



Educator Stipend Fact Sheet

[HB22-1220: Removing Barriers to Educator Preparation](#) established stipend programs for Colorado educator candidates. The purpose of the stipends is to remove financial burdens for teacher and school counselor candidates so they can participate in deep clinical experiences under the direct supervision of a mentor prior to taking on licensure and the position. We know that such roles typically go unpaid so the stipends are to alleviate the financial strain that candidates would face while in their residency/internships full-time. To qualify for the stipends, candidates must be able to demonstrate financial need according to legislative guidelines.

Funding for both the residency and test preparation stipends is available for the 2024-25 academic year. The Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) distributes funds to Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) based on the number of eligible students they each identify to the department. Programs then disburse the funds directly to candidates. Students who have questions should contact their School of Education for award information. ***There is no formal application process through CDHE for the stipend programs.***

Student Educator Stipend Program

The Student Educator Stipend Program awards money to an eligible student to compensate them for their clinical experience in an academic residency position. Candidates placed in a 16-week academic residency may receive a stipend of up to \$11,000, and those in a 32-week academic residency may receive a stipend of up to \$22,000. The stipends will be disbursed to candidates using the standard methods for allocating state-based financial aid (could affect financial aid package) or as wages (taxable income) for employment in monthly installments. Candidates are encouraged to work directly with their programs and financial aid offices to determine which may be best. Additionally, if the number of eligible candidates exceeds the current level of funding, CDHE has legislative discretion to direct programs to lower the overall amount of each stipend.

Student Educator Test Stipend Program

The Student Educator Test Stipend Program awards funds to authorized preparation programs to reduce financial barriers for eligible students preparing for the assessment(s) of professional competencies for licensure. The stipends will be disbursed by the preparation program to eligible students to pay the fees and costs associated with the assessment(s), which may include test vouchers, preparation materials or courses, and travel and lodging costs for getting to a testing site.

EPPs may purchase vouchers or make other arrangements to pay for the costs and fees associated with taking the exams necessary for licensure. Programs may choose to disburse the student educator test stipend funds through the financial aid office as they will not be considered part of an estimated family assistance and will not be taxable. Eligible expenses may include purchasing test vouchers on behalf of students, reimbursement of exam fees, purchasing or reimbursing costs for test preparation materials (including programs, courses, and tutoring), and third-party test preparation materials and vouchers. EPPs will also determine how many times a student can take the Praxis exams. Student educators can get stipend support for all competency-based tests such as the Praxis that are used toward licensure. Please consult with CDHE for testing outside of Praxis.

Demonstrating Financial Need

To qualify for either the student educator stipend or the student educator test stipend, candidates must meet certain income eligibility requirements. If the candidate is a United States citizen or an eligible noncitizen as described in the glossary at the end of this fact sheet, then they are eligible to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid ([FAFSA](#)). If not, they will need to complete the Colorado Application for State Financial Aid ([CASFA](#)).

Once a candidate completes the FAFSA or CASFA, the EPP will determine their financial eligibility (being within 250% of Pell eligibility) based on their Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) and Student Aid Index (SAI). Also considered as part of those calculations are family size and the number of family members who will attend college or career school during the year. CDHE's main objective is to ensure that the students are Pell eligible or within 250% of Pell. Per statute (CRS 23-3.9-302) a student cannot qualify for this program if they are determined to be above 250% of the maximum Pell amount as determined by the United States Department of Education. CDHE has provided educator preparation programs with guidance on prioritization groups but at no point can a student be eligible for this program who is found to be above the

250% Pell amount. Programs must ensure that all eligibility decisions are documented for reporting and possible auditing at a later date. Due to the varied needs of our educator preparation programs that are participating in HB22-1220, CDHE recommends the following three qualification formulas and has advised that programs should use the method that works best for their program.

Method 1:

The first priority group will be candidates who qualify with an Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) of \$67,500.00 and no more than 16,637.50 Student Aid Index (SAI). The 2nd priority* group will be students with an AGI between \$67,600.00-\$90,000.00 and no more than 16,637.50 SAI.

