Attachment 5
Training Center Best Practices

Ending Epidemics Education, Training and Technical Assistance Services

RFA #20760/Internal Program #25-0003

This document offers guidance on best practices for a successful program. This is a living document and will be revised as new practices and tools emerge.

Promotion, Training Marketing and Participant Registration
- When scheduling a course, allow a minimum of six (6) weeks to promote and market the training.
- Clearly state the intended audience, course goals and objectives in all promotional materials.
- Include the direct registration link in all promotional materials to facilitate participant registration, including flyers, emails, electronic announcements, agency website, calendars, etc.
- Include a slide or handout in each webinar or training about upcoming trainings.
- When scheduling a course in the system, ensure all fields are completed, including times and exact location. For webinars, include the link in the training address field to facilitate participant access to the required link.
- Send a reminder email to all registrants 1-2 weeks before and again 1-3 days before the webinar or training. It is beneficial to send an additional reminder the day of the event for webinar trainings. For webinars, include the training link in the reminder emails.
- Include in the reminder emails a request for participants who are not planning on attending, to drop the course to allow other participants to enroll in cases where there is a waitlist.
- Add content to reminder emails to spark participant interest and engagement. Examples include: providing the training agenda; attaching a relevant handout; requesting participants to submit questions they hope to have answered; including tips for how to get the most out of the training, and others.
- Monitor participant registration in the registration system to allow for additional promotional efforts as needed. Training centers should alert their contract managers of courses that continue to have low registration despite promotional efforts at least two (2) weeks prior to the course delivery. Track attendance as the delivery date gets closer and consult with your contract manager if considering cancellation.
- Use the report function in the registration system to track attendance, waitlists and participant no show rates for each training conducted during each calendar period. Review and use these data when planning your next calendar.
- Provide participants a contact email address for any questions or concerns regarding the course, as well as any needed assistance on the day of training.
- Continuously brainstorm and explore different ways to engage and outreach new learners and attract them to signing up for newsletters, course announcements, Constant Contact, etc.

Setting up a Conducive In-person Learning Environment
- The quality of the training space significantly influences the participant learning experience. Training space should be comfortable with enough room to accommodates up to 35 adult learners with ample space for small group work. It shall be handicap accessible to reasonably accommodate all learners.
- The training space is free of outside distractions (noise, outside interruptions, etc.) and reinforces a sense of safety to encourage open learner participation.

- The training space should have access to high quality AV equipment and strong internet reception.
- Room set-up encourages learner participation. A U-format or small group tables encourages greater participant engagement.
- During a dry run of the course, trainers should position themselves in various seats to ensure that visual aids can be seen and voice/audio can be heard throughout the room.
- For in-person trainings, trainers should arrive at least 60 minutes before the training start to allow sufficient time to assess the room set-up and take charge of the training space.
- To establish an environment that promotes learner participation, include opportunities for all participants to speak out loud to the group at the start of the training. This might be through participant introductions or through ice breakers. It may include each person unmuting and speaking to the large group or, if time is limited, this may be accomplished through small group breakouts or dyads.

Delivering Effective Webinars
For webinars, setting up the environment and technology includes:
- Designating a Webinar Technical Expert (or producer) who is not presenting during the webinar, but who is comfortable with using the webinar software and can provide technical support during the webinar.
- The Webinar Technical Expert (or producer) should know how to handle audio issues for the particular webinar platform being used, including: addressing feedback on the line, adjusting volume levels, helping participants mute and unmute as needed, and assisting learners who do not have audio.
- A producer agenda/outline should be developed and followed during each webinar. The producer agenda outlines the details of the different lecture and interactive activities of the training, time allotments, when to launch polls, break-out rooms and when other transitions should occur.
- The producer should play an active role in working with the trainers behind the scenes to ensure that the training stays on time. Trainers and producers should subtly utilize instant messaging and texts in order to address timing concerns and AV issues.
- Securing and setting-up a webinar room. This should be a quiet room with a door and where no background noise can be heard.
- Creating a sign or other system to ensure the presentation space stays quiet. ("Training in progress")
- Investing in high-quality headsets (speaker and microphone) to ensure good sound quality.
- Testing webinar software and system requirements in advance, to ensure all equipment is compatible, and all elements of the presentation are functional (i.e., Videos, polls, etc.) Ask presenters to log in 30 minutes before the webinar starts to troubleshoot any issues they may have in accessing the webinar platform.
- Ensuring that the background behind presenters is free of visual distractions (e.g. no windows to public areas, no other staff walking, using an appropriate background.)
- Conducting a presenter/training rehearsal to ensure familiarity with the technical aspects of the platform, verify content flow, confirm timing, and practice screen sharing. A pre-session checklist may be helpful.
- Holding practice sessions are vital, to ensure content as well as a chance to practice imbedded videos and addressing any connectivity and AV issues.
- For webinars and virtual trainings, producer and trainers log on 30 minutes before the start of the training, to prepare/open the virtual room and place participants in the waiting room before the start of the training.
- Decide in advance if the webinar will be recorded.

