



Hunter Information & Training Program News

Winter 2026

Coordinator's Corner-Ginamaria Smith

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HIT Program certification courses were taught in **45 different cities and villages** during 2025 and we had **499 active volunteer instructors**.

Class Type	Number of Classes	Certified Students
Hunter Ed	179	2,353
Bowhunter Ed	49	427
Muzzleloader Ed	17	84
Crossbow Ed	11	41
Totals:	256	2,905

Your **6,158** volunteer hours equaled **\$308,043.68** for in-kind match funds! Which allowed us to access **\$924,131** in P-R funds. These funds are used for HIT Program administration and to purchase class supplies, rent facilities, and pay for travel. Thank you for all of your volunteer hours.

Class Type	# of Instructors Who Taught at Least 1 Class	Taught the Most Classes
Hunter Ed	268	Jason Amaro (Eagle River) taught 17 hunter ed classes.
Bowhunter Ed	72	Ken Calkins (Salcha) & Steve Latz (Kenai) both taught 6 bow ed classes.
Muzzleloader Ed	15	Bill Sobolesky (Anchorage) taught 4 muzzleloader ed classes
Crossbow Ed	19	Steve Latz (Kenai), Bob Dragich (Kasilof), Ryan Hastings (Ft. Wainwright), & Paul Ritz (Anchorage) each taught 2 crossbow ed classes
Multiple Disciplines	52	Paul Houser (Palmer) taught 15 hunter ed and 4 bow ed classes



DID YOU KNOW?
In 2025 we held 53 school hunter ed classes which certified over 650 students.

Region	# of Classes	Students in Class
Region I (Southeast)	36	305
Region II (Anc, Kodiak, & Kenai Pen.)	107	1,264
Region III & V (Interior & Northwest)	49	556
Region IV (Central & Southwest)	64	758



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Volunteer Instructor Longevity Pins in 2025

Thank you to these long-time, dedicated volunteer instructors! The time and effort that they've contributed to teaching HIT Program certification courses has made a difference in the safety and behavior of hunters in the field.



David Atteberry-Fairbanks
Isaac Deaton-Valdez
Jeff Defreest-Ketchikan
Roy Hartz-Palmer
Anthony Henry-Anchorage

Hairl Holmes-Valdez
James Kimura-Fairbanks
Arnold Marks-Tanana
Rachel Ann Mitchell-Fairbanks
Amy Moselle-Juneau

Joseph Reeves-Auke Bay
Laura Reid-Palmer
John Rusyniak-Tok
Raymond Saft-Anchorage
Joshua Spann-Petersburg



Milo Burcham-Cordova
Ardy Hanson-Cordova
Jason Herreman-Homer

Aidan Hunter-Tok
Jachin Jacobs-Palmer
Russell Landers-Tok

Andrew Morse-Cordova
Regg Simon-Palmer
William Tyra-Anchorage



Stephen Bethune
Joel Burns
Robert Hicks

Douglas Johnson
John Krieg
Douglas Moore

James Parkin
Sarah Stallone
Robert Taylor



Edward Buyarski
George Campbell
Marc Cloward
Julian Mason

Sondra Meredith
Ernst Mueller
Ryan Scott
James Sheridan

Mark Somerville
Charlotte Westing
Lance Westing

2025 Instructor of the Year Awards



Volunteer instructors are the backbone of the HIT Program. As a group, volunteer instructors possess a vast wealth of information which has proven to be invaluable in passing on the knowledge and skills of the outdoors. The HIT Program would like to recognize the following volunteer instructors for making a significant contribution to the HIT Program and considerably advancing the cause of safe/ethical hunting.

Hunter Education Instructor of the Year:
John Sloss (Sterling)



**HIT Program Outstanding Educator
of the Year: James White (Juneau)**



IHEA Instructor Resource Site
<https://www.ihea-usa.org/>

HIT Program Site
www.huntereducation.alaska.gov



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Welcome to Our New Volunteer Instructors

We wish to extend a warm welcome to all new volunteer instructors who have joined us since the publication of our last newsletter. Congratulations and welcome aboard!

Hunter Education:

Albuquerque: Earl Chicharello

Anchorage: Jan Dominguez, Jonathan Godwin, Carol Hedges, Israel Portilla Gomes, William Steele

Fairbanks: Bryan Freed, Nicholas Jablonski, Devon Kleinsmith

Golovin: Agnes Moses

Haines: Joshua Whitby

Homer: Peter Swanson

Hoonah: Rebekah Contreras, Alan Urban

Juneau: Kaitlyn Dow, Eric Green, Abigail McAllister

Kake: Frederick Flyes

Ketchikan: Frank Bayles

Moose Pass: Dustin Carl

Nome: Justin Heinrich

Seldovia: Michael Opheim

Sitka: Ryan Hill

Soldotna: Jesse Blades

Sterling: Ronald Haberman

Togiak: David Delamatta

Tok: Jaimie Burnham

Wasilla: Joseph Betz, Victoria Limbocker, Steven Novak, Kristopher Wagoner

Yakutat: Richard Hoffman

Bowhunter Education:

Anchorage: William Steele

Eagle River: Stephen Hair

Fairbanks: Nicholas Jablonski

Kodiak: Larry Fisher

North Pole: Erik Antonson

Palmer: Christopher Green

Sterling: Ronald Haberman

Willow: Michael Leach

We are always looking to recruit new volunteer instructors.

If you know of anyone interested, have them visit the website (www.huntereducation.alaska.gov) and fill out the application. Once we receive their application we'll contact them about attending instructor training. The HIT Program covers all travel costs to attend the training or if there are enough interested instructors in an area we'll send HIT Staff to conduct a training.



In 2025 we certified the following new instructors:

- 114 hunter ed instructors
- 21 bowhunter ed instructors
- 3 muzzleloader ed instructors
- 2 crossbow ed instructors

The 2026 instructor training dates and volunteer instructor application are posted on the HIT Program website. Please encourage students, family members, and friends to become a volunteer. Instructors are our best recruiters!



HIT Steering Group Members

Melissa Hendrickson (Interior)
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Andy Finke (Rural)
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Jason Amaro (Southcentral)
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Tom Kowalske (Southeast)
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Brock Meredith (Southeast)
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Instructor Notes

2025 Instructor of the Year Awards



**Lifetime
Achievement
Award:
Steve Lanford
(Fairbanks)**



**Legacy Award:
Rick Sterling
(Fairbanks)**

**Lifetime
Achievement
Award:
Fred Moore
(Seward)**



**Rural Instructor
of the Year:
Joe Henry
(Metlakatla)**



**Rookie of the
Year Award:
Jackie Veats
(Fairbanks)**



**Legacy Award:
Tom Kron
(Anchorage)**



We are grateful to those of you who took the time to nominate one of your co-instructors. The nominations were well-written, well-thought out, and really demonstrate the influence of each nominee. Please keep these awards in mind throughout the year as you instruct classes and work closely with your co-instructors. We know that there are many dedicated instructors out there who deserve to be recognized as well, and who better to act as nominator than somebody who is teaching a class right alongside them.

HIT Program Staff Contact Information

Anchorage:

Gina Smith 267-2196
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Arianne Asay 267-2187

Fairbanks:

Tom Halverson 459-7211
Dani Easterling
459-7242

Juneau:

Mike Kelly 465-4345
Dan Palicka 586-4101



**Paul is the 17th
instructor to volunteer
over 1,000 hours
teaching certification
classes!**