

## **VICTIM ADVOCATE JOB DESCRIPTION**

### **GENERAL PURPOSE OF POSITION:**

The Hotchkiss, Cedaredge, and Paonia Police Departments are committed to supporting victims and witnesses of crime. All victims and witnesses will be treated with fairness, dignity, and respect. The Departments are also committed to developing, implementing, and continuing the Victim Assistance Program and its activities in conjunction with other components of the criminal justice system.

A “victim,” as defined by Section 24.4.1-302(5), C.R.S., means any natural person against whom any crime has been perpetrated or attempted.

A “crime” as defined by Section 24-4.1-302 (1) C.R.S. means any offense as defined by the statutes of the state of Colorado, whether committed by an adult or a juvenile.

The Victim Assistance Program is designed to assist individuals victimized by criminal activity. The program also extends its services to those who suffer trauma due to a sudden mishap or loss, including victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, homicide, survivors of fires, traffic fatalities, and families of *Sudden Infant Death Syndrome* and families/friends of suicide.

### **ESSENTIAL POSITION FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- To assist victims in obtaining services that will aid them in their recovery from trauma.
- To assist victims of crime situations, which shall also include the following:
  - Maintain contact with victims and their families to advise them of the progress in the investigation, and work to maintain and support deputy/investigator and victim/witness relationships as necessary.
  - Seek out available professional and community resources to assist victims and witnesses and coordinate these services.
  - Provide victims and their families with information about the criminal justice process to include referral to the Office of the District Attorney’s Victim Service Providers for criminal justice advocacy.
  - May be subject to call out to provide immediate assistance to victims of a crime.
- Provide training and educational opportunities to law enforcement personnel and non-sworn.
  - personnel who encounter victims and witnesses.
- Work with the District Attorney Victim/Witness office and other community resources.
- Develop, implement, and evaluate the program on an ongoing basis.
- Handle any correspondence as required, file reports, write grant applications, and file necessary quarterly reports associated with grants.
- Serve as a liaison with the Hotchkiss, Cedaredge, and Paonia Police Departments and the community.

- Provide community education, outreach, and support to civilians following critical incidents and support to officers when appropriate.
- Work cooperatively with subordinates, supervisors, the public, and other agencies, showing respect, compassion, and integrity.
- Perform similar and related duties as assigned (Records Clerk, Finance Clerk).

### **Call-out Requirements**

Officers at the scene of any of the above circumstances will initiate the Advocate call-out through Dispatch. Advocates receiving a call-out will respond to the scene within a reasonable time. Advocates must wear Victim Advocate identification to allow recognition by officers, hospital personnel, and victims. Advocates will meet with the requesting officer for a briefing to avoid interference with investigative efforts and coordinate on-scene activity. Advocates must act under the direction of and forward any questions to the officer in charge of the incident.

- **The on-call requirements of advocates are as follows:**
  - Respond to the scene within a reasonable time following an officer's request.
  - Do not report while under the influence of alcohol, narcotic drugs, or prescription or non-prescription drugs.
  - The advocate's responsibility is to the victim and to provide crisis intervention as trained under this directive.

### **MINIMUM VICTIM/WITNESS SERVICE PROVIDED:**

**Between victimization and preliminary investigation, the minimum levels of victim/witness services provided by the advocate will include the following:**

- Referral to resources for 24/7 on-call crisis intervention.
- Provision of referral information to victims needing counseling, medical attention, emergency financial assistance, or sheltering.
- Attempts will be made to provide appropriate assistance to a victim/witness who has been threatened or expresses credible, specific reasons for fearing intimidation or further victimization. If the Hotchkiss, Cedaredge, or Paonia Police Department becomes aware of the danger to a victim/witness, prompt and repeated attempts will be made to contact the victim. Should they reside in another jurisdiction, the Hotchkiss, Cedaredge, or Paonia Police Department shall contact the appropriate agency, inform them of the situation, and request reasonable precautions. Information shall be provided to individuals in jeopardy regarding restraining orders, shelters, criminal charges, and/or safety issues.
- Work with supervisors, the public, and other agencies in a cooperative atmosphere, showing respect and support.
- Perform other similar and related duties as assigned.

**Officers may involve the Victim Assistance Program in the following situations:**

- Death notification
- Sudden or unattended deaths, including SIDS, suicide, accidental death, or homicide.
- Robbery
- Domestic Violence
- Assaults which are not the result of mutual combatants
- Traffic accidents resulting in significant injuries or death.
- Natural or man-made disasters that impact persons by displacing them from their homes.
- Residential structural fires in which there is significant emotional impact.
- Burglaries where there has been significant monetary loss from the victim's perspective.
- Child abuse or sexual assault where the perpetrator is not a family member or where the perpetrator is a family member but not the primary caregiver.
- Sexual assault
- All crimes that fall under the Colorado Victim's Rights Act
- Any other crime where the victim's safety has been threatened, where the victim shows signs of fear, distress, and shock, or there appears to be a lack of support