

GRATIOT COUNTY

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER

General Summary

Under the direction of the Director, Gratiot County Department of Veterans Affairs, participates in the provision of assistance to veterans, their survivors and dependents in apply for various veterans benefits. Assesses, develops, and processes claims for benefits from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and the State of Michigan for veterans and their families. Assists with applications to the Veterans Burial Fund and the Veterans Relief Fund (aka Soldiers Relief Fund). Interviews and assists veterans and their dependents regarding benefits and other issues.

Essential Functions

1. Makes recommendations to, and implements policies and procedures to guide departmental operations and assist veterans and their dependents obtain benefits they are entitled to under various federal, state, and local laws and programs.
2. Regularly interviews and assists veterans, their survivors and dependents secure benefits under programs providing assistance to veterans such as service connected disability, non-service connected disability pension, survivors pension, life insurance, home loans, death benefits, education, vocational rehabilitation, discharge upgrades, job finding assistance and reemployment rights, medical/psychological benefits, to include advocating proper treatment and taking corrective action as necessary.
3. Regularly prepares claims and supporting documents, researches and assembles evidence and otherwise documents claims applications. Advises veterans on appeal procedures, grounds for appeal, and researches legal precedents, court decisions, medical evidence, and laws. Prepares and drafts appeals documents setting forth arguments for granting claims.
4. Assists with applications to the County Veterans Relief Fund (aka Soldiers Relief Fund). Includes interviewing candidates, developing and investigating evidence, making eligibility decision, and ensuring proper record keeping. Assists veterans and dependents by assisting with Emergency Food Vouchers.
5. Assists with applications to the County Veterans Burial Fund to provide an allowance for the burials of eligible wartime veterans and dependents and for installation of a federal grave marker.
6. Interviews veterans with medical, psychological and alcohol/drug problems and advises on the availability of treatment and hospitalization, makes referrals, and arranges admissions and transportation in emergency situations.

7. Stays abreast of services available through community agencies and refers veterans to those agencies as appropriate. Coordinates efforts with other human service agencies such as the Commission on Aging, Veterans Trust Fund, and Salvation Army and serves as liaison to such agencies.
8. As directed by Director, GCDVA, provides technical expertise on veterans benefits, legislation and related matters to the Board of Commissioners, Veterans Committee, and other groups.
9. Assists in drafting the department's budget, makes recommendations regarding expenditures, and performs other administrative functions as assigned by Director, GCDVA
10. Assists in maintaining a reference library of federal, state, and local veterans laws, codes, manuals, and judicial decisions.
11. Serves as Acting Director, GCDVA in the event that the Director, GCDVA position becomes vacant, or during extended absence (two weeks or more) of the Director.

Other Functions

12. Other duties as assigned by Director, GCDVA.

This list may not be inclusive of the total scope of job functions to be performed. Duties and responsibilities may be added, deleted, or modified at any time.

Employment Qualifications

Knowledge and Education: Professional level knowledge in a specialized field, equivalent to that which normally would be acquired by completing a regular four-year college program. A minimum of an Associates Degree is required, with strong speaking and writing skills in the English language, strong Research skills, and familiarity with medical terminology. A Bachelor's Degree is desired, an Associates Degree is required. Education requirements may be waived with two (2) years of prior experience as a Veterans Service Officer, or for Veterans with an Honorable Discharge and at least two (2) years of military service and one additional year of comparable work experience.

Work Experience: Experience that provides familiarity with researching, developing, documenting, and investigating disability claims. Prefer experience in an agency dealing with veterans issues (to include Honorable military service). Position requires one to three years of experience to master.

Contacts and Working Relationships: Job requires interpreting and translating complex federal and state laws and regulations; requires interpreting and translating facts and information; explaining situations and issues to veterans and their dependents and advising them of alternative or appropriate courses of action; and interviewing and developing information from others.

Technology Application: Requires a high degree of skill with word processing, occasional use of spreadsheet and presentation software; regular use of a scanner; some skill with financial analysis and statistical presentations. Position requires Remote Access to VA Computer Systems per MVAA grant requirements.

Supervisory Responsibilities: “Leader” relationship with Administrative Assistant. Supervises Administrative Assistant two days per week when the Director is not present. Makes recommendations to the Director, GCDVA as appropriate.

Job Impact: Professional competence has a substantial financial impact on clients.

Independence of Action: Works under administrative direction from the Director, GCDVA. Follows established policies, procedures, and practices in performing most duties and assignments, but has substantial discretion in selecting and determining alternative courses of action regarding submissions to the USDVA.

Job Complexity: Job requires the use of data and information which are typically a combination of factual and inferential elements. The VA standard of proof is “as likely as not,” hence, a VSO must be able to infer potential outcomes from the facts presented, then seek and research appropriate medical and scientific evidence, interpret the findings, and then creatively present those facts and evidence to the VA in a winsome manner. Needed data and information may require significant time and effort to obtain and organize. “There are major intangibles or uncertainties to be considered.”

Working Conditions: Typically works in office conditions but travels to various sites to attend meetings and perform other job functions. Exposure to individuals with various emotional/mental health problems.