

Berks County Search and Rescue Receives Autism Training to Better Serve Its Community

Berks County Search and Rescue, Inc. becomes a Certified Autism Center™ after receiving autism-specific training through IBCCES

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[Berks County Search and Rescue](#), Inc.
(BCSAR) becomes a [Certified Autism](#)
[Center](#)™ (CAC) after receiving autism-



specific training from the International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES). This training and certification process will help the search and rescue volunteers enhance their knowledge and understanding of best practices to assist autistic and sensory-sensitive members of the community.

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This certification comes as a testament to the team's unwavering dedication to enhancing accessibility and support for individuals on the autism spectrum during search and rescue operations”

*Scott Hertzog, President at
Berks County Search and
Rescue, Inc*

“We at Berks County Search and Rescue are proud to have attained this significant milestone in our commitment to inclusivity and community service. This certification comes as a testament to the team's unwavering dedication to enhancing accessibility and support for individuals on the autism spectrum during search and rescue operations,” stated Scott Hertzog, President at Berks County Search and Rescue, Inc.

In achieving this certification, team members underwent specialized training in autism awareness, communication strategies, and understanding sensory sensitivities. This

comprehensive training equips our team to handle diverse situations with increased effectiveness, ensuring that autistic and sensory sensitive individuals receive tailored support during critical moments.

Scott went on to share, “Our dedication to becoming a Certified Autism Center™ reflects a

commitment to fostering positive relationships with the community. Families with members on the autism spectrum can now trust that our team is prepared to understand and address the unique needs of their loved ones during search and rescue missions.”



Moreover, the certification positions BCSAR as a leader in inclusive emergency services, setting an example for other organizations to follow. By prioritizing autism awareness and training, the team aims to create a ripple effect, encouraging a broader adoption of inclusive practices within the search and rescue community, and for first responders, in general.

The specialized training not only enhances the team's communication strategies but also ensures a more supportive environment for autistic individuals during high-stress situations. Recognizing and respecting the individual needs and preferences of those with autism is at the core of BCSAR approach, allowing us to provide more personalized and effective assistance.

BCSAR sees this certification as an opportunity to positively impact not only the immediate community but also the broader emergency services landscape. By embracing inclusivity, the team is dedicated to making a difference in the lives of individuals with autism and their families. This achievement is not only a testament to our commitment to excellence in search and rescue but also a step toward creating a more compassionate and supportive community for all.

“We are pleased to award a Live United grant to support this specialized training and designation to help make our community safer and more inclusive. United Way grants support a wide range of needs and help people in many different parts of Berks County. We are excited to assist local nonprofits with innovative programming designed to achieve results. We are thankful for United Way donors who make this all possible and join us in making a difference,” says Tammy White, president, United Way of Berks County.

United Way LIVE UNITED Grants provide one-time small grants, up to \$5,000, to local grassroots and community-based organizations for creative projects that bring people together and improve the quality of life for Berks Countians. These grants are in addition to the annual funding provided to programs delivered through United Way’s agency partners.

With recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) revealing an increase in autism diagnosis rates to [1 in 36 children](#), the prevalence of 1 in 6 people having sensory needs and adults being diagnosed later in life, it is more crucial than ever to equip first responders with a better understanding of how to approach and assist these individuals.

IBCCES' first responder training and certification program provides comprehensive guidance on improving communication, enhancing understanding and identifying autistic or sensory-sensitive individuals. The program also includes scenario-based training to help responders navigate situations and prevent escalations when possible. IBCCES programs incorporate evidence-based content, perspectives from autistic individuals and additional resources to ensure ongoing support, continued learning and lasting impact.

"We are proud to honor Berks County Search and Rescue with this designation, which recognizes their commitment to serving their community as best they can," said Myron Pincomb, IBCCES board chairman. "We hope their efforts to enhance accessibility will inspire other organizations to follow suit, leading to more first responders being better prepared to assist every person in their community."

Berks County Search and Rescue has autism communication cards, backpacks, weighted blankets and other items with their command unit to assist in comforting people with autism.

For more than 20 years, IBCCES has been a leader in cognitive disorder training and certification for healthcare, education, and corporate professionals around the globe. IBCCES programs include evidence-based content as well as the perspectives of autistic individuals, alongside other resources, ongoing support, and renewal requirements to ensure there is continued learning and a lasting impact.

IBCCES also created [CertifiedAutismCenter.com](https://www.CertifiedAutismCenter.com), as a free online resource for parents that lists certified locations and professionals. Each organization listed on the site has met Certified Autism Center™ (CAC) requirements.

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About IBCCES

Delivering The Global Standard for Training and Certification in The Field of Cognitive Disorders – IBCCES provides a series of certifications that empower professionals to be leaders in their field and improve the outcomes for the individuals they serve. These programs are recognized around the world as the leading benchmark for training and certification in the areas of autism and other cognitive disorders.

About Berks County Search and Rescue

Berks County Search and Rescue, a non-profit 501(C)3 tax-exempt public charity, relies solely on community donations for funding, receiving no government support. The organization is committed to its mission of providing search and rescue managers and operators to the citizens of Berks County and surrounding areas. Simultaneously, BCSAR is dedicated to educating the public, both adults and children, on wilderness safety.

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