

“Building Back Better”: ARP ESSER Opportunities for the Teacher Workforce

The American Rescue Plan (ARP) offers an unprecedented opportunity for districts to transform their educator workforce in ways that center both quality and equity, solving historically intransigent issues of recruitment, retention, and preparedness of teachers to thrive in their roles. Over the past 20 years, the proliferation of fast-track programs have attempted to fill immediate hiring needs, but their graduates have also destabilized the teaching force because of their high turnover rates. Aspiring teachers enter the profession through those pathways because of the financial incentives of having a full-time paid position with benefits. Districts now have the opportunity to leverage these new funding streams to develop deep, sustainably funded teacher residency partnerships that provide high quality clinical practice for teacher candidates, address pressing instructional needs, and build a new educator workforce model that can permanently solve issues related to recruitment, retention, and school improvement.

ARP ESSER Funds Goals and Guidelines



The ARP Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER) supports efforts to address impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including eligible activities already approved under ESSA, IDEA, AEFLA, or Perkins CTE, with 20 percent of funds specifically addressing exacerbated learning opportunity gaps using evidence-based interventions

that address disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 (see the [ARP ESSER Fact Sheet](#)). Because residencies have a strong evidence base, and residents can serve in instructional roles that meet ESSER goals, these funds can pay them for work during their clinical practice.¹

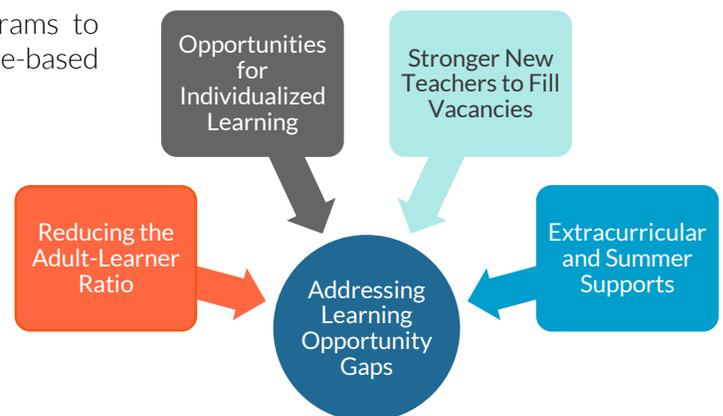
ARP ESSER: How Residencies Align

Teacher residency programs that offer candidates stipends to work in the district for a year before being hired as a teacher of record meet immediate instructional needs, supporting short-term efforts to address impacts of COVID-19; they can simultaneously rebuild the teaching and learning systems in a district to fundamentally change long-term outcomes for students—especially those historically disenfranchised by the system.

Residencies that are designed in partnership with programs to address district needs can offer high-impact, evidence-based approaches that meet three ESSER district fund guidelines:

- ◊ Addressing the needs of children from low-income families, children with disabilities, English learners, racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth
- ◊ Planning and implementing activities related to summer learning and supplemental after-school programs
- ◊ Addressing opportunity gaps (“learning loss”)

In addition, these deeply partnered residencies can provide a high-quality teacher pool of individuals who are well prepared to support the



learning of the particular students they will serve, addressing systemic inequities in educational opportunity, including the following:

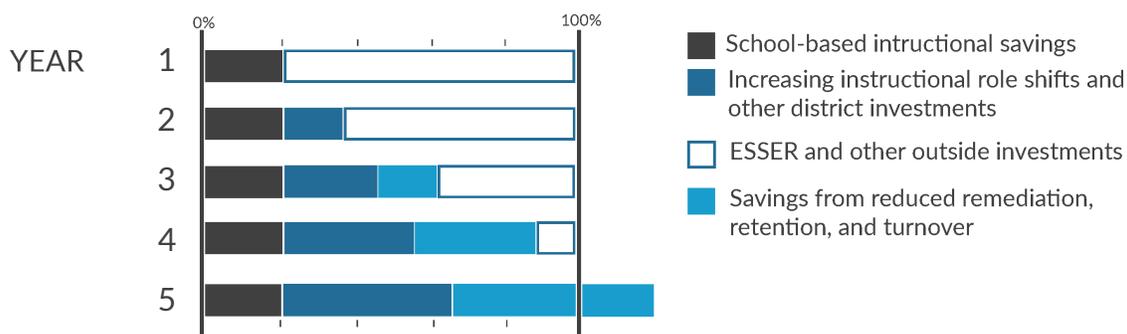
- ◊ Increasing diversity in the teaching force
- ◊ Addressing staffing needs in hard-to-staff schools and certification areas
- ◊ Reducing attrition, thereby ensuring students are not taught by a revolving door of novice teachers
- ◊ Providing professional learning and advancement for current mid-career and veteran teachers
- ◊ Supporting school-wide instructional improvement efforts
- ◊ Ensuring aspiring teachers enter through programs that forefront culturally sustaining and responsive pedagogies, current research on learning and development, and the importance of building relationships with students, their families and colleagues

An ESSER Investment That Endures

Individuals prepared through ESSER-funded residencies are likely to remain in their teaching roles, making residencies a worthwhile investment for both the short- and the long-term.

With planning, these funds can also kickstart deeper shifts so that funded residencies become the norm even after ESSER funding has ended. Prepared To Teach has documented how residents can be integrated into P-12 instructional roles in ways that provide budget-neutral funding that begins to cover some of the costs of living while engaging in full-time residency work (see [Simple Shifts: Paying Aspiring Teachers with Existing Resources](#)). In addition, having a stable, well-prepared teaching force would create substantial savings across a number of recurring district budgets, including human resources, professional development, and student support services (see [The Residency Revolution: Funding High-Quality Teacher Preparation](#)). In particular, districts with high attrition rates can realize large savings, as teacher turnover costs the nation billions every year.

The chart below illustrates the potential to reallocate instructional roles and reinvest cost savings in the increasingly lower number of needed residents—because each year turnover is reduced—so that 100% of residents’ stipends could be funded over time. How much a particular district will realize in savings over time will vary by locality, but every district would benefit from having residents in their classrooms today, and from hiring those residents as well-prepared, integrated staff for full-time teaching roles tomorrow.



We invite you to join this national effort to grow residency partnerships. You can sign up for [our newsletter](#), which shares free resources each month, or [contact us](#) for other opportunities.

ⁱ The research base behind residencies is strong; we have elected here not to document each point and invite you to [contact us](#) for specifics, or you may read [our reports](#), especially [The Residency Revolution](#).