



If you are just starting your journey into substitute teaching, welcome! It's rewarding and engaging work. Here are some tips for how to get your permit and find jobs at a school or in a district near you.

You'll need to start by getting a permit or license. The process to obtain a substitute teaching permit varies by state, and some US states leave the decision up to the local school district, in which case there may be variation from district to district.

The process to get hired, though generally similar everywhere—apply, interview, onboard—has its unique quirks based on context. Whatever the state process, you can be assured that it will be bureaucratic and a little tricky to navigate. It's likely going to feel new and foreign if you've never applied for a professional permit or public position before, and the rules for doing this are just different.

As you research your district and state requirements, here is what to look for:

- **Substitute Teacher Permit Tiers:** Every state has a few types of sub permits, with differing pay rates and education criteria. Find the tier that fits your background.
- **Education & Training:** Requirements may include a certain level of education (like some college or a bachelor's degree), specific coursework, or teacher training.
- **Background Check & Fingerprinting:** Most states require a criminal background check and fingerprinting to ensure the safety of students. This process may involve going to a designated location for fingerprinting and submitting personal information for the background check.
- **Exams:** Some states have testing requirements, but most states are waiving them or letting candidates use college entrance exams they've already completed as an equivalent. Find out what the requirement is where you are applying.
- **The Application:** After fulfilling the above requirements, you can apply for a substitute teaching permit or license through the state's education department. This often involves submitting an application, along with proof of education, background check clearance, and any certifications from completed training or exams.

## Practical Factors to Keep In Mind

None of these are barriers to you getting started, but we've come across a few things that are important to share:

- **Cost.** In almost every state, substitute teaching comes with costs: permits, fingerprinting, ordering transcripts, and mandatory training programs. This is what your SubClub funds are for!
- **Hiring Process.** School districts do have a hiring process and screen sub applicants, but they aren't super strict about it. Relevant experience can range from babysitting, to being a summer camp counselor, to being a TA in a course, or even experiences from high school like peer tutoring or running extracurricular clubs. When you apply, showcase your passion and anything relevant to succeeding in the classroom.
- **Be Proactive.** Almost everywhere, substitute applicants drive the speed and completion of the process. That's not to say that getting hired as a sub is particularly difficult. But, you do need to check the boxes, and be proactive about doing it.
- **Timing.** Most districts hire year-round for subs, but it's still important to consider timing. It's good to check in with schools, districts, or the sub staffing agency about how long the process will take and when you'll be able to start subbing.