



Grow-Your-Own (GYO)

Q & A

Q: What is a GYO?

A: A Grow-Your-Own (GYO) program is a leading strategy for addressing the nationwide teacher shortage. It creates programs that recruit and prepare local community members to enter the educator profession. In North Dakota, we are specifically targeting paraprofessionals aspiring to become teachers. It leverages partnerships, including the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI), educator preparation programs (EPPs), and school districts in North Dakota.

Q: How is North Dakota funding this work?

A: The first round of para-to-teacher grants was funded using state special education discretionary funding. The subsequent grants were funded using ESSER funding. In the future, the NDDPI will pursue federal apprenticeship funding through the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). In addition, if SB 2032 passes, we will also have state funding to support this work.

Q: Who receives the funding, and how is it used?

A: The funding is distributed to North Dakota EPPs competitively. Most of the funding must be used to provide scholarships to paraprofessionals to pay for their tuition and course materials.

Q: What programs currently exist?

A: To date, the NDDPI has funded three para-to-teacher programs:

- ✓ Round One – Minot State University (Fall 2020)
 - Focus on special education
- ✓ Round Two – University of Mary (Spring 2022)
 - Focus on general education and rural districts
- ✓ Round Three – Valley City State University (Fall 2022)
 - Focus on dual licensure

Q: What are the benefits of GYO programs?

A: The GYO programs we have funded benefit schools, students, and educator preparation providers. Specifically, the programs:

- ✓ Target individuals currently working in our North Dakota schools because they are more likely to remain in that school after obtaining their teaching degree and licensure.

- ✓ Target individuals working as paraprofessionals or those with an associate degree, allowing us to fast-track their path to becoming teachers.

Q: Who are the partners in an apprenticeship program?

A: North Dakota's Team

- ✓ NDDPI – Laurie Matzke, Assistant Superintendent
- ✓ ESPB – Dr. Becky Pitkin, Executive Director
- ✓ CTE – Wayde Sick, State Director
- ✓ Office of Apprenticeship – Barry Dutton, State Director
- ✓ Contracted Liaison – Dr. Lynn Hammonds
- ✓ NCGYO – David Donaldson

Q: Why do we need GYO programs?

A: The teacher shortage is a pervasive problem in North Dakota. All students need access to high-quality teachers. Therefore, we need programs that incentivize individuals to enter the teaching profession. In addition, GYO programs allow the teacher-candidate to remain in their home community and continue to work in their school district to support themselves and their family while pursuing their teaching degree.

Q: What standards are used to meet the apprenticeship competencies?

A: North Dakota's teacher apprenticeship program uses the INTASC standards and professional dispositions, as all EPPs uniformly incorporate them as required by the North Dakota Education Standards and Practices Board as a requirement to be a state-approved educator preparation program.

Q: Who is approved in North Dakota as a related instruction provider?

A: All North Dakota state-approved educator preparation programs have recently been provided the opportunity to apply to be listed as a related instruction provider for aspiring para-to-teacher apprentices in the USDOL Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) dashboard known as RAPIDS. Once the application process is complete, we will publish a list of all approved EPPs.

Q: What are the components of an apprenticeship program?

A: The basic structure of an apprenticeship program has a sponsor, employer, and related instruction provider. The registered teacher apprenticeship in North Dakota includes the following:

- ✓ Sponsor: North Dakota Department of Public Instruction
- ✓ Employer(s): School districts employing paraprofessionals.
- ✓ Related Instruction Provider: North Dakota EPPs who receive approval to be on our approved provider list.

Q: How are these funds targeted to help rural districts?

A: One of the three para-to-teacher programs funded to date is targeted to applicants teaching in a rural school district. Most importantly, all course content is online, so the program allows the teacher-candidate, especially those in rural districts, to remain in their home community and continue to work in their school district to support themselves and their family while pursuing their teaching degree.

Q: How do these GYO programs ensure success?

A: The program allows prospective educators to gain classroom teaching experience under a mentor’s supervision, all while earning their college degree.

Q: Who can we contact with questions on North Dakota’s GYO programming?

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