



## 2024 in Review

What if nobody had to choose between a job and a degree? Five years ago, Reach University set out to tackle [this question](#). Today, the answer is beginning to take shape. “Reach is breaking one of those traditional curses for people where ‘you get a job, you make a living,’ but you’re not on a pathway,” says Melvin Williams, Jr., of Arkansas, who is among the **2,600** job-embedded Reach candidates now turning their job into a degree. “Reach gives you control over your life.”

Millions more like Melvin should be able to take control of their lives. That’s why Reach is [leading](#) a growing coalition of colleges and universities to mobilize toward the [moonshot goal](#) of three million Apprenticeship Degree enrollments by 2035. If this sounds ambitious, well, it is. We may have a decade but there is not a moment to lose. We will have to pack an unbelievable amount of progress into every day, month, and year.

The past year at Reach was indeed jam-packed with progress and growth. You’ll see a summary below of what we accomplished in 2024 with more information in the pages that follow.

### What We Did in 2024

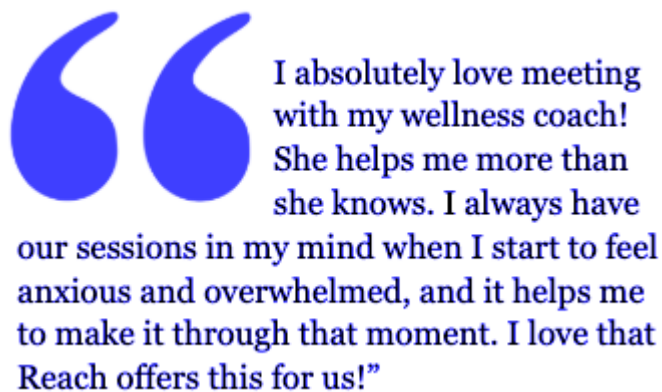
Reach over the past twelve months achieved major milestones and third-party validation:

- Trained **2,297** [teacher Apprenticeship Degree](#) candidates across over **420** school networks.
- Launched the [National Center for the Apprenticeship Degree](#) to drive systems change.
- Expanded into [Colorado](#), [Texas](#), and [Tennessee](#) for a total of **7** states with active programs.
- Earned [reaffirmation](#) of accreditation by WSCUC, the nationally recognized accrediting agency.
- Finalized **18** new transfer agreements for [AA-to-BA pathways](#) with community colleges.
- Reached **700** aspiring teachers with [computer science](#) as a pre-service requirement.
- Acquired assets of the nonprofit Edwell to provide **300+** [wellness coaching](#) sessions.
- Advocated the move by WGU to [integrate](#) Craft and prioritize [Apprenticeship Degrees](#).
- Facilitated professional learning for **17** colleges/universities on the topic of apprenticeship.
- Profiled by the [Today Show & NBC News](#), among many more media outlets.
- Won a **\$10m** Department of Education [TQP grant](#) to train emerging educators in Louisiana.
- Grew our staff and faculty to over **350** strong.

Starting in 2025, we will adopt a new strategic plan to propel Reach in its **growth stage**. Here, as in previous annual reports, the details below are anchored to our original strategic plan pillars of **impact, scale, and sustainability**.

**Impact.** In 2024, we approached the strategic pillar of impact by tackling the definitional question “What is a high-quality Apprenticeship Degree?” and [crystalizing its essential ABCs](#). At its core, an Apprenticeship Degree must be radically **A**ffordable, be **B**ased in the workplace, and provide **C**redit for on-the-job learning. We also made significant progress toward *proving* the ABCs are achievable and replicable. Our impact highlights include:

- **Reaffirmation of Accreditation:** The WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) reaffirmed Reach University’s accreditation through 2030. Reach was [commended](#) for our “tireless support for ensuring candidate success” as well as the launch of our National Center for the Apprenticeship Degree (NCAD) “to scale the Reach model, access federal funding, and establish Reach as a thought leader.”
- **Work-Based Liberal Education:** We launched a job-embedded interdisciplinary program – centered on *applied* liberal studies – demonstrating that first-year general education requirements *can* be integrated into apprenticeship. Over **70%** of candidates described the experience as both meaningful and manageable. We also launched our first-of-its-kind [computer science \(CS\) initiative](#), requiring that all undergraduate teaching candidates achieve competency in CS; in 2024, **700+** candidates took our flagship 12-week 3-credit course. These candidates will soon become CS-fluent teachers in K-12 classrooms.
- **Behavioral Health & Wellness:** In July, Reach [successfully acquired](#) and integrated the well-being coaching solutions of [Edwell](#), a nonprofit in the NewSchools Venture Fund portfolio, enabling Reach to provide **300+** wellness coaching sessions to apprentices within the first six months of the strategic transaction. This support helps to ensure that candidates can persevere through the challenges of attaining a degree. As one put it: “I absolutely love meeting with my wellness coach! She helps me more than she knows. I always have our sessions in my mind when I start to feel anxious and overwhelmed, and it helps me to make it through that moment. I love that Reach offers this for us!”



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**Reach in the news.** Reach’s impact was featured in 2024 by the [Today Show & NBC News](#), [ABC 7 News](#), [Education Week](#), [The Job](#), [Stanford Social Innovation Review](#), [Bellwether](#), [EdSource](#), and the [Arkansas Democrat Gazette](#) among other outlets. We published op-eds in [The Job](#) and [EdSurge](#), and our podcast [Apprenticeship 2.0](#) explored the trends and developments in modern U.S. apprenticeships, reaching 5,250 active listeners worldwide.<sup>1</sup>

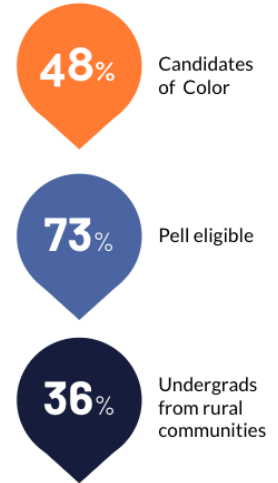
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<sup>1</sup> Top episodes of the year included a [discussion with Joe and Mallory](#) on Reach’s origins and the future of the Apprenticeship Degree; an exploration of higher education opportunities with [Jaime Merisotis](#) of Lumina Foundation, and deep dive into the world of apprenticeships with [Ryan Craig](#).

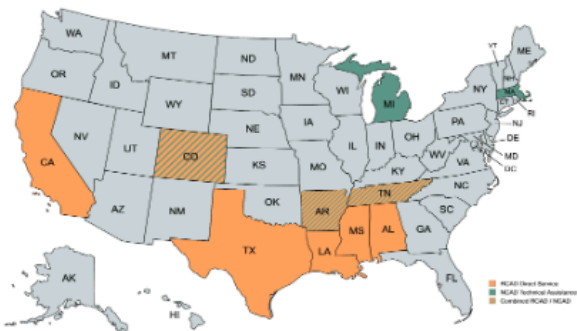
**Scale.** We begin 2025 with **2600** candidates enrolled across **7** states. Nationwide, Reach now works with **over 420** school systems (including over **79 charter schools**). As detailed below, we embrace scale as a strategic pillar not for its own sake but rather to achieve our **direct impact** and **systems change** objectives, with a strategic focus on addressing **education deserts**:

- Direct Impact.** As [forecasted](#) in last year’s report, we entered new states in 2024: **Colorado**, **Tennessee**, and **Texas**. We also deepened our work in **Louisiana** with over **1,400** candidates enrolled across **60** of **64** parishes (94% of total). And in **Arkansas** we continue to serve **all 15** educational service regions and **118** school districts. **Alabama** enrollment grew to **nearly 200**. And in **California**, we established a new partnership with the [Alameda County Office of Education](#). We also significantly expanded the A.A. to B.A. Transfer Pathway, expanding from **3 to 21 transfer partners** across five states.
- Systems Change.** As [forecasted](#) in last year’s report, we [launched](#) the **National Center for the Apprenticeship Degree (NCAD)** to serve as the backbone of our emerging field of practice. NCAD provided technical assistance to community colleges and universities in Colorado, Massachusetts, and Tennessee; brought **30** leaders of industry, government, and higher ed to Oxford for an study trip on UK apprenticeship; piloted a second cohort of the Apprenticeship Degree Network (**ADNet**) for **17** higher ed institutions in a 9-month facilitated program; presented at **7** conferences; and supported pathway development for Bloomberg Philanthropy’s launch of career-connected learning high schools in **10** sites across the nation.
- Education Deserts.** Reach’s colleges and academic departments (RCAD) and the National Center for the Apprenticeship Degree (NCAD) continued in 2024 to scale impact in places that are underserved by higher education, and particularly rural communities. The maps below illustrate Reach’s geographic focus on “education deserts” where there are zero or only one public broad-access colleges within commuting distance.

