

The Landscape of “Grow Your Own” Teacher Initiatives in the United States

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Abstract

“Grow Your Own” (GYO) programs, which recruit and support individuals from the local community to become teachers, have emerged as a promising approach to expand new teacher supply, address localized teacher shortages, and diversify the profession. Little is known about how widespread GYO programs are or their program features. We conduct a quantitative content analysis to describe commonalities and differences between 94 GYO initiatives. We find that GYO initiatives vary widely in the purposes, participants, and programming. Our findings illustrate that the term GYO is applied broadly and used imprecisely as an umbrella term to describe very different teacher pipeline programs. We also classify GYO programs by participants and programming to give more precision to future discussions of GYO programs.

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Introduction

Schools and districts face multiple challenges recruiting a diverse and effective teacher workforce. The number of graduates from teacher preparation programs has fallen by one-third during the last decade, forcing districts to look for new sources of teachers to meet staffing needs (Kraft & Lyon, 2022). The highly localized nature of teacher labor markets has left communities that do not benefit from a large supply of college graduates at a substantial disadvantage for staffing K-12 schools because most teachers work close to their hometown (Boyd et al., 2005). Many schools struggle to recruit teachers of color, a critical resource for the academic success of students of color who make up over half of U.S. public school students (Blazar, 2021; Dee, 2005; Egalite et al., 2015; Gershenson et al., 2022).

“Grow Your Own” (GYO) programs have emerged as a possible solution to the declining interest in the teaching profession, localized teacher shortages, and the lack of teacher diversity. GYO programs recruit and support individuals from the local community to enter the teaching profession (Gist, 2022b). By recruiting locally, GYO programs have the ability to uncover new sources of teacher talent, increase the local teacher supply, and attract more teacher candidates that reflect the background of the students they serve. Interest and investments in GYO programs have grown exponentially in recent years because of their potential to solve multiple problems plaguing teacher recruitment efforts. GYO programs benefit from support from both conservative and liberal education policy circles (Bush, 2022; Welles, 2022). The U.S. Department of Education has established new funding opportunities for universities to establish GYO programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2022), and several states, have invested in GYO programs as well (Michigan Department of Education, 2023; Tennessee Department of Education, 2022; Texas Education Agency, 2023).

Despite growing interest and investments in GYO programs, little is known about the scale of GYO programs nationally or their common program features. Most research concerning GYO programs are single site case studies that describe the context, origin, design elements, and participant experiences of GYO programs that focus on recruiting adults of color to become teachers (e.g., Flores et al., 2007; Irizarry, 2007; Jones et al., 2019; Lau et al., 2007; Ross & Ahmed, 2016; Skinner et al., 2011). Only a handful of studies summarize the design and features of a subset of GYO programs (Gist et al., 2019; McCollum, 2011; Toshalis, 2014). A better understanding of the range of GYO programs that exist and their prevalence is needed to create a common language around them and inform future GYO program design.

In this paper, we examine the existing landscape of GYO initiatives in the U.S. We describe the stated goals, participants, requirements, and program features of initiatives that encourage individuals to become K-12 teachers and self-identify as GYO programs. We conduct a systematic web-search for GYO programs and analyze the website content of the 94 GYO initiatives our search produced in Spring 2022. These programs include 20 statewide GYO grant competitions and 74 standalone GYO programs that together serve over 900 school districts. This snapshot of GYO initiatives allows us to examine how the term “GYO” is used nationally and explore commonalities and differences between existing GYO initiatives. Our GYO landscape analysis provides a critical overview for policymakers looking to understand this amorphous and rapidly evolving program space. Common language and definitions are central to an informed policy dialogue about effective GYO program types and features.

We find that GYO initiatives are prevalent throughout the U.S. with GYO programs operating in at least 40 states as of March 2022. The near universal feature of GYO initiatives is that they aim to expand the teacher pipeline by targeting individuals who work in, live in, or

attend schools near a specific district. Outside of this, they vary widely in their purposes, participants, and programming. In particular, only half of GYO initiatives explicitly assert that they aim to increase teacher diversity, in contrast with much of the research concerning GYO programs. The group targeted to become teachers also differs between GYO initiatives. Over half of GYO initiatives focus on increasing interest in the teaching profession among high school students through coursework or college scholarships. Other initiatives help paraprofessionals and community members earn bachelor's degrees and teacher certification, with a handful of programs providing financial support to college students to gain expertise in certain subject areas.

We also find that few GYO programs provide enough financial support to meaningfully lower economic barriers to entry into the profession or require participants to teach upon program completion. Just half of GYO programs provide any financial assistance for degree completion or certification with few covering full costs of participation. Only 16 percent of the programs we studied had a specific requirement for graduates to work in the region targeted by the GYO program. Instead, the implicit theory of action behind GYO programs appears to be that participation in them, by itself, will lead to increased probability of entering the profession and returning to teach in local communities.

We make two primary contributions with our analysis. First, we illustrate how “GYO” is often used imprecisely as an umbrella term to describe very different teacher pipeline programs. This implies that evidence concerning the effectiveness of one GYO initiative likely cannot be generalized to all GYO initiatives. Second, we propose a new typology of GYO programs that classifies these programs by their participants and programming. We view this typology as providing much needed precision to the emerging discussion of the potential and evidence

supporting the range of programs that self-describe as GYO programs. Moving forward, researchers and policymakers alike will be wise to pay close attention to the features of GYO programs when designing them and interpreting their effectiveness.

