



Release date: August 22, 2016

Request for Proposals: **Supporting Rural Educator Recruitment and Retention**
Colorado State Senate Bill 16-104; DHE Reference Number: 16-001

**GENERAL
INFORMATION
ABOUT THE
PROGRAM**

Following the 2016 legislative session, Senate Bill 16-104 was approved and signed into law by Governor Hickenlooper as Article 76 within title 23 of the Colorado Revised Statutes. This law provides funding for one Colorado institution of higher education to house a rural education coordinator that will: (a.) direct and oversee all activities related to supporting student teachers in rural and small-rural districts, (b.) coordinate and supervise the process of providing financial assistance to educators within rural and small-rural districts pursuing qualifications as a concurrent enrollment qualified teacher or a nationally board certified teacher and (c.) sustain recruiting efforts leading to placement of educators in rural and small-rural districts as teachers, administrators or educational support providers. This individual will also be responsible for collaborating with the Colorado Department of Education, the Colorado Department of Higher Education, the Colorado BOCES Association, all Colorado IHEs, alternative license providers and Colorado's local educational agencies (e.g. k-12 school districts) in all efforts related to rural educator recruiting and retention.

**FOCUS AND
ROLE OF THE
RURAL
EDUCATION
COORDINATOR**

Rural school districts throughout Colorado continue to have difficulty finding qualified educators to serve as classroom educators, school leaders and/or special service providers within their individual school districts.

To help alleviate this issue, funding has been established to support initiatives designed to increase the number of individuals pursuing careers in rural education. As outlined in C.R.S. 23-76-101 to 23-76-106, the following focus areas have been specified:

- 1.) Student teachers serving in rural or small-rural districts will be eligible for financial incentives to help offset tuition costs incurred while completing their student teaching. Selected candidates for this program will receive a stipend not to exceed \$2800.00 upon the successful completion of their student teaching. Up to 40 students per year may participate in this program.
- 2.) Current educators employed in rural or small-rural districts will be eligible to receive funding of up to \$6000.00 to offset costs associated with becoming qualified to teach concurrent enrollment (CE) courses or becoming recognized as a nationally board certified teacher (NBCT). Up to 20 educators may participate in this program annually.
- 3.) Funding has been provided to support teacher cadet programs within rural and small-rural school districts. These programs are designed to identify and support high school students who are interested in pursuing teaching careers in rural Colorado.
- 4.) Supporting the employment of a rural education coordinator within an

institution of higher education. This individual will work collaboratively with various state agencies, Colorado colleges and universities, local school districts and educational organizations to support the recruitment and retention of educators within Colorado's rural and small-rural school districts.

These specific areas of focus align with ongoing and specific initiatives within DHE and CDE. Proposals for this position should include and incorporate all the specified areas of focus.

The role of the rural education coordinator may include but is not limited to:

- 1.) Supporting and promoting rural education as a career for college-bound middle and high school students. This includes working with individual schools, school districts and career guidance organizations.
- 2.) Developing an application and review process for student teachers in rural areas to receive the available student-teacher stipend and submitting a roster of selected participants to the Department of Higher Education for payment. Developing guidelines and an appeals process for participation in the stipend program and enforcing program participation agreements and compliance by participants.
- 3.) Develop awarding guidelines and a process for teachers seeking one of the available NCBT or Concurrent Enrollment Certification stipends. Work with the Department of Higher Education to ensure participating educators receive payment.
- 4.) Track outcomes and other data points necessary for reporting on the effectiveness of the programs and efforts undertaken to increase rural educators.

**ELIGIBLE
PROPOSALS &
SELECTION
CRITERIA**

Proposals should demonstrate the institution's commitment to rural education and demonstrate how they would both provide services associated with the focus areas as outlined above. Proposals should also include initiatives related to sustain these efforts past the five years of provided funding.

Eligibility requirements have been established within 23-76-102 and 23-76-103. Accordingly, all proposals must meet the following minimum requirements and **must** include the following:

1. a public or private college or university authorized by the State of Colorado and the Colorado Commission for Higher Education and the Colorado Department of Education to prepare teachers, principals, and/or paraprofessionals.

Proposals will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Established history of rural education outreach – Proposals should identify previous and ongoing work done in support of rural recruitment and rural education, including specific information regarding ongoing efforts to place teachers in geographically remote regions of Colorado. Preferential points will

be provided to those institutions actively involved in rural education outreach and educator recruitment.

