

# Residency Programs



## Problem Overview

Illinois public schools retained 87.6% of classroom teachers in 2022 (Illinois Report Card). While this is trending positively, this still means that schools had to replace nearly one in every eight teachers leading into the 2023 school year. Costs to entry and support for new teachers are among the top five reasons cited by teachers leaving the profession (Podolsky, 2016). This strategy addresses those two conditions.

## Strategy Summary

Teacher residencies differ from other alternatives that require teachers to train while teaching to maintain a source of income. Teacher residencies underwrite the cost of preparation for candidates while still allowing for full preparation prior to employment. Since 2006, leveraged primarily by federal funding, teacher residencies have grown in number in response to hiring needs in hard-to-staff regional areas (both urban and rural) and subject areas (e.g., special education, mathematics, science, bilingual/English language development). School districts partner with local teacher preparation programs to recruit the teachers that districts know they will need, and to prepare the teacher candidates to excel and remain in these hard-to-staff areas. When used in this deliberate manner, teacher residencies address a crucial recruitment need while also building the capacity of the districts to offer high-quality instruction to the students they serve.

Designed based on medical residencies, this model provides teacher-residents with a yearlong apprenticeship teaching alongside an expert mentor teacher. Residents simultaneously complete credential coursework that is tightly integrated with their clinical placement. Residents are paid a stipend and/or receive tuition remission to enable them to devote the full year to their preparation, and in exchange commit to teach for three to five years in the districts' schools. Because teacher candidates are supported both financially and professionally, the pool of applicants includes "career-changers" who are looking to transition to education from another industry.

## Evidence of Success

Initial studies on residencies also suggest that they have attracted greater diversity into the teaching workforce and supplied more teachers in hard-to-staff subjects, while retaining them in the sponsoring districts at much higher rates than other new teachers (Guha, Hyler, & Kini, 2016). Across teacher residency programs nationally, nearly half of residents (45%) in 2015–16 were people of color, more than double the national rate of teachers of color entering the field (19%)(NCTR, 2015).<sup>1</sup> Typically, these teachers are prepared to teach in shortage fields. Moreover, studies of the longest-standing teacher residency programs have found higher retention rates of residency graduates. This is particularly important since hard-to-staff urban and rural schools can frequently experience very high turnover rates and often lose 50% or more of their beginning teachers within the first few



years on the job (Allensworth, Ponsiciak, & Mazzeo, 2024). A recent study of graduates of the 12 oldest and largest residency programs found that 82% of graduates were still teaching in their same district in their third and fourth year, compared to 72% of nonresidency graduates (Silva et. al., 2014). A longitudinal study of the Boston Teacher Residency found that by the fifth year, 75% of residents remained in the Boston Public Schools, as compared to only 51% of all novice teachers in the district (see Figure 6)(Papay et. al., 2012). Recent data from the San Francisco Teacher Residency indicate that 80% of residents are still teaching in the city after five years, as compared to only 38% of other new hires over that time (LPI, 2016). The research, when taken as a whole, suggests that the residency model holds promise for both recruiting diverse individuals and retaining effective teachers.

## Examples

Typically, teacher residency programs include at least one year of graduate level coursework, completed online or in-person with an additional one-year of active teaching. Illinois does have an alternative license that fits this type of program. The [Educator License with Stipulations-Alternative Licensure Program](#) (ELS-ALP) requires that candidates have at least a bachelor's degree, passing score on the applicable content test, and have at least 9 credit hours (undergraduate accepted) in the content area to be endorsed. The program is currently offered at nine Illinois colleges: Aurora University, Dominican University, Eastern Illinois University, National Louis University, Relay Graduate School of Education, Roosevelt University, Saint Xavier University, University of Illinois Chicago, and Western Illinois University.

The [Boston Teacher Residency](#), an AmeriCorps program, is a national recognized clinical teacher preparation program whose graduates support student achievement from day one and who stay in teaching, continuing to refine and improve their practice. The program takes 12 months, including an intensive two-month summer term of graduate coursework followed by one school year of residency teaching. Participants commit to at least three additional years of teaching following the program.

## Other Considerations

If considering teacher residency as a strategy, make sure to distinguish between the two uses of teacher residencies—one being attracting working professionals from industries outside of education to seek teacher licensure and the other being a model to onboard and develop new teachers as a means of increasing retention and early career support.

If considering recruiting new teacher candidates not yet licensed, note these questions:



If considering the development of new, licensed teachers, note these questions:

1

**What do your current new or nearly new teachers struggle with the most?**

2

**Who is the best teacher or staff member that could serve as a resident advisor?**

3

**How will the expectations for teacher residents differ from your current onboarding process?**

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## Sources

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