Making Webinars Interactive and Interesting
- To establish an environment that promotes learner participation, provide opportunities for all participants to speak out loud to the group at the start of the training. This might be through participant introductions or through simple icebreakers and/or self-introductions in the chat.
- To ensure regular interactions and break up periods of lecture, build in an interactive activity every 15-20 minutes. Interactions can vary in length and intensity but will help keep participants stay engaged and help support their learning.
- Periodically take down the slides so that trainers and participants can see everyone full screen, in gallery view. This should be done for periods of discussion, Q&A, brainstorms and other large group questions. If there is a specific discussion question or other group directions that are on the slide, put these in the chat so that people can refer to them as needed.
- Explain to learners the "why" behind questions and interactive activities, and how answering questions benefits them.
- Balance the content and the length of each webinar. Participants can generally maintain concentration for a limited length of time. General informational webinars should have a maximum length of 60 minutes. Training and educational webinars should have a maximum length of 90 minutes. A 2-hour webinar provides a deeper dive and skills practice. Sessions of 90 minutes or more should include a break for people to get up, stretch, and take care of critical needs.
- Speak with energy and enthusiasm. Avoid a monotone delivery style by consciously changing the pitch of your voice and your speed of delivery. Every small change in your delivery style refocuses your audience's attention on your voice and your content.
- Keep up to date with cutting edge virtual learning modes and add those new ways of learning into courses as appropriate.

Developing Effective PowerPoint Presentations
- Use consistent colors throughout the presentation to create a theme that appropriately represents the subject matter.
- Be consistent with font size, type and color throughout the presentation.
- Use a clear, professional font with a minimum of 30PT for titles and 28 for text.
- Ensure all materials are 508/Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Compliant. Use font color in high-contrast colors that allows foreground text be easily seen and read over the background. Refer to the following site: Presentations Training Videos | Section508.gov
- Apply "less is best" rule with minimal amount of text and less than four (4) bullet points per slide.
- Be consistent in how key points are highlighted throughout the presentation.
- Include purposeful, high-quality graphics (photos, charts, graphs, tables, diagrams) that make a specific point. Avoid irrelevant images that can distract.
- If there is a specific discussion question or other group directions that are on the slide, put these in the chat so that people can refer to them as needed.
- Ensure there are relatable stories, anecdotes, analogies and examples to maximize participant learning.
- Please cite your data sources. Update data slides regularly.

Trainer Preparation
- Trainers shall be prepared to teach/facilitate (e.g. be fully versed on the material and activities, get a full rest the night before and ensure good nutrition to help focus and sustain energy).
- Every new training needs a full practice session for trainers to get a sense of duration, delivery, tone, cues, and pace.

- Trainers and technical staff should be well-versed in all technology used, including chat functionalities, breakout rooms, white boards, etc.
- Training centers create a documented back-up trainer policy and a detailed schedule of back-up trainers for each course.

Quality Assurance and Evaluation
- Perform and allow training monitoring, where another trainer and/or supervisor observes the training session and provides feedback.
- Establish a continuous quality improvement plan built on the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) model to promote on-going quality improvement in all areas of the program.
- Create and utilize a training evaluation rubric and plan.
- To promote participant completion of training evaluation forms, use the webinar platform poll function at the end of the training or embed a hyperlink to an electronic survey in the presentation slides or chat. Post the evaluation link in chat early and often.
- For in-person trainings, hand out hard copies of the training evaluation and ask participants to complete it before leaving.
- In concluding both in-person and virtual webinars, trainers are advised to debrief the training to go over what went well, improvements for next time, and any other noteworthy notes and topics.