Theory of Action

GYO programs hold the potential to expand exposure to effective teachers, reduce teacher staffing challenges, and increase teacher retention by recruiting teachers from the surrounding community. We depict the variety of interrelated and mutually reinforcing pathways which GYO programs may improve teacher outcomes in Figure 1. First, GYO programs may increase the supply of teachers in a particular school or district. By focusing teacher recruitment efforts locally, GYO programs aim to attract more teachers to local schools because teachers prefer to work close to home. Most teachers teach less than 50 miles from where they went to high school and are more likely to work near their hometown than other college graduates (Boyd et al., 2005; Reininger, 2012). When GYO programs target schools and districts experiencing teacher staffing challenges, the increase in the local teacher supply from GYO programs may reduce teacher shortages due to the highly localized nature of teacher staffing challenges (Edwards et al., 2022). GYO programs may also be especially effective in alleviating teacher shortages in communities that do not already produce a large supply of college graduates that go on to become teachers such as low-income neighborhoods and rural areas (Economic Research Service, 2021; Wodtke et al., 2011).

By recruiting teachers from the local community, GYO programs also may improve exposure to effective teachers and reduce teacher turnover and. Homegrown teachers and paraprofessionals, a profession targeted for participation in GYO programs, have larger contributions to student achievement and higher retention rates than other novice teachers

(Clewell & Villegas, 2001; Fortner et al., 2015; Redding, 2022). Reductions in teacher attrition not only directly impact student achievement (Ronfeldt et al., 2013; Sorensen & Ladd, 2020), but likely reduce teacher staffing challenges because high rates of teacher turnover are a key driver of localized teacher shortages (Edwards et al., 2022).

Finally, GYO programs also have the potential to create a more diverse teacher workforce. GYO teacher candidates are more likely to reflect the populations they teach when candidates are recruited locally, especially from the pool of current high school students and paraprofessionals (Gist, 2019; Bisht et al., 2021). If GYO efforts are directed at communities of color, this may result in more teachers of color, an important resource for improving educational outcomes for students of color. Research shows that exposure to a same-race teacher results in higher achievement, reductions in disciplinary incidents, and an increased likelihood of high school graduation especially for students of color (Dee, 2005; Egalite et al., 2015; Gershenson et al., 2022; Lindsay & Hart, 2017). However, the current teacher workforce does not reflect the demographics of its students, leaving many students with little access to same-race teachers (Lindsay et al., 2017).

Prior Research on GYO Programs

Despite their potential to solve a multitude of challenges associated with creating and maintaining a diverse and effective teacher workforce, little is known about how widespread GYO programs are or their common program features. The modern GYO movement traces its origins to Project Nueva Generación, a program started in 2000 that helped parents and community members earn college degrees and become teachers in a predominantly Latinx Chicago neighborhood (Garcia, 2020; Skinner et al., 2011). To date, much of the research concerning GYO programs consists of case studies that describe the design and participant

experiences of individual GYO programs. The overwhelming majority of these studies examine GYO programs that encourage and support people of color to become teachers either through high school teacher training courses (Gist et al., 2018; Hill & Gillette, 2005; Villagomez et al., 2016) or opportunities to earn an education degrees for parents (Skinner et al., 2011), paraprofessionals (Lau et al., 2007), community members (Irizarry, 2007; Jones et al., 2019), or existing college students, (Flores et al., 2007). One study examined a teacher certification program for recent immigrants with college degrees (Ross & Ahmed, 2016). In addition to diversifying the teacher workforce and fulfilling district staffing needs, many of the GYO programs studied state that they also hope to transform teacher preparation to meet the needs of teaching candidates of color and provide more equitable educational opportunities to students of color through culturally responsive pedagogies and social justice teaching practices (Gist, 2019; Irizarry, 2007; Skinner et al., 2011).

The findings of these case studies identify the challenges faced by GYO participants and the supports they need to successfully transition into teaching. They find that financial assistance, such as scholarships and living stipends, are crucial to ensuring program completion and entry into the profession for GYO participants (Irizarry, 2007; Skinner et al., 2011). Many GYO participants also need extra academic supports such as test preparation and tutoring to earn teacher certifications (Jones et al., 2019; Ross & Ahmed, 2016). Studies identify mentoring, induction programs, and other cohort-based professional development opportunities as important factors influencing GYO program completion as well (Lau et al., 2007).

Our work is most closely related to the handful of previous studies have examined the commonalities of and differences between GYO programs and their features (Gist et al., 2019; McCollum, 2011; Toshalis, 2014). These prior papers have focused on a subset of GYO

programs with specific characteristics such as high school programs or programs that recruit teachers of color. There also have been efforts to create a comprehensive list of operating GYO programs nationally (Garcia, 2020). We build on and extend this literature by conducting a systematic national collection and analysis of programs that self-describe as “GYO” rather than focusing on programs that meet a specific definition. This allows us to illustrate how the term has been adopted by a wide range of programs and to describe the variation in their purposes, participants, requirements, and characteristics.

