

How States Can Support Teacher Apprenticeship

The Case of Tennessee



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Summary

Teacher apprenticeships are a new initiative intended to expand the supply of well-prepared teachers by allowing candidates to earn a salary and mentored on-the-job experience while working toward a teaching license. This brief describes Tennessee's Registered Apprenticeship in teaching, the first to be registered in the United States. It explains how the program is governed, funded, and operated, taking a closer look at a local teacher apprenticeship program in one school district. It concludes with considerations for policymakers who seek to expand teacher apprenticeships in other states, including who will sponsor the program, what pathways will be offered, how apprentices' tuition and pay will be funded, and which partners need to be engaged.

Introduction

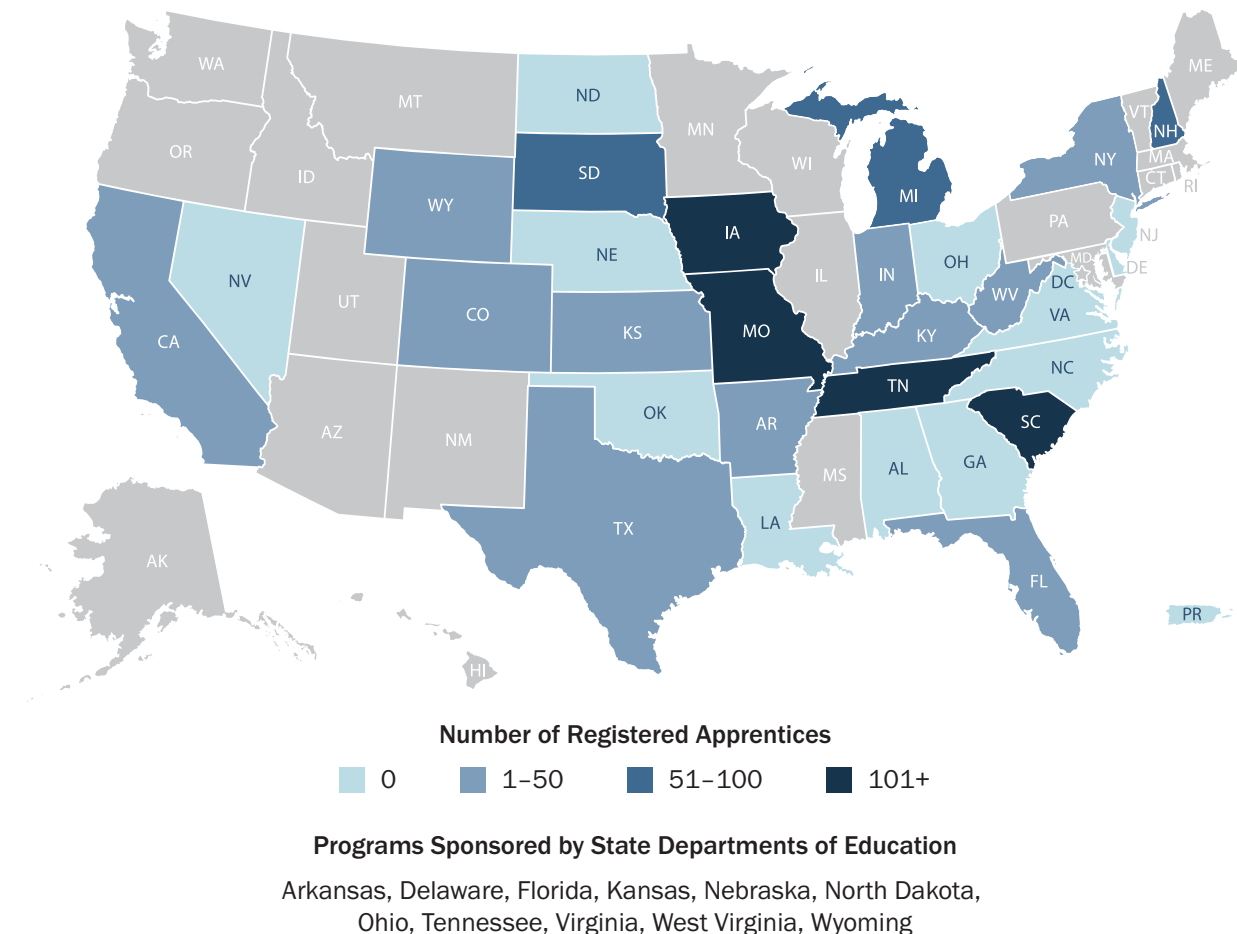
In January 2022, Tennessee became the first state in the United States to establish a federally Registered Apprenticeship in teaching. Teacher apprenticeship has rapidly gained attention as a strategy to expand the number of qualified teachers in response to nationwide [teacher shortages](#) (see "What Is a Registered Apprenticeship?"). Apprenticeship has the potential to make becoming a teacher more attractive by providing paid pathways into the profession, reducing barriers into the field such as challenges in paying for and navigating the higher education system. Teaching models that combine coursework with intensive clinical practice, such as [teacher residencies](#) and, more recently, apprenticeships, have demonstrated promise in preparing and retaining high-quality teachers. Because of the financial and other supports they provide, such pathways may be particularly promising for [increasing the racial and ethnic diversity](#) of the teacher workforce.

