

Become a Mental Health First Aid Instructor

Becoming a Mental Health First Aid instructor is an exciting opportunity and we are thrilled that you or your designee is considering this opportunity. Being a successful Mental Health First Aid instructor is highly rewarding. However, this role also requires a serious commitment of time, energy and creativity. Before applying to become a certified instructor, we want to make sure that you fully understand what will be necessary for certification as well long-term success as a Mental Health First Aid instructor. If you are in the role of reviewing applications for instructors, we hope the guidance below will assist you in selecting those individuals who will have the highest probability of being successful.

Who should apply to become an instructor?

A Mental Health First Aid instructor is required to serve as a presenter, a facilitator, and most importantly an ambassador of the Mental Health First Aid USA program. There are several key components that make an instructor successful. First and foremost, **it is required that an instructor candidate:**

- Has general knowledge of mental health and substance use issues (i.e. is a mental health/substance use professional, has worked with individuals experiencing mental health disorders or is in recovery from mental illness or substance use disorders)
- Has experience teaching groups of adults
- Understands best practices in adult learning
- Has experience facilitating groups

While the instructor training reinforces some of the skills and knowledge areas above, it is not designed as a substitute for prior knowledge and experience.

In addition, instructors must identify financial and operational support to schedule and run their classes. Therefore, it is highly recommended that instructor candidates demonstrate appropriate external support with tasks related to the program. For example, many successful instructors garner support from their employer organization or a partner community organization in order to accomplish the following tasks that are required of instructors:

- Planning (e.g., creating business plans, forming community partnerships, outreach)
- Setting a course schedule
- Setting and collecting course fees
- Marketing and media outreach
- Course registration
- Event planning (e.g., catering, logistics)
- Seeking grants sources of fiscal support
- Collecting and entering course evaluations and incorporating feedback

Instructor Training and Certification

The Mental Health First Aid instructor training is held over five days and is taught by two authorized Mental Health First Aid National Trainers. A maximum of 30 instructor candidates are allowed per training.

Pricing

Tuition for each instructor candidate is \$1,500 for individuals, \$20,000 for corporate groups, and \$17,500 for government and non-profit groups. This fee is inclusive of five days of instruction, instruction materials, and continued support from Mental Health First Aid Maryland staff for as long as the individual remains a certified instructor. Breakfast will be provided each morning and lunch will be provided on the fourth and fifth day of training. Instructor candidates will be responsible for travel, hotel and any miscellaneous expenses during the week of training. Payment must be made at least 15 days prior to the start of the instructor training.

Training Structure

National Trainers guide candidates through the five days of training with an emphasis on coaching and preparing candidates to be ambassadors of Mental Health First Aid. Courses typically run from 9am-5pm each day. There will be dedicated time on day three for independent preparation of candidate presentations. On days four and five instructor candidates will present and teach an assigned portion of the eight-hour course to the group. The National Trainers will conduct individual evaluations with each candidate. In addition, each candidate will provide a peer review for their colleagues.

Outcome of Instructor Training

There are three possible outcomes from the instructor training: 1) full certification 2) provisional certification or 3) no certification. **Attendance is not a guarantee of certification.**

1) Full Certification

In order to become a fully certified instructor, each candidate attend the training fully, pass the presentation evaluation, and complete postwork.

2) Provisional Certification

When a National Trainer discerns potential in an instructor candidate, but also recognizes that additional support will be required to deliver the curriculum effectively, a Provisional Instructor status can be issued. National Trainers make this determination by considering several factors including the candidate's exam score, course attendance and presentation score. Candidates who score between 60 and 64% on their presentation may be considered. Other factors include a demonstrated desire to improve and a willingness to adhere to the conditions of a Provisional Instructor. The Provisional Instructor is awarded a certificate along with all fully certified instructors. In addition, the Provisional Instructor will receive credit for any classes taught with a fully certified instructor. However, there are five important restrictions that apply to this status. A Provisional Instructor:

- a. must co-teach with a fully certified instructor at all times;
- b. is not allowed to order any materials independently (co-instructors must order all materials);
- c. cannot register a course in the data system;
- d. cannot enter evaluation data (co-instructors must enter all evaluation data);
- e. and may not enroll in an expedited course for additional Instructor certifications (by way of example, no Provisional Instructor Adult MHFA Instructor may enroll to become a Youth MHFA Instructor as a part of an expedited training).

3) No Certification

An instructor candidate will not be certified as an instructor in the event of i) a score of lower than 60% on the presentation portion, and/or ii) failure to pass the class's general requirements.

Please note that all certification determinations are made by an elite group of Mental Health First Aid National Trainers.

Cancellation Policy

Individuals who are accepted into the instructor training will be required to submit their tuition payment no later than 15 days prior to the start date of their training. Instructor candidates who need to cancel must submit a request in writing no more than 15 days prior to the training start date. A service fee of \$75 will be deducted from all cancellation requests received by that date. Registrants who do not cancel by this date and who do not attend the training will be responsible for the full tuition and registration fee. No refunds will be given for cancellations received fewer than 15 days prior to the training.

Instructor Commitments

Individuals who are interested in becoming certified Mental Health First Aid instructors must be committed to teaching the full 8-hour course with fidelity to the core program model and key messages. Instructors are responsible for almost all components of their trainings, including:

- Recruiting participants and securing training locations
- Collecting course fees
- Ordering manuals for all participants
- Preparing course materials
- Compiling local resources
- Providing participant evaluations to Mental Health First Aid USA

In order to maintain instructor certification, instructors are required to:

- Teach their first course within six months of becoming certified
- Teach at least three courses each year
- Pass Quality Evaluation visits and assessments
- Maintain satisfactory participant evaluation scores
- Engage in instructor/course re-fresher activities as required

The award of grant funding for Mental Health First Aid instructor training is a significant investment in the successful applicant. The tuition to become a certified instructor is \$1,500 and requires a 5-day commitment to the training course. Grant funding is limited. Priority consideration for grant funding will be given to applicants i) who can contribute to cost of tuition, and/or ii) intend to serve high-need communities as instructors.

Transportation, meals not provided during the training and lodging are the financial responsibility of the individual and/or the sponsoring agency/institution. **In return for grant funding, instructors will be required to teach one free class for the Mental Health Association of Maryland if asked to do so.**