



HOW TO BECOME AN AHA INSTRUCTOR

EMR Safety and Health's 2026 Guide

CONTACT US

✉ tccordinator@emrsafetyandhealth.com

🌐 www.emrsafetyandhealth.com

📞 972-235-8330



Summary

An AHA Instructor teaches essential life-saving skills like CPR and AED use according to American Heart Association guidelines. There are different instructor types, including BLS, Heartsaver, ACLS, and PALS, each focusing on a specific area of care. To become an instructor, one must complete certification in their discipline, attend the Instructor Essentials Course, and be monitored while teaching. AHA Instructors enjoy career flexibility, access to resources, and the ability to issue certification cards, playing a crucial role in enhancing public health and safety.



Save Lives



Issue Certificates



Start your own Business



Teach your Community

**Looking to Become an
AHA Instructor?**

AHA Instructor Courses



What is an AHA Instructor

An AHA Instructor trains individuals in life-saving skills — CPR, AED use, and first aid — following the American Heart Association (AHA) guidelines.

Their role is to ensure healthcare professionals, first responders, and everyday people are equipped to respond effectively in life-threatening situations.

AHA Instructor Types:

BLS Instructor	Basic Life Support Teaches Basic Life Support (BLS), which focuses on CPR and other essential skills needed to support a patient in cardiac or respiratory distress.
Heartsaver Instructor	Basic CPR, AED & First-Aid Trains individuals in non-medical settings on CPR, AED usage, and First Aid, making it accessible for teachers, coaches, or other community members.
ACLS Instructor	Advanced Cardiac Life Support Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS) Instructors train healthcare providers in managing complex cardiovascular emergencies, such as strokes and heart attacks.
PALS Instructor	Pediatric Advanced Life Support Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) Instructors specialize in training professionals to care for infants and children in emergencies.

Steps to Become an AHA Instructor



Find a Training Center



Complete Prerequisites



Attend in-person Instructor Course



Get Monitored

1

Find an AHA Training Center and Submit an Instructor Candidate Application

Reach out to EMR Safety and Health, an AHA Training Center, to guide you through the certification process and submit your instructor candidate application.

Contact us [here](#) or view our [AHA Instructor courses](#).

2

Complete the Required Prerequisite Work

Before class, bring your current provider card and Online Instructor Essentials completion certificate for each discipline you plan to teach.

3

Attend In-Person Instructor Course

Complete the in-person Instructor Essentials Course to learn teaching principles and develop the skills needed to instruct — required for all AHA disciplines.

4

Get Monitored While Teaching

You must be monitored while teaching your first class within six months of completing Instructor Essentials. A certified faculty instructor or Training Center Coordinator will evaluate you to ensure you meet AHA standards.

Prerequisites for Becoming an AHA Instructor

1 Certification in the Discipline You Want to Teach

To become an AHA Instructor, you must hold a valid certification in the discipline you plan to teach. If you don't, you'll need to complete the provider course for that discipline first.

AHA Instructor Certification	AHA Provider Certification Required
BLS Instructor	Basic Life Support (BLS)
ACLS Instructor	Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS)
PALS Instructor	Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS)
Heartsaver Instructor	Heartsaver Provider certificate in area you plan to teach

2 Skills Proficiency

Candidates must demonstrate strong proficiency in the skills for their discipline — CPR, AED use, and advanced cardiovascular care (for ACLS and PALS). You'll have the opportunity to refine and demonstrate these skills during the Instructor Essentials Course.

3 Healthcare Experience (Not Required for All Courses)

Healthcare experience is not always required. Heartsaver Instructors — who teach CPR, AED, and First Aid to non-medical audiences — do not need a medical background. However, ACLS and PALS candidates must have one due to the complexity of those emergency care scenarios.

How Much Does It Cost to Become an AHA Instructor?

The cost to become an AHA Instructor varies based on the specific course and the materials required for teaching. Below is a breakdown of the common expenses you can expect when pursuing certification.



Course Fees

AHA Instructor Course	Pricing
BLS Instructor Course	\$300 - \$400
ACLS Instructor Course	\$350 - \$450
PALS Instructor Course	\$400 - \$500
Heartsaver Instructor Course	\$300 - \$400



Equipment Costs

- ✓ Manikins \$300 - \$1,000 based off quantity, quality and features (feedback devices or torso compression indicators)
- ✓ Automated External Defibrillator (AED) trainers \$100 - \$500 each
- ✓ Teaching Materials \$120 - \$500 (DVD's, Digital Videos, Instruction Manuals, Etc.)
- ✓ Additional Class Materials \$100 - \$300 (face shields, disposable lungs for manikins, and certification cards)



Other Costs

- ✓ Instructor Essentials Course \$40-\$100 (Required for all AHA Instructors)

Total Investment



\$1,000 - \$3,000

On average, the total investment to become an AHA Instructor—including course fees, equipment, and materials—can range from \$1,000 to \$3,000, depending on the type of instructor certification and the size of the classes you plan to teach.