Since the launch of Tennessee's Registered Apprenticeship program, the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education have [highlighted](#) apprenticeship as a key strategy to addressing teacher shortages, and there has been a [surge of interest](#) in teacher apprenticeship across the country. By the end of 2023, Registered Apprenticeships in teaching had been launched in 31 states and territories and apprenticeship programs were in development in several others. (See Figure 1.)

States' roles in expanding teacher apprenticeship programs vary. Of the states with a registered program, 11 list the state department of education or another state agency as an apprenticeship lead (Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wyoming). The remaining states' programs are sponsored by local education agencies (LEAs), education preparation

programs (EPPs), or others, with varying levels of state involvement in getting new apprenticeship programs off the ground.¹ Most registered programs are still in early stages and enroll few apprentices. Just four states enrolled over 100 teacher apprentices in 2023: Tennessee, with 678; Iowa, with 517; Missouri, with 253; and South Carolina, with 225. Nationally, just over 2,100 teacher apprentices were registered in total.² A total of 85 teacher apprentices graduated with their teaching license in 2023—including 57 from Tennessee.

Figure 1. Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Programs by State in 2023



Source: Apprenticeship USA, U.S. Department of Labor. [Data and statistics](#); Apprenticeship USA, U.S. Department of Labor. [Partner finder](#); Personal email with U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development (2024, February 20).

This brief focuses on Tennessee’s Registered Apprenticeship, since it is the largest and most mature K–12 teacher apprenticeship in the nation and because the state has played a pivotal role in its development, making it relevant for state policymakers. The program is rapidly expanding. The state awarded grants to 11 EPPs partnering with 73 school districts in 2023. By the end of 2023, the program’s first year, 57 apprentices had completed the program and 678 were enrolled. This brief seeks to clarify the state of Tennessee’s role in expanding high-quality teacher apprenticeships to inform education policies in other states. It draws from data collected from publicly available documents and webinars, as well as interviews with agency and education preparation leaders.

What Is a Registered Apprenticeship?

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, “Registered Apprenticeship is an industry-driven, high-quality career pathway where employers can develop and prepare their future workforce, and individuals can obtain paid work experience, receive progressive wage increases, classroom instruction, and a portable, nationally-recognized credential.” Apprenticeships have the following distinguishing features:

- All apprentices have a **paid job** and earn a progressively increasing wage.
- Programs provide structured **on-the-job mentorship** from an experienced mentor.
- Apprentices receive **supplemental instruction** in the classroom that builds on their on-the-job training.
- Apprentices receive portable, nationally recognized **credentials** such as a teaching license.
- Programs are designed to meet the needs of individuals in the communities in which they operate and support workplace **diversity, equity, and inclusion**.

