







Whether you are developing a new SART or integrating the new legislation into your existing SART, it is important to take time to assess where you are at and what steps are ahead of you. The following can be a helpful resource to help you stay on track.

SART Implementation Timeline



Stage		Important actions items related to step
<input type="checkbox"/>	Read SART legislation	Educate yourself on the legislation so that you are prepared to discuss the requirements with potential members. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Read Statute ○ Review Introduction to SARTs in Texas ○ View Texas specific webinars on SART Basics
<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify members outlined by statute	Identify required preliminary SART members: 1. The Chief Administrator of a Sexual Assault Program (as defined by Govt Code Chapter 420) that provides services within the county, or their designee; 2. A prosecutor with jurisdiction over adult sexual assault cases in the county; 3. The Sheriff of the county, or their designee; 4. The Chief of the largest municipal law enforcement agency, if one exists, or their designee; 5. A Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner, or Forensic Examiner that provides exams within the county, or if they do not exist, a representative from the largest healthcare provider in the county; 6. A mental or behavioral health provider within the county, or if they do not exist, a representative from the public health department; and 7. Other persons or professionals the SART considers necessary for the operation of the response team. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure potential members understand the stated purpose of SART and required commitments ○ Ensure potential members are in a position where they can impact change within their individual agencies ○ Connect with your commissioner's court
<input type="checkbox"/>	Commissioner's Court formally establishes SART	The commissioner's court of each county is responsible for formally establishing the SART. This typically involves a formal resolution and vote during the commissioner's court meeting. More often than not, it is a professional or organization within the community that will provide the commissioner's court with a proposed list of initial members to consider and appoint. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meet with commissioner's court to discuss proposed appointments ○ Discuss process for establishing SART (resolution templates can be found here) ○ The law requires commissioner's courts to appoint members and establish the SART by December 1, 2021.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop SART infrastructure & processes for collaboration	Once your team is established, a discussion on the purpose of SART and its role in the community helps create a foundation for teams to build around. This is also an important time to begin building a sense of community with SART members. It takes consistent practice and intentional work to develop collaborative partnerships with SART members. A flexible infrastructure helps solidify your SART's foundation so that you are able to function effectively and achieve higher levels of collaboration. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Elect a presiding officer* ○ Outline meeting structure (ex. format, agenda, reoccurring meeting dates) ○ Discuss additional SART infrastructure needs (points to consider: should there be additional leadership structure to share power, for example co-chairs, or advisory committee, who takes notes/minutes, how will data be shared/collected, how will information be collected for the biennial summary, when do meetings take place, how is confidentiality addressed, etc.) ○ Develop team mission statement and vision ○ Develop group agreements to document infrastructure and support your SART's sustainability. This will also help create clarity around roles, responsibilities, and commitments (by-laws, MOUs, parliamentary processes).

