DESE MA Funding Webinar for RTAP

0:04
Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to our third webinar in a series of informational presentations on Massachusetts' new Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program.

0:14
My name is Claire Abbott, and I am the Director of the Office of Educator Effectiveness.

0:19
I am joined today by my colleague Lakia Baymon, DESE's Program Coordinator for the Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program, or what we call RTAP.

0:28
We are also joined today by representatives from the Educator Registered Apprenticeship Intermediary, a federally funded technical assistance organization supporting districts and states across the country that are implementing registered teacher apprenticeships.

0:44
They will introduce themselves to you momentarily, but before we jump in, we will discuss our plan for today and some logistics.

0:54
Today's webinar will draw heavily from ERA's expertise as we share with you effective principles for sustainably funding registered teacher apprenticeship programs in Massachusetts.

1:06
We will explore five key funding considerations, particularly from the perspective of the educator preparation program, with an eye toward aligning funding supports with the employing district's budgetary considerations.

1:21
As you will see, this is definitely not a one-size-fits-all approach.

1:25
Funding models for registered teacher apprenticeship programs are necessarily adaptive and responsive to the unique needs of a district, a community, and the apprentice type.

1:37
Hopefully, you will have an opportunity today to hear specific examples of funding models that vary in scale and scope, and we will discuss Massachusetts-specific funding opportunities, including the competitive grant for Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Programs, a tax credit associated with the employment of teacher apprentices, and other grant opportunities through the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development.

2:03
Whether you are exploring grant funding through DESE or elsewhere, we hope that you find this introductory webinar on funding models helpful for both your short- and long-term planning.

2:15
All of these models should be considered flexibly and with some fluidity, as everyone's context will change over time.

2:24
We are conducting today's conversation in a webinar format to facilitate recording and ensure that we capture all questions.

2:33
This webinar will be available on our website for additional viewing along with the slides.

2:39
Please submit any questions throughout the session using the Q&A feature on Zoom, located at the bottom of your screen.

2:47
We will monitor this throughout the session and use any remaining time to answer those questions live.

2:54
For questions that we cannot address during the webinar, we will collect them and provide answers through an updated FAQ document, which will be posted on our website next week.

3:02
We strongly encourage you to share your questions in the Q&A so that we can better understand what additional information you may need moving forward.

3:10
As always, please direct any future questions to the Educator Apprenticeships mailbox, which we will drop in the chat and include at the end of this presentation.

3:22
At this time, I will turn it over to Nicole Redding from ERA to get us started.

3:28
Nicole: Thank you, Claire, and good afternoon, everyone.

3:33
As Claire mentioned, I am part of the Educator Registered Apprenticeship Intermediary team, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor to support state and local education agencies and their partners, such as vital educator preparation programs, in developing apprenticeships for educators in the K-12 workforce.

3:53
We are led by RTI International, where I work, and we partner with WestEd, New America, Teach Me Education, and Gateway Education Partners.

4:02
Some of us are regionally based, like myself in Massachusetts, while others, like our subject matter experts John Diaz and Erica Mallett Moore, bring expertise in specific areas such as funding.

4:14
We are excited to have a conversation with you all and support you in developing your educator apprenticeship programs.

4:24
Just a few norms for approaching today's webinar:

- We ask that you remain present and fully engaged.
- We recognize that funding can be a difficult topic to grasp, so we encourage active participation in this conversation.
- Please bring a learning orientation, focusing on solutions rather than obstacles.
- Ask questions to check for understanding. Use the Q&A function to submit your inquiries.
- Be respectful of differences, as each district has unique funding landscapes.
- Step up and engage when necessary, but also step back if a highly specific question may be better addressed in a separate email or call.

5:23
We are excited to be here with you today, and I am now pleased to turn it over to Erica from ERA to begin our discussion on funding strategies.

5:37
Erica: Great!

5:38
Thank you, Nicole.

5:39
It is nice to meet you all.

5:40
My name is Erica Mallett Moore.

5:42
I am a research manager with WGU Labs and also work with the ERA Intermediary on apprenticeship funding for educator RAPs.

5:50
To start, I want to introduce this funding profile brief that we did with ERA.

5:57
It was a qualitative study examining four cases across the U.S. We were particularly interested in understanding how states have constructed their educator RAPs and the different program financing models.

6:11
This funding brief profiles these four educator RAP programs, identifying opportunities and challenges they have encountered along the way, with a particular focus on sustainability and funding.

6:27
We found a few key takeaways from this case study.

6:30
One was that diversified funding structures, through blending and braiding of funds, were essential for many educator RAP programs to achieve sustainability.

6:43
There is variation between one-time funding sources and sustainable funding sources.