All Registered Apprenticeships must designate agencies that will play key roles in their governance structure. These include the following:

- **Registration Agency:** The registration agency is responsible for registering programs and apprentices, providing technical assistance, and ensuring that apprenticeship programs comply with federal law. The registration agency may be the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Apprenticeship or a state apprenticeship agency, [depending on the state](#).
- **Sponsor:** The sponsor is responsible for the administration and operation of the Registered Apprenticeship. The sponsor makes key decisions about the apprenticeship structure that are outlined in the program’s registration, such as defining the competencies apprentices must meet, the schedule for meeting these competencies and receiving wage increases, the ratio of mentors to apprentices, and the apprenticeship program’s governance structure. The sponsor is also responsible for selecting and overseeing partners who provide related instruction and support for recruitment of apprentices and mentors. The sponsor may be an employer, an educational institution, a union, a government agency, or another entity.
- **Related Instruction Provider:** Related instruction providers are colleges, universities, or other education providers that offer coursework to apprentices that leads to a recognized credential, such as a teaching license and/or a bachelor’s degree.
- **Employer:** The employer hires apprentices and pays their wages and, as applicable, benefits. In a teacher apprenticeship, the employer is a local education agency.
- **Intermediary:** An intermediary is an organization that supports the sponsor in implementing an apprenticeship program. Intermediaries may engage and convene interest holders to determine interest in and need for an apprenticeship program, support the sponsor in registering and determining the structure of the program, provide support with recruitment of apprentices, collect and analyze data, and more. Not all Registered Apprenticeships have an intermediary.

Sources: Apprenticeship USA, U.S. Department of Labor. [What is a registered apprenticeship program?](#); Feldman, C. (2022). [Registered apprenticeship roles and responsibilities: Intermediaries and sponsors](#). Center for Apprenticeship & Work-Based Learning.

Tennessee's Registered Apprenticeship in Teaching

In Tennessee's apprenticeship model, the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) acts as the sponsor, meaning it is responsible for overseeing the apprenticeship program. LEAs act as the employer and provide on-the-job training, while EPPs provide the related instruction. The Tennessee Grow Your Own Center serves as an intermediary, supporting program implementation across the state. Apprenticeship programs are registered with the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the state's apprenticeship agency.³ (See "What Is a Registered Apprenticeship?")

History

Tennessee's Registered Apprenticeship for teachers grew out of a district teacher residency program, launched in the 2018–19 school year in the Clarksville–Montgomery County School System in partnership with Austin Peay State University. (See "Teacher Apprenticeship in the Clarksville–Montgomery County School System.") In 2020, Austin Peay began working with the Clarksville Montgomery County School System to register the program as an apprenticeship. They asked the TDOE to act as the sponsor to support with program administration.

The TDOE consulted with several interest holders, including the Tennessee Education Association, as it considered expanding the Clarksville–Montgomery Grow Your Own model in other districts. Agency leadership decided that model could be replicated in other districts across the state to address growing teacher shortages in high-need fields, such as special education and English as a Second Language.⁴

In October 2020, the TDOE awarded \$2 million in grants—using Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funding—to seven EPPs to partner with 37 school districts. The grants funded candidates' tuition, fees, and additional program costs, incentivizing EPPs to develop programs in partnership with LEAs. In June 2021, the TDOE awarded an additional \$4.5 million in ESSER-funded grants to 13 EPPs in partnership with over 50 districts.

