

# Teacher Residencies in California

## Enrollment, Preparation, and Outcomes of Residency-Prepared Teachers



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### Summary

Teacher residencies offer a comprehensive preparation model addressing local needs. Residents work alongside an experienced mentor teacher for a full year while completing credential coursework. California has invested more than \$740 million in the residency model since 2018, and residencies are also funded through other sources. This study examines California’s residency programs, analyzing the experiences and outcomes of residents and comparing them to those of new teachers from other preparation pathways. The number of residents statewide has more than quadrupled between 2018–19 and 2024–25, now accounting for 10% of teaching candidates. This analysis finds that California’s residencies recruit a racially diverse teacher workforce, offer better-supported clinical experiences, and are highly rated by their graduates. Compared to other new teachers, residents have higher passing rates on the California Teaching Performance Assessment, have higher entry rates into teaching while working in schools serving more economically disadvantaged students and students of color, and have higher retention rates in their schools and districts.

### Introduction

Teacher residencies offer clinically intensive preparation developed in partnership between local education agencies (LEAs) and preparation programs to address local needs. Residents get considerable classroom experience working alongside a mentor teacher for a full year while taking credential coursework and receiving financial support from the partner LEA. Research in California and elsewhere, often focused on a single program, finds that teacher residencies tend to prepare a racially diverse candidate pool and produce teachers who, on average, are more effective and stay in teaching longer than new teachers from other pathways.<sup>1</sup> In California, most residencies are structured as 1-year, postbaccalaureate programs in which residents spend the full year in their placement school while completing aligned teacher preparation coursework.<sup>2</sup>

Starting in 2018, California began making significant state investments to subsidize teacher preparation and encourage residency programs, allocating more than \$740 million between 2018 and 2025 for the [Teacher Residency Grant Program \(TRGP\)](#). During the first 5 years of funding, 2,601 TRGP-funded residents enrolled in preparation programs across California, with thousands more expected to enroll in grant-funded programs between 2024 and 2029.<sup>3</sup>

Federal and local funding sources have also helped grow California’s residencies. For example, the U.S. Department of Education’s [Teacher Quality Partnership \(TQP\)](#) Program awarded over \$140 million to California-based preparation partnerships between 2018 and 2024, though many of these grants were canceled by the federal government in 2025. Philanthropic funds have also supported hundreds of candidates in the [California State University \(CSU\) Residency Year Scholarship program](#). In some cases, districts have strategically invested their own funds in residency programs outside the context of grants. Given these many investments in a relatively new model of preparation, it is critical to better understand the landscape of residency programs across California and the experiences and outcomes of residency completers throughout the state.

These analyses leverage data sources provided by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) and the California Department of Education (CDE) that identify residents and residency programs, though there are notable challenges with these data.<sup>4</sup> Focusing on the 2018–19 to 2024–25 years, we examine the statewide growth of teacher residency programs and describe preparation experiences as reported by completers. Analyses also compare outcomes for residency-prepared teachers to those prepared through other pathways, including their teaching performance assessment passing rates, placement rates in teaching jobs, and retention rates for the first 3 years of teaching. To supplement these quantitative findings, we also offer vignettes from successful California teacher residencies to illustrate how these programs work in practice.

