

VICTIM ADVOCATE LEAD

JOB PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

The Victim Advocate Lead is responsible for providing child victims with professional advocacy and support and covering administrative and mentoring work directly related to the lead role and responsibilities for the Victim Advocacy Units at the Children's Justice Center. Duties include initiating contact with victims and witnesses, providing assistance, information, comfort and support to victims through the judicial process.

The work involves knowledge of the criminal justice system and victim support systems within the community and necessitates close working relationships with other classification which are a part of the CJC team. These include Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, law enforcement, Child Protective Social workers, legal assistants and legal secretaries, and CJC response team members. This position requires sensitivity and interactive skills to advocate for victims who may be experiencing high levels of distress, anxiety, anger and other psychological responses related to their victimization and the judicial process. The incumbent is supervised by the CJC Executive Director. This position is currently represented by OPEIU Local 11.

Incumbents prioritize, assign, coordinate, monitor and evaluate the work of the volunteer advocates; provides mentoring assistance to volunteers; resolve minor work or complex case-related problems; and makes recommendations on behalf of the Victim Advocacy Unit at CJC. Works cooperatively with staff and partner entities, including CJC's response team members from: Legacy Salmon Creek Medical Center; Clark County Prosecutor's Office; Vancouver Police Department; Clark County Sheriff's Office; Children's Center; Juvenile Probation; and State of Washington DSHS Social Workers.

Responsibilities in this area include evaluating and formulating volunteer advocate recruitment plans; day-to-day program leadership; volunteer mentoring; volunteer orientation and case assignment, monitoring case progress across the CJC Advocacy Unit and meeting case deadlines; and assisting the Director with volunteer work evaluation and identifying training needs.

Guidelines are available in the form of codes, regulations, policies, procedures and instructions. However, incumbents may be confronted with situations in which they must use considerable judgment in interpreting or applying guidelines. Incumbents may also analyze and evaluate existing guidelines, procedures and policies, recommending appropriate changes.

In lead work, the incumbent performs specialized duties utilizing advanced expertise in advocacy service, advocacy unit data collection and reporting, and mentoring of volunteers. Participation at core cross-agency collaborative forums is required to ensure that victim services and the needs of victims are well represented and information from an advocacy perspective is essential to encourage the support, and linkages to services for victims involved in the justice system. Special projects may be assigned by the CJC Executive Director as the need arises.

The incumbent is expected to carry out the work independently, and exercise discretion and judgment in making daily decisions. Work is reviewed for timeliness, accuracy, thoroughness, sensitivity and compliance to rules, regulations, guidelines and departmental policy.

CLASSIFICATION DISTINCTIONS

This class is distinguished from the Victims Advocate classification by: the more extensive body of subject matter knowledge and experience necessary to perform the duties; the greater degree of independent judgment and action required; the incumbent is more involved in the technical aspects of specialized subject matter; the results of work performed have a greater impact on accomplishment of unit goals; and the level or classification of offense is higher.

Work is characterized by the substantial responsibility for initiating and prioritizing work within the Unit; establishing case tracking systems across the Unit; making sure guidelines and departmental policies are understood and complied with by volunteers; if compliance problems arise that is communicated to the CJC Director in a timely manner. Incumbent will convey areas of improvements needs for the advocacy program at-large to CJC Director to promote quality practices and maximize support for victim services.

KEY OR TYPICAL TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES - In addition to lead responsibilities, duties may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Serves as the advocate assigned to a collaborative crime response team, working with other members of the team to provide services and support for child crime victims and witnesses.
- Assesses needs of victims and determines needed referral to community resources such as counseling, health and support groups, provides information about justice system procedures and assists in explaining case process.
- Provides victim support and makes appropriate referrals to local services.
- Informs victims about the justice system and court proceedings; escorts victims to court and explains procedures and forms.
- Advocates for restitution for the victim; refers any restitution information to the Prosecuting Attorney's Office regarding victim's needs that become known.
- Makes presentations to community groups to educate and inform the public about the services to and rights of victims as assigned.
- Establishes and maintains working relationships with community, human and social service agencies to which victims may be referred and with other agencies in the criminal justice system.
- General case management duties, including the reviews new cases and distribution to other advocates in the Unit, including the volunteers in a thoughtful manner taking consideration ability, workload and work schedules.

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- Provides feedback and suggestions to other team members and volunteers regarding case methodologies, procedures and how to provide quality advocacy support for victims.
- Assesses a victim's needs for comfort and support and utilizes the wide range of comfort available, including ensuring a child's access to CJC's Facility Dog throughout the case and judicial process.
- Consults with, and provides information to assigned attorneys regarding the status of witnesses and court testimony.
- Represents the advocacy discipline and the needs of victims during cross-agency collaborative forums at CJC
- Recommends modifications to program objectives, policies, procedures and strategies to improve service quality.
- Maintains detailed case notes and files; works as a team with other advocates to prepare the annual report and other reports and statistics as may be needed.
- Perform related duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with major course work in justice, counseling, psychology, social sciences or a related field is desired.
- One to three years of experience as a Victim Advocate for clients involved in the justice system, preferably work experience with child victims.

Knowledge of: laws and regulations related to victim/witness' rights, the criminal justice system; Superior, District and Juvenile Courts procedures; local support and health services; principles and practices of victim advocacy services and accessing resources including crisis intervention services.

Ability to: articulate information to child crime victims and their families; help navigate the criminal justice system for a victim; schedule, work well with people from all walks of life; coordinate with cross-agencies; provide ongoing supportive services for crime victims; interpret and apply applicable policies, procedures, laws and regulations; assess people and situations accurately and adopt effective courses of action; prepare reports, maintain detailed records and make presentations; communicate clearly, both orally and in writing; establish and maintain effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.

Any combination of experience and training that would likely provide the required knowledge and abilities will be considered.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The Victim Advocate Lead typically works in an office environment. In addition; the position involves exposure to disagreement or controversy and situations involving conflict, anger, verbal abuse and potential for volatile and/or hostile behavior. Work is generally completed on a regularly scheduled basis, however, attendance at meetings or completion of overtime work outside of normal scheduled hours may be required. Extended periods of concentration and sedentary work are required. Work is subject to frequent interruptions and normal office noise.

Lifting of records and reports may be required, usually not in excess of 50 lbs. in the office setting. May be required to deliver items and operate County automobiles. May require travel to meetings on an as-needed basis and visiting various County locations. Office tasks require significant periods of time spent working at a personal computer. This position is at very low risk for exposure to blood products, human biohazards, laboratory chemicals, toxic materials, or environmental hazards.

Ability to regularly use office equipment including computers, telephones, calculators, copiers, and FAX machine is required. Work regularly requires sitting and speaking or hearing, frequently requires using hands to finger, handle or feel and repetitive motions and occasionally requires standing, walking, reaching with hands and arms and lifting. Work also requires close vision, distance vision, ability to adjust focus, depth perception and peripheral vision; vocal communication

Work is generally performed in a moderately noisy location (e.g. business office with typewriters and/or computer printers, light traffic.)

Office use: 06/2014