

Believe PREPARE



LOUISIANA'S NEXT GENERATION EDUCATORS



DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS THAT PREPARE LOUISIANA'S NEXT GENERATION TEACHERS



You have in your hands a Toolkit that provides guidance and tools to help build, grow, or strengthen a Believe and Prepare Program that centers on the goal of preparing aspiring teachers who can support all students on their path to attaining a college degree or a professional career. School systems and preparation providers can use this how-to guide as they develop effective partnerships and programs that prepare exceptional first-year teachers who are able to add a year's worth of academic growth and/or meet IEP goals for all students.



A 2014 [survey](#) of new teachers, the programs preparing them, and the school systems hiring them found that aspiring teachers need more time in schools, learning the craft through extensive practice and mentoring before entering the classroom as professional educators.

Since 2014, [Believe and Prepare](#) has provided the opportunity for school systems and partner preparation providers to recruit and prepare teacher candidates through year-long, practice-based preparation experiences that develop essential teaching knowledge and skills. Currently, 62 school systems in three cohorts are working to prepare over 800 teacher candidates for the classroom through Believe and Prepare grants.

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Part I: Characteristics of Strong Believe and Prepare Programs

MENTORING

Students need great teachers to unlock their learning potential. Likewise, teacher candidates need high-quality mentors to guide their development. Pilots draw on the expertise of Louisiana’s best teachers to ensure future educators develop the skills they need to help all students learn.

As with any great craft or profession, learning to teach takes practice and experience to yield results. In a teacher preparation program that integrates theory and practice, teacher candidates routinely put into practice what they are learning. Partners must also ensure that candidates receive frequent, targeted actionable feedback on their developing skills from faculty, mentors, and coaches.

This feedback is invaluable because it prioritizes what is most important for candidates’ development and their impact on student learning.

Believe and Prepare program leaders know that one of the most critical features of a preparation experience is the mentor teacher with whom a teacher candidate practices. The table below illustrates some critical differences in how mentor teachers are recruited and trained.

In the past,	In Believe and Prepare programs,
Selection was often based on years of experience, education level, and completion of a single three-hour course.	Selection is based on demonstrated success with students and exhibited leadership qualities and skills.
Universities provided a three-hour course and initial training on procedures. Ongoing training was not required.	Training is delivered collaboratively throughout the year to develop and refine coaching and feedback skills. Mentor teachers undergo training every year to further hone their skills.
Placement of teacher candidates was based on certification area and mentor teacher availability.	Placement of teacher candidates is based on schools' staffing needs in specific certification areas and complementary personalities and skills.
Additional career pathways were limited or did not exist.	Teacher leadership career pathways are developed to provide effective teachers opportunities to lead and prepare the next generation of teachers.

SELECTING MENTOR TEACHERS: Mentor teachers must be leaders as well as content experts. Mentor teachers have achieved results in their own classroom by improving student outcomes and are respected by their colleagues. In addition to traditional academic markers, mentor teachers possess strong organizational and communication skills, the ability to motivate others, and a passion for children. Mentors may already be serving in leadership roles at the school level as Louisiana Teacher Leaders, serve on district-level curriculum teams, or at the state level as Louisiana Teacher Leader Advisors.

This [job description for mentor teachers](#) articulates the knowledge and skills that mentor teachers must have in order to be effective.

DEVELOPING MENTOR TEACHERS: Like teacher candidates, mentor teachers need support from multiple sources to effectively serve in their roles. In strong partnerships, leaders jointly define, recruit, select, and train mentor teachers.

This [sample recruitment and training plan](#) provides examples of training and development plans for supporting mentor teachers’ development.

YEAR-LONG RESIDENCY

Any complex skill takes time and practice to develop. Essential teaching skills – the foundation of great teaching – are no different. Because a classroom is where a teacher learns best, Believe and Prepare pilot programs are redesigning theory-based academic coursework into school-based, practice-oriented coursework to give candidates more time to engage with students and build essential teaching knowledge and skills.

