

Massachusetts Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program (RTAP)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program: Structure and Goals

- 1. What is the Massachusetts Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program (RTAP)?**

The RTAP is an innovative pathway into the teaching profession designed to enhance educator workforce diversity, strengthen the educator pipeline, ensure equitable access to teacher preparation (particularly in hard-to-staff roles), and support high-quality instruction. It allows individuals to earn their initial teaching license while gaining hands-on experience in a classroom. Each RTAP is supported by a partnership between an employing school district and approved educator preparation providers (EPPs).
- 2. What are the goals and main components of the RTAP?**

The RTAP aims to diversify the educator workforce, expand access to the teacher profession in hard-to-staff roles, and support high-quality instruction. Key components include a culturally responsive curriculum, wrap-around supports, mentorship and supervision from experienced educators, flexible programming, and access to an earn-while-you-learn preparation model with progressive wage increases.
- 3. How is the RTAP structured?**

Each RTAP involves a partnership between the sponsoring school district and an approved EPP(s). Apprentices are employed full-time in classrooms in an instructional role while completing coursework through their EPP and demonstrating on-the-job competencies under the supervision of a licensed supervising practitioner, or "journeyworker." RTAPs are flexible enough to be designed around a post-bacc model that supports college graduates or career changers, or it may serve as a degree-granting baccalaureate pathway for recent high school graduates or individuals with their associate's degree.
- 4. Who is eligible to operate a RTAP?**

In Massachusetts, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) approves all district-based RTAPs and serves as the intermediary to the state's Division of Apprentices in the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development. A public

school district, charter school, educational collaborative, approved special education school, or coalition of schools or districts may apply to operate an RTAP pathway as the employer in partnership. LEAs must partner with an approved educator preparation provider as the related technical instructional provider, and they must be using high quality instructional materials (as documented on profiles at: <https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/Curriculumdata.aspx>). For more information about the state requirements for registered teacher apprenticeships, please review the RTAP Programmatic Requirements & Work Process Schedules for post-baccalaureate and baccalaureate degree-granting pathways.

5. What types of organizations may apply to operate an RTAP?

A public school district, charter school, educational collaborative, approved special education school, or coalition of schools or districts may apply to operate an RTAP. The applicant must partner with an approved Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) and must meet DESE and apprenticeship program requirements.

6. What is the difference between a registered teacher apprenticeship program, teacher residencies, and a grow-your-own program?

An RTAP is a formal program that provides a paid path to becoming a teacher. It combines on-the-job training with academic coursework so participants can earn a salary while working toward their teaching license. Importantly, registered teacher apprentices are required to be employed in a full-time instructional role, but they are *not* teachers-of-record. Program costs, including tuition and fees, are covered by the EPP and/or district through braided funding models (e.g., grants, scholarships, state and federal funding). RTAPs in Massachusetts are approved by the state's Department of Elementary & Secondary Education and authorized through the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development in accordance with state laws governing preparation and licensure and U.S. Department of Labor requirements and guidelines for registered apprenticeships.

Grow-Your-Own (GYO) programs vary in program design and objectives. While they often focus on recruiting aspiring educators from the local community into pipeline programs related to education, they are not required to adhere to state preparation and licensure requirements nor result in licensure. Participants may or may not be teachers-of-record, and program costs may or may not be covered.

Teacher residencies also vary in scope and program design. These are typically post-baccalaureate programs that allow an individual to be employed in a teaching position (often on a Provisional license) while completing the requirements for Initial licensure. Participants may or may not be teachers-of-record, and program costs may or may not be covered.

More information about the differences between RTAPs, GYO programs, and teacher residencies is available [here](#).

7. How does the RTAP differ from the Performance Review Program for Initial Licensure (PRPIL)?

PRPIL (Performance Review Program for Initial Licensure) is an alternative Massachusetts license program for teachers who have been employed for three or more years and wish to advance from a Provisional license to an Initial license. Candidates engaged in PRPIL earn their Initial license while they continue to teach.

While both PRPIL and RTAP result in Initial licensure, PRPIL candidates are teachers-of-record with at least three years of experience teaching on a Provisional license. Registered teacher apprentices are not required to have a Provisional license, and they may not be employed as teachers-of-record while completing their apprenticeship term. An individual may pursue Initial licensure via PRPIL on their own, while a registered teacher apprentice must be sponsored by an employing district.

