



# NEA Professional Excellence Programs

Resources for all education professionals, in all settings

The image shows a screenshot of the NEA website's Professional Learning resources page. On the left is a dark blue navigation menu with the following items: STUDENT SUCCESS, YOUR RIGHTS & WORKPLACE, PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE (with sub-items: Just & Equitable Schools, Student Engagement, Professional Learning (with sub-items: Teacher Professional Growth, ESP Professional Growth, Higher Ed Professional Growth), Professional Learning Resources, Affiliate Professional Learning Submission, Micro-credentials, Teacher Licensure), Leadership Development, and Conferences & Events. Below these are ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE and JOIN OUR MOVEMENT. The main content area features a photograph of four diverse professionals in a meeting, with a large blue play button overlaid in the center. Below the photo, the text reads: **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING** **Resources for all education professionals, in all settings. Because we're there, too.**

[nea.org/ECLL](https://nea.org/ECLL)

**Early Career Learning Labs** (ECLL) is a member-led, member-driven professional learning program developed to support early career educators around problems of practice. The Labs occur in a blended learning format in both face-to-face and online environments.

**Audience:** Early career educators



“ One thing I love about Early Career Learning Labs is the collaboration and the support I get from other educators. ”

-Noemi Quintero, teacher



“ It gives you an opportunity to show your district that you are an important stakeholder in your career development. You can use the PGC to bargain, as leverage to increase your salary, or for career advancement. It will cultivate leaders. ”

-Kimberly Scott-Hayden, Inventory Control Clerk

[nea.org/esppgc](https://nea.org/esppgc)

The **ESP Professional Growth Continuum** (PGC) is a first-of-its-kind framework to help education support professionals (ESPs) raise their professional standing at every stage of their career.

**Audience:** ESP members



[nea.org/ELI](https://nea.org/ELI)

The **Early Leadership Institute** (ELI) provides an opportunity for state affiliates to strengthen their connection to early-career teachers in a cohort-based learning journey around issues of concern to the next generation of teacher leaders.

**Audience:** Early career teachers



“The ELI is teaching them how to be an advocate, not only for their profession, but for their students.”

- Gary Peluchette, President, Bridgeport Education



[nea.org/espmentoring](https://nea.org/espmentoring)

Through **ESPs: Supporting Our Own Through Peer Mentoring**, we are working with members and affiliates to build and support mentoring programs through in-person training, blended learning courses, pilot program financial support through NEA grants, and a NEAe3 learning path course (launching August 17, 2022).

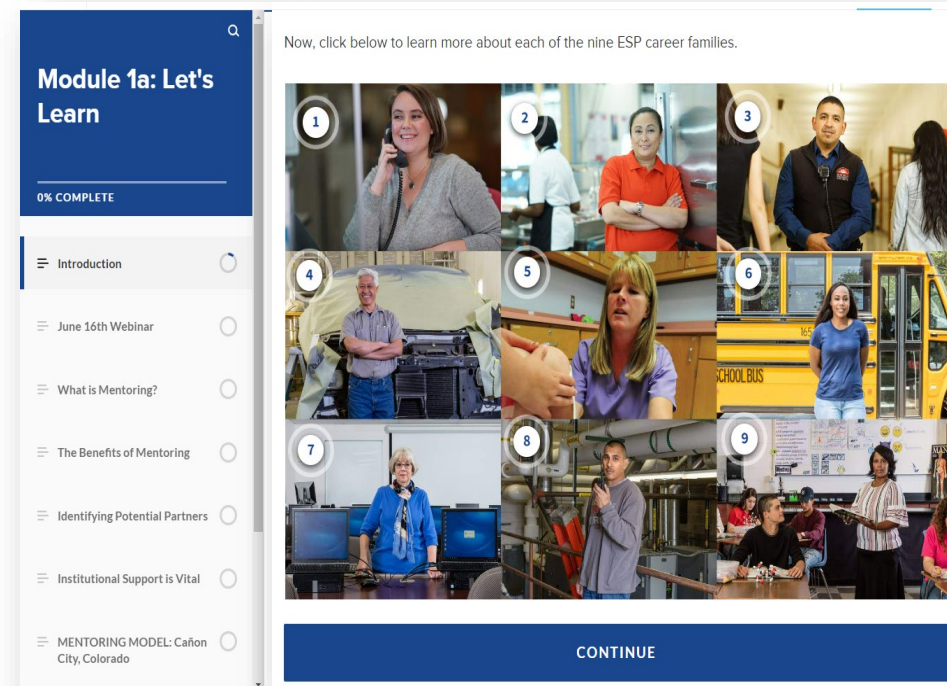
These programs advance the professional excellence of ESPs by increasing their professional learning opportunities and elevating their voice.