6:49
Many programs start with one-time grant funding and then face the challenge of securing sustainable funding sources throughout the process.

7:00
Additionally, there is no one-size-fits-all approach.

7:03
Each program differs in how it starts, the number of apprentices it serves, its partnerships, and its overall funding structure.

7:17
Go to the next slide.

7:20
Thank you.

7:20
Looking at a snapshot of the four programs profiled in this brief, we examined:

- **Ball State University in Indiana**

- **Classroom Academy in New York**
- **The National Collaborative for Digital Equity in New Hampshire**
- **The Tennessee Grow Your Own Program**

7:40
All of these programs are relatively new, having started around the same time.

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As shown by the enrollment numbers, they serve varying numbers of apprentices.

7:54
The sponsor types also differ, but all programs focus on training K-12 teachers.

8:02
We analyzed educator RAP programs that recently launched, vary in size and structure, and lead to different degrees—ranging from bachelor's to master's degrees or a combination of both.

8:18
These are the programs profiled in the brief. We can go to the next slide.

8:25
When analyzing these programs, five key EPP sustainability principles emerged:

8:33

1. Identifying sustainable funding sources for braiding is the first step in achieving long-term sustainability.

8:43
2. Securing LEA participation by aligning with budget development cycles is crucial.

8:50
This involves working closely with district partners to understand their budget cycles and identify available funding sources.

8:57
Collaborating with districts allows programs to leverage various funding streams, such as Title I, Title II, and Title IV funds, which can be used in different ways to support apprentices.

9:04
3. Reducing EPP operating costs when possible is another important strategy.

9:14
4. Leveraging student aid is essential.

9:28
Apprentices have access to various forms of financial aid, including Pell Grants and LEA funds, which can support tuition, wraparound services, and other expenses.

9:46
5. Transitioning from one-time funds to sustainable funding sources is the ultimate goal.

9:49
This principle ensures long-term program viability and the continued success of educator RAPs.

9:57
These five principles will be discussed further today.

10:02
So, what have we seen so far?

10:04

There are several broad categories of expenses to consider when DESE and implementing an educator RAP.

10:11
So starting with the program DESE and implementation itself, thinking about who are the folks that are going to run the program itself and how do we make sure that they get funded.

10:23
A lot of programs often use those one-time grant funds to get the program itself started and earmark a good portion of those funds for salaries for program staff and thinking about any other DESE, excuse me, DESE cost or administrative cost within the RAP DESE and implementation.

10:43
Next is thinking about supplemental education, right?

10:47
So related technical instruction, thinking about tuition fees, books, how are those things being funded and being paid for?

10:57
Then we look at progressive wages which are provided to apprentices for their clinical apprenticeship hours, usually through the district.

11:07
And then we have school-based personnel and supports and in addition to looking at some of the potential funding sources, so when we're looking at RAP DESE and implementation, we have a list of some potential sources for that related technical instruction.

11:25
Again, thinking about those Pell grants, those teach grants, WIOA funds, any form of IHA-based aid and for progressive wages again through the district, you can go to the next slide.

11:41
And then continuing with those expense categories, looking at that school-based personnel support for apprentices.

11:47
So any additional cost for school-based personnel such as teacher mentors for apprentices, school principals who oversee RAP administration and provide instructional support for mentors, right?

12:00
Because those mentors, teachers are also going to need some training.

12:04
Potential funding sources for this expense category or district general funds, ESSA funds, and again, Title I, Title II, Title IV funds, and WIOA.

12:15
And then again, thinking about basic needs support like housing, some folks need childcare or transportation.

12:24
WIOA, Pell, SNAP, and TANF funds can also go to support those basic needs.

12:31
And then thinking about the other funding category that some educator RAPs have.

12:36
Yeah, so thinking about some type of emergency funds, any expenses that are not a part of the categories previously mentioned really come from a lot of donations and windfalls from any type of unrestricted resource.

12:54
Go to the next slide.

12:57
All right.

12:57
And I'm going to pass it to my colleague John to start talking about in more detail the first principle of those funding sustainable strategies.

13:07
Thanks, Erica.

13:08
Hi, everyone, great to be here.

13:09
My name is John Diaz.

13:10
I'm a colleague of both Nicole and Erica's working in the ERA intermediary.

13:15
So Erica just gave an overview of kind of the whole universe, right, of some of the things that we've encountered in our few years of research working with apprenticeship programs and before that working with residency programs and traditional pathways as well.

13:30
Sort of how folks are approaching this question of how do we sustain, how do we have a long-term help look for our programs and make sure that we're solvent.

13:39
But also thinking about scaling, thinking about growth, thinking about what's the actual need of our community.