Apprentices and the Apprenticeship Experience

8. **Who is eligible to be a teacher apprentice?**

To qualify as an apprentice, candidates must be at least 18 years old or older and employed in a full-time instructional role related to the teacher occupation (e.g., paraprofessional, teaching aide). Candidates must have a high school diploma or a Massachusetts High School Equivalency Credential. Candidates must meet the physical requirements set by the employing Massachusetts Local Education Agency and be able to access and navigate all areas of a school. Employment eligibility within a Massachusetts Local Education Agency includes passing background checks, fingerprinting, and other pre-screening processes. Additionally, candidates must meet the admission requirements of the educator preparation provider. Registered teacher apprentices may not be teachers-of-record, including teachers in the classroom through emergency licensure waivers. More information can be found in Appendix A: Work Process Schedule, SELECTION PROCEDURES. All other eligibility requirements are determined by the school districts and EPPs. Applicants must meet the qualifications outlined by these entities. Individuals cannot apply directly without district sponsorship.

9. **Who should apply to be an apprentice?**

This program is ideal for career changers, paraprofessionals, college and community college students, or anyone seeking a cost-free pathway to become a teacher who meets the eligibility requirements outlined in Appendix A: Work Process Schedule.

10. **What does the apprenticeship look like in practice? What would an apprentice's day to day look like? How do the required on-the-job training hours align with an aspiring teacher's required practicum?**

Each apprentice will be assigned a mentor teacher and will complete a full-time apprenticeship in a classroom under their mentor's supervision. Like a student teaching practicum, apprentices will participate in a range of instructional experiences that align with Massachusetts teacher certification requirements and those established between the supporting district and Education Preparation Provider (EPP). These may include lesson observations, lesson/unit implementation, small group and whole group instruction, administration of formative and summative assessments, data analysis to inform instruction, and family and community engagement. Apprentices can expect a gradual release of responsibility from observation and support roles to full instruction and responsibility for the classroom, in accordance with field-based experience practicum requirements.

11. **How should an apprentice's responsibilities increase over time?**

An apprentice's responsibilities should increase gradually over the course of the program. Early in the apprenticeship, the apprentice may spend more time observing, assisting, working with small groups, and supporting classroom instruction. Over time, and with journeyworker and EPP support, the apprentice should take on more direct instructional

responsibilities, including planning, teaching, assessing student learning, and completing required field-based experiences.

12. What are the curriculum expectations for an RTAP?

In accordance with RTAP state requirements, registered teacher apprentices must have access to high quality instructional materials (HQIM) and to qualified journeyworkers modeling culturally and linguistically sustaining practices (CLSP).

Aligned to the DESE Educational Vision, high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) provide a strong foundation for all students, particularly students from historically underserved groups and communities, to have access to content, texts, tasks, and practices that enable them to excel at grade level (or beyond) and support teachers to do what they do best: make learning real-world, relevant, and interactive for their students while also providing data-informed, individualized supports through evidence-based practices that are inclusive and culturally and linguistically sustaining, to cultivate deeper learning. High-quality instructional materials have an increased positive impact on student learning when paired with curriculum-specific, ongoing professional learning.

13. What are the requirements or guidelines for apprentice compensation?

Apprentices must be compensated at minimum \$15.00 per hour and in compliance with the employing district's prevailing wage rate and collective bargaining agreement(s), where applicable. Apprentices shall be paid on a progressive wage schedule with at least one wage increase over the tenure of the apprenticeship term. Examples of compensation structures include, but are not limited to, payment of apprentices according to an LEA's existing paraprofessional wage scale.

14. Can apprentices be assigned administrative duties or act as substitutes?

A registered teacher apprentice must be employed in an instructional role. They may not be employed in an administrative or substitute capacity, and they may not serve as a teacher-of-record at any point during their apprenticeship term. Whereas an apprentice may at times work independently with students in an instructional setting as part of their participation in the apprenticeship program, the apprentice must have access to a qualified supervising practitioner (e.g., journeyworker teacher(s)) at all times. Unless conducting such duties directly alongside their supervising practitioner/journeyworker teacher, and as a result of their supervising practitioner/journeyworker teacher being assigned such duties, apprentices may not be independently assigned duties during the instructional day that do not align with the intent of the apprenticeship program or the role of an apprentice, including but not limited to lunchroom monitoring, substitute teaching, study hall, office duty, or in-school suspension supervision. In the event that an apprentice's journeyworker teacher is out, the LEA must provide a substitute teacher for the journeyworker's classes.