**Audience:** NEA local and state affiliates



When you give ESPs a voice and an opportunity to help other support staff know their value, then mentoring becomes invaluable. ”

Judy Near, Cañon City, Colorado ESP Mentoring program founder (retired ESP)





[nea.org/TQprograms](https://nea.org/TQprograms)

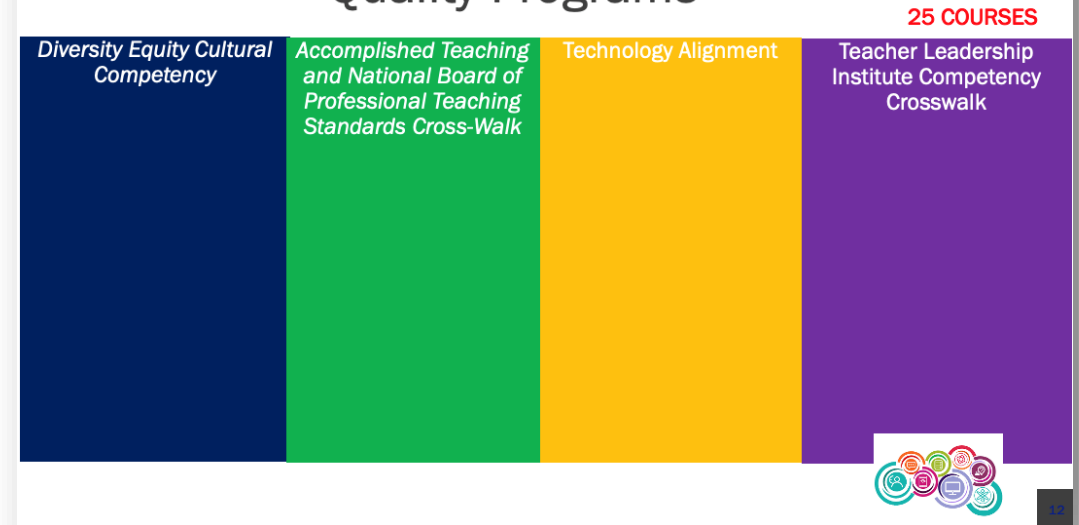
## NEA's Coaching and Mentoring Institute (CAMI)

serves as a structure for professional supports and a pathway to leadership through coaching theories and techniques that promote and support equitable learning environments for diverse students across the country.

CAMI participants explore strategies for leaders to refine their communication skills, facilitate team building, and coaching skills. The Institute's goal is for leaders to apply strategies to uncover and further develop their leadership skills and provide guidance to their colleagues for dynamic and transformative relationships.

**Audience:** Teacher members

## Alignment with NEA Priorities and Teacher Quality Programs





[nea.org/espli](https://nea.org/espli)

The **Education Support Professionals Leadership Institute** (ESPLI) is a program grounded in diversity, equity, and cultural competence that brings together the overarching NEA Leadership Competencies: Advocacy, Communication, Organizing, Governance and Leadership, and Leading Our Professions, to train ESP members to be effective leaders in their associations.

This 11-month program requires participants to commit to three in-person trainings, webinars, outside readings, and completion of a capstone project designed to elevate the goals of their association and NEA's core values.



**Audience:** ESP members



[nea.org/TLI](https://nea.org/TLI)

The **NEA Teacher Leadership Institute** (TLI) develops teacher leaders who can successfully advocate and support diversity and equity in classrooms and communities.

