

Recruiting Participants for an OMOD Workshop



In this packet, you will find 5 documents to help you recruit promising candidates for your OMOD workshop:

1. Participant Application. Utilizing a participant application like this one gives you the opportunity to get to know your prospective participants better, including what kind of assistance they might need in the class, how to best contact them, and how dedicated they may be to succeeding in the class. If they put in the effort to complete the application or are willing to ask a relative, case manager, teacher, or even you to help them complete the application, they are often more likely to succeed in the class.

2. Phone Interview Questions. These are suggested questions you may want to ask during your phone interviews with participants. It is most important that you find out how your participant will write in the workshop, which accommodations, if any, they may require, and whether or not they can attend the entire class; beyond that, ask questions that will help you get to know your participants better.

3. Participant Agreement. Once you have accepted a participant into your workshop, it's a good idea to make an agreement with them so they understand what is expected of them in the workshop (i.e., that they must attend every class, be on time, do their homework, keep after class appointments, show up on the showcase day, respect the other students in the class). You can utilize a formal signed agreement such as this one, or you can also make this agreement part of the classroom rules generated on the first day of the workshop.

4. Health Information and Media Release Authorization Form.

- Many participants you accept into your OMOD workshop may have health concerns you need to be aware of from the outset. The health portion of this form allows you to collect this important health information as well as emergency contact information, so you know whom to call in the event of an emergency.

- During your OMOD workshop, you may also want to photograph or video your participants in various stages of the workshop and/or showcase. The media release authorization portion of this form allows you to ask your participants for permission to use these photos or videos for promoting future workshops, showcases, conference presentations, and other program activities. Of course, this is optional, and if any participants are not comfortable giving permission, you will need to be aware of that and avoid capturing these participants in photos or video.

5. Where to Recruit Participants for an OMOD Workshop. These are tips for how and where you may find promising participants for your workshop.

Opening Minds, Opening Doors: Promoting Self-Advocates as Speakers



Application Deadline: March 7, 2016

VSA Texas, the state organization on arts and disability, is looking for adults with disabilities interested in storytelling and public speaking!

Participant Requirements

- Have a developmental disability*
- Must be 18 or older
- Demonstrate an interest in writing, public speaking, or advocacy
- Turn in completed application form
- Turn in a resume of work and volunteer experience
- Turn in two letters of recommendation (can be from teachers, employers, friends, or family members)
- Complete a phone interview with a panel of project staff
- Attend a mandatory orientation on Saturday, March 12th, from 1:00pm-3:00pm, in Room 101 of the AGE of Central Texas Building at 3710 Cedar Street, Austin, TX, 78705

Participants in **Promoting Self-Advocates as Speakers** will be professionally trained to speak and present at statewide conferences. Through workshops focused on narrative storytelling and presentation techniques, participants will work to develop strong, creative voices as well as the skills necessary to advocate for the disability community.

Workshop Schedule:

Saturdays, April 2nd – May 7th, 1:00-4:00 PM

AGE Building, Room 101, 3710 Cedar Street, Austin, TX 78705

Note: Attendance is required for all participants unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. Reasonable absences due to illness, family emergency, etc. will be excused.

VSA Texas: Promoting Self-Advocates as Speakers Application Due Monday, March 7th, at 5:00PM




Phone interviews will be scheduled for March 8th – 9th. Final decisions will be announced Thursday, March 10th.

This application is designed for typing directly into the text boxes. However, the application may also be printed and filled out by hand. Please use extra paper as needed to answer the longer questions. If you have any questions or need assistance to make this form accessible to you, please contact Eric Clow at 866-489-8412.

Please type answers into the right column. Cells will expand. For “Yes/No” questions, delete the answer you are not using. Please answer every question. If the question does not apply to you, enter “N/A.”

Name			
Address			
Home Phone			
Cell Phone			
Email			
School Currently Attending			
Graduated From			
Date of Birth			
Accommodations Needed			
Dates You Are Not Available			
Race/Ethnicity (<i>Optional</i>)			
Disability (<i>Optional</i>)			
Interest	Writing	Yes	No
	Public Speaking	Yes	No
	Advocacy	Yes	No

Opening Minds, Opening Doors		VSA Texas	
Do You Have Experience With...	Handwriting	Yes	No
	Typing	Yes	No
	PowerPoint/Slideshows	Yes	No
	Microphones	Yes	No
	Theater/Improv	Yes	No
	Email	Yes	No
	Disability History	Yes	No
	Advocacy/Activism	Yes	No
What Does Being An Advocate Mean To You?			
What Topics Or Issues Do You Want To Speak About Publicly?			
What Audiences Would You Like To Speak To?			
<i>(Audience examples include: parents, high school students, teachers, children, etc.)</i>			
<div>5</div>			

Opening Minds, Opening Doors		VSA Texas
Why Should We Choose You To Participate In This Program?		
Resume Attached	Yes	No
2 Letters of Recommendation Attached	Yes	No
Secondary Contact Person		
Relationship		
Phone		
Email		
Submit to VSA Texas by	Mail: 3710 Cedar Street #7 Austin, TX 78705 Email: eric@vsatx.org Fax: 512-454-1944	
<p>*Definition from the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities website www.tcdd.texas.gov - "A Developmental Disability is a severe, chronic disability that begins before the person reaches age 22 and is likely to continue throughout one's life."</p> <p>Financial Support for Opening Minds, Opening Doors: Promoting Self-Advocates as Speakers is provided by the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities and made available by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. *\$125,000 (75%) DD funds; \$41,666 (25%) non-federal resources</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>TEXAS COUNCIL <i>for</i> DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES</p> </div> <div> <p>VSA Texas 3710 Cedar St., Box #7 Rm #128 Austin, TX 78705 Local: 512-454-9912 Toll Free: 1-866-489-8412 info@vsatx.org www.vsatx.org</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">   </div> </div>		

