

# Pathways to Credentialing

To teach in California, you will need to earn a credential by completing a teacher preparation program approved by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC). There are many options to choose from, each with its own strengths and philosophy of how to prepare a successful teacher. Depending on the program, the format may be in-person, virtual, or hybrid and you may have the option to earn your bachelor's or master's degree along with your Preliminary credential (a professional-level license valid for 5 years). Explore the program models below to find the one that's right for you.

**R****RESIDENCY****IU****INTEGRATED UNDERGRADUATE****PB****POST-BACCALAUREATE****I****INTERN**

## Residency

Inspired by the medical school approach to training doctors, in a teacher residency program you will teach alongside an experienced mentor teacher for at least one full school year while completing your coursework to earn your Preliminary credential. Think of it like a guided clinical practice: you receive supervision from your program and get to learn from a veteran in the field in real time. The guiding philosophy of a teacher residency program is that aspiring teachers will be best prepared if they learn under expert mentorship in classrooms like the ones they will be teaching.

### *What Makes Residency Programs Unique*

#### ***Are you looking for extended guided practice before having your own classroom?***

Compared to other program models, you'll get more clinical practice under the guidance of a mentor before assuming full-time, solo teaching responsibilities as the teacher of record in your own classroom. Having a full year of experience helps to ease the learning curve of teaching.

#### ***Do you prefer to be part of a group experience?***

You will have a cohort of other teacher residents alongside you, supporting and valuing each other as you experience residency together.

#### ***Are you looking for a program where you can also earn your master's degree?***

Some residency programs may also provide the opportunity to earn your master's degree.

#### ***Are you a career changer?***

Residency programs offer opportunities for a wide variety of candidates from different backgrounds, including those who may initially not have considered teaching as a career.

#### ***Do you need financial support to complete your teacher preparation program?***

Teaching residents receive a salary or stipend and at the end of the program, a Preliminary credential. Additional financial incentives may include reduced or forgiven tuition costs and university fees, health benefits, and housing stipends. These arrangements depend on the employing school district where you will complete your residency program.

#### ***Things to Keep in Mind***

The application pool can be very competitive.

There is a service commitment to your residency employer of 3-5 years beyond the program.

If you do not earn your Preliminary credential or complete the period of your placement, you will have to reimburse the amount of grant funding that was invested in your residency training.

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## Integrated Undergraduate

If you want to teach but don't have your bachelor's degree yet, there's good news! You don't have to wait to begin a teacher preparation program. An integrated undergraduate program (sometimes called a "blended" or "ITEP" program) leads to both a bachelor's degree and a Preliminary teaching credential within 4-5 years. You might start at a four-year university during freshman year or at a community college if it has a specified agreement with a university. This route combines an academic major with early field experiences and courses on teaching methods for the specific subject you will be teaching. You will be completing your undergraduate degree while also learning to teach and your program will provide you with academic and teacher preparation coursework along with clinical practice experiences.

### *What Makes Integrated Undergraduate Programs Unique*

***Have you always known you wanted to be a teacher and want to start teaching as soon as possible?***

If so, this model is designed specifically for people like you.

***This program provides you a clear and focused track from your degree to a teaching credential in a unified, integrated approach.***

If you are currently attending community college, you can start now. Approximately 2/3 of students who become teachers begin their collegiate careers in community colleges.

***Do you need financial support to complete your teacher preparation program?***

It may be cost-effective to complete both your bachelor's degree and teacher preparation in a single program.

#### ***Things to Keep in Mind***

Since these programs can be compressed to make the most efficient use of the time available for both undergraduate and teacher preparation, it's critical to make sure you take the right courses to stay on track. You will need to communicate with your advisor regularly.

There are currently more integrated undergraduate programs for earning Multiple Subject (elementary) credentials than for Single Subject (secondary level) or Education Specialist (Special Education) credentials.

## Post-Baccalaureate

The post-baccalaureate program (also called a "traditional" or "fifth year" program) takes place after you have completed your undergraduate degree. Once you have earned a bachelor's degree, you can then complete a teacher preparation program to earn your Preliminary credential. These programs provide a strong academic and theoretical focus in addition to classroom-based field and student teaching experiences. The program is generally 1-2 years and may be completed on a part-time basis over a longer period of time.

### *What Makes Post-Baccalaureate Programs Unique*

***Are you looking for a wide range of programs and program format options?***

This is the most common and long-established program model in California, so there are many available programs across the state. There may also be more options for in-person, virtual, or hybrid formats.

***Are you looking for a program where you can also earn your master's degree?***

Some post-baccalaureate programs may also offer the opportunity to earn a master's degree.

***Are you looking for a program you can complete in a year of full-time study?***

Programs may be designed to be completed in as little as one year as a full-time student, but you can also attend as a part-time student although it will take longer to complete the program.

