



SB21-215 Open Educational Resources, *sponsored by Senators Hansen and Rankin & Representatives Herod and McCluskie*

This bill appropriates \$1M annually for the next 5 years to the open educational resources (OER) grant, administered by the Department of Higher Education (CDHE), and promotes policy and data collection to expand the use of OER at college campuses.

Background

Although data suggest that earning a postsecondary credential improves individual earning potential and offers robust return on investment, **the cost of college or technical school remains a barrier for many Coloradans**. To this end, CDHE is building capacity for wide-scale implementation of OER. OER are freely available online teaching and learning materials accessible to students, instructors and self-learners. Contained in digital media collections from around the world, examples of OER include full courses, lectures, quizzes, classroom activities, pedagogical materials and many other assets. A 2020 study revealed that during the COVID-19 pandemic, students continued to skip buying assigned textbooks despite concerns it would impact their grade, with food insecure students skipping buying course materials at significantly higher rates.

What is the OER Grant Program?

Institutional grants are intended to support campus-wide OER initiatives with an emphasis on funding faculty who are adopting, adapting or creating OER textbooks or applications on their campus. Other high-student-impact activities may also be appropriate for funding. Individual or small-group grants are intended to support the creation, adaption or adoption of OER by faculty from Colorado public institutions, primarily faculty at an institution without an OER initiative or incentive funding.

In the first two years of the grant program, 96% of eligible institutions have received funding, helping to create the statewide ecosystem of over 120 open education ambassadors championing work on their campuses and in their communities. As a result, students saved a total of **\$3.9 million statewide, representing a 700% return on investment** of state grant dollars. Cumulatively, grantees from the first two years of the grant have developed materials for almost 400 course titles, impacting 41,273 students.

Key Statutory Provisions

1. Charges public institutions to create zero textbook cost pathways, in which students can complete an entire program or certificate without paying for textbooks.
2. Continues infrastructural support to continue to save student money during economically challenging times on campuses where food insecurity for students is often a reality.
3. Provides instructors with support and incentives for refreshing course curriculum through innovative approaches in a growingly digital educational environment.
4. Enables expanding access to course materials to Coloradans seeking education and job advancement.
5. Enhances the Department's ability to measure and report on OER implementation, including analysis of impact on student success metrics and other classroom outcomes.



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The goal of the OER Grant Program is to support deploying and sustaining campus-wide OER initiatives and the creation or adoption of OER by faculty from Colorado public institutions.

Meets all strategic goals of *Colorado Rises to*

**Reach 66% credential attainment
by 2025**

For More Information

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Colorado Department of Higher Education <https://highered.colorado.gov/>

Colorado Rises: Advancing Education and Talent Development <http://masterplan.highered.colorado.gov/>

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