

Guidance For People Interested in Becoming a Teacher Assistant in RI

The RI Department of Education (RIDE) does not CERTIFY Teacher Assistants (TAs) at the state level. Rather, there are state level qualifications for TAs that school districts then follow in hiring TAs. School districts can have hiring requirements that are stricter than these minimum state qualifications.

State Level Qualifications for Instructional TAs

Most TAs serve in this role. Thus, these qualifications are listed here. These qualifications are also listed on a document entitled, Checklists for Reviewing Teacher Assistant (TA) Qualifications. These checklists also list qualifications for Non-Instructional TAs and Other Paraprofessionals. For information on accessing these checklists, see "Teacher Assistant Resources below.

The qualifications applicable to those seeking to be employed as instructional TAs are as follows:

- Be of good character
- High school diploma OR general equivalency
- Successful completion of a Teacher Assistant Training Program approved by the RI Department of Education. Exceptions: (1) certification as a Teacher Assistant in another state, (2) hold an associate's degree **or** bachelor's degree **and** have completed coursework or other training consistent with our State Standards. (That is, these persons must have completed a RIDE approved TA training program – unless the person has TA certification in another state or if the person has an associate's degree or higher **AND** have courses that cover the same content areas as those in RI state standards that apply to RIDE approved TA training programs. *The law does not specify the degree has to be in education or a related field...BUT they need to have had courses covering the Standards content. It is likely that if the degree is NOT in education or a related field that the person's course work may not meeting the same content areas as those in RI state standards. A listing of the competencies in the RI state standards that apply to RIDE approved TA training programs can be found at the end of the Checklists for Reviewing Teacher Assistant (TA) Qualifications.*)
- One of the following 3 requirements:
 1. Completed at least 2 years of study at an institution of higher education (the nature of that coursework is for the district to decide). *The law does not specify the coursework has to be in education or a related field; however, school districts have the discretion to be able to require this.*OR
 2. Obtained an associate's or higher degree (the nature of that degree/coursework is for the district to decide). *The law does not specify the degree has to be in education or a related field; however, school districts have the discretion to be able to require this.*OR
 3. Met a rigorous standard of quality and can demonstrate, through a formal State or local academic assessment: knowledge and ability to assist in instructing, reading, writing, and mathematics; OR reading, writing, and mathematics readiness. (The ParaPro is the state recognized assessment and the individual must have a score on the ParaPro of at least 461.)

Teacher Assistant Resources

The Teacher Assistant (TA) website at <http://www.ritap.org/ta> has these resources:

- [Legal Requirements section of this website](#) has a document entitled, Checklists for Reviewing Teacher Assistant (TA) Qualifications that may help in reviewing qualifications.

- ParaPro section of this website has materials related to preparing for and taking the ParaPro Assessment including a ParaPro Assessment Fact Sheet and ParaPro Awareness Training Module. This includes information for where to access ParaPro training and testing in RI. The website also provides linkage to the website for the Educational Testing Service (ETS), distributor of the ParaPro Assessment.
- Training Opportunities section of this website has information on Pre-Employment Training for TAs that includes a directory and profiles of currently approved TA Training Programs. That is, if someone wants to become a TA in RI, they need to have completed one of these programs if they do not otherwise meet the qualifications listed above. Interested persons should use the information in the directory or on the profiles to contact TA Training Programs of interest related to upcoming training dates, etc.
- Networking section of this website has a listing of the TA Contacts for each school district and related agencies – persons who can direct perspective TAs to human resources personnel in the district/agency who can evaluate the credentials of persons seeking employment as a TA.