



Victim Advocacy Programs

MCJ- related certificates and concentrations: Gender-based Violence Concentration

MCJ- related courses:

- CRJU/PUAD 5910 - Nature and Scope of Interpersonal Violence (3 credit hours)
- CRJU/PUAD 5920 - The Psychology of Interpersonal Violence (3 credit hours)
- CRJU/PUAD 5930 - Interpersonal Violence Law and Policy (3 credit hours)
- CRJU/PUAD 5940 - Interpersonal Violence Leadership, Advocacy, and Social Change (3 credit hours)

Recommended extracurricular activities and experiences: Alpha Phi Sigma Criminal Justice Honor Society, study abroad, other community involvement and equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) experiences such as a student association or club, volunteering in the community, or other experiences that expose you to communities and cultivate a service-minded perspective. Some agencies or nonprofits have volunteer victim advocate positions available to gain experience before seeking a paid position.

Internship: Many victim services organizations offer internships and many law enforcement agencies have victim services units, these would be ideal for victim advocate internship.

Duties and Responsibilities: The preferences of those affected by crime vary, some prefer to be called victims and others prefer to be called survivors. For the purpose of this brief, we primarily use the term “victim” to adhere to the MCJ concentration moniker.

Victim advocates often perform a variety of duties and depending on the organization or agency, advocacy may look like a “desk-job” or it may involve field work. For example, some organizations focus their advocacy on being available for victims as a resource for assisting in finding mental health services, family services, legal advisement or other. Some victim organizations provide these services directly. Others may provide financial support to victims who are unable to meet their basic needs due to being a victim of crime and an organization may provide food, temporary shelter, gas, rent/mortgage assistance, bus/airline tickets, or other necessities for a victim/survivor.

Other organizations may take a more out-of-office role in victim advocacy such as responding to crime scenes to support victims, transporting and supporting victims during court proceedings, to buy food, to a hotel or temporary dwelling, or other services.

Work Environment and Schedule: This may vary from standard 8am-5pm office hours to “on-call” hours during the day or night, and may be in-office or out-of-office.

Career Path/Promotion: The career path within non-profits is a varied one, but may involve beginning as a victim advocate and progressing to a more executive role or supervisor. A Master's degree will facilitate further advancement more quickly in many organizations or agencies, and will often replace years of experience in the requirements.

Additional opportunities for an MCJ degree: With a Master's degree there are other opportunities that may be of interest. With an MCJ teaching as an adjunct with a university is a possibility. Also, if one becomes an expert in their chosen field or subject within the criminal justice system, there may be opportunities for media contact, publication, and/or testifying before the legislature.

Education, Training and Certification: Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, Trauma-informed training is often useful.

Special Considerations: People may be drawn to victim advocacy because of their own victimization experiences. It's incredibly important to strongly consider one's own healing, health and self-care relative to providing support for victims. Being exposed to traumatic events on a daily basis, and being expected to provide support, is an incredibly important but taxing position. Please consider your own history and well-being, and ability to provide support to others if you are still healing from your victimization.

Skills and Competencies: listening, empathy, patience, needs assessment and action, interpersonal communication skills, trauma-informed practices.

Colorado Salary Averages:

Bottom 10%: \$41,708

Top 10%: \$77,281

Median: \$57,305

Median Salary in U.S. as of 2021: \$56,720