Method 2:

Priority 1: Candidate is Pell Eligible (Max, Min, or Calculated)

Priority 2*: Needs to be further defined by your Financial Aid team but to include: 250% of min Pell eligibility based on 2022 AGI, Federal Poverty Guidelines and Family Size. Min Pell eligibility is determined using a percentage within the poverty guideline, based on the status of the student (dependent or independent).

Method 3:

Each participating program will be responsible for establishing a process to standardize the qualification and approvals of each student within 250% of Pell. A written policy and procedure guide must be submitted to CDHE in order to provide documentation of the established process.

*For all the methods we intend to fund both priority groups. The priority groups are to help sort the students because priority group 1 should be less time intensive for the qualification.

When completing the FAFSA, candidates will list their college or university that they want to receive their information by entering their school's [Federal School Code](#). While completing the FAFSA form, one must list at least one school to receive their information. If the candidate's EPP is not listed, they should enter another Colorado public institution or print their completed application and take it to their program director to complete the steps necessary to determine their eligibility.

Stipend Program FAQs

How will student teachers receive their student educator stipends?

Preparation programs will distribute the stipends to students using their own standard methods for allocating state-based financial aid to each eligible student in monthly installments.

How will student teachers receive their testing funds?

EPPs will make arrangements to pay for the costs and fees associated with taking the Praxis exams required for licensure.

What experiences/guidelines qualify one to receive one of these stipends?

Eligible candidates must be enrolled in an approved educator preparation program, have a placement for student teaching/academic residency in the upcoming academic year, and their expected family contribution cannot exceed 250% of the maximum federal limit to be eligible for PELL grants.

What documentation does a candidate need to provide in order to take part in this program?

In order to show that students meet the PELL financial eligibility guidelines to receive the stipends, there must be a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) or CASFA (Colorado Application for State Financial Aid) on file for each candidate with their preparation program.

Do these stipends only apply to undergraduate students, or can post-baccalaureate students also receive them?

Yes, post-baccalaureate and graduate students seeking initial licensure may be eligible. Students should work with their financial aid office to ensure that they meet the income eligibility requirements.

Teacher of Record candidates are not eligible but what about candidates in alternative programs?

Candidates taking part in an alternative program are not typically eligible for the stipends because they are considered Teachers of Record, but there are a handful of alternative programs that do offer a residency alongside a mentor teacher before they become a Teacher of Record. As alternative teachers in that role, they would be eligible during that portion of their program.

Can a school counseling candidate be serving as a teacher of record in a classroom if they are seeking a school counseling degree? And can a school counseling candidate be serving as a school counselor under an Intern Authorization or Temporary Educator Eligibility (TEE) Authorization?

In-service teachers (teachers of record) and those serving in paid school counselor roles under intern or TEE authorizations are *not* eligible. The purpose of the stipends is to provide funding for candidates so that they can participate in deep clinical experiences under the direct supervision of mentors prior to taking on the role. We know that such roles typically go unpaid so the stipends are to alleviate the financial burdens that candidates would face while being in their internships full-time.

Are the test stipends retroactive or only for fees that will be paid in the future?

Funding for the test stipends is primarily available to eligible students who are enrolled in an educator preparation program as of July 1, 2023. However, if test stipend funds are available, program leaders will secondly consider graduates of an approved program of preparation who were placed as student educators before passing the assessment of professional competencies in state fiscal years 2019-2020, 2020-2021, and 2021-22. This provision is intended for students who could not test during Covid but would like to finish their testing. Please have program leadership reach out to CDHE for guidance in such a situation.

Are practicum students (pre-student teaching) eligible if they are in placements that meet residency criteria? Or is this only available for the final semester/year as a student teacher?

Only candidates completing their clinical final experience (student teaching or residency) are eligible for the student educator stipends. However, eligible students can receive test stipend support prior to that clinical experience.

