically teach general education classes during their summer placement. Following summer institute, corps members also receive specialized support in their regions before beginning teaching.

TFA has strict policies related to corps members' participation during summer institute. Corps members are required to attend all days of the summer program and may be subject to dismissal if they miss any days without proper authorization. Throughout the summer, TFA tracks corps member and student attendance and performance data and maintains notes from corps members' observations. To facilitate professional development during the school year, these data are made available to both summer advisors and, following fall placement, to TFA staff in the regions in which the corps members are placed.

E. Placement

TFA assigns corps members to the region where they will teach at the time that they are accepted into the program, taking into account corps members' preferences, the alignment of corps member qualifications with local teaching requirements (as determined by previous coursework and professional history), and the staffing needs of schools within each region. Within each region, corps members apply for positions with TFA's partner LEAs that have vacancies, including public school districts, public charter schools, and community-based organizations. In 2012, nearly two-thirds of corps members (65 percent) were hired by traditional public school districts, whereas approximately one-third of corps members (33 percent) were hired by public charter schools. In the Milwaukee region, approximately 25 TFA corps members were hired by private schools that participated in a state program providing tuition vouchers for low-income students. As its main priority in placing corps members, TFA focuses on partnering with LEAs composed of low-income, high-need schools, as measured by the percentage of students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch.[10]

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[10] TFA considers low-income schools to be schools in which at least 60 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.

All corps members are hired through the same hiring process as other beginning teachers in their district or school. Most corps members interview across multiple LEAs in a region prior to finding a position. In some cases, where districts centrally assign all of their teachers, districts will hire corps members before identifying the schools where the corps members will be placed. In other LEAs where principals make hiring decisions, corps members will submit résumés to specific schools. Typically, interviews with LEAs occur between January and September, with the majority of interviews taking place during the summer before the corps members are to begin teaching. In 2012, approximately 40 percent of corps members were offered positions by schools or districts by late June, and nearly all corps members (96 percent) had been hired by the beginning of the school year. Though TFA does not guarantee teaching positions for all corps members, only a few (approximately 1 percent) fail to secure a classroom teaching job; most corps members who do not secure a teaching job fail to do so because they did not pass certification tests required by districts or states and therefore were ineligible to teach.

During the hiring process, TFA prioritizes facilitating interviews for new corps members in schools where current or former TFA corps members teach so that the new teachers might benefit from support from those knowledgeable about the TFA program. In 2011, 87 percent of corps members were teaching in schools with at least one other corps member; approximately 50 percent taught in a school with five or more corps members.

F. Ongoing training and support

Once corps members are hired by partner schools and districts, regional TFA staff provide them with ongoing training and support during their two-year commitment. This includes one-on-one coaching support, group meetings specialized by grade and subject, and access to additional classroom resources and assessments via an online portal. Corps members in most regions must also complete alternative certification programs, state-defined routes through which individuals can begin teaching before completing all the requirements for state certification.

1. Round Zero

Following summer institute, corps members return to the regions where they will teach in the fall for a regional orientation, typically known as "Round Zero" or "First Eight Weeks." This period of training during the early fall focuses on building relationships with students and their families; developing a vision and goals for their classroom; and working with state standards and district requirements to develop long-term instructional plans for the year, daily lesson plans, and assessments. Given the variation in district requirements and student populations across regions, content within regional orientations varies from region to region. As a supplement to in-person activities, several regions provide corps members with additional online modules to complete as preparation for their teaching placement.

2. Managers of teacher leadership development

During their two-year commitment, corps members receive individualized support from their manager of teacher leadership development (MTLD), an instructional coach who provides one-on-one coaching and observational feedback. MLTDs work with corps members to prepare a differentiated support and development plan that includes regular observation from the MTLD and often other skilled instructors. Following observations, MTLDs offer feedback to corps

members on their teaching practice and provide suggestions for improvement. In addition to formal observations and debriefings, MTLDs also collect data on student progress for each corps member and provide corps members with resources tailored to the specific grade and subject area taught. Student data are used to strategically reflect on teacher performance and to assess progress toward the academic goals teachers have set. This information is also captured and used by TFA to more generally assess the effectiveness of its teachers and to inform the program broadly. The assistance that MTLDs provide corps members is also supplemented by the efforts of TFA support staff that specialize in specific subject areas and teaching strategies. TFA works to ensure that corps members receive as much individualized attention as possible. TFA sets as a standard that the ratio of corps members to supportive staff (including MTLDs) should be 30 corps members or fewer for each staff member.[11] Corps members are matched to MTLDs either based upon grade and subject area or based upon the geographic location of a corps member's school, depending on the region.

3. Ongoing group meetings

Over the course of the school year, corps members also regularly attend small-group and large-group meetings, designed as venues for sharing best practices and resources.[12] Regions use a variety of approaches to provide this group instruction. Some regions use "learning team" sessions, which are led by current corps members or alumni and are generally specialized by grade and subject area. In addition, some regions offer online modules targeted toward certain grades, content areas, or instructional practices.

4. Online resources

TFA provides its corps members with a number of online tools and resources through its TFAnet online community to help support and improve their teaching practices. These include sample student assessments and planning materials, trainings, video examples of model classrooms, and online forums in which corps members can discuss best practices.

- **Instructional planning tools.** TFA offers lesson and unit plans, assessments, tracking tools, and other classroom materials through its national Resource Exchange. Regional teams often curate resources from the Resource Exchange and other resources into custom tool kits for individual grade and subject combinations in their regions.

- **Videos and classrooms models.** Corps members can access video clips of teachers to see successful grade- and subject-specific teaching strategies in action. Videos range from short clips of different teaching techniques and lessons to longer, more in-depth videos of a featured teacher's instructional approach throughout a school day.

- **Teaching As Leadership Online Navigator.** The Teaching As Leadership Online Navigator provides corps members with resources and supplemental materials related to the

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[11] Support staff defined as staff within TFA's Teacher Leadership Development department that provide training and ongoing support to corps members. Support staff include MTLDs, managers of MTLDs, other coaches that specialize in particular areas or subjects, and other support staff that coordinate professional development activities.

[12] TFA notes that in some regions, group meetings focus more broadly on issues of educational inequality, and a few regions do not hold learning team meetings at all, focusing instead on directing corps members to content support available through online resources or through their certification programs.

Teaching As Leadership rubric and offers video demonstrations by teachers who have incorporated various teaching strategies identified by the rubric.

- **Advice and community posts.** Corps members can consult grade- and subject-specific online forums. These forums are led by other corps members, TFA alumni, and staff, who respond to corps members' questions and offer suggestions on best practices.

- **Career support.** Corps members can download resources for exploring different career paths after their two-year commitment and connect with alumni to investigate professional opportunities, with a particular emphasis on careers in educational leadership and teaching.

5. Alternative certification programs

Prior to beginning their first teaching assignment, all corps members must receive state teaching certification (a license, certificate, credential, or permit) and be considered "highly qualified" under federal law and according to state-specific requirements. Because most corps members have not completed a traditional college-based education program before teaching, they are considered "nontraditional" or "alternative route" teachers in most states. The credentials they receive enabling them to teach are often referred to as alternative certificates or licenses. Many alternative routes to teacher certification are constructed by states so that an individual who already has at least a bachelor's degree can begin teaching on an alternative certificate or license after completing an accelerated pre-service training program, provided that the teacher is enrolled in a state-approved program that provides ongoing support and training to the new teachers. These types of alternative routes allow a different path of entry to the teaching profession than a traditional model and enable the new teachers to progress to the next level of certification through completion of their state-approved program after they begin teaching.

As a part of their alternative certification program, corps members in most states receive added support and also must complete coursework or equivalent experiences as they progress toward the next level of certification or licensure. Depending on the region, corps members can complete coursework through a state-approved certification provider such as a school district, nonprofit organization, or local college or university. In 21 regions, TFA is itself a state-approved certification program in which regional corps members enroll. In Connecticut, for example, the regional TFA program has received state approval to operate its own certification program and, like college and university-based programs in the state, is held to the standards set by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation, even when seeking state approval to operate rather than a full national accreditation. In many regions, corps members have the option of completing a master's degree by the end of their two-year teaching commitment (see Table III.4).

The costs for certification programs vary by region. The average cost of tuition for programs is $4,887, although the individual costs range from $0 to $17,000.[13] Some states and districts provide additional financial assistance; otherwise, corps members must cover the remaining

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[13] See TFA's description of certification costs at http://www.teachforamerica.org/why-teach-for-america/training-and-support/teacher-certification.

Table III.4. Alternative certification providers in each TFA region

Region	Teach For America	Universities	Non-university partners	Optional master's degree
Alabama		X		X
Appalachia	X			
Arkansas	X			
Atlanta	X	X	X	X
Baltimore[a]	X	X	X	X
Bay Area		X	X	X
Massachusetts[b]	X			X
Charlotte[c]	X	X		X
Chicago		X		X
Colorado[b]	X	X	X	X
Connecticut[b]	X	X		X
Dallas/Ft. Worth		X	X	X
Delaware		X		X
Detroit		X		X
Eastern North Carolina[c]	X	X		X
Greater New Orleans			X	X
Greater Philadelphia		X		X
Hawaii[b]	X	X		X
Houston		X	X	X
Indianapolis		X		X
Jacksonville[c]				x
Kansas City		X		X
Las Vegas Valley		X		X
Los Angeles		X		X
Memphis	X			X
Metro D.C.[b]	X	X	X	X
Miami-Dade[c]				X
Milwaukee		X		X
Mississippi	X			X
Nashville[b]	X	X		X
New Mexico		X		X
New York[d]		X		X
New Jersey		X		X
Northeast Ohio-Cleveland	X			X
Oklahoma	X			X
Phoenix		X	X	X
Rio Grande Valley			X	
Rhode Island[a]	X	X	X	X
Sacramento		X		
San Antonio			X	
San Diego		X		X
South Carolina[c]	X	X		X
South Dakota[b]	X	X		
South Louisiana			X	
Southwest Ohio	X			X
St. Louis		X		X
Twin Cities[e]	X	X		X
Washington		X		X

Source: TFA ongoing support data.