Through this sustained practice, teacher candidates become prepared to teach independently. Believe and Prepare school system leaders have all focused on extending the practice time to at least a year-long clinical experience, or residency.

Across practice-based partnerships, the emphasis on practice allows candidates to spend the majority of their time, often four to five days per week during a residency year, co- or lead-teaching.



*Experiences within Louisiana and across the nation highlight the impact of teaching residency programs. In the state, **Louisiana State University at Alexandria (LSU-A)** adjusted its coursework and scheduling to give pre-service teachers more time practicing in a classroom setting. Meanwhile, **Arizona State University** has scaled its own residency-based teacher preparation program to over 800 undergraduate teacher candidates..*

After surveying students and teachers, it became clear that new teachers and those who work with them wanted new teachers to have more time in the classroom before program completion, so program leaders at [LSU-A decided to transition to a one-year residency for undergraduate seniors](#). LSU-A was able to accomplish this by embedding existing courses – covering topics from history of education to classroom management to working with diverse learners – into methods courses and the residency program. Currently, LSU-A is working closely with Rapides Parish to place their residents in classrooms to co-teach with mentor teachers four days per week and attend courses one day per week. The program began with ten elementary residents and is expected to expand to all undergraduate teacher candidates, including those at the secondary level.

Arizona State University (ASU) annually graduates roughly 800 teachers from its [residency-based teacher preparation program](#), iTeachAZ. Students are grouped into cohorts at different schools, and a university site coordinator is assigned to oversee each cohort. Students in each cohort then participate in formal and informal observations and take methods courses. Mentor teachers are carefully selected and trained by the university, and they are compensated with university credit vouchers. ASU's residency model relies on co-teaching and gradual release in addition to observation and feedback cycles.

COMPETENCY-BASED COURSEWORK

Building preparation experiences around essential teaching knowledge and skills, or competencies, aligns what teacher candidates learn with what they will be expected to do on day one in the classroom. In Believe and Prepare pilot programs, such as St. Charles Parish's partnership with Southeastern Louisiana University and Collegiate Academies' partnership with The New Teacher Project (TNTP), school systems and their partners have made shifts to preparation coursework and content based on the school system's expectations for first-year teachers' knowledge and skills.

At the outset, school systems and their partners must ensure that they share a common definition of new teacher readiness. The essential teaching knowledge and skills, or competencies, become the basis for a teacher preparation experience. Programs that prepare teachers in this way provide aspiring teachers with learning experiences that model the learning experiences they will design for their own students.

1. First, school system leaders and preparation provider faculty draft a sequence of learning outcomes for teacher candidates. This sequence increases in complexity across courses and practice experiences. The outcomes are written so that teacher candidates continually revisit key concepts and skills and build a deeper understanding of how all students learn and how best to teach them.

2. Second, partners develop learning tasks and performance assessments. These assessments require teacher candidates to demonstrate their developing teaching knowledge and skills. These tasks and assessments take place in practice experiences that are integrated with coursework so that candidates have opportunities to practice what they are learning immediately with students and receive feedback on their performance from highly-effective mentor teachers, preparation program faculty, and school leaders.

3. Third, partners determine the process for assessing teacher candidates in order to advance in the program. Candidates demonstrate developing teaching knowledge and skills through performance with students and advance to more challenging preparation content as they demonstrate mastery. By using a common tool and process, such as Compass or TAP, and regularly discussing teacher candidates' progress, mentors, principals, and preparation provider faculty are able to hold consistent, high expectations for teacher candidates.

When partners agree on what is most essential for new teachers to know and be able to do in order to teach all children effectively and use a common process for assessing teacher candidates, they are able to discuss candidates' progress towards mastering essential knowledge and skills at any stage of the program, develop interventions as needed, and ultimately make recommendations for professional certification based on candidates' demonstrated teaching effectiveness. To ensure that partners have a shared vision for teaching competencies and progress, preparation faculty, and mentor teachers should meet regularly to make adjustments to the preparation experience based on candidates' performance.