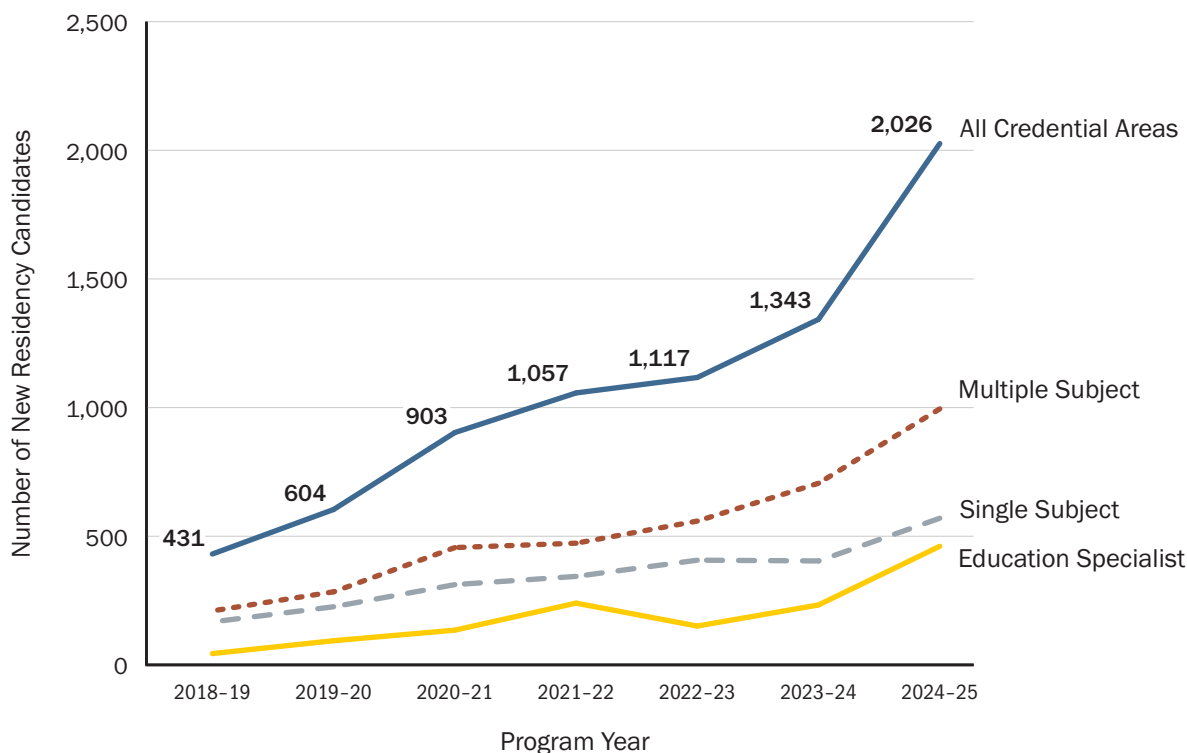
## Describing California’s Residency Pathway

While most teacher residency programs share common features, there is no standard definition for residencies either nationally or in California. Residencies are a subset of preservice student teaching programs in which candidates have a yearlong student teaching placement and receive financial support from the partner district. In California, state-funded programs supported by the TRGP must satisfy certain grant requirements (e.g., \$20,000 minimum stipends, residents teach at least half-time with a mentor teacher for a full year), but these features may vary in residencies funded through other sources. This analysis includes all California residency programs reported in statewide data, regardless of funding source.

### California’s Rapid Growth in Residency Candidates

Residents represent a small but rapidly growing share of the teacher pipeline in California. Between 2018–19 and 2024–25, the number of new residency candidates statewide more than quadrupled, growing from just over 400 to approximately 2,000—an amount that represents 10% of the state’s new teacher candidates. (These totals undercount residents statewide because some institutions with known residencies reported only student teachers in the accreditation data system.) As shown in [Figure 1](#), the largest absolute growth has been among Multiple Subject credential candidates (i.e., those preparing for elementary teaching positions), but there has also been substantial growth among Single Subject credential candidates (i.e., secondary teaching in specific subjects) and Education Specialist credential candidates (i.e., special education).

**Figure 1. Program-Reported California Residency Candidates by Credential Area**



Source: Learning Policy Institute analysis of the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing’s Accreditation Data System. (2026).

## Racially Diverse Candidates Enroll in Residencies

More than 70% of new residency candidates reported between 2018–19 and 2024–25 were people of color. Almost half of residency candidates (49%) were Latino/a, compared to 37% of student teaching candidates and 31% of intern candidates. Since 2021–22, TRGP grants can be used for programs meant to diversify the workforce, and many residencies explicitly design their program to recruit and support a racially diverse teacher candidate pool (for example, see [How Alder Graduate School Recruits and Supports a Diverse Candidate Pool](#)). When compared to the [racial and ethnic composition](#) of the California student population and teacher workforce overall, residency candidates are considerably more diverse than the overall teacher workforce and are reflective of the public school student population.

