

## Public Education Foundation – Teacher Residency FAQs

### What is “teacher residency”?

Teacher residency is an exciting new concept in teacher recruitment, preparation, and support. It is an effective method of recruiting teachers for hard-to-fill positions and giving them a strong year of “on-the-job” training, similar to a medical residency, so that they can hit the ground running when they become responsible for their own classrooms. It works to prepare a new kind of teacher from inside the classroom.

### How is a teacher residency different from other teacher preparation programs?

Residencies differ from both traditional teacher preparation and from “quickie” alternative routes in several ways but most primarily in whom they recruit; where and how long the teacher is prepared; and how the newly graduated teacher is supported and retained by the school district.

- Residency programs seek recent college graduates with superior academic credentials and/or young professionals and career changers with backgrounds in fields being sought, like math and science. Residencies recruit only for positions where districts have difficulty finding and keeping enough quality teachers.
- Like medical residencies for new doctors, teacher residencies place the resident in the classroom to learn under the tutelage and with the example of an exemplary, experienced, trained mentor teacher for an entire year. Residents spend four days a week in the classroom, and on Fridays and during summer, they take courses, meet in seminars and reflect on the practical learning they are gaining. They work and learn in clusters, or cohorts, in Learning Academy Schools.
- When the resident graduates with a master’s degree and state teaching certification, he or she commits to teach in that school district in a position of high need, typically for four years. The program provides to the new teacher at least two years of support from an induction coach and ongoing network seminars.

### Why will a teacher residency program be successful at finding good math teachers when existing programs have not?

We’re looking for individuals who love math and science. Given those interests, such individuals typically pursue math and science in college rather than a teaching degree. But it’s often the case that they decide they’d like to share this love of math and science with children. Currently they can do that through an alternative teaching certificate, but this route essentially throws them into sudden, full responsibility for a classroom with very little preparation – and they have to go to school at night to gain certification, at the same time that they are wrestling the challenges of classroom planning, grading papers, and learning how to teach! The difficulties of this approach are a deterrent to many people. Teacher residency offers a much stronger method of giving a teacher the training, experience and support needed to take effective responsibility for a classroom.

### How many teachers will be trained per year by Teach/Here?

We hope to prepare 20-40 new math and science teachers in the first year, and grow that number each year if we have adequate funding. In time, we hope to add teachers for other high need areas like special education and high-poverty elementary schools.

### How many of these will be in Knoxville, and how many in Chattanooga?

We expect to prepare an equal number in each location, i.e. 10-20 in Chattanooga and 10-20 in Knoxville. In time the number and types of teachers prepared may vary in the two locations based on the critical needs in each respective district.

### How will residents be recruited and selected?

The program will hire a recruiter who will visit college campuses, meet with businesses that are looking for opportunities for some of their career changers, use online job sites and social marketing tools like Facebook, and go the usual routes of job fairs and traditional recruiting methods.

### How will the Learning Academy Schools be selected?

The *Teach/Here* Design Team for each school district will review school performance data, assess which schools have a critical mass of teachers who have the potential to be mentor teachers, and visit with principals and faculties. The program seeks to place residents in cohorts of 3-6 in each Learning Academy School.

### How will the mentors be selected?

The principal will meet with the Design Team to discuss the different skills among the faculty; the team will present the opportunity to selected teachers and request them to apply; final selection will be made by the team and the principal. The selected mentors will receive summer training for this role, and ongoing professional development during the year.

**Where will graduates of this program be placed? How do I get one of them in my school?**

At the end of the residency year, the program will work with the HR department of the school district to place the graduates in teaching positions where there are critical needs for their skills. We hope to be able to place them in groups of 2-3 if possible. If the program continues long enough, there could be enough *Teach/Here* graduates to meet demand in all schools.

**How will “critical needs” be determined?**

That’s something that will be worked out in the planning year of the grant, but think about the possibilities: if we train 20 teachers a year for 5 years, that’s 100 strong new teachers who will be taking math and science positions across our district. Over time, this has the potential to help every school, and to expand to different areas of need, as well. It will make a real difference for our entire school district.

**What is the role of UT Knoxville?**

UT Knoxville will work with the Teach/Here Steering Committee to plan rigorous courses that the residents will take during the summer and all year and to help think about the in-school component of the curriculum. Course delivery will be in each location using regular and adjunct faculty and via online and video-conferencing. UT Knoxville will confer the master’s degree to all successful graduates as they complete the program.

**What is the role of PEF?**

PEF serves as the coordinating nonprofit group and as the fiscal agent for other private funding sources. The *Teach/Here* director and the recruiter will reside at PEF. Later Knoxville may choose to hire its own local director, as well.

**What evidence do you have that makes you think this program will have a positive impact on student test scores?**

In the three cities where the prototype teacher residency programs are located (Boston, Chicago and Denver), they have retention rates among their graduates of 90-100%. This means that students do not suffer the effects of a revolving door of coming-and-going new teachers. And it means that these new teachers have an opportunity to reach their full potential of expertise – which, according to research, happens after the third year – without burning out. Also, in these three cities the schools in which the residency graduates are placed have shown above average achievement gains. In fact, in Chicago it is graduates of the AUSL teacher residency program who are staffing many of the “turnaround schools that have been highly effective at improving student achievement.

**What does HCEA think of this program?**

We are collaborating with HCEA on this program, and the HCEA leadership is fully supportive. We are looking to HCEA to help us design the induction component of the program.

**Can teachers of English or social studies enter the residency program?**

We will seek candidates for the program only in math and science, in the first year. With available funding and based on school district need, we hope to expand to include teachers to fill other positions that are typically hard to fill; this could include certain other subject areas, elementary schools, and special education.

**Since it’s focused on math and science, does that mean it won’t include elementary teachers?**

We hope to include in the program candidates for positions in the upper elementary grades where there is a need for strong math teachers.

**Could someone graduate from a teacher training program and still go into your residency program?**

We do not anticipate having applicants who have already completed a traditional teacher education program. We will assess all applicants on a case by case basis.

**How will Teach/Here be evaluated?**

The Ochs Center for Metropolitan Studies is the designated evaluator for the NSF grant. Additionally, Teach/Here will be part of a national evaluation study conducted by the Urban Teacher Residency United group to review indicators of success in all teacher residency programs across the country.