#### ***Things to Keep in Mind***

Other program models may offer more hands-on learning experience compared to a post-baccalaureate program.

If you want to start teaching as soon as possible or cannot afford a post-baccalaureate program, you may want to consider a different program model option.

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## Intern

An intern program offers an alternative route if you already hold a bachelor's degree and want to teach as soon as possible. You may have had some prior experiences working in a classroom as an aide or another role assisting students, or you may have worked with young people in an after school or interest-based program, or maybe you just always knew that you wanted to be a teacher. As an intern candidate, you are employed as the teacher of record in a classroom while you complete your program and earn a teacher's salary. There are two types of intern programs: **University Intern programs** and **District Intern programs**. A University Intern program is a collaboration between an institution of higher education (IHE) such as a college or university and a LEA (local education agency) such as a district or county office of education, whereas a District Intern program is developed and implemented by an LEA to meet its own needs. Most programs are two years long but there is an early completion option.

### What Makes Intern Programs Unique

#### **Are you committed to serving students in your local community or area?**

An intern program might be for you if you already know exactly where you want to teach.

If you plan to make your career investing in your community, you may want to enroll in their District Intern program or in an intern program sponsored by a local college or university.

#### **Do you prefer to be part of a group experience?**

You will have a cohort of other intern teachers alongside you, supporting and valuing each other as you experience the intern program together.

#### **Do you need financial support to complete your teacher preparation program?**

As an intern teacher you will earn a teacher's salary according to your employer's negotiated salary schedule while completing your program. This model is a good option for career changers or individuals who cannot give up a salary to student teach.

#### **Things to Keep in Mind**

You may find it challenging being a student and teaching full time.

While the hours of required student teaching and support remain the same and you will still need to complete all the requirements for the credential you are earning, in an intern program you become teacher of record faster than in other program models.

Intern programs may not be available for every credential subject area.

University Intern programs require a lot of coordination between the IHE and the LEA, since the support and supervision you will be receiving is a joint responsibility.

If you are looking to enroll in a University Intern program, you will need to make sure prior to enrolling and accepting an offer of employment that the IHE and LEA have an existing Intern Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or are willing to create such an agreement.

Since this model was developed to help districts meet specific staffing needs, employment is restricted to a specific LEA. If you decide to change your subject area, it may be logistically challenging to do so. Also, if you're in a District Intern program, it will not be possible to change to another LEA and stay in your program.

Your teaching position and your program go hand in hand. Any changes to your employment status will affect your program status, and vice versa.

## Ready to find a program that's right for you?

Access a list of Commission-approved teacher preparation programs on the [Approved Institutions and Programs page](#).

# Pathways to Credentialing: Grants

## Grants

Now that you've decided on the type of program you want to enroll in, your next concern might be the tuition. In addition to financial aid through a college or university-based program, there are also different types of grants available for aspiring educators. Whether you're an undergraduate student, a candidate in a teacher preparation program, or a classified school employee who wants to become a teacher, there's financial assistance available. Check out the grants below to see if you're eligible!

### ***Federal TEACH Grant***

The [Federal TEACH Grant](#) provides up to \$4,000 annually in scholarships to undergraduate and graduate students who commit to teaching for at least four years in high-need schools. A TEACH Grant-eligible program is a program of study that is designed to prepare you to teach as a highly qualified teacher in a high-need field and that leads to a bachelor's or master's degree, or is a post-baccalaureate program.

### ***Golden State Teacher Grant (GSTG) Program***

The [Golden State Teacher Grant Program](#) awards up to \$20,000 to students currently enrolled in a program approved by the CTC and working on earning their Preliminary teaching or Clear Pupil Personnel Services credential. Students must complete the program and obtain their credential within three years from the first distribution of funds and commit to work at a priority school in California for four years within eight years of completing the program.

### ***Grants for Colleges/Universities (IHEs) and Districts/County Offices of Education (LEAs)***

Talk to your IHE/LEA today to see if they have a grant program that could potentially benefit you! For nearly all the grant programs listed below, the funds awarded to IHEs and/or LEAs can help to support future educators. Please note that these funds cannot be directly awarded to candidates as only IHEs and LEAs are eligible to apply for these particular grant programs. Information about these grants, as well as which IHEs and LEAs have currently been awarded a grant, can be found below:

- ▶ [Teacher Residency Grant Program](#)
- ▶ [Integrated Undergraduate Teacher Preparation Grants](#)
- ▶ [Classified School Employee Teacher Credentialing Program](#)

You can also ask your IHE about local grants, scholarships, and student loans.

### ***Questions?***

If you have questions about the information provided in this document, please contact the Certification Division at: [credentials@ctc.ca.gov](mailto:credentials@ctc.ca.gov).