Data Collection and Policy Coding

Sample Creation

We developed search procedures to collect a national snapshot of GYO initiatives. We gathered the GYO initiatives in our sample through Google searches for *[state name]* “grow your own” teachers for each U.S. state and the District of Columbia (D.C) in February and March 2022.¹ For each state, we examined the first five pages of search results, approximately 50 webpages per state.² If we did not find any GYO initiatives in a state through our Google searches, we examined any webpages listed in New America’s *Grow Your Own Teachers: A 50-State Scan of Policies and Programs* for GYO initiatives in that state (Garcia, 2020). We worked closely with a team of research assistants to conduct these searches and review the results.

We visited the webpage for each search result and determined that the initiative described on the webpage was a GYO initiative if it met the following inclusion criteria. First, the initiative had to encourage people to become K-12 teachers. Second, the initiative had to refer to itself as GYO on its website or through a program leader interview. These broad and inclusive criteria allow us to examine how the term GYO is being used in practice rather than a narrower subset of programs with a specified set of characteristics. We excluded proposed GYO initiatives and

initiatives that did not originate within the boundaries of the state that was being searched. We also excluded district chapters of *Educators Rising*, a national education and training career and technical education organization that has referred to itself as a GYO program, because these programs did not originate in the state being searched but rather from a national organization (Educators Rising, 2023).

If a GYO program on a specific webpage was a part of a larger GYO program, we only included the larger program in our sample and considered the smaller program a participant or stakeholder of the larger program. For example, if a GYO webpage for a district that was a part of a larger statewide GYO program, we did not code it as a separate program. Instead, we only coded the statewide program. During data analysis, we observed that many of these statewide GYO “programs” were grant competitions for districts to implement a variety of types of GYO programs. Because the term “GYO program” may imply that all districts operate the same type of program, we instead refer to the programs and policies collected as GYO initiatives. GYO initiatives include grant competitions to start GYO programs and stand-alone GYO programs, which sometimes operate in multiple districts. We use the term GYO program to refer to a GYO initiative operated by one group of stakeholders. This excludes grant competitions to establish GYO programs because characteristics of GYO programs created through these competitions likely vary. Over half of the GYO grant competitions we identified allow districts to establish a variety of GYO programs.

Our sample of GYO initiatives provides a survey and overview of established GYO programs with a web presence. We acknowledge that our sample is not exhaustive and not fully representative of the population of GYO initiatives because our inclusion criteria required initiatives had to have a strong online presence. However, our sample likely includes the biggest

and most established programs, and it allows us to examine variation in the purposes, participants, requirements, and program features for a critical mass of GYO initiatives. Given our data collection approach, we interpret our results as a description of the landscape of GYO initiative types operating nationally rather a representative sample.

Coding Procedures

We developed our initial set of codes through a deductive process informed by prior research that examined multiple GYO programs (e.g., Garcia, 2020; Gist et al., 2019). We then tested our initial codes on a pilot sample of 10 initiatives and adjusted our codes to ensure they captured the major features of existing GYO initiatives. Our final coding scheme includes directory information, such as participating districts and universities, program purposes (e.g., diversify teacher workforce; alleviate local teacher shortages), the groups targeted for recruitment (e.g., high school students; paraprofessionals), requirements for participation (e.g., work or live in district; get certified in a specific subject area), program activities (e.g., high school courses; teacher residency), and program funding (e.g., scholarships; living stipends). Our codes also provide additional detail concerning certification requirements, teaching requirements, high school courses, and scholarships, such as length of requirement and scholarship amount, for GYO initiatives with these features. We provide a comprehensive list of our codes in Online Appendix A.

Research assistants, working closely under our supervision, coded the content of the GYO initiative webpages we found. The research team engaged in a collective pilot coding process to establish coding norms and ensure that the coded data were reliable. The research assistants coded a common set of 10 initiatives, all GYO initiatives in three states, and worked together to reconcile conflicting codes. After the initial coding, the percent agreement across the

530 coded items in the pilot sample was 73% (Cohen's kappa 0.49). The percent agreement was 99% after the reconciliation process.

Results

GYO initiatives are prevalent throughout the U.S.

We identified 94 GYO initiatives comprised of 20 statewide GYO grant competitions and 74 standalone GYO programs through our data collection process. Although many GYO initiative webpages did not state which or how many districts and educator preparation programs (EPPs) participated in them, we identified at least 900 districts and 200 EPPs operating or participating in GYO initiatives as of Spring 2022. At least four local non-profit organizations and two local teachers' unions help operate GYO programs. GYO initiatives receive financial support from a range of government and private sources including the U.S. Department of Education, state departments of education, both major teachers' unions (the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers), the National Science Foundation, the Gates Foundation, and at least three local foundations. Many of the programs we identified were relatively new. Over half of the initiatives that reported start dates did not exist prior to 2018.

We display the range of GYO programs and GYO grant competitions we identified across states in Figure 2. At the time of collection, at least 40 states and D.C. had a GYO program operating within their boundaries. Nineteen states and D.C. also have grant competitions for districts and other entities to establish GYO programs. This indicates a larger, widespread interest in GYO in these states. Districts that participate in the GYO initiatives in our sample range from some of the largest urban districts in the country such as Houston Independent School District to rural districts such as Kingdom East Schools in northeast Vermont, which serves less than 2,000 students.

GYO initiatives state that they expand the teacher pipeline, but they vary widely in their other stated purposes.