In January 2022, the U.S. Department of Labor officially approved the Grow Your Own model as a Registered Apprenticeship program. Getting registered allowed the program to access federal apprenticeship funding from the U.S. Department of Labor and local workforce boards. It also created new responsibilities for the TDOE in terms of data collection and oversight—just as the department was experiencing staff transitions in key positions. In May of that year, as the program grew and leadership changed, the Tennessee commissioner of education launched the [Tennessee Grow Your Own Center](#) to oversee the growing program with a \$20 million investment, also using ESSER funding. The Center, which is hosted by the University of Tennessee at Knoxville and has eight staff members, now leads teacher apprenticeship in the state.

The Tennessee Apprenticeship Model

All teacher apprentices in Tennessee apprentice for at least a full year under the direct supervision of a mentor teacher who is the teacher of record, similar to a [teacher resident](#) or a student teacher. Apprentices typically are hired as teachers' aides, also known as paraprofessionals.⁵ They work in student-facing roles as employees of the LEA, in some cases gaining access to employee benefits such as health insurance and paid sick days. In this role, apprentices may co-plan with their mentor teacher, design curriculum, teach lessons to the whole class and small groups, and modify lessons for students with exceptional needs.

Candidate prior education requirements are determined locally by LEAs in partnership with EPPs, [with programs](#) that vary from no college coursework to a bachelor's degree. Tennessee's Registered Apprenticeship is [competency based](#), which requires successful demonstration of skills and knowledge and at least 12 months of on-the-job learning. The length of the apprenticeship varies by the candidate's education level to allow sufficient time to earn a degree and licensure, although all candidates must apprentice with their mentor at least 1 year for at least the equivalent of [3 days a week](#), which includes planning time with a mentor teacher.⁶ To allow candidates sufficient time for their studies as they work, candidates with a bachelor's degree typically apprentice for at least 1 year. Candidates with an associate degree or equivalent college coursework generally apprentice for at least 2 years. Candidates with less than 2 years of college coursework apprentice for 3 years.

All apprentices earn a progressively increasing wage as they demonstrate increasing competence in the state's required on-the-job learning competencies. Initially, these [competencies](#) were based on the teacher evaluation rubric used in the Clarksville–Montgomery County School System. Recently, however, EPPs have started shifting to use other competencies, including those used in the Pathways Alliance's national guideline standards approved by the U.S. Department of Labor.⁷ (See "National Guideline Standards for Registered Apprenticeship in Teaching.")

Mentor teachers in Tennessee's Registered Apprenticeship must be licensed teachers with at least 3 years of experience and must have been rated "above expectations" or "significantly above expectations" on a recent teaching evaluation. Mentors are responsible for evaluating their apprentices on the competencies listed for the Registered Apprenticeship program. Mentor teachers receive a stipend, the size of which varies by district. Mentor training is determined by the LEA.

Apprentices take coursework in addition to their on-the-job training. All programs must offer at least 120 hours of related instruction, although most require much more. Candidates with less than 2 years of college credit often begin their studies at a community college, which is more affordable. Candidates with an associate degree or the equivalent take coursework toward their bachelor's degree and teacher license at an EPP. Candidates who already have a bachelor's degree when they begin the program also enroll in an EPP to earn their teacher's license and, in some cases, a master's degree.

National Guideline Standards for Registered Apprenticeship in Teaching

National Guideline Standards are a model for developing local apprenticeship programs that have already been approved by the federal Office of Apprenticeship or a state apprenticeship agency. The [Pathways Alliance](#), a coalition of organizations working to develop diverse, inclusive, and effective educator preparation pipelines, developed a set of [National Guideline Standards for the K–12 teacher profession](#) in collaboration with interest holders from workforce development and labor. These standards include several key features:

- Apprentices complete at least 1 school year of paid on-the-job learning under the supervision of a mentor teacher, who is the teacher of record.
- The apprenticeship is competency based, using the InTASC standards adopted by more than 40 states to define the competencies that apprenticeships need to demonstrate.
- Candidates complete a bachelor's degree, either before entering or as a result of the apprenticeship.
- Apprentices must satisfy all requirements for full state teacher licensure or certification, excluding emergency or other substandard licensure or certification.
- Candidates must satisfactorily complete all related instruction required by the EPP.
- On-the-job learning and related instruction are designed to be interdependent and complementary.

