



COLORADO

**Department of
Higher Education**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Megan McDermott, Director of Communications

Office: 303-974-2495, Cell: 720-394-3205, Megan.McDermott@dhe.state.co.us

Colorado Department of Higher Education opens application for Educator Loan Forgiveness program

Up to 100 qualified educators will be eligible for an annual payment of up to \$5,000 toward their outstanding educational loans

Dec. 10, 2019: The Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) is now accepting applications for its [educator loan forgiveness program](#), which will grant up to \$5,000 annually for five years to educators currently serving rural districts or teaching in hard-to-fill positions.

To qualify, teachers and principals must have graduated from [an approved Colorado educator preparation program](#), while special services providers (SSP) must have completed an accredited program of study in their current endorsement area. SSPs include school nurses, physical therapists, psychologists and social workers.

“As a former high school teacher and administrator, I know how hard educators work to foster positive learning environments for all students,” said CDHE executive director Dr. Angie Paccione. “This program changes the calculus for current and aspiring educators so more choose to serve and stay in our classrooms.”

The program will prioritize applicants who serve in [rural school districts](#) or teach in [content shortage areas](#)—subjects that historically attract fewer educators. Prospective applicants can [check their eligibility](#) on the CDHE website.

To apply, prospective participants will first [determine their eligibility](#) through this online form. If educators meet the program requirements, CDHE will invite them to submit applications by Feb. 21, 2020. CDHE will notify all applicants of their program status on or before April 30, 2020.

“The best part about being a lawmaker is not so much actually making the laws as it is seeing them in action,” said Sen. Rachel Zenzinger, the sponsor of the original loan-forgiveness bill in the state legislature. “It is very satisfying to see the real-world benefits that this bill will have on Colorado communities, and it is heart-warming to think about the improvements that we can expect to see in public education, especially in rural areas.”

The loan forgiveness program is among several strategies CDHE and the Colorado Department of Education are pursuing to help curb the state’s educator shortage, which has hit rural districts especially hard. Enrollment and completion of Colorado educator preparation programs have declined 21 percent and 22 percent since 2011 respectively, while nearly a third of current educators will be eligible for retirement over the next several years.

###