

OHIO ADVOCATE NETWORK

FOR TRAINING AND REGISTRATION

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Dedicated to professionalizing the field of victim advocacy and maintaining a best-practice approach for credentialing, the Ohio Advocate Network Review Committee has enacted several updates to OAN registration policy and procedure. These updates were crafted with a continuing commitment to offer a credentialing process in Ohio which is achievable, affordable, and meaningful. The updates were phased-in over the course of one year. Beginning June 2017, ALL updates will be in effect and will be enforced. All OAN Applications have been revised to reflect the updates. Beginning with the June 2017 application cycle, the OAN Review Committee will only accept the revised Applications. Any outdated Application submitted for review will be returned.

Applicants for NEW Registered Advocate Status:

Recognizing the need to publicly affirm the field of Victim Advocacy, establish professional standards, and encourage continuing education and specialized training, a coalition of victim service providers representing numerous statewide advocacy organizations formed the Ohio Advocate Network in 1994 and developed this registration protocol for Victim Advocates and Allied Professionals working to assist crime victims in the state of Ohio. Acquiring and maintaining valid OAN Registered Advocate status attests that an individual has achieved a defined level of experience and knowledge in the victim assistance profession.

Please thoroughly review the following information and carefully read both the **Instructions** and the **Application for NEW Registered Advocate Status** before completing the required documents. All OAN Application forms and supporting documents may be downloaded from the Ohio Victim Witness Association website. Please visit www.ovwa.org and click on the OAN link. Questions about the registration process may be submitted by email to OhioAdvocateNetwork@gmail.org, or you may call 937-562-5087. Thank you for your interest in becoming a Registered Advocate with the Ohio Advocate Network for Training and Registration, and for joining the many Victim Advocates and Allied Professionals in Ohio seeking increased professionalization of our field.

THE OHIO ADVOCATE NETWORK REVIEW COMMITTEE

DEFINITIONS

ADVOCACY is defined as providing victim-centered supportive services specific to the distinct circumstances and needs individuals face in the aftermath of criminal victimization. In victim advocacy, empowerment of the individual to achieve improved circumstances is a primary goal.

SUPPORTIVE DIRECT SERVICES are defined as, but not limited to, crisis intervention; empowerment of the individual through emotional, physical and informational assistance; promoting, protecting and ensuring the constitutional and statutory rights of crime victims; advocacy/intervention with other systems a crime victim may encounter; inter-agency referral for additional or long-term support. Services must be provided directly to an identified crime victim or designated victim representative.

AN ADVOCATE is one who recognizes the distinct circumstances and needs of those victimized by crime, maintains a working knowledge of the common legal, social, and psychological issues of crime victimization and offers focused assistance within a victim-oriented professional and ethical framework.

REGISTERED ADVOCATE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

An individual may apply for OAN Registered Advocate (RA) status by submitting a NEW Application, all required supporting documents, and the required application fee. The NEW Application documents that the applicant has acquired the requisite professional work experience providing and/or coordinating advocacy services directly to those victimized by crime AND completed all required pre-registration training. Professional work experience may have been attained in a paid and/or volunteer capacity and would include advocacy to victims of such crimes as sexual assault, domestic/intimate partner abuse, child abuse, homicide, general felony crime, general misdemeanor crime, and other related offenses. The amount of accumulated professional work experience determines which level of Registered Advocate (RA) status may be sought. There are three Registered Advocate levels, and a New Applicant may initially apply for registration at any level, as long as all requirements for that level have been met.

REGISTERED ADVOCATE LEVELS

REGISTERED ADVOCATE (RA): An Applicant at the RA Level must have accumulated a minimum of 1950 hours of professional work experience (equivalent to one year of full-time employment), in a paid and/or volunteer capacity, providing direct services to crime victims.

REGISTERED ADVOCATE WITH ADVANCED STANDING (RAAS): An Applicant at the RAAS Level must have accumulated a minimum of 7800 hours of professional work experience (equivalent to four years of full-time employment), in a paid and/or volunteer capacity, providing direct services to crime victims.

REGISTERED ADVOCATE WITH SENIOR STANDING (RASS): An Applicant at the RASS Level must have accumulated a minimum of 11,700 hours of professional work experience (equivalent to six years of full-time employment), in a paid and/or volunteer capacity, providing direct services to crime victims.

REQUIRED PRE-REGISTRATION TRAINING

In addition to accrued professional work experience in a paid and/or volunteer capacity, an individual seeking OAN Registered Advocate status must also complete pre-registration training. Training provides a general yet focused introduction to the field of victim advocacy and results in a foundation conducive to providing knowledgeable, compassionate and comprehensive services to crime victims. All pre-registration training must have been completed within the four-year period immediately preceding submission of the NEW Application for Registered Advocate Status. While pre-registration training may be completed in a variety of formats, only 6 total hours of training may be completed via an electronic format (webinar, on-line module, etc.).

OAN promotes the idea that all new applicants should receive pre-registration training in a series of core topics. OAN also recognizes that training in specialized core topics is equally necessary as individuals may be employed with an agency or organization which assists a specialized victim population, and would benefit from training specifically developed to address particularized service needs.

To obtain Registered Advocate (RA) status, at any level, a new applicant must complete at least 24 hours of pre-registration training as outlined in the Training Area Guideline (TAG) List Series A. The 24 hours of required training must encompass all 9 Core Topic Categories and 5 Specialized Core Topic Categories. A new applicant must complete at least one hour of pre-registration training in each of the 9 Core Topic Categories. A new applicant must also complete at least one hour of pre-registration training in each of the 5 Specialized Core Topic Categories listed for their specified discipline. All applicants identify a Specified Discipline for their current agency in the Application for NEW Registered Advocate Status (it is permissible to select more than one). The Specified Discipline(s) denote the victim population(s) predominantly served by the agency. The remaining six hours of required pre-registration training may come from any of the approved topics listed in the TAG List Series A.

The OAN Review Committee has pre-approved several 40-hour Victim Advocacy Training Courses, including the Ohio Attorney General BASICS Course, the ODVN Domestic Violence Advocacy Fundamentals, and Summit County Victim Assistance Academy Course. Completion of any of these training courses fulfills the requirement of 24 hours of pre-registration training AND covers all required Core Topics and Specialized Core Topics.

Documentation of required pre-registration training must be submitted by new applicants to verify both the 24 hours of required training, and all required training topics. Acceptable documentation includes a Certificate of Completion or Attendance. The Certificate should clearly reflect the training hours completed **AND** all topics covered in the training. If a certificate does not contain sufficient detail, the applicant must also submit a Registration Confirmation, Training Agenda, or Course Overview so the training topics may be clearly verified. OAN understands that a new applicant may have completed training well in excess of the minimum number of 24 required hours. It is not necessary to submit documentation for every training event attended. Please limit submissions to the fewest number of documents necessary to verify both the 24 hour minimum requirement, and all required training topics.