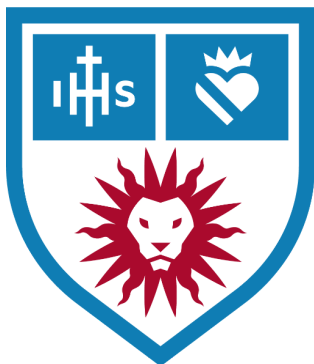




School Counselor Residency Program Handbook 2025-2026



LMU

Loyola Marymount University



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WHAT IS A RESIDENCY PROGRAM?

Across the country, districts and educator-preparation programs are building partnerships to share the responsibility for recruiting, developing and retaining effective educators. Residency programs provide a hands-on experience that builds professional practice through paid, year-long service with a high-quality mentor. Residency also provides a pathway to employment and ensures the educators are prepared on their first day.

[The Characteristics and Evidence of an Effective Teacher Residency Program*](#), developed by the Californians Dedicated to Education Foundation and the California Teacher Residency Lab, serves as a common framework for residencies in the state by which all partnerships can define and develop their program implementation.

The [California Commission on Teacher Credentialing](#) defines a “school counselor residency program” as a program that partners with one or more commission-approved professional preparation programs offering preparation in school counseling provided by a regionally accredited institution of higher education in which a prospective school counselor works at least one-half time alongside a school counselor of record, who is designated as the mentor school counselor, for at least one full school year while engaging in initial preparation coursework.

In their yearlong pre-service clinical practice settings, residents are not counselors of record. They work alongside accomplished mentor counselors, experiencing the breadth of roles and responsibilities that counselors engage in across the course of a year as educational professionals.

*A similar document specific to school counselor residencies is currently in development.



BENEFITS OF A RESIDENCY PROGRAM

There are many benefits to choosing a residency program as your counseling preparation pathway to higher education degrees and licensure in the field, to include:

- ❖ A year-long clinical experience provides superior preparation
- ❖ Candidates receive financial support while earning their credential
- ❖ Opportunities for other paid positions during the residency year
- ❖ Candidates are prioritized to be hired by local education agencies (LEAs) such as district and charter schools that partner with institutions of higher education (IHEs) to create pathways to employment

STEPS TO BECOMING A RESIDENT

There are two ways to enroll in a School Counselor Residency program.

Scenario A. for individuals currently enrolled in a university degree program:

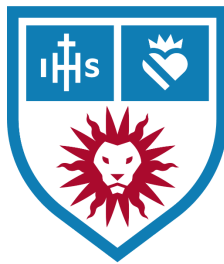
- 1) Candidate communicates with IHE admissions counselor and academic advisor that they want to be a resident with an LEA partner district or school.
- 2) Academic advisor checks their qualifications to be a resident.
- 3) If qualified, IHE connects potential residents with the LEA partner district/school.
- 4) LEA partner district provides residency application to candidates.
- 5) Residency application is due back to LEA by the provided due date.
- 6) LEA schedules residency interviews with IHE liaison and applicants.
- 7) LEA/IHE chooses residents.

Scenario B. for individuals currently employed as a school counselor:

- 1) Candidate contacts the residency program director at the LEA partner district or school.
- 2) LEA partner district school provides residency applications to candidates.
- 3) Residency application is due back to LEA by the provided due date.
- 4) LEA schedules residency interviews with applicants.
- 5) LEA/IHE chooses residents.
- 6) LEA connects candidate with IHE Residency Lead to ensure a coordinated effort and efficient communication (***MA School Counseling/PPS/CWA application fees and the required letters of recommendation will be waived***).
- 7) IHE chooses residents.
- 8) Candidate enrolls at university.

SCHOOL COUNSELOR PREPARATION PROGRAM

LEA PARTNERS



LMU

Loyola Marymount University

Wonderful college prep
ACADEMY



Camino
Nuevo
Charter
Academy



LAWNDALE

Elementary School District



WHAT TO EXPECT AS A SCHOOL COUNSELOR RESIDENT

Year-long commitment.