Source: Pathways Alliance. (2023). [National guidelines for apprenticeship standards for K–12 teacher apprenticeships](#).

Agency Roles

The state of Tennessee takes a central role in funding teacher apprenticeship through competitive grants to EPPs to support instructional costs, including student tuition, books, fees, and testing. The TDOE administers these state grants, with an [application](#) that set out several eligibility requirements for local programs. The Tennessee Grow Your Own Center supports TDOE in these responsibilities as the intermediary. In 2023, the Center developed a new [rubric](#) on which to evaluate EPPs applying for state funds.

[Grants](#) provide the TDOE an opportunity to incentivize EPPs to meet certain criteria. These criteria include that candidates incur no costs (other than non-repayable financial aid, such as Pell grants), that apprenticeship programs foster teacher diversity, that candidates apprentice for a minimum of 1 year (2 years if they are earning their bachelor's degree and teaching license), and that EPPs tailor their coursework in state-approved pathways to meet apprentices' needs.⁸ The grants also provided the department an opportunity to expand programs for special education and English as a Second Language since dual certification in these areas was required; this requirement has since been removed.

As the sponsor, the TDOE maintains data from apprenticeship programs in the apprenticeship database, RAPIDS, and the state's educator database, TN Compass. These data include candidate GPA and licensure assessment scores; program retention and completion rates; candidate, mentor, and district survey feedback; district placement and employment; and apprentices' employment duration.

EPPs and LEAs may each apply to the TDOE to begin an apprenticeship program. In their initial application, applicants must describe how they will recruit a diverse teacher workforce and provide coursework and on-the-job training that is responsive to candidates' needs and schedules.

As intermediary, the Tennessee Grow Your Own Center facilitates partnerships between LEAs and EPPs. This includes connecting LEAs who want to establish new partnerships with EPPs that offer the needed related instruction. The Center also supports LEAs in designing mentor training and an apprentice recruitment strategy and facilitating connections to local workforce development boards. It supports EPPs by soliciting grant funds that can be used for faculty or curriculum development, such as a [\\$1.8 million philanthropic grant](#) announced in 2024 for faculty across the state to develop online coursework to support apprentices. The Center also supports the collection of data from school districts, EPPs, and apprentices.

To cement their partnership, LEAs and EPPs establish [formalized partnership agreements](#). In its [playbook](#) for launching a Grow Your Own teacher apprenticeship program, the TDOE lists several topics in which LEA and EPP partnerships should develop agreements. These include a clearly defined target population of apprentices, a candidate selection process, and a communication and marketing plan. The partners must identify when candidates are expected to meet the state's educator competencies; what the program of related instruction will entail; and how they will structure a system of comprehensive supports, such as cohorts, tutoring, and advising. EPP and LEA partners must establish a process for selecting and training mentor teachers and develop a staffing model. They must develop a budget and finance plan and a way to monitor and evaluate progress.

As employers, LEAs are responsible for hiring, onboarding, and compensating apprentices. LEAs may use nondistrict funds to pay apprentices as long as they meet the minimum wages established in their application to TDOE to run an apprenticeship program. LEAs are also responsible for providing apprentices with coaching and on-the-job mentorship.

EPPs offer the coursework apprentices need to earn a bachelor's degree (as applicable) and a teaching license. They modify course content to support student success and offer course schedules that meet the needs of working apprentices, often blending in-person and online coursework. To receive state grants, EPPs must self-rate their readiness to offer a high-quality apprenticeship program on multiple dimensions on a [rubric](#) and submit accompanying evidence.

