

VICTIM SERVICES ADVOCATE

DEFINITION

Under general supervision, the Victim Advocate provides crisis intervention, case management, and support services to victims and witnesses of crime throughout the criminal justice process. The incumbent educates clients about their rights, connects them with available services and resources, and acts as a liaison between clients and criminal justice personnel, agencies, and community partners. Performs related work as required.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

This classification is distinguished by its focus on direct services and advocacy for victims of crime, often involving work with individuals in crisis. The Victim Advocate may be required to work independently, exercise sound judgment under emotional and stressful conditions, and coordinate with various law enforcement, court, and service agencies.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES

The following list of duties is intended only to describe the various types of work that may be performed and the level of technical complexity of the assignment(s) and is not intended to be an all-inclusive list of duties. The omission of a specific duty statement does not exclude it from the position if the work is consistent with the concept of the classification or is similar or closely related to another duty statement.

Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform these essential functions.

Essential Duties

1. Provides crisis intervention and emotional support to victims and witnesses of crime, including during police interviews, follow up investigations, and court proceedings.
2. Assesses client needs and develops individualized service and safety plans.
3. Provides information about and assistance with Victim Compensation Board (CalVCB) claims and other forms of financial, legal, and social support.
4. Educates clients on the criminal justice process, victim rights, and available services; actively participates in referrals to community-based partners.
5. Accompanies victims to court proceedings, interviews, and related appointments; acts as liaison between clients, law enforcement, attorneys, and community agencies.
6. Maintains comprehensive case files, client records, and documentation for reporting purposes; assists victims in preparation of victim impact statements and reports for court use.
7. Participates in community outreach and conducts educational presentations to staff, community-based partners, and city residents to increase awareness of victim rights and services.
8. Coordinates and collaborates with multidisciplinary teams, including law enforcement, prosecutors, healthcare providers, social workers, and housing service providers, including the City Attorney's Office's Rent Program.
9. Participates in case review meetings and supports the development of trauma-informed response protocols.
10. Gains knowledge of and effectively communicates to crime victims and survivors the purpose of diversion, restorative justice, various collaborative courts and the importance of using evidence-based solutions in the criminal justice system.
11. May provide on-call or emergency response services during evenings or weekends as needed.
12. Supports clients experiencing poly-victimization with risk assessments and complex care planning.
13. Assists with protective orders and legal paperwork for clients.
14. Manages cases using electronic databases; prepares statistical and narrative reports for state/federal compliance.
15. Provides training and consultation to staff and partner agencies on victim-centered practices.

Other Duties

16. Assists in grant writing, data collection, and reporting to funding agencies.
17. Translate as required to meet division needs. Translating may be oral or in written form.

18. Perform related duties as assigned.

WORKING CONDITIONS

- Work is performed in an office, court, or field setting.
- Occasional exposure to wet or humid conditions; extreme cold or extreme heat.
- Occasional exposure to fumes or airborne particles, and vibration.
- Noise level is usually moderate, ambient office sounds such as speaking, working office equipment, and software.
- May involve exposure to emotionally distressing situations and individuals in crisis.
- May be required to work irregular hours or respond to emergencies after hours.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

- Sitting or standing for extended periods of time including but not limited to long distance travel with extended periods in a motorized vehicle.
- Dexterity of hands and fingers to operate objects, controls, and/or tools such as but not limited to a computer, computer keyboard, and standard office equipment.
- Occasional lifting, pushing, or pulling of objects up to 25 pounds.
- Vision abilities or ability to interpret, read, and maintain various documents, such as case files and reports, in electronic and non-electronic formats.
- Reach with hands and arms; repetitive movements of hands or wrist; climb or balance; stoop, crouch, squat, crawl, walk; twist and bend from the waist.
- Fieldwork may involve mobility on uneven terrain.
- Hearing and speaking to present and exchange information and communicate in person and by telephone with clients and partners.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Education/Experience

Any combination of education and experience likely to provide the required knowledge and abilities; a typical way to obtain the knowledge and abilities would be:

Education: Graduation from an accredited college or university with major coursework in criminal justice, psychology, social work, or a related field.

Experience: Two years of experience providing direct services, crisis counseling, or advocacy for victims of crime, preferably in a public or nonprofit setting.

Knowledge

Trauma-informed and victim-centered approaches to advocacy and support; principles and practices of crisis intervention, case management, and counseling; victims' rights under California law, including Marsy's Law and CalVCB; the criminal justice system and related procedures; community resources and public assistance programs, confidentiality and ethical guidelines for client advocacy; relevant federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations related to area of assignment; modern office methods, practices, and procedures, including computers and applicable software; principles and practices of customer service.

Ability

Provide empathetic, culturally competent, and non-judgmental support to individuals in crisis; maintain professional boundaries and composure in high-stress or emotionally charged situations; establish and maintain effective working relationships with clients, criminal justice partners, and community organizations; communicate effectively, both orally and in writing; prioritize and manage multiple tasks under pressure; prepare victims for court and accompany them through proceedings; complete applications for CalVCB, restitution, and emergency services; use case-management systems; maintain accurate reports for compliance; conduct outreach and training for law enforcement, courts, community agencies; demonstrate cultural competence; bilingual capacity highly desirable; operate and effectively utilize use modern office equipment including computers and applicable software applications and database systems involved in the performance of job functions; maintain level of knowledge required for satisfactory job performance; interpret and apply relevant state, federal, and local laws and regulations.

Other Requirements

Possession of a valid California Driver's License and satisfactory driving record at the time of appointment is required as a condition of initial and continued employment only if the operation of a vehicle, rather than the employee's ability to get to/from various work locations in a timely manner, is necessary to perform the essential functions of the position.

Completion of California OES Entry-Level Victim Advocate Training may be required within the first year depending upon

combination of applicable experience and education.

Bilingual (Spanish or other) highly desirable.