



SUFFOLK COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE DISTRICT ATTORNEY KEVIN R. HAYDEN

JOB TITLE: Victim Witness Advocate in the Homicide Unit **DATE:** March 2024
REPORTS TO: Chief of Victim Witness Program, Chief of Homicide Unit, and Supervising VWA
COMPENSATION: \$55,500 annually or commensurate with experience

**PLEASE SUBMIT APPLICATION MATERIALS (RESUME AND COVER LETTER)
TO SCDAOVWAHIRING@MASS.GOV.**

POSITION PROFILE:

The primary goals of the Victim Witness Assistance Program are to: (1) assist victims in their recovery from victimization and restoring a sense of safety; (2) reduce the level of re-victimization associated with the aftermath of crime and participation in the criminal justice system; and (3) assist in the prosecution of criminal cases by ensuring that victims, witnesses, and families are afforded the rights and services mandated by the Massachusetts Victim Bill of Rights (M.G.L. Chapter 258B) and by providing support, information, and advocacy throughout the court process pursuant to office policy. Victim Witness Advocates (VWAs) are primarily responsible for the facilitation of crisis assessment and intervention, information and referrals, supportive counseling, and court advocacy services to victims, witnesses, and their families.

Victim Witness Advocates in the Homicide Unit work closely with prosecutors, investigators and detectives from Boston and the State Police, to assist the families and loved ones of homicide victims and the safety of civilian witnesses. They work with survivors, families, and witnesses of victims of homicides and violent crimes. Advocates are trained in crisis intervention, trauma and assist survivors beginning shortly after a homicide occurs, whether it is solved or unsolved. Advocates offer referrals, education, and resources to individuals looking to connect to social service agencies. They also provide emotional support and information about the criminal court process in the event of a criminal prosecution. VWAs must ensure victims receive the rights and services to which they are entitled under the Victim Bill of Rights.

Per SCDAO's vaccine mandate, as a condition of employment, successful applicants will be required to have received COVID-19 vaccination or an approved exemption as of their start date. Details on demonstrating compliance with this requirement will be provided to applicants selected for employment.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

- Orient and explain to victims, witnesses, and family members the court process and their rights.
- Court accompaniment for victims, witnesses, and family members
- Crisis intervention for victims, witnesses, and family members who are in need as a result of their victimization.
- Provide written and verbal notification to victims and witnesses regarding arrests, arraignments, pretrial conferences, motions, hearings, grand jury appearances, trials, defaults, dispositions, restitution hearings, sentencing, and post-conviction proceedings.
- Assess and evaluate victim needs and provide assistance with referrals to appropriate services, such as community resources (housing, education, job training programs), emergency financial assistance, witness protection and relocation; assistance with Victim Compensation applications; bail notification; and if applicable, arranging meetings, line-ups and housing interviews.
- Provide formal and informal education and training to criminal justice and community agencies regarding victim rights and victim witness services.
- Accompany prosecutors to community meetings and events to offer support and services to the communities who are most impacted by violence in Suffolk County.

OTHER DUTIES:

- Attend required training and other trainings relevant to Office functions.
- Attend required supervision and staff meetings regularly.
- Become familiar with and follow the provisions of the Office Personnel Policies.
- Become familiar and model conformance with the Massachusetts Rules of Professional Conduct.
- Exercise respectful and professional behavior and communication with the public, judicial and law enforcement personnel, and office staff.
- Complete work assignments in a timely, accurate and efficient manner.
- Other related duties as assigned.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE:

Required:

- Minimum of Bachelor's degree in victim services, criminal justice system, or related social service field.
- Minimum 1 year of prior experience as a victim witness advocate or equivalent experience.
- Experience in trauma, crisis intervention, case management, and safety planning.
- Excellent attention to detail and organizational skills.

- Ability to handle sensitive and confidential information.
- Strong desire to work in a collegial and team-focused environment.
- Outstanding interpersonal skills and workplace etiquette.
- Ability to work well in a high-pressure environment with multiple deadlines while maintaining a high level of quality.
- Capacity to handle stress and exposure to challenging, often graphic content.
- A sincere interest in the public sector, the work of the SCDAO, an overall understanding of the Criminal Justice System.
- Strong personal character, integrity, judgment, and maturity.
- A general knowledge of office practices and legal principles.
- Strong written and oral communication skills.

Preferred:

- 2-3 years of prior experience working as a victim advocate.
- Knowledge of, and interest in, working with homicide survivors or those affected by violent crime and community violence.
- Working knowledge of resources and providers in Suffolk County.
- Proficiency in a second language, preferably Haitian-Creole, Portuguese, Cape Verdean Creole, Cantonese or Mandarin Chinese, or Vietnamese.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS:

- Ability to lift boxes weighing 10-20 pounds.
- Ability to sit and stand for extended periods of time.

TRAVEL:

- Frequent travel to the Supreme Judicial Court, Appeals Court, and Superior Court, as well as occasional travel to other trial courts within Suffolk County and the Commonwealth required.
- Travel to homes and workplaces of victims and witnesses and their families, as well as to other community partners is required.

EEO STATEMENT:

The Suffolk County District Attorney's Office is an equal opportunity employer, and all qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability status, protected veteran status, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy and pregnancy-related conditions, or any other characteristic protected by law.

