



Request for Proposals Year 8 of NCTR's Boundless Educators Initiative

The National Center for Teacher Residencies (NCTR) requests proposals for Year 8 of the Boundless Educators Initiative (BEI), an effort to recruit, prepare, and retain educators who reflect the communities they serve through teacher residency programs in the NCTR Network.

As we enter Year 8 of BEI, NCTR will continue to support innovative efforts underway in Network teacher residencies by awarding approximately **\$6,000,000** in grant funds to eligible partner programs.

The Boundless Educators Initiative builds upon the foundation established through BEI's first seven years, with two goals:

1. Fund high-quality teacher residency programs to recruit, prepare, and retain teachers who reflect the communities they serve
2. Strengthen understanding across the field of how teacher residency programs can expand opportunity, improve retention, and create sustainable pathways into the teaching profession

Based on the outstanding work of the NCTR Network, we believe teacher residencies are well positioned to reduce barriers to entry while maintaining a high standard of preparation through community-based clinical experiences. Our residencies also prepare teachers who remain in the profession at higher rates than their peers, which is especially important given ongoing teacher shortages nationwide.

As BEI continues to evolve, Year 8 is grounded in a commitment to strengthening outcomes across programs, sharing effective practices, and continuing to build sustainable, community-based teacher preparation pathways. BEI Funding supports strategies that strengthen recruitment, preparation, and retention, particularly those that reduce financial barriers, strengthen mentorship and community, and support residents beyond completion. This year's funding priorities maintain a focus on access and strong preparation while placing **increased emphasis on supporting residents through completion and into their early years in the profession.**

Prioritized supports for funding include the following:

1. **Scholarships or stipends** to offset tuition and training costs for residents, reducing financial barriers and supporting completion.
2. **Emergency funds** to help residents address critical needs beyond tuition (e.g., housing, healthcare, transportation).
3. **Targeted support for residency graduates**, including continued mentorship, induction, and alumni engagement to support retention beyond the residency and into the early years of teaching.
4. **Recruitment efforts**, as well as support, training, and stipends for mentor teachers who reflect the communities residents will serve.
5. **Establishing or sustaining affinity groups** that build community and support program completion and early-career retention.
6. **Licensure support**, including test preparation, exam fees, or aligned coursework.

Applications do not have to include all of the prioritized supports.

Grant Period

NCTR will establish the start date for Year 8 of the BEI grant upon selection of grantees. All grant-funded activities are expected to take place between **August 1, 2026** and **April 30, 2027**, and all funds must be expended by **April 30, 2027**.

NCTR expects to notify all applicants by **June 26, 2026** and to issue the first disbursement of funds no later than the end of **July 2026**, or when contracts are signed.

Eligibility Criteria

1. Residencies must be [Network, Network Bridge, or Network+](#) members of NCTR's Network for the 2026-2027 school year to be eligible for BEI funding.
2. BEI grant funds must be used to recruit, prepare, and retain educators who reflect the communities served by the residency. Each program should define these populations based on its local context and priorities. NCTR will ask programs to provide this definition as part of the application.
3. Programs must agree to fully participate in BEI evaluation activities, including submission of required data and participation in surveys and related data collection efforts.
4. Programs must actively participate in NCTR Network and BEI programming, including grant-related calls, roundtables, working groups, and opportunities to share learning across the Network.

Submission & Award Process

STEP 1: If your program plans to apply, please complete the Intent to Apply Form no later than 11:59 p.m. PT on **April 14, 2026**. Programs that submit an Intent to Apply will receive the link to their application on **April 15, 2026**.

STEP 2: Submit the BEI Year 8 Application no later than **11:59 p.m. PT** on **May 6, 2026**:

- A. BEI Yr 8 Application - The application includes the following sections:
- Proposal Basics
 - Application
 - Budget & Financial Reporting

Applicants will respond to a set of questions within the application focused on program context, use of funds, and alignment to BEI priorities.

STEP 3: NCTR will notify the BEI primary contact with an award decision by **June 26, 2026**.

Budget Guidelines

Allowable expenses fall into these three categories:

- **Direct Support to Residents**
Expenses where funds are either provided directly to residents (e.g., stipends) or used to cover costs residents would otherwise pay (e.g., scholarships, health insurance, childcare).
- **Supplemental Recruitment, Preparation, and Retention Support**
Investments that strengthen recruitment, preparation, and retention but do not reduce the resident's cost of the program (e.g., mentor training and stipends, recruitment efforts, alumni support, licensure support, data systems, or residency-specific staffing).
- **Program Administration**
Costs associated with managing the grant.

Budget Requirements

1. At least 50% of the budget must be allocated to direct support for residents.
2. Supplemental recruitment, preparation, and retention support may comprise the remaining portion.
3. Administrative (indirect) expenses may not exceed 7% of the budget.

Applicants should also provide a rationale for proposed costs, including how amounts were calculated (e.g., number of residents supported, estimated cost per resident, or key assumptions). Additionally, please report total projected costs for each budget category in the “Proposed Total Spend” column, including both BEI funds and other funding sources. This helps NCTR understand how BEI funding fits within your overall program budget and supports ongoing learning across programs.

Questions

Questions regarding this opportunity can be emailed to bei@nctresidencies.org. Please include “**BEI Year 8 Grant Question**” in the subject line. Answers to common questions may be found in this Frequently Asked Questions document.