



This month I want to highlight NRA's Apprentice Instructor and Assistant Instructor programs administered by the Education and Training Division. Complementing NRA's flagship Certified Instructor programs, the age and score requirements are reduced for Apprentice and Assistant Instructor candidates, providing a streamlined path for young people to obtain firearm training credentials and options to upgrade their ratings as they mature into adults. For young people, these programs are the ideal route for NRA firearm-training certification.

Since its founding in 1871, the National Rifle Association's training programs have been the gold standard for the safe and proper use of firearms. Discipline-specific, all NRA Instructor courses are designed to help candidates develop the skills and techniques necessary to teach in the NRA Basic Firearm Training Program.

While NRA Certified Instructors have to be at least 21 years old, juniors between the ages of 13 and 17 are eligible to become Apprentice Instructors. The Assistant Instructor program is open to students that are age 18 and older.

Apprentice and Assistant Instructors are required to undergo the same strict training and qualification as Certified Instructors, except the two lower ratings can score 85% to pass the written exam, while Certified candidates must have at least 90%. We've found that many young people score better this way, since they're used to taking tests at school with a similar open-book format.

Since Apprentice and Assistant Instructors have the option to upgrade, both programs serve as a pipeline for young people to reach NRA-Certified Instructor status. Apprentice Instructors can move up to Assistant after reaching 18 years of age. To do so, they must submit a written request and the appropriate fees, along with a letter of recommendation penned by any NRA-Certified Instructor they have worked with conducting courses in the same rating.

The upgrade process is similar for Assistant Instructors who are 21 years of age or older and want to become certified. A written request and payment are required, plus a letter of recommendation from any NRA-Certified Instructor stating they've helped to manage a minimum of two NRA courses for which they hold the Assistant Instructor rating.

Once credentialed, Apprentice and Assistant Instructors can assist NRA Certified Instructors to conduct course lessons or practical exercises—making them valuable assets to any firearms-training team. Additionally, I want to recognize the fact that many NRA Apprentice and Assistant Instructors are also involved with the Boy Scouts of America, one of our key partners in promoting firearms safety with young people.