Just as students are expected to demonstrate their mastery of grade-level standards, prospective teachers should be expected to demonstrate required teaching knowledge and skills. This demonstration does not happen through paper and pencil tests. That is why Believe and Prepare preparation programs review candidates' performance as they are learning to teach.

Believe and Prepare programs use a skills rubric to review candidates' skills. Some programs use elements of Louisiana's [Compass system](#) while other programs use elements of the school district's TAP: The System for Teacher and Student Advancement model to measure prospective teachers' performance in the classroom and make decisions about residents' readiness for a professional teaching license.

Part II: Keys to a Successful Believe and Prepare Partnership

COLLABORATION

Practice-based teacher preparation programs depend on strong partnerships between school systems and preparation providers. While preparation providers need schools and classrooms in which to prepare prospective teachers, school systems need new teachers who are fully prepared for the realities of teaching and meet staffing needs. These partnerships cannot be formed and will not be sustained without collaborative structures.

A school system launching a teacher preparation partnership begins by answering two important questions collaboratively:

1. What are my school system's needs?
2. What are my school system's existing strengths and partnerships?

The first question ensures that any teacher preparation partnership is based on and responsive to school system needs. Because all school systems are unique, this question will be answered differently.



The second question requires collaboration among systems and their partners to build on existing strengths.

Some of Believe and Prepare's successful partnerships have been built on existing relationships. For some school systems, that has meant teaming up with local universities. For others, it has meant collaborating with non-university providers to help prepare teacher candidates to meet district's unique staffing needs.

PARTNERSHIPS

In 2014-2015 West Feliciana Parish and Louisiana State University's Cain Center teamed up to tackle the parish's shortage in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Lincoln Parish partnered with Louisiana Tech to create a teaching residency program. New Orleans College Prep worked alongside Relay Graduate School of Education to create a support system and first-year residency for its newest teachers.

In 2015-2016, Rapides Parish expanded its existing relationship with LSU-A, Terrebonne Parish developed a more focused plan with Nicholls State University, and Ouachita and Union Parishes forged a partnership with Louisiana Tech University.

For some systems, that may mean foregoing a partnership altogether. Ascension Parish is creating a district-based alternative certification program after years of developing a strong mentor teacher corps as a part of the district's [TAP system](#).

Collaboration takes work but yields results. Working together, school systems and partners can draw on the expertise of their best faculty and teachers.

In addition, strong partnerships need strong program leaders – a few key people who ensure that the partnership and program are operating effectively – and maintain strong, regular communication that guides program improvement.

PROGRAM LEADERS

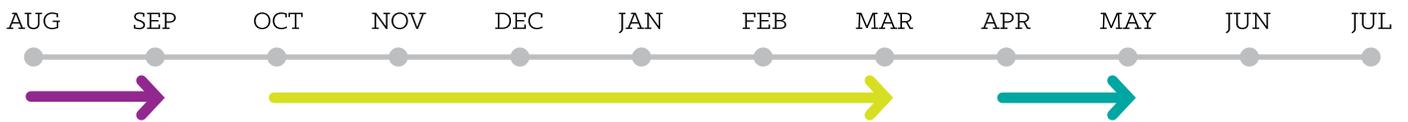
This is a sample view of program leaders who are responsible for ensuring the program's effectiveness.

Program Director: Leads the development and launch of university partnership programs, works closely with the district’s instructional supervisors and the university’s leadership, and manages program budgeting.

Site Coordinator: Coordinates communication, supports and trains mentor teachers between a system and partner, and leads candidate training.