[a]TFA is technically a state-approved alternative certification program in this region, but corps members are still required to complete preparation through a partner university or non-university entity.

[b]TFA leads certification training for this region in partnership with universities and/or other providers.

[c]Corps members in this region can teach for their full two-year commitment without enrolling in an alternative certification program.

[d]All corps members in the New York region are required to complete a master's degree.

[e]TFA Twin Cities has been approved to offer an alternative certification program run jointly by the University of Minnesota beginning in fall 2014.

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costs. Many corps members use funding from their AmeriCorps education awards to cover at least some of these costs.[14]

6. Measuring teacher effectiveness

As a key component of the training provided to corps members, TFA encourages corps members to set both academic and personal goals for students and to use a variety of formal and informal assessments to monitor student development. Corps members and regional staff are trained on the properties of rigorous and well-aligned assessments, which are either provided to corps members by regional staff or identified independently by corps members. If no appropriate assessments are available, corps members compile or create their own. TFA uses assessment data gathered by TFA corps members to measure the effectiveness of its teachers and to manage and improve the TFA program.

Under the Student Achievement Measurement System, TFA measures corps members' effectiveness relative to top-performing teachers, defined as teachers at the 75th percentile of student achievement growth. Whenever possible, corps members' benchmarks are tailored to the specific assessment, grade, subject, and initial level of student achievement. To generate tailored benchmarks, TFA collects longitudinal, teacher-linked student test score data from states, districts, and national test publishers and uses these data to determine the annual student test score gains brought about in high-performing classrooms in different grades and subjects, for students at each level of baseline achievement. At the end of the year, TFA measures the performance of each corps member against his or her benchmark, assigning a score equal to the percent of the benchmark achieved. When the necessary information to generate a tailored benchmark is not available, TFA uses non-tailored benchmarks that represent an estimate of the 75th percentile of student achievement growth based on average historical results (for example, 80 percent mastery of standards).

To create effectiveness measures, TFA compares this benchmark score to growth in student achievement at the elementary school level, measured on the same scale. Teachers with a score equivalent to at least 1 year of growth are classified as effective, and teachers with a score equivalent to at least 1.5 years of growth are deemed highly effective.[15]

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[14] Most TFA corps members participate in AmeriCorps, a program of the U.S. federal government created to engage adults in intensive community service work. AmeriCorps participants are eligible to receive an education award of at least $5,550 per year (or a total of at least $11,100 over two years) from AmeriCorps after successfully completing each year of teaching. This education award may be used to repay qualified student loans or for payment of current or future expenses at qualified higher education institutions. Many corps members use the award to cover the costs of coursework required to obtain teaching certification. Under AmeriCorps, eligible corps members may also postpone regular monthly student loan payments, and AmeriCorps will pay accrued interest on qualified student loans during the corps member's two-year commitment.

[15] Before the introduction of the Student Achievement Measurement System in 2011–2012, TFA used a different system, known as the Significant Gains system, to determine the fraction of teachers who were highly effective and the fraction of teachers who were effective. TFA's effectiveness goals remained unchanged after the introduction of the new system.

IV. TEACH FOR AMERICA'S SCALE-UP ACTIVITIES AND FIDELITY TO SCALE-UP PLANS

In this chapter, we summarize TFA's approach to the scale-up and assess its fidelity to its scale-up plans as it recruited, selected, placed, and trained the first two cohorts of corps members recruited under the scale-up (corps members who began teaching in the 2011–2012 and 2012–2013 school years). In describing the implementation of the scale-up, we synthesize data gathered from interviews with TFA senior staff, recruitment director surveys, TFA-administered End of Institute surveys, and training manuals and written plans for the scale-up provided by TFA. We describe the specific activities planned as a part of the scale-up effort in each program area, whether these activities were undertaken as planned, and the key challenges to the success of the scale-up.

We also conduct a quantitative analysis of the extent to which TFA maintained fidelity to its scale-up plans during the first two years of the scale-up, as determined by whether TFA was able to achieve the goals it set forth in the original i3 grant application. In measuring TFA's fidelity to its scale-up plans as described in its application for the i3 grant, we draw from data provided by TFA, including placement data, training data, and corps member effectiveness data.

Under the i3 scale-up, TFA planned to expand its teacher corps by more than 80 percent by September 2014. As a part of its i3 grant application, TFA listed the following goals: (1) expand its teacher corps to 13,500 first- and second-year teachers, reaching nearly 850,000 students in high-needs schools annually; (2) add 12 to 14 new placement regions where corps members will teach, expanding to a total of 52 to 54 regions; and (3) train the majority of teachers to earn the rating of "highly effective" during their first or second year of teaching. Table IV.1 shows the specific goals TFA specified for each year of the scale-up. This chapter describes key features of the scale-up implementation and documents whether TFA met its growth and impact goals for the first two years of the scale-up. The chapter focuses only on the first two scale-up cohorts because data for the remaining two years were not available at the time this report was completed.

In 2011–2012 (the first year of the scale-up), TFA aimed to place 5,300 first-year corps members in classrooms. In 2012–2013, (the second year of the scale-up), TFA planned to increase first-year placements to 6,000 corps members. TFA also planned to open three to five regions each year of the scale-up to accommodate its growing corps.

TFA also planned to enact several enhancements to its training and support program in an ongoing effort to increase corps member effectiveness, using the measures described in the previous chapter. As an indicator of improvements in teacher quality, TFA set a goal of having the majority of teachers achieve a rating of "highly effective" in their first or second years of teaching by the last year of the scale-up in 2014–2015.

Table IV.1. TFA's goals for i3 scale-up

	Scale-up begins	First cohort of corps members recruited under scale-up begins teaching	Second cohort of corps members recruited under scale-up begins teaching	Third cohort of corps members recruited under scale-up begins teaching	Fourth cohort of corps members recruited under scale-up begins teaching
School year	**2009–2010**	**2010–2011**	**2011–2012**	**2012–2013**	**2013–2014**	**2014–2015**
Growth goals						
Students affected	450,000	500,000	600,000	675,000	750,000	850,000
New teachers (first year)	4,035	4,500	5,300	6,000	6,700	7,500
Total teachers (first and second year)	7,300	8,200	9,600	11,000	12,300	13,500
Regions	35	40	43–44	46–47	49–50	52–54
Effectiveness goals						
Percentage highly effective						
First-year teachers	44	45	46	47	48	50
Second-year teachers	55	56	57	58	59	60
Percentage highly effective or effective						
First-year teachers	70	71	72	73	74	75
Second-year teachers	80	81	82	83	84	85

Source: Teach For America 2010.

Note: The grant period is October 2010 to September 2014. TFA's effectiveness ratings are based on an internal program metric that relies on student gains on teacher-administered assessments. See Chapter III for more information on TFA's effectiveness measures.

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A. Scale-up activities

Although the core elements of TFA's approach remained unchanged under the scale-up, TFA modified a number of key program activities to expand program capacity and meet TFA's expansion goals. Figure IV.1 summarizes TFA's approach prior to the scale-up and planned changes for each of the five program areas, the intermediate scale-up goals for each program area, and the long-term outcomes TFA aimed to achieve. Increasing the size of the corps required TFA to expand capacity across each of its program areas, including its recruitment activities, selection of corps members, training capacity, and its ability to help corps members apply for teaching positions with schools and districts. The section below describes activities that TFA undertook to increase the capacity of the TFA program within each program area.

1. Recruitment

TFA's recruitment efforts played a central role in the organization's growth strategy during the first two years of the scale-up. During 2009–2010, the year prior to the scale-up, there were more than 46,000 applicants for 4,500 teaching positions that would begin in fall 2010—of these, approximately 6,800 candidates met TFA's selection criteria. To keep pace with its expansion goals while still meeting its existing standards for corps member quality, TFA

Figure IV.1. Logic model for Teach For America's approach and goals for i3 scale-up

Key Activities of the Scale-Up	Mediators of Scale-Up	Scale-Up Goals[a]
Recruitment • Increase number of recruitment staff • Increase recruitment presence in colleges under-represented in recruitment process • Increase recruitment targeted toward professionals and post-graduates, including military veterans • Create recruitment team to focus on Historically Black Colleges and Universities	**Recruitment** • Number and racial/socio-economic diversity of applicants to the TFA program will increase • The base of applicants will increase at colleges that have historically not produced large numbers of corps members and among professional and post-graduate applicants • The applicant pool will increase	• TFA will increase the number of first year corps members from 4,500 in 2010-2011 to 7,500 in 2014-2015 • TFA will expand to 52-54 regions by 2014
Selection • Increase number of applications reviewed • Refine selection process annually	**Selection** • Number corps members selected will increase • TFA will select corps members from diverse backgrounds and professional experiences • TFA will use established selection criteria to select corps members that will be high performers in the classroom	
Placement • Open new regional locations across the country where corps members will be hired as teachers • Increase number of teaching opportunities for corps members in existing regions	**Placement** • TFA will increase the number of corps members hired by existing districts • New regional locations will accommodate a growing number of corps members	
Pre-service training • Open new summer institutes where corps members will be trained	**Pre-service training** • Additional institutes will help maintain or improve ratio of corps members to staff per institute during growth	• TFA will open one new summer institute program in 2012 and one in 2014
Ongoing training and support • Increase number of professional support staff • Increase online resources and refine content • Ensure corps members have access to rigorous assessments in each grade level and content area	**Ongoing training and support** • Additional hires will help maintain or improve ratio of corps members to support staff • New online tools and assessments will enable teachers to better evaluate student achievement • SAMS system will enable TFA to better measure effectiveness among its teachers	• Teachers will be trained and supported so that by 2014-2015: 　– 50 percent of first-year teachers earn a rating of highly effective 　– 75 percent of first-year teachers will earn a rating of effective or highly effective 　– 60 percent of second-year teachers will earn a rating of highly effective 　– 85 percent of second-year teachers will earn a rating of effective or highly effective

[a]All scale-up goals indicated in the logic model will be measured annually for fidelity in both 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 as a part of the implementation analysis.

estimated it would need to increase applications by an average of 10 percent each year.[16] At the start of the scale-up, TFA enacted two key changes to its recruitment process to expand recruitment operations and attract additional candidates, particularly racially and socioeconomically diverse candidates: (1) increasing the number of college campuses where recruitment is conducted and (2) expanding the recruitment of professionals and graduates.

