



Montana Teacher Residency
 Education Interim Budget Committee
 June 20, 2024

Introduction

The Montana Teacher Residency Program prepares teachers to best serve their students. Through undergraduate coursework, learning labs, targeted support, and a yearlong apprenticeship in the classroom, residents connect theory to practice and gain the skills of highly effective practitioners who will be ready on day one to successfully lead their own classrooms.

Residents begin the program with a two-day orientation, then enter a one-year in-school apprenticeship under a Teacher-Leader. During the year, Residents engage in learning labs sponsored by the Office of Public Instruction while simultaneously completing coursework to earn a bachelor’s degree. In exchange for committing to teach in a rural Montana school district for three years, Residents receive a stipend, partial tuition support, and district-provided housing assistance.

The project launched in fall 2022 through ARP-ESSER funding and will begin year three during the 2024-25 school year with state funding under 20-4-702, MCA.

School Year Residency Data

	Number of Residents	Number of Districts
2022-2023 SY Cohort 1	17	10
2023-2024 SY Cohort 2	23	13
2024-2025 SY Cohort 3	Pending	Pending



Figure 1



Figure 2

Contact Information:

Krystal Smith, Education Innovation Manager, OPI
Krystal.smith@mt.gov
 406-594-1722

Kirsten Minnick – Residency Program Coordinator, UMW
kirsten.minnick@umwestern.edu
 406-683-7327

2024-2025 School Year Residency Data

Cohort III participants are still underway, but, to date, we have 35 Residents and 22 Teacher Leaders across 12 districts. We are still awaiting placements for some Residents and Teacher Leader Assignments.

Number of Residents	Confirmed Districts	Interested Host Districts
Total of 35 Residents within the assignment process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 confirmed placements • 12 awaiting lead teachers • 15 awaiting district placements Still Accepting additional resident applications 4 prospects in cue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anaconda • Browning • Columbia Falls • Cottonwood • Darby • Forsyth • Hardin • Harrison • Havre • Hays/Lodgepole • Kalispell • Twin Bridges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrowhead • Conrad • Frazer • Frontier • Geraldine • McCormick • McLeod • Melville • Ovando • Richey • Roy • Sheridan • Target Range • Woodman • Yaak

Budget Information

Allocated: \$698,200 [ESSER III Funding](#)

ESSER III Funding	Expended as of 6/10/24	Balance to be expended by 9/30/24
		\$698,200.00
Personal Services	\$19,327.51	
Contracted Services	\$626,499.24	
Supplies	\$1,256.65	
Communications	\$205.06	
Travel	\$24,450.46	
Licenses/indirect costs	\$116.51	
Total	\$671,855.43	\$26,344.57

For More Information:

- Visit the OPI Residency [Website](#).
- Cohort II of the Residency Program was recognized by the United States Department of Education Best Practices Clearinghouse and created a video that tells the story of the Program and its participants. The [link](#) for the video.

Evaluation Report

This report includes a highlight of the Program, data received from both Cohorts I and II, feedback from Residents and their Teacher Leaders, challenges and solutions learned from the first two years of the Program and finally planned improvements for the 2024-25 school year. The insights gathered will help us refine and enhance the Program to better serve our educators and their future students.

COHORT I DATA- 2022/23

Findings show that the Program was effective in recruiting, preparing, and retaining Residents to be teachers in Montana communities. To date, 13 of the 17 Residents from Cohort I are teaching in Montana schools. Below the data shows what aspects of the program aided in the recruitment of the Residents.

Financial Incentives

Residents said that the financial incentives offered by participating educator preparation programs and sponsoring districts motivated them to join the Program and teach in rural districts.

"I do enjoy the fact that I can take class and the first year was free. Without this Program I probably would not have been able to go to school."

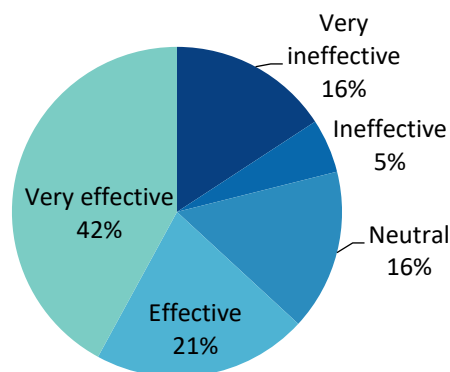
– Resident

"I feel much more prepared heading into an interview and trying to get a job. The financial part of it has relieved such a burden so I don't have to stress about that. I think it should be a full year."

