

Your Question

You asked what other states have been doing to alleviate teacher and substitute shortages.

Our Response

Teacher recruitment and retention is a topic consistently addressed by state policymakers across the country, especially as teacher shortages persist in certain schools and subject areas. Similarly, many states are struggling to maintain a strong and stable pool of [substitute teachers](#) and existing shortages may be exacerbated in light of the [COVID-19 pandemic](#). Below, we provide examples for several policy levers used by states to address these issues, including creating or expanding teacher recruitment and retention incentives, teacher residencies and alternative licensure routes. We also provide state policy options for expanding the pool of substitute candidates, improving substitute compensation and for providing substitute teachers with a pathway to full licensure.

Teacher Recruitment/Retention Incentives

Incentives aimed at recruiting and retaining teachers come in many forms, including scholarships and grants, loan forgiveness, hiring bonuses and salary increases. These policies often focus on particular subjects, school types or geographic areas for which teacher shortages are particularly severe. Some examples of state action around incentives for teacher recruitment and retention are below. For additional examples, visit our [50-State Comparison on Teacher Recruitment and Retention](#), last updated in 2019; this 2016 ECS resource, [Mitigating Teacher Shortages: Financial Incentives](#); and this 2018 ECS resource, [Targeted Teacher Recruitment](#). Many more resources on this topic can be found on our [Teaching Profession](#) Key Issue page.

Scholarships and Grants:

- **Indiana [H.B. 1553](#)** (2021) adds a requirement for the Next Generation Hoosier Educators Scholarship that the commission for higher education give priority to an individual who is pursuing certification in a teacher shortage area, showing significant financial need, or who is a member of a household qualifying for the free or reduced price lunch program.
- **Utah [Code Ann. § 53F-5-205](#)** creates the Paraeducator to Teacher Scholarship Program to provide scholarships of up to \$5,000 to paraeducators pursuing an associate degree or bachelor's degree program to become a licensed teacher. Paraeducator is defined as a school employee who "1) delivers instruction under the direct supervision of a teacher; and 2) works in an area where there is a shortage of qualified teachers, such as special education, Title I, ESL, reading remediation, math, or science." Statute also outlines eligibility requirements and other requirements for the scholarship.
- **West Virginia [H.B. 206](#)** (2019) required that the Underwood-Smith Teaching Scholar funds be used for the preparation of teachers in critical-shortage fields or as a counselor in a critical-need geographic location. Recipients must teach or serve in the shortage fields and areas for two years.

Loan Forgiveness:

- **Colorado** [Rev. Stat. Ann. § 23-3.9-102](#) authorizes the commission on higher education to develop and maintain an educator loan forgiveness program for educators in rural schools and in hard-to-staff positions.
- **Iowa** [Code Ann. § 261.111](#) establishes the teacher shortage forgivable loan program for sophomore, junior, senior or graduate students in an approved educator preparation program in a designated area where teacher shortages are anticipated.
- **New York** [A. 9506](#) (2018) created the New York State Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program, where an elementary or secondary teacher can receive loan forgiveness if they teach in a shortage subject area, a hard-to-staff district or if they are economically disadvantaged.

Hiring Bonuses:

- **Minnesota** [H.F. 2](#) (2021) establishes the Come Teach in Minnesota Hiring Bonus program account to offer hiring bonuses of \$2,500-\$5,000 for licensed teachers who qualify for a Tier 3 or 4 license in the state, have moved to an economic development region where they were hired, and belong to a racial or ethnic group that is underrepresented among teachers. Teachers who meet these requirements and meet a license-shortage area may be offered a bonus of between \$4,000 and \$8,000.
- **Virginia** [H.B. 7001](#) (2021) appropriates ESSER funds to support recruitment efforts through incentive payments to individuals hired to fill certain instructional positions. Individuals hired in hard-to-staff positions or schools may be eligible for a bonus of up to \$5,000.

