

EASTERN AREA COORDINATING GROUP

Date: April 1, 2025
To: Eastern Area Interagency Wildland Fire Community
From: Eastern Area Coordinating Group
Subject: 2025 Eastern Area Priority Trainee Selection Letter



Congratulations,

You have been accepted into the 2025 Eastern Area Priority Trainee Program (EA PTP). The EA PTP provides an avenue to mobilize priority trainees to incidents in support of interagency workforce development and Incident Management Team succession planning efforts. All Geographic Areas participate in the National Priority Trainee Program. The Program is managed by the Geographic Area Training Representative (GATR) for each Geographic Area.

How the Priority Trainee Program Works:

The Eastern Area Coordination Center's web page [EACC - Training](#) and Eastern Area Wildland Fire Learning Portal page [EA Priority Trainee Program](#) has information regarding the Priority Trainee program and the list of the current year's Eastern Area Priority Trainees. Please be aware that the 2021-2024 EA Priority Trainee Mobilization Program Guide (new version expected Spring 2025) has following changes:

Availability:

When you are available, you will follow your dispatch center's IROC process to set your resource status as "IMT ONLY, VIRTUAL ONLY, or PRIORITY TRAINEE ASSIGNMENT ONLY". EACC daily (05:00 Central Time) generate IROC Availability report for Eastern Area Priority Trainee's that can be viewed from the GACC website [EACC - Training](#). When activity increases throughout the EA GACC and Nationally, the EA Priority Trainee Coordinator will review availability list and reach out to Dispatch Centers confirming availability. Availability outside EA GACC requires National Level Coordination.

When you have declared your availability and the EA PTP Coordinator is working on placing you, if you accept an order for a position other than your priority trainee position, you **may be** removed from the Priority Trainee list for the remainder of the season.

If you are unavailable for a Priority Trainee assignment, please make sure to use your Dispatch Center's IROC status process to either set your resource status to "Unavailable". This will make sure you are not listed on EA-PTP's availability report. It is not required but good practice to reach out to EA PTP Coordinator of availability change by email SM.FS.EATraining@usda.gov.

Eastern Area Priority Trainee resources no longer will need to hide (make non-visible) qualifications or unhide (make visible) in IROC. If the resource status is “Available – PRIORITY TRAINEE ASSIGNMENT ONLY”, this indicates that the priority trainee resource is only available for a priority trainee assignment. Once your IROC status changes from “Available – IMT ONLY, VIRTUAL ONLY, or PRIORITY TRAINEE ASSIGNMENT ONLY”, to anything else. Your availability for the Priority Trainee Program will be updated showing you are no longer available for Trainee Assignment. Good practice to communicate to EA PTP Coordinator on your status if it changes rapidly emailing SM.FS.EATraining@usda.gov.

Availability report is generated daily in the morning. If responder status changes after this report have been generated, notification can be made to the EA PTP Coordinator by email SM.FS.EATraining@usda.gov or EA GATR.

Mobilization:

As incident activity increases GATR’s for all ten (10) Geographic Areas are working collaboratively to place priority trainees. Each GATR maintains a list of available priority trainees from their Geographic Area (GA), visible to all other GATRs. When GA experience incident activity their PTP Coordinator may request Priority Trainee(s) from Eastern Area Availability List, they will contact the EA PTP Coordinator will confirm trainee availability prior to placing an order. EA PTP Coordinator will work with Priority Trainee and/or Dispatch Center for required information for this type of mobilization.

The EA PTP Coordinator will contact the unit, dispatch center, or trainee directly to confirm availability. Number provided by Priority Trainee will be number utilized for contacting Priority Trainee (including nights and weekends). Availability confirmed, Resource Order will be placed through the mobilization system (IROC). Priority Trainee, their Dispatch Center, and EACC will be notified to expect Resource Order with the GACC (location), Incident Name, and tentative date needed. Resource Order will be submitted to EA PTP Coordinator SM.FS.EATraining@usda.gov.

Mobilization of priority trainees is based on availability. When assignments are being processed, the EA PTP Coordinator does not “Call Down” through the list of priority trainees, rather will utilize Availability Report from IROC. Priority trainees who have declared availability will be prioritized based on their EA Priority Ranking (if there are more than One trainee per position at time of request).

Expected length of time before placement:

Depending on the time of year, activity level, and trainee position; it may take 1-5 days for Priority Trainee’s to get resource orders. At the time you declare available, contact EA PTP Coordinator with any questions, concerns, or restrictions you may have. The EA PTP Coordinator will inform you of actions being taken to try to find an assignment for you until you are placed.

Your responsibilities as a Priority Trainee:

1. Declaring your availability to your Dispatch Center or Duty Officer and check to make sure you are listed on the “Available Priority Trainee” list. This report will be posted on the Eastern Area Coordination Center’s web page [EACC - Training](#) and Eastern Area Wildland Fire Learning Portal page [EA Priority Trainee Program](#) daily 05:00 Central Time automatically using IROC reporting tool.
2. Ensure your status is “Available – IMT ONLY, VIRTUAL ONLY, or PRIORITY TRAINEE ASSIGNMENT ONLY” in IROC when you declare availability for Eastern Area Priority Trainee Program.
3. If your availability changes, make sure that you notify your Dispatch Center & EA PTP Coordinator. Dispatch is responsible for updating status in IROC.
4. Assuring that you have your Qualification Card with you and can present it at Check-in (if requested).
5. After being processed through Check-in at the incident, check-in with the Incident Training Specialist (TNSP). The TNSP will check your paperwork and set up your file for your training assignment.
6. Ensure all documentation (position task book & incident performance evaluations) for the assignment are completed by your incident supervisor before demobilization occurs. Recommended for each trainee assignment [ICS-225 WF, Incident Personnel Performance Rating](#) be filled out along with Position Task Book evaluation pages.
7. Close-out with the Incident Training Specialist prior to demobilization. They will assist you in filling out PTB and documents correctly.
8. If you are recommended for certification, notify EA PTP Coordinator and your Training Officer upon your return.
9. If Priority Trainee becomes qualified in PT position, they need to inform the EA PTP Coordinator at SM.FS.EATraining@usda.gov.

If you have any additional questions, feel free to contact Dave Dukart, Eastern Area GATR, (805) 698-2541 or SM.FS.eatraining@usda.gov.

Jeremy Bennett

Vice-Chair
Eastern Area Coordination Group