

COUNTY OF SOLANO
VICTIM WITNESS ASSISTANT

Rev. 08/96

DEFINITION

Under general supervision, assists victims of serious crime with obtaining support services and assists prosecuting attorneys by providing court support and witness coordination activities; performs related duties as required.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

This class is characterized by the primary responsibility of assisting victims of crime during legal proceedings and with obtaining victim compensation and social mental health services or other support. Incumbents are responsible for witness assessment and coordination in support of case prosecution activities. Incumbents work primarily with victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse and other personal violence crimes. This class is distinguished from Victim Witness Program Coordinator in that the latter has overall program responsibilities.

EXAMPLES OF DUTIES

Duties may include but are not limited to the following:

1. Assists Deputy District Attorneys and law enforcement personnel in conducting interviews with victims of crimes who have sustained serious physical and/or emotional injury; assists, counsels and refers victims to available support groups and agencies.
2. Screens and analyzes crime reports to determine eligibility for victim compensation; prepares and processes applications for compensation pursuant to State regulations; represents victims and prepares appeals for denied cases which have merit.
3. Receives case referrals from a variety of sources to provide services which include crisis intervention, service needs assessment, court orientations and escorts, case status information, funeral arrangements and emergency financial assistance.
4. Conducts witness assessment interviews as requested; evaluates case elements to assist Deputy District Attorneys in assessing case prosecutorial criteria; coordinates witness court appearances.
5. May recruit, train and supervise office volunteers; may represent the program through conducting public relations functions; prepares work production and/or caseload statistics.

Victim Witness Assistant

QUALIFICATION GUIDELINES

Education and/or Experience

Considerable experience in a field integrating the legal and social service systems, including some substantial public contact experience, which demonstrates possession of and competency in requisite knowledge and abilities. Typical qualifying education and experience would be:

Two years of full time experience in a criminal justice or social services agency in a counseling position involving the provision of victim services and/or peer counseling, and 60 semester units from a recognized college or university, including, 18 units in social/behavioral science, criminal justice, psychology or related field;

OR

A Masters degree in counseling can substitute for the requisite experience.

Knowledge and Abilities

Considerable knowledge of the Criminal Justice System and court procedures; social service systems; community resources; law enforcement agencies=procedures; dynamics of sexual assault and other violent confrontations and experiences.

Ability to effectively interview clients to obtain thorough, pertinent and accurate information; communicate effectively with people of diverse socio-economic backgrounds and temperaments; demonstrate sensitivity to the cultural/ethnic diversity of the service populations and be sensitive to the needs of special populations including the disabled, young children and the elderly; communicate and deal effectively with individuals and groups in stressful situations; cope effectively with people in crisis, especially children; establish and maintain cooperative working relationships with community organizations, victims, witnesses, court and law enforcement personnel, attorneys, the media and the general public; make effective verbal presentations to small and large groups; attract, train and supervise volunteers; set priorities and work independently; research regulations, procedures and/or technical reference materials; learn to make referrals to local and regional providers of social, medical and other specialized services; project consequences of decisions; maintain confidentiality of information; recognize and respect limit of authority and responsibility; deal effectively with children for extended periods in a confined setting; demonstrate tact, diplomacy, compassion, courtesy and patience.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

Possession of or ability to obtain a valid Class C California driver's license is required.

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Independent travel is required.

Incumbents may be required to work outside of normal business hours.

Positions allocated to this class may require bilingual skills.

Candidates for positions in this class will be required to pass a background investigation in accordance with applicable law, regulation and/or policy.

VICTIM WITNESS ASSISTANT-SUGGESTED CHANGES TO EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE GUIDELINES FOR JOB SPECIFICATION

Current Job Specification:

AConsiderable experience in a field integrating the legal and social service systems, including substantial public contact experience, which demonstrates possession of and competency in requisite knowledge and abilities.@

Education and Experience: Job Announcement 5/26/95

ATwo (2) years full time experience in a position integrating the criminal justice system and social services, one year of which must have included substantial public contact AND 60 semester units from a recognized college or university, including 18 units in social/behavioral science, criminal justice, psychology or a related field. One year of counseling experience, at least six (6) months of which is in the counseling of domestic violence victims and/or a minimum of 40 hours of training specific to meeting the needs of domestic violence victims is highly desirable.@

Suggested changes which meet needs of grant:

Typical Qualifying education and experience would be:

Two years of full time experience in a criminal justice or social services agency in a counseling position ***involving the provision of victim services and/or peer counseling, six (6) months of which must have included counseling domestic violence victims*** AND 60 semester units from a recognized college or university, including 18 units in social/behavioral science, criminal justice, psychology or related field;

OR

A Masters degree in counseling can substitute for the requisite experience.