

What Does It Take to Become An Instructor Trainer?

The American Red Cross relies on identifying potential candidates to become instructor trainers (ITs) in order to maintain its reputation of providing the highest quality health and safety training available. ITs are selected, trained and authorized by local American Red Cross chapters and are essential to the expansion of service delivery. The IT may be an employee, volunteer, or authorized provider. It takes willingness, availability, skills, knowledge and specific training to become an Instructor Trainer.

There are a few steps to the IT training process. The chapter's Supervisory Committee and/or Health and Safety Services Administrator will review applications* for interest, appropriate teaching history and/or experience and will follow-up regarding the application submission. Qualified applicants are scheduled for an interview. The interview gives an opportunity to find out more about the interests and availability of potential candidates and gives candidates the opportunity to ask more questions about the process, requirements and time commitment regarding IT development.

Along with the application submission interview, the IT Candidate (ITC) Readiness Assessment continues with verification of basic-level skills and evaluation of teaching performance. Skill verification is usually conducted by an assigned IT or Training Team member through a basic-level challenge or successful participation in a instructor precourse session and will include additional skills that may be included within the candidate's specialty (i.e. for Lifeguarding Instructor Trainer Candidates, oxygen skills are also tested) or through another specially arranged skills verification session to check for basic level skill competency. The candidate's teaching performance is evaluated by a member of the training team who observes and takes notes of the candidate's basic-level course teaching skills. Verifications and observations are documented on the candidate's application. Once the Readiness Assessment is completed, the ITC enters into the Preparedness Training System (PTS) by participating in Phase I of the Training Plan.

Phase I of the Training Plan has two options of participation. Candidates can complete the Instructor Trainer Candidate course (about 11 hours) or candidates may work with a designated mentor or training team member to apprentice Phase I (about 15 hours, time varies with each candidate). Phase I will help to prepare candidates to deliver American Red Cross instructor level courses and will also include information on conducting the Fundamentals of Instructor Training (FIT) course which is a requirement for all instructor level courses.

After completion of Phase I, the ITC continues to Phase II of the Training Plan. Phase II is the Teaching Experience portion of PTS. Candidates work with assigned chapter/regional/national training team members who provide and record progress of the customized work plan which will include teaching experience through one or more methods depending on the candidate's work plan (i.e. instructor course observation, practice teaching, co-teaching, teaching under observation or group practicum). Upon the candidate's completion of Phase I & II, all records are given to the chapter's Supervisory Committee and/or Health and Safety Services Administrator for review of application, competencies, and the training team evaluation. Successful candidates will become certified and authorized Instructor Trainers (see the chart for a visual look at the IT selection and training steps).

The training ensures that an instructor trainer will serve as an effective representative of the American Red Cross and will abide by the standards, policies and procedures of the organization. Candidates completing this process are then able to train individuals as instructors and help increase the reach of American Red Cross health and safety training programs. Contact your local chapter and request an Instructor Trainer Application if you are interested in helping the American Red Cross to train Health and Safety Instructors that provide health and safety courses to help prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies in your community.

* Contact Denise Blok, dblok@centex.redcross.org to obtain Instructor Trainer Application or for further information.