

# DART Volunteer Manual

## Mission Statement

Disability Awareness Resource Team is committed to providing a broad array of disability and culturally specific services for people with disabilities. Our focus is self-empowerment, healing from trauma and victimization, self-determination, and personalized quality of life from a strengths-based perspective.

## Introduction

Welcome to the Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART). Volunteers are critical to the success of DART! This manual should give you all the basic information you need about DART as well as provide you some important tools for reference and forms for tracking your hours.

## Role of Volunteers for project DART

We firmly believe that volunteers contribute to the success of this program. We value our volunteers, their unique experiences, talents, skills, and time. Volunteers help us serve more crime victims and expand our breadth of services. Volunteers have a valued voice into the direction of DART. Volunteers truly make a difference for so many people. **Our funders place a high value on volunteers;** we are required to use volunteers.

## Services

DART provides a variety of services to crime victims with disabilities in the Portland Metropolitan Area, and even beyond. These services include information, referral, and advocacy, peer counseling and support, an online support group, empowerment groups, independent living skills referrals, safety and crime awareness, resources on managing caregiver relationships and abuse from caregivers, as well as a range of web based options. DART advocates have expertise in advocacy and support for people with disabilities who are dealing with criminal justice and/or social service systems. They are knowledgeable in supporting people and in providing them with the tools to empower themselves and help them cope with abuse, trauma and life challenges, including dealing with institutional abuse and abuse or neglect from caregivers. Advocates have expertise in abuse and safety as well as mental health,

Self-Care and crime awareness for people with disabilities; Highly trained DART team members and volunteers work together to coordinate services and resources that promote the independence, empowerment, and wellbeing of people with disabilities.

## **History of DART**

Project Dart was formed in 2007 by the Regional Research Institute (RRI) at Portland State University. Through a VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) grant, it was created to provide for the first time comprehensive victim services for people with disabilities in the Portland Tri-County area who are victims of crime. The overall goal was to increase the access of victims with disabilities to personal safety, a broad range of services and support in working through the criminal justice system.

## **Purpose**

DART addresses the individualized needs of crime victims with disabilities by facilitating outreach to survivors. We work with disability service providers, domestic violence (DV) and sexual assault (SA) agencies, and various people at different levels of the criminal justice system. Project staff and volunteers provide information, validation, education, and advocacy support. Many survivors of violence with disabilities are disconnected from mainstream DV/SA services and DART plays a critical role in reaching out to these victims, facilitating their connections to mainstream and disability focused services, and assisting them to advocate for their own needs. We will serve people with disabilities (PWD) who have been a victim of a crime in the greater Portland metropolitan region. PWD are un- and underserved, marginalized, and oppressed and often do not report their victimization for a variety of reasons. In short, victims with disabilities are not being served. Victim's services staff and volunteers are not aware of the unique problems facing victims with disabilities and do not know how to serve them. Critical social services may not be physically accessible and often do not have communications accommodations.

## **Need for DART services**

People with disabilities (PWD) are one of the largest and underserved crime victim populations in our nation and in Oregon. Project Disability Awareness Resource Team (DART) is the ONLY program in Multnomah County, and the state of Oregon, which provides comprehensive services to this vulnerable population. DART offers a broad array of direct services as needed, self-identified basis to help support the healing process of crime victims with disabilities.

## **Different Volunteer Positions**

### **1.) Administrative Assistant**

**Purpose:** To perform a wide range of administrative and support activities for DART. This position reports to the volunteer coordinator and may be “job shared” by two volunteers.

The duties include but are not limited to, office organization, preparing mailings and researching grant opportunities.

#### **Duties and Responsibilities:**

- Printing brochures, folding them, and keeping a record of number of brochures distributed.
- Distributing DART brochures and other DART materials throughout the organizations in the community.
- Updating a database of community organizations and partners relevant to the work of DART (domestic violence, sexual assault, disability, etc.)
- Produce mailing labels as requested
- Prepare bulk DART mailings
- Organize DART office as directed by the volunteer coordinator
- Assist with ordering of supplies for DART
- Make copies for the DART Empowerment Group, and assemble informational resource packets
- Research grant opportunities and keep an updated database of possible grants for which to apply.
- Type and word process documents as needed
- Identify, find, and attend free local trainings regarding disability, domestic violence, sexual assault, and other relevant topic areas (Training must be approved by the volunteer coordinator and/or Executive Director to count towards volunteer hours.)
- Other duties as assigned



- Required Qualifications:
- Demonstrated written and oral communication skills
- Demonstrated ability to work independently and as a team
- Familiarity or willing to learn Microsoft Office software (Word, Excel, PowerPoint)
- Knowledge of general office machines and telephone systems
- Sensitivity to the needs of persons with disabilities
- Ability and willingness to work cooperatively with others
- High degree of discretion with confidential information.
- Experience in grant research or the ability to learn.
- Experience preparing bulk mailings or the ability to learn.
- Familiarity and/or willingness to work with people with disabilities.

