

New Mexico receives federal grant for statewide teacher residencies

Written by gallupsun

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SANTA FE — The New Mexico Public Education Department has been awarded a five-year, \$8 million federal grant for NM Residencies, a statewide initiative to provide aspiring teachers with a year of co-teaching alongside an accomplished mentor teacher as part of their pre-service preparation program.

The grant, part of the U.S. Department of Education's Education Innovation and Research Program, will provide much-needed research, infrastructure and implementation support for NM Residencies.

NM Residencies has three primary goals:

- Strengthen the teacher recruitment and selection processes to attract, prepare and retain a strong teaching force that reflects the state's student population.
- Build consistency across residencies to ensure equitable access to well-prepared teachers.
- Create sustainable funding streams with competitive wages so paid residencies can grow and become the norm in New Mexico.

Studies of teacher residency programs consistently point to the high retention rates of their graduates, showing 80% to 90% of graduates remaining in the same district after three years and 70% to 80% remaining in the same district after five years.

By increasing the number of qualified teachers in the educator workforce and providing existing educators with aspiring teachers to help share classroom responsibilities, NM Residencies also contributes to the NMPED's goal of reducing classroom sizes and teacher workloads.

"Having aspiring teachers observe and assist experienced teachers benefits everyone in the education process," New Mexico Public Education Secretary Arsenio Romero said. "We are grateful for the opportunity to advance this program and further develop a coherent, high-quality teacher preparation system."

NMPED is one of only three mid-phase grantees in the nation awarded under the ED's Educator Recruitment and Retention priority.

The grant, which is housed in the NMPED's Educator Quality and Ethics Division, will develop

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open-source resources to be shared nationally. In addition, Basis Policy Research will conduct an external evaluation, the findings of which will be disseminated widely.

“New Mexico is a national leader in supporting shifts in the teacher preparation ecosystem so that people can afford to attend high-quality teacher residencies. These federal grants are highly competitive; this award recognizes the quality and potential of NM Residencies to inform the field more broadly,” Karen DeMoss, Executive Director of Prepared To Teach, a national organization working to make paid residencies the norm for teacher preparation and a collaborator on the NM Residencies project, said.

The NM Residencies program and the NMPED’s collaboration with the ED are part of Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham’s ongoing efforts to increase teacher recruitment and retention across New Mexico.

Legislative funding signed by the governor in 2022 provided stipends of \$35,000 for aspiring teachers in state-approved residencies to address the cost-barrier that many aspiring teachers faced when choosing a preparation pathway. As a result, enrollment in teacher residencies is growing. Over half the districts in New Mexico have hosted residents, and 92% of residents graduate on time. Two-thirds of residents also identify as persons of color, compared to 46% of the state’s current teachers.