

ESSA AND QUALITY TEACHER PREPARATION:

STRENGTHENING INSTRUCTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS & SUPPORTING SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

THE ESSA OPPORTUNITY FOR RESIDENCIES

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) provides states and districts with a renewed opportunity to strengthen the quality of teaching and learning in schools by explicitly incorporating well-designed yearlong pre-service co-teaching placements (“residencies”) into state ESSA applications as an allowable and encouraged use of funds. While “pre-service” teacher preparation is not frequently conceptualized as an allowable use of these federal funds, when well-designed preparation programs include funded, yearlong co-teaching residencies, they address many of the goals contained within ESSA and contribute to the systemic educational improvements sought by states and districts.

RESIDENCIES CREATE SYSTEMIC IMPROVEMENTS IN TEACHER QUALITY

- **Attract diverse, promising candidates:** Providing stipends for aspiring teachers reduces barriers to entry, including for mid-career professionals, and attracts a diverse and talented teacher pool
- **Prepare effective teachers who promote student learning:** Extensive clinical experiences result in increased preparedness and efficacy to promote learning
- **Retain effective teachers, especially in schools serving low-income and diverse families:** Residents who work alongside expert teachers in high-functioning schools during their preparation remain in teaching, even when ultimately hired in high-need schools that often experience greater levels of teacher turnover

PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL AND DISTRICT IMPROVEMENT

- **Value the professional expertise of current educators:** Effective educators are recognized as mentors and have career-ladder opportunities that don’t require them to leave the classroom
- **Develop current teachers’ skills:** Mentor teachers gain skills analyzing, reflecting on and sharing their practice, and refine their approaches accordingly; residents bring new pedagogy and theory to the classroom
- **Build stronger school communities:** Professional conversations between mentors and residents promote increased collaboration and relationships among educators across the school and district

LEAD TO AN IMPROVED EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

A diverse, prepared, and stable teaching force has the professional skills necessary to collaborate with colleagues to promote student learning and well-being, including in high-need schools and hard-to-staff subject areas.

States can use flexibility within ESSA to promote pre-service residencies as the first step in teachers’ career paths, structuring residencies to improve teaching and learning for all students.

HOW PRE-SERVICE RESIDENCY PROGRAMS CAN BE SUPPORTED UNDER ESSA

TITLE I – IMPROVING BASIC PROGRAMS

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Rationale: Where pre-service teachers spend a full year in a school, they can become an essential part of school improvement processes. Pre-service residents can play a role in supporting school improvement plans, and both pre-service residents as well as residency program providers can play a part in providing services aligned with school-wide and targeted assistance programs.

States should encourage districts to consider resources, which, if they include Title I funds, must be used consistent with allowable uses of those funds, to put towards supporting residencies as strategic investments in their improvement efforts.

How Residency Programs Support School Improvement	Related ESSA Sections
Residents can play a direct role in both comprehensive and targeted support plans for Title I schools. Their presence can also allow expert teachers to participate more deeply in school improvement strategies	<i>Section 1003. School Improvement.</i>
Residents can support students in meeting challenging academic standards, including providing services before and after regular school hours and/or offering enriched and accelerated curricula, providing supports for students in early college or co-enrollment programs, and offering early intervention services to prevent problem behavior	<i>Section 1008. Schoolwide Programs</i>
Mentor teachers and others can participate in and benefit from professional development activities around mentoring, adult leadership, and reflective practice	<i>Section 1009. Targeted Assistance Schools</i>
Residency programs can effectively support strategies to recruit and retain effective teachers, including in high-need subject areas	

TITLE II, PART A – SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION

Rationale: Well-designed, funded pre-service residencies are instrumental in accomplishing each of the four stated purposes of ESSA’s Title II: increasing student achievement, improving the quality and effectiveness of teachers, increasing the number of teachers effectively improving student academic achievement, and providing low-income and minority students greater access to effective teachers (Sec. 2001).

In addition to promoting the incorporation of pre-service residencies across LEAs, states may use their ESSA allocations to facilitate the development of clinically rich teacher preparation programs under Title II Part A.

How Residencies Support Effective Instruction	Related ESSA Sections
Reasonable evidence exists that pre-service residencies (as defined in section 2002(5)) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase the effectiveness and retention of new teachers, including those working in schools and LEAs serving low-income and minority students • increase the number of effective teachers and improve the quality of the teaching force • lead to improved student outcomes 	<i>Sections 2101 (c)(4)(B)(iii) and 2103 (b)(3)(B)</i>
The extensive clinical preparation of pre-service residencies increases feelings of preparedness and efficacy and reduces turnover, especially among beginning teachers and including in high-need schools	<i>Sections 2101(c)(4)(B)(iii) and 2103(b)(3)(B)</i>

Funded pre-service residencies reduce barriers to entry into the profession, can promote diversity of the teaching force, and can provide incentives to recruit mid-career professionals to teach, including in high-need subject areas	<i>Sections 2101(c)(4)(B)(v) and 2103(b)(3)(B and C)</i>
Residency programs can support a shift for preparation providers to become deeper partners in districts’ teacher quality and school improvement efforts	<i>Section 2101(c)(4)(B)(xi)</i>
Residency programs include a strong mentor teacher selection process, provide development support for mentor teachers, and may include stipends or salary differentials for mentors	<i>Sections 2101(c)(4)(B)(vii) and 2103(b)(3)(B)</i>
Residencies include strong partnerships between preparation providers, LEAs, and schools, and LEAs can draw on providers’ expertise for school-wide professional development needs	<i>Sections 2103(b)(3)(E, M, & O) and 2101(c)(4)(B)(ix, xvii, & xviii)</i>
Residents who work alongside a mentor teacher over the course of an entire school year provide additional instructional support that effectively serves to reduce class size	<i>Section 2013(b)(3)(D)</i>

ENGAGING AROUND THIS ESSA OPPORTUNITY

Because research indicates that residencies improve teacher quality and retention, promote student achievement, and, with funding for residents, contribute to stronger and more diverse teacher candidates, states should consider the role of residencies in meeting the strategic goals discussed above. Because well-designed residency models require deep partnerships between districts and preparation providers, states should engage with institutes of higher education and other teacher preparation organizations, as well as with LEAs, as they develop their ESSA applications to set the vision for pre-service clinical experience and deep provider partnerships as mechanisms for improving teaching and learning.

SAMPLE LANGUAGE for STATE ESSA APPLICATIONS

Including language that explicitly encourages districts to explore residencies as one means of meeting state ESSA goals can facilitate the development of residency partnerships. Below is sample language states might consider during their ESSA planning.

Pre-service teacher residencies can help the State and its LEAs meet the goals of ESSA in numerous ways. Individual residents enhance direct instructional services by reducing class sizes and providing personalized supplemental instruction. Well-designed programs also offer systemic effects: attracting and retaining strong, diverse candidates in hard-to-staff schools; promoting teacher leadership; supporting school improvement; and building productive partnerships between preparation providers and districts.

For these reasons, the State encourages districts to consider entering into partnerships with providers to implement year-long, clinically rich preparation programs that incorporate residents fully into instructional and school improvement efforts.