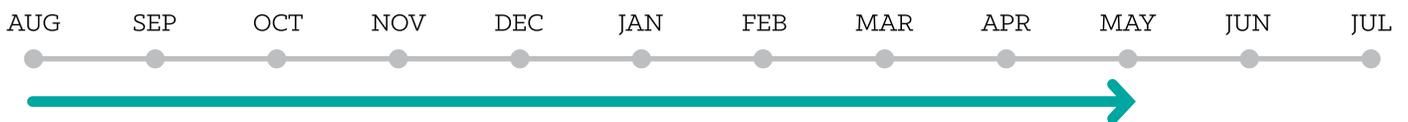
Clear job descriptions for these program leaders—[program director](#), [site coordinator](#), and [mentor teachers](#)—ensure that program leaders have clear roles and responsibilities for maintaining the program’s daily operations.

COMMUNICATION CALENDARS



CLINICAL COLLABORATION MEETINGS (MONTHLY)

PARTICIPANTS Site coordinator, Principal, & Mentor teachers	August-September	Set goals for the resident learning and development	
	October-March	Monitor resident progress	Make adjustments to coaching strategies
	April-May	Assess resident readiness	



INSTRUCTIONAL MEETINGS (WEEKLY)

PARTICIPANTS Mentor teachers & Residents	August-May	Deliver feedback, set weekly priorities for development
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BUDGET

School systems and their partners work together to develop financially sustainable programs that include year-long residencies. Developing teacher preparation partnerships may require two phases of funding. The first phase of costs is associated with launching the program and may include the cost of hiring an administrator to oversee program launch. The second round of costs sustains programs and may include stipends for mentor teachers and coaches, salaries for long-term program leadership positions, and ongoing supply and program maintenance costs. This [administration and budget tool](#) provides examples of partnerships and sample budgets.

To fund partnership development, school systems and their partners have repurposed existing funding streams. For example, school systems may choose to use Title II funds to cover costs for the program, which may include providing mentor teachers with stipends. Meanwhile, preparation providers can use a variety of [financial aid options](#) to support teacher candidates. These options include AmeriCorps funds for teachers at Title I schools, Federal TEACH grants, and USDOE Supporting Effective Educator Development grants.

School systems and their partners can use the financial models in the administration and budget tool to estimate program launch and operation costs. These models are based on the experience of first-generation pilot programs in Louisiana and mature programs in other states.

CONCLUSION

This toolkit was developed to support the continued expansion of Believe and Prepare by sharing the most promising tools and resources from the Believe and Prepare community. The school systems and preparation providers who partner to train and grow teachers ensure that those teachers are ready on day one to serve all of Louisiana's students.



Appendix I: Overview of Tools

Sample Job Descriptions: These tools can be used to establish, formalize, or strengthen the leadership roles in a partnership.

[A. Mentor Teacher Job Description on page 9](#)

[B. Program Leader Job Description on page 10](#)

[C. Site coordinator Job Description on page 11](#)

[D. Mentor Recruitment and Training Guidance:](#) This tool provides guidance for building a strong cadre of mentor teachers.

[E. Administration and Budget Tool:](#) This tool provides samples of start-up and sustaining costs.

[F. Financial Aid Options on page 12:](#) This tool lists available resources to support candidates in residencies.

Appendix II: Additional Resources

REPORTS

Believe and Prepare Annual Report

<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/teaching/2015-believe-prepare-annual-report.pdf?sfvrsn=6>

Partners in Preparation: A Survey of Educators & Education Preparation Programs

<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/links-for-newsletters/partners-in-preparation-survey-report.pdf?sfvrsn=6>

Compass Annual Report

<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/compass-final-report>

RESOURCES

Believe and Prepare overview

<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/teaching/believe-and-prepare>

Believe and Prepare Implementation Guide

<http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/teaching/2015-2016-believe-and-prepare-implementation-guide.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

Teacher Preparation Programs

<https://www.teachlouisiana.net/Prospect.aspx?PageID=413>

Talent Recruitment System

<https://www.teachlouisiana.net/>

A. MENTOR TEACHER JOB DESCRIPTION

WHO YOU ARE

- An exceptional teacher who has demonstrated the ability to add a year's worth of growth and/or met IEP goals with all students
- An instructional leader committed to ensuring all students have outstanding teachers in Louisiana who are inspired and highly motivated to change children's lives through education
- The most important part in supporting the growth of aspiring teachers
- Part of the team that ensures every classroom is staffed by an effective teacher and all students are on a successful path to college and career

