



Teacher Apprenticeship West Virginia



The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) approved the first nationally registered K-12 teacher apprenticeship program in January 2022, opening the door to a rapidly growing pathway for prospective teachers. DOL approved West Virginia's registered teacher apprenticeship program in May 2022 and has now approved registered teacher apprenticeships in more than 30 states.

What Is Teacher Apprenticeship?

Teacher apprenticeship is an “earn and learn” pathway to a teaching credential that provides structured, paid, on-the-job learning experiences combined with job-related technical instruction and mentorship. Teacher candidates serving as apprentices are paid by their employer while they participate in the program, helping to make their pathway into the profession more affordable.

West Virginia Teacher Apprenticeship by the Numbers



16

Institutes of Higher Education (IHE): 11 Education Preparation Programs (EPP) and 5 Community and Technical Colleges (CTC)



11

Registered Apprentices



20%

Local Educational Agency (LEA) Participation

Long-Term Solutions

Grow Your Own (GYO) programs in West Virginia focus on recruiting aspiring teachers while they are in high school and supporting their training, experience, and learning over the course of 4 years. West Virginia's GYO model is unique in its statewide focus on recruiting from high schools. While GYO is not an immediate solution to teacher shortages, it is an initiative that could positively impact the number, quality, and retention of early-career teachers entering the field of education.

In May 2022, the West Virginia GYO Teacher Apprenticeship Pathway became the second registered teacher apprenticeship program in the country. The apprenticeship model, subset within the broader GYO programs available statewide, started in seven districts in the 2022-23 academic year. The apprenticeship model provides apprentices with 5 years of authentic, wage-earning field experiences.

Journey to Teacher Apprenticeship

July 2021

West Virginia EPPs complete transition to year-long teacher residency requirements for all preservice teachers.

May 2022

DOL approves West Virginia Department of Education's (WVDE) Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program.

August 2022

West Virginia implements the GYO Teaching Pathway in seven counties.

June 2023

West Virginia wins State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula (SAEF) grant funding.

July 2023

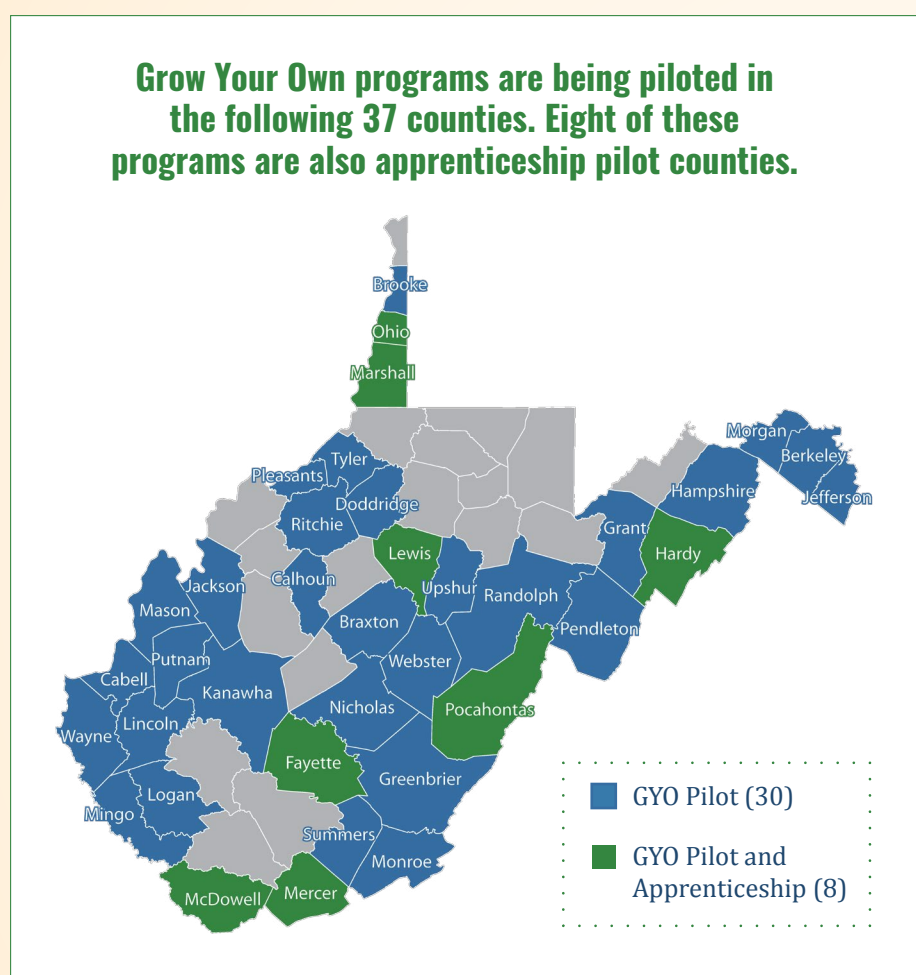
West Virginia Department of Economic Development and WVDE receive a federal grant to support the apprenticeship program.

