

## Steps to Becoming a Mathematics Teacher

### Step #1

Find out if teaching is for you; volunteer, substitute teach, or visit a math class at your local middle or high school.

### Step #2

Verify subject-matter competence through the mathematics department of your local university. Take courses or required tests as needed.

### Step #3

Decide what type of credential program is best for you. Depending on your educational level (high school student, college student, career changer), take the proper course work as directed by your school or college and enroll in a teacher preparation program or intern program.

### Step #4

Locate financial aid resources by logging on to the TEACH California Web site.

## Where can I get additional information?

For additional information about each of these steps or more information about what it takes to teach mathematics in California, visit the TEACH California Web site at [www.teachcalifornia.org](http://www.teachcalifornia.org)

Track your progress by registering in the **MyTools** section of the TEACH California Web site.

Make the **difference**  
of a lifetime.  
**Teach.**



[www.teachcalifornia.org](http://www.teachcalifornia.org)

The screenshot shows the TEACH California website with a navigation bar at the top containing links for Home, About Us, Partners, Contact Us, and Site Index. Below the navigation bar is a main banner with the TEACH California logo and the slogan 'Make the difference of a lifetime. Teach.' To the right of the banner are several menu items: 'Decide if Teaching is For You', 'Understand the Requirements', 'Make and Follow Your Plan', 'Find the Right Preparation Program', 'Find Financial Aid', 'Check Out Schools and Places', and 'Find a Teaching Job'. Below the banner is a section titled 'MyTools' with sub-sections for 'Common Questions' and 'Resources'. The 'Resources' section features a photo of a teacher and student. To the right of the photo are sections for 'SHORTAGE AREAS' (listing Special Education, Math, and Science), 'DISTINGUISHED TEACHERS', 'PARAEDUCATORS', 'TRY BEING A TEACHER', and 'PLAY THE TEACHING GAME'. At the bottom of the page, there is a 'NEWS' section with three items: 'TEACH California launches redesigned website!', 'National SMART grant provides up to \$4000 per year for two years for mathematics, science and other majors.', and 'New TEACH grant offers 4-year scholarship of up to \$16,000 for future teachers.' The footer contains copyright information, the California Department of Education logo, and W3C and CSE logos.

This brochure and other free teacher recruitment materials may be ordered online. Log on to [www.teachcalifornia.org](http://www.teachcalifornia.org), click on "Resources," then "Outreach Materials." Your order will be shipped within two weeks.



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# TEACH Math

A guide to becoming a  
**math teacher**  
in California



# California Needs Math Teachers

Over the next decade California will need 195,000 teachers to take on the challenging yet rewarding job of teaching our state's youths. According to the California Department of Education, 1265 math teachers were needed in 2010-11.

Math teachers play an important part in educating our children. They convey the wonder of mathematics by teaching students to solve challenging programs, develop computational expertise, and apply logic and rationale to mathematical equations. They open up the world of mathematics and make it real. They make clear how abstract symbols are used to describe, order, explain, and predict everyday events.

Mathematics is the foundation for everything from telling time and staying within a budget to exploring the frontiers of space. Math has become an essential skill of the twenty-first century. California needs qualified mathematics teachers. If you are interested and ready for a challenging career, take the next step—TEACH!

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is a credential?

A teaching credential is a license to teach in public schools from kindergarten through grade twelve. The credential is granted after an individual completes all the requirements and a teacher preparation program recommends him or her to the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC), the state teacher licensing agency. Only certain individuals (those who possess out-of-state teaching credentials, have taught at regionally accredited private schools, or are National Board-Certified Teachers) can apply directly for a credential from the CTC.

### Why do I need to get a credential if I already have years of math experience?

Teaching is a profession and requires knowledge beyond subject matter. Although many individuals are familiar with math and confident in their abilities, successful teaching requires an understanding of instructional methods. These skills and others are taught in teacher preparation programs.

### What is the purpose of a teacher preparation program?

Teacher preparation focuses on learning *how* to teach. Teacher preparation programs are organized to develop the skills needed for teaching in classrooms and include course work in such areas as instructional methods, curriculum development, and classroom management.



### What is subject-matter competency?

Subject-matter competence is knowledge of *what* is taught. This requirement is met either by completing specific examinations or by completing specific preparation programs in the academic subject area at a California college or university.

### Do I need a degree in mathematics to teach this subject?

Knowledge of math is needed to teach the subject. Usually, advanced course work or certification is needed, along with introductory computer science courses. If your degree is in a subject other than mathematics, you can satisfy the subject-matter competence requirement by passing specific exams.

### Is there just one type of mathematics credential?

There are two mathematics credentials: the foundational-level mathematics credential and the mathematics credential. The foundational-level

mathematics credential allows the credential holder to teach general math, algebra, geometry, probability and statistics, and consumer math but not Advanced Placement courses. Mathematics credential holders may teach all mathematics courses.

### Are there exam requirements for becoming a mathematics teacher?

No specific exam requirements exist for teaching mathematics; however, the basic skills and subject matter competency requirements can be fulfilled by successfully passing certain exams.

### What is a blended teacher preparation program?

The blended program is designed for individuals without a bachelor's degree. The programs often begin in the junior year and may be completed in five semesters. A program includes a curriculum sequence that "blends" mathematics and education courses and student teaching experiences and seminars.

### I need to work while fulfilling the requirements for a credential. Is there a program that will work for me?

Alternative certification programs target individuals who have related work experiences and subject-matter preparation or are seeking a career change and have to work. These programs are structured so that the student teaches during the day (and gets paid for teaching) while taking classes at night, during weekends, or during school breaks. The intern program is one type of alternative certification program.

### What is the average salary of a teacher in California?

According to the California Department of Education, the average salary for California's public school teachers, 2007-08, was \$65,808, and the minimum salary for a beginning teacher was over \$38,000 (*CalEdFacts*). Teachers' salaries are established by each school district. More information regarding teacher salary schedules and benefits and additional salary incentives can be obtained by contacting school districts directly.