

D-SAACP Applicant Instruction Sheet

Welcome to the D-SAACP!

The Department of Defense (DoD) is committed to providing a high quality response to sexual assault survivors. The DoD Sexual Assault Advocate Certification Program (D-SAACP) recognizes the critical support Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARC) and Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Victim Advocates (VA) provide to victims of sexual assault from initial report through case conclusion, or until the point the victim no longer requires assistance. SARCs and SAPR VAs certified through D-SAACP will join a growing field of certified civilian victim advocates who are trained and committed to upholding the highest standards of victim care and privacy.

Certification Requirements

All **new** applicants must complete DD Form 2950 and submit to the National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) via mail, work email, or FAX. (Please see submittal instructions below.) DD Form 2950 the *Department of Defense Sexual Assault Certification Program New Application Packet*.

All **renewal** applicants must complete DD Form 2950-1 and submit to the National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) via mail, work email, or FAX. (Please see submittal instructions below.) DD Form 2950-1 the *Department of Defense Sexual Assault Certification Program Renewal Application Packet*.

You can also find useful information at the National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) website: (<http://www.trynova.org/>).

Four D-SAACP Certification levels are offered for SARCs and SAPR VAs—Levels I, II, III, and IV. The minimum eligibility requirements for each level are outlined on the Application Form (page 2) of DD Form 2950 and DD form 2950-1. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for determining the appropriate level of certification are included at the end of this document.

All applicable parts of the form must be completed in its entirety. Depending on the position (SARC or SAPR VA) and the Level (I, II, III, or IV) to which you apply, the requirements vary. Thirty-two hours of continuing education hours is required to be submitted with the DD Form 2950-1, of which two hours must be advocacy ethics. The other 30 hours are to be in advocacy and/or prevention.

Deadline for Certification

The application deadlines are October 31, January 31, April 30, and July 31 with the D-SAACP Review Committee meeting in November, February, May, and August.

Submitting the Application

Applications are accepted via email (preferred), fax, or mail:

Email: dsaaccp@trynova.org

Fax: 703-535-5500

Mail: D-SAACP Review Committee
c/o National Organization for Victim Assistance
510 King Street, Suite 424
Alexandria, VA 22314

Applicants do not need to submit any payment for D-SAACP Certification or Recertification.

Frequently Asked Questions

| Questions | Answers |
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| What is NOVA and what is NACP? | NOVA is the National Organization for Victim Assistance, a 501(c)(3) organization. It is the oldest national victim assistance organization of its type in the United States. NOVA established the National Advocate Credentialing Program (NACP) in 2003 as the first voluntary credentialing program available to crime victim advocates nationwide. The DoD contracted with NOVA to process the applications. The applications are reviewed by the D-SAACP Review Committee, which consists of NACP members and includes military subject matter experts. |
| I currently hold a civilian certification through NACP. Can I use this instead? | No. The certification requirements are similar for the civilian victim advocate program and D-SAACP, but are not the same. You must apply to D-SAACP and submit an application as a “new” applicant—not a renewal candidate. |
| Why does the D-SAACP Committee only meet once a quarter and not every month? | Just like any other professional certification there is a process for reviewing and approving or disapproving applications for certification. There are many steps in the process that an application must go through before being reviewed by the D-SAACP Committee that cannot be completed on a monthly interval. |
| Who is on the D-SAACP Committee? | The D-SAACP Committee is comprised of civilian Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) with a minimum of eight years of advocacy experience. The SMEs are flown in for the D-SAACP Committee Meeting from all over the country. |
| How can I be part of the D-SAACP Committee? | Unfortunately, legally and contractually, DoD employees and Service Members are unable to serve on the D-SAACP Committee. |
| How will I know if my application was received? | NOVA will send you email notifications at each step of the process: when your application has been received, when your application has been screened and deemed complete or incomplete, and when you have been approved. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your application within five business days of being submitted to NOVA, please contact your SARC and NOVA at dsaacp_followup@trynova.org . |
| How and when will I be notified whether I become certified? | The D-SAACP Committee reviews applications on a quarterly basis. Within approximately 120 days of submitting your application, you will be notified of your certification status first via an email from NOVA, and then by mail. |
| Do I really have to wait 120 days to be certified? | If your application is received by the deadline and complete before the quarterly committee meeting, you will be notified via email of your approval within four weeks of the deadline. NOVA has 120 days to complete the process from the time an application is received to the date the certificate package is mailed. |
| What will I receive when I become certified? | You will receive an official approval email as soon as your application is approved. In recognition of your experience, skills, and commitment to victim advocacy, you will receive a letter of confirmation, a frame-ready certificate, and a wallet-size certification card, within 4-6 weeks of approval. The approval email serves as official documentation of your certification while you are waiting for your certificate. |