WHAT YOU BRING

- Experience making consistent, positive impacts on student learning
- Ability to teach and lead adults
- Leadership and coaching skills with a willingness to invest in colleagues to help them grow
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Ability to manage time and plan effectively
- A commitment to constant learning and improvement

WHAT YOU WILL DO

- Communicate frequently with preparation program faculty and school leaders about the candidates' development and readiness for certification
- Identify priorities for candidate development based on candidates' performance and resulting impact on student learning
- Observe and assess teacher candidates formally and informally
- Provide feedback (in real-time or on debrief) based on identified goals
- Model teaching skills through demonstration lessons
- Develop and implement individualized support plans for candidates, if needed
- Commit to additional professional development opportunities

In a co-teaching residency, you will:

- Host a resident and share your classroom for the full school year
- Co-teach and share instructional time, gradually releasing teaching responsibility to the resident

In a practitioner teacher residency, you will:

- Coach residents weekly by reviewing instructional plans, materials, assessments and student work samples
- Lead frequent (e.g., weekly or biweekly) observation/feedback cycles

B. PROGRAM LEADER JOB DESCRIPTION

WHO YOU ARE

- An instructional leader committed to ensuring all students have outstanding teachers in Louisiana who are inspired and highly motivated to change children's lives through education
- The person who ensures the Believe and Prepare pilot program launches successfully and has the foundation to sustain over time
- A liaison who ensures there is a shared vision and an alignment between preparation and practice experiences
- A relationship-builder who works closely with the district or school's curriculum and instruction staff and the preparation provider faculty
- Part of the team that ensures every classroom is staffed by an effective teacher and all students are on a successful path to college and career

WHAT YOU BRING

- Experience navigating operations at both school system and university levels
- Project management skills for large-scale program implementation and development
- Experience in developing and maintaining systems for collecting, organizing, and using data to guide program development
- Experience developing and managing budgets
- Ability to manage relationships and coordinate operations between multiple organizations
- Significant experience in grant-writing and creating funding opportunities
- Ability to manage time and plan effectively
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills

WHAT YOU WILL DO

- Systematically measure and respond to teacher resident performance and overall satisfaction with the program
- Create and implement long-term program goals and objectives
- Coordinate, manage, and oversee program implementation; identify and lead adjustments to programming when necessary
- Develop an annual budget and operating plan to support the program
- Coordinate with school leaders, mentor teachers, and partner staff on scheduling, resident placement, and other program needs
- Establish relationships with and serve as a liaison between the Believe and Prepare pilot partners and the Louisiana Department of Education
- Manage grant applications and other possible funding sources

C. SITE COORDINATOR JOB DESCRIPTION

WHO YOU ARE

- An instructional leader committed to ensuring all students have outstanding teachers in Louisiana who are inspired and highly motivated to change children's lives through education
- A liaison who implements and maintain school system-level structures that grow mentor teachers and aspiring teachers
- An important part in supporting the experience to grow aspiring teachers
- Part of the team that ensures every classroom is staffed by an effective teacher and all students are on a successful path to college and career

WHAT YOU BRING

- Exceptional project leadership and management skills
- Experience in developing and maintaining systems for collecting, organizing, and using performance data to guide program development
- Ability to manage relationships and coordinate operations between multiple organizations
- Ability to instruct and lead and coach adults
- Ability to manage time and plan effectively
- Leadership and coaching skills with a willingness to invest in colleagues to help them grow
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills
- A commitment to constant learning and improvement

