



GOLDEN EAGLE TEACHER RESIDENCY PROGRAM

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is the graduate teacher residency program designed for?

The program is a pathway to initial licensure as an elementary/special education teacher for individuals with bachelor's degrees in areas outside of education.

Who is eligible for the program?

Applicants must have (or will have by May 2026) a bachelor's degree in any area. In addition, they must meet one of the following criteria:

- 21 or higher on the ACT;
- Passing scores on all sections of the Praxis Core; OR
- Minimum of a 3.0 GPA in the last 60 hours of college coursework.

What makes this program different from other teacher preparation programs?

- A full academic year internship in an elementary school with one of USM's district partners. During this internship, residents gradually take on increasing classroom responsibilities.
- One-year graduate program leading to a master's degree with online coursework that is aligned to residents' classroom experience.
- Preparation for dual certification in Elementary Education (K-6) and Special Education (Mild/Moderate, K-12).
- Support from a general education mentor teacher and special education coach through the residency.
- During the academic year, residents serve 1,200+ hours in their residency placements as members of the AmeriCorps organization. The service provided by members supports student academic growth in the residency classroom while promoting our residents' growth as teachers.

Who are USM's district partners in the program?

For the 2025-26 school year, placements are available in the following districts:

- Harrison County School District
- Hattiesburg Public School District
- Jackson County School District
- Jefferson Davis County School District
- Moss Point School District
- Pass Christian Public School District
- South Pike School District

What if I am already employed by a school district?

In some cases, individuals employed as teacher assistants in elementary classrooms of districts outside of our district partners can complete their residency in their TA classroom. Please reach out for more information.

Is all the degree coursework online?

Yes, all coursework is completed online over the course of three semesters. In addition to the online coursework, there will be a face-to-face orientation meeting prior to the start of the residency as well as once a month professional development workshops throughout the fall.

What is my time commitment in the residency classroom?

USM teacher residents spend 3.5 days in the classroom each week during the fall semester and 5 full days each week during the spring semester.

What calendar do I follow as a resident?

You will follow the calendar of your placement district, observing breaks and holidays as outlined by their academic calendar.

When does the program start?

Residents will participate in an online orientation in late May with online coursework beginning in late May. Internship start dates depend on the schedule of the placement districts, with most districts starting mid-July to early August. Residents will begin their school placement with new teacher orientation and teacher professional development days prior to the arrival of students.

Can I be employed while completing this program?

Because of the intense nature of the graduate program and residency placement, outside employment is strongly discouraged.

Can I be employed as a teacher while completing this program?

USM believes strongly in the residency model of educator preparation, which includes a year-long placement within the classroom of a cooperating teacher. As such, we will not accept candidates who hold positions as a teacher of record during their residency.

How much will residents have to pay for this program?

Residents within our partner districts can participate in the program with their full tuition costs covered through a combination of scholarships and an education award provided upon program completion.

Residents serving as TAs in non-partner districts may be responsible for a portion of tuition expenses. Contact us to discuss your specific situation.

Books and testing fees are grant-funded for all participants. Residents may be required to cover incidental fees such as the graduate school application fee, background check, graduation fee, etc.

How much is the living stipend and who is eligible?

During their year of residency, residents serving as AmeriCorps members can receive a \$17,000 stipend. This is paid monthly (July through May) during the resident's internship placement. As the living stipend is designed to support residents who are not otherwise employed during residency, those who are employed by a school district during residency are not eligible to receive the living stipend.

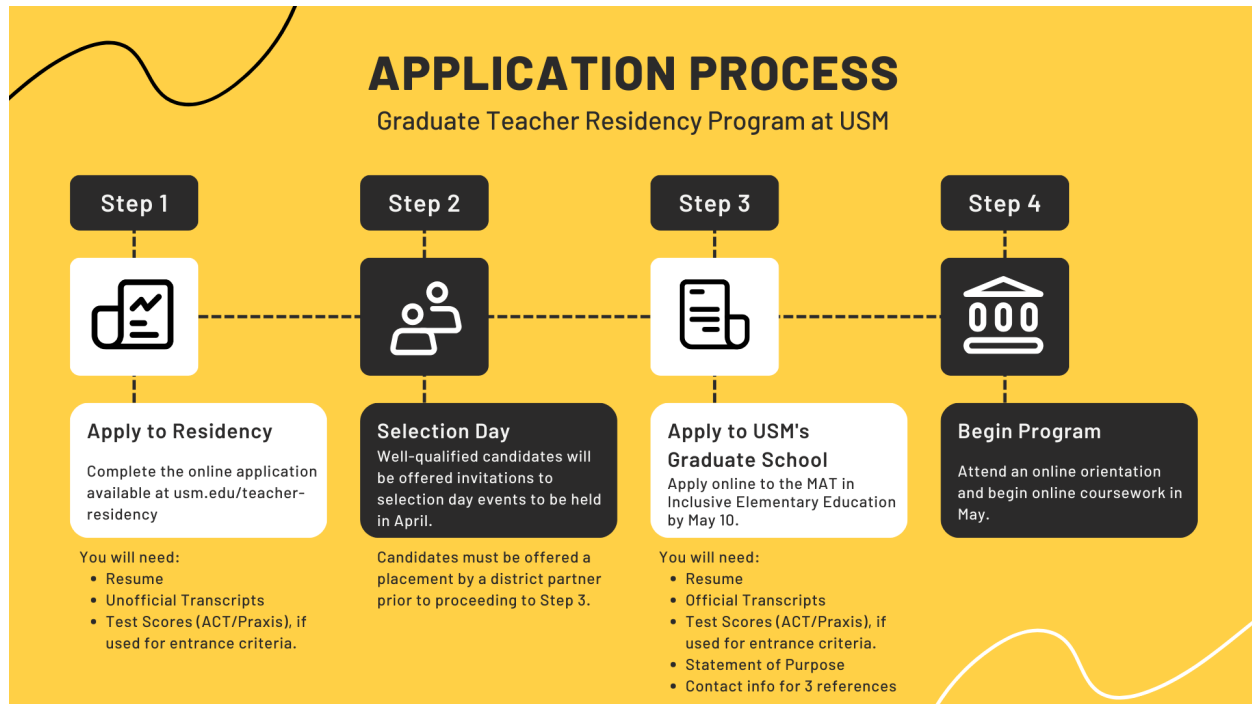
Is there a minimum required teaching commitment?

Yes, residents receiving full tuition scholarships agree to two years (including the residency year) in a school district deemed a [Mississippi Geographical Critical Shortage Area](#).

How do I apply?

Visit our webpage at www.usm.edu/teacher-residency for the application link.

What is the application process?



What are the application deadlines?

Applications for the 2026-27 cohort will open in Spring 2026. Check back for more specific deadlines.

When will I know if I'm selected for the program?

Applications are reviewed upon receipt to determine program eligibility. Eligible candidates are then invited to participate in Selection Day in late April on one of USM's campuses. At this event, candidates will participate in interviews with district partners, teaching a sample lesson, writing sample, and program overview. Candidates will be notified of district placement offers following Selection Day.

How can I learn more about the program?

Check out our website to register for one of our virtual open house events. You can also request more information by emailing Ms. Hailee Hawkins, Program Coordinator, at hailee.hawkins@usm.edu.