We present the percent of GYO initiatives with each purpose, participant group, requirement, and program characteristic we examined in Table 1. We display this for the full sample as well as separately for GYO grant competitions and standalone GYO programs. In terms of their stated purposes, 95 percent of GYO initiatives state that they intend to help expand the teacher pipeline. Outside of expanding the teacher pipeline, GYO programs do not share a common purpose. Six out of ten initiatives state that one of their purposes is to alleviate local teacher shortages while a quarter of GYO initiatives focus on reducing subject specific shortages. Fewer initiatives state that they intend to improve teacher quality for disadvantaged students (47%) or reduce teacher turnover (36%), teacher outcomes that more directly impact student outcomes. Most interestingly, only half of the GYO initiatives in our sample have a focus on increasing the diversity of the teacher workforce whereas most research concerning GYO programs has focused solely on GYO programs that recruit teachers of color. A higher percentage of competitive grant programs state increasing teacher diversity as a purpose than standalone GYO programs (70% vs. 44%).

The above analysis shows that, outside of expanding the teacher pipeline, GYO initiatives do not share a common set of purposes. This diverse collection of programs does, however, share one common feature that distinguishes them from other teacher pipeline programs. GYO programs recruit local individuals to teach in local schools and districts. Eighty-eight percent of standalone GYO programs in our sample require participants to meet one of the following requirements: work in the district, live in the community the district serves, or attend a school in the district.

GYO initiatives target a variety of populations for participation with most GYO initiatives encouraging high school students to become teachers.

Prior studies comparing GYO programs have classified them by the populations they recruit to the profession, mainly high school students vs. adults (Garcia, 2020; Gist et al., 2019; Toshalis, 2014). We examine variation in the groups targeted for participation in Table 1. In this analysis, we use a non-mutually exclusive list of target populations. Most GYO initiatives (61%) target high school students as potential future teachers with 85 percent of GYO grant competitions encouraging the creation of high school GYO programs. One in five GYO initiatives allow college students to participate. Forty percent of GYO initiatives encourage paraprofessionals to become teachers. Another 20 percent of GYO initiatives target community members as potential teacher candidates.

Programming varies between GYO programs that target the same population for participation.

We examine variation in the programming and purposes of standalone GYO programs by main target population in Table 2.³ For this analysis, we exclude GYO grant competitions because over half allow districts to establish multiple types of GYO programs. Seventy percent of standalone high school GYO programs have a strong focus on alleviating local teacher shortages. This purpose connects with the fact that 85 percent of teachers teach within 40 miles of where they went to high school (Boyd et al., 2005). In terms of programming, high school GYO programs offer some combination of education/teacher training courses, extracurricular activities, and college scholarships. Over three-quarters of high school GYO programs include education/teacher training courses or extracurricular activities. We note that over two-thirds of high school teacher training courses allow students to earn college credit or credit towards a paraprofessional certification and half of these courses require students to participate in student

teaching. One-third of high school GYO programs provide scholarship funding for high school students to pursue education degrees and teacher certifications. The value of these scholarships ranges widely from \$1,000 per year to full cost of tuition.

After accounting for high school GYO programs, most of the other GYO programs support paraprofessionals and community members to earn a teaching certification whether through a bachelor's degree program, a traditional post-baccalaureate certification program, or an alternative certification program. Differences exist between programs that mainly target paraprofessionals vs. community members. The majority (65%) of paraprofessional programs allow participants to complete a bachelor's degree in addition to a teaching certification, while half of GYO programs targeting community members require participants to have a bachelor's degree before entering the program. Providing bachelor's degrees may be necessary to convert paraprofessionals to teachers because three-quarters of paraprofessionals do not hold a bachelor's degree (Bisht et al., 2021). Additionally, nearly three quarters of programs targeting community members provide a living stipend to participants while less than ten percent of paraprofessional GYO programs do. Twice as many GYO programs targeting community members including a teacher residency as well. These differences across program types may reflect the fact that many paraprofessionals continue working during their GYO program and therefore do not need a separate living stipend or an additional teaching experience.

Less than ten percent of the GYO programs in our sample primarily target college students. These programs require students to teach or complete a student teaching experience in a district near their postsecondary institution or their hometown. All of GYO programs in our sample that primarily target college students provide participants scholarships to earn education degrees, teacher certifications, and/or particular subject area specializations. Four out of five of

these programs target subject shortages with the other program recruiting people of color to the profession.

Taken together, the findings from Table 2 show that GYO programs target various stages of the teacher pipeline and are not uniform in their features even when targeting similar types of potential teacher candidates.

Program participation and entry into the teaching profession are loosely coupled in many GYO programs.

GYO programs' core aim is to promote students, paraprofessionals, and community members from local communities to enter the teacher profession who might not have otherwise chosen or been able to do so. Prior research has shown that GYO participants, especially those who enter through non-traditional pathways, may need additional resources and financial support to earn teaching certifications and become teachers (Irizarry, 2007; Skinner et al., 2011). However, Table 1 shows that just half of GYO initiatives in our sample provide any type of tuition funding, and only one sixth offer living stipends. The provision of scholarships and stipends does vary by participant type, as seen in Table 2. Only one-third of high school GYO programs provide financial assistance compared to all college programs and the majority of paraprofessional and community member GYO programs. This is particularly troubling because high school students may need more resources to complete all the steps necessary to become a teacher because they are farther from entry to the profession.

