



Southwest Coordinating Group

Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire Management
Bureau of Indian Affairs: Southwest, Navajo, Western Regions
Bureau of Land Management: Arizona, New Mexico
National Park Service: Intermountain Region
New Mexico State Forestry Division
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service: Region 2
U.S. Forest Service



Southwest Area Priority Trainee Recruitment Notice for 2026

REPLY DUE COB, February 2nd, 2026.

To: Candidates for the Southwest Area Priority Trainee Program
From: The Southwest Coordinating Group

The Southwest Geographic Area focuses on successional planning for Complex Incident Management Teams, Incident Support within the Geographic Area and Nationally as well as organizationally as it pertains to Interagency Fire Program Management Standard (IFPM) /Forest Service Standard Position Description (FSPM) and agency/state mandates. It is critical that we prepare for the future by training individuals to ensure that key positions remain intact over time. The end state vision is to produce a holistic system wherein all functional areas involved in the mobilization and training process work together to create a sustainable workforce. The Southwest Priority Trainee Program (PTP) provides an avenue for speed to competency that supports interagency succession objectives.

Definition of a Priority Trainee

This designator reflects someone serving in a trainee position that is in critical need of receiving on-the-job training to:

- 1) Meet a job requirement
- 2) Fill CIMT / Type 3 Shortage
- 3) Career development

Trainees may request to be considered for the Priority Trainee Program if they meet the following:

- 1) **Position Requirement** – The trainee currently occupies a position that requires full qualification to retain their employment. The trainee is subject to removal from their position if they do not meet the requirement.
- 2) **Incident Management** – Once qualified, the trainee will fill a critical position on a Complex Incident Management Team or an Organized Type 3 Organization.
- 3) **Career Development** – Once qualified, the trainee will fulfill a need established on their Individual Development Plan (IDP's).

Southwest Area Priority Trainee Requirements

The Geographic Area Training Representative (GATR) facilitates the Southwest Priority Trainee Program and movement of pre-identified trainees within, and outside of the Southwest Geographic Area in collaboration with the National GATR Group.

Priority Trainees must be agency employees (Federal, State, Permanent FD/Local Agency, and Tribal). Federal or State ADs and Fire Department Supplemental trainees will mobilize under normal dispatching processes when no Priority Trainees are available.

Individuals may only nominate for ONE (1) Priority Trainee position and shall apply through the Microsoft Form, hosted in numerous locations.

CIMT Trainees

For out of Geographic Area assignments, Southwest CIMTs may roster a certain number of trainees who are selected through the Incident Command Application (ICAP) process. Additional trainees will be mobilized using the Priority Trainee List.

All trainees who intend to apply to a CIMT are strongly encouraged to apply to the Priority Trainee Program, regardless of selection status with the Team. The Priority Trainee application period closes on February 2nd, 2026, and the Geographic Area list is published early March 2026. If a Southwest Priority Trainee is rostered on a CIMT as a trainee and is a part of the Southwest Priority Trainee Program, they may be considered for Priority Trainee assignments if their Team is not available.

Application Process:

2026 nomination is available via the QR Code provided below. It is recommended that you speak to your supervisor prior to applying, as they will need to approve the request.

2026 Nomination Process and Timelines:

- November 3rd – February 2nd: Program application Period
- 1st-2nd week of February: review and prioritization of trainees occurs between SWA Committees
- 3rd week of February: final draft prioritized list of trainees submitted to the SWCG for final approval.

Please contact your Geographic Area Training Representative, Elliott Herrera at etherrera@blm.gov with questions.

Priority Trainee Program positions, mobilization expectations available for considerations, are listed below along with the link for the application of the Priority Trainee Program.

Chair, Southwest Area Coordinating Group



<https://forms.office.com/g/zjKegvYhwF?origin=lprLink>

2026 Approved Priority Trainee Positions					
Command	Aviation	Operations	Logistics	Planning	Finance
ICCI	AOBD	OSCC	LSCC	PSCC	FSCC
ICT3	ASGS	OPBD	LSC3	PSC3	FSC3
LOFR	ATGS	OSC3	BCMG	DMOB	TIME
PIOC	HEBM	DIVS	EQPM	DOCL	PROC
PIO3	HMGB	TFLD	FACL	FBAN	COMP
SOFC			GSUL	FOBS	COST
SOFF			MEDL	GISS	PTRC
			ORDM	HRSP	EQTR
			RCDM	ITSS	
			SUPL	LTAN	
				RESL	
				SCKN	
				SITL	
				SOPL	
				TNSP	

Priority Trainee Relocation

Individuals on the Southwest Area Priority Trainee list who relocate outside the Southwest Area (i.e. change jobs) will be removed from the Southwest List and will be subject to the procedures identified in the receiving Geographic Area's PTP (if applicable). Individuals who relocate to the Southwest Area after the nomination process deadline will only be allowed to participate in the program if they were a Priority Trainee in their previous Geographic Area.

Resource Ordering System Availability

Priority Trainees will be mobilized according to the highest priority with "Priority Trainee Assignment Only" status. Priority Trainees must have their status set to "Priority Trainee Assignment Only" in IROC, or they will not be included in the daily consideration utilized by the GATR group.

Any trainees identified and nominated for the program should be available for a minimum of 1 assignment throughout the season (14+ consecutive days). The following guidelines will be used for those declining assignments when showing available.

- 1) Upon first declination of an assignment, and with a reasonable explanation, the assignment will be awarded to the next available individual. Trainee status will be updated accurately until available again.
- 2) Upon second declination of an assignment, trainee will be removed from the list.