13:45
And apprenticeships do seem to be a really unique and special way to tap into not just addressing community concerns, but also potentially embedding programs in a way that creates a really strong partnership between districts and higher education partners, whether that be community colleges or four-year universities.

14:04
And ensuring that folks have a clinically rich experience, right?

14:07
And so that's what these principles are all about, is ensuring that we can maintain that quality as well as figure out ways to make that cost burden less difficult for districts and universities to bear in partnership with each other.

14:21
And so as Erica had said, this first one is really all about identifying sustainable sources.

14:25
Now, if you're working in the district context, you've probably heard the term blending or braiding a lot, especially in the past four years.

14:33
Thinking about ESSER funds and thinking about those one-time federal funds that were used to help reopen schools, right and do all kinds of innovative things to support kiddos getting back to learning within the COVID-19 pandemic.

14:45
In the context of thinking about apprenticeships, this is really just considering the question of OK, so a basic piece of an apprenticeship is that folks have to earn a wage, right?

14:55
They have to receive a W-2.

14:57
They have to be employed if they're going to be an apprentice in your district at a school site.

15:01
And that's going to be where a lot of those costs are borne by the school district, right?

15:06
Is whatever folks are being paid, whether it be as a paraprofessional or a teacher's assistant, however that's been managed with your labor partners, that's the majority of the cost the district is going to have to pay.

15:15
However, above and beyond that, right, there are also opportunities should the district have need to use a number of different sources to be able to pay for operating costs, mentorship costs, anything that within the context of what you've agreed on in your partnership with the university or community college feels accessible, allowable, and capable, right, on the part of the district that you can use federal dollars, you can use state dollars to be able to cover some of those expenses.

15:44
Erica has already touched on what some of those sources are, and we'll spend a little more time on that later.

15:49
But this is really just the basis, and it's not the end-all, be-all solution, but just to be thinking about how you can integrate your existing grants, whether they be federal or state, to really support your apprenticeship program and bolster it beyond simply just providing that wage to the apprentices.

16:05
So beyond that first checkmark of just leveraging those funds, another way that we can think about this—and this will tie directly into our second principle—is planning ahead, right?

16:16
So when you're doing your budget forecasting, when you're doing your projections, whether that be for local state compliance or even just internally planning for your strategic four- or five-year outlook, you should think about your FTE and your general funds.

16:28
And what does it look like to have those unrestricted sources be dedicated specifically to...?

16:33
Yeah, we know we're going to have X, Y, and Z number of vacancies at these three school sites.

16:37
What would it look like for all of those to be apprenticeships, right?

16:39
Or what would it look like for four of those to be filled by apprentices?

16:42
What costs are we going to have to bear, and how much are we going to have to allocate in our budget to make those positions realistically fit for an apprentice?

16:49
And know that four years down the line, they’re going to be experienced.

16:53
They're going to be fully credentialed teachers, and they're going to be adding to the quality of our district.

16:58
And they're likely going to come from within our local community, right?

17:01
And that is an asset that you really can't put a price on.

17:03
And they're likely going to have a higher retention rate than an average teacher candidate coming into the city or coming into my district from anywhere across the nation, right?

17:12
So doing that long-term planning, using funding for paraprofessionals, teaching assistants, non-certificated staff, and forming agreements with your higher education and labor partners ensures that folks are receiving a living wage and are placed in roles that will provide them with the experience they need.

17:26
That will get them the clinically rich experience that they need to feel like they belong, but also that they feel prepared and that they can financially sustain themselves while completing the program.

17:35
And this collaboration piece—we'll talk about it more—but really, collaborating with every other partner in your educator prep program is key.

17:47
Whether you are in a district or an IHE, having ongoing conversations between universities, districts, and other stakeholders ensures that costs are shared appropriately.

17:53
At the end of the day, the apprentice should not have to worry about these funding challenges, and institutions should not feel isolated in figuring out how to manage their operating costs.

18:03
And lastly, thinking about seeking funding from foundations.

18:07
Erica touched on this earlier, but there may be some untapped funding sources or local resources that can be integrated into your program to ensure long-term sustainability.

18:20
So that's just our first principle—not the end-all-be-all—but something we want to emphasize to ensure that funding remains a priority.

18:28
Our second principle, though, will get us a little more into the details of how we can integrate and connect partnerships effectively.

18:38
And I'm wondering... okay, yeah, this is the right one.

18:43
So if you are working in a district—and it is my understanding that we are talking mostly to districts today—I just want to make sure.

18:48
Yeah, okay.

18:49
I don't want to assume, but that's what it felt like. I also don't want to be talking to the wrong group and ignoring any IHE folks in the room.

18:56
So as someone who used to work in a district office for a time myself, one thing I've observed—and I think Erica and I have both seen this a lot over the years—is that it's really difficult sometimes to bring external folks into budget planning discussions.

