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# State Coronavirus Relief Funds Now Available to Reimburse Substitute Teachers

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The Governor's Office recently announced a new allocation from the state's Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) to support Missourians wishing to serve or who recently began serving as substitute teachers in Missouri schools. Additionally, the Missouri State Board of Education recently approved an alternative route for individuals to obtain a certificate to serve as a substitute teacher to help address the shortage of substitute teachers throughout the state.

"The substitute teacher shortage was a challenge our agency was working to address prior to COVID-19," said Commissioner of Education Margie Vandeven. "The pandemic has only exacerbated this issue. We are pleased that these additional options are now available to assists schools in providing onsite learning opportunities for Missouri students."

This new alternative certification route allows individuals who possess a high school diploma (or its equivalent) to complete a 20-hour online training to be eligible for a substitute certificate. That online training fee is $175, and there is a $50 application fee for certification. The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) will use the identified CRF funding to reimburse any individual who has paid the application fee and/or the online training fee from August 18 through November 4, 2020. There is no action required by the substitute teachers to be reimbursed; the payment method used to pay these fees will be automatically credited. Substitute teacher candidates must submit applications and enroll in the online training program by November 4, 2020 to be eligible for reimbursement. DESE will then begin processing these reimbursements on November 5, 2020.

Substitute teacher candidates must also pay $41.75 for a fingerprint background check for each local education agency (LEA) in which the substitute teacher intends to work. Substitute teachers may pay this fee multiple times if they work in multiple LEAs. CRF funding is also now available for LEAs that choose to reimburse substitute teachers working in their schools for the required background check fee he/she paid. The individual must have completed his/her fingerprint background check from March 1 through November 4, 2020. To access these CRF funds, the LEA will need to submit to DESE an on-line application and a list of those individuals to be reimbursed. The application is due by November 4, 2020.

More information about these reimbursements, as well as recent updates to substitute certification rules, can be found on DESE's **substitute teacher webpage**. Please contact the Office of Educator Quality at 573-751-2931 with additional questions.

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