| Questions | Answers |
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| <p>What if I missed my renewal deadline and my certification expires?</p> | <p>If you have been certified by D-SAACP at any time in the past, you are still considered a renewal applicant. <u>You must stop working directly with victims until your certification is renewed.</u></p> <p>If your certification has expired and you are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -within one application deadline: submit the DD Form 2950-1 and 32 hours of continuing education completed within the last two years. -within two application deadlines: submit the DD Form 2950-1, the required 32 hours of continuing education, and a brief note why you missed two deadlines. (e.g. "Certification expired while transferring to a new duty station.") -within three to four application deadlines; submit the DD Form 2950-1, 32 hours of continuing education plus certificate of completion of initial training within the last two years. -After five or more application deadlines; submit the DD Form 2950-1, 32 hours of continuing education within the last two years, plus certificate of completion of initial training within the three months prior to submitting the DD Form 2950-1 |
| <p>Can my D-SAACP certification be revoked?</p> | <p>Yes. D-SAACP Certification can be revoked for several reasons, to include violation of the SARC/SAPR VA Code of Professional Ethics.</p> |
| <p>How do I revoke someone's certification?</p> | <p>Contact your Service SAPR Program Manager for your Service procedures for revocation of certification.</p> |
| <p>Can I get my certification reinstated if I have been revoked?</p> | <p>It depends on the reason for revocation. Please contact your Service SAPR Program Manager for more information.</p> |
| <p>I am a SARC. Who is the Senior Commander responsible for providing my recommendation?</p> | <p>Your Senior Commander is an officer, an O-6 or above, who is usually the commander of a military installation or comparable unit and has been designated by your Military Service to oversee the SAPR Program.</p> |
| <p>I am a SARC. Who should fill out my two letters of recommendation?</p> | <p>One letter should be from the first person in your unit chain of command who supervises you in your daily work (E7, O3, W2, GS9 or above). The second should be from your Senior Commander/supervisor (O6, GS15 or above), who is usually the commander of a military installation or comparable unit and has been designated by your Military Service to oversee the SAPR Program.</p> |
| <p>Can I apply for the exception? When I have a case I report directly to the Commanding Officer.</p> | <p>According to the DoDI 6495.02, all SARCs are to have direct access to the Installation Commander concerning any report of sexual assault but that does not qualify for the exception. To qualify for the exception the Commanding Officer has to be your direct Supervisor in all facets of your daily work scheduled. If you report to another supervisor for your leave, evaluation and daily schedule, then no, you do not qualify for the exception. <u>Victim Advocates are not eligible for the exception.</u></p> <p>For example: The Air Force SARCs report directly to the Wing Commander on a daily basis. They qualify for the exemption. The Navy SARCs generally report to the Fleet and Family Director for their day to day tasks, they do not qualify.</p> |
| <p>How do I apply for the exception?</p> | <p>SARCs applying for the exception will submit page 13, Recommendation by Commanding Officer, of the DD Form 2950 or DD Form 2950-1. The box stating: "I fall under the exception: the first person in my chain of command and senior commander are the same person and meets the rank requirements of O6, GS 15, or above.", must be checked.</p> |