Time Commitment for AHA Instructors

Becoming an AHA Instructor requires a significant, but manageable, time investment. The amount of time you need to complete the training and prepare to teach can vary depending on the type of instructor certification you're pursuing.



Time to Complete Instructor Training

Total time is 15 to 25 hours, depending on the course you select. Includes both online learning and hands-on training:

AHA Instructor Course	Training Hours
BLS Instructor Course	12 - 15 Hours
ACLS Instructor Course	20 - 25 Hours
PALS Instructor Course	20 - 25 Hours
Heartsaver Instructor Course	10 - 12 Hours



Class Preparation

1-2 hours of preparation before teaching a class

- ✓ Review course materials
- ✓ Setting up equipment (manikins, AED trainers, etc.)
- ✓ Organizing handouts and certification paperwork



Teaching Time

AHA Provider Course	Teaching Time
BLS Provider Course	4 - 5 Hours
ACLS Provider Course	9 - 16 Hours
PALS Provider Course	9 - 15 Hours
Heartsaver Provider Course	1 - 4 Hours



Ongoing Time Commitment

- ✓ AHA Instructors are required to maintain their instructor status through periodic renewals and monitoring sessions
- ✓ Promoting your courses and staying updated on the latest AHA guidelines

Post-Certification Requirements for AHA Instructors

After certification, you must meet the following ongoing requirements to maintain your instructor status and stay current on life-saving techniques.



Teach Four Classes Every Two Years

A key requirement for maintaining your AHA Instructor status is teaching a minimum of four classes every two years. This helps ensure that instructors remain proficient in their teaching skills and familiar with course content.



Renew Instructor Certification Every 2 years

To renew your certification, you must:

- ✓ Teach a minimum of 4 classes
- ✓ Be monitored by a Training Center Coordinator to confirm you're meeting AHA teaching standards
- ✓ Complete the Instructor Renewal Course to refresh your knowledge and stay current with AHA guideline changes



Stay Updated with AHA Guidelines and Protocols

The AHA regularly updates its guidelines based on the latest research, and it's your responsibility as an instructor to keep your teaching current.

Online Updates & Instructor Bulletins:

- ✓ Check AHA newsletters and bulletins regularly for changes to course content, teaching methods, or certification requirements.

AHA Atlas:

- ✓ Use the AHA Atlas online platform to access the latest guidelines, protocols, training tools, and teaching resources.

Benefits of Becoming an AHA Instructor



Career Flexibility

Teach independently, within organizations, or launch your own training business — you set the schedule and pricing.



Issue Certification Cards

Issue AHA eCards directly to students upon course completion — secure, digital, and verifiable by employers online.



Access to AHA Resources

Get lesson plans, videos, manikin feedback tools, guideline updates, and an online instructor community through the AHA Atlas.



Make a Community Impact

Equip everyday people and healthcare professionals with life-saving skills — every class you teach could save a life.



Common Challenges for New AHA Instructors



Teaching Evaluation

Being monitored during your first class feels intimidating — but it's meant to help you grow.

Tip: Review materials thoroughly, practice your delivery, and ask your Training Center what to expect.



First Class Prep

Managing equipment setup while delivering content can feel overwhelming.

Tip: Build a checklist, arrive early, and start with a smaller class like BLS or Heartsaver.



Time & Pacing

Too fast loses students; too slow runs over time.

Tip: Rehearse with a timer and observe experienced instructors to find your rhythm.



Student Engagement

Keeping students engaged when content feels repetitive is a real challenge.

Tip: Use scenario-based training, group discussions, and manikin feedback devices.

How to Get Started Today



Reach out to EMR



Enroll in an Instructor Course



Access AHA Atlas



Start Teaching

1

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Enroll in an Instructor Course

Complete the Instructor Essentials Course — a blend of online modules and hands-on training to prepare you to teach.

3

Access the AHA Atlas

Get course materials, teaching aids, guideline updates, and connect with a community of fellow instructors.

4

Start Teaching

Once certified, teach independently, within an organization, or launch your own training business and make a lasting impact.

[View EMR's AHA Courses](#)



Ready to Make a Difference?

Becoming an AHA Instructor is one of the most impactful steps you can take in your career. Every class you teach has the potential to save a life.

Take the first step today!

CONTACT US

Website

www.emrsafetyandhealth.com

Phone

972-235-8330

HQ address

9221 LBJ Freeway, Suite 109,
Dallas, TX 75243

E-mail

tccordinator@emrsafetyandhealth.com

Social Media

 facebook.com/EMRSafetyandHealth

 linkedin.com/company/emrsafetyandhealth

 x.com/EMR_Safety

Train. Inspect. Protect.

EMR Safety & Health is a major American Heart Association Training Center serving students and instructors across the country. We're here to support you every step of the way.

