

**SUGGESTED POSITION DESCRIPTION FOR A
COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER**

NECESSARY QUALIFICATIONS

(Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 197)

- Residence in the State of Minnesota.
- Citizenship in the United States.
- A veteran as defined in Minnesota Statutes, Section 197.447. "Veteran" means any person who has been separated under honorable conditions from any branch of the armed forces of the United States after having served on active duty for at least 181 consecutive days, or by reason of disability incurred while serving on active duty.

DESIREABLE QUALIFICATIONS

- Bachelor's degree (B.A.)
- One to two years related experience and/or training
- Or equivalent combination of education experience

CERTIFICATES AND LICENSES

- Must achieve and maintain certification as a County Veterans Service Officer according to Minnesota Statute Chapter 197.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES:

- I. **Assist veterans/dependents in applying for available federal benefits from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office(VARO), by initiating or reopening claims.**
 - A. Complete initial application, or reopen existing claims, for compensation (service-connected disabilities) or pension (non-service-connected disability).
 - B. Research medical conditions and obtain necessary medical records and statements from physicians to support the claim(s).
 - C. Obtain necessary financial information and corroborating information and documents from the veteran's military buddies, family members, or other sources.
 - D. File application for eligible veterans for education under the GI Bill, or for vocational rehabilitation.
 - E. Contact and assist survivors of a deceased veteran in obtaining death

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benefits such as burial in a national cemetery, burial allowances, government grave marker, government life insurance proceeds and survivor benefits.

- F. Advise and assist veterans on all phases of government life insurance.
- G. Assist a veteran, or the eligible survivor of a veteran, in obtaining
- H. Veterans Administration home loan benefits.
- I. Ensure that all timelines are met so the veteran does not lose any potential benefits.
- J. Enter all claims information on computer.
- K. Keep in contact VA Officials and the veteran' Power of Attorney (POA) concerning the status of individual claims.

II. Assist veterans/dependents in appealing denied claims to the local VA Regional Office(VARO), the local Decision Review Officers, or the Board of Veterans Appeals in Washington D.C.

- A. Assist veterans in obtaining medical, financial, or other information necessary for the appeal.
- B. Assist veterans in preparation for personal hearings at the VARO, to include accompanying them to the hearing, if necessary.
- C. Ensure that all timelines are met so the veteran does not lose any potential benefits.

III. Assist veterans in obtaining necessary inpatient and outpatient care from the VA Medical Centers(VAMCs) and Community Based Outreach Clinics(CBOCS).

- A. Do all required paperwork, and obtain all necessary records for the VAMCs or CBOCs to accept the veteran for care as an inpatient or outpatient.
- B. Work with the VAMCs or CBOCs to schedule necessary appointments for the veteran.
- C. Assist veteran in obtaining transportation to the VAMCs or CBOCs.
- D. Work with VA professional in obtaining public health services, home health care, or placement in local nursing homes or the Minnesota Veterans Homes.

IV. Assist veterans in applying for available state benefits from the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA), by initiating or reopening claims.

- A. Complete initial application, or reopen existing claims, for the following state benefits for veterans and their dependents:
 - i. Subsistence program for disabled veterans or surviving dependents.
 - ii. Dental program for veterans and dependents.

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- iii. Optical program for veterans and dependents.
 - iv. War Orphans Education program for the eligible surviving dependents of certain deceased veterans.
 - B. Appeal denied claims when appropriate.
 - C. Ensure that the veterans and dependents in the county are aware of these benefits.
- V. Assists military retirees and their dependents or survivors in obtaining their benefits from the Department of Defense(DOD).**
- A. Assist in applying for or troubleshooting military retiree benefits, or other problems that arise.
 - B. Advises retirees in medical insurance benefits or TRICARE, and helps in filing of those claims.
 - C. Helps retirees or their dependents with military I.D. Card applications.,
- VI. Assist veterans in claims and proceedings involving the military services.**
- A. Assist a veteran in applying for a correction of military records or an upgrade of character of separation from the service.
 - B. Investigate history of unit, through Department of Defense, to prove that Veteran was in a combat zone, or a specific battle, to qualify for a specific benefits.
- VII. Assists veterans in obtaining benefits or services from other agencies.**
- A. Advises veterans and their dependents on services from Social Security, Small Business Administration, and other agencies.
 - B. Works with the County Human Services Department to maximize ALL potential benefits.
 - C. Assists veterans in obtaining help from local hospitals, clinics, and nursing homes.
- VIII. Attends workshops, seminars, and conferences and confers with professionals in order to keep up to date on the latest changes in Federal and State laws and regulations.**
- A. Keeps current on legislative and legal actions of federal and state veterans

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benefits.

