VICTIM/WITNESS ADVOCATE

Statement of Duties

Primary responsibility for the provision of support services to victims and witnesses at the district court level of the justice system; provides administrative and clerical support to all prosecutorial efforts in the office and court.

Supervision

Works under the general direction of the Deputy City Attorney or designee, establishing own work plan and priorities in accordance with standard practices with substantial responsibility for determining the sequence and timing of action; only unusual cases are referred to the supervisor.

Incumbent has substantial independence in planning and organizing the work activities, must be self-motivated and is expected to solve through experienced judgment most problems of detail by adapting methods or interpreting instructions to resolve the particular problem.

No direct supervisory responsibility.

Job Environment

Work is performed under typical office and court room conditions, with regular interruptions from the general public and other city employees. Routinely works after normal working hours.

Operates a computer and general office equipment, such as calculator, copier, facsimile machine, and telephone.

Makes frequent contacts requiring perceptiveness with persons at all levels of the justice system and must possess the skills and abilities necessary to gain the confidence and trust of persons with whom they interact. Works closely with the prosecutor, police officers and victims/witnesses during all phases of the investigative and legal process.

Contacts are by phone, correspondence and in person, and require some persuasiveness and resourcefulness to influence the behavior of others.

Has access to a large amount of department-wide confidential information, including law suits and investigations.
Errors could result in delay and confusion and could have direct legal, monetary, and serious public relations repercussions for the city.
Essential Functions

The essential functions or duties listed below are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related or a logical assignment to the position.

The victim/witness advocate position performs the following duties, functions and responsibilities:

- Notify victims regarding bail conditions following the arraignment of defendants.
- Keep victims and witnesses regularly updated regarding their case.
- Educate victims/witnesses about court procedures and their roles in those procedures.
- Provide support to victims/witnesses throughout the legal process.
- Make referrals for the victims to appropriate agencies and professionals.
- Contact individuals who have requested police intervention in domestic disturbance situations not resulting in criminal charges to offer report referral information.
- Assist victims in obtaining restraining orders when requested or necessary.
- Advise victims in developing plans for their continued safety and support.
- Attend court hearings to keep victims and witnesses abreast as to the status of those phases of the legal process when the victim/witness is not present.
- Obtain victim input for the purpose of determining appropriate disposition for a case and provide victim input to prosecutors.
- Research restitution issues and advise the prosecutor of any restitution due to victim.
- Advocate for victims throughout the legal process.
- Maintain records as to the services provided to victims and witnesses.
- Monitor bail conditions of defendants when necessary and provide this information to victims.
- Make referrals for defendants to appropriate treatment agencies when no other referral agent is available.
- Attend court hearings with victim/witnesses as their advocate.
- Facilitate review of written statements by victims/witnesses prior to testifying.
- Advise victim/witnesses as to the various roles of the individuals in Court.
- Provide victim/witness services in juvenile cases.
- Provides general administrative support to the prosecution office.
- Drafts and prepares legal pleadings.
- Performs other similar or related work as required or as the situation dictates.
Recommended Minimum Qualifications

Education and Experience

Preferred qualifications include a 4-year college level education with demonstrated experience in court or social service agencies that interact with victims of crimes. Counseling experience strongly preferred.

Must possess a valid driver's license.

Knowledge, Ability and Skill

Knowledge of:

- Must possess a detailed understanding of both the adult and juvenile justice systems.
- Must possess an appropriate educational background and must have experience in dealing with the victims of crime.
- Extensive knowledge of the support systems available to victims in the State of New Hampshire.
- Thorough knowledge of office terminology, procedure and equipment.

Ability to:

- Maintain complete and total professional confidentiality with regard to their role and their access to confidential documents and situations.
- Use tact, discretion, initiative, and independent judgment within established guidelines.
- Organize work, set priorities, meet critical deadlines, and follow up on assignments with a minimum of direction.
- Apply logical thinking to solve problems or accomplish tasks and to understand, interpret, and communicate complicated policies, procedures, and protocols.

Skill in:

- Superior communication skills, orally and in writing and be able to deliver information in an easy to understand and professional manner.
- Must be able to successfully interact, both verbally and in writing, with a wide variety of individuals.
- Skilled in the planning, organizing and reviewing of cases in a timely manner to coordinate with arraignment and/or trial dates.
- Must possess sufficient computer skills to perform the documentary functions of the position.
Physical Requirements

Minimal physical effort generally required in performing duties under typical office conditions. Position requires the ability to operate a keyboard and standard office equipment at efficient speed. The employee is frequently required to use hands to finger, handle, or feel objects, tools, or controls; and reach with hand and arms. The employee is frequently required to sit and talk and hear. Specific vision requirements include close vision, distance vision, and the ability to adjust focus.

This job description does not constitute an employment agreement between the employer and employee, and is subject to change by the employer, as the needs of the employer and requirements of the job change.