Salary Increases:

- **Mississippi** [H.B. 852](#) (2021) revises the minimum teacher salary scale by increasing the minimum salary of teachers and teacher's assistants.
- **New Mexico** [H.B. 2](#) (2018) required the secretary of public education to ensure that, notwithstanding the provisions of the School Personnel Act, no full-time level one teacher receives a base salary less than \$36,000, no full-time level two teacher receives a base salary less than \$44,000 and no full-time level three-A teacher receives a base salary less than \$54,000.

Other:

- **California** [A.B. 3308](#) (2020) created a state policy supporting housing for teachers and school employees, aiming to address the housing needs of teachers and school district employees who face challenges in securing affordable housing.
- **Georgia** [H.B. 32](#) (2021) establishes a refundable income tax credit of \$3,000 for teachers who agree to teach in certain rural schools or certain schools with lower performances.
- **South Carolina** [H. 4100](#) (2021) creates a program to recruit and retain classroom educators in rural and underserved districts experiencing excessive turnover of teachers. Individuals eligible for incentives must be willing to provide instructional services in an eligible district in exchange for participation in an incentive. The bill requires the development of a set of incentives including but not limited to salary supplements, education subsidies, loan forgiveness, professional development and mentorship to be provided to educators that offer instructional services in eligible districts; eligible individuals at all stages of their careers, including high school and college students interested in entering the teaching profession; and individuals entering the field through an alternative certification pathway to include, but not be limited to, PACE, ABCTE, Teach for America and CATE Work-Based Certification.

Residencies and Alternative Licensure:

At least 13 states have [created opportunities](#) for teacher residency programs in statute or regulation. Additionally, according to the [National Council on Teacher Quality](#), 46 states and Washington, D.C. have opportunities for alternative preparation in statute or regulation. Below are examples of residencies and alternative licensure programs specific to shortage areas. Please note that this is not a comprehensive 50-state scan.

- **Arizona:** Though not in statute or regulation, the Arizona Department of Education has two [Grow Your Own programs](#) specifically for special education teachers. The General Education Teacher to Special Education Teacher program provides tuition reimbursement to certified general education teachers who want to pursue a career change to become certified in an area of special education and the Special Education Teacher Tuition Assistance program provides tuition reimbursement to paraprofessionals and educational interpreters that leads to special education teaching certification.
- **California** [Educ. Code Ann. § 44415](#) establishes the [Teacher Residency Grant Program](#) to provide one-time competitive grants to applicants to develop new, or expand existing, residency programs that recruit and support the preparation of special education, bilingual education, science, technology, engineering or math teachers.
- **New Mexico** [H.B. 92](#) (2020) creates teacher residency programs through a competitive grant process. Grants will be awarded to public post-secondary educational institutions and tribal colleges in partnership with one or more local school districts or charter schools. The programs must be designed to increase diversity in the teacher workforce, fill high-need teaching positions and include both academic coursework and a guided apprenticeship. Program components, eligibility requirements, participant selection requirements, rule making authority and funding are also addressed in legislation.

[State Policy Examples Addressing Substitute Shortages](#)

[Expanding the Pool of Substitute Candidates:](#)

In light of substitute teacher shortages, many states have considered policies to bring [retired teachers](#) back to work, including as substitute teachers. Other legislation focuses on the opposite end of the spectrum, allowing students completing their bachelor's degree to substitute teach or reducing training requirements for substitute teachers. The National Council on Teacher Quality released a [resource](#) on strategies being considered to address the substitute teacher shortage in January 2022. Below are some examples of state action to expand the pool of substitute teacher candidates.

