

VETERANS' SERVICE OFFICER

35 HOURS PER WEEK

Position Purpose

The Veterans' Service Officer (VSO) works independently in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapters 115 and 471, Acts of 1972; as well as 108 CMR and Rules and Regulations of the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs. The VSO manages veterans' services for East Longmeadow, Hampden and Wales and performs administrative and social welfare work with perceptiveness and discretion by providing financial benefits, employment assistance, counseling and a variety of additional services to district veterans. The VSO is a confidential employee and is required to manage and protect highly sensitive information.

Supervision

Supervision Scope: Exercises considerable initiative and independent judgment in the planning, administration and execution of the district's services. Works independently in formulating decisions regarding policies, procedures, operations and department plans.

Supervision Received: Works under the administrative direction of The Eastern Hampden County Veterans' Service District Board, establishing short and long range plans and objectives and assuming responsibility for district results. Works according to established professional and district policies and procedures, standards, special directives, instructions and intent.

Supervision Given: None.

Job Environment

Administrative work is performed under typical office conditions; regular outreach work is conducted in the field with exposure to various weather conditions and the hazards associated with community outreach sites.

Operates an automobile, computer, telephone, and standard office machines.

Makes frequent contacts with veterans, the general public, and members of the veteran community, other district member town departments/boards/commissions as well as other professionals. Contacts are by phone, in person, and in writing and require discussing technical and administrative matters.

Has access to all district related confidential information including personal information about veterans.

Errors in either the technical application of Massachusetts General Laws or in the interpretation of related policies could have financial and/or legal implications.

Essential Functions

(The essential functions or duties listed below are intended only as illustrations of the various types of work that may be performed. The omission of specific statements of duties does not exclude them from the position if the work is similar, related or a logical assignment to the position.)

- Respond sensitively and constructively to citizen complaints; provide customer service with tact, courtesy, sensitivity and discretion in all dealings with internal and external customers.
- The VSO shall take all applications for M.G.L. c. 115 veterans' benefits and shall make initial determinations of eligibility; forward requests for authorization for reimbursement to the Department of Veterans' Services (DVS); pay benefits and prepare and submit monthly returns of veterans' benefits paid by the district member towns.

- Maintains a depository of military discharges and service records of veterans residing within the district member towns, makes copies and forwards copies, as appropriate. Except as provided by law, the VSO is obligated under M.G.L. c. 40, § 51 to safeguard and protect from unauthorized disclosure the names of any persons residing in the district member towns who receive veterans benefits under M.G.L. c. 115.
- The VSO shall prepare and submit documentation of veterans' and eligible dependents' burial expenses for partial reimbursement of funeral and burial or interment expenses from DVS.
- Provides outreach services by providing referrals and assistance to veterans and their dependents regarding available benefits and services, including G.I. Bill benefits under the various G.I. Bill iterations; educational assistance; home purchases; tax exemptions; pensions; reemployment rights; civil service; burials and hospitalizations. Establishes outreach programs that incorporate efforts to work with federal, state and local governmental bodies and agencies, as well as private entities, as needed, including accessing federal veterans benefits from the VA and employment assistance through Massachusetts Career Centers and the U.S. Department of Labor's workforce training programs.
- Conducts public information campaigns via social media, internet websites, print media, and other options to ensure that the eligible client population is aware of current laws and opportunities. The VSO should keep current with changes in the laws which affect veterans' benefits and services by attending professional development programs and by communicating with DVS.
- Keeps informed of all changes, additions or new interpretations of veterans benefits by attending educational seminars and meetings.
- Works with the U.S. Department of Defense, in cooperation with the families of lost and fallen veterans, to honor veterans lost in the line of duty and fallen veterans.
- Facilitates and attends monthly meetings of veterans' groups in each community and works with that group on veteran issues.
- Prepares and presents the annual departmental budget; prepares monthly and annual reports to include monthly activity reports.

Recommended Minimum Qualifications

Education, Training and Experience

Associates degree in administration, business or social work or equivalent experience. Demonstrated understanding of basic financial administration and organization practices. Must be a veteran pursuant to M.G.L. c. 4, § 7.

Special Requirements

A valid motor vehicle operator's license is required.

Knowledge, Ability and Skill

Knowledge: Expert knowledge of the statutes, bylaws, regulations, codes, policies and procedures relevant to the district's operation. Thorough knowledge and competence in Microsoft Word, Excel and social media platforms. Ability to compose and process correspondence and reports. Effective written and oral communication. Planning, leadership, management and organizational skills. High-functioning public relations and customer service skills.

Ability: Ability to establish goals and objectives for the district under the direction of the Board. Recognize and accomplish district-wide priorities and work cooperatively to support their accomplishment as part of the veterans' community. Establish goals and objectives for the office, meet deadlines and complete projects. Able to communicate

effectively and efficiently verbally and in writing at all times. Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with town and state officials, members of the veteran community and the general public. Ability to work cooperatively with citizen groups and ability to make impartial decisions.

Physical Requirements

(The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.)

Employee is regularly required to walk, stand, sit, talk and hear. Vision and hearing at or correctable to normal ranges.

(This job description does not constitute an employment agreement between the employer and employee and is subject to change by the employer as the needs of the employer and requirements of the job change.)