

News Center



UNLV's 'Nevada Forward Initiative' Approved as State's First Teacher Apprenticeship Program

College of Education program becomes first registered apprenticeship for teachers in the western U.S. and one of just eight nationally; designation will drive program expansion.

Students walking near UNLV's Carlson Education Building in December 2022. (Josh Hawkins/UNLV)

BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY

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U NLV and Nevada officials have partnered on an innovative approach to stem a statewide teacher shortage that ranks among the nation's most severe.

The [Nevada Forward Initiative](#), a teacher prep program housed within UNLV's [College of Education](#), was recently approved by the Nevada Office of the Labor Commissioner's Apprenticeship Council as the state's first teacher training apprenticeship program. The apprenticeship program is also the first of its kind in the western U.S. and one of just eight nationally.

Registering as a state apprenticeship program allows UNLV to expand the program by applying for competitive grant funding opportunities that were not otherwise available.

"The Nevada Forward Initiative provides a comprehensive and inclusive approach to addressing critical shortages in our state's education workforce," said UNLV President Keith E. Whitfield. "This teacher apprenticeship program is an important step forward for Nevada and positions both our state and university as national leaders in education workforce innovation."

The Nevada Forward Initiative provides career readiness and workforce training for future education professionals. It includes an accelerated master's level teacher licensure program (A-ARL) for professionals with degrees in non-teaching fields, as well as a unique licensure program – the Paraprofessional Pathways Project (PPP) – for existing school support staff who want to make the transition to teaching. Both programs are eligible for apprenticeship funding.

"Workforce development through alternative pathways to professional licensure is critical to help fill the employment gaps in our educational institutions," said Toni Giddens, Nevada's state apprenticeship director. "School support staff, already part of a school community, have a roadmap toward teacher licensure that will allow them to continue supporting the education and growth of the students they interact with every day."

Since the PPP's inception, more than 460 paraprofessionals, long-term substitutes, and other school support staff have become either licensed teachers or are on track to become licensed teachers. And they're able to do so while maintaining their employment and earning bachelor's or master's degrees. Nearly 70% of PPP students are from historically marginalized groups, which makes it a pipeline for qualified teachers who are helping to meet the ongoing needs of our state's diverse student populations.

There are currently 225 Nevada Forward graduates working in Southern Nevada classrooms with another 233 students enrolled in active cohorts of PPP and A-ARL programs, all slated to graduate in May 2024.

All Nevada Forward students receive extensive coaching, mentoring and professional development support before, during, and for three years after their academic journey. These supports have proven crucial to the program's success thus far, with a 92% graduation rate.

Want to Apply?

Applications are now open for the next PPP cohort, as well as the traditional and accelerated alternate route to licensure programs. Visit the [UNLV College of Education website](#)

to learn more and to apply.

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