19:12
Oh, I see.

19:12
It's a mixture.

19:13
Thank you, Claire.

19:13
I appreciate that.

19:15
It can be really difficult to bring each other into the room during the budget development cycle.

19:20
And I think this is particularly challenging for districts because the budget development cycle really starts early.

19:31
In California and other places on the West Coast, for example, it starts in July or August.

19:39
And if you're getting large federal grants, if you're relying on Title I-24 funds, the community engagement and planning process happens in the fall semester.

19:41
It's not happening in March.

19:42
It's not happening in June when apprentices are getting ready to start a program.

19:46
It's really a year-round process.

19:49
So one of the most helpful strategies we've seen is ensuring that conversations about budget planning do not happen in silos.

19:56
Your higher education partners should be in the room with you thinking about recruitment strategies:

20:04
How many candidates are we looking to recruit into the program?

20:06
Who are we targeting?

20:07
How does that align with vacancies at specific school sites and subject areas?

20:15
Whether we're talking about two school sites or ten, how do we ensure transparency between district leadership (chief business officer, CFO, HR director) and university representatives?

20:36
One of the most effective strategies I've seen is making sure that educator prep program (EPP) staff understand how the district's staffing ratios and budget formulas work.

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For most districts, staffing projections are tied to revenue.

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You're looking at last year's enrollment.

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If you're in a district with declining enrollment, those numbers shift, and staffing allocations must adjust accordingly.

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That was the case when I worked in a district years ago.

20:58
We were consistently in a declining enrollment context.

21:01
So we always had to consider staffing projections very early in the year, well before hiring season.

21:09
These staffing discussions should not be limited to school sites alone.

21:18
Regular meetings—whether monthly, quarterly, or semi-weekly—between EPP partners and district leaders ensure that EPPs understand district hiring needs well in advance.

21:24
If the district is struggling financially, or if allocating funds for additional apprenticeship program costs is difficult, what can the university do to ensure the program remains sustainable?

21:27
This is why having honest conversations upfront is crucial—so that apprentices are not blindsided midway through their program with unexpected funding challenges.

21:45
So again, just trying to frontload a lot of that planning, projecting vacancies one plus year ahead is difficult to do for any school district or any school site.

21:54
But to the extent it is possible, this is the sort of thing that folks in the CBO role, CFO role, or HR director role of the district might be able to do.

22:03
And it is a good thing to keep top of mind—leveraging those existing positions, something we have already discussed, whether it be paraprofessionals, teaching assistants, or non-certificated staff—and then setting aside whatever amounts of FTE or state funding for HR to support apprenticeship programming.

22:19
A lot of times, we have seen that in the district context, there are dedicated folks who are highly invested in teacher preparation.

22:33
They think it is critically important and often work overtime to make it happen.

22:38
They put in extra hours to ensure that the apprenticeship program is successful and that the right number of candidates are recruited.

22:45
To the extent possible, if there is flexibility in the budget, unrestricted funds can be allocated to support supplemental staffing.

22:56
That does not necessarily mean adding an additional director-level salary to run the apprenticeship program.

23:02
It really just means having individuals who can assist with coordinating, budget management, and other tasks.

23:08
This ensures that the burden does not fall entirely on one person trying to establish and sustain an apprenticeship program.

23:13
It is a lot of work, and ensuring that people do not feel isolated while making it happen is crucial.

23:20
District staff and central office personnel accomplish incredible things with limited resources.

23:27
They know how to stretch dollars and maximize impact.

23:30
However, for sustainability purposes, this is an area where early support is critical.

23:34
Even with just one or two apprentices, it is important to consider sustainability from the start.

23:44
Moving to Principle 2.

23:48
There are a couple of best practices we have identified.

23:50
If questions arise and you feel uncertain about something, please use the Q&A feature.

23:58
We will review and respond to questions, and if needed, follow up via email or schedule a call.

24:10
Please have your questions ready, though we will address them later in the session.

24:16
We want to get through our content first but encourage you to share questions so we can address them when the time comes.

24:23
One best practice we have identified is aligning teacher preparation with state budget goals.

24:29
In some states, particularly California, we have seen districts ask:

24:36
What is our state funding formula?

24:38
What are the state budget priorities?

24:44
How can we ensure that our teacher preparation goals align with our state budget priorities?

24:54
For example, eight years ago, California launched a one-time residency grant, which led to the establishment of residency programs.

24:59
Now, those funds are set to expire.

25:07
More than 20 districts that started residency programs in California are now shifting their focus to sustainability.

25:14
They are aligning their state budget priorities with their teacher preparation goals to continue their programs.