In 2011–2012, TFA restructured its national recruitment effort, shifting the focus of each recruitment team from overseeing a specific portfolio of schools to targeting all schools in a particular geographic region. By shifting the focus to all schools in a region, teams were able to expand their efforts to smaller, less selective schools that may have not been the focus of previous recruitment efforts (see Table IV.2). TFA's recruitment team also hired additional staff, increasing from 142 full-time recruitment staff members in 2011–2012 to 181 full-time staff in 2012–2013. In addition to expanding recruitment across new college campuses, TFA also increased recruitment efforts geared toward professional and graduate students, targeting these more experienced applicants through social media networks, by recruiting on site at graduate programs, and by hiring a team of recruiters to focus on recruitment of professionals in for-profit and service sectors as well as military veterans.

Table IV.2. Number of colleges in which TFA recruited corps members before and during the i3 scale-up

	Pre-scale-up cohort	First two scale-up cohorts	
	2009–2010 academic year	2010–2011 academic year	2011–2012 academic year
	Recruitment for entering TFA cohort 2010-2011	Recruitment for entering TFA cohort 2011-2012	Recruitment for entering TFA cohort 2012-2013
Selectivity of colleges[a]			
Most selective	66	66	67
More selective	182	186	214
Selective	73	75	109
Less selective	36	33	44
Least selective	2	2	2
Unranked	11	4	137
Type of college			
Historically black colleges and universities	25	25	38
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities	30	30	41
All universities	**370**	**370**	**573**

Source: TFA recruiting data.

[a]Based on *U.S. News & World Report* college rankings provided by TFA. Information on selectivity is only collected for schools from which TFA has received five or more applications in any year between 2010 and 2013. In addition, TFA no longer uses these selectivity data internally, so there are many colleges that are classified as unranked.

TFA = Teach For America.

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[16] For comparison, TFA increased the size of the corps by an average of 17 percent each year between the 2005–2006 and 2009–2010 recruiting cycles.

As a part of this expansion effort, TFA increased recruitment among less selective colleges with the understanding that highly qualified individuals, particularly those from low-income backgrounds, often attend less selective schools that are closer to their homes due to economic constraints (such as the need to support their families or the belief that more selective schools would be too costly).[17] TFA staff said that although the recruitment of students at less selective colleges increased under this new recruitment strategy, the organization did not modify or reduce its standards for applicants, such as GPA or leadership experience. Instead, recruitment teams expanding to new, less selective campuses sought to recruit the top students that they believed would meet the program's qualifications.

To ensure that the diversity of its corps kept pace with overall growth during the scale-up, TFA also initiated new recruitment activities geared toward communities of color and low-income applicants. In 2011, TFA created a recruitment team focused on recruitment at historically black colleges and universities. In that same year, TFA also increased efforts to track the number of corps members of color recruited from campuses targeted for diverse outreach. From 2011 to 2012, TFA expanded the number of historically black colleges and universities where recruitment was conducted from 25 to 38; it increased recruitment on Hispanic Serving Institutions campuses from 30 to 41. Teams also hosted outreach events geared toward diverse undergraduate students, such as the Rising Leaders Summit, a conference of panels and workshops for undergraduates of color, and the Multicultural Leaders Symposiums, which featured speakers from African American and Latino communities. TFA also hosted regional conferences in Denver, Phoenix, and the Rio Grande Valley through which top Latino candidates could learn about the TFA program and meet alumni and current corps members. Approaches to recruiting low-income students were also refined; TFA revised its description of both program costs and its financial packages for teachers in order to provide candidates with more comprehensive information.

TFA staff said they faced some challenges as they attempted to recruit a sufficient number of applicants from which to select a growing corps without compromising applicant quality. In particular, recruitment staff noted that some high-achieving candidates whom they would like to target (including candidates with high GPAs or demonstrated leadership on campus) do not see teaching as a promising career path and therefore do not consider TFA as a desirable opportunity after college. To combat this perception, the recruitment team makes an effort to highlight stories of alumni who have pursued successful careers in many fields and to emphasize partnerships with companies and graduate programs. However, TFA staff noted that, while highlighting these partnerships is a recruitment tactic that can be particularly persuasive with candidates' parents, in practice, very few corps members actually pursue career opportunities via these corporate partnerships.

2. Selection

To achieve its expansion goals, TFA needed to accept a larger number of qualified candidates into the program. Based upon past years' data on the percentage of accepted candidates who opt to join TFA, we estimated that TFA would need to recruit and accept

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[17] As empirical support for its recruitment approach, TFA cites Hoxby and Avery's (2013) finding that the vast majority of low-income, high-achieving students do not apply to selective colleges.

7,508 applicants during the 2010–2011 recruitment cycle to meet its 2011–2012 target of 5,300 placements; it would need to recruit and accept 8,500 applicants in the 2011–2012 recruitment cycle to meet its 2012–2013 target of 6,000 placements. TFA enacted two key changes to its selection procedures as a part of the scale-up effort: (1) it increased the number of applications reviewed by the selection team annually and (2) it refined its selection model (continuing its pre-scale-up practice of refining its model yearly).

A year prior to the beginning of scale-up, the admissions team launched a "100 K" initiative aimed at increasing the organization's capacity to review applications. Under this initiative, TFA moved large sections of the final in-person interview to an earlier phone screening so that, in some cases, admissions staff could make decisions about candidates earlier in the process. The admissions team also piloted an earlier application deadline in spring 2012 to test whether it would increase the rate of candidate acceptances, allowing all undergraduate applicants to apply at the end of their junior year instead of during their senior year, though TFA focused outreach for this pilot on seven different campuses. That year, TFA received 300 applicants and extended offers to approximately 60 candidates, who participated in a number of professional development activities over the course of their senior year. TFA has since expanded the pilot and in 2012–2013 received 1,477 applications from college juniors and extended offers to 489 of these candidates.

3. Training

To accommodate the increased number of corps members anticipated under the scale-up, TFA planned to open two new summer institutes. In 2012, TFA selected Tulsa as its ninth summer institute site, assigning a veteran TFA summer institute director to the launch the site. In 2013, TFA also added two regional institutes in Memphis and Jacksonville, which are summer institutes for corps members assigned to these regions. A new extension of TFA's summer training program, these regional institutes are intended to align summer training content more closely to the curriculum, programs, and policies of local districts and the needs of the communities they serve.

In keeping pace with the growth of its corps, TFA also expanded its capacity to provide ongoing support to corps members once they begin their teaching placement. TFA hired additional coaches and support staff to maintain the ratio of corps members to support staff (there were 21 corps members for each coach or support staff in 2011; the ratio was reduced to 19:1 in 2012). TFA also enhanced online resources available to corps members, including additional instructional tools and sample classroom assessments tailored to specific subjects and grades.

4. Placement

During the first two years of the scale-up, TFA expanded into seven new regions, including Appalachia, South Carolina, and Washington in 2011, and Arkansas, North East Ohio-Cleveland, Sacramento, and Southwest Ohio in 2012. TFA also increased the number of corps members placed in existing sites. Many regions experienced growing demand for corps members. In 2012–2013, demand grew by more than 10 percent in Alabama, Charlotte, Chicago, Dallas-Fort Worth, Detroit, Eastern North Carolina, Greater New Orleans, Greater Newark, Hawaii,

Houston, Indianapolis, Jacksonville, Las Vegas Valley, Los Angeles, Miami-Dade, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Rio Grande Valley, San Antonio, South Carolina, and Metro DC.

Other regions faced constrained hiring opportunities. TFA staff reported that the economic downturn in many districts combined with existing teacher contracts led to seniority-based layoffs that restricted the number and type of vacancies for which corps members could apply and be hired in some communities. In addition, the greatest hiring needs were in areas requiring specific backgrounds, such as secondary math and science and classes for English language learners, which not all corps members met the requirements to teach. In addition, demand for corps members slowed in some highly preferred urban locations, such as Boston; Washington, DC; and New York, whereas demand increased in some locations that were less preferred by corps members, such as some more rural regions. The number of new corps members shrank by 10 percent or more in Appalachia, Baltimore, Colorado, Kansas City, Metro Atlanta, and the Twin Cities.

TFA also faced some challenges related to the timing of district demand for corps members. Although the program had a waiting list during the first two years of the scale-up, it removed many corps members from its waiting list in the spring, at which point TFA staff needed to finalize their plans for summer training and confirm the total number of corps member that would attend summer institute. However, they received district requests for additional corps members in the summer, when candidates on the original waiting list were no longer available.

Changes in federal funding also affected TFA's ability to meet its scale-up targets for the number of new corps members. In 2011, Congress eliminated $21 million in federal appropriations dedicated to the organization, which had repercussions for the organization's efforts to recruit, select, train, and support the intended corps members in teaching positions in the subsequent year. Although TFA was able to mobilize additional financial support from private donations in the wake of the federal funding loss, they did not make up the entire gap and reduced the goal number of 2011 corps members recruited, selected, and placed from 5,300 to 5,100.[18] In 2012, TFA was able to recapture some of the federal funds it lost when the U.S. Department of Education launched the Supporting Effective Educator Development competitive grant program, which serves to support teacher training and development. TFA planned to use this grant to support summer institute expenses and ongoing support provided to teachers.

