

VICTIM/WITNESS SPECIALIST

FUNCTION OF THE JOB

Under supervision, provides comprehensive services as mandated by the Wisconsin Constitution and Wisconsin Statutes to crime victims, victim family members, and witnesses. Provides notification, information, resources, assistance, support, and other appropriate services and referrals; advises the prosecuting attorney and the court regarding victim notification and input; prepares and briefs crime victims and witnesses on court proceedings and legal procedures; and performs other duties as required.

CHARACTERISTIC DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Orients victims/witnesses to their rights and protections under State statute and the Wisconsin Constitution, to the criminal and juvenile justice system and to community and governmental resources available to them.
2. Provides preparation and assistance related to court proceedings including preparing victims and witnesses to testify in criminal court, providing court accompaniment and explanation and arranging transportation and logistics of appearances.
3. Initiates and maintains on-going contact and support with victims, witnesses and families, either in-person or by phone, to assist, inform and update them about the status of the case both prior and subsequent to disposition, including any cancellations or adjournments.
4. Notates and updates court files, the PROTECT database, and other systems promptly, accurately, and thoroughly regarding the status of victims' rights notification and compliance, and about the victims' wishes regarding notification and outcomes of the case.
5. Maintains required information for state and federal reports and grants.
6. Interprets police reports to obtain information regarding the circumstances of the crime, to assess the immediate needs of the victims, determine additional victims and to file mandatory State and federal forms.
7. Attend law enforcement interviews, prosecutor meetings and court proceedings with crime victims, their family members, and witnesses.
8. Acts as an advocate and liaison for crime victims, witnesses and their family members, with the court system, law enforcement agencies, and probation and parole officers in such areas as: exercising their rights to privacy and to attend and be heard at proceedings; seeking enforcement of their rights; registering for offender custody and release notifications; assisting witnesses in obtaining witness fees and expense reimbursement; and intervening with employers and insurance companies on the victim's behalf.
9. Acts as an advocate and liaison for crime victims, their families and witnesses with the prosecutor assigned to the case, keeping the prosecutor informed of any concerns or problems raised, and communicating the victim's wishes regarding privacy, the case, outcomes, plea negotiations and sentencing recommendations, their right to be heard and to assert and seek enforcement of their rights.
10. Assesses ongoing needs of crime victims, family members, and witnesses, including their physical and emotional well-being, safety, and financial needs. Provides emergency financial assistance, safety planning and intervention with law enforcement, and appropriate community referrals. Acts as a liaison with offender monitoring agencies to apprise victims of offender violations and safety risks. Assists victims with obtaining emergency civil protection orders.
11. Assists victims and families with writing and submitting their victim impact statements to the court at the time of sentencing.
12. Contacts victims to inform them of the process of submitting and filing of claims for restitution from the defendant and from the Crime Victim Compensation program and assist with documentation and verification of those losses.

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13. Assists witnesses and victims to understand the importance of their role to ensure their cooperation and hearing attendance in the criminal case.
14. Informs victims of the options and procedures for asserting a violation of their constitutional and statutory rights and seeking enforcement and/or remedies.
15. Establishes and maintains good working relationships with law enforcement agencies, court and government officials, attorneys, victims and witnesses of crimes, staff, and the public.
16. Assists in the training of staff and student interns.
17. Assists with community education about program services and related issues.
18. Performs other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

Essential Knowledge and Abilities

1. Working knowledge of Wisconsin Constitution, Article I Section 9m and state Statutes related to crime victims and witnesses, particularly Chapters 938,949 and 950.
2. Working knowledge of the special needs, problems, and concerns of crime victims and witnesses.
3. Working knowledge of the criminal justice system as it relates to victim witness programs.
4. Working knowledge of factors involved in victimization by domestic violence, sensitive crimes, and other crimes against person and property.
5. Working knowledge of community resources and social service programs.
6. Working knowledge of computerized department program software and database, spreadsheets, and word processing programs.
7. Ability to work as part of a team effort to solve problems and address issues or concerns related to issues of victimization.
8. Ability to effectively interact with sensitivity with persons from diverse cultural, socioeconomic, educational, racial, ethnic, and professional backgrounds and persons of all ages and lifestyles.
9. Ability to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing.
10. Establishes and maintains good working relationships with law enforcement agencies, court and government officials, attorneys, victims and witnesses of crimes, staff, and the public.
11. Ability to listen objectively and exhibit empathic listening skills.
12. Ability to work independently and to organize, plan and complete work assignments and projects.
13. Ability to prepare and maintain records and reports.
14. Ability to handle unusual, complex and crisis situations.
15. Ability to interpret, explain and present pertinent information involving court proceedings and program services.
16. Ability to deal effectively with difficult and stressful situations involving people in crisis.

Training and Experience

1. High School Diploma or GED.
2. Three years of paraprofessional work experience in criminal justice, social work, crisis intervention or a related field that involves the provision of direct human services.
3. Recognized post high school education in criminal justice, social work, psychology, sociology, or a closely related field may be substituted for the work experience requirement on a year-for-year basis.