## How Alder Graduate School Recruits and Supports a Diverse Candidate Pool

Between 2010–11 and 2025–26, Alder Graduate School of Education (Alder) nearly doubled the percentage of enrolled residents of color, from 45% to 82%. Alder’s approach to recruitment, admissions, and in-program support contributes to the diversity of its student body by:

- **Recruiting Current District Staff.** Alder focuses recruitment efforts on individuals who are already working as substitute teachers, paraeducators, instructional aides, after-school providers, and other classified staff in the schools of partner local education agencies. Alder staff directly support the application process, share information about grant and scholarship opportunities that can make the program affordable, and shepherd recruits through the application and admissions process.
- **Streamlining the Admissions Process.** To lower barriers associated with applying to the program, the university has streamlined application requirements. Alder does not require applicants to have completed prerequisite coursework or passed licensure exams, and staff work directly with admitted residents to track their outstanding requirements and support them to pass their licensure exams.
- **Providing Wraparound Services.** Once residents are enrolled, Alder provides a suite of supports to ensure residents have what they need to graduate. All residents receive a stipend that helps cover living expenses. Alder’s Office of Student Services has each resident fill out an intake survey and connects residents to relevant institutional or community resources (e.g., child care, health care) based on their responses.

Sources: Alder Graduate School of Education. (2024). *Impact* (accessed 02/02/2026); Yun, C., Fitz, J., Nakajima, T. M., & Mauerman, C. (2025). *Educating for equity: Alder Graduate School’s teacher residency*. Learning Policy Institute.

## Clinically Intensive Residency Programs Vary in Size and Modality

The number of institutions offering the residency pathway has also grown over time, likely due to state and federal investments in the model. Between 2018 and 2024, 52 California institutions were named as preparation partners in at least one state-funded TRGP implementation or expansion grant, and 14 institutions received at least one federal TQP grant. This analysis examines several key characteristics of residency programs, including:

- **Program Size.** Residency programs varied in size, with most programs enrolling a small number of candidates (i.e., median of 10 new candidates per program per year) while a handful of programs enrolled much larger numbers. In fact, over 60% of residency candidates statewide were enrolled in just eight institutions: five institutions in the California State University system (Bakersfield, Fresno, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Northridge) and three private institutions (Alder Graduate School of Education, National University, and Teachers College of San Joaquin).

- **Program Level.** Almost all residency programs enrolled exclusively postbaccalaureate students. Across all pathways, 9% of California’s new candidates were undergraduates, while undergraduates comprised just 2% of residency candidates. California State University, Long Beach’s Multiple Subject credential program was the only residency program that consistently reported enrolling undergraduate residents.
- **Program Modality.** The share of fully online candidates, both in residency programs and in other preparation programs, has increased substantially since 2018–19. About one fifth of residency candidates were enrolled in fully online coursework as of 2024–25.
- **Program Structure.** All California teaching candidates are expected to complete at least 600 clinical hours, but hours are defined and structured differently for residents, student teachers, and interns. Because residencies provide a full year in the classroom under the wing of a mentor teacher, they typically offer higher average clinical hours for their candidates. Given their design as full-time intensive programs, residencies are typically completed in a shorter overall timeline than other program types.

## Experiences of Residency Completers

The CTC administers a [program completer survey](#) to all California-prepared candidates applying for their preliminary teaching credential. These analyses include responses from more than 35,000 program completers surveyed between 2020–21 and 2023–24.

### Intensive Clinical Support From Program Faculty

All candidates, regardless of pathway, should receive support and feedback from clinical supervisors and other program faculty and staff. On their completer survey, residency completers were more likely than student teachers to report high levels of clinical observation and feedback. When asked how many times their preparation faculty or supervisors provided feedback on their practice, 85% of residency completers reported receiving feedback more than 6 times, and just over half reported receiving feedback more than 10 times. In contrast, only 36% of student teaching completers reported more than 10 instances of feedback. As described below, a teacher residency program in Bakersfield structured regular observations and feedback by clinical supervisors *and* mentor teachers (see [How the Bakersfield Teacher Residency for Rural Education Provided Clinical Support](#)). This approach aligned feedback between supervisors and mentor teachers and greatly increased the amount of developmental feedback that residents received during their clinical experiences.

