

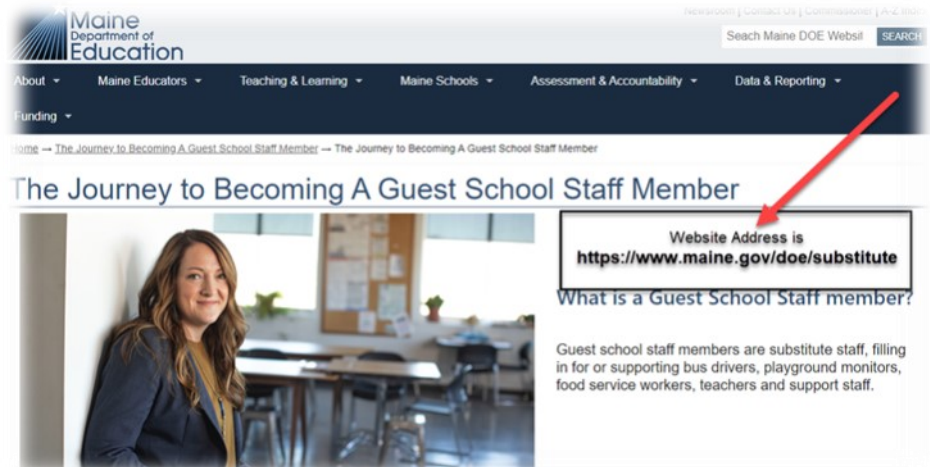
How do I get started subbing?



By “Mr. Boomsma”

The process, like most processes, is continually evolving. In it’s current state (fall, 2022), there are still some fundamental truths. The first one is that anyone who works with children in a school setting is required by law to be fingerprinted through a process approved by the Maine Department of Education (DOE). The fact that you’ve been fingerprinted for some other reason may not be sufficient. You will need a certificate issued by the Maine Department of Education (DOE) indicating you are approved.

Be prepared for some new vocabulary. The DOE has adopted the term “Guest School Staff Member” to describe substitutes. They have created a web page “The Journey to Becoming a Guest School Staff Member.” The first sentence explains “Guest school staff members are substitute staff...” The page describes the steps required with easily identified links to the information needed for each step. Stay focused and take it a step at a time. It’s not necessary to digest the entire process at once. To summarize the process:

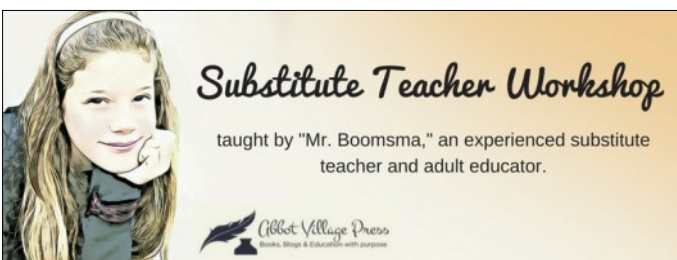


1. You’ll first **complete your employment application** and submit it to the district(s) where you anticipate working. This assumes you have the ability to fill out a PDF form online and email it to the correct address (you can look it up).
2. Next, you’ll **create an account with MEIS** (Maine Educator Information System).
3. You’ll use that account to **submit an application for the background check** that accompanies the fingerprinting.
4. Then you’ll **schedule your fingerprinting** with a company called Identogo.

When you’ve completed those steps, you’ll just need to wait to hear from your local district. Given the current shortage of substitutes, you may be contacted very quickly—even before you’ve been fingerprinted. Just remember that the district you are applying to has access to the MEIS system and can check your status at any time. So can you by signing into your MEIS account. There are some additional suggested steps, including watching three short videos on some important topics.

Most local districts will be helpful, but it’s important to remember that the process truly is an online process managed by the DOE. By their own admission, support and answers to questions is going to be slow.

Your certificate will expire in five years. The DOE will not remind you of the expiration. You’ll need to find some way to remember to keep your credentials current. The rules are potentially confusing because as a substitute you cannot “renew” your certificate—you must effectively “start over” and be fingerprinted again every five years. This rule only applies to substitute teachers and coaches. It’s not necessary to understand it; it’s necessary to do it.



DOE Website:

<https://www.maine.gov/doe/substitute>

There are additional resources for substitute teachers on my website:

<http://wboomsma.com>