15. Can an apprentice's prior experience or coursework affect the length of the pathway?

Yes. An apprentice's pathway may vary based on prior college credits, relevant work experience, EPP requirements, licensure area, and program design. The EPP is responsible for reviewing prior coursework and determining how it applies to the apprentice's program of study. However, apprentices must still meet all RTAP, licensure, OJT, and related instruction requirements.

16. How long does it take to complete a RTAP?

Registered teacher apprentices must complete no less than 150 hours of related technical instruction per year and at least 2,000 hours of on-the-job learning during their apprenticeship term. Given that a typical academic school year is comprised of 180 instruction days, this type of model will likely yield apprenticeship terms that span at least two academic years. RTAPs may extend beyond two years and exceed 2,000 OJT hours depending on the pathway design, prior experience, level of education, and the requirements of the license.

17. Who is responsible for assessing an apprentice's progress toward proficiency?

The journeyworker, EPP supervisor, and appropriate district or school staff work together to assess the apprentice's progress. The journeyworker provides day-to-day coaching and feedback, while the EPP ensures the apprentice is meeting educator preparation and licensure requirements. Final sign-off should confirm that the apprentice has demonstrated the required competencies and completed all program expectations.

18. What happens after an apprentice completes the RTAP?

Upon successful completion of the program and passing required MTEs, apprentices are endorsed for their Initial teaching license and are eligible for full-time teaching positions in Massachusetts.

Journeyworkers / Mentor Teachers

19. What are the requirements and expectations of apprentices' mentor teachers?

Mentor teachers (i.e. journeyworkers) are required to be licensed, full-time employees of their district, have at least three full years of experience under an appropriate Initial license, and have achieved a summative performance evaluation rating of Proficient or Exemplary on their most recent evaluation. Mentors should be carefully selected by their district/school, in accordance with state requirements and a set of shared expectations established with the designated EPP. Ideal mentors will have demonstrated:

- Positive impact on student outcomes, particularly with students from historically marginalized groups and communities
- Proficiency in culturally responsive and linguistically sustaining instructional practices
- Ability to effectively mentor and coach a diverse set of adult learners

Mentor teachers meet with their apprentice mentees at minimum weekly to ensure understanding and integration of related instruction and to provide training and feedback that corresponds with licensure requirements. Mentors also serve as "supervising practitioners" and are responsible for formally assessing an apprentice's level of proficiency in the Professional Standards for Teaching via the Candidate Assessment of Performance (CAP), which is required for teacher certification. They will collaborate with the partnering EPP and their school and/or district administrators to ensure alignment and final sign-off on all the approved skillsets and performance areas prior to the apprentice's completion of the apprenticeship program.

20. What training and support do mentor teachers receive?

DESE provides training for mentors on effective mentoring approaches with a focus on instruction and feedback aligned to Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices. Training includes a multi-day summer institute, monthly professional learning community (PLC) meetings, and ongoing coaching. Topics includes the presence of historical and

ongoing structural, systemic, and interpersonal racism in school environments, how this impacts the experiences of educators of color, and how to respond to bias as both an ally and an advocate. Mentors also receive coaching and support to:

- Offer culturally sustaining mentorship that reflects the diverse identities of their apprentices.
- Support apprentices in implementing culturally responsive teaching practices that meet the diverse needs of students.
- Foster a sense of belonging and empowerment for apprentices navigating the challenges and opportunities of the teaching profession.
- Engage in ongoing reflection, feedback, and adjustments to practice in partnership with apprentices.

Training be provided for mentors prior to the start of the apprenticeship period as well as during the apprenticeship. Schedules and logistics are coordinated by districts and the related instruction providers.

21. Can a journeyworker/mentor support more than one apprentice?

The preferred programmatic structure is a one-to-one apprentice/journeyworker assignment. With approval, an LEA may assign more than one registered teacher apprentice to one qualified journeyworker, but they must demonstrate that the impacted apprentice(s) (1) have consistent access to that journeyworker, and (2) are still employed in a classroom or instructional setting under the day-to-day mentorship of a highly effective teacher-of-record.

22. What are the requirements for journeyworker compensation?

Recipients of the DESE competitive grant are required to compensate journeyworkers a minimum of \$10,000 for the first academic year serving as a mentor teacher. This stipend compensates journeyworkers for their daily support and collaboration with apprentices and participation in ongoing mentor training. This level of compensation is strongly recommended for everyone. Journeyworkers must continue to be compensated competitively beyond the first year serving in the journeyworker role.