## How the Bakersfield Teacher Residency for Rural Education Provided Clinical Support

The Teacher Residency for Rural Education (TRRE) is a graduate-level program that, from 2020 through 2024, operated as a partnership between the Tulare County Office of Education and California State University, Bakersfield. TRRE residents coteach in their mentor teacher's classroom for 3 days each week, and the program structures regular observation and feedback cycles to support their developing clinical practice.

Residents' clinical supervisors and mentor teachers observed and provided feedback on their teaching at regular intervals. Clinical supervisors conducted six formal observations each semester (three in person and three online). Mentor teachers informally observed the residents in their clinical practice every week, but they also scheduled and conducted formal observations, typically on a monthly basis. Mentors were expected to submit a Mentor Observation Form to program staff after each formal observation, which served the dual function of holding them accountable for completing these observations and keeping program staff informed about resident progress. After observations, clinical supervisors and mentor teachers debriefed with their residents to deliver feedback to support their continuing growth.

These regular touchpoints allowed clinical supervisors and mentors to support residents as they worked through problems of practice common to novice teachers. Residents had ample opportunities to implement feedback in their daily teaching practice. Clinical supervisors, mentor teachers, and residents all used The [Danielson Group's Framework for Teaching](#) to guide instructional feedback and reflection. Residents focused on specific areas of the framework at different points in the semester, and the observations and feedback they experienced during each period were similarly aligned to the focal cluster. Having this structure in place helped to keep clinical observation and feedback cycles focused and productive.

Source: Fitz, J., & Yun, C. (2025). *Meeting urban and rural district needs for educators: California State University, Bakersfield's teacher residencies*. Learning Policy Institute.

## More In-Depth Training in Literacy and Math

Residency completers were slightly more likely than those from other pathways to rate themselves as well prepared or very well prepared for teaching domains aligned with California's [Teaching Performance Expectations](#) (i.e., standards for beginning teachers). Multiple Subject credential residency completers and Education Specialist credential residency completers were also more likely to report in-depth training to teach many aspects of literacy and math, compared to those completing student teaching and internship programs. For example, just over half of residency completers reported extensive opportunities to practice what they learned about teaching reading (51%) and math (53%) in their field experiences, compared to lower percentages of those completing student teaching (48% and 51%, respectively) and internships (40% and 38%). As outlined below (see [How Claremont Prepares Its Candidates to Teach Literacy](#)), residency programs may focus their training on concrete, instructional skills that support their candidates in learning how to integrate literacy into teaching across content areas.

## How Claremont Prepares Its Candidates to Teach Literacy

Claremont Graduate University (CGU) uses an interdisciplinary approach for training its Multiple Subject credential candidates to develop language-rich lessons for diverse learners and integrate culturally responsive and whole child pedagogy across content areas.

Residents take a series of three courses that prepare them to deliver effective literacy instruction. They take the first of these courses—designed to orient them to California state frameworks and standards—the summer before beginning the residency. Then, during the residency year, they take two Literacy and Methods courses that faculty have redesigned to align with new state literacy instruction standards and state teacher performance expectations.

The courses focus on how to deliver student-centered instruction using research-based strategies, materials, and assessment practices that support critical literacy teaching and content-specific pedagogy, with particular attention to the needs of students who are multilingual or have disabilities. The first of these specifically focuses on foundations of literacy development, including listening and speaking, phonological awareness and phonics, fluency, and assessment. The second focuses on disciplinary literacies and pedagogies and incorporates anti-racist teaching, whole child approaches, culturally responsive practices, and high expectations for all students in the context of subject-specific pedagogies.

CGU's interdisciplinary approach creates a more streamlined experience and fosters greater student engagement through active learning approaches, resident reflection, and community building, modeling student-centered teaching for residents. This sequence of courses left residents feeling well prepared to provide strong literacy instruction across content areas. As one resident shared, “My Literacy and Methods classes have been especially helpful ... [because] it makes me feel like I have more stuff in my toolbox that I can actually take in to work.”

