



Recruiting and Retaining Rural Teachers— A Resource Brief

This brief is part of [a seven-part series](#) on challenges related to recruiting and retaining teachers from underrepresented backgrounds or with certain certifications. This series was developed as part of the R9CC Teacher Recruitment, Retention, and Recognition project with Illinois.

Resolving the Rural Teacher Shortage

Attracting and retaining excellent educators is one of the most important drivers of a well-functioning education system—a system that must prepare diverse students with complex needs to participate in today’s knowledge-driven economy. However, a recent surge in the demand for teachers, alongside a diminishing supply and a steady rate of teachers leaving the profession, threatens students’ academic and economic welfare.¹ Teacher turnover adversely impacts student achievement, school finances, and school improvement efforts.² Specific, targeted supports can help recruit and retain teachers in your district.

Rural school districts throughout the country face increasing challenges with recruiting and retaining beginning teachers due to job demands that include a lack of mentoring, lower salaries than their urban and suburban counterparts, geographic isolation, requirements to take on additional nonteaching duties, and teaching assignments that include multiple subjects and grade levels.³

This brief provides resources that highlight examples of strategies, programs, and initiatives that assist states, local education agencies, and school districts with addressing the shortage of certified teachers who commit to teaching in rural school districts. This brief also includes additional resources related to recruiting, retaining, and supporting teachers.

Highlighted Resources

This section highlights examples of strategies, programs, and initiatives that help states, local education agencies, and school districts address the shortage of certified teachers who commit to teaching in rural school districts.

Title	Summary
<u>10 mentoring and induction challenges in rural schools and how to address them (2019)</u>	<p>In rural school settings, mentoring and induction programs must be designed and implemented with the unique challenges of the local context in mind. Strong, locally designed mentoring and induction supports can help to address the unique challenges faced by rural schools related to beginning teacher development and retention. This brief from the Center on Great Teachers and Leaders at the American Institutes for Research outlines 10 common challenges encountered by rural schools when implementing mentoring and induction programs along with strategies to address the challenges and examples from the field.</p>
<u>What does the research say about increasing teacher recruitment and retention in rural areas? (2018)</u>	<p>This report from Regional Educational Laboratory Midwest shares research reports and descriptive studies on increasing teacher recruitment and retention in rural areas, including examples of state strategies to address rural teacher shortages and resources related to K–12 teacher recruitment.</p>
<u>Rural Schools Collaborative Teacher Corps</u>	<p>Education is a linchpin issue in rural economic development but sustaining and strengthening rural schools has many challenges. The Rural Schools Collaborative aims to serve as a catalyst in developing teacher-leaders needed by rural schools and their communities. This site lists the network of teacher preparation programs that partner with rural school districts across the country.</p>
<u>Why rural matters 2018–19 (2019)</u>	<p>This report from the Rural School and Community Trust, the College Board, and the School Superintendents Association analyzes the contexts and conditions of rural education in all 50 states and calling attention to the need for policymakers to address rural education issues, including recruiting and retaining teachers.</p>
<u>Perspectives of potential and current teachers for rural teacher recruitment and retention (2019)</u>	<p>This report from the University of South Carolina Center for Innovation in Higher Education presents suggestions for adopting a course of action for improving teacher recruitment and retention in rural areas throughout South Carolina and other rural areas of the country that are experiencing teacher shortages.</p>

Additional Resources

Teacher recruitment and retention is a challenge across teacher subgroups. These resources offer a more general overview of strategies to combat the teacher shortage.

Brenner, D., Azano, A. P., & Downey, J. (2021, November 29). Helping new teachers stay and thrive in rural areas. *Phi Delta Kappan*. <https://kappanonline.org/new-teachers-stay-thrive-rural-brenner-azano-downey/>

Center on Great Teachers and Leaders at the American Institutes for Research (AIR): <https://gtlcenter.org/>

Duncan, E. (2022). *Addressing teacher shortages in the short and long term: What states and districts can do*. Education Trust. <https://edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Addressing-Teacher-Shortages-in-the-Short-and-Long-Term-May-2022.pdf>

Irvin, M. J., Kunz, G. M., Starrett, A. D., & Harrist, J. N. (2020). *Recruitment and retention of teachers in rural South Carolina*. South Carolina Teacher Education Advancement Consortium. https://sc-teacher.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/RuralRecruitmentWP_2020.pdf

Konoske-Graf, A., Partelow, L., & Benner, M. (2016). *To attract great teachers, school districts must improve their human capital systems*. Center for American Progress. <https://americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/HumanCapitalSurvey-report.pdf>

Podolsky, A., Kini, T., Bishop, J., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2016). *Solving the teacher shortage: How to attract and retain excellent educators*. Learning Policy Institute. https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Solving_Teacher_Shortage_Attract_Retain_Educators_REPORT.pdf

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). (n.d.). Ideas that work: Attract, prepare, retain resource database. <https://osepideasthatwork.org/federal-resources-stakeholders/topical-issues/attract-prepare-retain-resource-database>

U.S. Department of Education, Rural Education Resource Center: <https://www.ed.gov/rural-education>

Other Briefs

This section includes links to other briefs in the series.

[Bilingual Teachers](#)

[New Teachers](#)

[Special Education Teachers](#)

[STEM Teachers](#)

[Teachers in Low-income and Low-performing Schools](#)

[Teachers of Color](#)

Endnotes

¹ Sutchter, L., Darling-Hammond, L., & Carver-Thomas, D. (2016). *A coming crisis in teaching? Teacher supply, demand, and shortages in the U.S.* Learning Policy Institute.

² Podolsky, A., Kini, T., Bishop, J., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2016). *Solving the teacher shortage: How to attract and retain excellent educators.* Learning Policy Institute.

³ Hayes, L., Lachlan-Hache, L., & Williams, H. (2019). *10 mentoring and induction challenges in rural schools and how to address them.* Center on Great Teachers and Leaders at the American Institutes for Research.