23. What happens if a journeyworker changes during the apprenticeship year?

An apprentice may work with more than one journeyworker during the apprenticeship, as long as the apprentice remains under the supervision of a qualified, licensed journeyworker at all times. If a journeyworker changes, the LEA should ensure a smooth transition, update documentation, and confirm that the new journeyworker meets all RTAP requirements.

Apprentice Duties and Program Guidelines for Instructional Roles

24. What does it mean that an apprentice cannot serve as a "teacher of record"?

An apprentice in the RTAP program cannot be employed as a teacher-of-record. This includes serving as a long-term substitute or any role that functions as a teacher-of-record for extended periods of time. Apprentices must be employed in an instructional role supported by an experienced mentor teacher (journeyworker).

25. What roles can apprentices hold in schools?

Most LEAs employ apprentices in positions such as:

- Paraprofessionals
- Full-time tutors

- Teacher aides

The exact role will depend on the LEA's employment designation. These roles allow apprentices to provide instruction in the context of the license being sought without carrying full teacher-of-record responsibilities.

26. Can apprentices take over a classroom if needed?

Yes, but only in limited, temporary situations and always with journeyworker support when required. Examples include:

- Supervising a class for a short period if the journeyworker steps out briefly
- Supporting a cohort of students in a special subject area (e.g., PE, Art, Music)
- Performing other duties assigned to the journeyworker as part of their role (e.g., bus duty)
- Covering a class if the journeyworker is unexpectedly absent for a short period (1–2 days)
- Engaging in the required minimum number of “full responsibility” hours associated with the practicum

27. What activities are not allowed for apprentices?

Apprentices may not:

- Serve as a long-term substitute (even for their own classroom)
- Serve as a building substitute
- Perform administrative duties that are not part of the journeyworker's normal responsibilities
- Serve as one-to-one paraprofessionals

28. Is there flexibility in these rules for daily school operations?

Yes, apprentices can take on temporary, short-term instructional duties as part of their role, as long as they are under the supervision of a journeyworker and are not functioning as a teacher of record for an extended period. These arrangements are intended to balance classroom needs with program requirements.

29. Why are these restrictions in place?

These rules ensure that apprentices receive proper mentoring and supervision while developing their skills and competencies in the licensure role. They also protect program integrity and ensure compliance with grant and program expectations.

30. What should an LEA do if an apprentice is being assigned duties that do not align with RTAP requirements?

The LEA should review the apprentice's role and make any needed adjustments right away. Apprentices should be placed in instructional roles that allow them to develop teaching skills aligned to their licensure area. They should not be assigned duties that prevent them from completing OJT, related instruction, field-based experiences, or supervised teaching responsibilities.

31. How should LEAs handle coverage when a journeyworker is absent for more than a short period?

If a journeyworker is absent for more than a short period, the LEA should provide appropriate substitute coverage or assign another qualified teacher to supervise the apprentice. The apprentice should not be used as the long-term substitute or teacher-of-

record. The LEA should ensure the apprentice continues to receive supervision, support, and appropriate instructional experiences.

Related Technical Instruction and Educator Preparation Program Partnerships

32. What is related technical instruction, and who is the related technical instruction provider(s)?

Related technical instruction (RTI) refers to coursework aligned to the necessary requirements for obtaining an academic teacher license at the Initial level. The related instruction provider must be approved educator preparation provider (EPP) that is able to offer an approved pathway (degree- or non-degree granting) in partnership with the apprentice's employing district.

33. What pathway(s) are offered through RTAP?

RTAP standards in MA have been designed to accommodate multiple pathways to licensure, including baccalaureate, post-baccalaureate, and degree- and non-degree-granting routes. DESE is initially encouraging RTAPs focused on post-baccalaureate pathways or baccalaureate pathways serving apprentices who have already completed an associate's degree or a similar level of course credit hours. These pathways lend themselves to accessible and affordable 2-3 year apprenticeship terms, are ideal for recent graduates, paraprofessionals, career-changers, or anyone seeking a low-cost pathway to becoming a teacher.

DESE strongly encourages LEAs to begin with one licensure track or pathway when establishing an RTAP in order to focus on implementation quality. LEAs may expand their RTAPs to include additional licensure programs or pathways following the initial program launch year.

