

Educate Maine

Teacher Apprenticeship District Application

Purpose of Funding Opportunity

The purpose of this funding opportunity is to support Maine school districts in developing, implementing, or expanding teacher apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship pathways that help recruit, prepare, support, and retain future educators.

These funds are intended to help districts build accessible and sustainable pathways into the teaching profession, particularly for individuals who are already serving students and schools in support roles or who are interested in entering the educator workforce.

Teacher apprenticeship funds are designed to reduce barriers for aspiring educators by supporting an “earn while you learn” model that combines paid employment, structured on-the-job learning, high-quality mentorship, related instruction, and progress toward teacher certification. Through this model, apprentices are able to continue working in schools while advancing their education and professional preparation.

Districts are strongly encouraged to leverage these funds as a strategic investment in building sustainable educator workforce pipelines. Funding should be used to expand access to the teaching profession, create advancement opportunities for current staff, and develop high-quality pathways that recruit, prepare, and retain educators to meet both current and future workforce needs.

Applications should clearly describe local workforce needs, including but not limited to:

- Hard-to-fill positions or certification areas in the district
- Reliance on emergency, conditional, or long-term substitute staffing
- Local or regional workforce challenges
- Rural access barriers, transportation barriers, or limited access to higher education
- District goals related to strengthening, growing, and diversifying the educator workforce

A Note to Applicants

Applicants must provide clear, concise, and complete responses to all application questions. Responses should include sufficient detail for reviewers to assess the district’s workforce needs, proposed apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship pathway, apprentice support strategies, and intended use of funds. Bullet points are acceptable and encouraged when they improve clarity. Applications will be evaluated based on the quality, specificity, and completeness of the information. Please limit your narrative to 250 words.

Eligible Uses of Funds

Funding may be used to support the development and implementation of teacher apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship pathways, including mentor stipends, supportive services, and education-related costs.

Mentorship Stipends:

Mentors will be recruited to support apprentices and pre-apprentices during the project. Each mentor may receive up to \$1,500 per year for providing high-quality mentorship, guidance, and support aligned with the apprenticeship pathway.

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Supportive Services:

Apprentices may be eligible to receive up to \$750 per year to help reduce financial barriers to participating in the apprenticeship pathway and related coursework. Supportive services may include technology, materials, supplies, transportation-related needs, or other allowable supports that help apprentices successfully participate in the program.

Education Costs:

Apprentices may be eligible to receive up to \$3,000 per year to support coursework associated with their apprenticeship and degree completion. These funds are intended to help reduce the cost burden of required education and training connected to progress toward certification.

Apprentices are also **required** to apply for the Competitive Skills Scholarship Program through WorkSource Maine's Virtual CareerCenter. This requirement is intended to help apprentices access additional available supports and reduce the financial barriers associated with coursework, training, and participation in an apprenticeship pathway.

Funding Award Cap and Phase One Selection

Funding awards will be capped at **up to \$12,000 per district**.

Up to **10 districts** will be selected for Phase One funding. This cap is intended to ensure equitable access to funds across districts while supporting meaningful investment in apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship pathways.

Details for Phase Two funding will be released by **September 30**.

Application Priority

Priority will be given to applications that directly address critical educator workforce shortages in rural, high-need, and hard-to-fill communities. Competitive proposals will demonstrate a strong, sustainable strategy for expanding access to the teaching profession through high-quality apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship pathways. Applicants should clearly articulate how they will remove barriers to entry, provide robust mentoring and related instruction, support apprentice success and retention, and build long-term workforce pipelines that extend beyond the grant period. Preference will be given to projects that show a strong commitment to sustainability, scalability, and measurable impact on local educator recruitment and retention challenges.

Definitions

Teacher Apprentice:

A teacher apprenticeship program is a structured, work-based educator preparation pathway aligned with the Maine Department of Labor's apprenticeship model. The Maine Department of Labor describes apprenticeship as a career pathway that allows individuals to get paid while they learn on the job, participate in related classroom instruction, and earn a nationally recognized credential.

In a teacher apprenticeship program, participants are employed in a school setting while completing structured on-the-job learning, receiving mentorship from experienced educators, participating in related coursework, and progressing toward teacher certification. This "earn while you learn" model helps reduce barriers to entering the teaching profession while supporting districts in building and retaining a skilled educator workforce.

Pre-Apprentice:

The Maine Department of Labor describes Certified Pre-Apprenticeship as a pathway for students and adults age

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16 or older to gain occupational experience and transition into a registered apprenticeship program. Participants may earn up to 1,000 hours of credited on-the-job experience toward a future registered apprenticeship. Certified Pre-Apprenticeship can serve as a strong transition point for high school CTE students and other aspiring educators interested in entering the educator workforce.

The application below is a preview of the required questions included in the application. The application must be completed online. Applications will not be accepted outside of the system.