WHAT YOU WILL DO

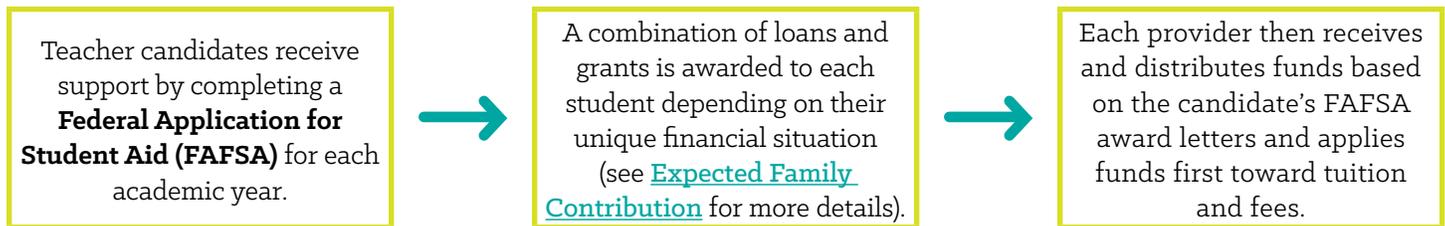
- Oversee, evaluate, and adjust program throughout the year
- Coordinate with mentor teachers, school leaders, and partner staff to identify goals for aspiring teacher's development based on performance and resulting impact on student learning
- Track mentor teacher and teacher resident performance growth over time
- Coordinate with school leaders, mentor teachers, and partner staff on scheduling, resident placement, and other program needs
- Lead site-based seminars and training for teacher residents, mentor teachers, and/or school leaders
- Observe and assess teacher candidates' growth formally and informally
- Provide feedback (in real-time or on debrief) based on identified goals
- Model teaching and coaching skills
- Participate in all school-based professional development activities

F. FINANCIAL AID OPTIONS

OVERVIEW

Students who hold part-time or full-time jobs may be wondering how they will be able to spend a full year as a teaching resident. Providing adequate financial support is a crucial step in supporting aspiring teachers as they learn how to teach alongside highly-effective mentor teachers in full-year residencies.

The typical student financial aid process for teacher candidates is as follows:

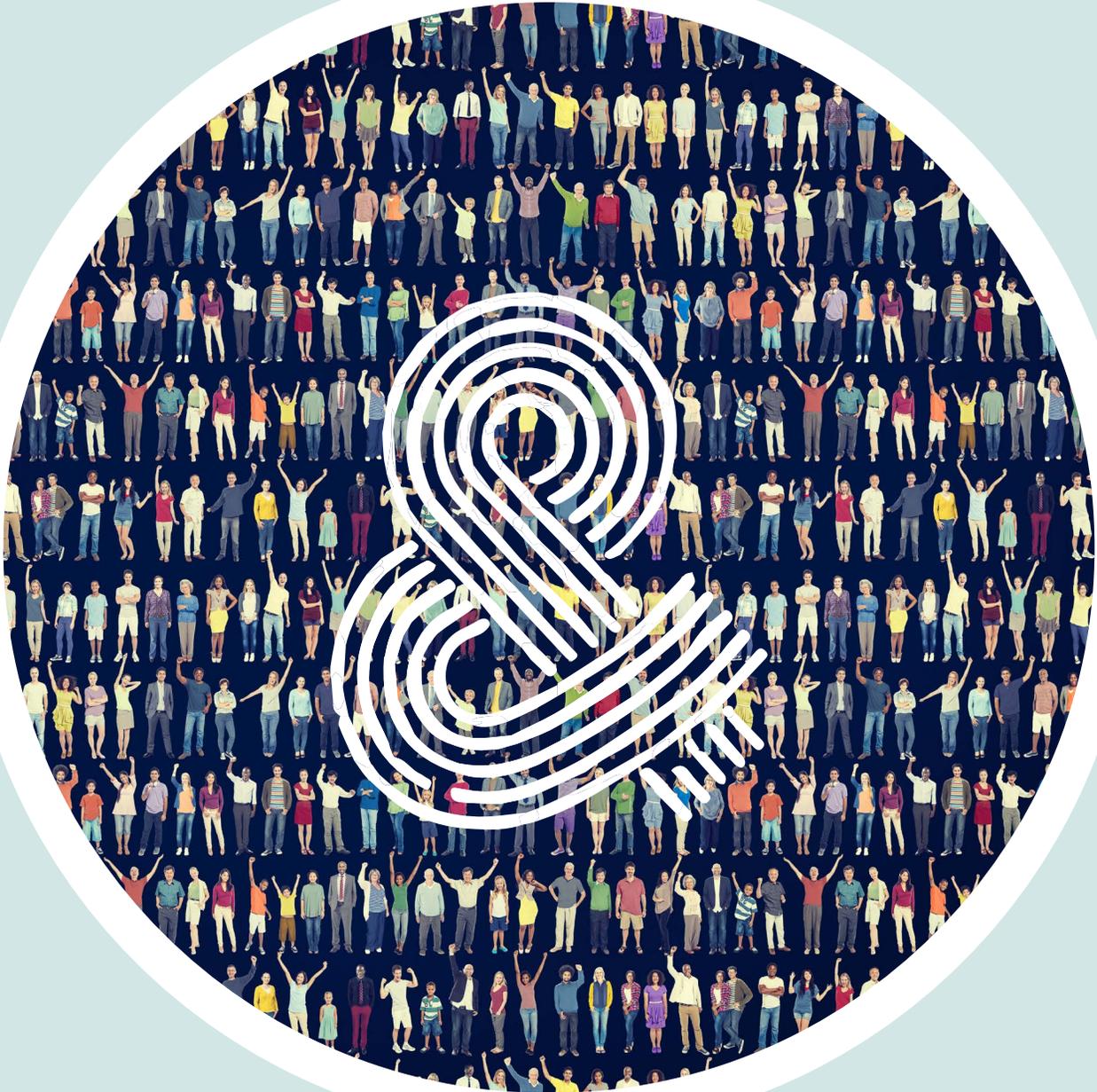


Note: Each teacher candidate's aid situation is highly individualized based on a variety of factors. Different approaches may be used to support all teacher candidates through federal aid avenues.

PROMISING PRACTICES

- **Teacher candidates can request a professional judgment** (or indicate a change in circumstance), which will direct the financial aid office to re-calculate the student's aid package based on their **current** financial situation (reflecting their inability to work due to year-long residency program).
- **AmeriCorps Funds of \$5,500 each year** are available if the candidate is teaching in a Title I School. The iTeachAZ program at Arizona State estimates that 98% of their students receive grant funding through AmeriCorps.
- **Federal TEACH grants of up to \$4,000 per year** are also available to teacher candidates who meet certain academic requirements (3.25 cumulative GPA, 75th percentile on college admissions test) and plan to teach at a high-needs school and commit to teaching in a low-income district for four of the eight years following graduation.
- **Establish department scholarships to teacher candidates.** These scholarships could be funded in a variety of ways – charitable donors and benefactors, department funds, and district donations are a few ideas. Arizona State's iTeachAZ program offers numerous **department scholarships** to support their candidates.
- **Draw on the expertise of university financial aid specialists to help mitigate individualized aid challenges for teacher residents.** The Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at Arizona State University employs a financial aid specialist who helps select and assign scholarships to teacher candidates. The specialist ensures that each student maximizes their support through aid/scholarships through their knowledge of ASU's financial aid requirements and through individual interviews with the students.
- **Work with school systems to compensate teacher candidates during the year-long residency.** Districts pay tuition or offer scholarships in exchange for a teaching commitment from the candidate. Districts could also "hire" teacher candidates as temporary employees and pay them a wage or stipend while they complete the one-year residency.
- Apply for a **USDOE Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) grant** for additional funding that could be used to further support teacher candidates.
- **Providers can hold any additional required academic courses at district sites** in lieu of traditional campus classes to alleviate transportation costs of the program's teacher candidates.

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