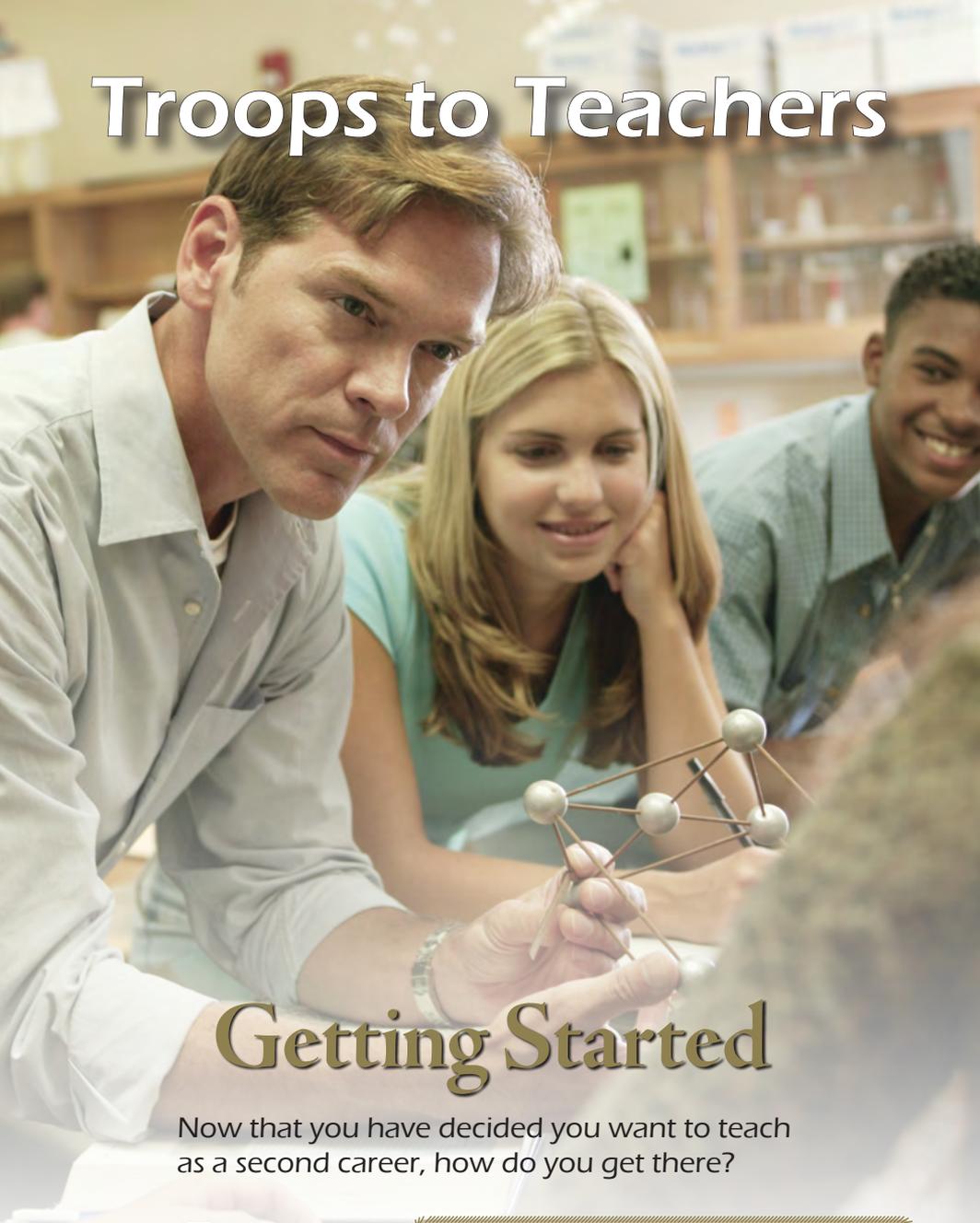


# Troops to Teachers



## Getting Started

Now that you have decided you want to teach as a second career, how do you get there?



If you are a member of the military and a couple of years away from retiring or separating from your current career, now is the time to get started. Many certification programs can take as long as two years to complete. Plan ahead and start now!

## Making the decision

The Troops to Teachers program provides counseling and referral services to military personnel interested in beginning a second career as a public school teacher. But first, you must decide if you *really* want to be a teacher.

If you have not been in a public school classroom in the past two or three years, you might not know what you are getting into. Before you invest a lot of time and money in preparing for a new career, learn more about the challenges involved in being a teacher in the public school system.



- Get in a classroom and see if you “fit” by visiting, volunteering or even teaching on an informal basis. You cannot underestimate the value of this type of experience!
- Many online sites offer suggestions about how to be an effective substitute teacher. Search for “substitute teachers” using Internet search engines to locate ideas and tips.
- Meet with a school principal and request a working relationship with a teacher in a specific subject area.
- After you’ve tested your resolve in an actual classroom setting and you find that teaching is still for you, refine your goal into a definite plan of action.

### **Decide what state you want to live and teach in.**

At the very least, narrow your decision down to two states. Remember that certification programs and requirements vary greatly from state to state. You don’t want to waste your time obtaining certification to teach in one state and then change your mind after investing all of that time and effort. However, most states do offer reciprocity.