Benefits for Teacher Apprentices

- Reduced tuition burden & last dollar in tuition support
- Shortened college timeline
- Free laptop
- PRAXIS test preparation
- Free dual credit courses in high school
- Referrals to community support organizations



“All apprentices are Grow Your Own students, but not all Grow Your Own students are apprentices.”



Homegrown Futures

West Virginia is developing systems to recruit and retain future teachers in their home communities. High school students interested in teaching can enroll in the GYO pathway. Currently, many of the GYO students in West Virginia are first-generation college students. The state is developing a large assistance network for these future teachers, with support coming from advisors within their school district, mentor teachers, and partnering EPP institutions. The accelerated coursework, paid field experience, mentorship, and financial support provided through the apprenticeship pathway work together to enhance academic confidence and eliminate obstacles hindering progress toward a college degree and teaching certification.

Teacher Apprenticeship and GYO programs in West Virginia

GYO programs for high school students are found in 37 of West Virginia's 55 county school systems, eight counties are also GYO West Virginia Apprenticeship pilot counties.



“By providing high school students with rigorous dual credit courses in high school, students experience that they can do rigorous college-level work.”



Funding Teacher Apprenticeship



- West Virginia is receiving a portion of the \$65 million that DOL is spending nationwide to enhance the national apprenticeship system. The Mountain State will receive \$465,113 with annual renewals available for an additional 4 years.
- The local educational agency (LEA) employer can report an apprentice's on-the-job learning to the WVDE, and recoup 50% of the apprentice's wages for the semester. Wage reimbursement and other benefits to the apprenticeship are dependent upon receipt and renewal of the State Apprenticeship Expansion Formula (SAEF) grant, received jointly by the WVDE and the West Virginia Department of Economic Development.

Lessons Learned from West Virginia

- **Communication is key:** Maintaining open channels between the state educational agency (SEA) sponsor, LEA employer, and the EPP is important for addressing inquiries, offering technical assistance, and eliminating obstacles for all stakeholders. Additionally, apprentices engaging in regular communication with mentor teachers and experienced professionals ensures the apprentice is thoroughly invested in the work environment, increasing teacher retention and job satisfaction.
- **Apprentices supporting apprentices:** Given that many apprentices in West Virginia are or will be first-generation college students, establishing methods for building support networks tailored to the needs of the apprentices is important for individual successes.
- **Regular check-ins:** Using virtual meeting platforms to conduct regularly scheduled meetings between and among apprentices, the EPP, the LEA employer, and the SEA sponsor may increase the likelihood of program completion, state licensure, and full-time employment within the LEA employer county.



Want to learn more about teacher apprenticeship in West Virginia?
[Watch the West Virginia Teacher Apprenticeship video series](#)
[Check out the GYO Apprenticeship page on West Virginia's TeachWV website](#)
[Dive into the West Virginia Teacher Residency Model here](#)