



VICTIM/WITNESS PROGRAM SPECIALIST

DEFINITION

Under general supervision, provides assistance and support to victims and witnesses of crimes; positions are assigned to a specific function within the Victim Witness Program such as serving in a direct assistance/support capacity for crime victims and witnesses, or determining eligibility and coordinating the compensatory process for crime victims; serves as a liaison for, and coordinates services with, internal staff and external organizations; receives, reviews, and processes a variety of documents relevant to assigned area of responsibility; and performs related duties as assigned.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receives general supervision from assigned supervisory or management personnel. Exercises no direct supervision over staff.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

This is a fully qualified, journey-level classification which performs the full range of duties as assigned, requiring knowledge of the Victim Witness program and/or the California Victim Compensation Program, including policies, procedures, and/or operating details; incumbents work independently, and exercise judgment and initiative. Positions at this level receive only occasional instruction or assistance as new or unusual situations arise and are fully aware of the operating procedures and policies of the work unit.

This class is distinguished from the management level in that the latter has responsibility for managing and directing the program's daily operations, as well the assignment, supervision, and evaluation of the work of assigned staff.

EXAMPLES OF TYPICAL JOB FUNCTIONS (Illustrative Only)

- Receives, reviews, and processes a diverse range of documents relevant to specific case; documents include, but are not limited to, crime reports, medical reports, court records, and other documentation used to either determine the level of County or legal services needed to support the crime victim or witness, or to establish the victim's eligibility to receive compensation through the California Victim Compensation Program.
- Serves as a liaison to, and coordinates services with, internal staff and external agencies or organizations including, but not limited to, law enforcement, court systems, medical providers, community based organizations providing needed services, landlords, employers, and other entities.
- Prepares and maintains a variety of records, correspondence, and reports, impact statements, case records, program information, and related reports.
- Establishes and accurately maintains multiple case files, including regular updates and review of all communication and contacts with clients, court updates, and restitution follow-up.
- Performs various administrative duties such as receiving telephone calls, processing forms, entering data into specialized computer systems, and maintaining appropriate files and records.
- Incorporates information from relevant federal, state, and local laws, policies, and procedures to develop and practice timely, accurate filing management while maintaining a large caseload.

- Keeps supervisor apprised of activities, including current and anticipated issues.
- Establishes and maintains effective working relationships with community organizations, government and private agencies, and the general public.
- Attends regional training, conferences, hearings, workshops and meetings
- Performs related duties as assigned.

When Assigned to Victim/Witness Direct Support:

- Provides crisis intervention to victims and witnesses of crimes to assist in reducing trauma and facilitating adjustment; provides paraprofessional counseling on a short-term and follow-up basis, in the field or program office.
- Assists victims and witnesses in various processes of the criminal justice system such as providing support at crime scenes, ensuring property is returned, arranging interviews with sheriff and attorney staff, and accompanying clients to court hearings and trials as requested.
- Provides referrals to various support organizations and assists victims and witnesses in obtaining counseling, medical and dental care, protective services, psychiatric services, child care, food, shelter, clothing, and related services.
- Aids victims in obtaining compensation and restitution by assisting in completing required applications and claim forms and intervening for the victim with creditors and claim authorities.
- Explains court procedures and terms to clients in lay terms, notifies victims and witnesses of court appointments, arranges transportation, and follows up to ensure victims and witnesses appear.
- Notifies family members of deaths and works with members of the victim's primary support group to assist them in dealing with various aspects of the victim's experiences.
- Provides information to the public and makes educational presentations regarding the program and its services.

When Assigned to the California Victim Compensation Program:

- Interviews clients to assist in the preparation of victim compensation claims and ensures timely, accurate filing through automated case management systems.
- Determines client eligibility in accordance with state government program regulations for initial and/or ongoing assistance through the California Victim Compensation Program.
- Verifies client information for accuracy, completeness, and consistency; reviews law enforcement reports, medical reports, and other documentation submitted for accuracy, completeness, and compliance with program rules and regulations in order to substantiate client eligibility and losses; contacts employers and reviews documentation submitted regarding loss of wages.
- Completes forms and submits documentation with recommendations to the appropriate governmental agency for payment.
- Within established authority, processes and pays bills by conducting a review of the expense and any supporting documentation.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

- Operations and services provided within a comprehensive victim witness program.
- Applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulatory codes, ordinances, and procedures relevant to assigned areas of responsibility.
- Functions, processes, and terminology of the criminal justice system.
- Rules and regulations governing eligibility for the California Victim Compensation Program, as well as the determination of allowable payments.