### **Decide what city or town you want to live in.**

Consider your personal preferences about where you want to live: urban vs. suburban vs. rural. Find out about the school districts and learning institutions in your new community. At some point you will have to take classes to complete requirements for a teaching certification program. Check out driving distances.

### **Practical and personal issues you should consider:**

- Availability of teacher preparation programs. Some states have programs requiring less college credit and time in the classroom.
- State residency. You may have to pay out-of-state tuition rates for college credit.
- Financial support. Some states offer free tuition for returning military members if they are residents (normally based on residency at the time of enlistment).
- Availability of jobs. Consider not just teaching jobs for yourself, but job potential for your spouse.
- Cost and availability of housing.
- Tax liabilities. Research state personal income tax, property taxes, etc.
- Available medical support. Are there hospitals within easy driving distance?
- Closeness to family. Many military personnel have aging parents that may require frequent visits.
- Personal interests and hobbies. What do you like to do in your free time – boating, fishing, shopping, hiking, movies, dining?

### **Decide what you want to teach.**

- Select a subject area, for example, English, history or vocational education. Keep in mind that teachers for math, science and special education remain in greatest demand.
- Select a teaching level (elementary, middle school, high school).
- Determine the certificate you will pursue. Teaching certificates are generally issued by subject area and level, such as high school math, middle school science, elementary school or grades K-6. A general decision, such as math at the high school level, is sufficient at first. However, this may have to be refined further, such as calculus for 11th and 12th grades. Make this decision from a lifetime career standpoint. Be sure your choice will lead to adequate employment opportunities.
- Remember not all states have all types of vacancies. Consider more than one state to improve your odds of finding a job.
- Depending upon your educational background, job experiences and a school district's needs, you might be able to obtain an emergency certification to teach while you work on a permanent certification. Do not underestimate your qualifications. Also, if you worked in a technical specialty during your previous career, you may want to look into certification in a career/vocational

field. Requirements for this type of teaching are based more on skill levels than college degrees. This does not mean an absence of required academic credit; the academic part comes into play after the skill level is considered.

**Still want to teach?** Use the Troops to Teachers *Self-Determination Eligibility Guide* available at [www.proudtoserveagain.com](http://www.proudtoserveagain.com) to verify your eligibility for the program. If you are eligible, you can register for the program. If not, continue to research teacher certification requirements and plan for the future.

## Start collecting information

**From the state Troops to Teachers office or state Department of Education where you want to teach:**

- A listing of all the school districts located in the area where you want to live.
- A current teaching pay scale for your state or school district of choice.
- Information about positions available in the area where you plan to live and how to find out about job vacancies.

For information about a specific state, try searching “state education office” using Internet search engines.

**From the state teaching certification agency:**

- Specific information about types of certificates available, including substitute teaching.
- Detailed requirements for the type of teaching certificate you want to obtain.
- Information about what type of transcript will be required to perform an evaluation of your educational background.
- The cost of the evaluation and how long it will take to complete.
- A listing of educational institutions in the state that have approved teacher preparation programs.
- Information about obtaining an “alternative” teaching certificate if it is available in the state you have contacted. This is a certificate a local education agency can issue to an individual who has not previously been certified to teach. Some states call alternative options “provisional” or “emergency” certification or an “internship.”

**From the Chamber of Commerce:**

- Quality-of-life information about the area where you plan to live including maps, lists of businesses, schools, shopping areas, etc.

## Research job vacancy potential

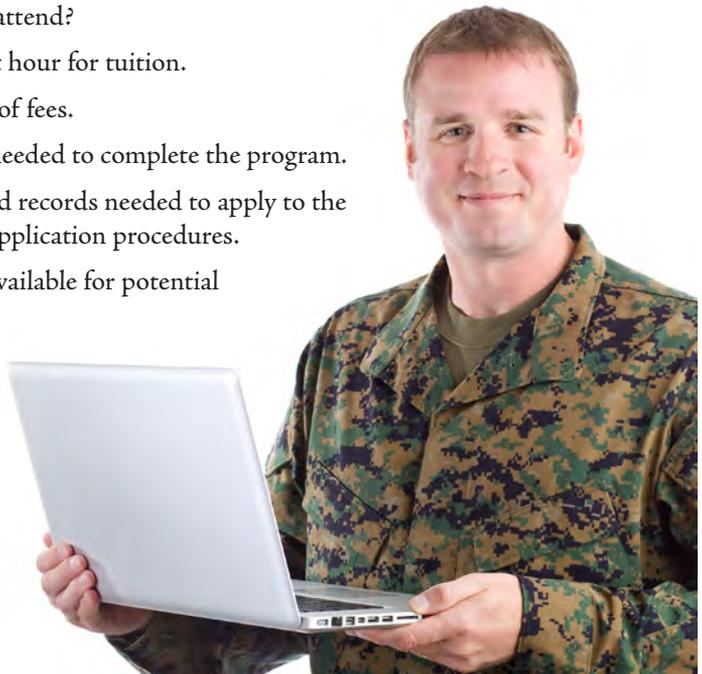
Keep accurate records throughout the process.