EPPs are responsible for supporting candidates as they take on increasing responsibilities throughout their apprenticeship. Most EPPs send university supervisors to visit apprentices in their classrooms; others, like Austin Peay State University, rely on strong coordination between university staff and mentor teachers employed by the LEA. EPPs must also report data to the state and determine how they will measure impact.

Funding

Funding for the apprenticeship programs comes from state, federal, and local funding sources. In Tennessee, most funding for apprentices' salaries comes from districts, while most higher education costs are covered by state grants and student financial aid.

State grants. State grants to EPPs fund student tuition, books, fees, and testing. The [first grants](#), awarded in 2020 and 2021, provided \$100,000 and were funded by flexible federal pandemic relief (ESSER) funds. These grants were awarded to EPPs that were willing to serve the highest number of apprentices. A total of \$6.5 million was awarded in grants to serve approximately 650 apprentices (an average of \$10,000 in grant funding per apprentice).⁹

In 2023, with the sunset of ESSER funds, Tennessee’s governor committed to Grow Your Own programs for teachers by funding a \$5 million grant from the governor’s discretionary fund, a state set-aside. EPPs may receive annual scholarships of \$5,000 for apprentices in a 2-year baccalaureate program and \$2,500 for apprentices in a postbaccalaureate program. These awards typically do not cover the full cost of tuition, and thus must be braided with other funding sources.

Federal funding. The U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Apprenticeship awards competitive and formula funding to the Tennessee Department of Workforce Development that is used for local apprenticeship programs in teaching and other industries, including nearly \$750,000 in formula funding in 2023.¹⁰ This funding is flexible and can be used for general program support as well as for individual apprentices. These funds are typically used for mentor teacher stipends.¹¹ In 2023, the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development announced that 10% of all apprenticeship funds in the state would be directed to registered teacher apprenticeships. Programs may also access Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds through their local workforce boards to cover tuition, child care, and transportation expenses. The Tennessee Grow Your Own Center facilitates relationships with local workforce boards, although the extent to which LEAs have accessed WIOA funds is unclear.

LEAs in Tennessee also draw upon federal education funds, including Title I, Title II, and Perkins funding for career and technical education, consistent with guidance from the U.S. Department of Education.

Student financial aid. EPPs rely on nonrepayable student financial aid to fund tuition. Financial aid in Tennessee includes state-funded tuition assistance at state institutions; Federal Pell Grants; GI benefits for veterans; and other state and local scholarships, such as TN Hope, TN Promise, and TN Reconnect.

Institution of higher education funding. In Tennessee, community college coursework is free for candidates, so apprentices can earn their lower-division coursework in these programs to reduce costs. Some EPPs have additionally reduced tuition for apprentices by using flexible university funding to cover program costs or changing their delivery model to teach more students per class.

Teacher Apprenticeship in the Clarksville–Montgomery County School System

The Clarksville–Montgomery teacher apprenticeship program was the first registered teacher apprenticeship program in Tennessee and the nation. It began in 2019 as the Early Learning Teacher Residency Program, in partnership with Austin Peay State University, with the goal of filling the Clarksville–Montgomery County School System’s elementary school vacancies. That year, the district had 80 teacher vacancies in grades K–12.

The district’s target population was high school students and current district employees, especially candidates of color and first-generation college students. Candidates needed to have at least 12 units of college coursework, including an introductory course in education, with at least a 2.5 GPA. The program started with 14 candidates and grew to 40 by spring 2019: 20 high school students and 20 teacher aides.

Initially, candidates all earned their license in elementary education, with specialization in special education. Now the district also offers postbaccalaureate pathways with Lipscomb University in middle school math and English with endorsement to teach English as a Second Language.

Apprentices in the district serve as full-time teachers' aides in general education classrooms in elementary or middle school, depending on their area of certification, and are paid both wages and benefits comparable to the wages of a teacher assistant (starting at \$16 per hour in fall 2023). They support their mentor, the teacher of record, with instruction and planning. Apprentices co-plan with their mentor at least one period of the day (a requirement outlined in their [job description](#)) and co-teach at least two periods of the day, with gradually increasing responsibilities.