The program guides the professional growth of these leaders in policy, instruction, and/or the Association to be culturally competent in their ability to create, support, and promote equitable learning environments for all learners at every school site and district in the country.



**Audience:** Teacher members interested in becoming teacher leaders





[nea.org/TQprograms](https://nea.org/TQprograms)

**Teacher Pathway Leadership Institute (T-Path)** is an accelerated program designed to develop teacher leaders with an interest in policy.

These leaders go on to assist their local affiliates to advocate for policies and systemic changes that create and promote equitable learning environments for all learners.

**Audience:** NEA state affiliates that can identify one or more local cohorts of mid-career teachers who are interested in engaging in policy work and advocacy



I cannot emphasize enough how great the NEA Blended Learning program has been. It has given me a chance to learn useful information that makes me a better teacher!

I am more mindful of my students' circumstances as well as my own, and it shows in the classroom!

- Kindergarten Teacher, Metro-Nashville Education Association



**Audience:** NEA members, local and state affiliates

[sites.google.com/view/tq-instructional-leaders/blended-learning](https://sites.google.com/view/tq-instructional-leaders/blended-learning)

NEA's interactive **Blended Learning** online courses are developed by teams of NEA members who are content experts and provide guidance in using research-based strategies for supporting the professional growth and achievement of NEA members.

Each course provides high-quality professional learning to members in a combination of in-person and online learning platforms that allow participants to learn at their own pace while improving their professional practice and support for all students.

All facilitated NEA online blended learning courses run six to eight weeks and provide a certificate for 15 hour of professional development upon completion.



[nea.org/NBJumpstart](https://nea.org/NBJumpstart)

National Board Certification is a voluntary, advanced teaching credential that goes beyond state licensure.

In partnership with Washington Education Association and National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, NEA developed its **Jump Start** program as support to educators interested in pursuing National Board Certification.

In 2022, NEA launched legislative training for these member leaders focusing on affiliate-identified state policies.

**Audience:** Teacher members



[nea.org/BWT](https://nea.org/BWT)

**Building Winning Teams: Effective Paraeducator-Teacher Teams** (BWT) is an eight-session professional learning opportunity designed for paraeducators and teachers to build stronger and more effective educational teams to positively impact student outcomes.

**Audience:** Paraeducator-Teacher teams



**Building Winning Teams**  
Effective Paraeducator-Teacher Teams

Participants in the **Community Schools Institute** learn the history of Community Schools, how to use the pillars of Community Schools, and best practice benchmarks to achieve their school and community vision.

Through professional learning communities, curriculum, and coaching, school teams and districts learn skills like school mapping, conducting a needs/asset assessment, and improvement science.

**Audience:** Community school practitioners including coordinators, principals, and educators; members engaged in community school implementation efforts in their school or district

### Supporting School Transformation Utilizing Community School Best Practices





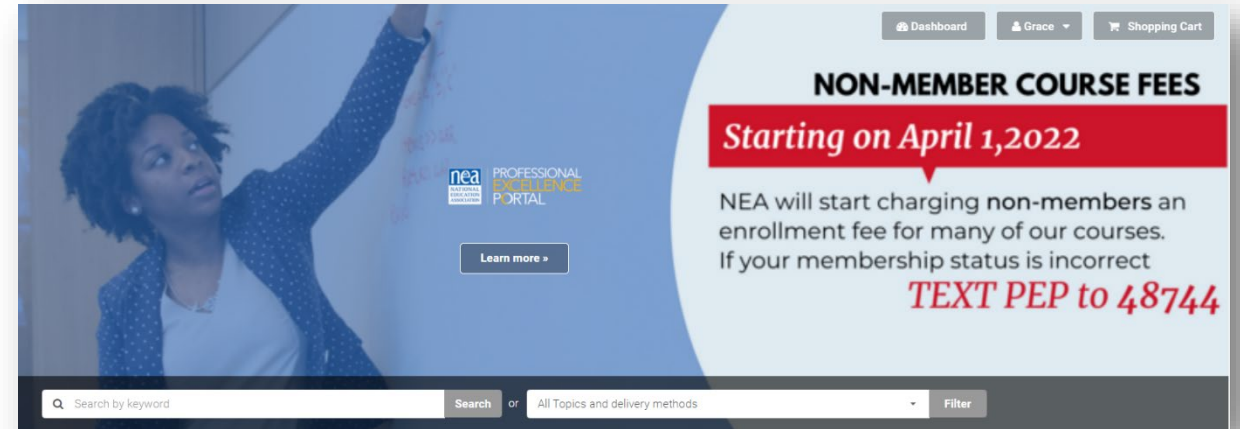
[neapartnera.learnupon.com/store](https://neapartnera.learnupon.com/store)

