

OPPORTUNITY CULTURE TEACHING RESIDENCIES

SUMMARY

BY PUBLIC IMPACT

Opportunity Culture teaching residencies are full-time, full-year, well-paid positions offered in collaboration with participating colleges, universities, and other accredited programs (“providers”). Residents pay the usual provider tuition and fees, offset by their district-paid salary and benefits, or the district pays providers directly. See <https://opportunityculture.org/teacher-and-principal-residencies/> for more.

The cornerstone of these residencies is leadership by multi-classroom leaders (MCLs)—accountable teacher-leaders who have a track record of high-growth student learning. Strong guidance and coaching from MCLs lets educator preparation programs swap some course credit for *academic* learning with credit for *on-the-job* learning.

Residents who already have a bachelor’s degree are typically **Teacher Residents**, in a role like novice teachers. Residents working toward a bachelor’s degree are typically **Reach Associate Residents**, in a role as instructional assistants. Both gain **more experience than typical student teachers**. Residency roles available depend on open positions in each school; some may be intentionally reserved for residents. Pay or tuition payment by the district matches available roles. **All residents in the district’s Opportunity Culture schools receive heavy guidance from their MCL**, the cooperating teacher of record. **MCLs, who lead small teams** averaging five to six teachers, closely guide and coach all members of a collaborative grade or subject team, while teaching part of the time. Residents and other early-career teachers are more heavily supervised than most others.

In 2018, researchers from the Brookings Institution and American Institutes for Research found that teachers who joined the team of an MCL with prior high growth as a teacher then **produced learning gains equivalent to those of teachers in the top quartile in math and nearly that in reading**. The team teachers were, on average, at the 50th percentile in the student learning gains they produced before joining an MCL’s team.

Why Residencies? The residencies serve three main purposes, which also benefit existing teachers:

- * **Ensure that all prospective teachers learn** the elements of instructional excellence;
- * **Attract an outstanding, diverse pipeline** of teacher candidates and colleagues into the district; and
- * **Provide the district’s students with strong learning experiences**, including with new teachers.

How? Residents learn through a combination of coursework and experience, aligned for rapid development:

- * **Coursework** through a participating provider that is aligned with residency experiences—focused on academic knowledge of key topics, such as student development, pedagogy, and subject content; and
- * **Full-year, well-paid residencies** under a multi-classroom leader to learn instructional skills on the job.

Five Paths for Teacher Residents. Providers collaborating with districts offer one or more residency paths. Paid residencies in each district may be limited in number, based on job openings on MCL teams. Some districts may have only paid residencies; others may also keep unpaid student teacher slots. Summer school is part of all paths.

1. **Bachelor’s Residency:** Students earn a bachelor’s degree and certification with four years of coursework that include a full-year, paid residency.
2. **Bachelor’s Residency—Extended Program:** Students earn a bachelor’s degree and certification with courses, work before the residency in schools for credit and pay, and have a full-year residency. Completion times vary widely and take longer than other bachelor’s paths.
3. **Bachelor’s-Master’s Residency:** Students earn bachelor’s and master’s degrees and certification with five years of courses that include a full-year, paid residency. This path can promote subject specialization.
4. **Master’s Residency:** Students with bachelor’s degrees obtain a master’s degree and certification in about 14 months of courses that include a full-year, paid residency. This path can promote subject specialization.
5. **Certification Residency:** Students with bachelor’s degrees obtain certification in 12 months of courses that include a full-year, paid residency. This path can promote subject specialization.

Other scholarships and fellowships available from the state or provider are *in addition* to resident pay. Candidates may be able to tutor and teach small groups before the residency for additional course credit.