B. Assessment of fidelity to scale-up plans

1. Constructing fidelity measures for scale-up plans

As required for all evaluations of i3 scale-up grantees, we conducted a quantitative analysis of the extent to which TFA achieved its stated goals and maintained fidelity to its scale-up plans during the first two years of the scale-up. Within its i3 grant application, TFA identified scale-up goals for three key program components: placement, pre-service training, and corps member impact.

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[18] To determine whether TFA maintained fidelity to its plan to increase the number of corps members placed in 2011–2012, we compared the total number of corps members placed against the original goal of 5,300 stated in the i3 grant application.

For placement and corps member effectiveness, TFA set multiple goals within its grant application; for pre-service training, TFA set one goal (Table IV.3). For each separate goal identified by TFA in its grant application, we collected data for the first two years of the scale-up (2011–2012 and 2012–2013) and determined the percentage of each goal that TFA attained. For instance, if TFA had placed 5,100 corps members in 2011–2012, it would have achieved 96 percent of its goal of placing 5,300 in that year.

For each goal listed under each program component, we also created an implementation score intended to measure whether TFA maintained fidelity to its key scale-up plans. For each goal, the implementation score was equal to one if TFA met or exceeded 75 percent of its stated target in this area, and zero if it did not. We then summed implementation scores for each goal to construct a program component score, including an overall placement score, a pre-service training score, and a score for corps member impact on student achievement. We used the component scores to determine whether TFA achieved adequate fidelity overall for each of the three program components in each year of the analysis. Components implemented with adequate fidelity were those for which TFA met at least 75 percent of each goal under that program component (or, in other words, received an implementation score of 1 for each goal).

2. Fidelity to placement goals

The placement component of TFA's scale-up plan included two goals: (1) to increase the number of corps members placed and (2) to expand the number of geographical regions where corps members teach to accommodate its growing corps. TFA planned to expand corps member placement from 4,500 corps members placed in 2010–2011 to 5,300 in 2011–2012 and 6,000 in 2012–2013. TFA also planned to expand the number of regions where corps members are placed from 40 regions in 2010–2011 to 43 to 44 regions in 2011–2012 and 46 to 47 regions in 2012–2013.

In the first two years of the scale-up, the period covered by this evaluation, TFA fell just short of the growth goals it laid out in its application for the i3 grant. In 2011, the first year of the scale-up, it placed 5,031 new teachers (a 12 percent increase from the prior year, and just below its target of 5,300). In 2012, the second year of the scale-up, TFA placed 5,807 new teachers (a 15 percent increase from the first year, and short of its target of 6,000).

More recent data for the final years of the scale-up show that TFA's growth slowed and it failed to meet its targets for those years (Mead et al. 2015).[19] Nonetheless, over the first two years of the scale-up, the focal period for this evaluation, TFA expanded the number of first- and second-year corps members by 25 percent, exceeding 75 percent of its stated placement goals for

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[19] According to Mead et al. (2015), TFA placed 5,400 new corps members in 2014, well below its goal of 7,500. That study, which is based on analysis of data and documents from TFA and interviews with current and former TFA staff, concludes that both improving economic conditions that increased employment options for graduating college students and external criticisms of TFA might have contributed to TFA's inability to meet its growth targets for the final years of the scale-up. As discussed earlier, TFA staff also said that declines in federal funding, budget cuts at the state and local level, and a mismatch in the supply and demand for corps members with specific qualifications and in specific regions contributed to its inability to meet its growth targets.

Table IV.3. Measures of scale-up implementation and TFA's targets for scale-up

	Key elements of components	Operational definition for indicator (goal)	Data source(s) for measuring indicator	Data collection schedule	Raw scoring and scoring criteria for fidelity					
					2011–2012			**2012–2013**		
					Raw annual data	Percentage of goal attained	Implementation score	Raw annual data	Percentage of goal attained	Implementation score
Component 1: Placement										
1	Number of first-year corps members placed in classrooms	2011–2012: 5,300 2012–2013: 6,000	TFA program data	Annual data for 2011–12 and 2012–13 sent by TFA	5,031	94.9%	1 if at least 75% of goal attained, 0 otherwise 1 point awarded	5,807	96.7%	1 if at least 75% of goal attained, 0 otherwise 1 point awarded
2	Number of regions	2011–2012: 43-44 total regions 2012–2013: 46-47 total regions	TFA program data	Annual data for 2011–12 and 2012–13 sent by TFA	43 regions	100%	1 if at least 75% of goal attained, 0 otherwise 1 point awarded	47 regions	100%	1 if at least 75% of goal attained, 0 otherwise 1 point awarded
Component-level score							**2 out of 2** **Implemented with fidelity score = 2**			**2 out of 2** **Implemented with fidelity score = 2**
Component 2: Pre-service training										
1	Number of summer institute sites	2011–2012: Open one institute (in summer 2012)	TFA program data	Annual data for 2011–12 and 2012–13 sent by TFA	1 summer institute	100%	1 if at least 75% of goal attained, 0 otherwise 1 point awarded	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Component-level score							**1 out of 1** **Implemented with fidelity score = 1**			**n.a.**

	Key elements of components	Operational definition for indicator (goal)	Data source(s) for measuring indicator	Data collection schedule	Raw scoring and scoring criteria for fidelity					
					2011–2012			2012–2013		
					Raw annual data	Percentage of goal attained	Implementation score	Raw annual data	Percentage of goal attained	Implementation score
Component 3: Impact goals										
1	Percentage of first-year corps members who are highly effective	2011–2012: 46% 2012–2013: 47%	TFA program data	Annual data for 2011–12 and 2012–13 sent by TFA	36%	78%	1 if at least 75% of goal attained, 0 otherwise 1 point awarded	32%	68%	1 if at least 75% of goal attained, 0 otherwise 0 points awarded
2	Percentage of second-year corps members who are highly effective	2011–12: 57% 2012–2013: 58%	TFA program data	Annual data for 2011–12 and 2012–13 sent by TFA	46%	81%	1 if at least 75% of goal attained, 0 otherwise 1 point awarded	41%	71%	1 if at least 75% of goal attained, 0 otherwise 0 points awarded
3	Percentage of first-year corps members who are highly effective or effective	2011–2012: 72% 2012–2013: 73%	TFA program data	Annual data for 2011–12 and 2012–13 sent by TFA	75%	100%	1 if 75%% of goal attained, 0 otherwise 1 point awarded	72%	98%	1 if at least 75% of goal attained, 0 otherwise 1 point awarded
4	Percentage of second-year corps members who are highly effective or effective	2011–2012: 82% 2012–2013: 83%	TFA program data	Annual data for 2011–12 and 2012–13 sent by TFA	85%	100%	1 if at least 75% of goal attained, 0 otherwise 1 point awarded	78%	94%	1 if at least 75% of goal attained, 0 otherwise 1 point awarded
Component-level score							**4 out of 4 Implemented with fidelity score = 4**			**2 out of 4 Implemented with fidelity score = 2**

both years of the scale-up. TFA also accomplished 100 percent of its regional expansion goals in the first and second years of the scale-up, expanding to 47 regions in 2012–2013.

Scores for both types of placement goals (increased corps member placement and regional expansion) were rolled up to create an implementation score at the component level for each year. To achieve adequate fidelity at the placement component level for each year, TFA would need to meet or exceed 75 percent of each stated goal listed under that program component, receiving a component-level implementation score of 2 out of 2. During both scale-up years, TFA attained more than 75 percent of each goal, meeting the criteria for adequate fidelity of scale-up for placement.

3.   Fidelity to pre-service training goals

Under the pre-service training component of its scale-up plan, TFA planned to open one additional summer institute to accommodate new corps members in 2011–2012. TFA did not set a pre-service training goal for the second year of the scale-up (2012–2013), so scale-up fidelity for pre-service training is based only on data from 2011–2012.

By opening the Tulsa summer institute program in summer 2012, TFA met its pre-service training goal for the 2011–2012 grant year, increasing the total number of summer institutes in operation to nine. Because TFA exceeded 75 percent of its stated pre-service target, it received an implementation score of 1 for 2011–2012, meeting adequate fidelity at the program component level.[20]

4.   Fidelity to corps member impact goals

Within its i3 grant application, TFA specified four annual scale-up goals to increase corps member impact: (1) increasing the percentage of first-year corps members that would be rated highly effective, (2) increasing the percentage of first-year corps members that would be rated either highly effective or effective, (3) increasing the percentage of second-year corps members that were found highly effective, and (4) increasing the percentage of second-year corps members that were rated as either highly effective or effective. Corps member effectiveness for these measures was determined based on end-of-year performance scores that corps members received through the Student Achievement Measurement System (for a further description of this system, see Chapter III).

In 2011–2012, roughly 75 percent of the first-year teachers were found to be either effective or highly effective teachers, and approximately 36 percent of first-year corps members were found to be highly effective. In that same year, 85 percent of second-year teachers were found to be either effective or highly effective teachers, and 46 percent of second-year corps members were found to be highly effective. TFA exceeded 75 percent of its target for each of these elements, receiving an implementation score of 1 for each of these elements. Across all impact goals, TFA met the criteria for adequate fidelity to impact goals for 2011–2012, receiving a total implementation score of 4 out of 4 points.

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[20] Since 2012, TFA has consolidated two of its national summer institute programs, and opened nine smaller regional summer institute programs tailored to the specific needs of corps members within individual regions.

In 2012–2013, overall corps member effectiveness decreased slightly across all categories. Among first-year corps members, 72 percent were found to be either effective or highly effective teachers, and approximately 32 percent were found to be highly effective. In that same year, 78 percent of second-year teachers were found to be either effective or highly effective teachers, and 41 percent of second-year corps members were found to be highly effective. TFA exceeded 75 percent of its target for the percentage of corps members rated either effective or highly effective; it did not meet its target for corps members being rated highly effective.

