



Rural Centered March 2025

A Monthly Newsletter from the
Colorado Center for Rural Education

	Long-Term Sub	Retired	Alternative	Emergency	Unfilled	Totals
2018-29	92	82	205	81	71	531
2019-20	120	93	208	42	72	535
2020-21	113	95	191	44	95	538
2021-22	159	128	284	81	295	947
2022-23	257	144	318	68	324	1111
2023-24	280	196	308	121	250	1155

According to the CDE's 2023-2024 educator shortage survey results, Colorado's rural and small rural districts and BOCES had 905 positions filled by shortage mechanisms, and 250 positions were unfilled the entire school year.

CCRE Addresses the Teacher Shortage in Multiple Ways

The U.S. faces a worsening teacher shortage, particularly in Western states, rural and urban communities, high-poverty areas, and in certain subject areas such as science and special education. Colorado's teacher shortage is more severe than the national average, with higher percentages of unfilled positions and teachers planning to leave the profession. Colorado ranks low in its ability to attract teachers due to lower salaries, less desirable working conditions, and lower levels of support compared to national averages.

Dr. Robert Fulton, the Director of the [Colorado Center for Rural Education](#) (CCRE), recently co-authored [an article](#) that was published in the Journal of Educational Research and Innovation, titled "[The Colorado Center for Rural Education: Mitigating the Teacher Shortage in Colorado.](#)" In this month's newsletter, we summarize key points from the article and the work CCRE is doing to motivate teachers to lend their knowledge and talent to rural Colorado schools.

The Center uses multiple avenues to address the teacher shortage in rural Colorado. They aim to recruit and retain educators in rural areas by providing financial incentives, partnering with other organizations, and providing information about how to be successful as a teacher in a rural community.

Stipend Awards

Since 2016, the Center has awarded nearly \$5 million in stipends to recruit and retain educators. CCRE offers various stipends to support different educator pathways:

- The Rural Alternative Licensure Stipend, which allows community members to start teaching while earning certification;
- The Rural Inservice Educator Stipend, which allows practicing educators to gain additional certifications;
- The Colorado Rural Teaching Stipend, which supports teacher candidates during their clinical experiences;
- The National Board Certified Teacher stipend for teachers seeking national certification; and
- The Special Service Provider Stipend for individuals pursuing a role as a special services provider.

Stipends have led to higher retention rates among rural teachers, with in-service stipend recipients retained at an 86% rate and pre-service recipients at an 80% rate.

Colorado Center for Rural Education			
2023-2024 Stipends	Number of Awards	Award Amount	Total Awarded
Colorado Rural Student Teaching Stipend (Fall 2023)	35	\$4,000	\$140,000
Colorado Rural Student Teaching Stipend (Spring 2023)	38	\$4,000	\$152,000
Rural Inservice Educator Stipend	75	\$6,000	\$450,000
National Board Certified Teacher Stipend	15	\$4,250	\$63,750
Special Service Provider Stipends	14	\$6,000	\$84,000
Totals	177		\$889,750

The Center awarded 177 stipends in the 2023-2024 academic year, totaling almost \$890,000.

The Center also provides information on multiple teacher pathways, including hiring current students as “Teachers of Record,” J-1 Visa exchange teachers, adjunct instructor authorization, and substitute teacher stipends.

The article gives several testimonials from teachers and administrators that highlight the positive effects of the stipends on their professional development and ability to serve their communities. Kristen Esposito, a third-grade teacher in Weld County, said, “Trying to pay for a master's degree while helping my oldest child through college was going to be a huge burden on my family. This degree will help me ensure that all of my students, especially emergent bilingual students, have access to quality instruction.”

Marsha Cody, Haxtun School District’s former superintendent, reports that with CCRE’s support, “...we were able to staff multiple positions through various licensing pathways with people already connected to our community. This year, our district-certified turnover rate decreased from 30% to 5%!”

Hire	Help	Encourage	Support	Champion
Hire Community members with bachelor's degrees who want to earn alternative licenses (Rural Alternative Licensure)	Help existing teachers gain dual certification to teach additional content areas (Rural Inservice Educator)	Encourage student teachers to choose your district (Rural Student Teacher)	Support teachers to gain National Board Certification	Champion Special Service Providers who choose your district or BOCES

Use these strategies to fill rural teaching positions.

Collaborations and Partnerships

CCRE collaborates with various stakeholders to strengthen educator pathways and improve rural student outcomes, including Colorado institutions of higher education, rural school districts, and educational organizations. Director Fulton said, “Our long-term goal is to develop a sustainable system for recruitment, preparation, and retention of highly effective educators in Colorado’s rural school districts. To that end, we pursue and encourage new and ongoing relationships with agencies and organizations that are like-minded.”

The article also provides detailed information on various options for high school and college students to pay for college and become teachers, including concurrent enrollment programs, stipends, grants, scholarships, and other financial aid resources.

The Center has provided significant support to aspiring and practicing teachers, and those efforts have led to higher retention rates among rural educators. CCRE continues to work towards fully funding stipend programs and developing sustainable solutions for educator recruitment and retention.

Upcoming Application Timelines

Colorado Rural Student Teaching Stipend applications for fall 2025 accepted: December 1, 2024, through March 31, 2025

National Board Certified Teacher Stipend applications accepted: January 1, 2025, through April 30, 2025

Visit TEACH Colorado's **Financial Aid and Scholarship Information** 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.



Since 2003, [Colorado Learning](#) has helped education professionals find excellent jobs in the education sector and helped schools find high-quality teachers. They are doing everything possible to find, attract and keep top education talent in the state.

[Check out the story](#) we wrote about how they work with J-1 visa holders!

Robert Fulton, PhD | Director

