

# How do I get started?



Your best place to start is the superintendent's office of the district where you plan to substitute teach. Pick up an application packet. It may include instructions and the paperwork required to complete the required fingerprinting and background check.

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. 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.

A good first step is to make an appointment to be fingerprinted with Identogo, a private contractor who performs this service. There are a number of locations around the state. As of this writing, the cost of fingerprinting is \$55. Make your appointment online:

<http://www.identogo.com/>

The second step is to apply for your certification from the DOE. If your hiring packet did not include an application, you can download one:

<http://www.maine.gov/doe/cert/fingerprinting/approvalform.doc>

Note the form asks if you've been fingerprinted and where. As of this writing, the cost for applying is \$15. You will be issued a temporary certificate fairly quickly. Make a copy and include it with your hiring packet, or if you've already submitted the packet, give a copy to the superintendent's office. Your permanent certificate will arrive later.

The permanent 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.

At present (2017), the rule is potentially confusing because as a substitute you cannot "renew" your certificate—you must effectively "start over" and be fingerprinted again. You may wish to confirm this with your district office. The instructions on the DOE website are, frankly, confusing.

<http://www.maine.gov/doe/cert/fingerprinting/approval-instructions.html>

There are additional resources for substitute teachers on my website:

<http://wboomsma.com>

Don't forget to build your sub pack/bag... and review a copy of the student and parent handbook!

*Substitute Teacher Workshop*  
taught by "Mr. Boomsma," an experienced substitute teacher and adult educator.

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