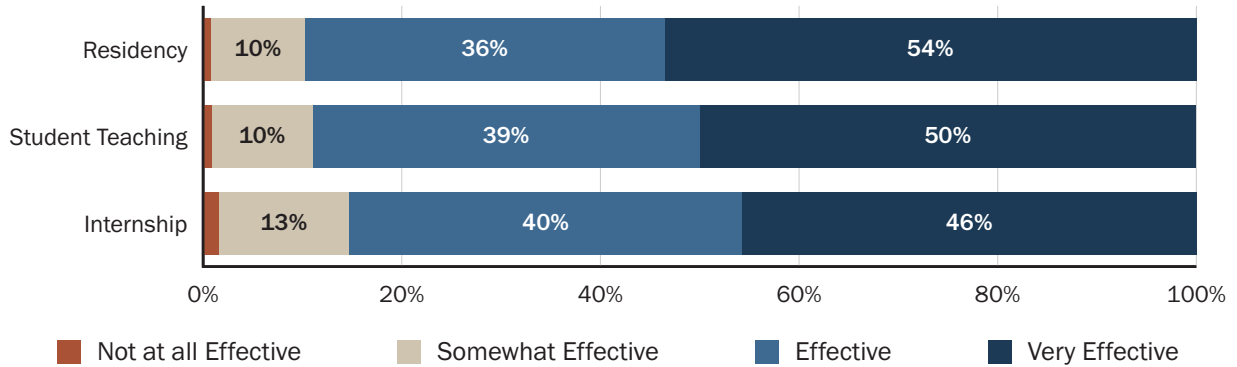
Source: Yun, C., & Fitz, J. (2025). *Humanizing teacher preparation: Claremont Graduate University's teacher residency*. Learning Policy Institute.

## Residency Programs Rated as Effective

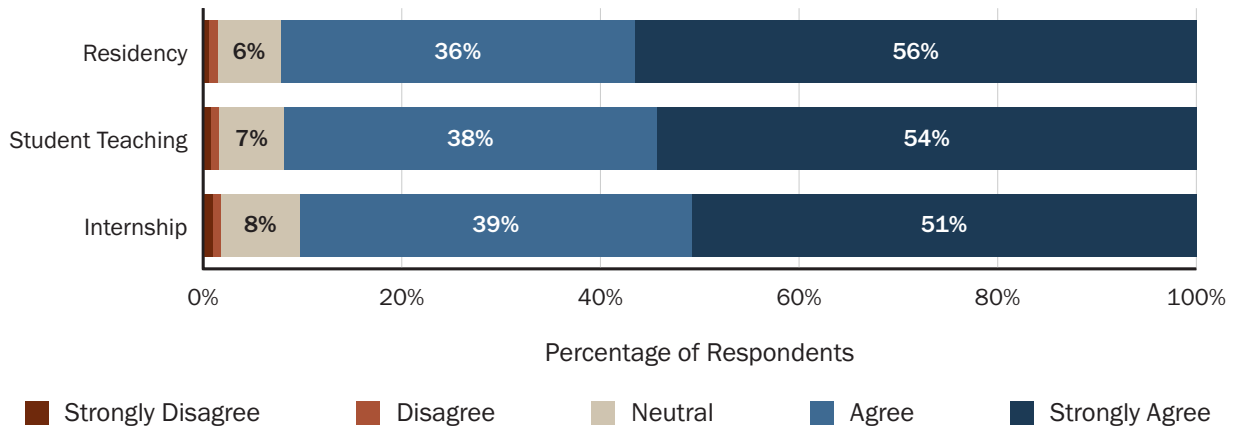
As shown in [Figure 2](#), 90% of residency completers rated their program as “effective” or “very effective” for developing their teaching skills and tools. Residency completers were more likely to rate their program as “very effective” than student teaching and intern completers. Residency completers were also more likely to “strongly agree” that their experiences working in classrooms helped them apply their coursework to their own classroom teaching practice.

