



American Heart Association®
Social Impact Funds



SHOWCASE

Proserva

Building Pathways for Underrepresented Teachers



When Josh Thelemann founded Proserva, he was driven by a powerful truth: talent is everywhere, but opportunity is not. A former elementary school educator, Josh saw firsthand how traditional teacher preparation programs — expensive, time-consuming and rigid — shut out many aspiring educators, especially those from underrepresented communities and working families.

By offering job-embedded, affordable pathways, Proserva enables educators to earn credentials while continuing to work.

Proserva is changing the way teachers enter the profession. This Minneapolis-based technology platform offers affordable, job-embedded pathways to licensure and career growth, combining preparation, coaching and professional development. Its approach allows educators to earn credentials while working, turning real-world experience into recognized qualifications without requiring them to leave their livelihoods.

THE CHALLENGE

 **Barriers to licensure** limit access and workforce diversity.

PROSERVA IMPACT

 **20,000+** educators supported

 **47** states

 **350+** teachers licensed

The impact has been remarkable. In just four years, Proserva has supported more than 20,000 paraprofessionals, teachers and administrators through professional development, teacher evaluations and coaching; helped license over 350 teachers and expanded to 47 states.

Early funding from the Social Impact Funds was a game changer, enabling Proserva to accelerate growth and launch two groundbreaking initiatives:

- **Apprenticeship Program:** A paid, school-based pathway that combines classroom experience with university coursework, helping participants earn a bachelor's degree and teaching license.
- **Para-to-Degree Pilot:** Converts paraprofessional training into college credit, opening doors for more than 15,000 Minnesotans with 0–60 credits to complete degrees and licensure. Minneapolis Public Schools estimates this could generate millions annually in economic gains for families at or below the poverty line.

Looking ahead, Proserva is developing stackable micro-credentials to help educators gain new skills and advance their careers without stepping away from work. These innovations build on Proserva's proven model: meeting people where they are and turning experience into opportunity.

By creating flexible, affordable pathways to teaching and advancement, Proserva is driving economic mobility and laying the foundation for stronger schools, healthier communities and brighter futures.

Proserva expands opportunity by creating flexible pathways into teaching and strengthening the educator workforce.



Explore the Breakthroughs Transforming Health and Opportunity for All.

Learn more about how the Social Impact Funds are catalyzing solutions that improve lives and communities.

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The **Social Impact Funds** are part of American Heart Association Ventures, the group that leads and coordinates the venture capital programs of the American Heart Association. heart.org/SocialImpactFunds



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