



Grow Your Own Educator Toolkit Overview

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New America

[Grow Your Own \(GYO\) programs](#), which recruit and prepare community-based teachers, are a promising strategy for easing local teacher shortages and for increasing the racial and linguistic diversity of the teacher workforce. Given the rapid growth of GYO programs across the country and increasing interest from policymakers, we see a need for resources to support program development, implementation, and sustainability.

This Grow Your Own Toolkit is an evolving collection of research, policy, and practice resources to promote the creation and implementation of high-impact GYO programs in communities across the nation. This toolkit is focused on programs and partnerships that support adult community members, such as paraeducators, to enter the teaching profession.

Over the past five years, New America has been engaged in comprehensive research, and analysis, of GYO programs and policies. We established a [GYO Educator National Network](#) in 2021 that brings together programs from across the country. We believe that GYO provides a framework for how to improve teacher preparation programs for the benefit of the communities they serve. Through its focus on who is recruited into teaching and how to remove barriers and promote teacher candidate persistence and success, GYO facilitates partnerships grounded in the needs and realities of local schools.

Using the Toolkit

The resources in this toolkit were developed by a team of policy experts and practitioners, and thus are useful to people with different relationships to GYO. As the strategy is highly localized and dependent on the needs of individual communities, this toolkit does not encompass every aspect of designing, implementing, and evaluating GYO programs. Rather, these tools are meant to supplement your team's practice, research, and advocacy efforts with high-level considerations for effectively implementing GYO.

Where to Start

The toolkit is divided into **five sections** to align with different phases of the GYO development process.

GYO 101

The **GYO 101** section covers the fundamentals of Grow Your Own. The resources here detail what makes a high quality GYO program, as well as the policies and practices needed to support programs:



Essential Elements for High-Quality Grow Your Own Educator Programs

This guide highlights five essential elements of high-quality GYO programs.



Grow Your Own Programs for Bilingual Educators: Essential Policies and Practices

This blog post outlines five essential policies and five essential practices to support GYO programs for bilingual educators.



Grow Your Own Educators Explainer Video

This short video explains the fundamental elements and goals of GYO strategies and practices.

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Program Design and Funding

The **Program Design and Funding** section offers insight into how to build, implement, and sustain a successful Grow Your Own program, and includes guidance on funding operations and building strong partnerships between stakeholders involved in the process:



A Starter Guide to Grow Your Own Educator Programs

This brief outlines key features of GYO program models and where to begin when designing a program.



Guidelines for Developing Grow Your Own Educator Partnership Agreements

This quick guide explains the purpose and features of an effective memorandum of agreement for building strong partnerships in a GYO program and contains sample MOAs.



State Funding for Grow Your Own Educator Programs

This comprehensive data table displays GYO policies and funding streams in the 50 states plus Washington, DC.



Strategies for Establishing and Sustaining Partnerships in Grow Your Own Educator Programs

This document describes how to build and sustain strong partnerships among GYO program partners.



Using Federal Funds for Grow Your Own Educator Programs

This reference guide highlights federal grant programs and other funds that can be used to support GYO.

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Candidates

The **Candidates** section outlines strategies for recruiting, retaining, and mentoring both teacher candidates and the educators who prepare them in Grow Your Own programs:



Candidate Recruitment and Retention Strategies for Grow Your Own Educator Programs

This document describes considerations and strategies for recruiting teacher candidates to GYO programs, as well as strategies for retaining and supporting them.



Key Competencies in Linguistically and Culturally Sustaining Mentoring and Instruction for Clinically Based Grow Your Own Teacher Education Programs

This working paper details 10 mentoring competencies for school-based cooperating teachers and university supervisors, as well as 12 instructional competencies for teacher candidates and university instructors. These competencies have been used to create annual surveys for teacher candidates, mentors, and instructors. For more information, contact [Amanda Kibler](#) and Jason [Greenberg Motamedi](#).



Mentoring: A Key Tool for Success in Grow Your Own Educator Programs

This guide addresses the elements and importance of high-quality mentoring in GYO programs and specifies the responsibilities and needs of all mentors involved in a teacher candidate's preparation.

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Advocacy

The **Advocacy** section provides some of the tools necessary for practitioners to advocate for Grow Your Own in their locales and beyond, including important information to know about GYO and its impact, sample GYO legislation, and tips for writing and speaking about GYO:



Grow Your Own Educators: Talking Points for Advocacy

This document contains compelling points one would want to make about GYO and why it is a worthy investment. This document can be used with **Tips for Testifying in Legislative Hearings**.



Grow Your Own Educators: Tips for Testifying in Legislative Hearings

This guide lists key factors to consider when testifying in legislative hearings, and provides a testimony template using the **Grow Your Own Educators: Talking Points for Advocacy**.



Guided Grow Your Own Advocacy Presentation

This customizable presentation slide deck offers speaker prompts and talking points for anyone advocating for a GYO program.



Op-Ed Outline: Key Points for Writing about Grow Your Own Educator Programs

This template offers guidance on how to write a compelling op-ed about a Grow Your Own program. It is meant to be used with the **Op-Eds 101: Presentation** and the **Op-Eds 101: Video**.



Op-Eds 101: Video

This video describes the fundamentals of opinion writing, including what op-eds are, important considerations for pitching an op-ed, and how the op-ed publication process works. It can be used in conjunction with the **Op-Ed Outline: Key Points for Writing about Grow Your Own Educator Programs** that offers guidance on writing an op-ed.

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Data and Evaluation

The **Data and Evaluation** section presents strategies and frameworks for researching and evaluating Grow Your Own program growth and impact:



Evaluating Grow Your Own Educator Programs

This document offers guidelines for evaluating GYO programs and a logic model template.



Guidelines for Staying in Touch with Grow Your Own Educator Program Graduates

These guidelines outline suggested ways to stay connected with GYO program candidates in order to help document program impact.

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Additional Resources



Grow Your Own Educator Reading List

This list highlights selected resources on aspects of the teacher pipeline relevant to Grow Your Own educator programs and strategies.

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