# Teacher Residency Program - FAQ

1. **What is a "Living Stipend"?**
   A Living Stipend is a cash allowance for living expenses given to residency candidates. As part of a rigorous recruitment and selection process, Living Stipends allow residency candidates to pursue a full-time preparation program in exchange for their commitment to teach in a hard-to-staff public school for at least three years. Living Stipends are a primary cost center in launching and sustaining a residency teacher preparation program. When determining the local stipend amount, consider how the program will achieve its intended impact around scale, sustainability, and recruitment goals.

   Programs should develop a diversified funding base for the entire program and should always include funds from the state, district, and local philanthropy. Programs should consider what funding sources could be applied toward the stipend, including contributions from the teacher preparation program, partnering school district(s), regional service centers, the state grant, other public sources, private philanthropy, and the candidate contribution.

   Stipends vary widely throughout the country. For example, both programs in Denver offer a $10,000 stipend; New York City offers $25,000; Chicago offers $32,000; and Boston offers $11,400. All programs support these stipends with a diversified mix of state, school district, federal, and philanthropic dollars. The fiscal note for House Bill 1752 considered $27,500 statewide.

2. **Can we establish partnerships with multiple school districts?**
   Clearly defined impact goals should determine if the residency program can serve the needs of multiple school district partners within the time period of the grant. Programs should consider the LEA-partner hiring needs--current and forecasted areas—as well as the institution of higher education's programmatic assets and ability to prepare candidates in the high-demand content areas. Also, the residency program must be able to create the necessary learning experiences that integrate rigorous master's level coursework with the guided apprenticeship in the local school district's classrooms. This relationship impacts school selection, mentor recruitment and selection, and professional development for residents and mentors.

   There are examples of residency programs partnering with more than one district partner, however, it can be difficult to accomplish this successfully in the early years of program implementation, given the complexity of district relationships and demands on annual hiring needs and cohort placement into the hiring district.

3. **What are examples of "Rewarding Teachers"?**
   Residency programs may develop a compensation and professional rewards system for mentor teachers, and mentor teacher stipends are a major cost center for teacher

residency programs. The stipend amount and number of mentors will influence program financial structure and scalability.

Around the nation, mentor stipend amounts range from $1,500 to $10,000+ per mentor teacher, per year, and accompany varying levels of mentor teacher responsibility. Program partners must first identify the roles and responsibilities for cooperating mentor teachers, and consider how these align to the program's impact goals. Also, programs should consider how the stipend will influence the identification, recruitment, and selection of excellent classrooms teachers to serve as mentors.

When considering how to "price" the mentor teacher stipend, it can be helpful to review the existing district financial model and consider existing sources of funding to supplement the state grant. For example, does the district partner already allocate professional development dollars to each teacher and, if so, can these dollars be reallocated to support the mentors of residents during the training year? Do they have other professional development funding sources that can be allocated to the program for the recruitment, development, and ongoing support of mentors? Also, programs must identify what professional growth and recognition opportunities that accompany the mentor role. Are there systems in place to reward mentor teachers with recognized teacher-leadership positions within and outside of the school building, or additional time set-aside for planning and other responsibilities associated with the residency program?

Finally, residency programs can offer tuition-reduced coursework to mentors.

4. **What proof of sustainability do we need to provide?**
   A comprehensive sustainability plan may include identifying institutional funds, prospective donors, and any other potential funding opportunities.

5. **Preparing a "significant number of teachers". What does this mean and what impact will it have on the grant award?**
   The applicant should work closely with the identified district partner to determine exactly how many teachers are needed to fulfill their annual hiring needs. For example, if the district is in need of STEM, ELL, or SpEd candidates, the residency program can seek to fill those hard-to-staff positions on behalf of the district. In this way, the IHE can add value back to their district partner. And, it's possible, given this particular approach, to develop a high percentage of teachers in a particular hiring area, e.g. 50% of STEM teachers from the residency program.