34. Can LEAs partner with multiple EPPs to implement an RTAP?

Yes, but LEAs are strongly encouraged to partner with one EPP in Year 1 of implementation as they solidify the systems and structures to well support an RTAP.

35. Can EPPs partner with multiple districts to run RTAPs?

Yes. However, it is strongly encouraged that EPPs focus on only one or two LEA partners in Year 1 of implementing a RTAP as they solidify systems and structures.

36. How often should LEAs and EPPs communicate during implementation?

LEAs and EPPs should communicate regularly throughout implementation. At minimum, partners should have scheduled check-ins to review apprentice progress, coursework, OJT hours, CAP timelines, journeyworker support, and any issues that may affect program completion. Early and ongoing communication helps prevent confusion and keeps apprentices on track.

37. How will DESE support LEAs and EPPs in implementing RTAPs?

RTAP is designed with built-in supports to help LEAs and EPPs succeed, including handbooks, communities of practice for managing implementation and change, and training programs for mentor teachers/journeyworkers. Mentor training focuses on culturally and linguistically responsive mentoring practices. LEAs and EPPs also receive guidance on securing state and federal funding and external evaluations to assess the

program's impact. These resources are designed to ensure the successful and sustainable implementation of RTAP across participating LEAs and EPPs.

- 38. Can an apprentice begin RTAP before the EPP confirms admission?**
Apprentice selection may be conditional until the EPP confirms that the apprentice meets admission and enrollment requirements. LEAs and EPPs should coordinate early to ensure selected apprentices can enroll in the required coursework and related technical instruction.
- 39. What should be included in an apprentice's individualized program of study?**
The individualized program of study should outline the apprentice's full pathway to licensure. It should include coursework, related technical instruction, OJT expectations, field-based experiences, CAP timeline, MTEL or approved alternative assessment requirements, SEI endorsement requirements, prior credits accepted by the EPP, and the expected timeline for program completion.
- 40. When should CAP occur during the apprenticeship?**
CAP should be embedded within the apprenticeship experience and completed at the appropriate point in the apprentice's pathway. In most cases, this will occur during Year 2 or Year 3, depending on the pathway design, apprentice progress, licensure area, and EPP requirements.

Licensure Requirements

- 41. Do apprentices need to take and pass the MTELS?**
Yes. Registered teacher apprentices must meet all licensure requirements for the license they seek. Apprentices will need to pass the Communications and Literacy MTEL or an approved alternative, as well as the subject matter knowledge MTEL(s) or approved alternative(s) corresponding to their licensure area. When relevant, a competency review in lieu of an MTEL may be completed. Apprentices will pursue these licensure requirements throughout their apprenticeship term under the guidance of the partnering EPP and employing LEA. Additional information about MTELS and alternative assessments is available at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/mtel/>.
- 42. What licensure areas do registered teacher apprentices pursue through RTAPs?**
In Massachusetts, RTAPs are explicitly designed to expand pipelines for Initial licensure into our hardest-to-staff instructional roles. DESE grant-funded RTAPs prioritize four academic licensure areas: special education, English as a Second Language (ESL), secondary STEM, and early childhood. However, LEAs may propose RTAPs in other high-need fields if they can show a local, persistent need, partner with an EPP capable of preparing educators in the field, and support a cohort of apprentices.
- 43. Can an LEA operate an RTAP focused on multiple licensure areas?**
LEAs are strongly encouraged to focus on one licensure area with the first cohort of apprentices. LEAs should consider their open positions and hard-to-staff roles when selecting a licensure area to focus on. LEAs may eventually propose RTAPs to offer apprenticeships in multiple licensure areas.
- 44. Can apprentices use approved alternatives to MTELS?**
Yes, where applicable. Apprentices must meet all licensure requirements for their intended license, which may include MTELS, approved alternatives, or a competency review when

allowed. The EPP should guide apprentices on which assessments or alternatives apply to their licensure pathway.

45. How should LEAs decide whether to expand into additional licensure areas?

LEAs should consider expanding into additional licensure areas only after they have strong systems in place for the initial pathway. Before expanding, the LEA should review staffing needs, EPP capacity, apprentice recruitment, journeyworker availability, OJT tracking, and the district's ability to provide strong support across multiple licensure areas.