– Resident

The majority of Teacher Leaders (63%) reported that the waiver was an effective or very effective recruitment tool (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Sixty three percent of Teacher Leaders said tuition waivers were effective recruitment tools for Residents

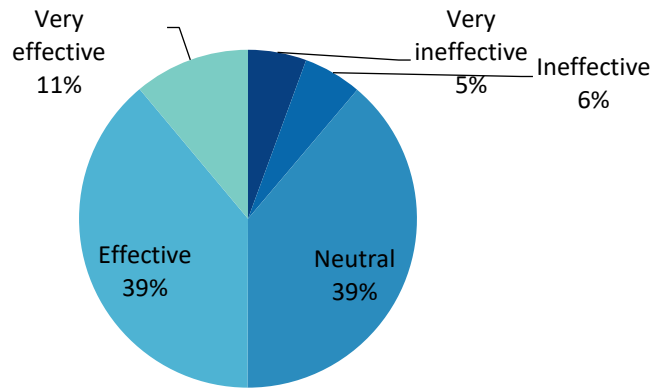


Source: Teacher-leader survey 2022-23, question 2.

Half of all Teacher Leaders (50%) also felt the housing stipend was effective or very effective at recruiting Residents to teach in rural schools (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Half of Teacher Leaders said the housing stipend was an effective tool for recruiting Residents

Source: Teacher-leader survey 2022-23, question 3.



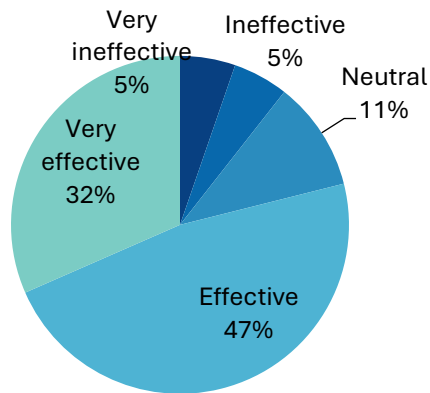
Extensive Experience Incentive

The immersive nature and length of the Program were important factors in Resident recruitment.

In surveys, most Teacher Leaders (75%) felt that the Residency’s place-based assignments, which immersed Residents in the rural communities where they would teach, were an effective factor in recruiting Residents (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Over 75 percent of Teacher Leaders said place-based assignments were effective recruitment tools

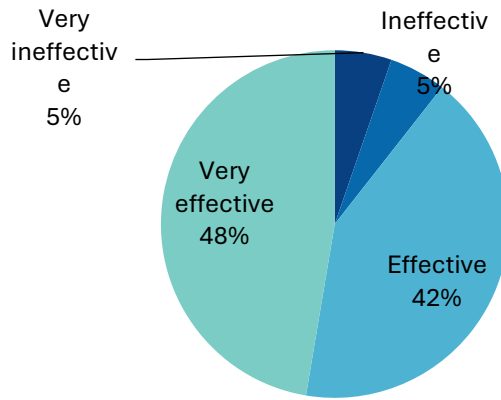
Source: Teacher-leader survey 2022-23, question 5.



A vast majority of Teacher Leaders (90%) also felt that the yearlong structure of the Program—a contrast to the typical 12-week student teaching model—was effective at recruiting Residents to participate in the Residency Program (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Ninety percent of Teacher Leaders said the yearlong structure of the Program was effective at recruiting Residents

Source: Teacher-leader survey 2022-23, question 4.



COHORT II DATA- 2023/24

Our data collection from Cohort II Residents and Teacher Leaders is still in progress as of May 29, 2024. However, with the data we have received so far, Residents and Teacher Leaders alike are happy with the Program and felt that the experiences gained were enlightening and positive.

Resident Input from March Survey

Residents were overall satisfied with their guidance from their Teacher Leader, the financial compensation they received for participating, and the program as a whole (Figure 7).

The students also felt more prepared to teach in their own classroom after this experience and that they had grown as educators from the experience (Figure 8).

Figure 7. Nearly 95 percent of Residents were satisfied or very satisfied with the Residency Program as a whole.

Please rate your satisfaction with the following components of the Residency Program.