Even if individuals complete GYO programs, they may not become K-12 teachers. It is possible that graduates may use the training or degree they have earned to enter more lucrative or prestigious professions. If they do enter teaching, they may choose to teach in districts other than those in their local community. To maximize their local impact, GYO programs could require participants to teach for a certain period of time in a particular district. In our sample, less than a

quarter of GYO initiatives require participants to teach as a part of program participation, as seen in Table 1. These commitments ranged from two to five years of teaching. Only 13 of the 18 (72%) initiatives that had commitments required participants to teach in the district that sponsored them. We show variation in teaching commitments by program participant type in Table 2. Approximately half of college student scholarships and community member GYO programs require a teaching commitment while only 20 percent of high school and paraprofessional GYO programs do so. We note that few high school programs may have the ability to require or enforce teaching commitments because the majority do not provide any financial support to participants, the common accountability mechanism for teaching commitments. Districts also may have more confidence that paraprofessionals will complete the program and return to the district due to their familiarity with and established professional network in district schools (Cannata, 2010).

Discussion and Conclusion

Over the last five years, GYO programs have proliferated across the country. They have a presence in about one tenth of U.S. public school districts and in four out of five states. Rather than sharing a common set of program characteristics, our findings show that the term “GYO” is being adopted broadly to describe teacher pipeline programs with very different purposes and practices. This somewhat vague label can be applied to almost any effort to increase the number or diversity of educators in the teaching profession so long as they recruit from local schools and communities. Many high school education courses, teaching scholarships, teacher residencies, and alternative certification programs refer to themselves as a GYO program because they focus recruitment on local students, paraprofessionals, or community members.

Given the widespread variation in the purposes, participants, and program features of GYO initiatives, we posit that the term GYO is being used in the field to refer to any type of teacher pipeline program that recruits potential teachers from the local community. As GYO programs continue to proliferate and researchers start evaluating them, this vague and imprecise label may cause confusion about which programs and program features are effective because of the wide variation in goals, participants, and programming of GYO programs. High school teacher training courses that aim to increase interest in the profession are likely to have very different effects than a scholarship for paraprofessionals to earn their teacher certification. For this reason, we propose that researchers view GYO as a macro-category that describes a diverse class of teacher pipeline programs rather than using the term to characterize a singular program type. Further, we recommend that researchers and program leaders refine their descriptions to include references to two key distinguishing elements: target populations and programming (e.g., a GYO high school teacher training course; a GYO paraprofessional teacher residency program) rather than solely as a “GYO” program to clarify and emphasize the differences between GYO program types.

We present a typology of GYO programs in Figure 3 to help facilitate a common and more precise set of program descriptors. First, we only consider a teacher pipeline program a GYO program if it focuses or limits its recruitment to individuals that work, live in, or attend school in the community in accordance with our theory of action. This excludes programs, including those in our sample that self-identified as “GYO”, that encourage or allow individuals from outside the community to teach in a specific district or community such as more general place-based teacher residencies (e.g., Boston Teacher Residency) and alternative certification pathways (e.g., NYC Teaching Fellows).

To classify GYO programs, we begin with the categories used in prior research: high school student GYO programs and adult GYO programs (Garcia, 2020; Gist et al., 2019). Our analysis revealed two predominant types of programming for high school participants: teacher training courses/clubs and college scholarships to earn education degrees or teacher certification. Adult GYO programs target school support staff, community members, or local college students. Programming is more varied for adult GYO programs than high school GYO programs. Adult GYO programming can include scholarships to earn bachelor's degrees, scholarships to earn a traditional or alternative teacher certification, other financial, academic, and social supports, accelerated or specialized certification programs, alternate pathways to enrollment in a traditional or alternative certification program, teacher residencies, or registered teaching apprenticeships. Since the beginning of our data collection, registered teaching apprenticeships have emerged as a new and specific type of GYO program. Registered teaching apprenticeships are approved and validated by the U.S. Department of Labor, include paid on-the-job work experience such as employment as a teacher's aide, relevant job training (e.g., enrollment in an educator preparation program), and mentorship, and lead to teacher certification (Walsh & Cardona, 2023). As of March 2023, 16 states have a registered teaching apprenticeship program (Will, 2023).

Policy Implications and Future Research

Our findings also have implications for the design of future GYO programs. First, more GYO programs will likely need to center people of color in their recruitment strategies and programming if they are to achieve any effect on the diversity of the teacher workforce at scale. Although much of the research and policy conversation concerning GYO programs has been on their ability to increase the number of teachers of color, only half of the GYO initiatives even

mention diversity as a goal on their websites. Rather than approaching participant recruitment and training in a race-neutral way, prior research suggests that GYO programs likely need to explicitly implement recruitment strategies and community partnerships that value the backgrounds of people of color, in addition to culturally responsive teacher training practices, to recruit and retain teachers of color (Gist, 2022a; Gist et al., 2019).

GYO programs also may need to offer more financial supports and require teaching commitments if they hope to increase the supply of new teachers in specific communities. Prior research suggests that financial supports are needed for GYO participants to enter the teaching profession (Irizarry, 2007; Skinner et al., 2011). However, only half of GYO initiatives in our sample provide any type of scholarship or stipend with almost no programs covering the full costs of teacher certification. Although districts may not want to hire every GYO candidate or saddle those who did not complete the program with more student debt, GYO programs may be more effective at reducing localized teacher shortages when they require teaching commitments rather than relying on just teachers' general interest to work close to where they grew up. Without these commitments, GYO participants may opt to work in surrounding schools and districts with less challenging working conditions than those that GYO programs aim to serve.