## Figure 2. Completer-Reported Experiences With Preparation, by Pathway

Overall, how effective was your teacher preparation program at developing the skills or tools you needed to become a teacher?



My field experiences helped me integrate and apply the major ideas developed through program coursework.



Note: This analysis combines data across 4 years (2020–21 to 2023–24) and includes responses from more than 4,400 residents, 23,000 student teachers, and 10,700 interns.

Source: Learning Policy Institute analysis of the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing program completer survey. (2026).

## Preparation Outcomes for Residency-Prepared Teachers

This analysis offers one of the first statewide comparisons of preparation outcomes between residency-trained new teachers and those prepared through other pathways. Because of the limitations of the statewide data sources, these analyses likely *underestimate* the differences between residents and student teachers, as not all residents can be identified with the available data and are therefore grouped with student teachers.

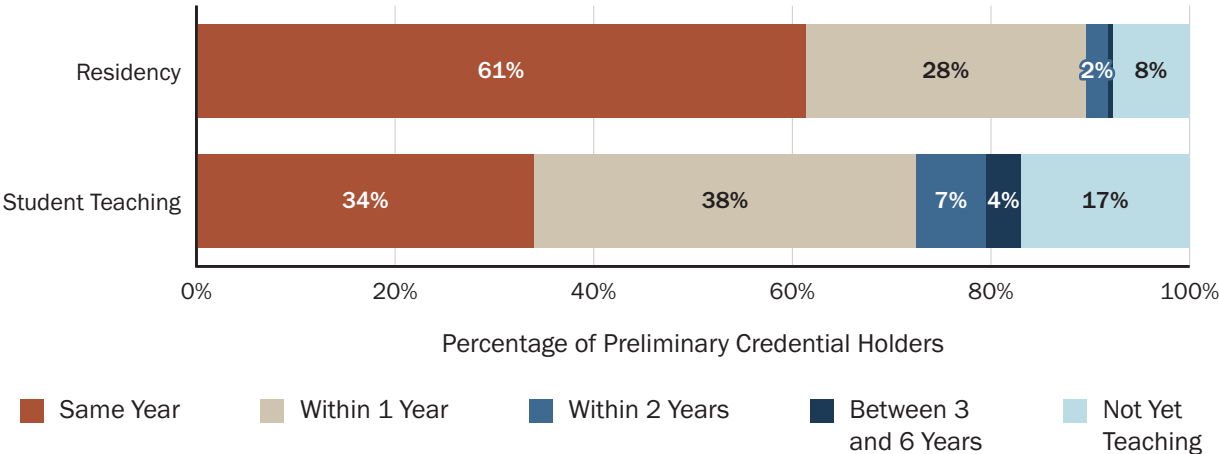
# Residents More Likely to Pass the California Teaching Performance Assessment

Residents were more likely to pass the California Teaching Performance Assessment (CalTPA), a classroom-based assessment used to evaluate the teaching skills of candidates. Residents had higher initial passing rates (75%) than student teachers (71%) and interns (70%), with differences primarily driven by higher passing rates for residents taking the Multiple Subject CalTPA. Black and Latino/a residency candidates also had significantly higher average passing rates than their peers in student teaching and intern programs, and there were no statistically significant differences in passing rates among residents by candidate race and ethnicity.

# Residency Completers More Likely to Enter Teaching and Work in High-Need Schools

A central goal of residency programs is candidates' successful entry into the classroom and retention in the profession. On average, residency completers were more likely to be hired and then retained in California public schools. Among preservice completers who received their preliminary teaching credential between 2018–19 and 2023–24, 89% of residency completers were employed as a teacher in a California public school within 1 year of receiving their preliminary credential, compared to 73% of completers from student teaching programs (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Time Between Preliminary Credential and Employment in California Public School Teaching Job, by Pathway**



Note: This analysis includes residents (N = 3,103) and student teachers (N = 46,771) who received their credentials between 2018–19 and 2023–24.

Source: Learning Policy Institute analysis of a linked dataset created from credential data provided by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing and staffing data provided by the California Department of Education. (2026).