[Complete the Application Here](#)

Applicant Information

District/School Administrative Unit Name:

Superintendent Name:

Primary Contact Name:

Primary Contact Title:

Email:

Phone:

Mailing Address:

Type of Application:(choose all that apply)

- New teacher apprenticeship pathway
- Expansion of an existing teacher apprenticeship pathway
- Pre-apprenticeship pathway

Number of Apprentices Proposed: _____

Target Certification Areas: (Note: Check ALL that apply)

- Special Education
 - Early Childhood Education
 - Elementary Education
 - Secondary Math
 - Secondary Science
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Workforce Priorities

Please describe the educator workforce needs this proposal will address.

Applicants should include, when available:

1. Current and projected teacher vacancies
2. Hard-to-fill positions or certification areas in their district
3. Reliance on emergency, conditional, or long-term substitute staffing
4. Local or regional workforce challenges
5. Rural access barriers, transportation barriers, or limited higher education access
6. District goals related to strengthening, growing, and diversifying the educator workforce

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Narrative Response: (250 words or less)

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Proposed Apprenticeship or Pre-Apprenticeship Model (Defined in introduction)

Please describe the proposed teacher apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship model.

Include the following:

1. How apprentices or pre-apprentices will be recruited and selected
2. Whether participants are current employees, such as ed techs, paraprofessionals, substitutes, or other school staff
3. The anticipated pathway from entry into the program to teacher certification
4. How participants will remain employed while completing coursework, training, or on-the-job learning
5. The expected timeline for participants to complete the pathway
6. How the pathway aligns with district staffing needs
7. How the district will ensure participants are appropriately supported and not used as unpaid or unsupported labor

Narrative Response: (250 words or less)

Apprentice Recruitment, Selection, and Equity

Please describe the district's plan to recruit and select apprentices or pre-apprentices.

Include:

1. How the district will identify strong internal candidates
2. How the district will communicate the opportunity to eligible staff
3. How the district will ensure the application and selection process is fair, transparent, and accessible
4. How the district will recruit candidates who reflect the students, families, and communities served
5. How the district will support candidates from rural communities, low-income backgrounds, first-generation college backgrounds, or other underrepresented groups
6. Any minimum eligibility requirements for participants

Suggested Participant Eligibility Criteria:

Applicants may consider requiring that participants:

- Are employed or eligible for employment in the district
- Demonstrate a commitment to becoming a certified teacher
- Meet entry requirements for the aligned educator preparation pathway, when applicable
- Commit to completing required coursework, training, on-the-job learning, and mentorship
- Intend to teach in the district or region after certification

Narrative Response: (250 words or less)

Mentor/Journeyworker Teacher Plan

Please describe how the district will identify, train, compensate, and support mentor or journeyworker teachers.

Include:

1. Criteria for selecting mentor/journeyworker teachers
2. How mentors will be matched with apprentices or pre-apprentices

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3. How mentors will provide regular feedback and support
4. How mentor time will be protected
5. Whether retired certified teachers, regional mentors, or virtual mentors may be used when local capacity is limited

Narrative Response: (250 words or less)

Apprentice Supports

Please describe how the district and partners will support apprentices or pre-apprentices so they can persist and complete the pathway.

Allowable supports may include:

- Tuition assistance
- Books, fees, testing costs, or certification-related costs
- Transportation support
- Child care support
- Technology or equipment
- Paid release time for coursework, seminars, advising, or observations
- Coaching or academic support
- Emergency assistance or other barrier-reduction supports
- Stipends or wage support, where allowable

Narrative Response: (250 words or less)

Sustainability Plan

Please describe how the district will sustain the teacher apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship pathway beyond the initial funding period.

Include:

1. Long-term funding strategy
2. Use of local, state, federal, philanthropic, or workforce development funds
3. How the district will continue mentor support
4. How the district will maintain partnerships with preparation programs
5. How the pathway will become part of the district's broader workforce strategy
6. How successful apprentices will be supported into teaching positions

Narrative Response: (250 words or less)

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District Assurances

By submitting this application, the district assures that it will:

- Use funds only for approved and allowable apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship-related expenses.
- Maintain documentation of all expenditures.
- Participate in required reporting and evaluation activities.
- Support participants through structured on-the-job learning, training, and/or mentorship.
- Ensure participants have access to related instruction that leads toward certification, when applicable.
- Follow all applicable state, federal, district, and apprenticeship requirements.
- Ensure a fair and transparent recruitment and selection process.
- Work with partners in good faith to support participant completion and employment.
- Notify Educate Maine of any significant program, budget, or staffing changes.
- Submit any required final report, budget reconciliation, and outcome data.

Rubric

Category	Points
Workforce priorities	15
Quality and clarity of apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship model	20
Apprentice recruitment, equity, and access	25
Mentor/journeyworker support plan	15
Apprentice supports and barrier reduction	10
Sustainability	15
Total	100

Receive up to 10 Optional Priority Points

Applications may receive additional consideration for:

- Rural or geographically isolated communities
- High-need or hard-to-staff schools
- Special education, early childhood, multilingual learner, math, science, or other shortage areas
- Strong partnerships with educator preparation programs
- Clear plan to recruit local, homegrown candidates
- Strong participant support plan that reduces financial and logistical barriers
- Demonstrated commitment to diversifying the educator workforce.