- Examine the job potential to better identify what certification you might pursue.
- Introduce yourself to school districts in person, if at all possible, or by phone, letter or email.
- Write down the names of offices and people you have contacted along with their phone numbers, fax numbers, and email addresses and the dates on which actions were completed (or promised).
- Introduce the Troops to Teachers program to school districts, emphasizing the maturity, life experience, training and motivation of participants. If districts are not aware of the program, ask them to contact program representatives at 1-800-231-6242.
- Inquire about current and future positions available.
- Ask about substitute teaching positions and pay if you are interested.
- Follow up contacts with a thank you letter.

## Gather basic college/university certification program information

Ask the institution for program details.

- Times courses are offered. Are classes held at times you can attend?
- Cost per credit hour for tuition.
- Cost and type of fees.
- Average time needed to complete the program.
- Transcripts and records needed to apply to the program and application procedures.
- Financial aid available for potential teachers.



Find out if there is a point of contact on campus familiar with the Troops to Teachers program.

**Note:** Certification program costs and completion times will vary. When possible, compare and contrast all of the institutions available in your area before making a final commitment.

### Now take these actions

- Review your decisions with the applicable Troops to Teachers state office. The Troops to Teachers program has a network of more than 30 offices covering 44 states. Contact them first for advice about your state.
- Have your transcripts evaluated by the appropriate office at your institution of choice.
- Sign up for Troops to Teachers if you have decided which program to attend.
- Complete your stipend application if you are already a registered Troops to Teachers participant. This includes informing Troops to Teachers about the program you are attending, when it begins and ends, and the type of certification you will obtain. This information will be put into your file for potential employers to review.

### For personnel still in the service

If you want to get started right away and you have sufficient time to take the courses required for your program but you are not in the same state as the institution that will be granting your final certification, you should:

- Work with your education center or Navy College counselor to develop a course of action and a degree plan. If you already hold a degree, develop a plan to become certified in a desired subject and level. Note: Holding a degree in education does not necessarily equal teacher certification.
- Investigate education-related programs available from institutions serving your installation.
- Carefully coordinate and document all course work. Ensure that all of your acquired credit will transfer to the institution in the state to which you plan to move.
- Before signing up and paying for courses (in your current state), have the degree or certification granting institution in the state to which you are moving validate the transferability of credits toward your program.
- Have the institution provide you with written documentation bearing the appropriate official's signature.



- Don't waste time and money on courses that will not help you complete your final program.

### Final thoughts

- Do the research necessary to become a teacher before “jumping into” a degree program or course of study.
- Seek resolution of any unsolved problems with the Troops to Teachers home office in Pensacola, Fla.
- Keep good notes/records of everything related to your pursuit.

**Good luck in your endeavor!**

## Central States Troops to Teachers

P.O. Box 480

Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480

573-751-3487

Toll Free: 877-530-2765

Fax: 573-526-5710

Email: [dese.troopstoteachers@dese.mo.gov](mailto:dese.troopstoteachers@dese.mo.gov)



Visit our website: [www.troopstoteachers.mo.gov](http://www.troopstoteachers.mo.gov)

Follow us on Twitter. Like us on FaceBook.

---

### Teacher Certification Contact Information

#### Iowa

Name: Ms. Geri McMahon

Phone: 515-281-8323

Email: [geri.mcmahon@iowa.gov](mailto:geri.mcmahon@iowa.gov)

Licensure website: [www.boee.iowa.gov/index.html](http://www.boee.iowa.gov/index.html)

#### Kansas

Name: Mr. Sungti Hsu, Teacher Education and Licensure Program Consultant

Phone: 785-291-3573

Email: [shsu@ksde.org](mailto:shsu@ksde.org)

Licensure website: [www.ksde.org/](http://www.ksde.org/)

#### Missouri

Name: Ms. Debbie Butcher, Certification Supervisor

Phone: 573-751-7863

Email: [debbie.butcher@dese.mo.gov](mailto:debbie.butcher@dese.mo.gov)

Licensure website: [www.dese.mo.gov/eq/cert/index.html](http://www.dese.mo.gov/eq/cert/index.html)

#### Nebraska

Name: Dr. Kevin Peters, Supervisor, Certification Director

Phone: 402-471-0739

Fax: 402-742-2359

Email: [nde.tcercertweb@nebraska.gov](mailto:nde.tcercertweb@nebraska.gov)

Licensure website: [www.education.ne.gov/tcert](http://www.education.ne.gov/tcert)

---

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, or disability in its programs and activities. Inquiries related to Department programs and to the location of services, activities, and facilities that are accessible by persons with disabilities may be directed to the Jefferson State Office Building, Office of the General Counsel, Coordinator – Civil Rights Compliance (Title VI/ Title IX/504/ADA/Age Act), 6th Floor, 205 Jefferson Street, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480; telephone number 573-526-4757 or TTY 800-735-2966; fax number 573-522-4883; email [civilrights@dese.mo.gov](mailto:civilrights@dese.mo.gov).