V. CHANGES TO TFA DURING THE SCALE-UP AND FIDELITY TO ITS PROGRAM MODEL

TFA was awarded the i3 scale-up grant based in part on the program's evidence of prior effectiveness in improving student achievement.[21] However, TFA is continually revising its program in ways that could either increase or decrease its effectiveness. In addition, the challenges of scaling up its program could lead TFA to deviate from its core program model in ways that could alter its effectiveness. This chapter first documents changes TFA made to its program during the first two years of the i3 scale-up and then examines the extent to which TFA maintained fidelity to the core elements of its existing program model as it expanded under the i3 grant during those first two years. The analysis draws on data provided by TFA, including admission data, pre-service training data, data on ongoing training and support, placement data, and TFA corps member surveys.

A. Changes to the TFA program

The first section of this chapter analyzes general changes to the TFA program over the course of the scale-up, including changes to TFA's selection process, pre-service training, ongoing support, corps member placement, and the retention of corps members. This information can provide context for the findings of the impact analysis, to be documented in a separate report, which will analyze the effectiveness of TFA corps members recruited during the first two years of the scale-up. In particular, if the impact analysis finds that TFA corps members recruited during the first two years of the scale-up are more (or less) effective than are prior cohorts of corps members examined in previous studies, this examination of changes to TFA's program during the scale-up may help shed light on possible reasons for any changes in corps member effectiveness.

1. Recruitment/selection

To examine changes in the types of candidates selected by TFA over the first two years of the scale-up, we compared the characteristics of candidates selected in the two years before and after the scale-up began. Although some changes took place in the two years prior to the scale-up, in most cases, the characteristics of selected candidates do not appear to have changed substantially during the first two years of the scale-up (Table V.1).

In the first two years of the scale-up, as in the two prior years, at least 90 percent of selected corps members held a bachelor's degree from a "selective," "more selective," or "most selective" college (as defined by *U.S. News & World Report)*. More than one-third of corps members held a bachelor's degree from "most selective" colleges across those four years.[22] Consistent with TFA's planned expansion of recruitment efforts to lower ranked colleges, there was a slight increase in the proportion of admitted corps members from colleges ranked "selective," "not selective," or unranked and a slight decrease in the proportion from those ranked "most

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[21] Evidence of prior effectiveness cited in TFA's i3 grant application included Decker et al. (2004), Xu et al. (2008), and Boyd et al. (2009).

[22] TFA recruitment staff said they no longer use the selectivity data internally, so many colleges are classified as unranked.

selective" and "more selective" over this period. The average undergraduate grade point average of new corps members remained constant at 3.6 over all four years, and the average combined math and verbal SAT score remained relatively constant, ranging from 1,314 to 1,327 over this period.

Table V.1. Accepted applicants to TFA program during the first two years of the TFA-i3 scale-up

	Pre-scale-up cohorts		First two scale-up cohorts	
	Entering TFA cohort 2009–2011	Entering TFA cohort 2010–2011	Entering TFA cohort 2011–2012	Entering TFA cohort 2012–2013
Percentage of applicants accepted	15.8	14.7	14.8	17.0
Percentage of accepted applicants who join TFA	75.4	74.2	73.9	71.2
Academic background				
College selectivity[a]				
Most selective	39.8	38.6	38.9	36.1
More selective	43.1	41.2	41.1	40.5
Selective	10.2	11.7	10.9	13.4
Not selective or unranked	6.8	8.5	9.0	10.0
Average undergraduate GPA	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6
Average SAT score	1,325	1,314	1,327	1,319
Demographic characteristics				
Ethnicity/race				
Percentage white, non-Hispanic	70.0	66.5	65.5	63.5
Percentage from racial or ethnic minorities[b]	30.0	33.5	34.5	36.5
Percentage black, non-Hispanic	9.3	11.5	12.1	12.1
Percentage Hispanic	6.9	7.6	8.1	9.3
Percentage Asian	7.0	7.1	6.7	7.5
Percentage American Indian, Native Alaskan, or Native Hawaiian	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6
Percentage other[c]	6.3	6.7	7.2	6.9
Percentage from disadvantaged background[d]	24.2	26.9	30.3	33.9
Percentage male	32.0	30.6	28.7	29.1
Average age[e]	23.4	23.9	23.6	23.7
Overall sample size	**5,349**	**6,022**	**6,802**	**8,185**

Source: TFA admissions data.

[a]Selective colleges include colleges ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as "selective," "more selective," or "most selective." Information on selectivity is only collected for schools from which TFA has received 5 or more applications in any year between 2010 and 2013. In addition, TFA no longer uses these selectivity data internally, so there are many colleges that are classified as unranked.

[b]Applicants from racial or ethnic minorities includes all non-white racial/ethnic categories plus applicants who selected "Other, I identify as a Person of Color."

[c]The "Other" ethnicity/race category includes corps members who identified their race/ethnicity as one of the following: "Other, I identify as a Person of Color;" "Other, I do not identify as a Person of Color;" or "Multi-Ethnic/Multi-Racial."

[d]Percentage from disadvantaged backgrounds measured by Pell Grant receipt.

[e]Age calculated as of September 1st for the year each cohort begins. Age data are missing for those who did not matriculate into the TFA program.

GPA = grade point average; SAT = Standardized Achievement Test; TFA = Teach For America.

Although demographic characteristics have no bearing on TFA's selection decisions, an examination of changes in demographic characteristics of selected candidates can illuminate possible shifts in selection procedures that could have inadvertently affected the demographic distribution of selected applicants. However, the demographic characteristics of accepted applicants remained relatively consistent between the pre-scale-up years and scale-up years. The percentage of accepted applicants who were male remained close to 30 percent both before and during the scale-up. The average age of accepted applicants remained between 23 and 24 years across all four study years. Consistent with its efforts to expand recruitment of racial and ethnic minorities and candidates from low-income backgrounds, TFA increased the diversity of its corps over this period—the percentage of corps members from racial or ethnic minorities increased from 30 to 37 percent, and the percentage from a disadvantaged background (measured by Pell Grant receipt) increased from 24 to 34 percent.

2. Pre-service training

There were a few changes in the pre-service training TFA provided to corps members in the first two years of the scale-up relative to the two previous years that we were able to discern in data provided by TFA (Table V.2). There were some year-to-year fluctuations in corps member assignments in pre-service training. For instance, the number of hours of curriculum and literacy sessions assigned during summer institute decreased from 60 in 2009 (two years before the scale-up) to 52 in 2012 (the second year of the scale-up) (Table V.2). TFA staff said that they explicitly reduced the number of nationally assigned hours in these areas to expand opportunities for corps members to engage with communities, families, and students outside of classroom hours; to transition to practice-based sessions sooner; and to give institute staff more autonomy to tailor the training to the different contexts in which corps members would teach. TFA staff also indicated that individual summer institute programs often required corps members to complete more than the national minimum identified in the table. Almost all corps members

Table V.2. Corps member pre-service training during the first two years of scale-up

	Pre-scale-up cohorts		First two scale-up cohorts	
	Entering TFA cohort 2009–2010	Entering TFA cohort 2010–2011	Entering TFA cohort 2011–2012	Entering TFA cohort 2012–2013
Percentage who completed summer institute	98.6	99.0	98.6	99.0
Summer institute training sessions				
Hours of curriculum and literacy sessions assigned[a]	60	63	63	52
Hours of corps member advisor-led sessions assigned[a]	38	36	36	33
Student teaching placement				
Percentage who taught in subject of future placement	56	53	56	64
Percentage who taught in grade level of future placement	52	54	44	54

Source: TFA pre-service training data.

[a]Based on number of hours assigned on the national level. Hours may vary by institute.

TFA = Teach For America.

(approximately 99 percent) who began summer institute each year successfully complete the pre-service training program.

During summer institute, TFA also makes efforts to place corps members in classrooms similar to those they will be teaching in during their two-year commitment, though TFA's ability to do so depends upon the needs of the local school districts that TFA partners with during the summer. The percentage of corps members conducting student teaching in the subject of their future placement increased from 56 to 64 percent from 2009 to 2012, whereas the percentage teaching in the grade of their future placement decreased from 52 to 44 percent from 2009 to 2011 but then increased back to 54 percent in 2012 (Table V.2).

We also compared corps members' perceptions of pre-service training provided across the first two scale-up cohorts, based upon corps member responses to the End of Institute surveys, administered immediately following the summer institute program (Table V.3).[23] TFA typically achieves a high response rate for this survey. TFA achieved a response rate of at least 95 percent across all years in the analysis, from 2009–2010 to 2012–2013.

Table V.3. Corps member perceptions of pre-service training during the first two years of scale-up (percentages unless otherwise indicated)

	Pre-scale-up cohorts		First two scale-up cohorts	
	Entering TFA cohort 2009–2010	Entering TFA cohort 2010–2011	Entering TFA cohort 2011–2012	Entering TFA cohort 2012–2013
Overall perceptions of TFA and pre-service training				
Agreed or strongly agreed that "within TFA I feel part of a community where corps members help each other increase collective impact"	77.1	78.7	75.5	74.6
Agreed or strongly agreed that summer institute was critical in efforts to become a successful teacher	84.7	83.8	82.0	74.8
Positive or very positive overall satisfaction with TFA	69.3	71.7	65.9	60.7
Pre-service activities (agree or strongly agree that components aided teaching)				
Group instruction				
Curriculum sessions	87.3	86.1	81.1	77.7
Literacy sessions	77.2	67.3	72.4	63.9
Corps member advisor sessions				
Lesson planning clinics	75.7	72.9	73.0	64.9
Observations and feedback	88.1	83.1	81.8	77.3
Pre-institute assignments	16.7	30.1	26.9	35.8
Sample size	**3,919**	**4,449**	**5,003**	**5,850**

Source: TFA End of Institute surveys.