### **3.) Co-facilitator**

#### **Empowerment Group**

Purpose:

To serve as a co-facilitator for a monthly (DART) Empowerment group for women with physical disabilities who have experienced depression, domestic violence, and/or criminal victimization and support those women in forming friendships and healing.

#### **Qualifications and Responsibilities:**

- Attend the DART Empowerment Group for three consecutive months as a participant before applying for the co-facilitator position.
- Strong commitment to leading the group and ability to regularly attend and facilitate the group sessions.
- Excellent therapeutic and personal boundaries and ethics.
- Good verbal and written communication skills.
- Interested in working with women of varied backgrounds, ages, and abilities, and the desire to make each group attendee feel welcome and comfortable in group.
- Create a climate of trust, openness and acceptance within each group.
- Maintain confidentiality and respect the individual needs of group members.

- Maintain contact with the volunteer coordinator, partnering co-facilitator, and other DART staff regarding status of the group and any supports needed.
- Participate in suggesting and designing topics and activities of interest for group members.
- Help recruit and retain group members
- Assist with reminder calls and follow-up calls to group members

#### **Opportunities:**

- Increase group facilitation skills and experience.
- Receive support and guidance from DART staff.
- Gain additional knowledge regarding issues faced by women with depression, domestic violence, and criminal victimization.
- Help design empowerment groups to address the specific needs of women served by DART by providing ideas and feedback.

Build volunteer experience valuable to resume notation and employment skills

#### **Training:**

- To be provided by DART's Executive Director, Volunteer Coordinator, and experienced volunteers.
- Ongoing supervision and support provided by DART's Executive Director, Volunteer Coordinator, and experienced volunteers.

#### **Other:**

- Preferred no criminal law violations as evidenced through a criminal background check. When an ex-offender applies for a volunteer assignment or transfers to a direct service position, the volunteer coordinator and/or executive director will request and evaluate the criminal record information. The safety and protection of our consumers, crime victims with disabilities, is highly important and is a priority when accepting new volunteers.
- Direct Service volunteers must complete a criminal background investigation.
- Basic knowledge of domestic violence/sexual assault and its intersection with disabilities.

#### **4.) Outreach**

Persons with disabilities do not report crimes for many reasons, including fear and lack of trust. Conducting outreach is one way to let persons with disabilities know that DART exists and that we and our partner agencies are committed to serving them.

Common outreach methods include staffing booths at public awareness events, distributing brochures or fact sheets that advertise that your services are accessible to persons with disabilities and address some of the issues facing these crime victims, and providing cross trainings with disability service agencies.

- Build relationships and partnerships with disability service agencies. These relationships can be built one on one or on a larger scale; Having strong relationships with community partners is a big asset in reaching out to persons with disabilities.
- Help develop disability specific outreach materials.
- Provide materials in alternate formats (e.g., in large print, in Braille, on CD-ROM, using simplified language).
- Distribute brochures, newsletters, and other literature in places that are frequented by persons with disabilities, including disability and Deaf advocacy and activist groups, Offices for Students with Disabilities at local colleges, independent living centers, state rehabilitation agencies, day programs for adults with disabilities, and so forth.

#### **5.) Website**

The DART website is located at [www.projectdartpdx.org](http://www.projectdartpdx.org). We're hoping that people find resources, support, and friendship from our online community. The website has a variety of articles relevant to the service of mission and service of DART.

A DART volunteer or two is needed to locate additional relevant articles to fit into the above categories or create new categories relevant to the work and mission of DART. Please send articles to Roxie Mayfield ([Roxie\\_Mayfield@yahoo.com](mailto:Roxie_Mayfield@yahoo.com)). Roxie will approve them and have John H., our website technical volunteer put them on the website.

