

Building Degree Apprenticeships in Louisiana

A State-Led Approach to Strengthening the Teacher Pipeline



Why Degree Apprenticeships?

STATE CHALLENGE

Louisiana faces a persistent shortage of qualified teachers, and the cost of a teaching degree is a proven barrier. The traditional pathway requires a year-long unpaid student teaching residency: students pay tuition while working full-time with no wage.

KEY INSIGHT

Louisiana flipped the model. Instead of students paying tuition and working unpaid, the apprenticeship helps pay their tuition and pays them wages while they train. This keeps aspiring teachers on the well-supported four-year pathway rather than pushing them toward faster, less supported alternative certification, and it gives districts a built-in yearlong opportunity to evaluate and develop future hires.

SNAPSHOT

STATE

Louisiana

CURRENT STATUS

Multiple pilots underway; statewide framework in development

EMPLOYER PARTNERS

13 school districts engaged through Delta Community College

PRIORITY SECTOR

Education

PROGRAM SITES

Louisiana Delta Community College; Southeastern Louisiana University

APPRENTICES SERVED

54+ across five cohorts at Delta Community College, with additional cohorts at Southeastern Louisiana University and Tangipahoa Parish

Building the Foundation

GOVERNANCE

Governor Jeff Landry has made the education–workforce continuum a top state priority, including through the Board of Regents' Louisiana Prospers initiative, which aims for 60% of working–age adults to hold a degree or high–value credential by 2030. Notably, no single agency championed degree apprenticeship. The Governor's Office, Board of Regents, Department of Education, LA Works, and the community college system identified a shared problem and chose apprenticeship as the solution. The Board of Regents now leads documentation of pilot lessons and is convening agencies to build a statewide framework.

LESSON FOR OTHER STATES

Cross–agency collaboration rather than single–agency ownership built trust and momentum. A clear signal from the governor's office that education–workforce alignment is a priority brought agencies to the table.

CORE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Governor's Office
Louisiana Board of Regents
Louisiana Department of Education
LA Works

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

School Districts
Louisiana Delta Community College
Southeastern Louisiana University

Sector Strategy and Program Design

Louisiana focused first on education because of dual pressure: teacher shortages and high postsecondary costs.

Louisiana Delta Community College

Accelerated three–year associate plus bachelor's degree as a registered apprenticeship, 1.5 years toward the associate followed by 1.5 years toward the bachelor's, with apprentices working full–time in districts during summers.

6 to 13

partner districts

54

apprentices served, now in its 5th cohort

Southeastern Louisiana University

Building district partnerships now.

Tangipahoa Parish

Funded its first cohort of five apprentices from general funds, with a contract giving the district right of first refusal to hire its apprentices.

Funding and Sustainability

Louisiana's approach is still program-by-program rather than a statewide cost model. School districts are typically the primary wage payer: many apprentices are already full-time paraprofessionals who keep their salary, and true registered apprentices are hired at an apprenticeship rate. Tuition is covered through a mix of sources: Pell grants, WIOA funds where available, early exploration of Title II funding, MOUs for tuition reductions on transfer credits, and the Geaux Teach tuition-waiver program.

PROOF OF MOMENTUM

In at least one system, the local education agency now pays tuition entirely from general funds after seeing early results.



Early Results and Impact

100%

job placement for Delta Community College's first cohort in the districts where apprentices trained

In Caldwell Parish, all three first-cohort apprentices were hired by their districts immediately upon graduation.

Louisiana tracks short-term completion and employment metrics and is one of six states selected for NGA's policy academy on data dashboards. The state is building infrastructure to track long-term outcomes such as how many apprentices become master teachers, instructional coaches, or system-level leaders.

Governor's Action Items

1

Establish degree apprenticeship as a top workforce and education priority for the Governor.

A clear signal of priority brings agencies to the table without requiring a single champion.

2

Convene all higher education, K-12, and workforce agencies.

These entities are best positioned to drive degree apprenticeship; bringing them together creates alignment on priorities and challenges.

3

Build data tracking into the program from the start.

Demonstrates short-term value and captures the long-term career outcomes that make the case for continued investment.

Louisiana's pilots are maturing into a statewide model, offering clear takeaways for states looking to launch similar efforts.