



Virginia's Grow Your Own Initiative



The Grow Your Own (GYO) or apprenticeship programs are designed as partnerships between local school divisions and higher education teacher preparation programs. Unlike traditional college teacher preparation programs, these programs allow aspiring educators to get the best of both worlds with extended apprenticeships and high-quality coursework. In the past, an aspiring teacher would have to complete almost all of their coursework prior to a 12-week clinical experience. The apprenticeship model blends these two elements together, providing aspiring educators practical extensions of coursework throughout their apprenticeship resulting in higher retention of theory and extensive opportunities to practice what they are learning. More importantly, the apprentices become part of the school community and are more likely to stay in teaching than traditionally prepared teachers.

Virginia GYO – Registered Teacher Apprenticeship: Overview

In a registered apprenticeship, an aspiring teacher spends an extended time in the classroom with a master teacher using an apprentice model. The apprenticeship provides **2,000-3,000 hours of on-the-job training** with a master teacher in a school-based setting. At the same time, the apprentice receives at least **288 hours of coursework** to complete a bachelor's degree and licensure requirements. Moreover, as an apprentice, the aspiring educator works as a classroom assistant getting paid **at least \$14/hour**. Apprenticeship programs produce educators that are well prepared without the financial barriers associated with traditional preparation since individuals are paid during their preparation and have the advantage of using federal workforce funds to cover a portion of program costs. This **low-to-no cost** approach is the fastest growing apprenticeship occupation in the Commonwealth.

How Do Aspiring Teachers Participate?

Aspiring educators can enter into registered apprenticeships in three ways (each pathway requires that apprentices have an associate's degree or 60 credit hours to be eligible for the program).

Teacher for Tomorrow Partnership:

High school students often participate in a CTE Pathway for aspiring teachers called Teachers for Tomorrow. School divisions are being encouraged to turn this pathway into an associate's degree program. When high school seniors graduate with an associate's degree, they can immediately enter the apprenticeship program. This approach allows apprentices to be fully licensed teachers within two years of graduating high school.

Transition Model:

College students who don't want to complete their programming through a traditional approach and are considering leaving the teacher preparation program all together often choose a Grow Your Own model in lieu of a traditional preparation model because this program allows them deeper application and a paid apprenticeship while they complete their degree program.

Re-Entry Model:

Many educational assistants, front office secretaries, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, and other school staff believe deeply in the school community and have always wanted to be a full-time teacher, but financial and time barriers have not allowed them to leave their job to complete a traditional teacher preparation program. The Grow Your Own model allows them to continue being paid as an educational assistant/instructional aide and complete their coursework within the school community that they are already deeply committed to serving.

Grow Your Own OVERVIEW

The Apprenticeship Provides...

2,000-3,000 hours on-the-job training

288 hours of coursework

Paid \$14/hour as classroom assistants

Virginia GYO – Current Participants

Participating School Divisions

Albemarle County	Petersburg City
Bland County	Prince George County
Bristol City	Prince William County
Carroll County	Pulaski County
Chesterfield County	Radford City
Dinwiddie County	Roanoke City
Essex County	Smyth County
Fredericksburg City	Spotsylvania County
Galax City	Stafford County
Giles County	Surry County
Grayson County	Tazewell County
Henrico County	Washington County
Hopewell City	Waynesboro City
Newport News City	Wythe County

Participating Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs)

Averett University	Radford University
Bluefield University	University of Mary Washington
Emory & Henry College	Virginia Commonwealth University
James Madison University	Virginia State University
Mary Baldwin University	

State Apprenticeship Expansion Funding (SAEF): Overview

In partnership with the Department of Workforce Development and Advancement (Virginia Works), the VDOE was awarded **\$6 million in competitive funding** from the U.S. Department of Labor to develop and expand Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Pathways and pre-apprenticeship opportunities in Virginia.

1. Allocated **\$2.55 million** to expand teacher apprenticeships to an additional 80 school divisions with 170 teacher apprenticeships projected.
2. Working with the National Center for Grow Your Own (NCGYO) for technical support and the establishment of the **Virginia Registered Apprenticeship in Teaching Technical Center** to provide services to school divisions. This partnership will develop an agency-wide, targeted support network to establish teacher apprenticeship programs in the Commonwealth's most challenged school divisions.
3. **\$1.632 million** will expand dual enrollment and pre-apprenticeship opportunities through the creation or expansion of Teachers for Tomorrow programs in public high schools.
4. The VDOE Office of School Quality and Department of Educator Preparation is establishing a three-pronged approach to develop and retain strong leaders through **principal apprenticeship**, principal mentoring, and Principal of Distinction Programs. **\$510,000** was set aside from SAEF to support registered apprenticeship programs for K-12 principals.
5. **\$408,000** will be awarded to qualified community colleges for the creation and program implementation of a K-12 teacher aide/paraprofessional apprenticeship opportunity.

Current Investments

The VDOE awarded **\$2.58 million in grant funding** to support apprenticeship programs with the average cost per apprentice per semester between \$4,000-\$5,000.

Virginia Works **will provide \$3,750 per apprentice** to offset the costs of on-the-job training for this fiscal year.

Potential exists to carry-over approximately \$3.5M from ESSER funding to **support the program through 2026**.

Collaboration with the Department of Veterans Services **to expand the Skillbridge Program** as a pre-apprenticeship opportunity.

Read More:

Press Releases

[Virginia Department of Education Awarded \\$6 Million to Expand Teacher Apprenticeship Opportunities](#)
(07/12/2024)

[VDOE Announces \\$1.52 Million in Grow Your Own Grants for School Divisions to Help Meet Classroom Staffing Needs](#)
(02/14/2024)

VA Education Update Newsletter Articles

[September 21, 2023 Edition](#)

[November 2, 2023 Edition](#)

VDOE Website

[Teacher Residency and Apprenticeship Programs](#)