

Funding Your Future in Teaching

A Financial Resource for Aspiring Educators



California urgently needs more educators!

Well-prepared people who reflect the diversity of our state can make a real difference—and a real living—preparing young learners to thrive. Ever considered teaching? Earning your teaching credential might be less complicated and more affordable than you think.

Who is this resource for?

- Prospective teachers
- Advisors to prospective teachers

What does it provide?

- **Part 1** offers potential financial planning steps for individuals considering entering teaching through *any pathway* and outlines key federal and state financial aid opportunities that aspiring teachers may access.
- **Part 2** introduces the financial supports available to students participating in *teacher residency programs* and showcases example funding packages on offer in California-based residency programs. Residencies are one of four primary pathways to becoming a teacher. In residency programs, you teach alongside an experienced mentor while completing coursework toward your credential.



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LEARN MORE



This resource was developed by the interagency State Collaborative for California’s Educator Workforce in conjunction with the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC), with research and support from WestEd. Find more information about teacher preparation pathways and ways to finance them at ctc.ca.gov/credentials/roadmap-to-teaching.

Part 1.

Financial Planning for Pursuing Any Type of Teacher Preparation Program

This section offers potential financial planning steps for individuals considering entering teaching through *any pathway* and outlines key federal and state financial aid opportunities that aspiring teachers may access.



KEEP IN MIND

Candidates interested in pursuing special education, bilingual education, and related specializations are eligible for all the funding resources covered in this section. In addition, some programs offer additional financial aid for candidates going into these high-need subjects, and schools may also offer hiring incentives for teachers who focus in those areas. Ask about these opportunities in your conversations with program and financial aid advisors.

Exploring Funding Resources for Teacher Preparation

If you're an aspiring teacher, consider following these steps to plan how you will focus and finance your participation in a teacher preparation program.

1. **Identify the pathway into teaching that is right for you**, whether it's a residency, a traditional program, an integrated undergraduate program, or an internship. See the CTC's [Pathways to Credentialing](#) page to learn more about each.
2. **Identify specific programs** within the pathway that interest you. See the CTC's [Program Pathways Dashboard](#) for key facts about specific programs.
3. **Visit the website** of each program that interests you to learn more about its educational offerings, anticipated program outcomes, and timelines.

Note: Some programs lead to a master's degree in addition to a teaching credential. These may require additional time, coursework, and costs. However, in most districts, teachers entering with a master's degree begin at a higher tier in the salary schedule than those with a bachelor's degree.

4. **Identify estimated total cost of attendance (COA)** for each program that interests you. The COA typically includes tuition, fees, books, supplies, and living expenses. Consider your personal situation—factors such as having dependents, living on-campus, or attending part-time can impact your costs. Note that the COAs published on college and university websites usually assume a single full-time student without dependents. Actual costs can vary.
5. **Identify state and federal financial resources** that can be applied toward your teacher preparation program costs—major grants of this type are featured in the next section of this document. In addition, you may qualify for public resources such as:
 - CalFresh and WIC
 - Medi-Cal
 - Utility discounts (see the [CARE/FERA Program](#) and [LIHEAP](#))
 - Childcare and Family Care
 - Public transportation discount

The [Teacher Candidate Funding Explorer](#) is a comprehensive and searchable matrix of state and federal funds, though it does not capture region-specific resources.

6. **Complete the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#) or [California Dream Act Application \(CADA\)](#)** to apply for the state and federal funding opportunities that may apply to you.
7. **Learn about program-specific financial supports** by reviewing the program’s website or contacting a program or financial aid advisor at your program of choice. Resources to look for or ask about include:
 - Scholarships
 - Stipends
 - Supplemental income opportunities
 - Healthcare
 - Test preparation support
 - Testing fee waivers
8. **Estimate net cost.** After completing the steps above, subtract all forms of support you could access from the total cost of attendance at your program of choice to estimate your net cost. You may be surprised! For example, in some cases robust programs that may seem expensive may also offer significant financial support. When aspiring teachers combine state grants, supplemental income opportunities (e.g., through substitute teaching) and other support, some find that they can completely cover cost of attendance. By estimating net cost, you can make more financially informed decisions about which teacher preparation program is right for you.
9. **Evaluate long-term benefits.** Some programs may have higher initial costs but could offer greater long-term benefits like job placement services, higher starting salaries, or more rigorous preparation and support. Consider these factors as they may affect your overall financial situation post-graduation. Note that some districts also offer incentives for specific specialization (e.g., hiring bonus for bilingual authorization).

ASK FOR ANSWERS



Don’t hesitate to reach out to financial aid offices and program advisors for help in understanding the costs and supports available at any point in the process. They can provide personalized assistance that can be valuable to your decision-making process.