   Another approach would be to assess all areas of hiring need with the district, so that the residency program can respond accordingly. One objective of the residency model is to develop teachers that the district partner needs to ensure they will have positions at the end of the training year. There is an important supply and demand relationship that must be developed in partnership with the district so the institution of higher education isn't developing teachers that the district doesn't need.

When considering scale, it's important to work with the district to identify areas of growth over time to steadily increase the number of teachers to that district who come from the residency program pathway. The fiscal note for House Bill 1752 considered 30 teacher residents per year.

6. **How would the professional development work if our students only attend classes at night and Saturdays?**
   In the residency model, clinical preparation takes place in a school setting, where the resident is a teacher-learner or apprentice. Institutions can offer coursework or seminars outside of school hours, but each must be integrated with the clinical experience.

7. **What is the definition of a "teacher residency program"?**
   Teacher Residency Programs are teacher education programs. formed in partnership with a local education agency or open enrollment charter school, that pair master's level education content with a rigorous full year classroom practicum and result in teacher certification.

   Teacher Residencies typically take a five-pronged approach to developing and maintaining teacher quality: *1) targeted recruitment and rigorous selection of residents and mentors*; *2) intensive pre-service preparation focused on the specific needs of teachers in diverse school settings*; *3) coordinated induction support*, *4) strategic placement of graduates; 5) evaluation of teacher effectiveness once a teacher of record*. Focusing on all five of these areas leads to the highest probability that teachers will develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be successful over time and that their students will meet or exceed learning targets.

   Sec. 21.802 details the required program components for the teacher residency program.

8. **Can you please define "difficult to staff" schools?**
   Difficult to staff schools are frequently plagued by high poverty in the community, higher teacher turnover rates, higher percentage of out-of-field teacher placement, insufficient physical resources, geographically isolated, and low performance on state accountability measures.

9. **Cost-share or Matching funds – are the following categories acceptable? Faculty and Mentor teacher salaries? Scholarship funds from University?**
   Faculty salaries, mentor teacher salaries and scholarship funds from the university are acceptable. In some cases, course release support is often a contribution by the institution and may not be paid by the grant. If the project receives tuition support, faculty support cannot be charged to the grant if the faculty member is teaching the course for the residency program participants

10. **Plan for Sustaining the TR Program through 2017 – Is the selected institution expected to continue to pay Teacher Residents a livable stipend beyond Aug. 31, 2015?**
    The program should develop clear and achievable impact goals, including a long-term scale and sustainability plan. In determining the programmatic approach, a program must consider the major cost centers and create a financial model that will facilitate achieving that impact. Resident stipends are a tool to support teacher preparation candidates that train full-time in partnering school districts, and, in exchange, program graduates must commit to teach for at least four years. The expectation is for the selected IHE to have developed a comprehensive, short- and long-term sustainability plan. To this end, since resident stipends are a part of the value proposition to the emerging teacher candidate, it would continue to be important to offer this stipend to candidate cohorts beyond 2015. The ability to continue and account for a livable stipend beyond the grant period in the sustainability plan would probably be looked upon favorable.

11. **Time Frame - Do TRs need to complete the master's degree and certification by the end of program funding? (Aug. 31, 2015)**
    Ideally, yes.

12. **Is it best to partner with multiple districts, or stay with one large district?**
    See answer to question #2.

13. **Can there be two (or three) Co-PIs, one of whom serves as Project Director?**
    Yes

14. **Can we use grant funds to pay for tuition for TRs?**
    Yes

15. **Do you prefer we hire an external evaluator? Or, is a strong internal evaluator acceptable?**
    A strong internal evaluator is acceptable as long as the evaluator works for a different department on the campus.

16. **Can the timeline for the project be extended to support a planning year or additional coursework?**
    THECB will not extend the project period beyond the August 31, 2015 project end date. All program activities must be completed by the end date. THECB is assuming the first cohort of teacher residents will begin summer or fall 2014.