

DIRECTOR OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS:

This is a managerial position responsible for the administration of the veterans service program for the County and directing the activities of the Office of Veterans Affairs. The work is performed under general administrative direction from the County Executive in conformance with local, state and federal laws, rules and regulations with wide latitude allowed in the administration of the overall program. Supervision is exercised over the work of clerical and professional employees.

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:

Typical work activities for incumbents in this title include those listed below in addition to those typical work activities performed by lower level titles in the series. They are indicative of the level and types of activities performed by incumbents in this title. It is not meant to be all inclusive and does not preclude a supervisor from assigning activities not listed which could reasonably be expected to be performed by an employee in this title.

1. Assists, advises and advocates for veterans, members of the armed services and their families and survivors concerning their rights and benefits, including matters pertaining to educational training, military law, employment and reemployment, health, medical and rehabilitation services and facilities, and the provisions of laws relating to veterans' rights and privileges;
2. Assists veterans and their dependents in the preparation of their entitled claims for disability, pension and death benefits;
3. Aids veterans in obtaining medical care, treatment and hospitalization for both service connected and non-service connected disability;
4. Establishes and maintains liaison with public and private agencies which provide benefits for veterans;
5. Provides veterans with vocational guidance and assists them in finding employment or establishing their own business;
6. Informs veterans of educational and loan benefits available under the GI Bill and other national, state and local legislation;
7. Counsels veterans on review and upgrade of discharges;
8. Supervises administrative functions of the office and prepares departmental budgets and reports;
9. Supervises county owned cemetery plots for veterans as well as burials therein;
10. Participates in community functions, service groups, school workshops, conferences given by the State and Federal authorities, and committee meetings as a representative of the County;
11. Maintains confidentiality of records and information pertaining to veterans and their families including psychological, social, medical, financial, and legal matters;
12. Stays abreast of current rights and benefits, and any changes in existing legislation or polices pertaining to veteran and dependent benefits.

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FULL PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

- Thorough knowledge of the federal, state and local laws pertaining to veterans and their families in order to advise them on their eligibility for benefits, to complete the paperwork for application for benefits and to assist them in the appeal of benefit denials;
- Thorough knowledge of various services available to veterans and their families in order to advise them of possible programs and services to which they may be entitled;
- Good knowledge of counseling techniques in order to assist veterans and their families with a variety of problems related to disability, death, economics and legal conditions, etc.;
- Good knowledge of administrative principles and practices such as budgeting, supervision, inventory and records management and retrieval in order to direct the operations of the department;
- Good knowledge of techniques used to interact effectively with individuals or community groups in order to work with a variety of federal, state and local agencies to promote the needs of veterans; and secure provision of services and to represent one's agency or program while maintaining good public relations;
- Ability to learn, interpret and explain changes in rules and regulations pertaining to benefit eligibility;
- Ability to understand and respond to people with diverse needs, perspectives, personalities, and levels of familiarity with agency operations;
- Ability to use good judgment to determine legitimacy of client claims/needs;
- Ability to prepare and maintain confidential information;
- Ability to communicate clearly and effectively with a wide variety of clientele in order to elicit information and explain services;
- Ability to plan and supervise the work of others;
- Ability to use computer software programs to retrieve records and prepare forms and reports;
- Personal characteristics necessary to perform the duties of the position;
- Physical condition commensurate with the demands of the position.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

Graduation from high school or possession of high school equivalency diploma and:

- EITHER: (A) Graduation from a regionally accredited or New York State recognized college or university with a Bachelor's degree;

- OR: (B) Completion of a minimum sixty (60) credit hours at a regionally accredited or New York State recognized college or university and two (2) years of work experience counseling, assisting, or advocating for veterans and their families;

- OR: (C) Four (4) years of work experience counseling, assisting, or advocating for veterans and their families;

- OR: (D) An equivalent combination of education, training and experience between the limits of (A), and (C) above.

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SPECIAL REQUIREMENT

New York State Executive Law, § 357

(a) Requires that a person appointed to this position must be a veteran as defined in New York State statute (i.e., ...resident of this state, who has served in the active military or naval service of the United States during a war in which the United States engaged and who has been released from such service otherwise than by dishonorable discharge, or who has been furloughed to the reserve).

(b) Any county or city director hired after the effective date of this statute shall take all steps necessary to be accredited as a veterans service organization (VSO) representative within eighteen months of such appointment. Accreditation shall mean the authority granted by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to assist veterans and their family members in the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for benefits pursuant to [section 5902 of Title 38 U.S.C .](#) and [section 14.628 of Title 38 Code of Federal Regulations](#) . Once an application for accreditation is approved by the General Counsel of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and the applicant is notified of this action, the director of the county or city veterans service agency shall file a copy of the accreditation certificate from the appropriate veterans service organization with the director of the division. Such accreditation shall be maintained during the duration of his or her status as a director of such county or city veterans service agency. The director of the division may determine that a satisfactory completion of a course of instruction on veterans' benefits approved by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and conducted by the division may fulfill the requirements of this subdivision.

(c) During the time a director is working toward accreditation pursuant to paragraphs (a) and (b) of this subdivision, such individual may provide services to veterans and their family members as defined in [section three hundred fifty-eight](#) of this article other than the preparation, presentation, and prosecution of claims for benefits under federal statutes and regulations.

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