

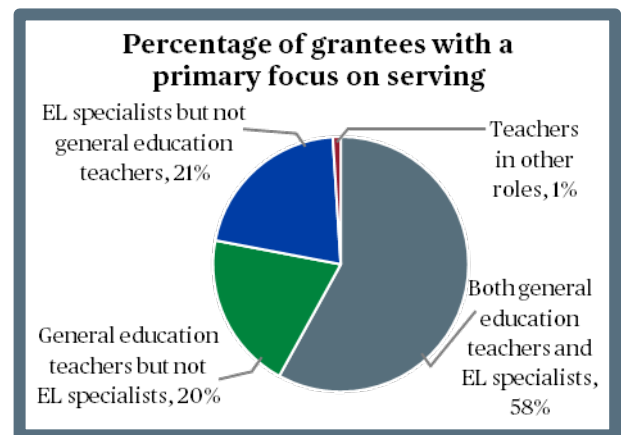
# How a Federal Grant Program Is Training and Supporting Educators of English Learners

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Across the nation, states and school districts face a persistent shortage of educators with expertise in promoting both the English proficiency and academic achievement of English learner (EL) students. To help improve educators' qualifications and classroom instruction for ELs, the National Professional Development (NPD) program has awarded grants for EL-focused educator professional development projects since 2002. This U.S. Department of Education-funded program allows grantees to serve the varied types of educators who work with ELs, including those preparing to join the educator workforce, and encourages grantees to focus on topics and approaches supported by rigorous research evidence. In addition, the NPD program encourages grantees to engage in evaluation, including performance measurement and rigorous evaluations of project effectiveness, that may inform project improvement and contribute to evidence building. This study examines the extent to which NPD grantees implemented their projects in ways aligned with these program objectives, drawing primarily on a 2021 survey of all 2016 and 2017 NPD grantees.

## Key Findings

- Given wide latitude in whom to serve, grantees focused on supporting general education teachers and EL specialists already in the classroom, compared to those still preparing to become teachers.*** All grantees served current teachers, and just over half also served participants preparing to become teachers. Almost all grantees emphasized serving educators who do or will provide regular instruction to ELs, including general education teachers and EL specialists (see exhibit).
- All grantees provided professional development on multiple topics, most often focusing on English language development and academic content mastery.*** Most grantees also used a variety of approaches to providing professional development.
- Almost all grantees reported using rigorous research evidence to inform their professional development, as encouraged by the program.*** However, some had challenges implementing the practices they identified in research.
- Limitations in the types of data that grantees collected may have impeded grantees' ability to address the emphasis on performance measurement and rigorous project evaluations.*** Almost all grantees, however, reported using data in some way to inform ongoing project improvement and planned to engage in dissemination activities that may contribute to evidence building.



The findings highlight some diversity in project implementation and aspects of success, as well as areas where grantees faced some challenges, which can inform future improvements to the NPD program and broader efforts around providing professional development to enhance instruction for ELs.