Given the popularity of GYO initiatives, it is imperative that researchers partner with existing programs to study their causal impact on a range of teacher outcomes such as teacher preparation program enrollment, the number of teachers of color, teacher staffing challenges, teacher retention, and teacher effectiveness. Currently, there is very little evidence concerning the effectiveness of any type of GYO program. At the same time, we caution against generalizing the findings of any one GYO impact evaluation to all GYO programs because of the wide variation in GYO purposes and practices. Rather, we will need studies on a broad range of

GYO types to better understand which GYO programs and strategies are effective at improving teacher outcomes.

Finally, both education leaders directing GYO programs and researchers studying them need to pay careful attention to specific type and number of goals assigned to GYO programs. Although GYO programs can have many purposes, expecting one program to solve multiple problems associated with recruiting effective teachers runs the risk of diluting their ability to strongly impact any one outcome. For this reason, GYO program leaders should design and implement their individual programs to meet their most pressing staffing needs rather than treating it as a silver bullet to solve all teacher recruitment challenges. Researchers would also be wise to focus on the intended outcomes of a particular program when evaluating its effectiveness and not to be quick to judge it as ineffective if it does not improve all goal ascribed to GYO initiatives more broadly.

Endnotes

1. Our choice of search term was informed by the search term used for New America's *Grow Your Own Teachers: A 50-State Scan of Policies and Programs* (Garcia, 2020). We refined the search term through test searches prior to the pilot search process.
2. After five pages of search results, no new programs were found and most search results were not relevant to the study in initial test searches.
3. We determined the main target population for the 12 standalone GYO programs that target multiple populations by reviewing additional information on websites. We consider three GYO programs that allow high school students to continue to participate in the program as college students as high school GYO programs because they originally target high school students for participation. For GYO programs that both community members

and paraprofessionals could participate in, we consider five programs that explicitly list paraprofessionals as a target population as paraprofessional programs and the other two programs as community member programs. Two GYO programs target community members broadly and list college students as potential participants. We consider these programs as mainly targeting community members.