25:26
Instead of ending partnerships, districts are projecting budget growth and allocating future funds specifically to maintain these programs.

25:37
As you all know, state funding is one of the more stable funding sources.

25:46
Even in economic downturns, state funding is often maintained, with the most common outcome being a freeze rather than a reduction.

25:50
The last time California saw a state funding freeze was in 1994.

25:56
This highlights why state funding is an important, sustainable source to consider.

26:04
Districts with startup funding today need to plan for how they will fill financial gaps 2-3 years down the road.

26:18
Many districts are currently facing this challenge with little time to prepare.

26:35
By planning ahead, districts can align their teacher preparation programs with state budget priorities, submit budgets early for approval, and secure long-term sustainability.

26:44
Moving to Principle 3, which focuses on the Educator Preparation Program (EPP) side.

26:51
We have spent a lot of time discussing districts, but the burden is not entirely on them.

26:55
For IHE partners—whether at a community college or university—funding can sometimes be less flexible and more opaque.

27:11
However, we have seen several effective strategies for making apprenticeship programs work within higher education budgets.

27:20
Some of these models include:

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1. Employing professors of practice—qualified professionals with doctoral degrees who work in school districts—to teach courses on-site.

27:44
This reduces faculty costs while maintaining a clinically rich experience for apprentices.

27:55
2. Offering courses at school sites so apprentices do not need to commute between locations.

28:13
3. Maximizing transfer credit recognition—some programs accept up to 30 credits of prior learning, accelerating progress toward a degree.

28:55
4. Awarding credit for prior experience, similar to College Level Examination Programs (CLEP).

29:06
5. Structuring courses to include monthly synchronous meetings with asynchronous learning in between—similar to executive master's programs.

30:02
Moving on to our next principle.

30:17
We are nearing the end of our time to discuss these principles, so I apologize if I am moving quickly.

30:26
If anything is unclear, we are happy to follow up.

30:38
While funding flexibility varies between IHEs and LEAs, one effective strategy in Indiana is dual enrollment.

30:51
This allows high school juniors and seniors to begin teacher preparation while earning college credits.

31:08
They take community college courses, which are often free, and gain employment in legally allowable school-based roles.

31:15
This structured pathway transitions students from high school to community college to a four-year university.

31:23
It significantly reduces costs for students and districts.

31:38
Another effective model is work experience seminars, where apprentices earn credits for professional learning discussions.

32:26
This allows them to share experiences, receive real-time feedback, and develop a community of practice.

32:50
These discussions support their mental load while also providing academic credit.

33:20
Lastly, some programs integrate apprenticeship coursework into existing course offerings to avoid duplicating efforts.

33:48
Accelerated course sequencing is another option, but it must be balanced to maintain program quality.

34:02
That concludes our discussion of Principle 3.

34:08
Now, let's discuss a model at Ball State.

34:11
Erica, would you like to take this one?

34:16
Go ahead, and I will take the Tennessee example.

34:18
Excellent, thank you.

34:20
This model at Ball State follows a dual enrollment approach.

34:29
It launched just a few years ago and quickly established partnerships with eight local school districts.

34:45
Key partners include Ball State University and the Indiana Department of Education.

34:54
The program recruits high school students to begin earning their bachelor's degree while gaining classroom experience.

35:00
Initially, students participated in after-school programs based on district policies.

35:06
They worked limited hours—typically 12 hours per week—rather than full-time positions.

35:09
But they really went through, and every single year of an apprentice's life was mapped out ahead of time in this partnership between the university, the local community college, and the school district to see that they could get paid for every year they were there.

35:23
And they could also get all their expenses covered for every year they were there.

35:26
And they started out with a grant from the Indiana Department of Education and some Perkins CTE funding.

35:32
But a lot of this cost is absorbed into the districts just paying them the wage for the job they are doing.

35:37
They're a full-on employee, right?

35:38
The community college costs are incredibly low, if not free, in most contexts.

35:43
So then it's really just those last two years that they are at the university where you are figuring out that scholarship side of things.

35:48
So just wanted to give you a snapshot of what that looked like.

35:51
It's a current program that is operating, and they have only had about two years of time to work with.

35:58
Yeah.

35:58
So this is Cardinal Pathways, and then I'll pass it to Eric, I think, for our next one.

36:04
Oh, no, sorry, Principal 4, which I'll touch on just briefly before I pass to Erica.

36:09
So this one is just leveraging that student aid.

36:11
This is for those, you know, if you're in a dual enrollment program those third and fourth years, or if you are doing a post-bac, right?

36:18
What are your apprentices eligible for?

36:21
And when starting out the program, how do you do an intake process that makes them apply and look into some of these things that, in some ways, feel more like entitlements than purely just grants, right?

36:32
Are they eligible for Pell?