## NEA's Digital Professional Learning & Implementation PLC

NEA facilitates a Professional Learning Community (PLC) for affiliates that are using or are interested in having their own LearnUpon portal to deliver high-quality affiliate-led professional learning experiences.

The goals of the PLC are to:

- Collaborate and share ways affiliates are using LearnUpon LMS to create a professional learning system that uses an equity lens to provide high-quality, relevant, and engaging professional learning for all members and/or staff.
- Learn new skills to plan, design, create high-quality, relevant, and engaging professional learning for all members and/or staff.
- Explore, leverage, and lobby for state policies that support affiliate-led professional development.



- Use a human-centered design approach to build an equitable system of professional learning. This includes; data analysis, cultural shifts, and stakeholder engagement.
- Use your professional learning system to recruit, retain and engage members from across the career continuum and across membership types.

**Audience:** NEA local and state affiliates

[nea.org/microcredentials](https://nea.org/microcredentials)



[nea.certificationbank.com](https://nea.certificationbank.com)

**Micro-Credentials** are short, competency-based recognitions that allow an educator to demonstrate mastery in a particular area. NEA micro-credentials are grounded in research and best practice and designed to be:

- **Personalized:** You can create your own learning journey, based on your interests and career goals; gaps in your skills; and the specific needs of your students, school, and district.
- **Flexible:** You can study when it's convenient for you, alone or with your peers.
- **Performance-based:** Unlike “sit-and-get” certifications, NEA micro-credentials are awarded based on demonstrated mastery of the subject matter, not just for showing up.

**Audience:** NEA members

[nea.org/microcredential-resources](https://nea.org/microcredential-resources)

## Micro-Credential Professional Learning Communities

NEA provides members an opportunity to participate in a virtual Professional Learning Community (PLC) to support successful completion of a NEA Micro-credential from start to finish. Educators who participate in a PLC to complete a micro-credential are more likely to earn their badge in their first attempt.

**Audience:** NEA members





## NEA Professional Practice and Policy Teaching Fellows

A Professional Practice and Policy Teaching Fellow is a school-based teacher released full-time to their state affiliate. The Fellow will use improvement science to organize and plan around professional learning to build affiliate membership and capacity.

In addition, the fellow will:

- Model, propose, design, and/or implement equitable policies and practices to promote diversity and inclusion
- Create professional learning opportunities in their affiliate for members to become association, professional practice, and policy leaders
- Learn about the processes and outcomes of policymaking at the local, state, and national levels
- Collaborate with the team fulfilling affiliate strategy
- Build a network of cross-country professional colleagues

**Audience:** NEA teacher members, NEA local and state affiliates



EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS  
NATIONAL CONFERENCE

[nea.org/esconference](https://nea.org/esconference)

The NEA **ESP National Conference** is the premier professional development opportunity for education support professionals across the nation.

The purpose of the NEA ESP National conference is to grow and strengthen the professional excellence of ESP members working in Pre-K to Higher-Ed through Association-convened, educator-led, and student-centered learning experiences.

**Audience:** Members interested in gaining career-specific professional development and networking opportunities



Debra Ward-Mitchell, 2022 NEA National ESP of the Year

“ I love this conference and the spirit it brings as well as the unity that comes with being in a room filled with education support professionals. ”

- Elizabeth Ward-Robertson,  
Washington



[nea.org/Aspiringed](https://nea.org/Aspiringed)

The **NEA Aspiring Educators (AE) Program** supports members preparing to be educators and fosters their leadership of the profession. The AE program's four core values provide a framework for their activities.