| Questions | Answers |
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| Why must I use my military address and not my home address on my application? | Due to Privacy Regulations the certification program has only been authorized to accept military addresses. |
| I am a SAPR VA and I have both an Installation (Lead) SARC and Command SARCs on my installation. Who is my designated SARC for completing the SARC Recommendation? | The SARC you report to is the preferred choice for completing your recommendation. If you are unable to get the signature of your SARC, you may have another SARC complete the recommendation if he/she has overseen you in the provision of your sexual assault advocacy services. |
| I am currently deployed as a SAPR VA and am not co-located with my SARC. Who can sign my SARC Recommendation Form? | You should first attempt to email the SARC Recommendation Form to your Installation SARC and have him/her return the completed form to you via email. If this is not logistically possible, you may request an area SARC complete the recommendation if he/she has overseen you in the provision of your sexual assault advocacy services. |
| I am a full-time SARC/SAPR-VA and am also on call. How many hours can I seek credit for? | The maximum hours granted per year is 1,950. |
| Which D-SAACP Levels (I, II, III, or IV) can part-time SARCs and SAPR VAs apply for? | <p>Part-time or collateral duty, SARCs and SAPR VAs are eligible for all of the D-SAACP levels. Part-time hours can be calculated by actual hours worked performing SARC/SAPR VA duties, including on-call hours.</p> <p>For example, if you are on-call 8 hours per week/per year, the number of hours credited would be 416/per year. If you are a collateral duty SARC on-call 24/7, 365 days a year, the maximum number of hours credited is 1,950 hours/per year.</p> <p>The Verification of Sexual Assault Victim Advocacy Experience (page 7 of DD Forms 2950 and 2950-1) must verify your on-call assignment. If you have specific questions about calculating your service hours, contact NOVA at dsaacp-followup@trynova.org.</p> |
| I worked for several years at a local Rape Crisis Center prior to becoming a SARC/SAPR VA. Can I count these hours in determining my D-SAACP level? | Yes. All paid and volunteer work where you provided direct services to sexual assault victims should be aggregated when determining your D-SAACP level. This includes any work you completed prior to your appointment to SARC or SAPR VA, as well as any sexual assault advocacy services you continue to provide outside of your duties as a SARC/SAPR VA. This experience should be documented on your Verification of Sexual Assault Victim Advocacy Experience. |
| Does my experience have to be in sexual assault advocacy services? | Yes. D-SAACP certifies SARCs and SAPR VAs in sexual assault victim advocacy. All hours counted to certification must be related to providing direct services to sexual assault victims. |
| Is there any timeline for when I have to have attended the initial 40 hour training? | Yes, the initial 40-hour training must have been completed within two years of your application. Check with your SAPR Program Manager to determine if you should repeat the 40-hour training, or need to obtain some additional training. |
| How often do I need the 32 hours of continuing education training to renew my certification? | You need to take 32 hours of continuing education training between the dates you are first certified until the date you apply for certification renewal. D-SAACP Certification expires after two years, so you must complete 32 hours of continuing education within this timeframe. |
| Where can I find resources for continuing education? | Your SARC or Program Manager should be able to provide you continuing education resources. |

| Questions | Answers |
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| How do I know if a particular training will count for CEUs? | Just about any training related to victim advocacy will be acceptable for CEUs. Ideally, the topics will be more advanced or cover new developments in the field. Whenever possible, seek in-person training, as opposed to online. Please contact your SAPR office for further guidance. |
| What counts for the ethics requirement? | The two hours of ethics training must be related to victim advocacy. General professional ethics, even if it is a DoD ethics trainings, will not count towards the requirement. |
| Can I get CEU credit for college/graduate courses? | Maybe. Submit a copy of the syllabus and highlight the relevant lectures. You cannot receive credit for independent study or homework assignments. |
| Can I get CEU credit for initial victim advocacy trainings? | Maybe. If you have not worked any cases during your certification period and you feel you can benefit from a straight refresher that is acceptable. You should avoid taking the exact same class you took for initial certification. |
| Can I get CEU credit if I am teaching a relevant training/course? | No, you must be an attendee to receive credit. |
| Can I get CEU credit for attending a court martial, reading a relevant book or watching a relevant TV show. | These activities will not be accepted unless there is a discussion led by a SARC or other victim services professional. |
| I submitted my certificates for my continuing education hours but received an email that more information was needed. | <p>Each certificate needs to include the title of the training, number of hours, date of training and signature of the trainer. An applicant may be asked to provide an agenda if the training title is ambiguous.</p> <p>For example: A training course titled “Refresher” does not provide enough details about the course. What is the refresher course about? Does it even pertain to victim advocacy or prevention? But a training course titled “What is Restorative Justice?” is a descriptive title.</p> |
| I am completing my renewal application, why does NOVA/NACP requires me to have new Letters of Recommendation? | DoD and the Services created the requirements for the certification program. While the program is based on the National Advocate Credentialing Program standards, our program exceeds the standards by requiring Letters of Recommendations with each renewal. DoD and the Services determined that due to the transient nature of the Military that this was critical to the success of the program. |
| I was originally certified as a Level II. I have completed my continuing education but have not had any cases in the last two years. Do I submit my recertification package for a level I? | No, once you are certified at a level II, III, or IV you do not go down a level. You will renewal at the same level. |
| I have more questions that are not answered by this instruction sheet. Who should I contact? | <p>Please contact your SAPR Program Manager or SARC regarding Service-specific training, and other application requirements.</p> <p>For questions about your certification status, or if you have questions about the application process, please contact NOVA at dsaacp-followup@trynova.org.</p> |