

VICTIM/WITNESS ADVOCATE

DEFINITION

Under general direction, to provide crisis intervention, emergency assistance, resource and referral counseling, and follow-up counseling for victims and witnesses of crimes and domestic violence situations in accordance with the Victim/Witness Program in the Sheriff's Department; to assist with the development of community resources for victim/witness assistance; to represent the Victim/Witness Program with community organizations and agencies; and to do related work as required.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

Positions in this class are responsible for providing a variety of victim/witness and program support services for the Victim/Witness Program. Incumbents may be on 24-hour call.

REPORTS TO

Sheriff/Coroner.

CLASSIFICATIONS DIRECTLY SUPERVISED

None.

VICTIM/WITNESS ADVOCATE - 2

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES

- Provides counseling and crisis intervention support for program clients.
- Interviews victims and witnesses of crimes, advising them of restitution rights and the availability of services.
- Assesses needs and makes referrals to appropriate community resources and organizations.
- Provides orientation on the criminal justice system, court assistance and support, and case status/disposition for program clients.
- Arranges for return of property held as evidence.
- Assists with crime compensation claims.
- Arranges for temporary child care, transportation, and/or emergency food and shelter for program clients.
- Explains program procedures, policies, and services.
- May accompany victim/witness to the court, providing advocacy with attorneys and other law enforcement agencies.
- Assists victims with preparation and presentation of victim impact statements.
- Promotes the Victim/Witness Program in the local community.
- Works with community organizations to develop resources and appropriate referral services for victims and witnesses.
- Makes presentations as necessary.
- Maintains liaison with other law enforcement agencies.
- Maintains program records and enters data into a computer system.

TYPICAL PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

Sit for extended periods; frequently stand and walk; normal manual dexterity and eye-hand coordination; corrected hearing and vision to normal range; verbal communication; use of office equipment including computers, telephones, calculators, copiers, and FAX.

TYPICAL WORKING CONDITIONS

Work is performed in an office; occasionally works outside; continuous contact with staff and the public.

DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

- Rules and regulations governing victim/witness services and programs.
- Community needs for victim/witness services.
- Functions of public law enforcement agencies and the criminal justice system.
- Principles of providing assistance to victims and witnesses of crimes.
- Client problems requiring referral to other organizations and support services.
- Interviewing and record keeping techniques.

Ability to:

- Provide a variety of client and program support services for the Victim/Witness Program.
- Interview people, identify needs, and make appropriate referrals.
- Analyze and interpret laws and regulations related to victim/witness services.
- Gather, organize, analyze, and present a variety of data and information.
- Prepare, clear, concise and accurate records and reports.
- Communicate with others from diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.
- Elicit factual information from applicants and recipients in difficult circumstances of deprivation or emotional disturbance.
- Assist with development of community referral resources for program clients.
- Effectively represent victim/witness programs in contacts with service providers, the public, community organizations, and other government's agencies.
- Establish and maintain cooperative working relationships.

Training and Experience: Any combination of training and experience which would likely provide the required knowledge and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the required knowledge and abilities would be:

Two (2) years of responsible work experience in dealing with victims and witnesses of crimes, or within the criminal justice system.

Advanced education in social or behavioral science, criminology, public administration, or administration of justice is highly desirable. 12 Semester units in an appropriate field may be substituted for one (1) year of the required experience.

Special Requirements: Must possess a valid driver's license at time of application and a valid California Drivers License by the time of appointment. The valid California License must be maintained throughout employment.

Completion of mandated Office of Criminal Justice Planning training within one (1) year of appointment.