Compared to other new teachers, residency-prepared teachers were slightly more likely to have main teaching assignments in high-need shortage areas of mathematics, science, and special education. This likely reflects the fact that state-funded TRGP grants targeted designated shortage fields.

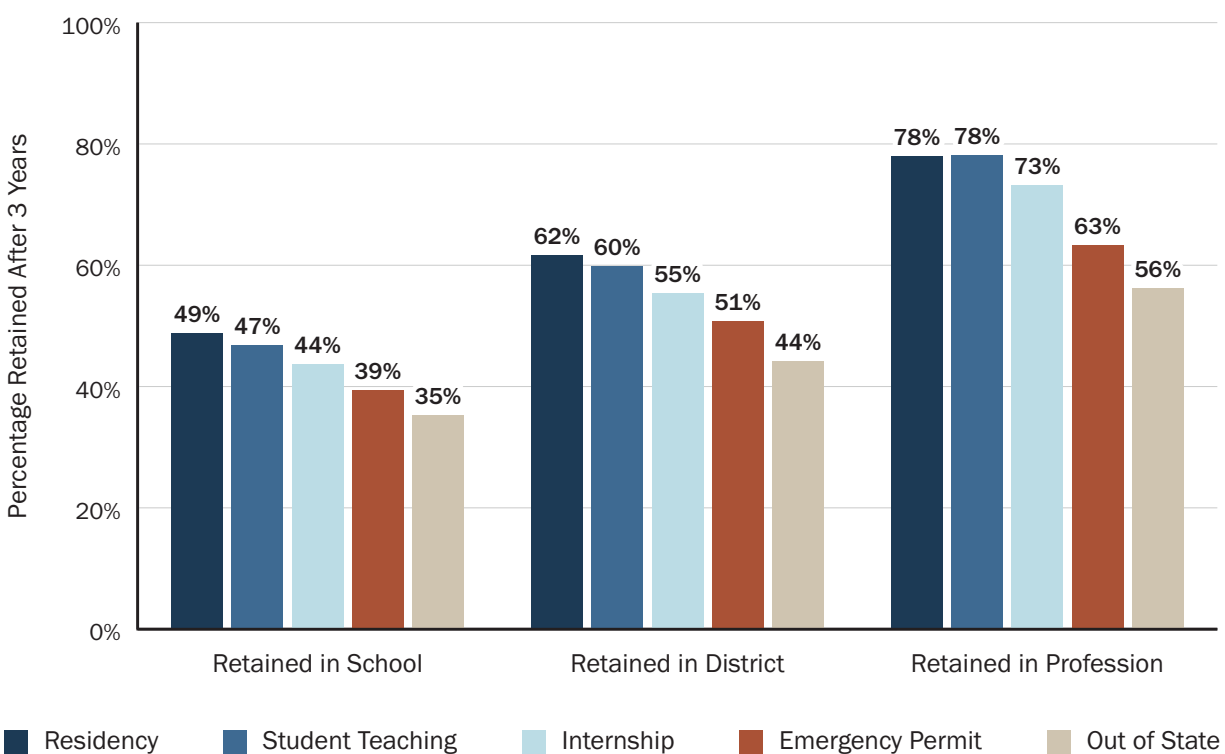
Residency-trained new teachers taught in schools serving higher average shares of students of color and economically disadvantaged students and were also more likely to teach in urban schools and charter schools, compared to other new teachers.

## Residency-Trained New Teachers More Likely to Stay in Teaching

Residency-prepared new teachers were also more likely to stay in their initial school and district in their first 3 years of teaching, compared to other new teachers (see Figure 4). These overall retention rates are lower than the state average across time, likely because this analysis focuses on new teachers who entered during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Once controlling for teacher and school characteristics, residency-prepared new teachers were an estimated 3 percentage points more likely to remain in their district after the first 3 years than student teaching completers, 4 percentage points more likely than interns, and 10 percentage points more likely than new teachers entering on emergency-style permits or trained out of state.

**Figure 4. 3-Year Retention Rates for New Teachers Entering From 2018–19 to 2021–22, by Pathway**



Source: Learning Policy Institute analysis of a linked dataset created from credential data provided by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing and staffing and schools data provided by the California Department of Education. (2026).

