



DANE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY ISMAEL R. OZANNE



ISMAEL R. OZANNE
District Attorney

ANDREA B. RAYMOND
Deputy District Attorney
Adult Unit

WILLIAM L. BROWN
Deputy District Attorney
Adult Unit

ANDREW D. MILLER
Deputy District Attorney
Juvenile Unit

AMY E. BROWN
Director,
Victim/Witness Services

MARLYS K. HOWE
Deputy Director,
Victim/Witness Services

JULIE A. FOLEY
Deputy Director,
Victim/Witness Services
Crime Response Program

KELLY S. BREUNIG
Operations Manager

SUZANNE K. ZINKEL
Paralegal Manager

MELVIN S. JUETTE
Director,
Deferred Prosecution Program

AMANDA M. NEHMER
IT Systems Coordinator

TO: Supervisor Patrick Miles

FROM: Amy Brown, Director of Victim Witness Services

DATE: June 29, 2024

RE: 2024 RES-057 Authorizing the Reclassification of a 1.0 Victim Witness Case Manager to a 1.0 Bilingual (Spanish) Deputy Director of Victim Witness Services in the Dane County District Attorney's Office

Thank you for meeting on Thursday to discuss this important resolution currently before the Board of Supervisors. This memorandum is intended to summarize the significant issues we discussed.

- Both Dane County Employee Relations and this office believe the current staff-to-management ratio in the Victim Witness Unit requires an additional manager. Our attached current organizational structure shows one director and two deputy directors currently supervise 32 employees and 12 contractors.
- In 2015, we operated with an additional manager: three M12 managers and one M14 director. Due to growing caseloads, we requested a reclassification down of one M12 positions to a case manager.
- The 2020 COVID shutdown case backlog coupled with the new service mandates set forth in the constitutional amendment known as Marsy's Law changed our staffing needs at both the management and line-levels. This new reality required our unit to request and add additional line-level positions. Today, we have 8.8 additional line-level staff working in the Victim Witness Unit.
- Since 2021, the position for which we are requesting reclassification received acting class management pay to step in when a member of our management team was absent.
- Although our case managers remain very busy handling complex cases, case counts have decreased by approximately 1900 cases from their highest point in 2022. The unit is currently managing approximately 5700 cases, whereas in January 2022, the case count was approximately 7600.

6. This current reclassification request, if passed, would add a bilingual Spanish-speaking leader and supervisor to the Victim Witness Unit and to the management team in the District Attorney's Office. The advantages of moving forward with this new position and in this direction for the unit, the office and our community include:
 - a. This position would have the bicultural and bilingual skill sets to provide support and supervision to our bilingual staff in the unit through a Hispanic and Latino cultural lens which would ultimately enhance and grow our service delivery to this population. Staff in the unit have expressed to me a need to have culturally specific supervision that can review initiatives they have developed; and to offer feedback on project implementation and enhancement; and to advocate for broader support at a management level. Specific examples identified is the need for:
 - i. the development of MOUs with the Office of Immigration Affairs, participation in community immigration law clinics, and collaboration with private immigration attorneys for direct referral services;
 - ii. participation in informational community outreach throughout the county at targeted sites to educate Spanish speakers on the U.S. criminal justice system and their constitutional rights;
 - iii. updating, reviewing and signing off on translated forms and documents, and then to advocate for their incorporation into the District Attorney case management software program for implementation across the state; and
 - iv. case consultations with a bilingual/bicultural manager in order to receive supervision and support from someone with experience doing this unique work.
 - b. This new position would create both a promotional opportunity for bilingual and bicultural employees in the District Attorney's Office and in our community. Currently, the leadership opportunities for this historically marginalized population are few and far between in Dane County.
 - c. This new position would present the opportunity to elevate the unique issues Spanish-speaking crime victims and witnesses experience in Dane County by having a District Attorney's Office leader present for collaborative systems meetings, program development discussions, training and staff development planning, discussions about resource allocations, mass violence preparation planning, and general community outreach. Our already comprehensive services to Spanish speaking victims include bilingual Spanish-speaking staff at every stage of the criminal justice process including our 24/7 Crime Response Program. This high level of service delivery has created an atmosphere for Spanish speaking crime victims that has resulted in high engagement levels. We are proud of that and our bilingual staff are working

hard to address these unique issues and minimize systemic barriers across all Dane County systems and organizations; leadership is needed maintain and enhance our quality of service for the future.

- d. This is an unprecedented time for cuts in VOCA (Victim of Crime Act) federal funding for our non-profit organizations serving crime victims. These cuts in funding will require intentional and proactive macro-level service coordination, especially for those who are already marginalized and underserved such as Spanish-speaking crime victims in our community.
- e. Finally, this is an especially challenging time for Spanish-speaking immigrants who are trying to navigate a new life in our community. For those who are experiencing the impact of violent crime and/or human trafficking, barriers such as access to services should never be an additional challenge. I am hopeful this new leadership position will have a continued impact on reducing systemic trauma on this population.

In summary, this strategic decision is in line with the needs of our organization and the goals set forth in the District Attorney's Office Equity and Inclusion Plan; as well as those expressed by the Board and the Executive's Office. I believe, that leadership positions such as this are a critical and needed step in furthering our collective commitment to reforming our criminal justice system to better serve all Dane County residents. Based on all of these factors, I hope you will consider supporting this request.

Copy:

Supervisor Richelle Andrae
Supervisor Matthew Veldran
District Attorney Ismael Ozanne

Attachment:

Current VWU Organizational Structure