

CDC-Funded Training for the COVID-19 Contact Tracing Workforce



Background

Contact tracing is a key strategy to prevent the further spread of COVID-19. Contact tracing in the United States requires states, tribes, localities, and territories to recruit, hire, and train adequate levels of case investigators and contact tracers. Successful case investigation and contact tracing for COVID-19 depends on a robust and well-trained public health workforce, with staff who have excellent and tactful interpersonal skills, cultural sensitivity, and language and interviewing skills that help them to build and maintain trust with clients and contacts.



The CDC COVID-19 Response and the CDC Division of STD Prevention are supporting two cooperative agreements to train the COVID-19 contact tracing workforce. The newly funded National Network Disease Intervention Training Centers (NNDITC) and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) in partnership with the National Coalition of STD Directors (NCSO) are leading a nationwide, coordinated training effort to build a well-trained public health COVID-19 contact tracing workforce, including case investigators, contact tracers, and contact tracing supervisors.

Knowledge-Based Training

ASTHO and NCSO are collaborating with CDC and NNDITC to expand existing training and develop new knowledge-based COVID-19 contact tracing trainings. ASTHO is a national nonprofit organization representing public health agencies in the United States and over 100,000 public health professionals. NCSO is a national public health membership organization representing health department STD directors, their support staff, and community-based partners across 50 states, seven large cities, and eight U.S. territories.



These trainings are available [online](#). The trainings incorporate a variety of learning approaches including online instructional modules, recorded videos of sample interviews with cases and contacts, and other interactive online components.

The initial goals of the partnership are to:

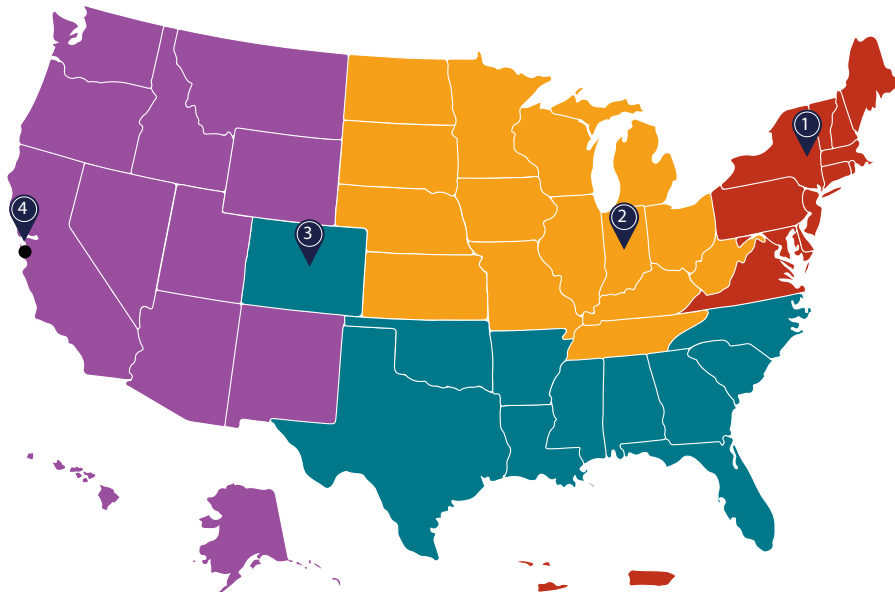
1. Expand the existing ASTHO training, [Making Contact: A Training for COVID-19 Contact Tracers](#).
2. Develop additional modules to build the knowledge about COVID-19 that case investigators and contact tracers need.
3. Develop a training course for contact tracing supervisors.



cdc.gov/coronavirus

Skills-Based Training

Once contact tracers and case investigators complete online knowledge-based training, they need additional skills to be effective. CDC is partnering with NNDITC to scale up virtual skills-based training for contact tracers, case investigators, and their managers. This instructor-led training will be delivered virtually. The NNDITCs have a long history of training Disease Intervention Specialists, the key workforce in health departments who investigate infectious disease outbreaks, including STDs, HIV, tuberculosis (TB), and any emerging infectious disease threats.



NNDITC comprises a national skills-based curricula development and coordination center — the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) Disease Intervention Training Centers (DITC) — and four regional centers that will provide the virtual skills-based interactive trainings:

- Region 1: Health NY DITC in Albany, New York
- Region 2: Health Care Education and Training (HCET) DITC in Indianapolis, Indiana
- Region 3: Denver Public Health DITC in Denver, Colorado
- Region 4: UCSF DITC in San Francisco, California
- Curriculum Development Center in San Francisco, California

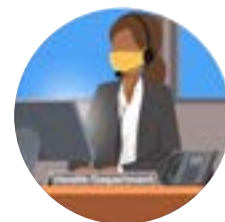
The partnership is aimed at training three initial COVID-19 cohorts:

- State and local health department staff
- Individuals hired as part of the [CDC Foundation COVID-19 Corps](#)
- CDC's Public Health Associate Program (PHAP) trainees

These trainees will continue to be supported through necessary on-the-job trainings, such as mentorship programs and virtual learning collaboratives, offered by the NNDITC to hone the trainees' skills while they are working at a health department.

Impact

The trainings planned by the NNDITC, ASTHO, and NCSD will enhance the knowledge and skills of the contact tracing workers essential to the COVID-19 pandemic response in the United States. Specifically, the trainings will 1) ensure that U.S. contact tracers have a standard set of skills and knowledge needed to do their jobs well, 2) bolster health departments' ability to work across jurisdictions to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the United States, and 3) build a highly proficient public health workforce that can reduce the spread of other current and future health threats. These cooperative agreements contribute to the national COVID-19 response while sustainably strengthening the public health workforce for the future.



Additional Information

To access the knowledge-based training from ASTHO, please visit TRAIN: <https://www.train.org/main/course/1091302/compilation>