Every resident school counselor is paired with an experienced mentor counselor for an entire school year, mirroring the schedule of the mentor counselor. The resident is part of the pre-planning days to prepare for the school year and remains in that placement from the first day of instruction through the last day of school. Candidates find counselor residencies attractive due to the longer field experiences offered which leads to higher quality preparation, and a pathway to employment that ensures counselors are prepared on their first day.

Balancing coursework and clinical experience

Resident school counselors generally complete their year-long residency program (50% of the time) in the final year of their masters degree coursework. This means that residents must balance the daily responsibilities at the school site and the coursework required to earn the Pupil Personnel Services credential. Both of these components are equally important to earning your credential and becoming a counselor, so determining a schedule that ensures your success in the program is vital.

Reflection and feedback

One of the most effective strategies for growth and development as a school counselor is being a reflective practitioner. Your mentor, site administrator and university supervisor will give you feedback on your practice with the expectation that you will reflect on that feedback and apply it to subsequent counseling sessions, interactions, communications, and overall professionalism. Site and district administrators will also help you prepare for your full-time employment by reviewing your resume and preparing for your interview.

Residency Grant Stipend

Because residents are engaged in clinical practice for a full year, the district provides a stipend to honor your commitment and counseling time. This is not a full-time salary, but a living stipend to increase the affordability of the preparation process.



Employment opportunities

Residents can earn additional salary by taking on roles such as tutoring, substitute teaching, mentoring, or providing academic and social-emotional support to students while completing their residency, typically outside of their clinical hours.

ROLE OF MENTOR AND UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR

Mentor School Counselor

The Mentor School Counselor plays an extremely important role in the preparation of a Resident School Counselor. The Mentor School Counselor serves as a role model and mentor, providing opportunities for the Resident School Counselor to observe professional behavior, effective counseling techniques, student support strategies, and school-wide intervention practices. The Mentor School Counselor also provides the day-to-day evaluation, guidance, resources and training necessary to become a successful counselor, helping the resident to become a self-evaluative, reflective practitioner and positive problem solver. The Mentor School Counselor alerts the resident to the assets and challenges of the student population and local community, and challenges the resident counselor to assess his/her own talents while assisting to improve or refine those talents and skills. See the Mentor qualifications and job description [here](#).

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Clear credential with at least three years of successful counseling <input type="checkbox"/> Site leader recommendation based on successful counseling, growth mindset, receptiveness to feedback, and willingness to focus on equity and justice <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge/ability to implement the School Counselor Performance Expectations (SCPEs) <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to collaborate and grow as a counseling professional <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge of equity principles and culturally responsive counseling practices to address issues of equity, bias, and access to comprehensive school counseling services that support students' academic, social-emotional, and college/career development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Guide Resident Counselor to gradually assume increasing counseling responsibilities, including direct student support, group counseling, and school-wide initiatives, by the second semester. <input type="checkbox"/> Attend 1-day orientation prior to the start of the school year <input type="checkbox"/> Attend 4 Resident Seminars and 1 Capstone Event <input type="checkbox"/> Provide at least 75 minutes of "Sacred Meeting Time" each week <input type="checkbox"/> Complete all feedback surveys <input type="checkbox"/> Collaborate with the university counselor preparation staff <input type="checkbox"/> Be aware of the Resident Counselor's academic responsibilities

University Supervisor

While the guide counselor serves as the day-to-day mentor, the university supervisor is responsible for evaluating the resident's practice against the California School Counselor Performance Expectations (SCPEs) and university standards. The university supervisor and mentor counselor work together to support the School Counselor Resident.

