

Centennial Connection



American Red Cross



Openers

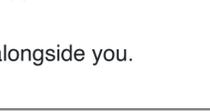
We hope you're staying safe and warm—2026 is certainly off to an energetic start! Of course, this is a time of planning and getting things in order, so you are ready and fully staffed for the summer season. As many of you finalize your spring Lifeguarding and Water Safety Instructor® course schedules, we encourage you to make these classes open to the public and post them on the American Red Cross Take-a-Class pages using the Class Posting Service.

Opening your courses to the community—and ensuring they're visible—can make a powerful impact across your region by:

- Bringing in new and promising candidates who might become excellent members of your team.
- Expanding the overall training pipeline, helping nearby facilities meet their staffing and safety needs.
- Generating additional revenue for your organization.

And remember—posting your Water Safety Instructor courses is completely free.

We're also excited to join many of you at the 2026 International Aquatics & Water Safety Conference and Expo this month in Colorado Springs. Please stop by our booth—we'd love to see you in person. We also hope you'll attend our session, "Water Safety IS Public Health: Expanding Aquatic Training for AI/AN Youth," presented by a panel of three leaders, including Centennial Campaign participant Swan Cooke, Aquatics Director for Lake Havasu City, AZ. The session takes place Monday afternoon—please join us!



Please reach out anytime—we're honored to work alongside you.

Welcome New Centennial Campaign Providers!

- ◆ City of Garden Grove, CA
- ◆ City of Jacksonville, AR
- ◆ City of Fairfield, CA
- ◆ City of New Braunfels, TX

Supporting Red Cross National Alliance to Advance Water Safety Partners

The Red Cross Mission team and National Partnerships group have collaborated over the past several years to create the National Alliance to Advance Water Safety (NAAWS)—a coalition of national Red Cross partners from across the organization, including Biomedical Services and Disaster Services. Through this alliance, partners learn about our aquatics and drowning prevention mission and are encouraged to engage in water safety work where it's needed most.

NAAWS offers a special grant opportunity for eligible partner organizations and their chapters that commit to advancing water competency and drowning prevention efforts in underserved communities. Water competency includes three key elements: water safety knowledge, essential swimming skills, and the ability to assist in a water emergency.

This initiative is especially focused on supporting organizations serving African American, Latino, and Native American communities, where drowning rates remain disproportionately high. By expanding access to swim lessons and other components of the water safety ecosystem, NAAWS aims to make a measurable, lasting impact.

We want our Centennial Campaign providers to be aware of this initiative because NAAWS partners may reach out to collaborate with you, including opportunities such as:

- Hosting a water safety outreach event.
- Providing instructors or staff to teach safety skills (e.g., "reach or throw, don't go," life jacket fitting, using Longfellow's WHALE Tales) to their families or children they serve.
- Sharing your upcoming training schedule so partners can plan funding for swim lessons, Lifeguarding and/or Water Safety Instructor training where cost is a barrier.
- Offering dedicated swim lesson sessions to help youth meet prerequisites for Lifeguarding and/or WSI courses.

We hope you'll welcome these collaborations and help strengthen water safety pathways in communities that need them most.

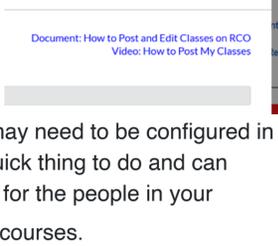
As always, please reach out with any questions!

Operations

Posting Classes to RCO

Do a quick experiment with me. Go to redcross.org/takeaclass and search for "Swimming + Water Safety" classes in your area. What do you find? Online classes for sure, but anything else? If the answer is "not much," then this is your next big challenge. The Class Posting Service (CPS) allows you to promote your classes on the Red Cross website, a site that gets over half a million visitors every month. Posting Water Safety Instructor courses is free for everyone and, as always, municipalities and non-profit organizations can post all courses at no cost. To get started, log in to the [Red Cross Learning Center](#) and find the "List Class on RCO" button on the right-hand side of the homepage.

When the form opens, look for the help documents in the top right-hand corner. Those documents will walk you through the process and answer any major questions you might have. After that, if you're still having trouble, reach out to your Sales rep. In some cases, an account may need to be configured in the background to allow for CPS, but it's a quick thing to do and can make a big difference for your programs and for the people in your community looking for WSI® or Lifeguarding courses.

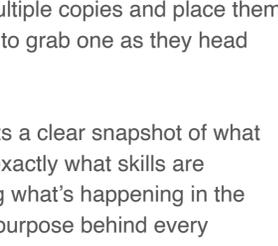


Spotlight On

City of Winter Haven: How We Welcome Families Into their Swim Journey

Submitted by Chase Hogue

From the moment families arrive at our swim program, we want them to feel informed, included, and excited about their child's swim journey! One of our favorite ways to do this is by sharing the American Red Cross Swim Achievement Booklet right away. We print multiple copies and place them on a parent table, making it easy for families to grab one as they head out to watch their child's lesson.



The Swim Achievement Booklet gives parents a clear snapshot of what their child will be learning at each level and exactly what skills are needed to move forward. Instead of guessing what's happening in the water, parents can follow along and see the purpose behind every activity. We've found that providing this information from day one greatly reduces questions and confusion. It also helps parents realize that swim lessons are about so much more than just "kicking your feet". Each class builds confidence, safety, coordination, and lifelong water skills.

We also use this parent table to introduce another fan favorite resource: our "Meet Our Instructors" pages. These sheets feature photos and short bios of each instructor, sharing their experience, background, and even a little about who they are outside of swim lessons. Since instructors don't always have time to fully introduce themselves during quick lesson transitions, this gives parents a chance to get to know the people teaching their children.

Together, these simple touches have made a big difference in our program. By keeping parents informed and connected, we create a more welcoming and transparent environment. Families feel involved, instructors feel supported, and trust is built naturally. When parents know what their child is learning and who is guiding them along the way, everyone wins and the swim experience becomes even more meaningful.

Resources

Quick Links

Red Cross Learning Center Overview & Orientations for Instructors and Administrators

- Register here: [Overview & Orientation Session](#)
- Register here: [Setting Up & Delivering Classes](#)

Request Online Class

Request Online Class can be found on RCLC only if you are logged into your account and you are an Administrator with Partner Portal Access. The red button for request Online Class is on the righthand side.

- [Request Online Class](#)
- [Request Online Class Quick Reference Guide](#)

Calendar

Water Safety Instructor® Trainer Academies

Interested in attending an academy? Start by reviewing the [Instructor Trainer qualifications](#). If you meet the requirements, submit your [application](#). Approval usually takes about 1–2 weeks. Once approved, your eligibility to reserve a spot is valid for one year. Apply early—enrollment closes one month before the academy start date.

- **April 13-17:** Lawrenceville, GA
- **April 27- May 1:** Raleigh, NC
- **May 11-15:** Strongsville, OH
- **May 18-22:** Laurel, MD
- **June 8-12:** Twin Cities, MN

If you have an Academy fee waiver as a part of your Centennial Addendum, please reach out. We can provide you with guidance to make sure that your waiver is applied before you must pay the registration fee.

Visit Us at This Upcoming Conference

- **International Aquatics & Water Safety Conference and Exposition (formerly AOAP/NDPA), Colorado Springs, CO:** February 16-19, 2026

[Click here to manage communication preferences.](#)