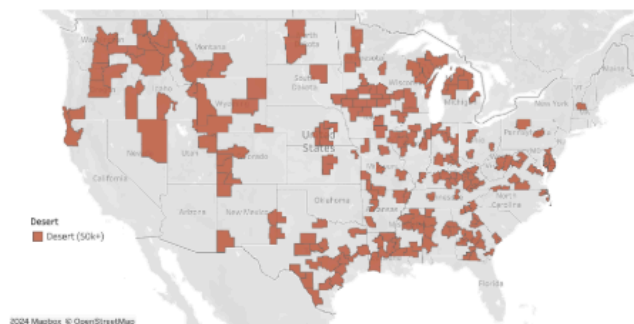
DEMOGRAPHICS



Where we reach today

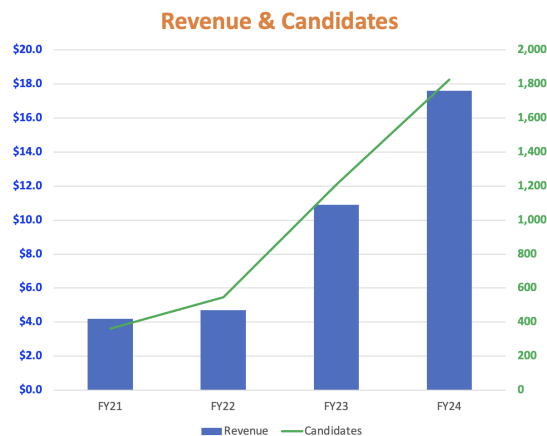


Education deserts



**Sustainability.** This third strategic pillar encompasses both financial *and* human capital. We seek over time to become cash-flow positive in our core programs with earned revenue, thereby relying less on philanthropy. We keep tuition extremely affordable (or free) by braiding debt-free funding sources. In parallel, we cultivate, invest in, and sustain our growing team of innovators.

- **Financials.** For the **fourth** year in a row, our audit rendered a perfect composite ratio of **3.0**. Reach maintained a balanced budget with positive change in net assets and **62%** growth in revenue.<sup>2</sup>
- **Federal Grant:** Reach won a highly selective **\$10m** grant from the U.S. Education Department. Reach has won over **\$25m** since 2021 in competitive federal grants to expand teacher apprenticeship.
- **People.** Today, Reach has a team of nearly **140** staff members and a faculty of over **235**, the majority of whom are job-embedded professors of practice. Our fully remote team, now spanning **40** states, nearly doubled in size while maintaining a **7%** voluntary attrition rate and a staff Net Promoter Score (NPS) of **46**.



## What to Expect in 2025

This is our fifth annual report since launch. Thanks to your support, Reach is now a growth-stage university. In the year ahead we expect to expand our reach in teacher training, bring the Reach Method to a new vertical, and grow the nation's only Apprenticeship Degree Network (**ADNet**).

1. **Teacher Pipeline.** Reach Teachers College will share early learnings from our groundbreaking **computer science initiative** and expand with a geographic focus on the **U.S. Southeast**.
2. **Behavioral Health.** We will lay groundwork for a *new kind* of **college of health**, starting with an apprenticeship-based **associate degree** for entry-level workers in the behavioral health field.
3. **Scaling Impact.** At our National Center for the Apprenticeship Degree, an expanded ADNet will serve as catalyst for higher ed innovators building and scaling **work-based higher education**.

Amid growth what stays constant? We turn jobs into degrees. The workplace *is* our campus. An education at Reach builds economic mobility, strengthens the workforce, and inspires deep learning through **inquiry, dialogue**, and on-the-job **practice**. Join us to lead U.S. Higher Ed into its [4th century](#).

Thank you for supporting the work of Reach University. Feel free to review our [audited financials](#) and prior reports ([2023](#); [2022](#); [2021](#); [2020](#)). Questions? Contact Joe E. Ross, [president@reach.edu](mailto:president@reach.edu).

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<sup>2</sup> Fiscal year (July-June).