



VIRGINIA BEACH JUSTICE INITIATIVE

Volunteer Victim Advocacy Program

About the Volunteer Victim Advocate Program

One way we fulfill VBJI's mission to end human trafficking is by providing victims with the resources and hope they need to experience freedom and wholeness. In order to do that, we have a team of volunteer victim advocates who have completed intensive training, background checks, psychological evaluations, and panel interviews to prepare to work two-on-one with individuals who have experienced victimization and exploitation at the hands of human traffickers and others in the commercial sex industry. We launched our first advocacy training course in the summer of 2014. When we offer the course in Fall 2020, we will equip our tenth class of victim advocates. ***Will you be one of them?***

From Our Victim Services Director

Since we began our advocacy program in 2014, we have been able to empower our victim advocates to serve in a number of different ways. Currently, we have advocates who are walking in long-term relationships with clients, meeting short-term needs (like transportation requests), teaching classes in our local jails, and going on ride-alongs with law enforcement. The heart behind our advocacy program is to create a culture where we show up for the men and women we are serving. Many of them have never had consistent people in their lives. We are truly seeing the difference it makes for people who have experience trauma to know that someone will be there for them. I like to call it our "Culture of Persistence." Jesus left the 99 to go after the 1 who needed Him most. We continue to train advocates because we have found the need to be great. We are looking for those who will faithfully walk alongside our clients and encourage them to reclaim the broken areas of their lives. The bonus to all this is that we get to a part of the work that God is doing to bring justice in the darkest places in our community. —Joy Dudley



Joy Dudley

Victim Services Director
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Opportunities to engage as a volunteer victim advocate include:

Short-Term Advocacy

- Appointment accompaniment
- Running errands with or for survivors
- Supporting case managers w/short-term needs for multiple clients

Long-Term Advocacy

- Paired with another trained advocate to support one survivor
- Serve as the main point of contact for the survivor, with oversight and support from VBJI's case managers
- Connect with survivor in person at least twice/month, depending on where they are in their journey and their physical location

Jail Class Instruction

- Teaching a 1-day session or 10-week class
- Assisting or co-teaching the class, building relationships with participants



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Volunteer Victim Advocacy Training

About the Victim Advocacy Training Course

This class is designed for those who desire to work directly with people who are victims of human trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation. It is also available for those seeking professional development. We will prioritize space for those wishing to serve as victim advocates with VBJI.

Becoming a volunteer victim advocate requires a \$50 investment of money and a 40-hour investment of time for classroom-based advocacy training over a period of 4-6 weeks. By registering, you commit to attend and participate in all sessions. Training includes a combination of presentations from local experts and VBJI staff. Following completion of the class, you will also need to successfully complete a psychological evaluation, background check, and interview. To complete the process, volunteers invest an additional \$55 for the necessary background checks and clearances.

**** Our Spring 2021 Training will be Online Only ****

Spring 2021 Training

Location:

Online

Registration opens:

Monday, January 4

REGISTER

Cost:

\$100 (*Those planning on becoming volunteer advocates with VBJI will receive a \$50 discount.*)

Training starts:

Monday, April 12

Graduation night:

Monday, May 10

*COVID-19 Notes

Our Spring 2021 training will be online only. Participants should plan to attend all sessions virtually. We will be using the Zoom platform and most sessions will be hosted live. Participants are responsible for having devices that will support that platform and reliable internet access.

Frequently Asked Questions

1) What if I can't make every class? If you wish to be a volunteer advocate with us, we require that you attend all classes. However, if you are unable to commit to all of the classes now, then you can make up the class you missed.

2) What if I can't pay for the class right now? Our online registration form requires payment at the time of registration. It's ideal that these online tools be used to keep our registration in one place and keep our team focused on preparing for the training. If absolutely necessary, you can pay by check; but, if you plan to do this please email justice.vb@gmail.com as far in advance as possible to ensure we hold a place for you, as the Zoom sessions have attendee limits.

3) What does this class qualify me to do? Participation in the class will allow you to move to the next step as a volunteer victim advocate with VBJI. However, there are still a number of checks to be completed before becoming an advocate to include: completing our online forms, a criminal background check, child protective services registry check and a psychological examination.

4) What if I need to drop out of class before the class starts? Please contact justice.vb@gmail.com and advise us that you are not able to attend and whether you wish your enrollment fee to be a donation to the organization, whether you would like a refund, or whether you would like the fee to roll over to the next class so you can start later.

5) What is the time commitment to be an advocate with VBJI? We ask that those who decide to become advocates who work with our clients to commit to at least 4 hours a month. Many of our advocates have daytime jobs and serve on evenings and weekends. For example, a long-term advocate may meet with a client for two hours in the evening every other week. Consistency is important when working with victims of trauma, so we ask that potential advocates really examine their availability before making the commitment.