



## CENTER FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

COLORADO MESA  
UNIVERSITY

# How to Pay for College to Become and Stay a Teacher in Colorado

Updated 4.19.2026

### Colorado Employment

- Earn money by serving as a paraprofessional and/or substitute teacher.
  - Colorado paraprofessionals make \$20.72 per hour on average. (Indeed)
  - Colorado substitutes make \$26.32 per hour on average. (Indeed)

### Colorado Center for Rural Education Programs

- Colorado Rural Alternative Licensure Stipend (RALS): \$4,500
  - <https://www.unco.edu/ebs/centers-institutes/rural-education/rural-alternative-licensure-stipend/>
- Colorado Rural Inservice Educator Stipend (RIES): \$6,000
  - <https://www.unco.edu/ebs/centers-institutes/rural-education/rural-inservice-educator-stipend/>
- Colorado Rural Student Teacher Stipend (CRTS): \$4,000
  - <https://www.unco.edu/ebs/centers-institutes/rural-education/colorado-rural-student-teaching-stipend/>
- National Board Certified Teacher Stipend (NBCT): \$4,250
  - <https://www.unco.edu/ebs/centers-institutes/rural-education/national-board-certified-teacher-stipend/>
- Special Service Provider Stipend (SSPS): \$6,000
  - <https://www.unco.edu/ebs/centers-institutes/rural-education/special-services-provider-stipend/>

### Colorado Department of Education Programs

- CDE ERR (Educator Recruitment and Retention): up to \$7,500
  - NOTE: The max award prior to 2026-2027 was \$10,000.
  - <https://ed.cde.state.co.us/educatortalent/errprogram>
- High School Concurrent Enrollment: up to 60 credit hours FREE
  - <https://www.cde.state.co.us/postsecondary/concurrentenrollment>

## Colorado Department of Higher Education Programs

- Colorado College Opportunity Fund: \$116 per credit hour (public colleges) and \$58 per credit hour (private colleges)
  - <https://cdhe.colorado.gov/programs-services/the-college-opportunity-fund>
- Colorado Educator Loan Forgiveness: up to \$5,000 in loan forgiveness annually
  - NOTE: The 2026-2027 fiscal year is likely the last year for this program.
  - <https://cdhe.colorado.gov/colorado-educator-loan-forgiveness>
- Colorado Promise: Students who attend Colorado public institutions of higher education with family incomes of \$90,000 or less are eligible for COMPLETE REIMBURSEMENT of any out-of-pocket tuition and fees they pay.
  - <https://cdhe.colorado.gov/colorado-promise>
- Colorado Rural Teaching Fellowship: \$10,000
  - <https://cdhe.colorado.gov/rural-teaching-fellowship>

## Colorado Department of Labor and Employment

- Colorado Workforce Centers: free or supplemental educational opportunities
  - <https://cdle.colorado.gov/jobs-training/workforce-centers>

## Federal Programs

- Pell Grant: For the 2026–27 award year, the maximum Pell Grant through FAFSA award is \$7,395.
  - <https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/grants/pell>
- Public Service Loan Forgiveness: The PSLF forgives the remaining balance on a direct loan.
  - <https://studentaid.gov/manage-loans/forgiveness-cancellation/public-service>
- USDOE TEACH Grant (Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education): up to \$4,000
  - <https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/grants/teach>

## State of Colorado Programs

- Serve Colorado: variable living stipends
  - <https://servecolorado.colorado.gov/Education>

## TEACH Colorado Programs

- TEACH Colorado: variable scholarships and application fee reimbursements
  - <https://colorado.teach.org/financial-support>

---

To learn more, join an upcoming virtual open house:

Robert W. Fulton, PhD

Director - Colorado Center for Rural Education

Email: [robert.fulton@unco.edu](mailto:robert.fulton@unco.edu)