The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing also offers [Education Career Counselors](#) to those interested in having a one-on-one conversation about becoming an educator. These experienced staff members serve as career guidance counselors, credential experts, subject matter experts, and resource specialists for people seeking to make the transition into a PK–12 educational career.

Federal and State Aid for Teacher Candidates

Below is a snapshot of key state and federal financial aid grant opportunities for teacher candidates in any teacher preparation program—some need-based, some not. To access these grants, prospective teachers should complete the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#) (FAFSA) and any supplementary materials. Eligible California AB540 students should complete the [California Dream Act Application](#) (CADA). See the [Teacher Candidate Funding Explorer](#) for more resources.

Funding for Teacher Candidates	Amount	Guidance	Need-Based?
Golden State Teacher Grant Program	Up to \$20,000	Golden State Teacher Grant recipients must commit to serve in an eligible priority school/California State Preschool Program (CSPP). This grant has a service requirement of four academic years upon completion of a degree program. If the four-year service requirement is not fulfilled over an eight-year period, the grant is converted to a loan the teacher candidate must repay with interest. Applicants that applied from 9/1/2023 to 6/30/2024 will continue to receive up to \$20,000 but applicants that applied from 7/1/2024 and after will receive up to \$10,000. Applicants who received the reduced award of \$10,000 have a service requirement of two years instead of four years. Additionally, intern programs in this group are no longer eligible.	No, has a service requirement
Cal Grant Teaching Credential Program	Up to \$13,572	Cal Grant A and B recipients enrolling in a fifth-year teacher credential program may be eligible to renew their Cal Grant award for one additional year but must have received their bachelor's degree within 15 months. Students meeting this criterion that also have dependents may be eligible for an additional \$6,000 through the Students with Dependent Children Grant.	Yes
Pell Grant	Up to \$7,395	A student who is enrolled in a <i>post-baccalaureate</i> teacher certification or licensure program is eligible to receive a Pell Grant if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program does not lead to a graduate degree (e.g., Master of Arts); • The school offering the program does not also offer a bachelor's degree in education; • The student is pursuing an initial teacher certification or licensing credential within a state; and • The program consists of the courses required by a state to receive a professional certification or licensing credential necessary for employment as a teacher in an elementary or secondary school in that state. 	Yes

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<p>TEACH Grant</p>	<p>Up to \$4,000 per academic year</p>	<p>Upon completion of an eligible credential program, TEACH Grant recipients must teach in a high-need field at a low-income elementary school, secondary school, or educational service agency for four years. If the four-year service requirement is not fulfilled over an eight-year period, the grant is converted to a loan the candidate must repay with interest. The years served toward the service requirement can also count toward those required by the Golden State Teacher Grant program.</p> <p>Eligible TEACH grants programs lead to a bachelor’s degree or graduate degree (e.g., Master of Arts or Sciences) or are post-baccalaureate programs (i.e., preparation programs that lead to a teaching credential, but do not lead to a graduate degree). However, a post-baccalaureate program is not TEACH grant eligible if the school where it is offered also offers a bachelor’s degree in education.</p> <p>The best way to learn if a program is TEACH grant eligible is to contact the financial aid office at the school you are considering. Ask whether the school participates in the TEACH Grant Program and about the programs of study at the school that are TEACH Grant eligible.</p>	<p>No, has a service requirement</p>
<p>State University Grant (CSU only)</p>	<p>\$6,660</p>	<p>California State University (CSU) teacher candidates are eligible for the State University Grant (SUG) via the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or California Dream Act application (CADA). It is important to note that students can receive <i>either</i> the SUG grant <i>or</i> the Cal Grant, not both.</p>	<p>Yes</p>

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE

Complete the FAFSA and Golden State Teacher Grant Application for Multiple Academic Years

- Many teacher preparation programs begin in the summer before the academic year for which a student would typically submit their FAFSA. Teacher candidates in such programs must submit the FAFSA for both academic years in order to be able to access funds for both the summer term starting in June, and the following Fall and Spring terms that begin after the start of the new academic year.

For the Golden State Teacher Grant (GSTG), which also operates on a July 1 fiscal year start, teacher candidates must submit two applications, one for each applicable academic year. The GSTG application for the fiscal year covering the academic term starting in June must be submitted by April 1. This may be challenging for teacher candidates who aren’t admitted to their programs until the later admissions rounds in May.

Part 2.

Pursuing a Teacher Residency Program: Financial Supports and Examples

This section illustrates the financial supports available to students participating in one well-regarded pathway to a teaching credential: *teacher residency programs*. It showcases example funding packages associated with a variety of real California-based residency programs.



About the Teacher Residency Model

What distinguishes this type of teacher preparation?

