

# Addressing Affordability & Accessibility to High-Quality Teacher Preparation Pathways

Picture this: Reggie, a local high school student, dreams of becoming a teacher. After two years at a community college, Reggie transferred to UT San Antonio's (UTSA) teacher preparation program, where he discovered that he was eligible for free tuition due to meeting the criteria for the Bold Promise Program. At UTSA, Reggie took hybrid courses, enabling him to work full-time as a paraprofessional in a local San Antonio school. In his senior year at the college, Reggie transitioned into a full-time resident role, dedicating three days per week co-teaching with his highly-effective mentor teacher and an additional eight hours a week substitute teaching and tutoring children after school. His dedication paid off: the district not only paid him \$20,000 during his student teaching but also enrolled him in the state retirement system (TRS). To top it all off, Reggie was offered a teaching position in the very district where he honed his skills, starting at a \$62,000, which is equivalent to a second year teacher salary. This

success story illustrates how many Texas colleges of education are rapidly setting a new standard for accessible, high-quality, teacher preparation programs.

In the Lone Star State, 17 colleges of education have risen as beacons of affordability, accessibility, and high-quality preparation pathways, providing aspiring educators with a gateway to rewarding careers. US PREP coalition members (see below) have worked to implement scaled residency programs for all of the candidates they prepare. New teachers prepared through the residency programs are not only highly effective teachers, but they also remain in the classroom.<sup>1</sup>

## Affordable Tuition

US PREP Texas coalition members offer tuition rates that are more competitive than national averages

1. <https://mailchi.mp/ttu/us-prep-welcomes-cohortvi-sfa-20257056>

## TEXAS COLLEGES OF EDUCATION SHINE AS AFFORDABLE, ACCESSIBLE, & HIGH-QUALITY

- Texas colleges of education offer affordable tuition and financial aid, with some institutions providing free tuition programs for eligible students.
- Innovative and accessible pathways, such as quality accelerated programs and community college pipelines, make teacher preparation more accessible than ever before in Texas.
- Through strategic staffing, partner districts in Texas provide residents with stipends ranging from \$15,000 to \$35,000 during their year-long residency, addressing both student needs and school staffing requirements.
- Texas' focus on cost-effective, accessible, and high-quality teacher preparation programs solidifies its reputation as a nurturing ground for future educators, enhancing readiness to teach and promoting outcomes for PK-12 students.

of public and private institutions<sup>2</sup>. On average, among the 18 Texas colleges of education in US PREP, the average tuition cost per year amounts to \$9,518<sup>3</sup>. Many aspiring teachers choose to start their teacher training at a community college, which leads to a total cost of approximately \$19,000 for a bachelor's degree, not including financial aid options. Furthermore, there are programs with lower tuition rates such as Texas Tech University, Prairie View A&M University, University of Houston - Downtown, Tarleton State, UT Permian Basin and Angelo State University, where the total tuition cost for a bachelor's degree for a student who starts at a community college is around \$14,000.

All of these programs provide a wide array of financial aid options and scholarships, significantly alleviating the financial burden on students

and enhancing access to high-quality teacher preparation. On average, 65% of candidates at Texas-based US PREP Coalition programs have access to nearly \$8,000 of local and state grants/scholarships that do not require repayment. Institutions like the University of Houston - Victoria, Lamar University, University of Houston - Downtown, Texas A&M - Texarkana, among others, have an overwhelming majority of their student population (70-92% of college students) receiving state and local aid that their tuition averages only \$679 per year. Table 1 illustrates Texas institutions that offer zero-dollar tuition programs.

### Innovative, Accessible Pathways

These programs not only feature competitive tuition rates but also offer accelerated pathways,

