



INNOVATIVE READINESS TRAINING



The Premier Military Training Platform for a Secure and Prosperous America

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Military Applications: Identifying Critical Training Opportunities

IRT partnerships begin with two elements: a community application and a corresponding military application. This month, we take a look at the military application process and what constitutes a quality application. Like communities that apply, the military service component applicants start in the online application portal at irt.defense.gov. Here, military units from across the United States and its territories scan community applications that seek a variety of civil-military partnerships. Typical areas of training include medical, construction, civil affairs, cybersecurity, aerial spray, transportation, and diving missions; though these examples are not exhaustive and IRT missions can be accomplished on any valid training requirement a branch or service may require.

The military applications—at eight pages long with numerous attachments—capture many elements that demonstrate valid training expectations. Applicants also estimate specific aspects, such as the number of Servicemembers to be trained and the financial resources requested from the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and military department, to accomplish desired training outcomes. Once submitted, all military applications are automatically routed to a unit's corresponding OSD IRT Program Manager (PM) for their Service component. In order to understand more about the military application process, IRT recently sat down with Major Andrew Chrestman, IRT PM for U.S. Marine Corps Forces Reserve (USMCR).



*Major Andrew Chrestman, IRT PM
for U.S. Marine Corps Forces Reserve
(USMCR)*

IRT: What do you look for first when reviewing a military application?

Maj Chrestman [MC]: Off the top, we want to know the number of personnel, amount requested, and scope of training.

IRT: When is the best time for a unit to apply?

MC: Clearly, by the May 1 deadline, but units should consider IRT in year-round training planning, including the first quarter of the calendar year.

IRT: Should units communicate with community partners before they apply?

MC: Yes, they need to gather details on the project not included in the community application, to focus their support and facilitate an accurate military application.

IRT: What is your top piece of advice for a unit going through the military application process for the first time?

MC: Lean on the program managers. We are the subject matter experts on IRT, how the funding works, the left and right lateral limits when executing a project, etc. We also can help with planning and communication between the unit and a community partner as well as other participating Services.

IRT: How should units engage their leadership in building advocacy for IRT participation?

MC: Emphasize the two main selling points: (1) the relative low cost and (2) training value. Compare an IRT project your unit has done with other types of training, such as an OCONUS theater security cooperation exercise, an integrated training exercise, or even home-site annual training. How much did those efforts cost your unit compared with the IRT project? What METs/METLs [mission essential tasks] did you hit compared with the IRT project? Looking at IRT under this lens shows, in many cases, that it provides better training at a lower cost.

Unit applicants across the nation, through the coordinated efforts of Maj Chrestman and his Program Manager colleagues in the Service components, enable the IRT military application process to generate the right mix of training opportunities for Servicemembers while delivering lasting benefits to American communities.

IRT leaders and staff are closely monitoring the COVID-19 public health situation. Over the next days and weeks, we will furnish updated information on our website concerning its effect on our FY 2020 missions, once our planners have had enough time to carefully plan and construct timelines for each of our missions. Please check irt.defense.gov regularly for the latest information on the IRT program.