36:33
Are they eligible for TEACH?

36:36
And are they, are you able to get them in a way that does not fly in the face of maybe any university-level aid caps that you might have?

36:42
In California, we deal with this a lot where there is a cap on the amount of financial aid that an apprentice, a resident, or any kind of student is eligible to get.

36:51
And so trying to do that process, you know, maybe even before they actually start their program, right? When they know, "Hey, I'm going to be an apprentice, I am starting my class this fall."

36:59
Let's sit down for an hour and see what you are eligible for.

37:02
What is your financial aid picture in the past?

37:04
And how can we maximize that to not just reduce our cost burden as an EPP, but also to make sure that as an apprentice, they are taking advantage of those programs that were designed for them, right, and designed to help them out?

37:17
Let's see.

37:19
So I will only touch very briefly on WIOA, but I am certainly glad to talk a lot about this if folks want to.

37:24
I know this is kind of an exciting and really interesting area for folks, especially on the, I think on the LEA side of things, it is kind of a new avenue to explore.

37:31
But this is just Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funding.

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This is funding that is not going directly to the LEA.

37:39
It is not funding that is going directly to the hands of the participant.

37:42
This is funding that is managed by local workforce development boards.

37:47
And this is something that a lot of states are leveraging to be able to help assist with things like training and education costs, covering tuition costs, and covering book expenses.

37:55
But there are very specific criteria that need to be met.

37:58
And it is a process that sometimes takes, you know, a whole year to ensure that districts, EPPs, and apprenticeship programs are able to participate.

38:05
Because again, these funds are managed by workforce development boards, not necessarily by a school district or a university in the way that some of the other grants we have talked about are.

38:14
But overall, these are the kinds of funds that are tailored specifically to apprentices.

38:19
And they are funds that are generally used for, you know, whether it be electricians, plumbers, or other apprenticeship-based professions. In education, teaching is really just jumping into this field, and it is just getting started.

38:31
So not a lot of WIOA funding is, I think, accessed by folks right now on the education side of things because it is relatively new and it is just starting to become a priority for workforce development boards.

38:42
But it is certainly something that we have seen work in the past.

38:47
If we move ahead, we might have to move two slides ahead.

38:50
Yeah, to Principle 5. And I am thinking, Erica, do you want to take this one?

38:56
Yeah, I will jump in here to round this out.

38:58
Thank you.

38:58
John, that was a very comprehensive review of those first four principles, so I appreciate that.

39:04
And then rounding out here with Principle 5, this is really the goal, right? Transitioning from those one-time funds to sustainable funding where possible.

39:14
And so, to start, what that looks like at the district level is really just cataloging those current funding sources as recurring versus one-time.

39:25
I think looking through the grants that you receive, looking through the title funds that you received, and really seeing: where can I leverage these funds? What can I use these funds for? Gaining a fuller understanding of that.

39:38
So you can kind of see the full picture of where funds can go, where they can be best utilized, and then identifying expiration dates for those one-time funds.

39:49
Again, the majority of educator RAPs start with some form of grant funding, some form of one-time funding, whether that is sustainable or not.

39:58
So getting a sense of that—is it something that you have to apply for year over year?

40:03
Is it something that you can get for the first two to three years of the program?

40:08
Like, what does that funding source look like?

40:10
What can that provide you with?

40:12
And then looking at replacement or replenishment funding sources, whether that can come from the state.

40:20
What level of WIOA funds does your state or your LEA have access to? And then thinking about sunsetting those one-time funds by replacing them with a sustainable funding source and where that can come from.

40:34
And what that looks like, more often than not, is starting with the grant funds that you receive, being able to set up your program to really get established, and then looking for those recurring funds that might not be at the same level.

40:49
So I am going to talk about Tennessee in a moment here, just to give you an example of what that looks like.

40:54
So the funds that you need to start may not be the same amount of funds that you need to sustain.

40:59
So thinking about that and planning for that from the beginning with the influx of funds you are able to receive to get started.

41:07
And if we go to the next slide, using Tennessee as an example—so Tennessee, their program is sponsored, excuse me, by the Tennessee Department of Education, right?

41:18
And so that is a really large program across the state.

41:21
So they work with 70-plus districts, and they were able to start actually with one-time grant funds in ESSER, COVID relief funds, I believe in the amount of about $20 million.

41:34
So lots of funds there to get started.

41:37
And then they were able to establish, through the state governor, a recurring amount that they receive for their educator RAP—about $5,000,000.

41:47
So they started with this large influx of funds but are able to sustain their program with about one-fourth of the funding amount that they started with, which is a really important story to tell.

41:59
And so they have that bachelor post-bachelor degree.

42:03
And then these are the populations that they target.