**Table 1. US PREP Texas Coalition Member Tuition Waiver Programs**

University	Tuition Program	AGI Maximum	Target Student Population
Texas A&M - Corpus Christi	<a href="#">Island Promise</a>	\$125,000	Newly Enrolled Freshmen
UT - Permian Basin	<a href="#">Falcon Free</a>	\$100,000	First-Time Undergraduates
UT - Rio Grande Valley	<a href="#">Tuition Advantage</a>	\$100,000	All In-State Undergraduates
UT - El Paso	<a href="#">PayDirt Promise</a>	\$75,000	First-Time Freshmen, Returning, Transfer Undergraduates
Angelo State University	<a href="#">Blue &amp; Gold Guarantee</a>	\$70,000	First-time Entering Freshmen
UTSA	<a href="#">Bold Promise</a>	\$70,000	Incoming Fall Freshmen, Top 25% of High School Graduating Class
Stephen F Austin State	<a href="#">Purple Promise</a>	\$80,000	First-Time, First-Year Students
University of Houston	<a href="#">Cougar Promise</a>	\$65,000	First-Time Entering Freshmen
Texas Tech University	<a href="#">Red Raider Guarantee</a>	\$65,000	First-Time Entering Freshmen, Transfer Students with Associate's
Texas State University	<a href="#">Bobcat Promise</a>	\$50,000	First-Time Entering Freshmen
UH - Downtown	<a href="#">Gator Pledge</a>	\$50,000	First-Time Entering Freshmen
Sam Houston State	<a href="#">Berkat Promise</a>	\$40,000	Entering Freshmen or Transfers
Lamar University	<a href="#">Lamar Promise</a>	\$40,000	Entering Freshmen or Transfers
Tarleton State University	<a href="#">Tarleton Promise</a>	EFC at \$0	Entering Freshmen
Texas A&M - Texarkana	<a href="#">Eagle Promise</a>	\$50,000	All In-State Undergraduates
UH - Victoria	<a href="#">JAG Promise</a>	\$65,000	First-Time Entering Freshmen

2. National Center for Education Statistics. Tuition Costs of Colleges and Universities. Retrieved November 3rd, 2023 from: <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=76>  
 3. Tuition only. Does not include room, board, and/or textbooks

which results in tuition savings. In response to the evolving education landscape, several Texas institutions have formed robust community college pipelines as well as have embraced hybrid learning, making teacher preparation more accessible than ever before. In Texas Tech University's [Tech Teach Across Texas](#) program, for example, teacher candidates complete their AAT degree at a community college and then transfer to Texas Tech to complete a Bachelor of Science degree and earn teacher certification in one calendar year. This pathway is an accelerated one-year teacher preparation program, combining intense clinical experiences with online coursework in district-based partnerships across many regions of the state. The [UT Permian Basin Teach In 3](#) program, in collaboration with Odessa College and school districts heralds a transformative approach to teacher education. This innovative initiative is designed to expedite the journey to becoming an educator by condensing the preparation timeline to just three years with the third-year culminating in a yearlong residency. The 3-way partnership aims to address teacher vacancies by fostering a pipeline of well-prepared, passionate teachers.

## Residents Earn While they Learn

Recognizing the economic struggles their students are facing, universities across the [US PREP Coalition](#) have begun to test drive creative solutions that meet students' financial and developmental needs, while also meeting the immediate staffing and instructional needs of schools and districts. Through a process called [Strategic Staffing](#) the partner districts reallocate underutilized funds to provide residents with stipends. In turn, residents fulfill immediate instructional needs in schools during their year long student teaching experience.

Strategic Staffing with residents has caught the attention of over 110 school districts across Texas. As of May 2023, most residents who are prepared by the 18 US PREP coalition Texas educator preparation programs will have access to sustainable stipends ranging from \$15,000-\$35,000 during their yearlong residency.

Members of the US PREP coalition are dedicated to the development of cost-effective, accessible, and high-quality teacher preparation programs. Their unwavering commitment includes providing affordable tuition and financial aid, which extends to offering free tuition programs for eligible students. This commitment ensures that prospective educators can pursue their

career goals without the weight of substantial debt. Aspiring teachers can confidently look to these colleges, where a harmonious blend of quality and affordability guarantees a promising future for both PK-12 students and the teachers entrusted with their education.

## US PREP COALITION TEXAS PROGRAMS

Angelo State University

Lamar University

Prairie View A&M University

Sam Houston State University

Stephen F Austin University

Tarleton State University

Texas A&M Corpus Christi

Texas A&M-Texarkana

Texas State University

Texas Tech University

University of Houston

University of Houston Downtown

University of Houston Victoria

University of Texas El Paso

University of Texas Permian Basin

University of Texas at  
Rio Grande Valley

University of Texas San Antonio