Teacher residency programs are inspired by the medical school approach to training doctors, where instruction and practice are combined. Once you earn your bachelor's degree, as a teacher resident you will teach alongside an experienced mentor teacher for at least one full school year. You'll engage in this pre-service clinical practice three to four days a week while completing coursework to earn a Preliminary credential. After receiving the credential, you will likely serve as teacher of record (a full-time teacher) in the same district where you conducted your pre-service clinical practice. Residency programs are collaboratively administered through a credential program at an institution of higher education and a local educational agency (a school district, county office of education, or charter school).

How long do residencies typically take?

For a full-time student, most residencies usually take 1 to 1.5 years to complete.

What are the benefits of teacher residency programs?

- You'll receive financial support to cover tuition and expenses during your time in the classroom—and some programs provide the opportunity to earn a master's degree. Nearly all residency programs offer a stipend.
- You'll receive rich, hands-on experience teaching and learning alongside a mentor educator.
- You'll teach as part of a cohort of fellow residents who can learn from and support one another.
- Residents are more likely than teacher candidates in other pathways to report feeling well-prepared and well-supported by their program over time.¹
- Residencies are designed to provide immediate employment for which residents are prepared following program completion.
- Teachers who complete a residency tend to remain at work in local classrooms longer than peers who chose other pathways.²
- Residency programs tend to attract a more diverse pool of teacher candidates.³

¹ Silva et al (2014). *Teaching residency programs: A multisite look at a new model to prepare teachers for high-need schools* (NCEE 2015-4002). Washington, DC: Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.; Sloan et al (2018). *A Different, More Durable Model: Hunter College Urban Teacher Residency Project*. New Visions for Public Schools.

² Goldhaber et al (2022). Room for improvement? Mentor teachers and the evolution of teacher preservice clinical evaluations, *American Educational Research Journal* 59(5), pp. 1011-1048.; Papay et al (2012). Does an urban teacher residency increase student achievement? Early evidence from Boston, *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 34(4), pp. 413-434.; Sloan et al (2018). *A Different, More Durable Model: Hunter College Urban Teacher Residency Project*. New Visions for Public Schools.; Valente et al (2023). Establishing partnerships in the Central Valley to expand the teacher residency model, *Issues in Teacher Education* 32(1), pp. 8-23.

³ Huguet et al (2021). *Widening the pathway: Implementation and impacts of alternative teacher preparation programs across three contexts*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.; Matsko et al (2022). How different are they? Comparing teacher preparation offered by traditional, alternative, and residency pathways, *Journal of Teacher Education* 73(3), pp. 225-239.; Ong et al (2021). CTERIN Policy Brief: *Diversifying California's Teaching Force: How Teachers Enter the Classroom, Who They Serve, & If They Stay*. California Teacher Education Research & Improvement Network.

Financial Support for Teacher Residents Provided by the Program

In addition to state and federal aid shown on pages 7–8, other kinds of financial support are available to teacher candidates in residency programs. These financial supports can come from the residency program’s institutions of higher education and the local education agency where residents are completing their clinical practice. See the next section for example funding packages.

Stipends

- Most teacher residency programs offer a stipend as compensation. Different programs administer their stipends on different schedules—some distribute a few lump sums (e.g., each semester) and others make more frequent distributions (e.g., monthly).
- Some residency programs offer higher stipends for specializations, such as education specialist or bilingual authorization.

A note on tax liability: When administered by the school district, stipends are paid as wages and taxed accordingly. In this common case, stipend compensation does not interfere or impact eligibility for other aid. Residents should be prepared to file their taxes for the corresponding fiscal year.

Employment

- **Substitute Teaching.** Teacher residents in some programs may have the opportunity to earn supplemental income by substitute teaching in their district. However, due to the immersive rigors of the residency program model, many residents do not substitute teach, or only substitute teach on a limited basis (e.g., a few days a semester). Ability to substitute teach largely depends on district need and an individual’s capacity to take on additional work.
- **Paraprofessional Teaching.** Some teacher residency program models build working and earning an income as a part-time paraprofessional into the residency. This can, however, meaningfully increase a resident’s overall workload, which always includes standard clinical practice alongside a mentor teacher and coursework. When supplemental paraprofessional opportunities are offered, they are nearly always optional.

Program and Institutional Scholarships

- While not necessarily specific to the resident pathway, some teacher preparation programs offer need-based or merit scholarships to address costs of tuition and fees and, in rarer cases, living expenses. In lieu of, or in addition to, scholarships, some programs also offer tuition reduction.
- Unlike program stipends, these scholarships are usually not guaranteed.
- Some scholarship awards may be offered without any additional application beyond applying to a program, while other program or institutional scholarships may require supplemental applications. Reach out to program or financial aid advisors at the institution of higher education for additional information.