The district tries to select its strongest teachers to mentor apprentices. Mentors must have at least 3 years of experience. Each mentor is assigned two apprentices and earns a \$3,000 stipend for their extra responsibilities. The district also designates a secondary mentor teacher who supports at least one apprentice for one period of the day. Secondary mentors, who must have at least 1 year of teaching experience, earn a \$1,000 stipend.

The district also hires a facilitator to oversee the apprenticeship program. This facilitator recruits apprentices, tracks their progress, and coordinates with EPPs.

The Clarksville–Montgomery County School System funds apprentice salaries, mentor stipends, and their facilitator's salary using Title I funds. (Apprentices are employed in Title I schools.) The district also received a waiver from the state to increase elementary class size from 20 to 25 in classrooms with apprentices. The savings go toward apprentice salaries. The teachers' union funds candidates' textbooks.

Austin Peay State University covers candidates' tuition in earning their bachelor's degree and teacher's license, as well as the cost of licensure tests. These costs are primarily covered through grants from the Tennessee Department of Education. The state grant is less per apprentice than what Austin Peay State University typically charges in tuition. However, Prentice Chandler, Dean of the College of Education, explains that the university ultimately decided that the increased student enrollment due to the apprenticeship program was sufficient to allow them to cover the cost of the program despite the lower per-pupil funding.

Candidates with less than an associate degree begin their college coursework at Nashville State Community College. Community college coursework is free in Tennessee and is thus the most cost-effective way for candidates to do introductory coursework.

Sources: Tennessee Department of Education. (2022). *Case study: GYO apprenticeship in action: The Clarksville–Montgomery Model*; Interview with Prentice Chandler, Dean of the College of Education at Austin Peay State University, and Lisa Barron, Professor of Education at Austin Peay State University (2023, October 16); Clarksville–Montgomery County School System. [Teacher residency programs](#).

Considerations for States

At just 2 years old, Tennessee's Registered Apprenticeship in teaching is still early in its development, so its scalability and impact in successfully preparing a diverse, stable teacher workforce is yet unknown. However, its early results are promising, with 57 apprentices completing the program and 678 registered a year after its launch. As other states rapidly create and scale up their own apprenticeship programs, Tennessee's model provides a useful example. Some questions for states to consider in light of their own unique contexts are listed below.

- **Who will serve as the Registered Apprenticeship sponsor?** In Tennessee, the TDOE serves as sponsor, with support from a dedicated center within the state university system. Benefits of this state role include quality control, alignment with existing licensure pathways, and making it easier to scale the program statewide. States considering this model should determine whether they can dedicate sufficient capacity in their state agencies to teacher apprenticeship. They should also consider whether these agencies are well positioned to facilitate strong relationships among partners, including professional standards boards, labor or workforce development agencies, LEAs, and EPPs. States with their own apprenticeship agency will need to partner with these agencies and learn their state-specific requirements.
- **What pathways will the state offer?** Tennessee currently supports teacher candidates with a range of education levels, from less than an associate degree to a bachelor's degree. Offering pre-baccalaureate pathways makes apprenticeship more accessible to a diverse range of teacher candidates, but it is also more costly for the state. An important factor in providing these pathways in Tennessee has been free tuition at community colleges, which lowers the cost for programs. States should consider what existing revenue sources they have to fund coursework to determine which pathways are feasible.
- **How will the higher education costs be funded?** In Tennessee, the key incentive to growing teacher apprenticeships and engaging institutions of higher education has been state grants to EPPs, which were funded by pandemic-era funds that have since expired. The state has since committed to setting aside federal apprenticeship funding for teachers, but this funding is limited. States should determine if they can identify sufficient funding for state grants and, if so, how funding would be awarded. They should also consider how best to engage local workforce boards, which locally determine the use of federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act dollars.
- **How will apprentices' compensation be funded?** Tennessee provides little state support to LEAs to fund apprentice salaries and benefits. This does not appear to have deterred apprenticeship growth, however, with 678 apprentices registered in 2023. Many LEAs appear to support apprentices who are already in general education paraprofessional roles, which are primarily in early elementary classrooms that tend to be staffed with a teacher assistant, or use funding set aside for unfilled positions. States should consider what existing paid roles LEAs have that can be filled by apprentices and if new roles need to be created.
- **Which key partners need to be engaged?** In Tennessee, partners are generally the TDOE, the Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development, EPPs, and LEAs. The teachers' union was also an important advocate in getting the state's application approved by the Department of Labor. In other states, there may be additional key partners that need to be involved. In large states, regional entities such as county offices of education might also support engagement of small and rural districts.

