



COLORADO

**Department of
Higher Education**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Megan McDermott, Director of Communications

Office: 303-974-2495, Cell: 720-394-3205, Megan.McDermott@dhe.state.co.us

Colorado Commission on Higher Education approves \$1 million in OER grant funding

DENVER, Feb. 21, 2020: The Colorado Commission on Higher Education approved 34 proposals that provide \$1 million in funding for higher education Open Educational Resources (OER) projects throughout the state.

OER are high-quality teaching, learning and research resources that permit free or repurposed use and are legally available to students for free or very low cost. Championed by the General Assembly in 2018, [H.B. 18-1331](#) established the grant program and charged Colorado's OER Council with reviewing and administering the proposals.

“With this year’s \$1 million investment in open education, Colorado is signaling that we support our faculty and institutions in their innovative teaching practices,” said Brittany Dudek, Colorado Community Colleges Online librarian and OER council chair. “Colorado continues to showcase the talent, engagement and dedication of its faculty and institutions to open education.”

In its second year, the [Colorado OER Grant Program](#) awards funds to several institutions in two different tiers: individual and small group; and faculty- and institutional-level grants. Funded proposals are systemwide, intercampus collaborations, and faculty content design in disciplines with high enrollment and

expensive textbook costs. Projects ranging from comprehensive institutional efforts, to individual course material redesigns aim to reinvigorate approaches to teaching and learning at campuses across the state. [View the list of 2020 awards.](#)

With a projected savings of \$3.4 million from the initial grant cycle, this year's grant cycle has seen a notable increase in applicants resulting from educators' amplified interest in Open Education. Colorado has been diligently working on becoming a national OER leader among state peers. The OER Council has established recommendations for continued infrastructural support of this work, and has been [recognized nationally](#). To learn more about the Council's recommendations and the outcomes of the initial grant cycle, read [Transforming Education Practices through Open Educational Resources](#).

"Kudos to the colleges and universities implementing OER on their campuses," said Dr. Angie Paccione, executive director of the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) and prominent advocate of the OER movement. "They are committed to saving their students money, but it's so much more than that. They are on the front lines redesigning teaching approaches and transforming education and the future of learning. Some say our education system hasn't changed in the last 50 years, this is proof it has."

With an additional \$1 million left for next year's grant cycle, Colorado's OER Council is eager to support more projects that will lower costs and improve student success—two goals outlined in CDHE's statewide plan for higher education, [Colorado Rises](#).

Get Involved

In conjunction with CDHE, the OER Council hosts events and other professional development opportunities to help others learn about the open education movement in Colorado. During [Open Education Week 2020](#), March 2-6, CDHE will partner with campuses to put on interactive webinars, panels and more. Campuses are encouraged to host associated events; contact OER@dhe.state.co.us for potential collaboration.

In June, CDHE will host its second-annual [Statewide OER Conference](#) at the Colorado School of Mines. This conference features national and local experts exploring topics in the open education movement at various levels. This year, the conference includes a K-12 track to explore possible OER collaborations with K-12 educators. Governor Jared Polis will recognize outstanding zero textbook cost (ZTC) faculty, staff and programs as part of his [ZTC Challenge](#). To get involved with the 2020 OER Conference, [RSVP](#) or submit a [session proposal](#).

About the Colorado OER Council

The [Colorado OER Council](#) is a dynamic 15-member delegation designated by the executive director of CDHE. Members include experts from various disciplines such as faculty, instructional designers, digital experts, institutional administrators, state staffers and a student representative.

About the Colorado Department of Higher Education

Working with the Colorado Commission on Higher Education, we support students, advocate and develop policies to maximize higher education opportunities for all. The Department believes every Coloradan should have an education beyond high school to pursue their dreams and improve our communities.