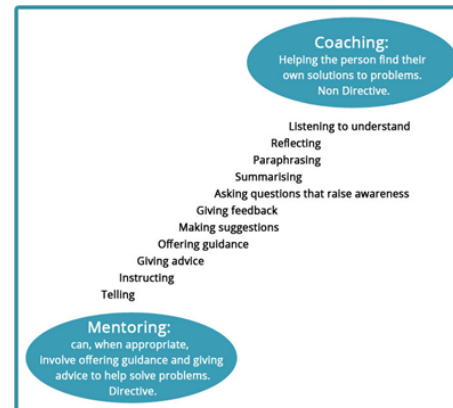
RESOURCES FOR THE MENTOR COUNSELOR

The Mentor School Counselor who serves as host counselor to a Resident School Counselor participates in initial and ongoing training focused on mentoring and coaching strategies and co-counseling models as you gradually turn over counseling responsibilities to the resident. These resources should be consulted throughout your service to a Resident School Counselor as a reminder of best practice as a coach and mentor.

Understanding yourself and your **coaching stance** is the first step to being a successful mentor. Your coaching stance is determined by your underlying values and beliefs about people. Know your [core values](#) because they influence your coaching stance (resource provided by www.brightmorningteam.com).

Your role as a mentor/coach is to inspire new counselors by helping them recognize the possibilities that lay ahead and their own potential as counselors to make a transformative impact on their students. As trust with your mentee is built and your learning-centered relationship becomes more intact, you will likely move along the **continuum of support** away from emphasis on mentoring and spend much more time in the coaching role.

Start at the bottom of this graphic to see how your mentoring behaviors gradually change as your mentee grows in their experiences and counseling decisions. Elena Aguilar's book, *The Art of Coaching* (Jossey-Bass, 2013) provides some wonderful [coaching sentence stems](#) to use with your mentee.



Reference: <https://fptrainingltd.co.uk>



ROLE OF THE SITE ADMINISTRATOR

The role of administrator is extremely crucial in the success of Residents in the School Counselor Residency Program. It is imperative that the site administration understand the components and requirements of the School Counselor Residency Program in order to guide and support the Mentor Counselors and Residents. Site administrators will attend an initial orientation prior to the start of the school year as well as arrange for a meeting with the Mentor Counselor and Resident within the initial weeks of school to outline goals and expectations. Site administrators will provide support throughout the year to ensure the Residents are prepared and prioritized for employment within the district/charter at the completion of the program.

Site Administrator Duties and Responsibilities

- Attend Residency Orientation with the Mentor Counselor
- Schedule and attend Triad Meeting in first 2 weeks of school (Admin, Mentor Counselor, and Resident)
- Introduce your residents to all staff as a year-long resident in training/staff member
- Develop and ensure "Sacred Meeting Time" between Resident and Mentor Counselor
- Attend "Sacred Meeting Time" as needed
- Conduct 3 observations per semester focused on Resident progress in providing student support, implementing interventions, and delivering counseling services
- Support and foster a positive relationship between Mentor Counselor and Resident
- Support facilitation of resident observations of other counselors on campus
- Provide feedback on Residents' progress prior to each quarterly team meeting
- Support in the hiring process of the Resident in the Spring



CANDIDATE AGREEMENTS & COMMITMENTS

The Resident participating in the School Counselor Residency program is both a graduate student in the Loyola Marymount University School Counselor Preparation Program and a volunteer with the LEA partner district or school for their counseling preparation. While earning a Pupil Personnel Services credential in School Counseling, Residents work alongside a Mentor Counselor for the duration of one school year, while attending credential coursework and participating on the school campus as a staff member. Throughout the school year (for 50% of the time), the Resident and Mentor Counselor meet weekly for “Sacred Meeting Time” and counseling responsibilities are gradually released to the Resident. This year-long clinical placement coupled with consistent reflection and feedback provides the Resident Counselor a deep understanding of counseling practice prior to employment as a school counselor.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- Bachelor’s degree, or equivalent if obtained outside the US
- Basic Skills requirement (satisfied by a completed BA degree or passage of CBEST)
- Certificate of Clearance

RESIDENT SCHOOL COUNSELOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Represent district and university in a professional and positive manner, including demonstrating effective professional practices in counseling and learning.
- Gradually assume responsibilities and demonstrate application of the School Counselor Performance Expectations (SCPEs) using evidence-based practices
- Communicate regularly and effectively with your Mentor Counselor, University Supervisor, district staff, and the other residency team members
- Successfully complete the School Counselor Residency Program including all clinical practice and coursework requirements
- Contribute to the needs of the school and district through attendance at staff meetings and professional development sessions, schoolwide events, and positive collaboration practices
- Participate in professional learning seminars with an open mind
- Uphold the mission, vision, and promises of the school district in word, action and behavior



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Which candidates are eligible for the LEA USD Residency Program?

