



VIOLENCE FREE
MINNESOTA



Differences Between Community-Based and System-Based Advocates

Community-Based Advocates	System-Based Advocates
Generally employed by independent, non-governmental, often non-profit agencies.	Employed by a criminal or juvenile justice agency, typically a prosecutor's office, but sometimes by a law enforcement, probation, or corrections department, or by a paroling authority or state Attorney General's office.
Provide free, voluntary services to victims as well as secondary victims (such as children), whether or not a crime has occurred or has been reported.	Provide statutorily mandated free, yet voluntary, services to primary and secondary victims of crime, when a crime is committed and reported to law enforcement.
Provide comprehensive services such as 24-hour crisis services, emergency shelter, assistance with finding employment, support groups, education, safety planning, civil, criminal, and legal assistance, etc.	Provide comprehensive services that include guidance through the court process, notification of victim rights, and connection to community resources to ensure essential and safety needs are addressed.
Do not have a time limit on provision of services. Can provide services over the duration of a lifetime.	Service provision can begin from the time a crime is committed and can continue for as long as a victim identifies need.
Have statutorily protected confidentiality privileges. The law protects both communications between the advocate and the victim, as well as victim records. The advocate cannot share victim information without a written release. MINN. STAT. 595.02	Are considered an arm of the prosecutor's office and held to the same ethical standard of disclosure. System-based advocates are obligated to turn over information that is considered exculpatory evidence; meaning any information that goes towards the defendant's innocence.
Goal is to empower the victim, assist the victim in achieving safety and promoting healing, improve the systems with which the victim interacts, educate the public, and advocate for the needs of all victims/survivors.	Goal is to provide access to and information regarding the criminal justice system for the purpose of empowering the victim, improve systems response to all crime victims, educate the public and criminal justice professionals, and deliver the rights of the victim.

Source: Lonsway, Dr. Kimberly A. "The Role of Victim Advocates." National Center for Women and Policing, Violence Against Women Office and Office of Justice Programs.

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