- Methods and techniques of evaluating program eligibility.
- Basic medical terminology and common procedures and medications.
- Principles and techniques of effective interviewing.
- Principles and practices of case management.
- Community resources for services, including housing, social services, and behavioral health resources.
- Methods and techniques of reviewing and/or preparing documents for assigned cases.
- Business mathematics.
- Techniques for providing a high level of customer service by effectively dealing with the public, vendors, contractors, and County staff.
- The structure and content of the English language, including the meaning and spelling of words, rules of composition, and grammar.
- Modern equipment and communication tools used for business functions and program, project, and task coordination.
- Computers and software programs (e.g., Microsoft software packages) to conduct, compile, and/or generate documentation.

Ability to:

- Serve as an advocate for assigned clients with respect to needed services and court related processes.
- Provide paraprofessional crisis intervention, trauma reduction, and follow up counseling assistance to individuals who are victims of, or witnesses to, a crime.
- Effectively interview to elicit personal and financial information in the preparation of appropriate forms.
- Develop and maintain the confidence and cooperation of individuals from diverse circumstances and ethnic backgrounds.
- Interview crime victims/witnesses, which may involve graphic accounts of brutal crimes, assess their needs and refer clients to appropriate community agencies
- Determine victim eligibility and allowed payments pursuant to the California Victim Compensation Program.
- Work independently under stressful conditions while maintaining good judgment.
- Make fact based decisions when reviewing and evaluating applications for victim restitution.
- Learn, understand, interpret, apply, and communicate to clients all pertinent laws, codes, regulations, processes, policies and procedures, and standards relevant to work performed.
- Prepare clear and concise correspondence, reports, and other written material.
- Coordinate services with internal and external groups on behalf of victims and witnesses.
- Maintain confidentiality of all documents and records.
- Maintain professional ethics and personal boundaries.
- Perform accurate mathematical calculations.
- Review and evaluate data and information, weighing alternatives and determining the appropriate course of action
- Independently organize workload and set priorities in order to process claims in a timely manner, adhere to state processing guidelines, meet critical deadlines, and follow-up on assignments.
- Effectively use computer systems, software applications, and modern business equipment to perform a variety of work tasks.
- Communicate sensitively, clearly, and concisely; both orally and in writing, using appropriate English grammar and syntax.
- Use tact, initiative, prudence, and independent judgment within general policy, procedural, and legal guidelines.
- Establish, maintain, and foster positive and effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.

Education and Experience:

Any combination of the required experience, education, and training that would provide the essential knowledge, skills, and abilities is qualifying.

Equivalent to an associate degree from an accredited college or university with major coursework in psychology, sociology, criminal justice, or a closely related field, and one (1) year of experience directly related to the provision of services to victims, crisis intervention, peer counseling, or social work.

Licenses and Certifications:

- Possession of, or ability to obtain, a valid California Driver's License by time of appointment and a satisfactory driving record.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment, including a computer, and to operate a motor vehicle to visit various County and meeting sites; vision to read printed materials and a computer screen; and hearing and speech to communicate in person and over the telephone. Standing in and walking between work areas is frequently required. Finger dexterity is needed to access, enter, and retrieve data using a computer keyboard or calculator and to operate standard office equipment. Positions in this classification frequently bend, stoop, kneel, and reach to perform assigned duties, as well as push and pull drawers open and closed to retrieve and file information. Employees must possess the ability to lift, carry, push, and pull materials and objects up to 25 pounds with the use of proper equipment. Reasonable accommodations will be made for individuals on a case-by-case basis.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Employees work in an office environment with moderate noise levels, controlled temperature conditions, and no direct exposure to hazardous physical substances. Employees may interact with upset staff and/or public and private representatives in interpreting and enforcing departmental policies and procedures.

WORKING CONDITIONS

Must be willing to work after hours, weekends, and holidays as needed.