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Total Responses
The Teacher Leader for your student teaching experience	73.7%	10.5%	15.8%	0%	0%	19
Financial compensation, including the tuition waiver, \$1400 stipend, and any additional housing or travel stipends you've received for participating in the Program	52.6%	31.6%	10.5%	5.3%	0%	19
The Program as a whole	63.2%	31.6%	5.3%	0%	0%	19

Figure 8. The Residents gave positive input to the program and the experience that it gave them.

Why was your overall experience with the Program satisfactory or dissatisfactory?

My overall experience while in this Program is very unique. I am in a classroom with many behavior-heavy students. Most days are difficult and very eventful. I remind myself that this experience may be stressful and difficult but it is a good experience for me because by the end I will be ready for many different behaviors that could come in my future classrooms. Finally, I have had many opportunities to plan for differentiated instruction because we have many students below grade level and a few students that are above grade level. I have received great support from my Resident teacher and the others involved in the Residency Program. Thank you for that!

I love having an entire year to work closely with, and under the supervision of, an experienced teacher.

My overall experience with the Program was satisfactory because I now feel ready to have my own classroom. I have learned so much and have grown as a soon-to-be teacher because of this Residency Program.

The ability to teach for an entire year under the supervision of an experienced instructor is invaluable.

Teacher Leader Input from May Survey

Teacher Leaders said that the Program had met or exceeded their expectations, provided great experience for their Resident, and that the time they had with their Resident was valuable.

“Yes, I really enjoyed being able to give knowledge to my student teacher for a much longer time. I did not have anything close to this experience and I think it was so valuable for her to be able to work under me for a much longer period of time.”

-Teacher Leader

“This experience has more than met my expectations. I have been a Teacher Leader for two years and both years Frontier has been able to hire both Residents. Also, in terms of my learning, the quality of PD that has been made available to me is invaluable. It has help me to be able to identify my teaching goals and who I want to be as a teacher.”

-Teacher Leader

“This experience was more positive than I expected. I was able to put my work into helping [my Resident] rather than jumping through hoops for the Program. I felt valued and supported but not burdened. I learned about my own practice through the experience as well.”

-Teacher Leader

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Over the past two years, Residents and their Teacher Leaders have responded to surveys and participated in interviews to provide feedback on their experiences. This feedback has been used to continuously improve the Program as well as measure overall effectiveness. Lessons that have been learned so far resulted in the creation of a Residency Handbook, better communication, and requiring evaluation as a component of program participation which has resulted in higher evaluation participation.

Cohort I Challenges

The challenge most frequently mentioned by Residents was unclear communication. Residents felt that they didn't know who to communicate with regarding the Residency, within their own college, and within the school they were placed at:

"... the communication. It's stressful. I now just email, and if they can't answer I just try to figure it out on my own."

– Resident

"Only problem I'm having is lack of communication from the college. Just little things like what money do I owe, and business office doesn't know anything about it. It's a hassle. They didn't know anything about it when I registered."

– Resident

"Challenge is that we don't have email or anything with the school. We don't know exactly what's going on in the school. Throws me off because I ... the last two weeks we've been put into the class without our lead teacher. I took over a class today instead of finding a sub."

– Resident

To help alleviate this issue, the Residency Team created a handbook that outlines the Residency and goes into details of the program. This handbook was then made available before Cohort II began for everyone's convience.

The Residency Team also designated a Program Coordinator for the Residents, Teacher Leaders, Educator Preparation Program (EPP) Staff to contact for all questions regarding the Program.

Cohort II Challenges

When Teacher Leaders were asked what could help aid in the recruitment of Teacher Leaders and the challenges they encountered, they responded that they would have liked to have seen more communication from the program, communication from the colleges, and a better understanding of when their Resident should be taking over the classroom.

"I would have liked to see more interaction with the University Advisor of the Resident teacher. It would also be beneficial to both lead teacher and the Resident teacher to have some sort of check list as to when to transition to certain parts of the student teaching portions or the experience."

-Teacher Leader

"I feel that Teacher Leaders may need better expectation of reporting the Resident's college may require from the Teacher Leader throughout the year. Maybe it could be more streamlined into one type of reporting for Residents?"

-Teacher Leader

"1. When I don't know the answer. 2 when questions went unanswered. 3 lack of communication between the Program and teachers."

-Teacher Leader

"Classroom management has been the most complex challenge. Students don't always show the same respect to the student teacher as the Teacher Leader. Having a student teacher for a year helps them manage a class better."

