

This response was prepared for Pad McCracken, Research Analyst, Montana Legislative Services

Your Question

You asked for information about what other states are doing to encourage pre-service teachers to complete their student teaching in rural districts and schools.

Our Response

It appears that few states have rural recruitment programs specific to student teaching. We did track down two states – **Colorado** and **Minnesota** – that have passed legislation this year encouraging student teaching in rural areas. It appears that much of the work around this area happens more at the district or school levels or through partnerships with teacher preparation programs. I have included information about rural-focused partnership programs below, including two funded through the U.S. Department of Education’s Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) grant program. If you would like more examples of rural-focused TQP grantee programs, let me know.

Although not specific to student teaching, there are a number of states with programs for teachers who agree to work in rural schools or in subject areas with a shortage of teachers. If you are interested in some state programs incentivizing teachers to work in rural schools or hard-to-staff subject areas, let me know and I’d be happy to send along some state examples. Most of these programs focus on financial incentives.

Finally, you may be interested in this 2008 report from REL Central, [Preparing Teacher to Teach in Rural Schools](#). Although it is a few years old, there is some interesting information, including some information specific to student teaching.

State Examples

Colorado

In 2016, the legislature passed [SB16-104](#) creating multiple programs to incentive teachers to work in rural districts, one of which provides financial incentives for student teachers in rural areas. Under this program the department of higher education will provide up to 40 stipends of \$2,800 to offset tuition costs for students who complete student teaching in a rural school or district. Students who accept the stipend agree to teach in a rural school or district for at least two years. (See page 4 of the bill; bill summary available [here](#).)

Minnesota

The legislature approved [HF2749](#) in 2016 (currently awaiting the governor’s signature) creating a grant program providing student teaching stipends for low-income students interested in a high-needs subject area or region. This includes subject areas or specific regions of the state facing a shortage of teachers. Students must demonstrate financial need and meet program guidelines that will be established by the commissioner of education. (See Article 25, Section 59, page 491-492.)

Additionally, the Minnesota Department of Education’s 2015 *Teacher Supply and Demand* report may be of some interest to you. It found that rural districts in Minnesota had a very difficult time attracting teachers and had some of

the highest use of license variances. The report is available on the Department of Education's [website](#) (see "Teacher Supply and Demand Report" at the very bottom).

Teacher Preparation Program Partnerships

Teacher Quality Partnership Grants

The U.S. Department of Education's [Teacher Quality Partnership \(TQP\) Grant Program](#) provides grants to promote partnerships between teacher preparation programs and high-needs districts and schools, including those in rural areas. Below are two examples of rural-focused grantee programs that specifically address student teaching (**Kansas**) or exposing pre-service teachers to rural communities (**Iowa**).

- [Preparing Educators in Rural Kansas](#). This program is a partnership with MidAmerica Nazarene University (MNU), Southwest Plains Regional Service Center, and several schools. One of the program's goals is to place student teachers from MNU in rural western Kansas.
- [Iowa Teacher Quality Partnership](#). This program is a partnership between, among others, the University of Northern Iowa, the Iowa Department of Education, and a number of schools. Prior to beginning their student teaching, pre-service teachers in this program spend three to five days in a partner school classroom. The schools are in rural areas and students live with a family from the school district.

In addition, TQP [recently announced](#) an additional grant program specific to tribal and rural communities.

"STEM Goes Rural" at Purdue University

The ["STEM Goes Rural"](#) fellowship program through Purdue University helps individuals transition to a career teaching in the STEM fields in rural secondary schools. Fellows receive stipends and support as they transition to classroom teaching.