

CITY OF BELLINGHAM

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: Victim Witness Advocate/Case Coordinator

E-PLAN

SG:10

DEPARTMENT: Legal

CS:N

FLSA:N

EEO4CODE:PR

JOB SUMMARY:

Coordinates and conducts initial assessment interviews with victims and witnesses of domestic violence and other cases referred by the Bellingham Police Department. Documents the reaction of the victim and the trauma and impact associated with the crime; prepares recommendation to aid prosecutors in determining the viability of prosecution; and familiarizes victims and witnesses with the legal process in an effort to clarify options and minimize anxiety. Provides victims with information about appropriate community resources for counseling, health and protective services, and Crime Victim's Compensation. Responsible for follow-up or continual contact with victims and witnesses as needed. Works closely with Bellingham Police Department, Prosecutor's Office, Municipal Court, and private or non-profit services related to domestic violence. Provides support for prosecutions in Municipal Court.

Screens and trains volunteer advocates to accompany victims to court.

SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP:

Reports to the City Attorney. Performs works independently under the guidance of state law and City and department policies, procedures, rules and regulations.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF THE JOB:

1. Provides assistance to victims of domestic violence with priority given to the safety of victims.
2. Makes or arranges direct contact with victims and witnesses of domestic violence and other crimes to provide support, referral, and comprehensive information regarding victim's rights, available options, community resources and the legal system. Maintains ongoing contact with victims and witnesses in order to provide information. Assists in making arrangements for their attendance at court hearings, and assists in their preparation as witnesses. Explains process of criminal prosecution to victims. Attends court as necessary.
3. Conducts victim assessment interviews to collect and analyze the information involving the immediate crime and any prior history of domestic violence. Effectively documents observations and recommendations for further reference, preparing and maintaining intake forms and activity logs. Makes recommendations that are reviewed and utilized by prosecutors when assessing the ability of victims and witnesses to assist in the prosecution.
4. Prepares correspondence and/or reports, tracks cases and uses a computer database to obtain, collect and evaluate information.

5. Engages in ongoing reading, research and professional networking to keep up with legal developments and available community resources pertinent to area of assignment.
6. Prepares subpoenas for trial, forwards subpoenas to police for service, notifies witnesses of change or cancellation of court date, prepares jury instructions and exhibits.
7. Screens and trains volunteer advocates to accompany victims to court.

ADDITIONAL WORK PERFORMED:

1. As assigned, serves as liaison with community organizations and other governmental agencies regarding domestic violence issues. Coordinates activities of the City Attorney's Office related to domestic violence identification and prevention and serves on committees to combat domestic violence within the community.
2. Facilitates the entry and rescission of no contact orders as appropriate, and the victim's access to the court. Makes recommendations to the court as appropriate.
3. Utilizes computer software, including word processing, spreadsheets, and databases to prepare letters, documents and graphics to revise drafts and charts into business quality formats; and to compose letters.
4. Performs filing and copying.
5. Performs other duties as assigned.

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS (Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities):

- Knowledge of investigatory and trial processes related to domestic violence and other criminal cases including interviewing and assessment, court rules and procedures.
- Knowledge of the dynamics of domestic violence and community protocols developed for domestic violence cases.
- Knowledge of safety and sensitivity concerns, precautions, practices and procedures applicable to assigned area.
- Knowledge of office procedures and practices.
- Ability to organize, prioritize and coordinate tasks in a multi-task environment to meet goals and objectives under varying deadlines.
- Ability to listen well, be attentive to detail, ask pertinent questions and think logically to obtain and provide necessary information and assist in the solution of problems.
- Ability to demonstrate appropriate initiative and use sound judgment in referring matters beyond the scope of knowledge and authority.
- Ability to communicate sensitive and graphically explicit information on abuse effectively, both orally and in writing, in clear, concise language appropriate for the purpose and parties addressed, including correspondence, reports, and verbal testimony.
- Ability to understand and respond sensitively to cultural differences.
- Ability to read, understand, learn, interpret and appropriately apply the laws, rules, regulations, policies, procedures and protocols pertinent to the field of assignment.
- Ability to use tact, discretion and courtesy to gain the cooperation of others and establish and maintain effective working relationships with co-workers, members of the legal community, community resource providers and others.

- Ability to respond effectively in crisis and emergency situations and to exert a calming influence on, reassure and advise individuals in crisis.
- Knowledge of and ability to use personal computers with word processing, spreadsheet and data base software, and standard office equipment. Keyboard approximately 40 wpm with accuracy. Compose a variety of correspondence using standard business English and format.
- Ability to apply independent judgment and carry work through to completion with minimal supervision and to work cooperatively as a member of a team.
- Willingness and ability to maintain confidentiality.
- Ability to instruct and direct other employees and volunteers in methods or procedures needed to carry out their jobs.
- Ability and willingness to demonstrate the Public Service Competencies of Service Orientation, Results Orientation, and Teamwork and Cooperation.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT:

Work is performed in office and courtroom settings in potentially volatile situations with clients who have undergone physical and emotional trauma. Potential exposure to verbal abuse and graphically explicit language about abuse.

EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS:

- Requires a BA/BS in social services or closely related field, one (1) year of experience in Social Work or related field providing direct services to victims of domestic violence, and two (2) years experience with computers and legal office procedures, OR any combination of education, training and experience that provides the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to perform the essential functions of the job.

PREPARED BY: Dawn Sturwold
1/98

REVIEWED BY: _____
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City Attorney

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7/00
Lorna Klemanski
12/00