DATE AGENCY DESCRIPTION UPDATED: December 3, 2014

NAME OF AGENCY: Victim Assistance Program

ADDRESS: 170 S 2nd Street, Suite C, Hamilton, MT 59840

MAILING ADDRESS: Same as above

CONTACT PERSON: Deb Eckheart  PHONE: (406) 363-4007

CONTACT EMAIL: deckheart@rc.mt.gov

AGENCY WEBSITE: N/A (We are part of the Ravalli County Sheriff’s Office: http://ravalli.us)

STUDENT PREFERENCE: BSW student  MSW student  Either BSW or MSW

A. BRIEF OVERVIEW OF AGENCY SETTING
The Victim Assistance Program is a sub-program of the Ravalli County Sheriff’s Office and this placement is in Hamilton, MT. (In the bigger picture, the Montana Office of Consumer Protection and Victim Services is a department of the Montana Department of Justice.) The role of the Victim Advocate is to serve as the liaison between the victim and the Ravalli County Attorney’s Office. The Victim Assistance Program is housed separately from the Sheriff’s Office, providing the victim a neutral space to meet. The practicum student will be sharing office space with the Ravalli County Victim Advocate.

B. DESCRIPTION OF CLIENT GROUP
Clients served are victims of violent crime in Ravalli County, including both adults and children. Priority services are for victims of domestic violence, intimate partner violence, stalking, child abuse, and child sexual abuse. Other cases may include assault, assault with a weapon, privacy in communication violations, protective order violations, or homicides.

C. LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES
The practicum student will learn how the criminal justice system works and gain an understanding for how each member of the coordinated community response team responds to victims of crime. The student has the opportunity to participate in Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings at our Children’s Advocacy Center where child victims and their non-offending family member are served while exploring allegations of the following crimes: child physical or sexual abuse, drug endangered children, or a child who has witnessed domestic violence. The student will have training opportunities to learn about and apply best practices for working with victims of domestic violence, intimate partner violence, child abuse, and child sexual abuse. The student will also have opportunities to participate in other meetings relevant to this work, such as the Legal Issues Committee through S.A.F.E.’s Community Coalition (our local domestic violence shelter).

D. EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS
Assist victims of violent crime with the following services:
* Attend court hearings on the victim’s behalf and notify victim of proceedings
* Assist victims in filing Orders of Protection, which may include court accompaniment
* Provide crisis counseling and interventions to victims of violent crime
* Help with writing Victim Impact Statements or file claims with the Crime Victim Compensation Program
* Outreach and education about the Victim Assistance Program in outlying areas within Ravalli County
* General case management and referrals to other resources or services in Ravalli County
* Maintain a tracking system of cases
* Maintain statistical data collection system