A DART website volunteer is also needed to check for the accuracy of information on the website. Make sure that website links work and links provide access to up-to-date information.



We seek to make the DART website accessible for those with disabilities. The DART website is now available in different font sizes and accessible to people who use screen readers. We seek to continue to increase the DART's web site's accessibility so that someone who has limited reading skills can still get information, "alternative text" is provided for all pictures and designs, and the wheelchair logo and interpreter symbol are prominent.

## **6.) Personal Assistant for DART Empowerment Group**

### **Purpose:**

To provide personal assistance for women attending the monthly (DART) Empowerment group so that they will be able to fully and comfortably participate. Group attendees will include women with physical disabilities who have experienced depression, domestic violence, and criminal victimization.

### **Personal Assistant Duties Checklist (May be adjusted to the individual needs of the group)**

#### **Before the Group Begins:**

- Help transport snacks, drinks, pencils, and other supplies to the group room.
- Set out the water/snack supply
- Adjust tables and chairs as necessary
- Set out pencils/pens for each person, as needed.
- Handout name tags, as needed
- Write out agenda and notes on the whiteboard, as needed.
- Write reminder about cell phones, turning them off or on vibrate
- About 5 minutes before group, check to see if any women are waiting or arriving and need assistance. Let facilitators know when participants are arriving.

#### **During the Group:**

- Try to prevent and address distractions, e.g. animals, kids, cell phones, etc. Please refrain from loud talking, texting, or making noise other than when assisting the participants.
- Help anyone that needs assistance in doing exercises.
- Be proactive in looking around and visually checking to see who needs assistance.
- Take initiative.
- Be ready to hand out handouts at the appropriate time.
- Assist facilitators with writing on the board during the group as requested.

#### **During Break:**

- Show participants to the restroom as necessary.

**After Group:**

- Assist women in getting to their transportation as needed.
- Erase all info from the whiteboard.
- Gather all project items after the meeting and store them appropriately.
- Move tables and chairs back to their original place.
- Help transport all materials, snacks, drinks to the appropriate place.

**Other things to be aware of:**

- Attend the DART Empowerment Group for three consecutive months as a participant before applying for the personal assistant position.
- Ability to regularly attend and assist with the group sessions.
- Excellent therapeutic and personal boundaries and ethics
- interested in working with women of varied backgrounds, ages, and abilities, and the desire to make group attendee feel welcome and comfortable in group.
- Maintain confidentiality and respect the individual needs of group members.
- Maintain contact with the volunteer coordinator, co-facilitators, and other DART staff regarding status of the group and any supports needed.
- Training to be provided by DART's Executive Director, Volunteer Coordinator, and experienced volunteers.

**Preferred:** no criminal law violations as evidenced through a criminal background check. When an ex-offender applies for applies for a direct service position, the volunteer coordinator and/or executive director will request and evaluate the criminal record information. The safety and protection of our consumers, crime victims with disabilities, is highly important and is a priority when accepting new volunteers.

**How to apply to be a volunteer:**

Thank-you for your interest in volunteering with DART. Please contact Sue Winfree, Volunteer Coordinator for volunteer information and application. Sue can be reached at (503) 988-6481 Ext. 86481.

**Activities that can be Included in Volunteer Hours**

Please remember to carefully track your volunteer hours on your time and task sheet. Many activities count towards DART volunteer hours and every volunteer hour counts and makes a difference! Please let Sue know if you have any questions about activities that can be counted towards volunteer hours.

Volunteer hours are any activity directly related to the administration of the DART VOCA Grant and/or the delivery of victim assistance services.



Examples include:

- Clerical/support services related to the administration of the grant (i.e. compiling semiannual statistics) or services such as victim notification and correspondence;
- Accompanying victims with other agencies;
- Providing information and referral;
- Advocating for release of property
- Gathering client feedback;
- Crisis intervention; and
- Other standard advocate duties
- Personal Assistant duties
- Group Preparation and Co-facilitation
- Distributing of DART materials, flyers, and other DART material
- \*DART website activities (i.e. finding new articles, checking for accurate information, identifying broken links).
- Community Outreach Planning
- Team Meetings
- Consultations with DART staff, other volunteers, or consumers
- Paperwork (filling out time and task sheets, documenting consumer notes)
- Travel time as it relates directly to DART volunteer activities
- Internal volunteer training and local approved community trainings
- Approved website-based training

**Programs can count the hours volunteer spent in training as a Match, providing that the training is directly related to victim assistance services.**

**A person can be a volunteer at two different programs.**

However, at any point in time, the program(s) and the volunteer need to be clear about who is responsible for directing the volunteer's work. the hours during which the grantee program directly supervises the volunteer's work. the hours during which the grantee program directly supervises the volunteer's victim advocate activities may be counted. It is not allowable to count the same volunteer hours on more than one grant award.