Are candidates eligible for stipends if they are completing their clinical experience/residency outside of the State of Colorado?

After consulting with the bill sponsors, CDHE has determined that educator candidates do qualify for stipends if their student teaching/clinical experience takes place no more than 100 miles outside of the Colorado border. This was further legislated with language in [HB23-1001](#). This rule is designed to support students enrolled in educator preparation programs at institutions located near state borders where placement opportunities include service in rural communities located near, but outside of, Colorado. It is the responsibility of institutions to verify that placement sites qualify given this requirement.

Are candidates eligible for stipends if they are in an out-of-state or online preparation program but are completing their student teaching/residency in state?

HB22-1220 defines a candidate who is eligible for this program as someone who is “enrolled in an approved program of preparation,” a list of which can be found on [CDE’s website](#). As the funding for this program goes from CDHE to authorized preparation programs for disbursement directly to candidates from there, candidates in unauthorized and/or out-of-state programs are not eligible to be part of this stipend program.

What happens to a stipend if a candidate withdraws from their program?

If a student withdraws from their program, or is unsuccessful during their educator residency, program staff should inform the office paying the student’s monthly stipends. Stipend payments should end immediately.

If a candidate receives these funds, does that affect their eligibility for loan forgiveness or any other financial aid or stipend program?

HB22-1220 stipulates that if a candidate receives these stipend funds, they will not be eligible to receive funds through the Temporary Educator Loan Forgiveness program, and those who have received the Temporary Educator Loan Award are not eligible to received educator stipend funding. Candidates may still be eligible to receive other educator recruitment and retention initiatives, however. Contact educator.preparation@dhe.state.co.us with specific questions.

Educator Stipends Glossary

Academic Residency – a 16-week to 32-week intentional clinical experience for student educators who are placed in a school- or community-based setting for their culminating clinical experience. The student teacher/resident cannot be the teacher of record in the classroom. If the candidate is paid for work in the classroom and is using that work as their hours toward their residency placement, the EPP must demonstrate through documentation a separation of duties. Student teachers cannot be paid for work in the classroom and receive the stipend for the same work. EPP’s must demonstrate a separation of duties as this would be a duplication of benefits.

Approved Program of Preparation – An Educator Preparation Program (EPP) at a public, private, or proprietary postsecondary institution authorized by the Colorado Commission of Higher Education to offer educator preparation programs, or a designated agency authorized by the State Board of Education to offer educator preparation programs.

CASFA – Colorado Application for State Financial Aid (CASFA) is used to determine the need for financial aid awarding purposes to students historically left out of receiving state and federal financial aid. **Non-U.S. citizens** and those that are **not permanent residents of the U.S.** can use the CASFA to apply for aid. Students who are eligible for Federal Title IV aid by completing the FAFSA should not complete the CASFA.

Eligible Student – A student who is enrolled in an approved program of preparation and eligible for financial assistance because the student's expected family contribution does not exceed 250% of the maximum federal Pell-eligible expected family contribution.

FAFSA – The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is used to demonstrate financial need. Use the FAFSA if you are a student educator enrolled in an approved preparation program and:

- are a U.S. citizen or an eligible noncitizen;
 - An eligible noncitizen is a U.S. national (includes natives of American Samoa or Swains Island), U.S. permanent resident (who has an I-151, I-551 or I-551C [Permanent Resident Card]), or an individual who has an Arrival-Departure Record (I-94) from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) showing one of the following designations:
 - "Refugee"
 - "Asylum Granted"
 - "Cuban-Haitian Entrant (Status Pending)"
 - "Conditional Entrant" (valid only if issued before April 1, 1980)
 - Victims of human trafficking, T-visa (T-2, T-3, or T-4, etc.) holder
 - "Parolee" (You must be paroled into the United States for at least one year and you must be able to provide evidence from the USCIS that you are in the United States for other than a temporary purpose and that you intend to become a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.)

Student Educator – A candidate in a preparation program for initial teacher or school counselor licensure.