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Identify and discuss additional individuals or agencies that should be invited to participate on the SART and utilize agreed upon processes to invite new members (ensure new members have clarity around the purpose of SART). ○ Begin developing procedures for managing conflict and maintaining confidentiality.* ○ Develop procedures related to information sharing/gathering* (this will also help prepare you for the biennial report) ○ Determine training needs and dates for required cross-training on dynamics of sexual assault* (4 hours annually). <p> Teams should not expect to immediately have the trust and communication structures needed to achieve their goals or to be an effective collaboration. Teams should take time to learn about each other's knowledge and experience. This step is vital and should be done prior to developing protocols or conducting case reviews.</p> <p>*A required element of the SART law</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Begin SART protocol development</p>	<p>SARTs are tasked with strengthening collaborative response and enhancing health and judicial outcomes for adult sexual assault survivors. Protocols are guidelines that help communities remain accountable to those goals. All SARTs are required to develop a written adult sexual assault protocol. The stated purpose of the written protocol is: “to ensure coordination between all agencies involved in sexual assault cases, to increase the efficacy of response, and to minimize survivor traumatization.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Discuss and outline the type of support survivors need and what resources are available in the community to meet those needs (ex. sexual assault examinations, advocacy, mental health, housing assistance, etc.). *Tip: Asset mapping guides can also be a helpful tool. ○ Discuss and outline each member and/or agency's existing services, roles, and responsibilities and document internal and external processes for responding to adult sexual assault survivors ○ Identify opportunities for collaboration (including procedures for addressing conflict and maintaining confidentiality). ○ Discuss and outline how and when members work together when responding to adult sexual assault survivors and document how members coordinate the intervention, treatment, investigation, and prosecution efforts of adult sexual assault cases. ○ Compile information to develop a protocol draft and revise it to address items required by statute, including identifying gaps or areas that can be modified to enhance survivor rights, safety and wellbeing. ○ Create processes for identifying community trends, including drug-facilitated sexual assault, predatory rape, and sex trafficking ○ Determine how protocols will be implemented and distributed to all relevant agencies in the county (ex. will training be provided; is the protocol available online; how are updates distributed, etc.) <p> Communities can unintentionally create protocols that lead to re-traumatization. It is crucial to think critically about how agencies will collaborate to assess if the protocol is prioritizing the survivor's rights as well as their health and safety. Protocols should include clear practices that prioritize the survivor's needs. Consider incorporating a subcommittee of survivors or community partners to help identify ways to enhance response protocols.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Prepare and conduct biennial evaluation</p>	<p>Biennial evaluation: SARTs are required to conduct at least 1 adult sexual assault case review to assess the effectiveness of individual agency and interagency protocols and systems. The team may also use other methods for evaluating their protocol, such as survivor feedback surveys.</p> <p>Important considerations related to case reviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The SART protocol should be completed before conducting a case review ○ Develop procedures for selecting and reviewing cases, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What type of cases will be reviewed (active, inactive, disposed) ○ Selection procedure (can survivors contact the agency about having their cases reviewed or does the SART request them etc.) ○ A framework for conducting case reviews (How will the case be discussed? Who participates? What information will be presented? Who will present it? Is there a rubric or evaluation form for participants to use when assessing the effectiveness of agencies, protocols, and systems? How will findings be documented and shared?) ○ Procedures for obtaining the survivor's informed consent in advance (How are survivors contacted? What forms are needed? How are the privacy requirements of different agencies considered? How is the purpose for the review communicated? Who has access to the information? Who will be present? Will information be communicated back to the survivor? etc.) <p> The law requires SARTs to obtain an adult survivor's signed consent before reviewing their case. The consent must specify: (1) the information or records covered by the release; (2) the reason or purpose for the release; and (3) the person or agency to which the information is to be released. Additionally, mental health providers and Sexual Assault Programs have additional privacy requirements that must be met before they can share survivor information during a case review. Contact TAASA for assistance on this if needed.</p>

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Prepare the biennial report</p>	<p>Biennial Report: SARTs must provide a report to the commissioner’s court of each county the SART serves. This report is due by Dec 1 of each odd-numbered year and must include the following information:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) List of response team members participating in quarterly meetings 2) Copy of the written protocol (which includes the biennial evaluation) 3) The number of sexual assault reports received by local law enforcement agencies, number of investigations conducted as a result of those reports, number of indictments presented in connection with a report and the disposition, and the number of reports of a sexual assault which no indictment was presented (or an explanation to why the team could not provide this information). <p>Note: Some of the information required by the report can be pulled from existing records, however, other aspects of the report, such as tracking the trajectory of individual cases, must be done by combining data from SART members.</p> <p>To prepare for the report consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure there is a process and structure in place for sharing and collecting required information (ex. timeline, designated portion in meeting, person/committee to compile and track information). SARTs can benefit from developing data collection processes early on (see infrastructure building) ○ Create a report outline so members can identify next steps for drafting the report ○ Gather all required data ○ Determine need for additional messaging/education related to the report (disclaimers, how the report will be presented to commissioner’s court, contact person for questions, call to action). <p> It is important to remember that tracking cases for the biennial report, is not the same as conducting a case review. Members should be clear about the scope of data collection and how information can be documented while still protecting the survivor’s privacy.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Submit biennial report and review findings with your team</p>	<p>SARTs should review their draft of the biennial report as a team to ensure all required elements are represented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Address identified gaps in required information. Provide a written explanation for any required information that the team was unable to include in the report. ○ Provide final report to the commissioners’ court no later than Dec 1, 2023. ○ Discuss biennial report and determine action items for the SART to address in future meetings (cross-training topics, protocol changes, etc.).