

The Los Alamos County Social Services Division is excited to announce the launch of our second "Train-the-trainer" cohort opportunity in collaboration with the Association of Nature and Forest Therapy Guides (ANFT). The application period will be open from November 19, 2025 – December 12, 2025. Details about the application and program are below!

ANFT is a global leader in Forest Therapy Guided Training, a practice which draws on developing connections with nature and creating experiences centered in mindfulness, as ways to help improve physical and mental wellbeing. Increasing research points to the benefits of "forest bathing" as it may be commonly called - In fact, some colleges are providing this as coursework to help students remain connected to nature in the midst of challenging studies, to reduce their stress and anxiety levels on campus! More about ANFT can be found at anft.earth.

Our vision: Over the next two years, we hope to have up to 50 people from throughout our community and region become trained as ANFT guides, and use that knowledge to incorporate our beautiful open spaces, trails, and natural landmarks into existing programming; create new programs or reach new audiences; and/or develop new partnerships! We're open to your ideas, and excited about the possibilities.

What you'll learn: The ANFT curriculum is delivered in a virtual format, led by two certified trainers. Over the six-month period, you will learn the skills and techniques to successfully guide any group through a series of outdoor experiences. There will be opportunities for hands-on learning on surrounding trails; self-reflection; and feedback and support for each other in the cohort. At the conclusion of the virtual programming, the two trainers will come on-site to Los Alamos and the entire cohort will meet for four consecutive days to complete the in-person learning component.

Once you are certified, you can then guide your own group into our surrounding natural areas. Our hope is that your program participants realize extra benefits from being guided using these techniques, experiencing your program while being in nature.

This program is open to all community members ages 18+. There is no assumption of minimum fitness ability; we welcome applicants of all backgrounds, abilities, and lived experiences. There is no cost to attend this training cohort.

Program Details: Our first cohort of leaders will kick-off on Monday, January 26, and meet virtually once a week on Mondays from 2:00 – 4:00pm. The virtual learning sessions will last for six months, and will run until mid-June. During this time, you will also be expected to complete weekly readings/assignments, learn hands-on experiential lessons, lead small groups into nature, and report back on your experiences through an online learning platform. The program includes a mandatory 4-day on-site immersion experience in Los Alamos and the surrounding trails, which will take place May 6-8, 2026. You will also need to complete wilderness first aid training, so that you are completely equipped in all aspects for anything that may happen once you begin to lead groups (more details to come on that certification once the program begins).

To Apply: please send a letter of interest to Jessica.strong@lacnm.us that includes the following information:

1. Applicant name, physical address, email address, and phone number
2. Organizational or professional affiliation, if any

3. Description of current programs / services you provide, including demographic details and number of annual participants
4. Proposed plan: Description of proposed plan for how you would incorporate ANFT guides into *either* existing programming or a new program, including demographic details you intend to reach and proposed number of program participants
5. Proposed plan: Describe how you will measure programmatic success once you are trained as an ANFT guide
6. Description of marketing and outreach activities that would incorporate ANFT
7. Statement of commitment ensuring you will be able to attend 90% of virtual sessions (beginning Monday, January 26, 2026, and continuing weekly on Mondays from 2:00 – 4:00pm through mid-June), *and* complete the on-site immersion in May.

Deadline to apply: All letters of interest must be received by **5:00pm MST on Friday, December 12.**

A committee will review and score all letters according to a standardized rubric, with scoring as follows:

1. Current programs / Services: Evidence of ability to successfully manage current programs (15 points)
2. Proposed plan: Evidence of ability to successfully integrate ANFT guide training into existing work (25 points)
3. Proposed plan: Does the intended audience fulfill an identified community need and/or represent diverse perspectives (15 points)
4. Proposed plan: Description of outcomes is clear, actionable, and measurable (25 points)
5. Marketing and outreach plan (15 points)
6. Statement of commitment (5 points)

Total points: 100 points

Letters of interest should be limited to no more than three (3) pages. Please only apply if you can guarantee completing the entire program in this timeframe, as training spots are limited and we want to ensure success for everyone.

Notifications will be sent to all applicants indicating the status of their application by Friday, December 19.