-Teacher Leader

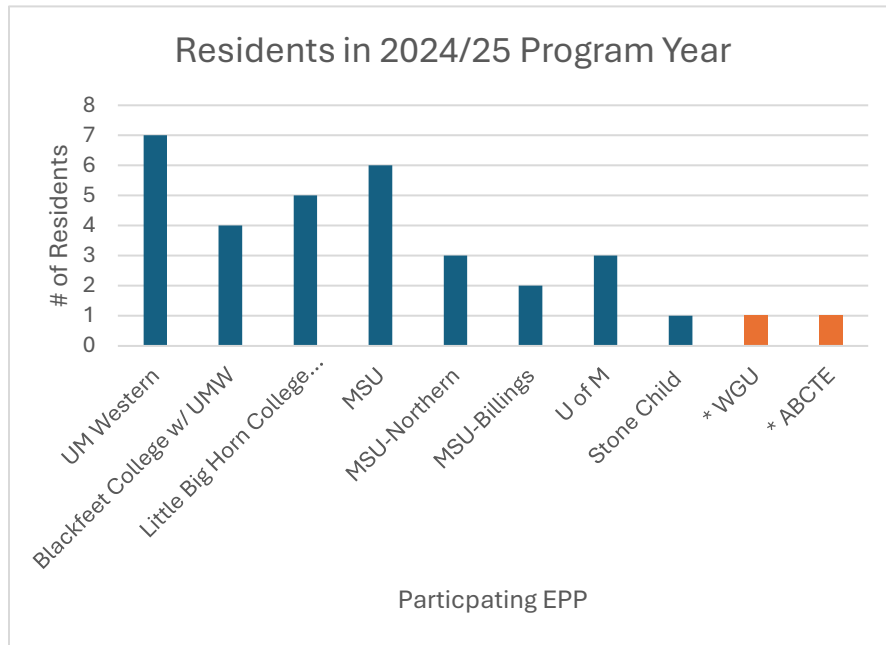
The Residency Team plans to make various changes and improvements to help alleviate the issues that were brought up in Cohort II. Please refer to the next section for those developments.

LOOKING FORWARD

Cohort III

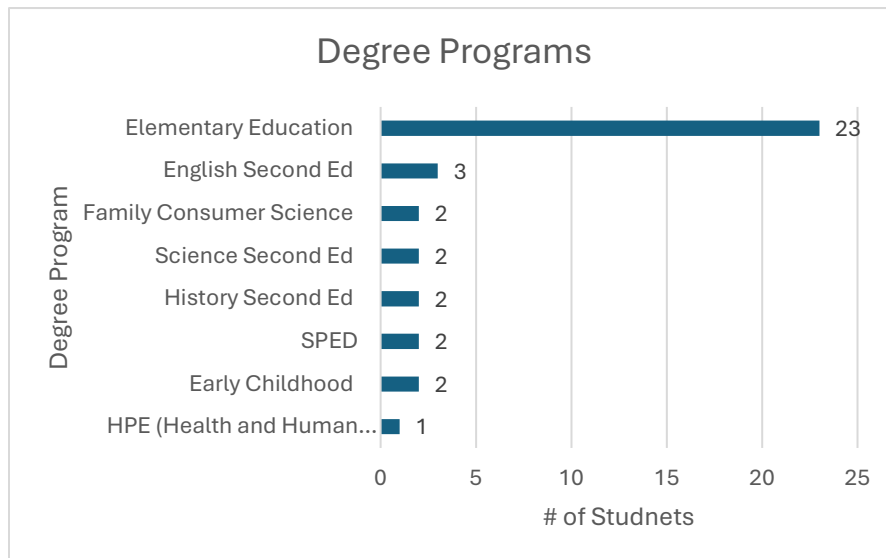
The Residency Program for the 2024/25 school year is planning to have 33 Residents from 8-10 different EPPs across many degree programs (Figures 9 & 10).

Figure 9. There are more EPPs involved with the Program this year than in either past Cohort.



(Orange indicates potential EPP)

Figure 10. There are multiple types of Education Degree being sought after in Cohort III.



Continued Improvements

Moving into Cohort III the Residency Team is in the process of employing another staff member to help with the functionality and communication between all parties involved and implementing a summer convening for the EPP staff to learn about how the program fits and works within their own degree requirements and explain their involvement with the Resident and Teacher Leader. The Residency Team is also looking into ways that they can more clearly relay information to the Teacher Leaders and Residents during the summer orientation.