Interview Questions for OMOD Applicants

1. How did you hear about our program?
2. Do you have any writing experience?
3. What is the easiest way for you to write? Handwrite, type, dictate, etc. Will you need any accommodations to write in class?
4. Are there any other accommodations you will need to be able to fully participate in the class?
5. Will you be able to attend all six sessions?
6. Do you have any public speaking experience, and if so, what?
7. Are you interested in speaking at conferences?
8. You said you had ... experience? What have you done?
9. What do you hope to get out of the class?
10. Why do you want to tell your story?
11. Do you have any fears about taking this class?
12. Has anyone else's personal story impacted your life? How?
13. What do you feel are your strengths? Weaknesses?
14. Do you have any hobbies? What are they?
15. Is there a specific time in your life where you felt like you were an advocate for someone? Tell us about it.
16. Who is your favorite writer and why?

Opening Minds, Opening Doors:
Promoting Self-Advocates as Speakers



General Policies and Participant Agreement

As a participant, you will act as a representative of VSA Texas and the Opening Minds, Opening Doors (OMOD) program. For a better understanding of what you can expect as a participant and what is expected of you by our program, we ask you to read and sign the following participant agreement.

The Opening Minds, Opening Doors (OMOD) program will provide for you:

- Training in public speaking and writing skills
- Coaching and support in delivering keynote or ensemble conference presentations
- Opportunities for professional development and social interaction with peers, mentors, skilled trainers, and state conference hosts and attendees
- Ongoing updates of any changes made to the training schedule, syllabus, or other program activities
- Any accommodations you request, including but not limited to: scribing, notetaking, audio description, and wheelchair access

We ask that you:

- Arrive to each class session on time and prepared
- Attend each session unless you have made prior arrangements with the trainer (reasonable absences due to illness, family emergency, etc. will be excused)
- Arrange an alternate meeting with the trainer or other qualified program staffperson in the event of an absence so that you can make up any material you missed
- Complete all tasks assigned to you by the trainer(s) or program staff
- Maintain all program commitments and speaking engagements unless you have made prior arrangements with program staff
- Maintain bimonthly phone, Skype, or in-person follow-up meetings with the project coordinator to report on your progress and request any additional coaching or support in preparing for speaking engagements
- Request any accommodations you may need to successfully participate in the program
- Conduct yourself in an appropriate and ethical manner at all times
- Please dress appropriately for each class session, speaking engagement, or other event you are requested to attend
- Immediately contact the trainer or another program staffperson in case of an emergency/potentially harmful or unsafe environment
- Have fun and ask any questions you may have. Remember we are here for you!

By my signature I declare that I have read, understand, and agree with all parts of the participant agreement and will strive to fulfill all parts therein.

_____/____/____
 Participant Signature Date

_____/____/____
 Parent/Guardian Signature (if appropriate) Date

VSA Copy ☐

Participant Copy ☐

Opening Minds, Opening Doors:
Health Information and Media
Release Authorization



Name: _____

Emergency Contact Person: _____

Relationship: _____ Phone: _____

Health History*

Please check if participant has any of the following and detail below:

☐ asthma ☐ epilepsy ☐ diabetes ☐ allergies (food, drug, other)

Or any other medical details the instructor needs to know:

Health Information is for VSA staff purposes only in case of an emergency.

Media Release Authorization

I, _____, hereby grant VSA Texas permission to disclose my photograph, video, audio recording, and/or other form of media documentation of my image, voice, **and/or product of my creative expression created in this project/program** for the purpose of sharing with the community the work of VSA Texas. Images and/or audio recordings will appear in publicity pieces including, but not limited to: news releases, publications, videos and web use, photograph, video, audio recording and/or other form of media documentation.

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return to: VSA Texas, 3710 Cedar Street #7, Austin, TX 78705

Where to Recruit Participants for an OMOD Workshop

1. Social Media. Promote your upcoming OMOD workshop through your existing social media network, if you have one. If you don't, then establish one as best as you can. Any of the following forms of social media are a great means to get the word out about your program, but they work most effectively in unison:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Instagram
- Blog
- Your Website
- Email Campaigns
- Monthly Electronic Newsletter (Constant Contact, MailChimp, etc.)

2. Flyers. Not everyone has Internet access, especially in the disability community, so you may want to also create a single-page flyer that you can post up in group homes, assisted living centers, disability advocacy organizations, independent living centers, department of rehabilitation offices, local college offices for students with disabilities, and other locations you identify in your area.

3. Transition Fairs and Conferences. Most public high school districts host transition fairs for students with disabilities before they graduate. These fairs can be a good place to set up a booth to promote your program, inform students directly about the workshop, and gauge their interest. You can also bring applications for potential participants to take home with them and/or sign-up sheets so that people who want to learn more can receive email, phone, or mail updates from you. Any time you present at a disability-focused conference, especially when you present with participants of past OMOD workshops, is another great opportunity to promote future workshops and generate interest.

4. Word of Mouth. Last but just as effective as any of the other means of recruitment listed above, is word-of-mouth. If you have decided to facilitate your own OMOD workshop, chances are you probably already have a network of people – friends, family members, neighbors, co-workers – who would either benefit or know someone who would benefit. Reach out to these folks and tell them about your program.