- Institutional willingness for collaboration – Proposals should outline and document institutional efforts that highlight previous collaborative work with Colorado educational organizations (e.g. CDE, DHE, Colorado BOCES Association, CASE, CASPA, other Colorado IHEs offering educator preparation programs, etc.).
- Ability to monitor and collect data related to rural educator recruitment and retention – Proposals should provide detail on how the institution intends to collect, analyze and utilize data collected by the rural education coordinator (or his/her designee). Specific information on the utilization of this data for program modification should be included.
- External funding development and sustainability – Proposals should include information on how the coordinator and/or institution will look to augment state funding with external funding sources in order to sustain rural education activities and provide long-term positive impact to Colorado’s rural and small-rural school districts.
- Host IHE contribution – Proposals should include narrative regarding the potential contribution(s), both monetary and in-kind, to be provided by the IHE selected to house the rural education coordinator. This may include, but is not limited to, in-kind support and/or monetary supplements to state-provided funding for this role.

**NARRATIVE
DETAIL**

Within the narrative of this proposal, please include the following components:

- Statement of institutional interest and support to house the rural educator coordinator at the specified IHE for a period of at least 5 years
- Identification of key personnel (administrators and/or faculty) that will be involved in supporting the work of the rural coordinator
- Detailed initiatives that the rural coordinator would direct in an effort to enhance interest in individuals becoming rural educators
- Projected timelines for the hiring of a rural recruiter (if not already employed by the institution) and for the implementation of initiatives related to rural educator recruiting and retention. For these purposes, a projected start date for new initiatives of January 1, 2017 would be suitable.
- Evaluation criteria for the rural education coordinator and for the initiatives developed by the institution and/or coordinator. This evaluation should include quantitative and/or qualitative data analysis components.

All narratives must not exceed 20 pages (12-point font, single spacing). Any proposal that exceeds this limit will be returned to the submitter for revision (if time allows). Appendices are not included within the 20-page limit.

**FINANCIAL
SEGMENTATION**

Please note the following required budgetary guidelines regarding this RFP. As this RFP is not grant-based and provides direct salary compensation, no indirect cost allowances are permitted.

Total annual appropriation: \$441,095

DHE FTE allocation: \$14,095

Student teacher financial incentives: \$112,000

Teacher Cadet funding (administered by DHE): \$50,000

NBCT/Concurrent Enrollment Stipends: \$120,000

Rural Coordinator and staff Salary, Benefits and Operations: \$145,000

**REQUIRED
SECTIONS AND
DOCUMENTS
FOR PROPOSALS**

1. An executive abstract of not more than 250 words.
2. Narrative including details as outlined above.
3. Projected budget and detailed costs for the rural coordinator salary, benefits and operational costs
4. Appendix should include one-page vitae for key project staff. Letters of support should also be contained within the appendix.

Narrative components **cannot** exceed twenty (20) double-spaced pages (not including vitas, budgets, and letters of support, which may be included in an appendix). Proposals exceeding this page limit will be returned for revision.

**PROPOSAL AND
APPLICATION
DEADLINE:
SEPTEMBER 1,
2016**

Proposals must be submitted by the higher education institution's academic vice president/CAO to the Colorado Department of Higher Education by **12:00 PM, October 21, 2016**. All proposals need to be submitted electronically to: **robert.mitchell@dhe.state.co.us** with the heading "*Rural Education RFP*" in the subject line.

GRANT PERIOD

The funding period for this initiative will be **July 1, 2016 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2021**. All funding is subject to annual state appropriation determinations.

NOTIFICATION

The Department will notify the selected grant recipients by **NOVEMBER 18, 2016**.

**REPORTING AND
AUDIT**

The director of this project will complete both annual and final performance reports demonstrating any increase in the recruitment and retention of effective educators in rural areas. A spreadsheet template will be provided by Colorado Department of Higher Education for both the annual and final performance reports. Also, a final accounting report is required. The financial records of each funded project shall be made available for inspection or audit on reasonable notice from DHE.

Additionally, the project director (or his/her designee) may be required to attend or participate in project-end meeting with the representatives from the Colorado Department of Higher Education to review program effectiveness and

recommendations for further action
Questions regarding the RFP may be addressed to:
Robert.Mitchell@dhe.state.co.us.

**DHE CONTACT
INFORMATION**

**Colorado Department of Higher Education
1560 Broadway, Suite 1600 Denver, CO 80202
Office: (303) 862-3006**

