



NATIONAL CENTER FOR

**TEACHER  
RESIDENCIES**

# CASE STUDY:

Teacher Residency Programs  
Provide Licensure/Certification  
Support to Teacher Residents

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SPRING 2025



# Teacher Residency Programs Provide Licensure/Certification Support to Teacher Residents<sup>1</sup>

*Spring 2025*

## Overview

The National Center for Teacher Residencies (NCTR) Network members recognize that not only are they responsible for preparing day-one-ready educators through the teacher residency program, but they are also responsible for supporting aspiring teacher residents to pass state certification exams to lead the classrooms in which they have been prepared.

Graduates of teacher residency programs, as well as other state-approved teacher preparation programs, are required to pass state certification exams, like the Praxis. The Praxis series is used in over 40 states to determine eligibility for a teaching license or certificate. Like many other U.S. standardized tests, Praxis exams bear out inequities in access and pass rates, including along racial lines.<sup>2</sup> For example, data show that aspiring African American teachers pass at lower rates than aspiring white teachers, despite having the same GPA and attending similarly selective institutions.<sup>3</sup> While several studies show inconsistencies in the objectivity and predictability of such tests, which relate to the differences in passing rates, they remain a commonly utilized benchmark for residents' credentialing.<sup>4</sup>

NCTR's teacher residency model is designed to provide teacher candidates and program graduates ongoing, cohort-based, and individualized support and instruction through coursework, professional development, and clinical practice. Teacher residents and graduates may engage in affinity groups, instructional coaching, and other strategies to attend to their

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<sup>1</sup> The content and resources shared in this document highlight models for programmatic design in teacher residency programs. They are intended to support program development and should not be considered as legal guidance. While NCTR operates under federal law, we recognize state laws may differ for you; please refer to your state law for guidance.

<sup>2</sup> Goldhaber, D., & Hansen, M. 2010. [Race, gender, and teacher testing: How informative a tool is teacher licensure testing?](#) American Educational Research Journal, 47(1), 218–251.

<sup>3</sup> Nettles, M.T., et al. 2011. [Performance and Passing Rate Differences of African American and White Prospective Teachers on Praxis™ Examinations](#). Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service; Tyler, L. 2011. [Towards Increasing Teacher Diversity: Targeting Support for Teacher Licensure Candidates](#). Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

<sup>4</sup> Motamedi, Leong, & Hanson. 2018. [Potential Testing Barriers for Teacher Candidates of Color](#). Regional Education Laboratory Northwest.

unique needs as aspiring and new teachers of record.<sup>5</sup> Providing professional development to teacher residents specifically focused on preparing for and passing the Praxis and/or other state-required licensure or certification exams can and should be integrated into the teacher residency program.

## **Nashville Teacher Residency Supporting Teacher Residents**

The Nashville Teacher Residency (NTR) designed a process and found an online platform, 240 Tutoring<sup>6</sup>, to support its teacher residents and improve Praxis exam pass rates.

NTR designed a three-step tiered system to differentiate support, including time and resources, for its teacher residents. Below is a description of the support NTR incorporates into its teacher preparation program, the outcomes achieved, and sound advice for teacher preparation programs that want to support their teacher residents to pass a state licensure exam.

### **TIER 1**

All NTR applicants take a practice Praxis exam. NTR has set a benchmark for admission into residency based on what they know former teacher residents have achieved in terms of growth. Praxis study and assessment opportunities are provided throughout the interview process to prepare candidates for the admissions assessment. Candidates are also offered opportunities to test in additional content areas (i.e. secondary mathematics to middle grades mathematics). If someone scores within passing on the initial practice exam, NTR issues them a voucher to take their Praxis immediately. Everyone else then begins their work on 240 Tutoring. If someone does not meet the benchmark practice exam score, NTR sets the benchmark practice exam score based on data from former teacher residents' pass rates, then the candidate is deferred to the next cohort. If the candidate meets the benchmark, then NTR creates an individualized content course plan for each teacher resident.

All teacher residents in the NTR program work through the 240 Tutoring modules between the orientation period and the onset of residency programming. NTR documents and tracks teacher residents' progress toward completion and mastery, and follows up on trends. Later, the data trends are used to inform the 10-12 content development courses provided by alumni of the program. Another support that NTR provides for its teacher residents is a study template, which includes a place to take notes and a modified Frayer model to help build and strengthen the teacher residents' vocabulary. All teacher residents are required to share their study notes to make sure they are properly using the tutorial resources to which they have access. NTR also

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<sup>5</sup> [NCTR Levers: Graduate Support](#)

<sup>6</sup> [240 Tutoring](#)

provides content development sessions to provide instruction on study skills and strategies and practice opportunities. After completing the modules and passing the 240 Tutoring practice exam, teacher residents prepare for the December Praxis test. Establishing a set date for the cohort offers everyone a chance to pass the exam within the candidacy year.

## **TIER 2**

Teacher residents who do not pass the Praxis exam are provided with a variety of support from NTR. NTR offers a second program, titled Passage Prep to ensure teacher residents have access to study guides and practice questions. NTR uses the data from the Passage Prep, content development courses, and the Praxis results to understand every teacher resident's needs and ensure that the program provides the time and resources required via twice-monthly content development courses to help each teacher resident be prepared to pass the Praxis exam. For example, NTR creates content communities for teacher residents to participate in small group study communities based on similar needs. Super Saturday sessions are hosted by NTR during the second quarter for any resident who has not taken and passed the Praxis exam. These three-hour study sessions are a mix of self- and group-guided study sessions led by an NTR team member.

## **TIER 3**

For teacher residents who attempt the Praxis practice exam again and do not pass, NTR purchases a hardcopy aligned practice workbook. NTR encourages course instructors to use teacher resident data to strategically integrate concepts and practice into the coursework and to help teacher residents identify the modules they should repeat to address the specific areas they struggled with on the exam. Teacher residents also receive one-on-one tutoring sessions scheduled with an outside tutor at the candidate's availability. Once a teacher resident scores close to the exam's cut score, then NTR provides one more simulation for teacher residents to take the official practice Praxis exam released by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). Then, NTR provides a voucher for the teacher resident to take the Praxis. Finally, if a resident does not pass their licensure exams within the residency year, then they are provided an opportunity to go into an extension year. During the Extended Pathways Program year, they receive content development support using 240 Tutoring, other online systems, and content community study sessions.

***The NTR tiered approach is working and teacher residents are seeing positive results!***

Lindsey Hamilton, the Director of Equity and Program at NTR, notes that teacher residents passing or struggling to pass the Praxis exam mirrors what happens with students in our classrooms every day, and that recognizing the connections among such trends and barriers can help build teacher residents' empathy for each other and their P-12 students. Hamilton states that using 240 Tutoring is not enough and advises other teacher preparation programs to embed meaningful content development that targets highly-tested topics that are necessary for classroom instruction and the exam, rather than having test preparation feel like additional work and study. Last, Lindsey Hamilton describes the approach that NTR takes with the Praxis exam preparation as emblematic of the mindset that NTR has: ***We are all always learning.***



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