- B. Maintains annual certification by the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs(MDVA).
 - i. Obtains a minimum of seven(7) credits of training necessary for annual certification by MDVA.
 - ii. Takes and passes an annual test given by MDVA, which is necessary for certification.

IX. Assist members and dependents of the National Guard and Reserve Components in obtaining appropriate benefits and assistance.

- A. Provide information to deployed service members and their dependents about assistance programs during deployment and benefits upon return from active duty.
- B. Attend and speak at information meetings for service members and their families.
- C. Work with Family Assistance Centers in obtaining help for deployed service members families.
- D. Maintain an outreach booth at various local events, including the county fair, to show visibility in the community and increase public awareness.

X. Serves as the county's liaison to the veterans service organizations in the county.

- A. Appears regularly before the county veterans organizations to brief members on current information on veterans benefits.
- B. Speaks to other community organizations at their request.
- C. Provides information to county media about veterans benefits.

XI. Supervises the keeping of office records, including file generation, privacy provisions, and retention policy and standards.

- A. Maintains confidential records in accordance with all the requirements of the data privacy laws and HIPAA.
- B. Maintains record retention according to written policy for the county.

XII. Performs county-requested duties.

- A. Compiles reports for county and State regarding office activities.
- B. Prepares and operates within annual budget with Board approval.
- C. Orders supplies and services for the Veterans Service Office.
- D. Prepares application for the county veterans service office grant administered by MDVA.
- E. County Safety Officer/AWAIR duties, including ensuring proper training

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for all county employees, safety walk-thrus, and all applicable OSHA compliance tasks and reporting.

- F. Performs other duties as requested.

SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Directly supervises County Veterans Service Officer Assistant.
- Carries out supervisory responsibilities in accordance with the county's policies and applicable laws.
- Responsibilities include interviewing, hiring, and training employees; planning, assigning, and directing work; appraising performance; rewarding and disciplining employees; addressing complaints and resolving problems.

RELATIONSHIPS

- This position must maintain a proper working relationship with clients, many who have complex physical and mental health issues and come from diverse ethnic and economic backgrounds
- Employees of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs
- Other federal and state agencies working with veterans
- Other County Veterans Service Officers and their staff
- Other agencies and departments to include recorders office, judges, lawyers, doctors/nurses, hospitals, nursing homes, human services department, banks, local chapters and posts of the veterans organizations, referral agencies, Department of Defense and Military Service Departments, State employment offices, Public Health Offices, Funeral Homes, Police and Sheriff Offices, medical and legal professionals, and the general public.
- It is also necessary to maintain good relationships with the staff within the County.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

Extensive knowledge of:

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- Federal rules, regulations, and statutes of the VA and MDVA
- Case law of the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims
- Etiology and relationship of medical conditions
- Medical terminology, human anatomy, and physiology
- Social Security, Medicare, and all need-based federal and state programs

Skills:

- To read, analyze, and interpret common scientific and technical journals, financial reports, and legal documents
- To respond to common inquiries or, complaints from customers, regulatory agencies, or members of the business community
- To write speeches and articles for publication that conform to prescribed style and format
- To effectively present information to top management, public groups, or other groups
- To work with and apply mathematical concepts, such as fractions, percentages, ratios, and proportions, to practical situations.
- To define problems, collect data, establish facts, and draw valid conclusions.
- To interpret an extensive variety of technical instructions and deal with abstract and concrete variables.

Ability to:

- Understand, interpret, and apply federal laws and regulations
- Understand and interpret medical records and statements
- Prepare written statements on behalf of claimants
- Assist in preparation of oral presentations on behalf of claimants
- Express technical information in clear oral or written manner
- Counsel and advise distraught claimants, some whom are mentally ill and/or chemically dependent
- Possess the organizational skills to handle multiple complex claims simultaneously

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- Get along in a professional manner with clients, co-workers, and other personnel
- Use pc's for word processing, the VIMS database program, and other appropriate software
- Lift and carry up to ten pounds regularly, up to fifty pounds intermittently
- Push and pull five- high file drawers regularly.

PROBLEM SOLVING

An employee in this position:

- Is responsible for determining the best course of action for each veteran or dependent
- Since each claim is unique, individual judgment and strategy is necessary
- Must be able to inquire into, troubleshoot, and expedite claims when necessary
- Must be able to problem solve complex cases arbitrarily utilizing comprehensive knowledge of all pertinent rules, regulations, and statutes
- Must review each action or decision thoroughly to ensure that it was done correctly

FREEDOM TO ACT

An employee in this position is responsible for the performance of all aspects of this job. The freedom to act is limited only by the legal restraints of the benefits sought and the desires of the County Board (or their appointed representative). There is limited supervisory oversight and intervention.