TFA = Teach For America.

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[23] We focused on core components of pre-service training that all corps members were obligated to attend, such as group instruction sessions and corps member advisor-led activities. We did not include an analysis of optional activities.

Overall perceptions of corps members regarding TFA and the efficacy of pre-service training also remained generally positive during the scale-up, though the percentage of positive responses decreased slightly during the scale-up years. In all four years examined, almost 75 percent of corps members agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that "within TFA I feel part of a community where corps members help each other increase collective impact" immediately following summer institute. However, the percentage who believed that the summer institute was critical for being an effective teacher decreased from 85 to 75 percent from 2009 to 2012, and the percentage reporting positive or very positive overall satisfaction with TFA at the end of their pre-service training decreased from 69 to 61 percent over this same period.

More than half of corps members found core summer activities to be helpful in guiding their teaching practice, though corps member responses varied from year to year. More than 63 percent of corps members found group instruction activities, including curriculum and literacy sessions, to be helpful during each year in the analysis, though positive responses to these activities decreased between the first and second scale-up years.[24] Similarly, more than 64 percent of corps members also found activities led by their summer coaches, known as corps member advisors, to be helpful, but these percentages also decreased between the first and second scale-up years.[25] Fewer corps members found pre-service assignments, which they must complete prior to summer institute, to be helpful compared with other pre-service activities.

3. Ongoing support

To assess whether there were differences between the entering pre-scale-up and scale-up cohorts in terms of their exposure to ongoing support, we analyzed quantitative data reported by TFA and corps member surveys.[26] We found that most corps members received frequent support from the instructional coaches assigned to them by TFA, known as managers of teacher leader development (MTLDs) for both years in the analysis. Approximately 60 percent of corps members interacted with their MTLDs at least three times a month during both scale-up years (Table V.4). Corps members also frequently used the TFA online site to access supportive tools such as lesson plans and assessments. On average, corps members accessed the online site approximately 55 times per year during the year prior to the scale-up (2010–2011) and the first scale-up year (2011–2012).[27]

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[24] The percentage of corps members who found curriculum sessions helpful decreased both years of the scale-up, from 86 percent in 2010–2011 to 78 percent in 2012–2013. The percentage of corps members who found literacy sessions helpful increased from 67 to 72 in the first scale-up year and then declined to 64 in the second scale-up year.

[25] The percentage of corps members who found lesson-planning clinics helpful remained relatively constant for the first three years examined but then declined from 73 to 65 between the first two scale-up years. The perceptions of observations and feedback from staff stayed steady at slightly above 80 percent for the first scale-up year but then dropped to 77 percent for the second year.

[26] Because of limited data, analysis included only two dimensions: (1) support provided by MTLDs and (2) online support; data were not available for other components such as group learning and alternative certification programs.

[27] Data on how frequently corps members accessed online resources were not available for the second year of the scale-up.

Table V.4. Ongoing support during the first two years of scale-up

	Pre-scale-up cohort	First scale-up cohort	Second scale-up cohort
	Entering TFA cohort 2010–2011	Entering TFA cohort 2011–2012	Entering TFA cohort 2012–2013
Interactions with MTLD per month			
Percent that reported 0–2 interactions	61.3	37.4	41.9
Percent that reported 3–4 interactions	25.4	27.8	30.2
Percent that reported 5–6 interactions	7.8	19.1	15.4
Percent that reported more than 6 interactions	5.5	15.6	12.6
Average number of times corps members accessed TFA's online support tools during the year	55	55	n.a.[a]
Overall sample size	**3,906**	**4,247**	**4,925**

Source: TFA End of Year surveys and TFA training data.

[a]Data were not available before the completion of this report.

MTLD = Manager of Teacher Leadership Development; TFA = Teach For America.

We also compared corps members' perceptions of ongoing professional development provided by regional TFA staff after the corps members began teaching. We reviewed responses of first-year corps members to questions on the End of Year surveys, which included questions on all key components of ongoing support, including MTLD support and online support as well as group learning activities and alternative certification programs (Table V.5). As with the response rate of its pre-service training survey, TFA also typically achieves a high response rate for the End of Year surveys. TFA achieved a response rate above 90 percent among all first-year corps members during all years in the analysis, from 2009–2010 to 2012–2013.

Although perceptions were generally favorable over the full period examined, perceptions grew less favorable in the first two years of the scale-up. For instance, more than half of corps members reported a high level of inclusion within the TFA community during the pre- and post-scale-up years, but this percentage declined over each period examined, from 64 percent in 2009–2010 to 57 percent in 2012–2013, the second year of the scale-up. The percentage of corps members reporting that they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the program also declined over this period, from 64 percent in 2009–2010 to 57 percent in 2012–2013.

Corps members also reported on the usefulness of specific professional development offered by the TFA program, including support provided by their coach (MTLDs), group learning activities, online resources, and alternative certification programs. Across all pre- and post-scale-up years, the majority of corps members perceived that coaching support from the MTLDs aided their teaching practice, and more than a third of corps members found group learning activities to be helpful. A smaller percentage of corps members found alternative certification programs to be helpful to their teaching (28 percent of the first scale-up cohort and 33 percent in the second scale-up cohort). The percentage of corps members that found TFA's online resources, such as online lessons plans and tracking tools, to be useful declined during the scale-up from 61 percent in 2009–2010 to 35 percent in 2012–2013.

Table V.5. Corps member perceptions of ongoing support following first year of teaching (percentages unless otherwise indicated)

	Pre-scale-up cohorts		First two scale-up cohorts	
	Entering cohort 2009–2010	Entering cohort 2010–2011	Entering cohort 2011–2012	Entering cohort 2012–2013
Overall perceptions of TFA at end of school year				
Agreed or strongly agreed that "within TFA I feel part of a community where corps members help each other increase collective impact"	64.1	59.0	52.4	56.9
Positive or very positive overall satisfaction with TFA	64.0	58.5	47.9	57.0
Perceptions of ongoing support activities (agree or strongly agree that components aided teaching)				
Coaching from MTLDs	58.4	54.8	52.2	54.7
Online resources	60.9	50.9	41.7	34.7
Group learning activities	42.9	39.7	33.8	39.3
Alternative certification programs	31.5	23.7	27.6	33.0
Overall sample size	**3,582**	**3,906**	**4,247**	**4,925**

Source: TFA End of Year surveys.

MTLD = Managers of Teacher Leadership Development; TFA = Teach For America.

4.   Placement

Each year, TFA's placement team works to ensure that corps members are able to obtain teaching positions for which they are well-suited and that TFA is able to meet demand for its corps members from disadvantaged schools and districts across the country. To do so, the team builds relationships with district and school leaders, matches the geographic and teaching interests and qualifications of its existing pool of teachers with the needs and certification requirements of its district partners, and expands into new geographic areas and districts based on demonstrated need and community support. We analyzed the classrooms and schools where corps members were hired to determine whether the characteristics of TFA placements changed over the first two years of the scale-up.

The types of classes in which corps members were hired changed little between the two years before the scale-up and the first two years of the scale-up (Table V.6). TFA corps members were roughly equally distributed across elementary (first through fifth grade), middle (sixth through eighth grade), and high school (ninth through twelfth grade), with 27 to 33 percent of corps members in each category in each year, whereas a smaller group of teachers (between 7 and 9 percent per year) were assigned to prekindergarten or kindergarten. Most corps members were placed as general education teachers (between 84 and 89 percent for each year), with a smaller percentage of corps members teaching special education (8 to 12 percent) and English language learners (4 percent).

Table V.6. Placements of TFA's entering cohorts during the first two years of the TFA-i3 scale-up (percentages unless otherwise indicated)

	Pre-scale-up cohorts		First two scale-up cohorts	
	2009–2010	2010–2011	2011–2012	2012–2013
Grade level				
Prekindergarten and kindergarten	8.6	6.7	7.4	6.9
Grades 1–5	28.0	27.4	28.9	29.3
Grades 6–8	32.3	32.7	32.7	30.6
Grades 9–12	31.2	33.1	31.0	33.2
Group				
General education	84.0	88.7	84.8	85.3
Special education	12.2	7.7	10.8	10.7
English language learners	3.8	3.5	4.4	4.0
Subject				
General	28.8	29.6	32.7	33.6
Math	20.2	18.4	19.5	17.4
English	20.7	16.8	20.6	19.2
Foreign language	2.9	3.0	2.9	2.9
Science	14.1	15.5	15.0	15.7
Social studies	5.9	5.8	5.9	6.8
Other	7.4	10.9	3.5	4.5
School type				
Traditional public[a]	69.8	65.0	65.1	65.3
Charter	27.0	32.9	32.7	32.9
Private	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.4
Early childhood	1.5	0.9	0.9	0.9
Catholic	0.3	0.0	0.1	0.1
Bureau of Indian Affairs	0.9	0.9	0.7	0.5
Average enrollment	728.7	764.7	741.1	776.5
Poverty level[b]				
High percentage free or reduced-price lunch	83.3	82.2	85.6	84.1
Low percentage free or reduced-price lunch	16.7	17.8	14.4	15.9
Community setting				
Urban	71.9	73.3	70.6	70.0
Suburb	11.9	12.1	14.8	13.7
Town	6.2	5.7	5.9	6.0
Rural	10.0	8.9	8.7	10.2
Overall sample size[c]	**4,035**	**4,469**	**5,027**	**5,825**

Source: TFA placement data and the Common Core of Data.

[a]Traditional public schools are non-charter schools.

[b]Schools are defined as high poverty if 60 percent or more of the student population qualifies for free or reduced-price lunch.

[c]Sample sizes for our analyses differ slightly from official TFA statistics on number of corps members cited earlier in the report, which classify corps members who take a leave of absence according to the year in which they were admitted rather than the year in which they actually began teaching.