**Paid agency employees may not perform their duties as volunteers.**

Practices that may not be considered "volunteer" time include unpaid overtime, on-call duties or unreimbursed staff expenses, especially if these duties are explicitly stated in the employee's job description.

**DART must maintain properly documented for all volunteer time and can report these hours as a match.**

This should include time, attendance, and service area records documenting VOCA eligible activities.

## **Training**

All volunteers are required to complete an internal training. All volunteer need to complete the internal training no matter what. Background check for volunteers involved in direct service.

## **Specialized training for different positions**

The volunteer coordinator will work with every volunteer to identify training needs. It may be possible to shadow and/or be mentored by an experienced volunteer. DART desire that all of our volunteers be equipped to serve effectively in their volunteer roles.

## **Volunteer Expenses and Accommodations**

### **Reasonable Accommodation**

Reasonable accommodation refers to the provision of conditions, equipment, and environment that enables an individual to effectively perform his or her job. A reasonable accommodation as follows: A reasonable accommodation is any change in the work environment or in a way a job is performed that enables a person with a disability to enjoy equal volunteer opportunities.

Examples of accommodations may include change in the volunteer application process, chance's to the way a job is usually done, changes that enable an employee with a disability to enjoy equal benefits and privileges to volunteer activities (Such as access to training.)

### **Application process for identifying accommodation**

Talk to Sue, volunteer coordinator directly about any accommodations needed after the application process. Once needs are identified, DART will work with volunteers to see that their needs are meet. Accommodations should be economical and streamlined expenses. As a nonprofit organization, DART has limited amount of money and it has faced additional administrative costs. Policies have changed; we need to stay abreast of the policies and follow their guidelines. DART must follow guidelines of new grant monitor's handbook

### **Volunteer Expenses detailed**

- 1.) Bus Passes
- 2.) Honored Passes
- 3.) LIFT



The above public transportation passes may be available to volunteers who travel as part of their official DART volunteer duties. Due to limited resources, we need to plan. DART plans quarterly for our expenses and budget

### **Forms and Deadlines:**

#### **Travel Reimbursement (Training and Travel)\***

All travel must be clearly connected to mission of DART and approved at least 10 days ahead of time by the volunteer coordinator. The volunteer may not approve travel if a clear connect to DART cannot be made or for lack of funding. No cost of travel will be reimbursed unless preapproved for plans, and budget. Appropriate reasons for travel **may** include conferences, trainings, consumer advocacy, and team meetings. After the travel, a travel reimbursement form must be filled out completely. Volunteers may calculate travel from their home to the approved destination. Please print out a map of the route, showing mileage. Map quest ([www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com)) or Google Maps ([maps.google.com](http://maps.google.com)). Please remember to sign the travel Reimbursement form. A copy will be kept in your volunteer notebook in the office

***DART is a unique program and the only VOCA program that specifically addresses the needs of crime victims with disabilities. Our program is different than others. We provide 3 core services to every victim: advocacy or co-advocacy, information and referral and follow-up. Services may also be provided in a variety of communication modes including in-person, phone, text, email or mailing.***

CVCP provides quarterly training on CVCP guidelines and procedures at CVSD. A schedule can be found at: <http://www.doj.state.or.us/victims/training.shtml> (general training link). [http://www.doj.state.or.us/victims/pdf/cvcp\\_acp\\_quarterly\\_training\\_training\\_agenda.pdf](http://www.doj.state.or.us/victims/pdf/cvcp_acp_quarterly_training_training_agenda.pdf).

### **Confidentiality and Release of information guideline.**

What is confidentiality?

1. Keeping information protected from unauthorized viewers
2. Ensuring that information is accessible only to those authorized to have access
3. Trusting another person with information that will not be shared with others.