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Figure 1. Theory of Action



Figure 2. Map of GYO Programs

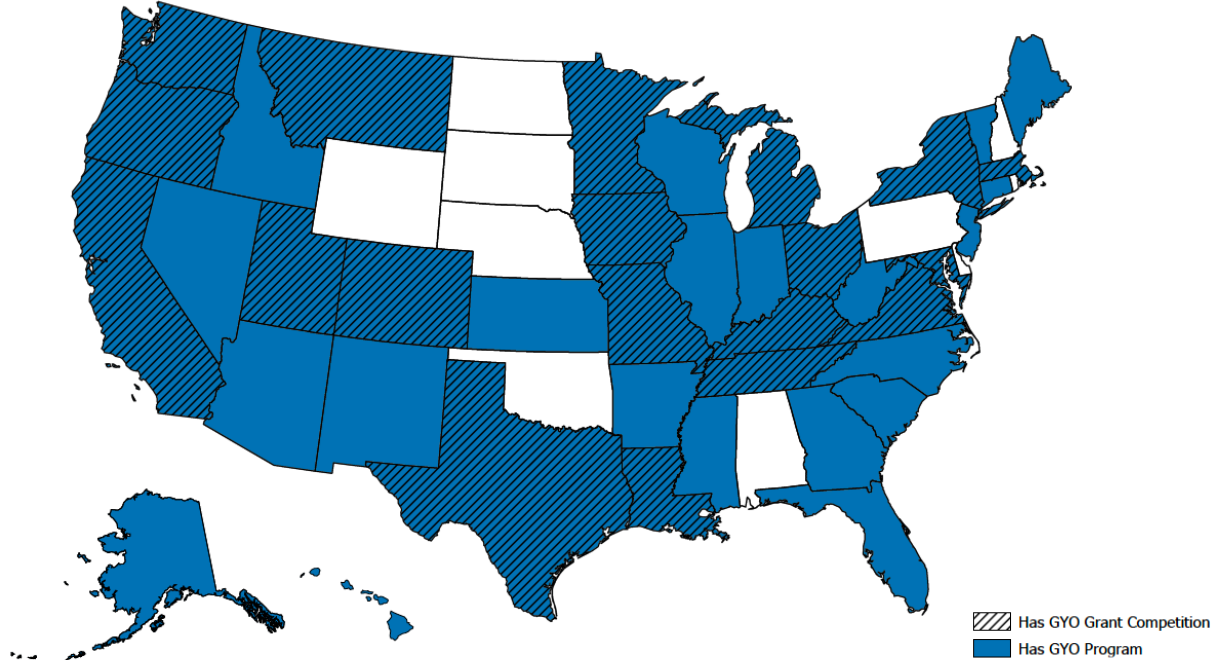


Figure 3. *Grow Your Own Program Typology*

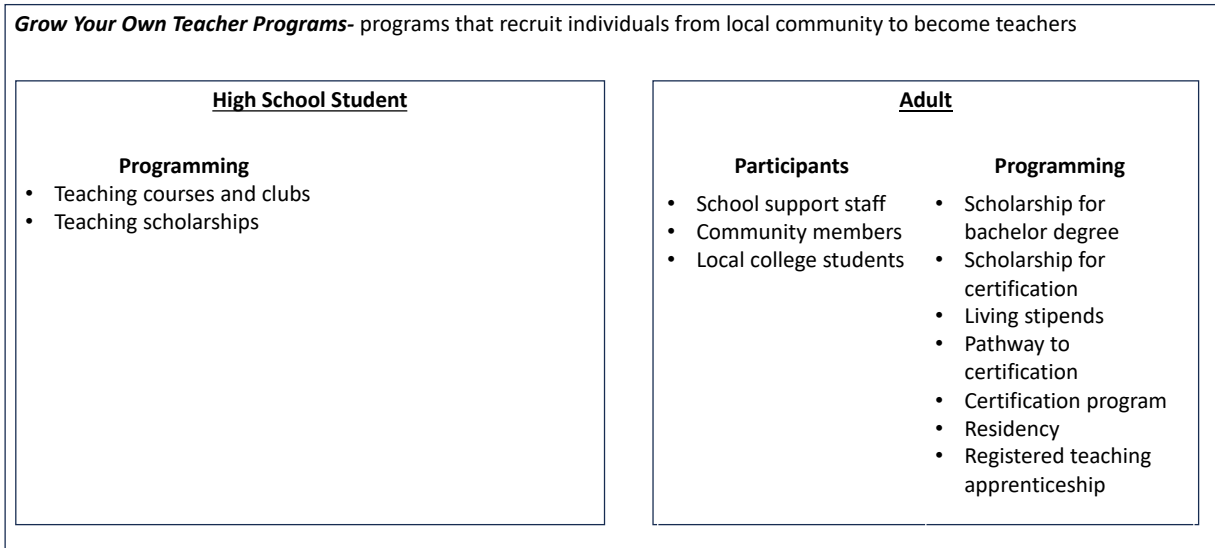


Table 1. Purposes, Participants, Requirements, and Program Characteristics of GYO Programs

| | Full Sample | | Standalone GYO Program | | Competitive Grant | |
|--|-------------|----|------------------------|----|-------------------|----|
| | Pct. | N | Pct. | N | Pct. | N |
| <i>What is the program's stated purpose?</i> | | | | | | |
| Expanding the pipeline of future teachers | 95% | 94 | 93% | 74 | 100% | 20 |
| Increasing the diversity of the teacher workforce | 50% | 92 | 44% | 72 | 70% | 20 |
| Alleviating local or district teacher shortages | 59% | 91 | 62% | 71 | 50% | 20 |
| Alleviating subject area shortages | 36% | 92 | 39% | 72 | 25% | 20 |
| Increasing teacher quality for disadvantaged students | 47% | 91 | 45% | 71 | 55% | 20 |
| Reducing teacher turnover | 27% | 90 | 26% | 70 | 30% | 20 |
| <i>What groups are encouraged to become teachers?</i> | | | | | | |
| High school students | 61% | 94 | 54% | 74 | 85% | 20 |
| Paraprofessionals/non-certified staff | 40% | 94 | 34% | 74 | 65% | 20 |
| College students | 20% | 94 | 16% | 74 | 35% | 20 |
| Local community members | 20% | 94 | 16% | 74 | 35% | 20 |
| <i>What are the requirements for participation?</i> | | | | | | |
| Live, work, or attend school in the district | 84% | 91 | 88% | 74 | 65% | 17 |
| Come from a historically disadvantaged background | 24% | 91 | 22% | 73 | 33% | 18 |
| Hold/get certified in a specific subject area | 30% | 91 | 32% | 73 | 22% | 18 |
| <i>Program Characteristics</i> | | | | | | |
| Requires completion of teacher certification | 68% | 80 | 68% | 65 | 67% | 15 |
| Provides a scholarship or loan | 50% | 84 | 48% | 69 | 60% | 15 |
| Provides a stipend | 16% | 86 | 13% | 70 | 31% | 16 |
| Includes a high school course or E.C. program | 45% | 86 | 41% | 69 | 65% | 17 |
| Includes a teacher residency | 33% | 84 | 30% | 67 | 47% | 17 |
| Requires a teaching commitment | 22% | 82 | 25% | 68 | 7% | 14 |

Note. When an item was unable to be determined for a GYO initiative it was excluded from the analysis for that item. E.C. is an abbreviation for extracurricular.

Table 2. Purposes and Program Characteristics of GYO Programs by Participant Type

| | High School Student | | College Student | | Paraprofessional | | Community Member | |
|---|---------------------|----|-----------------|---|------------------|----|------------------|---|
| | Pct. | N | Pct. | N | Pct. | N | Pct. | N |
| <i>What is the program's stated purpose?</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Expanding the pipeline of future teachers | 97% | 38 | 100% | 5 | 91% | 23 | 75% | 8 |
| Increasing the diversity of the teacher workforce | 47% | 38 | 50% | 4 | 36% | 22 | 50% | 8 |
| Alleviating local or district teacher shortages | 70% | 37 | 50% | 4 | 55% | 22 | 50% | 8 |
| Alleviating subject area shortages | 22% | 37 | 80% | 5 | 59% | 22 | 38% | 8 |
| Increasing teacher quality for disadvantaged students | 35% | 37 | 75% | 4 | 50% | 22 | 63% | 8 |
| Reducing teacher turnover | 25% | 36 | 25% | 4 | 18% | 22 | 50% | 8 |
| <i>Program Characteristics</i> | | | | | | | | |
| Requires bachelor's degree prior to participation | 0% | 38 | 0% | 5 | 19% | 21 | 50% | 8 |
| Allows for completion of a bachelor's degree | 75% | 36 | 80% | 5 | 65% | 17 | 33% | 6 |
| Requires completion of teacher certification | 45% | 33 | 60% | 5 | 95% | 20 | 100% | 7 |
| Provides a scholarship or loan | 32% | 37 | 100% | 4 | 67% | 21 | 43% | 7 |
| Provides a stipend | 5% | 37 | 0% | 4 | 9% | 22 | 71% | 7 |
| Includes a high school course or E.C. program | 78% | 36 | 0% | 4 | 0% | 21 | 0% | 8 |
| Includes a teacher residency | 20% | 35 | 50% | 4 | 32% | 22 | 67% | 6 |
| Requires a teaching commitment | 21% | 38 | 40% | 5 | 17% | 18 | 57% | 7 |
| Percent of GYO Programs (excluding comp. grants) | 51% | | 7% | | 31% | | 11% | |