42:07
And so you see the funding sources listed there, but they are really able to sustain themselves with that $5,000,000 government funding that they are able to receive year over year.

42:17
It is written into the state budget.

42:19
Again, not all states are able to do that in the same way, but the idea that you can start with a surplus of funds and then really work your program by going through what was listed in Principle 5, like earmarking those funds—what can I spend them for?

42:35
So that you know what you need to sustain your program past year one moving forward and really get that to a workable amount that you can sustain and continue to have year over year.

42:50
And I am going to pass it to Claire to take it from there.

42:54
Thank you, everyone, for your time.

42:57
Thank you, Erica and John.

42:59
That was a really comprehensive and thorough overview of how different organizations, whether they are individual districts, EPPs, or even states, have approached braiding and blending these funds together.

43:12
And I really appreciate you underscoring that this is a dynamic funding process and that what you need in the beginning of a Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program might not be what you need as it evolves and as it matures.

43:28
And so, thinking really strategically, both in the short and long term, about what those sustainable funding sources can be as you scale and invest in your program.

43:40
So I am going to now shift us slightly to talk specifically about Massachusetts state funding options.

43:47
We are going to dig into a couple of very specific things that I wanted to elevate, but I also want to name, before we get into the details, that some of the larger opportunities that you have in Massachusetts to leverage include things that Eric and John have already mentioned, such as early college programming, which would allow high school students to really get a head start on college credits if they are thinking about going into teaching.

44:12
We also have the benefit of free community college tuition now, and that is just a terrific opportunity to think about building an associate's degree pathway into a Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program.

44:26
And then there continues to be our investment in our Tomorrow's Teacher Scholarship programs.

44:31
Again, opportunities for students in some of our four-year IHEs to leverage those generous scholarships toward possibly a Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program.

44:43
So thinking about those existing Massachusetts programs and funding opportunities, I think, is really helpful as you work with your partners to build these funding models.

44:56
So one of the specific funding opportunities that I wanted to raise for Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Programs, however, is the Registered Apprentice Tax Credit, which comes out of the Division of Apprentice Standards in Massachusetts.

45:11
This is a state tax credit that equals up to 50% of the wages paid to an individual apprentice in a taxable year, up to a maximum of $4,800 per apprentice.

45:21
So this is a really important opportunity, I think, for employers to support some of these investments.

45:33
And an employer can qualify for up to $100,000 in total tax credits per calendar year for up to two taxable years.

45:41
So we are going to include a link to information about the tax credit at the end of this presentation.

45:48
But I think this is a really important potential funding source to leverage.

45:58
Next slide, please.

46:03
There are also apprenticeship grants that come out of the Division of Apprentice Standards.

46:03
And it is interesting—similar to the WIOA comment that John made—the inclusion of registered teacher apprentices in these grants is new but growing quickly.

46:15
And the title of these grants is appropriate.

46:19
These are called Grow Apprentice Grants, which are really there on an annual basis to give sponsoring districts the opportunity to expand an apprenticeship, to really invest in specific pre-apprentice training, which is something that the department is also going to be exploring.

46:38
And then, perhaps most importantly, technical assistance funding as you continue to expand your programming.

46:44
So DAS conducts these on an annual basis.

46:48
It is always pending the funding, but they anticipate a new RFR will go out for fiscal year 26.

46:55
So that is another thing to keep an eye on.

47:00
Next slide, please.

47:02
And of course, DESE has invested its own funds into a competitive grant opportunity for districts interested in launching a Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program.

47:14
So this is a grant opportunity for all Massachusetts public school districts, charter schools, and collaboratives that are partnering with an educator preparation program.

47:24
Eligibility is limited to those receiving Title I or 9408 school improvement grant funds, but that covers a pretty significant number of our LEAs because this is a very important part of our diversification efforts.

47:41
Districts that have larger gaps between their student and teacher demographics are going to receive more priority.

47:49
In an effort to really cultivate some of these Grow Your Own models and close some of those gaps between our student and teacher demographics.

48:01
We are looking to give out up to $2,000,000 per year for the next three years.

48:08
And applicants can request awards in one of four different amounts ranging from $50,000 to $100,000, $250,000, or $500,000.

48:20
Obviously, we want you all to be strategic about the amount of award that you believe will be necessary to support the scale and scope of your program.

48:30
But the fund use is pretty flexible.

48:32
And Lakia is going to talk a bit about that in a moment.

48:35
But our grant funds can be used to support everything from mentor stipends to apprentice salaries, tuition, recruitment, program coordination, and more.

48:45
And I think John touched upon a couple of important programmatic components of a strong Registered Teacher Apprenticeship, including things like project management and mentor stipends.

48:59
So we really wanted to give you all flexibility in grant fund use here.