**1) Educator quality:** In-person and virtual education conferences and workshops through NEA, state, and campus chapters; Programs coordinated with NEA locals and early career educator events; Opportunities for aspiring educators to observe, tutor, and offer enrichment to P-12 students through partnerships with NEA local affiliates.

**2) Community engagement:** Community service projects in neighborhoods; school renovations; book drives and literacy projects for children and families; after-school programs for students.

**3) Political action:** Advocacy days at a state capitol; meet the candidates (often coordinated with NEA locals); outreach to legislators about the needs of P-12 students AND to improve educator preparation and remove financial barriers to become educators.

**4) Social justice:** Campus & state AE chapter racial and social justice conferences; social justice movie nights; Black Lives Matter Week of Action; Simulations to learn about issues and inequities and to develop strategies to dismantle White Supremacy Culture, etc.

[nea.org/professional-excellence/conferences-events/aspiring-educators-conference](https://nea.org/professional-excellence/conferences-events/aspiring-educators-conference)



The **NEA Aspiring Educator Conference** (AEC) provides opportunities for networking, leadership development, and growth in the four core values of the Aspiring Educator (AE) program: Educator quality, community engagement, political action, and social and racial justice.

In addition to excellent workshops aligned with the core values, often presented by AE members and early career educators (recent AE members), the AEC hosts annual awards to recognize AE leadership, outstanding projects, and exemplary efforts to achieve NEA's vision and mission. The GramAE's move from virtual to in-person in 2022!

# NEA ESP *LEARNING NETWORK*

[nea.org/esppdwebinars](https://nea.org/esppdwebinars)

The **ESP Learning Network** connects educators from across the country through monthly professional development webinars on a wide variety of ESP career-specific topics to support professional growth.

Members can register as individuals through the NEA ESP Learning Network Dashboard or affiliates can organize viewing parties to extend the learning and community building. Webinars are recorded and cataloged for future viewing.

**Audience:** NEA members and affiliates





[nea.org/tqprogramguide](https://nea.org/tqprogramguide)

NEA works to ensure all educators are supported with high-quality, relevant, and continuing professional learning opportunities throughout their careers.

NEA'S TEACHER QUALITY PROGRAM GUIDE

RECRUIT AND ENGAGE EARLY CAREER EDUCATORS

SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE

ADVANCE RACIAL JUSTICE IN EDUCATION

INCREASE EDUCATOR VOICE, INFLUENCE, AND AUTHORITY

AFFILIATE RESOURCES

NEA's Teacher Quality Program Guide



## A Guide to NEA's **TEACHER QUALITY PROGRAMS**

NEA is committed to the idea that quality teaching is a critical factor that affects student learning and seeks to help teachers achieve high standards of practice and maintain those standards throughout their careers.



[nea.org/esppd](https://nea.org/esppd)

NEA works to ensure all educators are supported with high-quality, relevant, and continuing professional learning opportunities throughout their careers.

**Supporting ESP Professional Excellence**

NEA is leading and strengthening efforts to elevate Education Support Professionals (ESPs) as respected professionals essential to the success of all students, educators, schools, and communities through relevant, Association-convened, ESP-led programs and supports.

[Learn more at nea.org/esppd](https://nea.org/esppd)

**“We must be in the room where decisions are made. And we must provide educators with the professional supports they need to be culturally competent and active leaders in their communities.”**

— Andrea Swanson, 2021 NEA ESP of the Year, Special Education Paraprofessional, Maple Heights, Ohio

**“Any time you give people the opportunity to learn it gives them a voice. But when you give ESPs a voice and an opportunity to help other support staff know their value, then mentoring becomes invaluable.”**

— Jody Nee, Health Services Instructor, Colton City, Colorado

**ESP Professional Growth Continuum (PGC)**  
Develop your professional knowledge and skills using the ESP PGC to positively impact your students, your workplaces, and your communities. Grounded in eight universal standards of professionalism, the PGC provides ESPs with clear pathways for professional growth throughout their careers.  
[nea.org/pgc](https://nea.org/pgc)