Conclusion

Tennessee’s teacher apprenticeship program offers paid pathways into teaching, supporting candidates who might not otherwise be able to enter the profession with at least a full year of clinically rich, hands-on experience working alongside an accomplished mentor teacher while taking aligned coursework. The model is an example of how state agencies, LEAs, EPPs, and other partners can work together to improve teacher recruitment and preparation and, ultimately, increase teacher retention. While the model is still growing and changing, Tennessee’s early successes have yielded important lessons for other states pursuing similar work.

Endnotes

1. Apprenticeship USA, U.S. Department of Labor. [Partner finder](#) (accessed 02/02/24).
2. Demographic data are available by state on the U.S. Department of Labor’s website. Nationally, 84% of apprentices were female, 14% male, and 2% did not self-identify. Seventy-three percent identified as White, 17% as Black/African American, 2% as Multiracial, 2% as Asian, and 1% as American Indian or Alaskan Native, and 5% did not self-identify. Ethnically, 75% identified as non-Hispanic/Latino and 8% as Hispanic/Latino, and 17% did not self-identify. Sixteen percent of apprentices were under age 24, 78% were ages 24–54, and 6% were 55 and up. Forty-two percent held a bachelor’s degree, 34% had some college or an associate degree, 9% had a high school diploma, 8% had a master’s degree, 7% did not self-identify, and 1% had not graduated high school. Apprenticeship USA, U.S. Department of Labor. [Data and statistics](#); personal email with U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development (2024, February 20).
3. The Tennessee Department of Education initially registered with the federal Office of Apprenticeship since Tennessee did not yet have a state apprenticeship agency.
4. Interview with David Donaldson, Founder and Managing Partner at the National Center for Grow Your Own (2023, September 29).
5. Some apprentices work as general education paraprofessionals, typically in elementary schools. Others work as special education aides.
6. Tennessee’s Registered Apprenticeship initially required 6,000 hours of on-the-job learning, equivalent to 3 years of full-time employment.
7. Interview with Erin Crisp, Executive Director at the Tennessee Grow Your Own Center (2023, December 13).
8. Interview with David Donaldson, Founder and Managing Partner at the National Center for Grow Your Own (2023, September 29).
9. The state initially planned to fund grants through a combination of federal funding, including Title II, Title III, and Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funds. Title III and IDEA funds would have been allowable uses of funds because at the time teacher candidates were expected to be dually endorsed in English as a Second Language or special education. However, the state switched to more flexible pandemic funds when they became available. Interview with David Donaldson, Founder and Managing Partner at the National Center for Grow Your Own (2023, September 29); Tennessee Department of Education. [Archive: Grow Your Own competitive grant](#) (accessed 10/09/23).
10. Formula funds were provided through the State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula grant. The state also received \$5 million in 2023 for the Disaster Recovery Dislocated Worker Grant for apprenticeships. Apprenticeship USA, U.S. Department of Labor. (2023). [Active grants and contracts](#).
11. Interview with Erin Crisp, Executive Director at the Tennessee Grow Your Own Center (2023, December 13).

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