Fee Waivers

- Teacher residency programs may offer fee waiver or reimbursements. These fee waivers can help cover the cost of items such as test registration, test preparation, credential fees, as well as live scan and TB test fees.

Requesting Cost of Attendance Adjustments

- Teacher candidates can request that their cost of attendance be adjusted to reflect costs such as testing and credentialing fees that are often not automatically included in cost of attendance budgets. While receiving an adjusted increase would in no way guarantee the receipt of additional aid, it does raise the ceiling on the total amount of aid a student can receive through the institution of higher education's financial aid office. This may matter for a student who is eligible for more grants than the cap on their financial aid (which is set by the estimated cost of attendance) will allow them to access.

Books and Supplies

- Some programs use a zero-cost textbook model or cover the cost of required books and materials.



Example Teacher Resident Funding Packages

The following table presents examples of real teacher residency programs in California, from the 2023–24 academic year, that offer robust financial packages for teacher residents. These summaries are based on interviews with residency program leaders describing the financial packages that they offer to prospective candidates. Each example represents the range of resources that a candidate could potentially receive from an institution to fund their teacher preparation.



KEEP IN MIND

This table utilizes the standard cost of attendance and assumes a single full-time student without dependents, living off campus. Students' actual costs of attendance will vary depending on the program and personal circumstances. Students may request a cost-of-living adjustment at their institution of higher education. This would raise the ceiling on the total amount of aid they are allowed to receive.



Example Funding for Teacher Residency Candidates

		Program A (CSU+District)	Program B (CSU+District)	Program C (CSU+County)	Program D (Private+District)	Program E (Private+District)	Program F (UC+District)	
Geographic Location		City in a largely urban area	Urban hub of a rural area	Town in a largely rural area	Coastal town in a rural area	Urban hub of a rural area	City in a largely urban area	
Program Length		12 months	10 months	12 months	12 months	18 months	15 months	
Total Cost of Attendance⁴		\$29,499	\$31,512	\$28,862	\$56,710	\$46,116	\$77,210	
Program Aid	+	Stipends	\$33,896	\$40,000	\$13,000	\$40,000	\$30,000	\$48,148–\$52,148 (incl. \$18,000 for housing)
	+	Scholarship	\$0–\$15,000	N/A	\$0–\$2,000	\$0–\$7,000	\$4,300 (tuition reduction value)	\$0–\$43,000
	+	Substitute Teach ^{5,6}	\$0–\$2,050 (\$205 / day)	\$0–\$3,000 (\$250 / day)	\$0–\$2,940 (up to \$245 / day)	N/A	\$0–\$2,700 (\$225 / day)	N/A
	+	Paraprofessional Employment ⁵	N/A	N/A	\$15,600–\$38,025	N/A	N/A	N/A
	+	Fee Waivers ⁷	N/A	\$0–\$1,085	N/A	\$0–450	\$0–800	\$0–800
Federal and State Aid	+	Various ⁸	<i>Varies</i>	<i>Varies</i>	<i>Varies</i>	<i>Varies</i>	<i>Varies</i>	<i>Varies</i>
Total Program Aid Financial Package⁹		\$33,896–\$50,946	\$40,000–\$43,000	\$28,600–\$55,965	\$40,000–\$47,450	\$34,300–\$37,000	\$47,148–\$95,148	
Net Cost to Candidates		To determine net cost, subtract the total available financial package <i>and</i> any state or federal grants you are eligible for from your total cost of attendance. As demonstrated above, many program aid packages associated with California teacher residency programs could cover the total cost of attendance.						

⁴ Includes program expenses (e.g., tuition, fees, materials) and living expenses (e.g., meals, housing, transportation).

⁵ This range only includes scholarships offered directly by the program. Students may be eligible for additional state and federal aid; see page 7–8.

⁶ The maximum in the ranges represented assume a total of 12 days of substitute teaching (six days per semester). Some programs allow residents to substitute teach more frequently and for classrooms besides that of their mentor teacher (e.g., nine to 18 days per semester).

⁷ Fee waivers and reimbursements are excluded from the Total Program Aid Financial Package sum, except for Program D. Most programs do not include Testing, Credential, and Certification fees in the Total Cost of Attendance.

⁸ Federal and state aid varies based on eligibility, need, and willingness to commit to service agreements.

⁹ This range represents only program aid. It does not include federal and state financial aid. The range bounds are minimum guaranteed to maximum possible program financial supports.



The future is calling: California students can't wait for more highly capable, qualified teachers in their classrooms. Teacher preparation programs and candidates motivated to respond to this call can find resources needed to make it all happen at ctc.ca.gov/credentials/roadmap-to-teaching.