RTAP Alignment with DESE's Educational Vision

46. How does the RTAP align with Massachusetts' educational goals?

RTAPs in Massachusetts support diversity, equity, and excellence in teaching in accordance with DESE's Educational Vision and commitment to cultivating and sustaining an educator workforce that is diverse, culturally responsive, well-prepared, and committed to continuous improvement, ensuring that all students have equitable access to effective educators. The program also works to expand the pipeline into hard-to-staff fields by developing local pipelines into teaching.

47. How does an RTAP support culturally and linguistically sustaining instructional practices?

LEAs work closely with EPPs to prepare apprentices in evidence-based, culturally and linguistically sustaining instructional practices. The goal of this work is to "support students to thrive by creating affirming environments where students feel seen, engage in deeper learning, and are held to high expectations with targeted support"; to realize this vision, educators must have the mindset, knowledge, and capacity to serve all students well, particularly students from historically underserved groups and communities. In order to be highly effective, educators must develop an authentic understanding of the students and adults in their school communities, ensure that their students' experiences in school are affirming of who they are and what they bring to the school community, and unpack how their own culture impacts their worldview and approach.

Grounded in the Professional Standards for Teaching and the Massachusetts Standards for Effective Practice, registered teacher apprentices must be prepared in accordance with evidence-based, culturally and linguistically sustaining instructional practices. Employing LEAs and partner EPPs will need to demonstrate evidence of expertise in cultivating these practices and learning environments.

Costs and Financial Support

48. What are the costs and financial assistance obligations associated with an RTAP?

RTAPs are intended to be an affordable way to become a teacher. While apprentices earn a living wage based on the employer's wage schedule, employing LEAs and EPPs are expected to cover almost all costs associated with obtaining licensure through braiding local, state, and federal recurring funds and grant programs. Higher education costs for individual apprentices may be covered through scholarship programs.

49. What financial support is available for districts and EPPs interested in a RTAP?

DESE offers grant funding for strategic planning and implementation stages of RTAP development. The RTAP Planning Grant is a competitive grant to support a year of strategic planning in LEAs seeking to develop and apply for state approval of an RTAPs.

The RTAP Implementation Grant is a targeted grant to support continued implementation and scaling in LEAs already implementing state-approved RTAPs. Funding is contingent upon state appropriations and subject to change. For FY2027, grant funding prioritizes 9408-qualifying/underperforming schools and districts, and LEAs with large student-teacher demographic gaps. Grant-funded RTAPs must demonstrate evidence of culturally and linguistically sustaining teaching and learning environments, the use of high-quality instructional materials, a focus on high-needs licensure areas, and the ability to provide wraparound supports to ensure program success.

50. Can grant funds be used to support apprentice devices, materials, or supplies?

Grant funds may be used for approved costs that directly support RTAP planning or implementation, as allowed by the grant. LEAs should make sure any devices, materials, or supplies are clearly connected to the apprenticeship program and are included in the approved budget or amendment.

51. Is the planning grant application the same as the application to run an RTAP?

No. LEAs selected to receive planning grant funds are not automatically approved to launch a registered teacher apprenticeship program. In the spring of the planning year, selected LEAs will be able to apply for a competitive implementation grant to support RTAP launch and implementation. The RTAP implementation grant application serves as the application for state approval to run an RTAP.

52. What can LEAs strategic planning grant funding for? Can grant funding be rolled over into the next fiscal year?

Strategic planning grant funding can be used to support program design and strategic planning, including, but not limited to partnership development, application process development, hiring a program coordinator, marketing and community outreach, and other infrastructural and administrative costs. Grant funding awarded to districts for FY27 must be spent by June 30, 2027. Grant funds cannot be rolled over into the next fiscal year. LEAs will apply for implementation grant funding in the form of a continuation grant for program launch and implementation.

53. What should LEAs do if they do not expect to spend all grant funds by the end of the fiscal year?

LEAs should monitor spending closely and contact DESE as soon as they know they may not spend the full award. Depending on the situation, the LEA may need to submit a budget amendment, revise planned activities, or complete drawdowns before the fiscal year closes. Grant funds cannot be carried over unless specifically allowed by the grant.

Apprenticeship Agreements and DAS Standards

54. Can additional terms or requirements be added to the RTAP apprentice agreement?

No. The apprentice agreement should be limited to the terms and requirements directly related to the registered apprenticeship program and aligned with Department of Apprenticeship Standards (DAS) guidelines. The agreement should only cover the apprenticeship period and should end when the apprentice completes the program.