A: Candidates entering the MA in School Counseling/PPS/CWA preparation programs are eligible. To enter residency, pre-service counselors must have met the Basic Skills requirement and have a Certificate of Clearance on file with the CTC.

Q: What are the benefits of a counselor residency?

A: Counseling residents are placed with a mentor counselor in a school setting for one full school year and earn a stipend ranging from \$XX,000 to \$XX,000 for their ongoing collaboration with their mentor, school administrator, and other staff members. The resident stipend varies based on additional employment opportunities, such as substitute teaching or working as paraeducators within the district, providing residents with extra income while also demonstrating their commitment to team collaboration.

Residents engage in quarterly networking and professional development events designed to build community and enhance their skills, helping them become expert educators. Successful residents are given priority for employment within the district and are expected to serve in the district for a minimum of four years.

Q: What is the difference between traditional counseling pathways and residency?

A: The primary difference between traditional counseling pathways and a residency program lies in the structure and support provided. In traditional pathways, counseling candidates typically complete clinical practice on an unpaid basis, during which they assume responsibilities under the guidance of an experienced mentor. These candidates are not offered additional paid opportunities, and they are not prioritized for future employment within the district after completing the clinical practice.

In contrast, residency candidates are placed with an experienced mentor counselor for an entire school year, where they share counseling responsibilities and engage in structured, accountable collaborative activities aimed at developing both their counseling expertise and autonomy. Residents have dedicated time to collaborate with their mentor, site support staff, education experts, and fellow residents. The focus on collaboration and teamwork is central to the



residency model, ensuring that residents are well-prepared for their future roles as school counselors.

Q: How long is the counselor residency program?

A: Residents spend 3-5 days a week at their school site for the duration of a whole school year. The school counselor preparation coursework at the university will continue during the residency year, and may begin prior to or extend beyond the residency period.

Q: What are the available grants or loans to assist with the cost of tuition?

A: Residents can apply for and receive education-related grants (including the Golden State Teacher Grant) as funds remain available. Please refer to the LMU Financial Aid Office [webpage](#).

Q: When does the residency program begin?

A: Potential residents apply prior to and are enrolled by Fall Semester. Residents attend an orientation prior to starting their clinical practice in August. Prior to the first day of school for students, residents attend a networking event to meet and plan with their new mentor followed by an all staff professional development day. From the first day of student attendance, residents are on campus observing counseling sessions, collaborating with their mentor, becoming co-counselors, and gradually increasing their counseling responsibilities.

Q: How do I become a resident in one of the LEA partner district or school?

A: The counselor preparation programs will provide an application following your attendance at an information session. After an interview, program leaders recommend applicants for consideration for the residency spots available. Counselor preparation candidates can indicate interest in residency by contacting their program advisor, and may also reach out to the school district's counselor residency program liaison. Upon signing their residency contract, residents are matched with a mentor school counselor at one of the select host schools. Input will be solicited from each resident regarding their preferences for placement before finalizing mentor/resident teams.

Q: What is a resident's obligation to the state of California?

A: Counselor candidates who successfully participate as residents commit to counseling in the district of residency for at least four (4) full years within 8 years of earning their credential. If a Resident is unable to accept employment in the district of residence, they must fulfill the service commitment in another California public school district. Residents who move to another district must contact the LEA Union residency program liaison on an annual basis for four years to verify employment in California.



Q: What are the consequences for not fulfilling the residency commitment to be a school counselor for at least four years in California?

A: A resident who does not work as a school counselor for at least four years in California must repay the amount of grant-funded money invested in them (including both Residency grant funding and any other grant funding, as applicable). This obligation is pro-rated according to the number of years served.

For more information, please contact:

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