“Privileged.” refers to an ethical principle associated with several professions –



“Privileged” information is information that is not readily available to the general public without your consent. When is it appropriate to share our own personal information with group members, and when is it not? Briefly share personal experiences only to let them know that you are indeed a peer of theirs. You have been there and done that! Then the focus should be shifted back to the group. Your sharing of personal experiences should be brief. When is it appropriate for group members to share personal information, and when is it not? How might we best support trainees to learn this?

It is appropriate for group members to share things about themselves or their own experiences when it pertains to what is being discussed at the time. These must be kept brief so that no one person monopolizes the group. This must be flexible at facilitator’s discretion. Sometimes the person needs to share their experiences to make this a healing moment or a personal growth moment.

### **Criminal Background Checks for Volunteers**

A criminal background investigation shall be completed on all volunteers applying for or assigned to direct service work with consumers of the Disability Awareness Resource Team (D.A.R.T.).

When an ex-offender applies for a volunteer assignment or transfers to a direct service position, the volunteer coordinator and/or executive director will request and evaluate the criminal record information. The safety and protection of our consumers, crime victims with disabilities is highly important and is a priority when accepting new volunteers.

All criminal background information on a volunteer applicant/worker is strictly confidential. Criminal record information must be kept secured at all times. No unauthorized person may view these records.

### **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

In evaluating whether a volunteer applicant may be rejected for volunteer placement or accepted as a direct service volunteer, the department shall consider the following criteria:

- The nature and seriousness of the offense(s), and the circumstances under which the offense(s) occurred,
- The age of the person at the time the offense(s) was committed,
- The recency of the offense(s),
- The number of convictions,
- The relationship of the offense(s) to the sensitive nature of serving crime victims with disabilities and venerable populations.
- Evidence of rehabilitation and maturation, including the volunteers employment record with respect to job responsibility and duration and other volunteer efforts
- Truthfulness of admitting previous record
- Attitude of applicant

- Other factors relevant to the volunteer's suitability for the job, e.g. maturity, attitude, and hone.
- 

### ***Victim Assistance Training Online (VAT Online)***

***VAT Online is a basic victim advocacy web-based training program that offers victim service providers and allied professionals the opportunity to acquire the basic skills and knowledge they need to better assist victims of crime. Specific information is also provided to meet the needs of target populations. VAT Online includes seven modules. The modules cover:***

- 1. Goals and how to navigate through the online training**
- 2. Basic issues such as ethics and cultural competency that provide the foundation for victim services**
- 3. Characteristics, prevalence and other information about 14 types of crimes**
- 4. Core skills needed by victim service providers, such as establishing rapport,**
- 5. problem solving and crisis intervention**
- 6. Information about specific topics and skills needed to provide services to specific populations**
- 7. Information about and skills needed to collaborate with various types of systems, such as community based, criminal justice based, faith based, and reservation based systems**
- 8. Challenging situations faced by victim service providers**
- 9. VAT Online Training is available at [www.ovcttac.gov/vatonline](http://www.ovcttac.gov/vatonline)**

The Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) is pleased to announce a new online training opportunity for victim service providers. Victim Assistance Training Online(VAT Online) provides professionals with the basic skills they need to assist victims effectively and sensitively.

Learn anytime, anywhere. With the click of a mouse, service providers can access foundation level training 24/7 from any Internet accessible location.

No costs attached. The course is available free of charge . . . no tuition fees, no travel expenses! Learn at your own pace.

VAT Online is divided into sections that can be completed when convenient. The total course time is approximately 35–40 hours. Just bookmark your place and start where you left off!

Learn something new . . . or refresh your learning. VAT Online is for victim service providers with less than 3 years of experience. It is also useful as a refresher course for seasoned professionals.

Stay abreast of emerging issues. The course will be updated every 2 years

to make sure the content is current and relevant. Maximize your training dollars. VAT Online provides supervisors with the opportunity to ensure that their staff has access to high quality training whenever needed.

### **Accessibility Problems with the VAT Online Training**

Many of our DART staff and volunteers have not found VAT to be accessible. The VAT modules require a lot of use of the mouse to enter responses which can be very repetitive and difficult. It is not "speech recognition software" compatible. The VAT training also requires 35-40 hours of sitting at the computer. DART has contacted the office of crime victims concerning the accessibility issues and has received very little resolve or an alternative accessible format. We still wish this offer the VAT training as an option for volunteer learning knowing that unfortunately, it is not accessible to everyone.