**ESP Learning Network Webinars**  
Join ESP colleagues from across the country in a monthly professional development webinar on a wide variety of topics to support your professional growth. Missed a webinar? No problem! Many past webinar recordings are available now.  
[nea.org/esppdwebinars](https://nea.org/esppdwebinars)

**Professional Development Offerings in Spanish**  
The ESP Professional Growth Continuum and the ESP Learning Network include Spanish language options. Learn more at [nea.org/pgc](https://nea.org/pgc) and [nea.org/esppdwebinars](https://nea.org/esppdwebinars)

**NEA ESP National Conference**  
Among the largest national conference for ESPs to develop the skills and knowledge to support student and school success, strengthen your educator voice through the Association, and network with the largest community of ESPs.  
[nea.org/espcconference](https://nea.org/espcconference)

**ESPs Supporting Our Own Through Peer Mentoring**  
Design and build effective workplace ESP peer mentoring programs to support ESP professional excellence. Available formats include in-person events, blended learning, independent learning path courses (online), and a manual to guide program development.  
[nea.org/espsmentoring](https://nea.org/espsmentoring)

**Building Winning Teams: Effective Paraprofessional-Teacher Teams**  
Develop strong paraprofessional-teacher partnerships critical for student learning and success by engaging in this eight-session in-person professional learning opportunity.  
[nea.org/bwt](https://nea.org/bwt)

**WHY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ESPs?**  
Everyone who works in schools plays a critical role in supporting student success. Learning occurs throughout the school day, in the cafeterias, the hallways, school playgrounds, athletic fields, and school buses. ESPs create experiences and conditions for healthy, safe, supported, engaged, and challenged students.




**ESP Leadership Institute (ESLI)**  
Join the next generation of ESP leaders to develop leadership attitudes, skills, and knowledge that will enhance your ability to be visible, vocal advocates at the local, state, and national levels of the Association.  
[nea.org/espli](https://nea.org/espli)

**ESP of the Year Award Program**  
Learn about the annual awards program that recognizes ESPs for the contributions they make in their schools, communities, and the Association, and their role as leaders and advocates for ESPs across the country.  
[nea.org/espoty](https://nea.org/espoty)

**NEA Micro-credentials**  
Demonstrate your knowledge and skills and earn a micro-credential! A micro-credential is a short, competency-based recognition that ESPs can earn in a range of topics, from applying the ESP PGC standards to your role and responsibilities to working effectively in paraprofessional-teacher teams.  
[nea.org/micro-credentials](https://nea.org/micro-credentials)

**Student and Educator Mental Health**  
Learn how to support the mental well-being of your school community through blended-learning courses, webinars, and resources on social emotional learning, grief, and trauma-informed education.  
[nea.org/sef](https://nea.org/sef)  
[nea.org/grief](https://nea.org/grief)  
[nea.org/trauma](https://nea.org/trauma)





**Integrated Pest Management (IPM)**  
Protect the health and safety of students and educators by learning how to control pests without harmful pesticides. IPM training and certification is now available from the IPM Institute of North America.  
[contact tbarchak@nea.org](mailto:tbarchak@nea.org)

**Be Like Water: ESP Empowerment and Activism**  
Work for change in your school communities and beyond! Attend this two-hour virtual or in-person training for ESP activists.  
[contact tbarchak@nea.org](mailto:tbarchak@nea.org)

**Protect Against the Privatization of ESP Jobs**  
Fight to keep public education and ESP professions out of the hands of profiteers! Learn how NEA is preventing the privatization of ESP jobs and protecting the future of public education.  
[nea.org/espsjobsecurity](https://nea.org/espsjobsecurity)

Access or request digital and hard copies of our resources at [nea.org/esp-publications](https://nea.org/esp-publications)

**SCAN ME!**



## The **Resource Library**

[nea.org/resource-library](https://nea.org/resource-library)

Programs and Resources for Members, by Members



Trauma-Informed Support for  
Students Blended Learning Course



Making the Most of Student Teaching:  
Making the Experience Great



Restorative Practices