- **California:** The state provides an [emergency 30-day substitute teaching permit](#) that allows permit holders to substitute teach for no more than 30 days for any one teacher during the school year. Candidates must hold at least a bachelor's degree and complete the basic skills requirement. The state also provides an [emergency substitute teaching permit for prospective teachers](#) that allows students still completing their degrees to serve as substitute teachers if they have completed at least 90 semester hours of course work, have verification of enrollment and complete the basic skills requirement.
- **Louisiana** [H.B. 8](#) (2020): Outlines requirements and provisions for the re-employment of retired teachers as substitute classroom teachers, including specifics related to salary, retirement system contributions and notification of employment to the board of trustees.
- **Michigan** [H.B. 4421](#) (2018): Permits a school district or intermediary school district board to employ an individual without a teaching certificate as a substitute teacher if either of the following requirements are met: 1) the individual has at least 60 semester hours of college credit or an associate degree from a college, university or community college; or 2) for a substitute teaching a course in an industrial technology education program or a career and technical education program, the individual is engaged to substitute

teach in a subject matter or field in which the individual has achieved expertise, as determined by the board of a school district or intermediate school district, and satisfies a number of requirements.

- **Missouri:** The state board of education recently [approved](#) a rule that allows candidates to receive a substitute teaching certificate by completing 20 hours of online training. The rule went into effect late December 2021.
- **New Jersey [S.B. 2832](#)** (2021): Allows students to apply for a substitute teacher credential if they: 1) are enrolled at regionally accredited institutions of higher education, 2) are applying for a substitute teacher credential between the enactment of this bill and June 30, 2023, 3) have completed a minimum of 30 semester-hour credits and 4) are at least 20 years old. The bill requires the commissioner of education to examine issues and develop recommendations as to whether the 30 semester-hour requirement should be extended.
- **South Carolina [H. 3513](#)** (2018): Creates a new retired teacher certificate for substitute teaching and provides that eligible retired educators must not currently hold a valid educator certificate and that renewal of a retired educator certificate does not require completion of professional learning or renewal credit. The bill specifies that retired educator teaching certificate holders are not exempt from district professional development requirements. The bill also requires the state board of education to develop implementation guidelines and requires the department of education to create forms and a process for applying.

Substitute Compensation:

According to the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), the mean annual wage for a short-term substitute teacher in the U.S. as of 2020 was \$36,090. Providing competitive compensation can help states improve the substitute teacher pool by attracting more candidates. A number of local districts have increased substitute teacher salaries, including [Boulder Valley School District](#) in Colorado, [Rutherford County Schools](#) in Tennessee and [Amarillo Independent School District](#) in Texas. Some states have also taken legislative action on the issue. Below are examples of legislation that addresses compensation for substitute teachers.

- **Delaware [H.B. 88](#)** (2018): Permits a student who is: 1) currently enrolled in an accredited institution for higher education in a program that will culminate in the student becoming eligible for teaching and 2) who has earned at least 60 credits to be paid \$83 per day as substitute teachers — the same rate paid to those who hold a bachelor’s degree but not a teaching license.
- **Tennessee [S.B. 379/H.B. 368](#)** (2017): Specifies that a substitute teacher who is a retired teacher is not required to continue to renew their teacher’s license in order to work as a substitute teacher and requires that the rate of compensation for a retired teacher without an active teaching license must not be less than the rate of compensation set by the school district for a retired teacher with an active teaching license.

Substitute to Full-Time Teacher Pathways:

Creating pathways for substitute teachers to become full-time teachers may help make the profession more attractive and eventually help states retain qualified substitutes as full-time teachers. Below is an example of legislation from Arizona and a resolution from Hawaii.

- **Arizona [S.B. 1071](#)** (2019): Requires the state board of education to adopt rules for certification that allow substitute teachers who can demonstrate primary teaching responsibility in a classroom, as defined by the state board of education, to use the time spent in that classroom toward the required capstone experience for standard teaching certification.

- **Hawaii [S.R. 59-2017](#)** (2017): Requests that the department of education and University of Hawaii System develop programming and educational supports for educational assistants and long-term substitute teachers to earn teaching degrees and become full-time certified teachers.