

# **OHIO ADVOCATE NETWORK FOR TRAINING AND REGISTRATION**

c/o Greene County Prosecutor's Office Victim/Witness Division  
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Dear Ohio Advocate:

The Ohio Advocate Network (OAN) for Training and Registration is pleased to provide you with the attached **Upgrade Application packet** for renewing and upgrading your OAN registration status. As a Registered Advocate with OAN, you affirmed your commitment to continuing education in your field. This application is being provided for you to renew that commitment. Maintaining an OAN Registered Advocate (RA) status, at an upgraded level, attests that a Victim Advocate has achieved a defined and advanced level of experience, knowledge and skill in a victim assistance profession.

Please thoroughly read the information contained in this packet for **Upgrading/Renewing Your Registered Advocate status** before completing the required documents. The packet contains the following materials:

- An overview of definitions and eligibility requirements
- An overview of continuing education training
- A Training Area Guideline (TAG) List
- Instructions for completing the Upgrade/Renew Application
- An Upgrade/Renew Application (to Upgrade/Renew your Registered Advocate level)
- A sample Advocate Training Record

Thank you for your continued interest in the Ohio Advocate Network for Training and Registration Program and for joining other Ohio Victim Advocates 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 UPGRADE LEVELS:**

**REGISTERED ADVOCATE WITH ADVANCED STANDING (RAAS): This is an upgraded level.** Must have accumulated a minimum of three years of professional work experience (at least 5850 hours), in a paid and/or volunteer capacity, providing direct services to crime victims – AND – Must have completed at least 20 hours of continuing education training bi-annually in the required topics as outlined on the Training Area Guideline (TAG) List, Series “B”.

**REGISTERED ADVOCATE WITH SENIOR STANDING (RASS): This is an upgraded level.** Must have accumulated a minimum of five years of professional work experience (at least 9750 hours), in a paid and/or volunteer capacity, providing direct services to crime victims – AND – Must have completed at least 20 hours of continuing education training bi-annually in the required topics as outlined on the Training Area Guideline (TAG) List, Series “B”.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

An individual may apply to upgrade their Registered Advocate (RA) status by submitting an application which documents that the applicant has acquired additional professional work experience and training while providing and/or coordinating supportive advocacy services directly to those victimized by crime. Professional work experience should 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 and required, topic-specific continuing education training determines which level of upgraded Registered Advocate (RA) status may be sought. An OAN Registered Advocate may apply to renew and upgrade to Advanced Standing, and then to Senior Standing, when all eligibility requirements have been met for each level. Once an upgrade is approved, an applicant must continue to renew the registration every two years, following the established continuing education training guidelines for renewal. *Please note that the eligibility requirements described under REGISTERED ADVOCATE UPGRADE LEVELS above are for Upgrade/Renew Applicants only.*

## **CONTINUING EDUCATION TRAINING**

In addition to accrued professional work experience in a paid and/or volunteer capacity, it is important that OAN Registered Advocates also receive continuing education training in a variety of advanced and specialized topics providing focused, in-depth information pertaining to the field of victim advocacy and resulting in a keener knowledge base conducive to providing compassionate and comprehensive services to crime victims.

OAN promotes the idea that all Registered Advocates should receive continuing education training in a series of core advanced topics. OAN also recognizes that some amount of training in a series of advanced specialized topics is equally necessary as individuals may be employed with an agency and/or organization which assists a specialized victim population, and would benefit from training specifically developed to address particularized service needs.

To maintain Registered Advocate (RA) status, at any level, least 20 hours of continuing education training must be completed bi-annually. As outlined in the Series “B” Training Area Guideline (TAG) List, approved continuing education training topics are listed in the Advanced-General Topic Categories and the Advanced-Specialized Topic Categories. Some amount of the required training should be completed in approved topics from both categories. Though not required, it is strongly encouraged that individuals will seek some amount of training from the advanced-specialized topics of their Specified Discipline.

Documentation must be submitted by Registered Advocates to verify the 20 hours of required continuing education training in the approved Series “B” TAG List topics. Completion of Section 4 of the Upgrade Application satisfies this documentation requirement for those individuals applying to renew and upgrade their registration status. It is not necessary for any renewing Registered Advocate to submit certificates of completion (this is only a requirement for New Applicants). A listing of the training date, topic, sponsor and number of hours is sufficient. OAN understands that a Registered Advocate may have completed continuing education training well in excess of the minimum number of 20 required hours however, it is not necessary to list every training event attended. Submissions may be limited to the fewest number necessary to verify the 20-hour minimum requirement. A sample Advocate Training Record is included with this Upgrade Application packet and may assist the Registered Advocate to track future training hours/topics as they are acquired.