# Summary and Policy Considerations

Relying on statewide data from the CTC and CDE, this analysis found that California's residency programs:

- successfully recruit and prepare a racially and ethnically diverse teacher workforce,
- offer more and better-supported clinical experiences for their candidates,
- are more likely to be viewed as very effective by their graduates,
- produce higher passing rates on the CalTPA,
- support higher entry rates into teaching and place new teachers in schools serving more economically disadvantaged students and students of color, and
- show higher retention rates for residents in schools and districts compared to other new teachers.

Based on the findings in this report, the following are important considerations for education leaders in California. These suggestions can improve our understanding of the impact of California's residency investments and sustain the progress described in this report.

- **Consider mechanisms to recognize and incentivize residencies.** Given the success of residencies in recruiting, preparing, and retaining teachers, the state could consider recognizing and differentiating residency programs from other preparation types at the state level. This could help bolster programs by clearly communicating residency features to employers and reinforcing their value. Approaches could include recognizing residencies that meet state criteria with a special state designation; creating a residency credential, as done in New Mexico and New York; and assigning a candidate-level designation that indicates to potential employers that the candidate was prepared through a residency pathway, as Texas has done.
- **Leverage resources and strengthen technical assistance to support the scaling and sustainability of residencies.** Although residency programs are growing and have been successful at addressing long-standing shortages, they are not yet the norm. District and state leaders could consider how to support further scaling and increase sustainability of residencies through continued financial investments and additional technical assistance. Technical assistance centers, such as California's Statewide Residency Technical Assistance Center and The Residency Lab, can provide tailored supports to residency programs to improve recruitment, program design, resident and mentor supports, and sustainability.
- **Improve the collection and use of data on residencies to support analysis and improvement of program outcomes.** California's ability to produce regular analyses of residencies is limited by current features of the state data system. The CTC could clarify the defining features of residency programs and update data collection processes to more accurately identify residency programs and candidates. Candidate-level data that enables the tracking of candidates from preparation through induction and beyond would allow for more accurate analyses of resident hiring, retention, and classroom effectiveness. Doing so would support deeper understanding of the impacts of teacher residencies and California's residency investments, not only on the teacher workforce but also on student achievement.

These considerations may require increased state-level staff, capacity, and resources to maintain, continuously improve, and recognize high-quality residency programs. Given the growing momentum and positive outcomes highlighted in this analysis, continued investments in recognizing and supporting residencies are crucial to ensure that residencies are not a passing fad.

# Endnotes

1. Bastian, K. C., Fuller, S. C., & Otte, A. (2024). *Paid residency programs in Texas: Initial impacts on student achievement and teacher retention*. Education Policy Initiative at the University of North Carolina; Guha, R., Hyler, M. E., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2016). *The teacher residency: An innovative model for preparing teachers*. Learning Policy Institute; National Center for Teacher Residencies. (2023). *NCTR annual report 2022–2023*; Papay, J. P., West, M. R., Fullerton, J. B., & Kane, T. J. (2012). Does an urban teacher residency increase student achievement? *Early evidence from Boston*. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 34(4), 413–434; Silva, T., McKie, A., & Gleason, P. (2014). *New findings on the retention of novice teachers from teaching residency programs*. [NCEE Evaluation Brief 2015-4015]. National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance.
2. For more on California residencies, see Yun, C., & Fitz, J. (2025). *Successful teacher residencies: What matters and what works*. Learning Policy Institute.
3. Brannegan, A., & Hirschboeck, K. (2024). *Scaling California’s Teacher Residency Grant Program: Findings and implications from the grant’s first 4 years*. WestEd; WestEd. (2025). *California Teacher Residency Program dashboard* (accessed 02/20/2026).
4. There are no statewide data sources that identify residents for all years and programs. This report combines four data sources that identify residency programs and candidates: annual accreditation data reported by programs, program completer surveys, registration information from the California Teaching Performance Assessment (CaITPA), and program-provided candidate information. Please see the full report for more details.

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