Note. When an item was unable to be determined for a GYO initiative it was excluded from the analysis for that item. E.C. is an abbreviation for extracurricular.

Online Appendix A: National GYO Initiative Search and Coding Protocol

We conducted Google searches for [state name] “grow your own” teachers for each U.S. state and the District of Columbia in February and March 2022. For each state, we examined the first five pages of search results. We visited the webpage for each search result and determined that the initiative described on the webpage was a GYO initiative if it met all of the following criteria:

1. The initiative calls itself “Grow your own” either in the title or its description (anywhere on the web page including videos or PDFs)
2. The initiative encourages people to become teachers
3. The initiative has been enacted (not just a proposal)
4. The initiative is in the state that is currently being searched
5. If the initiative is a part of a larger GYO program, only list the larger initiative

We coded each initiative identified as GYO through the search process using the items in the table below. We used information from multiple webpages and websites describing the initiative to determine each code. If we were unable to determine the code for a particular item for an initiative we left it as missing. Multiple researchers coded 11 initiatives to ensure interrater reliability before the full coding process. Before the reconciliation process, coders were in agreement for 73 percent of codes (Cohen’s kappa: 0.49). After the reconciliation process, coders were in agreement for 99 percent of codes.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Source (Link)

State (Two letter abbreviation)

Does the program call itself grow your own? (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Does the program encourage people to become PK-12 Teachers? (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Has the program been enacted? (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Does the program have a webpage on a state, district, school or university website? (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Is this program a part of a larger Grow Your Own program? (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Participating District(s) (if greater than 5 put number of districts)

Participating Educator Preparation Program(s) (if greater than 2 put number of EPPs)

Other organizations participating (if greater than 2 put number other orgs)

Year program or policy started (YYYY)

PROGRAM PURPOSE

What is the program's stated purpose?

Expanding the pipeline of future teachers (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Increasing the diversity of the teacher workforce (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Alleviating local or district teacher shortages/return to local district (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Alleviating subject area shortages (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Increasing teacher quality for disadvantaged students (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Reducing teacher turnover (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Other: (Open Response)

What groups are encouraged to become teachers in this policy/program?

High school students (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Paraprofessionals/non-certified staff (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Community college students (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Teacher candidates enrolled in educator preparation programs (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Other College students

Local community members (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Other: (Open Response)

What are the requirements for participation?

Hold a Bachelor's degree before program begins (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Work in the district before the program begins (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Live in/Attended the district/local community (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Come from a disadvantaged background (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Person of color (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Low-income (1 if yes, 0 if no)

First-generation college student (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Hold/get certified in a specific subject area (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Other: (Open Response)

PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS

Is this a competitive grant program for districts, EPPs, and other orgs to start/fund a GYO program? (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Does the program allow participants to complete a Bachelor's degree if needed? (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Do participants have to complete a teacher certification? (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Does the program provide a scholarship/loan for tuition? (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Does the program cover all costs related to becoming a teacher (no-cost program)? (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Does the program provide a stipend for participants? (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Does the program include a teacher residency? (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Does the program include high school courses in education? (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Does the program require/include that high school students participate in an extracurricular group/program about teaching? (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Is this program a Teacher Cadet program? (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Is this program a 2+2 program (community college students can complete their teacher cert in 2 yrs.) (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Does the program require a teaching commitment from participants? (1 if yes, 0 if no)

APPENDIX

TEACHER CERTIFICATION (Fill out if line participants have to complete a teacher certification)

Do participants have to attend a specific educator preparation program? (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Can participants receive an alternative certification? (1 if yes, 0 if no)

HIGH SCHOOL COURSES (Fill out if program includes high school education courses)

Are these courses apart of career and technical education? (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Are these courses apart of dual enrollment? (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Can participants receive paraprofessional or teacher aide certification through the program? (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Is student teaching required? (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Do instructors get an extra stipend for teaching courses associate with GYO? (1 if yes, 0 if no)

TEACHING REQUIREMENTS (Fill out if program offers a teaching commitment)

For how many years is the teacher required to teach? (Number)

Does the teacher have to teach in the same school? (1 if yes, 0 if no)

Does the teacher have to teach in the same district? (1 if yes, 0 if no)

SCHOLARSHIP/STIPEND (Fill out if program offers a scholarship or stipend)

How much do participants receive? (Number if possible)

Is this a loan? (1 if yes, 0 if no)

NOTES
