



## STORY COUNTY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

**Timothy C. Meals – County Attorney**

Story County Justice Center

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October 20, 2020

Story County Board of Supervisors  
Story County Administration Building  
900 Sixth Street  
Nevada, IA 50201

Dear Story County Board of Supervisors:

A Victim/Witness Coordinator position was approved for my office during our FY21 Budget Session. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and courts being closed down for several months, there was not an urgent need to fill this position. Now that courts have opened back up and trials are being held, I am requesting this additional FTE position.

A current employee has completed extensive training and has become a certified victim/witness coordinator through the State of Iowa and she will be moved to this position. That, in turn, will open up a FTE Legal Assistant II position which we will open up for recruitment as soon as feasibly possible.

Thank you for your consideration to this request.

Respectfully,

/s/ Timothy C. Meals  
Timothy C. Meals  
Story County Attorney

## Hiring Freeze Exemption Request

Position Title: Victim/Witness Coord      Date Submitted: October 6, 2020

Division/Department: Attorney      Preferred Start Date: October 26, 2020

Requestor: Attorney Tim Meals      Board Approval: \_\_\_\_\_

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What job function will this position serve?

Provide direct services to crime victims/witnesses, providing information, notification, and assistance to victims/witnesses regarding rights/benefits under the State Victims of Crime Act and Iowa Code 915, acting as a liaison between different stakeholder groups.

Why do you consider this position to be essential?

A VWC is the direct link to the victims in a case. Victims are the most vulnerable population we work with and should be provided an individual they can call and ask questions to, get guidance on the court process, and have a person who can be in the courtroom with them. A VWC helps answer any questions as a case progresses as well as being a support. Should the attorney's be unavailable to help, a VWC would be able to do what the attorneys cannot and help ensure victims are getting the assistance they need, when they need it.

What are the consequences if this position is not filled?

When victims are unable to reach a person, feel like they are not being heard by the legal process, or cannot get the help they need; it is common for the victims to stop working with the County Attorney's Office. The attorney is not always able to provide this service due to other demands regarding the case so the VWC provides that direct link. Without this position many victims will be left without a lifeline to help them know where they can go or what they can do throughout the process of a case.

Is it possible for the job responsibilities to be performed by other staff?

Currently I have two legal assistants and a part time temporary intern that are fulfilling many of the functions, but outside agencies that normally provide victims assistance in meetings, depositions, and trial are not available due to COVID-19 concerns. Due to having other duties to attend to, current staff cannot invest the amount of time necessary to provide the best services.

What are the funding sources for this position?

This position was approved for FY21 so funds are currently in our budget.

How will the department/office manage its work if this position is not authorized?

Attorneys who are assigned to these staff members will not get the appropriate level of support needed as they prepare for trials, depositions, meetings, hearings, etc.