

NCTR Evaluation of the Connecticut Teacher Residency Program (CT-TRP)

Executive Summary

Founded in 2019, the [Connecticut Teacher Residency Program \(CT-TRP\)](#) is a teacher preparation pathway that partners with school districts as a “grow-your-own” model, leading to Connecticut state certification. CT-TRP has grown since its inception and now serves five regions across the state and partners with 26 different districts. The mission of the CT-TRP is to provide college graduates with an alternate route to certification based on a teacher residency model that focuses on recruiting, preparing, increasing and retaining teachers of color in Connecticut.¹

CT-TRP is a member of the [National Center for Teacher Residencies \(NCTR\) Network](#), a national network of 63 member organizations providing teacher residency programs across the country. NCTR’s Network is designed to provide comprehensive programmatic support from NCTR’s consultants. Members in NCTR’s Network collaborate and exchange best practices to continuously improve their programs and influence teacher preparation nationally. NCTR also has a Research and Evaluation team which was commissioned to conduct an evaluation of the CT-TRP.

NCTR’s [Levers for Equitable Teacher Residencies](#) are used as the theoretical basis for understanding the impact of CT-TRP and the potential for teacher residency programs more broadly. NCTR’s *Levers for Equitable Teacher Residencies* detail the research-based and equity-aligned features of an effective teacher residency.

The evaluation applies a mixed-methods approach, using both quantitative and qualitative data to understand the impact of CT-TRP and the experiences of those participating in the program as well as consider areas for program improvement. Research questions and findings for the evaluation include:

¹ <https://www.ct-trp.org/about-us/>

Research Question 1. *To what extent is CT-TRP diversifying the teacher workforce?*

- CT-TRP is diversifying the Connecticut teacher workforce, and key constituents agree.

Research Question 2. *What is the impact of CT-TRP on teachers of color and school communities?*

- CT-TRP is having a positive impact on teacher residents and mentor teachers of color, as well as on the school communities where teacher residents and graduates work;
- The holistic supports provided by the program, the communal aspect of the program, and the cohort model are especially important to teacher residents of color;
- Teacher residents' experiences are shaped by their experiences with their mentor teachers, and racial identities; teacher residents who have more positive experiences with their mentors tend to have more positive experiences of the program; and
- Financial support, and support with navigating the certification and licensure system, remain essential for supporting teacher residents and graduates of color to enter and continue teaching.

Research Question 3. *How well does CT-TRP prepare teacher residents and graduates to be teachers of record?*

- Overall, teacher resident, mentor teacher, graduate, and principal perceptions of preparedness indicate that the program is preparing teacher residents well. The applicability of coursework, increased clinical experience, and exposure to the demands and expectations of being a teacher of record makes teacher residents prepared.

Research Question 4. *What is the impact of CT-TRP on the retention of graduates?*

- CT-TRP is positively impacting the retention of program graduates, with most graduates teaching in Title I schools in the program's partner districts. The preparation the program provides and the support it provides to teacher residents once they become teachers of record enables graduates to continue teaching.

Research Question 5. *How effective is the CT-TRP’s mentor recruitment, selection, and preparation, and how can the program improve in this area?*

- Overall, in terms of mentor recruitment, selection, and preparation, CT-TRP recruits effective mentor teachers and supports mentors well; yet, there is room for improvement in recruiting a more racially and ethnically diverse group of mentors and clarifying and communicating about roles and expectations as well as in the feedback the program provides to mentors.

Research Question 6: *What policies and steps can CT-TRP, the state, and other institutions adopt, considering the research findings?*

- Based on qualitative and quantitative data analysis, conversations with several state and district leaders, and information from publicly available documents, the findings of this report suggest five recommendations for CT-TRP as well as other teacher residency programs, teacher preparation programs, and state policymakers.

Summary of Findings

NCTR’s evaluation of the CT-TRP shows that the program is achieving its mission to recruit, prepare, and retain teachers of color and diversify the state’s teacher workforce. The evaluation also reveals areas for continuous improvement for the program, something that CT-TRP has been committed to since its inception in 2019. Last, data collected and reviewed for the evaluation suggest several key recommendations for not only CT-TRP but also the state as well as other teacher residency and teacher preparation programs across Connecticut.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. CT-TRP should tell the teacher residency story, particularly from the district’s point of view.

Recommendation 2. The state should establish a high-quality definition for teacher residencies in state policy.

Recommendation 3. CT-TRP, the state, and districts should consider how to improve racial and ethnic diversity among mentor teachers, engaging districts and schools in how

to support selection and professional development of mentor teachers, and clarifying communications about roles and expectations of mentor teachers.

Recommendation 4. Other teacher preparation programs should consider ways of making teacher preparation more financially accessible and supporting candidates with the certification and licensure process. The state should consider ways of making teacher preparation more financially accessible, including increasing and sustaining investments in teacher residency programs like CT-TRP, examining teacher certification and licensure exam requirements, and supporting candidates with the certification and licensure process.

Recommendation 5. CT-TRP and other preparation programs should persist in employing and strengthening additional research-based strategies, such as providing holistic supports to teacher residents; centering cultural competency throughout the program; and providing extended supports and guidance after the teacher resident graduates.

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