TFA = Teach For America.

The types of schools in which TFA teachers were hired were also similar across pre- and post-scale-up years. The percentage of corps members hired in high-poverty schools remained above 82 percent over the two pre-scale-up and two post-scale-up years, with only minor fluctuations from year to year (Table V.6). TFA teachers also remained largely concentrated in urban schools districts; in all four years of the analysis, at least 70 percent of corps members were hired in urban schools. The distribution of teachers placed in public schools, charters, and community-based organizations also remained relatively stable during the scale-up. Sixty-five to 70 percent of placements were in traditional public schools and 27 to 33 percent were in charter schools.

The number of corps members increased across all geographic areas where TFA regions were located from 2009–2010 to 2012–2013. This growth was particularly notable within the geographic areas where new regions were added, such as the Southeast (in which Appalachia, Alabama, and South Carolina were added) and the Midwest (in which Detroit, Northeast Ohio, and Southwest Ohio were added) (Table V.7).

Table V.7. Changes in placements of entering corps members by geographic area during the first two years of the scale-up

	Pre-scale-up cohorts		First two scale-up cohorts	
	2009–2010	**2010–2011**	**2011–2012**	**2012–2013**
New England	3.0	4.3	4.2	3.8
East	24.1	19.2	19.0	17.0
Southeast	26.9	27.6	31.1	30.0
Midwest	13.6	13.9	15.3	17.1
Southwest	17.8	21.1	17.0	17.9
West	14.4	13.9	13.4	14.3
Overall sample size	**4,035**	**4,469**	**5,027**	**5,825**

Source: TFA placement data.

TFA = Teach For America.

5.   Retention

TFA asks all corps members to commit to teach in a high-needs school for at least two years. Our analysis examined the retention patterns of corps members recruited before and during the scale-up to explore whether TFA maintained its ability to retain corps members for their two-year commitment as the program expanded. The analysis focused on retention among cohorts placed in the two years prior to scale-up (cohorts beginning in the fall of 2009–2010 and the fall of 2010–2011), as well as the first cohort that began to teach under the scale-up (the cohort that began in the fall of 2011–2012). We were not able to examine retention for the second scale-up cohort, because these data were not available at the time this analysis was conducted.

There was some fluctuation in retention across the years examined, although these changes were small (Table V.8). The percentage of corps members who completed their two-year commitment decreased by approximately 5 percentage points, from 92 percent to 87 percent between 2009–2010 and 2011–2012. Retention rates remained relatively stable between the final pre-scale-up cohort and the first scale-up cohort.

Table V.8. Retention rates of TFA's entering cohorts during the first year of the TFA-i3 scale-up (2011–2012)[a]

	Pre-scale-up cohorts		First scale-up cohort
	Entering TFA cohort 2009–2010	Entering TFA cohort 2010–2011	Entering TFA cohort 2011–2012
Percentage of cohort who fulfill two-year commitment	91.5	87.8	86.8
Percentage of cohort who leave teaching			
During first year	3.8	5.1	6.3
After one year	3.6	5.8	5.6
During second year	1.1	1.2	1.3
Overall sample size	**4,035**	**4,469**	**5,027**

Source: TFA placement data.

[a]Teachers in the second scale-up cohort (that began in fall 2012–2013) were not included, as data for this cohort were not available by the time of analysis.

TFA= Teach For America.

To explore factors that might be related to corps member retention, we compared characteristics of corps members from the first scale-up cohort who completed their commitment to the characteristics of those who did not. There were no meaningful differences between the two groups in terms of their background characteristics, including ethnic and gender composition and academic background (Table V.9). There were also few differences between corps members who completed their commitment and those who did not in terms of the schools and classrooms where they taught, including few differences in grade level, school type (traditional public school, charter, or community-based organization), or community setting (urban, suburban, town, or rural) (Table V.10). We did find that corps members who completed their commitment were more likely to be special education teachers than those who did not (a difference of about 5 percentage points).

Table V.9. Admissions characteristics of first TFA-i3 scale-up cohort (2011–2012), by whether they fulfill their two-year commitment to teaching[a]

	Complete two-year commitment	Leave before end of two-year commitment
Academic background		
Percentage with bachelor's degree from selective college[b]	98.8	98.8
Average undergraduate GPA	3.6	3.6
Average SAT score	1,314	1,334
Demographic characteristics		
Ethnicity/race		
Percentage white, non-Hispanic	65.3	68.3
Percentage applicants from racial or ethnic minorities[c]	34.7	31.7
Percentage black, non-Hispanic	12.7	9.8
Percentage Hispanic	8.1	6.4
Percentage Asian, non-Hispanic	6.1	6.5
Percentage American Indian, Native Alaskan, or Native Hawaiian	0.6	0.5
Percentage other race or ethnicity[d]	7.1	8.6

	Complete two-year commitment	Leave before end of two-year commitment
Percentage from disadvantaged background[e]	30.1	33.1
Percentage male	28.0	30.8
Average age[f]	23.4	24.4
Sample size	**4,365**	**662**

Source: TFA admissions data.

[a]Teachers in the second scale-up cohort (that began in fall 2012–2013) were not included, as data for this cohort were not available by the time of analysis.

[b]Selective colleges include colleges ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as "selective," "more selective," or "most selective." Information on selectivity is only collected for schools from which TFA has received 5 or more applications in any year between 2010 and 2013. In addition, TFA no longer uses these selectivity data internally, so there are many colleges that are classified as unranked.

[c]Applicants from racial or ethnic minorities includes all non-white racial/ethnic categories plus applicants who selected "Other, I identify as a Person of Color."

[d]The other ethnicity/race category includes corps members who identified their race/ethnicity as one of the following: "Other, I identify as a Person of Color;" "Other, I do not identify as a Person of Color;" or "Multi-Ethnic/Multi-Racial."

[e]Percentage from disadvantaged backgrounds measured by Pell Grant receipt.

[f]Age calculated as of September 1st for the year each cohort begins. Age data are missing for those who did not matriculate into the TFA program.

GPA = grade point average; SAT = Standardized Achievement Test; TFA = Teach For America.

Table V.10. Placements of first TFA-i3 scale-up cohort (2011–2012), by whether they fulfill their two-year commitment to teaching[a]

	Complete two-year commitment	Leave before end of two-year commitment
Grade level		
Prekindergarten or kindergarten	7.5	7.0
Grades 1–5	28.4	32.5
Grades 6–8	32.9	31.6
Grades 9–12	31.3	29.0
Subject		
General	32.1	36.2
Math	19.9	16.4
English	21.5	14.2
Science	14.8	15.7
Social studies	5.8	6.2
Foreign language	3.0	2.6
Other	2.7	8.7
Group		
General education	84.2	88.5
Special education	11.4	6.9
English language learners	4.4	4.5
School type		
Traditional public[b]	65.3	63.9
Charter	32.4	34.6
Private	0.4	0.5
Early childhood	0.9	0.8
Catholic	0.1	0.0
Bureau of Indian Affairs	0.8	0.3
Community setting		
Urban	70.5	71.6
Rural	8.6	9.1
Suburban	15.1	12.8
Town	5.8	6.5
Overall sample size	**4,365**	**662**

Source: TFA placement data and the Common Core of Data.

[a]Teachers in the second scale-up cohort (that began in fall 2012–2013) were not included, as data for this cohort were not available by the time of analysis.

[b]Traditional public schools are non-charter schools.

TFA = Teach For America.

B. Assessment of fidelity to the TFA program model

In addition to examining general changes across TFA program areas, we also determined whether any such changes affected TFA's own established program standards. These measures of program fidelity assess whether all corps members in the first two scale-up cohorts received the intended TFA "treatment." To assess TFA's fidelity to its program model during the first two years of the scale-up, we developed scores reflecting whether TFA met key standards for each program area in both years. Key standards for each program area were determined in consultation with TFA senior staff. Fidelity measures were developed for the following areas: (1) selection standards applied to all candidates, (2) pre-service summer training activities assigned to corps members, (3) ongoing support provided to corps members, (4) the extent to which corps members were placed in low-income schools; and (5) corps member retention.[28]

Table V.11 summarizes our analysis for determining whether TFA adhered to its stated standards in each program area during the first two years of the scale-up. For each program standard, we collected data for all corps members teaching during the 2011–2012 and 2012–2013 school years.[29] For each standard, each corps member was then assigned a score of 1 if the specified standard was met and 0 otherwise. For each standard listed, we then assigned a program implementation score equal to 1 if the specified percentage of corps members met TFA's stated standard in this area, and 0 if it did not. Specified thresholds for the percentage of corps members that must meet each standard to achieve fidelity were established individually for each program area based upon historic data and discussions with TFA.

The scores for individual standards were then summed to create a component-level score for each of the program areas for which fidelity was measured, including a selection score, a pre-service training score, an ongoing support score, a placement score, and a retention score. Component scores were constructed separately for each year in the analysis (2011–2012 and 2012–2013). Summed scores were used to determine whether standards were implemented with fidelity at the component level. At the component level, adequate fidelity was defined as having implemented all standards in that program area with fidelity (receiving the highest possible implementation score at the component level, such as a score of 2 out of 2).

1. Selection

To determine whether TFA met basic standards for its selection process during the first two years of the scale-up, we developed fidelity scores based upon three basic standards that TFA requires all corps members to meet: (1) having a bachelor's degree by the beginning of the program, (2) meeting a minimum GPA of 2.5, and (3) proving their identity as either a U.S. citizen or permanent resident. TFA staff said that corps members not only exceed these basic

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[28] As noted above, TFA does not set annual goals or standards for the number of applicants to the program; instead, it judges the success of its recruiting efforts by the number of candidates placed in schools. Thus we do not examine standards related to recruitment efforts or the number of applicants to the program. Similarly, TFA does not set annual goals for the number of former corps members to be served by its alumni support team. Therefore, we also do not examine standards related to its alumni support program area.