55. What documentation should LEAs maintain for each apprentice?

LEAs should maintain records of the apprentice agreement, OJT hours, related instruction progress, EPP enrollment, journeyworker assignment, wage progression, probationary period status, CAP progress, licensure milestones, and program completion

documentation. These records help ensure compliance with RTAP and DAS requirements.

56. How many OJT hours do apprentices need to complete each year?

All registered teacher apprentices must complete a minimum of 2,000 on-the-job training hours during an apprenticeship term. Because the academic school year is only 9 months long, DESE requires that registered teacher apprentices complete at least **1,500 OJT hours per year as they work toward the total number of required hours.**

57. How many On-The-Job Training (OJT) hours are required by the end of the apprenticeship?

Apprentices must complete a **minimum of 2,000 total OJT hours** over the full apprenticeship term, or a minimum of 1,500 OJT hours per year.

58. How should LEAs track apprentice OJT hours?

LEAs should maintain clear and regular documentation of apprentice OJT hours. Tracking should show the apprentice's instructional role, progress toward required competencies, supervision by the journeyworker, and alignment to the approved work process schedule. LEAs should review OJT progress routinely with the apprentice, journeyworker, and EPP.

59. Does the journeyworker need to be with the apprentice at all times during OJT?

No. The assigned journeyworker does not need to be physically present at all times, but they must be available as needed to guide and support the apprentice.

60. Can districts include local employment policies outside of the apprentice agreement?

Yes. Apprentices are district employees and may be subject to general local employment policies, such as attendance, confidentiality, professional conduct, background checks, and workplace expectations. However, local policies should not conflict with or add new apprenticeship requirements to the DAS-approved apprentice agreement.

Best Practices and Lessons Learned

61. What are key lessons learned from the planning and program launch of Cohort 1 districts?

One key lesson learned from the launch of RTAP Cohort 1 is the need for ample planning time for conducting a needs assessment, strategic planning, partnership development, recruitment. Moving forward, a dedicated one-year planning grant will be available to LEAs seeking to incorporate a RTAP into their staffing pipeline.

62. What best practices do Cohort 1 districts elevate as important to support successful RTAP implementation?

Cohort 1 districts elevate two best practices: dedicated RTAP program coordinator staffing and strong partnership development. Incorporating an RTAP coordinator role and/or dedicated administrative support into the LEA's RTAP budget improves the LEA's capacity to oversee smooth program implementation. In addition, Cohort 1 districts consistently emphasize the importance of early, clear, ongoing communication with RTAP partners, particularly the LEA's EPP partner.

63. What should planning-year districts prioritize first?

Planning-year districts should begin with a clear needs assessment. This includes identifying hard-to-staff licensure areas, reviewing workforce data, determining how many potential candidates may be interested, understanding candidates' prior credits or coursework, and confirming EPP partnership options. Districts should also begin planning for recruitment, selection, journeyworker support, and long-term sustainability.

64. What are common implementation challenges LEAs should plan for early?

Common challenges include unclear apprentice roles, limited journeyworker capacity, scheduling conflicts between work and coursework, EPP communication gaps, OJT tracking, grant spending timelines, and confusion about what apprentices may or may not do during the school day. LEAs should address these issues early through strong coordination, clear documentation, and regular check-ins with apprentices, journeyworkers, EPPs, and DESE.

Characteristics of RTAPs, GYOs, and Teacher Residencies

Element	MA RTAP	GYO	Residencies
Federally recognized	•		
Community-based recruitment	•	•	◦
Individualized support	•	•	◦
Multiple pathways (e.g., HS, UG, Grad)	•	◦	◦
Progressive wages	•		
Paid work-based learning	•	◦	◦
Aligned coursework	•	◦	•
Minimum number of hours/years of work-based learning	•		•
Cohorts	•	◦	◦
Culminates in a degree	◦	◦	◦
Prepares candidates for Initial licensure	•		•
Focused on diversifying the profession	•	◦	
Mentorship and Coaching	•	◦	•
In partnership w/ Educator Prep Provider	•	◦	•
Long-term Career Support	•	◦	
Equity-Focused Pedagogy	•	◦	◦
Formal Evaluation and Feedback Loop	•		•

• = always present ◦ = sometimes present

*Adapted from **"What's the Difference Between Grow Your Own, Teacher Residency, and Teacher Registered Apprenticeship?"** by New America, 2024*