



Rural Centered  
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A Monthly Newsletter from the  
Colorado Center for Rural Education



## Administrators and Aspiring Educators: Take Note of These Resources

The Colorado Department of Education's [Educator Talent Licensing Office](#) is responsible for evaluating the 45,000+ licensing applications they receive each year for educator credentials. Their licensing consultants answer applicant inquiries electronically and via phone and answer the occasional question about how to enter the teaching profession. We asked Tanya Klein, Director of Educator Licensing, how an individual can become a licensed educator in Colorado.

### Pathways to Teaching

"There are far more ways a person can become credentialed to serve in a Colorado classroom than most people think—at least 20 pathways," said Klein. She pointed out that some are more appropriate than others depending on the circumstances.

For example, a person with no degree or teaching experience can apply for a one-year substitute authorization if they meet the requirements. A retired teacher can also qualify for a one-year substitute authorization. But they might be more likely to get the position they want in a school district they want to teach in if they apply for the five-year substitute authorization, which indicates that they have completed a teacher preparation program.

People don't pursue some of the credentials as often as others, such as the exchange educator interim authorization. It makes more sense for an international educator to apply for a full teacher license if they qualify for it, because it is valid for a longer period of time and authorities view it more positively if the candidate is still awaiting approval of their application for a U.S. visa.

How a person can become a teacher also depends on the district's hiring needs and what the applicant brings to the table in terms of educational background and expertise. Klein noted that the alternative teacher license pathway is quite popular, as it allows individuals to work as a teacher, obtain on-the-job training, and complete their teacher preparation program all at the same time. Completion of an alternative teacher program then puts them on the professional teacher licensure track.



## Solving the Teacher Shortage

When asked about the future of the teacher shortage, Klein said she couldn't predict. "Colorado has numerous pathways to get individuals into the classroom as instructors and a number of pathways to get people onto a professional teacher licensure track," she said. "If a person can clear a background check and wants to serve students, there is a pathway for them to do so," she added.

Entering a [Teacher Apprenticeship Program](#) will be another pathway to becoming a teacher. The CDE updates their web page as additional information becomes available. Additionally, proposed 2024 legislation would create a district-based special education training program for already licensed educators.



## How You Can Pay for Your Teacher Preparation Program

“It’s cheaper to become a teacher now than it ever has been in our lifetime,” said Dr. Robert Fulton, Director of the [Colorado Center for Rural Education](#) (CCRE). “There is so much aid available to help you pay for a degree. Aspiring educators should create a plan before they start so they can minimize the cost and avoid debt.”

Concurrent enrollment options for high school students vary by district. If students go through the [ASCENT](#) program, they can earn 39 credit hours for free. In some districts, they can earn a full 60 credit hours for free.

“There’s also the option to earn transferable credits by going to community college for the first two years rather than a more expensive university,” said Fulton. The cost to attend community college is around \$3,500 per year versus \$10,000 per year for in-state university and \$30,000 and up for out-of-state university.

Persons already attending a college or university have several options. First, they can earn a salary working as a substitute or paraprofessional. Second, [Career Advance Colorado](#) makes it possible to earn the first 60 credit hours for free if the person is in an Early Childhood Education or Elementary Education teacher prep program. Third, they are eligible for stipends—up to \$10,000 through the state’s [Educator Recruitment and Retention](#) program and up to \$22,000 through the state’s [residency program](#) and a related program which pays for educator licensure exams.

Go to the [CCRE website](#) for a full list of the programs available to help aspiring educators pay for their education. For more information, email [Robert.Fulton@unco.edu](mailto:Robert.Fulton@unco.edu).



## Interested in Teaching?

Here's what to do next: Contact the Colorado Department of Education's (CDE) partner, [TEACH Colorado](#), for a one-on-one consultation with a licensed teacher. The CDE's [Educator Recruitment and Retention specialists](#) can help districts and individuals identify the options available for teachers, principals, and other educators. CDE licensing consultants can help individuals identify the correct credential for their desired path.

Individuals interested in becoming teachers can also work with their local school districts and charter schools to determine how their expertise aligns with the needs of those districts and schools. Lastly, a good way to test the waters before committing to obtaining full licensure is to obtain a substitute authorization and work as a substitute teacher.

## Upcoming Application Timelines

**Colorado Rural Student Teaching Stipend** applications for fall 2024 accepted:  
December 1, 2023, through March 31, 2024

**National Board Certified Teacher Stipend** applications for 2024 accepted:  
January 1, 2024, through April 30, 2024

**Rural Inservice Educator Stipend** applications for fall 2024 accepted:  
May 1, 2024, through August 31, 2024

**Colorado Rural Student Teaching Stipend** applications for spring 2025 accepted:  
July 1, 2024, through October 31, 2024

**Colorado Substitute Stipend** applications accepted:  
Not currently accepting applications

Visit TEACH Colorado's **Financial Aid and Scholarship Information** page for information about additional scholarships.

For financial aid available to in-service and aspiring educators, download the **Colorado Department of Education's Educator Recruitment and District Supports flyer**.

## Featured Partners

Learn more about our featured partners and how they are helping to solve the teacher shortage in rural Colorado. To have your organization added as a featured partner, please email [Robert.Fulton@unco.edu](mailto:Robert.Fulton@unco.edu).



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*Grace and Truth*

This month, we'd like to highlight [Colorado Christian University Online](#), which offers a variety of fully online undergraduate and graduate level educator preparation programs in both non-licensure and licensure pathways. These programs, authorized by the Colorado Department of Education, are offered through CCU's College of Adult and Graduate Studies and are specifically designed to meet the unique needs of working adults.

Robert Fulton, PhD | Director