[29] Fidelity measures are based on all corps members who taught during the first two years of the scale-up—the full set of corps members directly affected by the i3 funding in the first two years of the scale-up.

requirements but also meet several criteria TFA uses to predict teacher effectiveness, as discussed in Chapter III. However, according to TFA, the organization does not set a quantifiable bar for these selection criteria that must be met by all corps members, so these criteria could not be incorporated into the fidelity measure.

Based upon the above measures established by TFA, the organization maintained fidelity to its basic selection program model through the first two years of scale-up. During both the first and second scale-up years (2011–2012 and 2012–2013), 100 percent of selected corps members met TFA's three basic selection standards. Because TFA continued to meet each of the three standards, TFA received an implementation score of 3 out 3 possible points at the selection component level, and therefore continued to implement its selection model with fidelity.

2.   Pre-service training

In collaboration with TFA, we developed two measures to determine whether the organization maintained fidelity to its pre-service training model intended to prepare corps members for their classroom placement. Given that we were unable to obtain corps member-level data for these measures, we measured fidelity based on the minimum hours TFA assigned to each corps member as a part of their training. The two standards used to develop pre-service training fidelity measures include (1) the number of hours assigned to corps members for pre-institute work and (2) the number of hours assigned to corps members for group learning experiences during the summer training program. Although pre-service training features a number of other components beyond these measures, the components above were selected for their importance and because TFA had data available for the measures.

During the first two years of scale-up, the two key elements of TFA's pre-service training model generally remained unchanged. The number of hours of assigned pre-training activities, including online modules and pre-institute teacher observations, far exceeded TFA's minimum of 20 hours for both years of the scale-up (the minimum instruction assigned for 2011 and 2012 was 30 and 42.5 hours, respectively); TFA therefore met 100 percent of this standard for both years. All corps members also attended a minimum of 99 hours of formal learning activities at summer institute (such as classes and group instruction) during the first scale-up year and 85 hours during the second, both of which met or exceeded TFA's minimum standard of 85 hours (see Table V.2).

3.   Ongoing support

For ongoing support, fidelity was assessed based upon one standard, the quality of individual support provided to corps members by TFA staff (as measured by the ratio of corps members to TFA staff). TFA set as its standard that TFA would have one support staff member for every 30 corps members.[30] As noted above, although ongoing support features a number of

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[30] TFA defines support staff as staff within its Teacher Leadership Development department that provide training, ongoing support, and logistical support to corps members. These staff include MTLDs, managers of MTLDs, other coaches that specialize in particular areas or subjects, and other support staff that coordinate professional development activities.

other components beyond this measure, the component above was selected for its importance and because TFA had data available for the measure.

The assessment of fidelity for ongoing support indicates that TFA maintained a low ratio of corps members to support staff even as the corps grew. In both 2011–2012 and 2012–2013, the ratio of support staff to corps members was less than one support staff member to 30 corps members in all regions. In 2011–12, one staff member provided support for 21 corps members; in 2012-2013, one staff member provided support for 19 corps members.

4.   Placement

As a central part of TFA's mission, placing corps members in low-income schools is a key priority of the organization. We therefore calculated a fidelity measure for corps member placement based upon the corps members who were placed in low-income schools (as measured by the percentage of students certified for free and reduced-price lunch). TFA set as its standard that at least 75 percent of its corps members would work in low-income schools. The assessment of fidelity for placement indicates that TFA maintained its standard in placing corps members in low-income communities in both 2011–2012 and 2012–2013.

5.   Retention

TFA seeks to retain most corps members throughout both years of their two-year commitment to the program. TFA aims to retain at least 90 percent of first-year corps members and 95 percent of corps members that begin their second year teaching. We found that TFA continued to meet its retention standards in the first year of the scale-up (2011–2012). Ninety-four percent of first-year corps members in 2011–2012 completed their first year of teaching, and 99 percent of corps members who began teaching their second year in 2011–2012 completed their second year.[31] Retention data for 2012–2013 (including first-year data for corps members who began their first year teaching in fall 2012, and second-year data for corps members who began teaching in fall 2011) were not available at the time we conducted this analysis.

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[31] Second-year corps members in 2011–2012 were recruited the year prior to the scale-up but would have benefited from the TFA support provided under the scale-up in their second year of teaching.

Table V.11. Measures of program implementation during the first two years of scale-up

	Key elements of component	Operational definition for indicator	Data source(s) for measuring indicator	Data collection schedule	Raw scoring and scoring criteria for fidelity					
					2011–2012			2012–2013		
					Indicator score for corps member	Percentage of corps that met standard	Implementation score at program level	Indicator score for corps member	Percentage of corps that met standard	Implementation score at program level
Component 1: Selection										
1	Meet standards for level of education	Bachelor's degree by first day of summer institute	TFA program data	Annual TFA data for 2011–2012 and 2012–2013	0/1 for each corps member	100%	1 if 100% of corps members meet standard, 0 otherwise = 1 point awarded	0/1 for each corps member	100%	1 if 100% of corps members meet standard = 1 point awarded
2	Meet standards for GPA score	2.5 minimum GPA	TFA program data	Annual TFA data for 2011–2012 and 2012–2013	0/1 for each corps member	100%	1 if 100% of corps members meet standard = 1 point awarded	0/1 for each corps member	100%	1 if 100% of corps members meet standard = 1 point awarded
3	Meet standards for citizenship	U.S. citizen national/ permanent resident	TFA program data	Annual TFA data for 2011–2012 and 2012–2013	0/1 for each corps member	100%	1 if 100% of corps members meet standard = 1 point awarded	0/1 for each corps member	100%	1 if 100% of corps members meet standard = 1 point awarded
Component-level score					**0–3 for each corps member**		**3 out of 3** Implemented with fidelity score = 3	**0–3 for each corps member**		**3 out of 3** Implemented with fidelity score = 3
Component 2: Pre-service training										
					2011–2012			2012–2013		
1	Pre-summer work for corps member	20 hours assigned	TFA program data	Annual TFA data for 2011–2012 and 2012–2013	0 if < 20 hrs 1 if > 20 hrs	100%	1 if 75% of corps members meet standard, 0 otherwise = 1 point awarded	0 if < 20 hrs 1 if > 20 hrs	100%	1 if 75% of corps members meet standard, 0 otherwise = 1 point awarded
2	Group learning for corps member	85 hours offered	TFA program data	Annual TFA data for 2011–2012 and 2012–2013	0 if < 85 1 if > 85	100%	1 if 75% of corps members meet standard, 0 otherwise = 1 point awarded	0 if < 85 1 if > 85	100%	1 if 75% of corps members meet standard, 0 otherwise = 1 point awarded

| | | Data source(s) for measuring indicator | Data collection schedule | Raw scoring and scoring criteria for fidelity | | | | | |
| | | | | 2011–2012 | | | 2012–2013 | | |
Key elements of component	Operational definition for indicator			Indicator score for corps member	Percentage of corps that met standard	Implementation score at program level	Indicator score for corps member	Percentage of corps that met standard	Implementation score at program level
Component-level score				**0–2 for each corps member**		**2 out of 2** Implemented with fidelity score = 2	**0–2 for each corps member**		**2 out of 2** Implemented with fidelity score = 2
Component 3: Ongoing support									
				2011-2012			2012–2013		
1 Ratio of staff to corps members	30:1 corps member to staff ratio	TFA program data	Annual data for 2011–2012 and 2012–2013 sent by TFA	0 = ratio > 30:1 1 = ratio < 30:1	100%	1 if 75% of corps members meet standard, 0 otherwise	0 = ratio > 30:1 1 = ratio < 30:1	100%	1 if 75% of corps members meet standard, 0 otherwise
Component-level score				**0–1 for each corps member**		**1 out of 1** Implemented with fidelity score = 1	**0–1 for each corps member**		**1 out of 1** Implemented with fidelity score = 1
Component 4: Placement									
				2011–2012			2012–2013		
1 Placement in low-income schools[a]	Place corps members in low-income schools	TFA program data	Annual data for 2011–2012 and 2012–2013 sent by TFA	0 if not placed in high-poverty school 1 if placed in high-poverty school	85.6%	1 if 75% of corps members meet standard, 0 otherwise	0 if not placed in high–poverty school 1 if placed in high–poverty school	84.1%	1 if 75% of corps members meet standard, 0 otherwise
Component-level score				**0–1 for each corps member**		**1 out of 1** Implemented with fidelity score = 1	**0–1 for each corps member**		**1 out of 1** Implemented with fidelity score = 1

	Key elements of component	Operational definition for indicator	Data source(s) for measuring indicator	Data collection schedule	Raw scoring and scoring criteria for fidelity					
					2011–2012			**2012–2013**		
					Indicator score for corps member	Percentage of corps that met standard	Implementation score at program level	Indicator score for corps member	Percentage of corps that met standard	Implementation score at program level
					Component 5: Retention					
					2011–2012			2012–2013		
1	First-year retention	Corps member completes first year	TFA program data	Annual data for 2011–2012 and 2012–2013 sent by TFA	0 = does not complete 1st year 1 = completes 1st year	93.7%	1 if 90% of corps members complete first year, 0 otherwise	**n.a.**	n.a.	**n.a.**
2	Second-year retention[b]	Corps member completes second year	TFA program data	Annual data for 2011–2012 and 2012–2013 sent by TFA	0 = does not complete 2nd year 1 = completes 2nd year	98.5%	1 if 95% of second-year corps members complete second year, 0 otherwise	**n.a.**	n.a.	**n.a.**
Component-level score					**0–2 for each corps member**		**2 out of 2** Implemented with fidelity score = 2	**n.a.**		**n.a.**

[a]Schools in which at least 60 percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

[b]Reflects percentage of second-year corps members that completed two-year commitment among all second-year corps members that began their second year.

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