



Area Contact Leader Volunteer Position Description

Thank you for your interest in becoming an Area Contact Leader for Dysphonia International, formerly the National Spasmodic Dysphonia Association (NSDA). No one understands what you are going through better than someone who also lives with a voice disorder. Many places do not have sufficient numbers of people living with a voice disorder like spasmodic dysphonia to form a local support group, but there is a definite need for people who are newly diagnosed to make contact with a Dysphonia International volunteer – to share experiences and know 'they are not alone.' The same applies to people who have lived with a voice disorder for some time and wish to take the first steps in reaching out to others.

An Area Contact Leader can be a lifeline to others, provide information on doctors, share experiences with treatments along with tips, and build lifelong friendships. In this role, you have the ability to connect with others in a positive and supportive way while empowering both the people who contact you and yourself as a leader. Contact is usually made via email but at times people may want to talk on the phone. Please read through this position description to get a better understanding of the responsibilities, qualifications, and benefits of being an Area Contact Leader in your community.

About Dysphonia International

Established in 1989, the NSDA, now Dysphonia International, is a 501(c)3 nonprofit dedicated to improving people' with spasmodic dysphonia and related voice conditions through research, education, awareness, and support.

About the Area Contact Leader Role

Area Contact Leaders are very special individuals who give freely of their time and talents, serving on behalf of Dysphonia International without financial compensation.

Area Contact Leaders in each community work with the staff and Support Network team to:

- Be a local contact person who understands the challenges of living with a voice disorder
- Increase awareness about spasmodic dysphonia and related voice conditions within each community
- Develop and enhance a relationship between Dysphonia International and the local community including the medical community.
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What are the responsibilities of the Area Contact Leader?

- Be available to respond to inquiries via email in a timely manner
- Keep the staff informed about people who contact them by sending their contact information to the office
- Build relationships with local physicians, health care professionals, and government and community representatives
- Distribute Dysphonia International literature to healthcare providers, libraries and other businesses and organizations, as needed.

As a volunteer, we know life changes and other commitments may come up. If at any time you feel the need to step down as an Area Contact Leader just inform the staff.

How does Dysphonia International support me as an Area Contact Leader?

When you become an Area Contact Leader, you are not on your own! We have a robust Support Network to help you be successful in the role.

Leader Development

- You will be introduced to our Support Leadership Team along with the staff
- You will have mentors to help guide you and answer any questions about the role.
- You will have access to the Leadership Library designed specifically for our Support Network
- You will be invited to join the Leadership Facebook Group so you can connect with other leaders
- You will be invited to participate in the virtual meetings and the annual Leadership Workshop
- You will receive and have the opportunity to contribute to the quarterly newsletter of the Support Leadership Network called *Voices of Support*.

Dysphonia International Support

Our Dysphonia International staff is here to help support you. They will:

- Mail out educational materials, literature, and awareness materials to you at no charge upon request
- Connect you with local healthcare professionals
- Host Zoom meetings for Area Contact Leaders
- Add your name to the Support section of our website, which includes your name and email.

What do I need to become an Area Contact Leader?

We expect Area Contact Leaders to have the following qualifications to be considered for volunteer service:

- Good communication skills, including the ability to listen and empathize with the person contacting you
- A strong desire to help support and educate others about spasmodic dysphonia and related voice conditions
- Willingness to learn more about spasmodic dysphonia and related voice conditions and share their experiences. You do not have to be an expert in spasmodic dysphonia and related voice conditions
- Access to the internet and an active email account
- Agreement to have your name and email listed on the Dysphonia International website
- Being comfortable using Zoom to meet virtually. If Zoom is new to you, we can walk you through the process.
- Ability to communicate with diverse groups of individuals.

Once you become a leader, you will be expected to:

- Review and understand the organization's Vision, Mission, and Core Values
- Follow the Conflict of Interest Policy and Code of Ethics, which reinforces the values and standards of conduct applicable to staff and all individuals who act on behalf of Dysphonia International.
- Maintain confidentiality about all internal matters of the organization.

Reasons to be an Area Contact Leader for Dysphonia International

- You serve as local contact person who is providing a place where people can connect and feel at ease to talk about experiences they've had living with spasmodic dysphonia and related voice conditions, both in-person and online.
- You will gain insight by listening to how other people with vocal conditions feel about themselves, what treatments have been helpful and not helpful for them, and how as a community we can better support them.
- You will feel good about helping local people in your community express how they feel, to enjoy the social contact, and to learn more about their vocal challenges. To be really heard is so important and it helps to empower people to advocate for themselves.
- Especially for those people who are anxious, having been recently diagnosed and/or who are going for their first treatment, it feels good to meet others who can help them realize they're not alone and you have walked a similar path.
- In many cases, by serving as an Area Contact Leader, you are sharing the kindness and support that you received from others.
- You will feel part of the Dysphonia International community that works as a team to help advance the Mission of our organization, which is "to improve the lives of people affected by spasmodic dysphonia and related voice conditions through research, education, awareness and support."

What are the next steps to become an Area Contact Leader?

1. Review this position description
2. Complete and submit the online on-boarding form: <https://dysphonia.org/area-contact-leader-form/>
3. Once submitted you will hear from our Support Network and staff who will welcome you and introduce you to your new role!

If you have any questions, please reach out to us via email at support-leadership@dysphonia.org or via phone at 630-250-4504. We look forward to discussing your interest in becoming a volunteer leader for Dysphonia International.