

Jurisdictional Class: Competitive
Adopted: September 15, 1988
Revised: August 20, 2010

VETERANS' COUNSELOR

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS: This is responsible administrative work for providing direct benefits counseling, assisting, and claims management which may include the preparation and filing of appeals to the Board of Veteran's Appeals, for veterans, active and reserve service members, and their dependents and survivors. The work also involves acquainting clients with their rights and assisting them with claims filing for veteran benefits on the Federal, State, and local levels requiring comprehensive knowledge of all veteran benefits and regulations. The work may be performed in other locations than the office of the agency and may include participation in evening meetings. Work is performed under the direction of the Director of Veterans' Service Agency with considerable leeway allowed for the use of independent judgment in individual cases according to established procedures and rules. Supervision may be exercised over a small number of clerical assistants. The incumbent has charge of the Veterans Agency in the absence of the Director. The incumbent does related work as required.

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES: (Illustrative only)

- Interviews and counsels all veterans and their dependents seeking information, advice, or assistance to determine eligibility for various benefits and evaluates the information and recommends a course of action or initiates applications;
- Assists veterans and dependents in the processing of claims, insurance due, held or conveyed back pay and allowances, and other related matters;
- Assists veterans and dependents in the proper preparation of applications and forms for benefits to which they may be entitled under local, state, and federal legislation, such as Agent Orange exposure claims, blind annuity, burial, grave marker, requests for service records, life insurance coverage and proceeds, education, on-the-job training, vocational rehabilitation, home loans, property tax exemption, service connected disability claims to include Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, medical care, non-service connected pension, benefits relative to employment, social security, and social services, discharge review claims, and nursing home benefits;
- Assists veterans in proper evaluation of military knowledge, education, and training in relation to civil occupations;
- Establishes and maintains a file of individual case histories as to the nature of each contact and services rendered;
- Advises veterans regarding local employment, training and educational opportunities;
- Contacts the federal Veterans' Administration and other public offices to follow up on pending claims;
- Prepares and files appeals to the Board of Veteran's Appeals;
- Maintains records for the preparation of statistical and other reports;
- Assists the Veterans' Service Director in researching and updating VA Regulations as they pertain to the county's Veterans' Program;
- Keeps abreast of current updates/changes in laws, regulations, medical practices, and medicines that pertain to veterans and military benefits.

FULL PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES & PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

Comprehensive knowledge of federal, state, and local laws pertaining to veterans' benefits;
Comprehensive knowledge of procedures for processing veterans' benefits claims;
Good knowledge of accepted interviewing and counseling techniques;
Good communication skills including the ability to meet and deal effectively with clients and the general public;
Ability to read, interpret, and apply complex written material;
Ability to use computer technology;
Sound judgment;
Interest in veterans' programs.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS: Candidates must be a United States Armed Services Veteran with an Honorable Discharge as a United States Services War Veteran as defined by New York State Military Law and possess either:

- (a) Graduation from a regionally accredited or New York State registered college or university with an Associate's Degree and three (3) years of experience in benefits counseling, human services, social work, or closely related field; or
- (b) Graduation from high school or possession of a high school equivalency diploma and five (5) years of experience outlined in (a) above; or
- (c) An equivalent combination of training and experience as defined by the limits of (a) and (b) above.

NOTE: Possession of a Bachelor's Degree in Counseling, Human Services, Social Work, or closely related field may be substituted for one (1) year of the above experience in (a); however, you must still possess two (2) years of the required experience.

NOTE: Your degree must have been awarded by a college or university accredited by a regional, national, or specialized agency recognized as an accrediting agency by the U.S. Department of Education/U.S. Secretary of Education. If your degree was awarded by an educational institution outside the United States and its territories, you must provide independent verification of equivalency. A list of acceptable companies who provide this service can be found on the Internet at <http://www.cs.ny.gov/jobseeker/degrees.cfm>. You must pay the required evaluation fee.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENT: Candidate must obtain accreditation by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs within eighteen (18) months of appointment and must retain Accreditation throughout employment.