

# **HIDALGO COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**

## **ADVOCATE I**

### **GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

Coordinates support services and information to crime victims, and their families in compliance with the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure; Ensures that crime victims and/or their families are afforded the rights granted to victims by the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure. Prepares all needed information required for presentation of the victim's court case. Position requires a high level of confidentiality. Under the supervision of the Hidalgo County Criminal District Attorney's Office: Victims Unit Program Director.

### **EXAMPLES OF WORK PERFORMED**

Prepares victims for interviews with prosecutors and provides court accompaniment

Conducts assessment of victim and family needs and make appropriate referrals for on-site or off-site services to medical, mental health services, and community based victim services

Assists victims in applying for Crime Victims Compensation (CVC) and follows up with the CVC claims and procedures

Assists victims in registering for the VINE system (Victim Information Notification Every Day) in an effort to keep victim informed of the criminal justice process.

Provides crisis intervention and peer counseling as needed

Assists and explains to victims the Court Order Restitution process

Notifies victims of court proceedings and case dispositions as needed to include Indictment Notification and Restitution Hearings

Provides and explains Victims' Rights under Texas Code of Criminal Procedure Chapter 56

Assists victims with submitting Victim Impact Statements

Refer victim for post sentence services with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice

Assists victims with referrals for legal services and legal remedies available

Assists attorneys with case staffing; ensures all cases are assigned as necessary

Duties may require travel to and from different locations inside and outside the county

Performs related work as assigned

## **GENERAL QUALIFICATION GUIDELINES**

### **Experience and Education**

Bachelor's degree in psychology, social work, criminal justice or related field or

Five years experience in a social service agency, preferably dealing with victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, crimes against children, survivors of homicide victims, and other violent crime

Experience and ability to respond in a supportive way to people in crisis situations

Knowledge of domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse dynamics

Working knowledge of Texas laws pertaining to domestic violence and sexual assault, Texas Code of Criminal Procedure Chapter 56 & 42, as well as the justice system's response to these crimes

Familiarity with the network of social and legal services, resources and procedures available in Hidalgo County area

### **Certificates, Licenses, Registrations**

Registration, Certification, and Licensure Applicant must have a current valid Texas operator's driver's license

Must be able to be insured by the County's insurance carrier

### **Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities**

Adequate personal health, social maturity, and emotional stability to fulfill the functions of the position

Ability to maintain full confidentiality about victims and their families

Must follow strict rules regarding the gathering, decimating, and storage sensitive crime victims' documents, reports, and other information

Ability to read, analyze and interpret general business periodicals, professional journals, technical procedures, or government regulations

Ability to read, write and speak both English and Spanish

Ability to write generalized report

Excellent interviewing and counseling skills

Ability to plan and organize effectively

Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with other county employees and officials, representatives of victim/witness advocacy and assistance groups, court personnel, attorneys and the general public

Ability to effectively present information and respond to questions from groups, supervisors and the general public

Ability to maintain full confidentiality concerning victims and their families

Ability to respond with sensitivity and awareness to victims of crime

Experience preparing summary reports, chronologies, and analyses of medical records

### **Computer Skills**

Must have some personal computer knowledge

Ability to learn new computer software

Must be familiar with MS Windows products

Must have experience with word processing and general knowledge of personal computers

Computer proficiency in Microsoft Word, Excel and Publisher and be familiar with other MS Windows products and related software

Comfortable using newer technologies such as governmental apps and databases

### **THIS IS A SECURITY SENSITIVE POSITION**

Position requires gathering, disseminating and storing sensitive crime victim's documents and offense reports.

***BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION IS REQUIRED FOR THIS POSITION***

## **PHYSICAL DEMANDS:**

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job.

While performing the duties of this job, the employee is regularly required to talk or hear. The employee frequently is required to stand. The employee is occasionally required to walk; sit; use hands to find, handle, or feel objects, tools or controls; reach with hands and arms; climb or balance; stoop and kneel.

The employee must occasionally lift and/or move over 25 pounds. Specific vision abilities required by this job include close vision, depth perception, and the ability to adjust focus.

## **WORK ENVIRONMENT:**

The work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounter while performing the essential functions of this job.

The noise level in the work environment is usually moderate.

## **SAFETY REQUIREMENTS:**

Maintain physical conditions appropriate to the performance of assigned duties and responsibilities which may include the following:

- sitting for extended periods of time
- operating assigned equipment

Maintain mental capacity which permits:

- making sound decisions and using good judgment
- demonstrating intellectual capabilities

Effectively handle a work environment and conditions which involve:

- working closely with others
- working in a multi-task environment

Maintain effective audio-visual discrimination and perception needed for:

- making observations
- reading and writing
- operating assigned equipment
- communication with others

- required to follow the Hidalgo County Accident Prevention Plan and department's safety regulations