49:06
So if you are applying to the grant, we will ask that you submit a fiscal year 25 and 26 budget, which Lakia will talk more about.

49:15
And with that, I think I am going to turn it over to Lakia so she can dig into some of the details around grant fund use.

49:22
Thank you so much, Claire.

49:24
So as it relates to expenses and funding, we are asking districts to outline the key expenses for effective funding allocation.

49:31
Essentially, the categories listed here are what we are looking for in both fiscal year 25 and 26, and I am going to differentiate between the two.

49:40
Some of the things you can spend funding on include professional, clerical, and other staff salaries, as well as contracted services and marketing.

49:49
Especially when you are launching your program, you want to make it attractive and appealing for people to want to get involved, whether they are apprentices or journey workers, also known as mentors.

50:01
You can also use funding for wages, tuition, and fees associated with the program cost, as well as professional development and stipends for mentors.

50:11
And again, sustainability is key.

50:13
So if you leave with nothing else, really think short term and long term as you plan for the rollout and sustainability of your program.

50:26
Some other things to think about include supplies, operations, and their costs.

50:30
There is a lot of flexibility in terms of how you use your funding.

50:36
The goal is to come up with a good short-term and long-term plan that will lead to success over time.

50:41
Next slide, please.

50:56
In terms of fiscal year 25, there are three key areas that we expect districts and applicants to focus on: getting your program up and running, recruiting and training participants, and setting up initial operations.

50:56
Budgets need to match the RTAP objectives, which we have outlined on our webpage as well as in other publicized literature.

51:04
You need to clearly lay out costs and funding sources. We provide space in the full application for you to do that.

51:10
There are some required expenses as well as optional expenses that you will be able to fill in.

51:15
Again, this is all about making sure that you have a solid plan for fiscal year 25, which ends June 30th.

51:21
So if you are applying for the grant, for example, keep in mind that the deadline for DESE's grant is March 7th. It is initially only for fiscal year 25.

51:40
For fiscal year 26, the focus is on ensuring that your program is growing and is able to be sustained over time.

51:45
The focus will be on personnel support, program implementation, and ongoing apprentice and mentor support.

51:52
Your budgets for fiscal year 26 should reflect that.

51:55
It is about taking what you have done in fiscal year 25 and expanding it to ensure that your program continues to run smoothly.

52:02
So when you think about everything we have covered today, there are so many options.

52:08
I know we are in a climate right now where things are uncertain regarding funding availability, but there are many creative ways, opportunities, and success stories that will help us feel confident moving forward with this work.

52:22
And with that, I am going to turn it back over to Nicole.

52:29
Thank you, Lakia.

52:31
So I get the fun of closing us out by just giving an example of what this might look like in practice.

52:39
As you all are going through either your general RTAP application or your grant application, you will be asked, like Lakia and Claire mentioned, to submit a budget.

52:47
And so, using some of the principles that we have outlined today, we have created a sort of mock budget—really without incorporating any of the grants—to show that even in an event where you would not be a grant recipient in Massachusetts, there are still ways to fund this program.

53:06
For example, if your expenses were the apprentice salary, the stipend amount for the mentor teacher or journey worker, your EPP tuition and fees, MTEL preparation costs, DESE licensure fees, and any kinds of substitutes or other wraparound support, you could fund that with line items from your district general funds, right?

53:29
Especially if you are using a paraprofessional that you have already been paying—that is the salary you have already been allotting—meeting your balance of $0.00 for a salary.

53:40
For journey worker stipends, there are a number of different title funds that could be used, particularly depending on the subject area that you are looking to apply for.

53:51
The Registered Apprenticeship for EPP tuition, right?

53:55
There are things like Pell Grants that apprentices could take advantage of.

53:58
WIOA is often used for tuition dollars for training and helps bring down that tuition cost significantly.

54:06
The same applies to your MTEL preparation fees.

54:09
Again, that is the kind of preparation element for licensure fees, and then thinking about any kind of substitute time or administrative time that might be needed.

54:19
We are happy to dive more into any of these topics.

54:23
We really want to show that this balanced budget is not as far off as it might seem from the outset of thinking about creating an entirely new program, such as this in-house, district-driven educator preparation model.

54:39
And so with that, I want to give a couple of minutes for questions.

54:43
I know we are short on time, but we do have some additional resources here.

54:49
I have been putting some in the chat, and we will stay on to answer some questions.

54:53
I know we have some in the Q&A as well, but I am really happy to be with you all today and hopefully provide some helpful information as you plan your RTAPs.

55:05
Great, thank you so much.

55:06
Nicole, Erica, and John, this was incredibly helpful.

55:10
With that, I think we will end our recording and move on to questions.