

STATE OF MONTANA

JOB DESCRIPTION

Montana state government is an equal opportunity employer. The State shall, upon request, provide reasonable accommodations to otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities.

Job Title: Veterans Service Officer **Position Numbers:** 00419, 00087, 00397, 00408, 00398, 00405, 00401, 00410, 00409, 00391, 00389, 00088, 00400, 00095, 00411, 00394, 00403, 00402, and 00393

Location: Statewide **Department:** Military Affairs **Division:** Veterans Affairs

Section: Veterans Services Program

Division Mission Statement: The Veterans Affairs is responsible for assisting all Montana veterans, surviving spouses, and dependents in preparing and filing claims for benefits with the federal Department of Veterans Affairs, the State of Montana, and any agency involved in veterans affairs. This includes obtaining copies of military service records upon request; coordinating with service officers of the chartered veterans' organizations both in and outside Montana; providing social service/employment liaisons; and facilitating federal, state, county, city and private organizational services for clientele. The Division operates and maintains the Montana state veterans cemetery program, and manages the burial services and records for these cemeteries.

Job Overview: This job description is in the VSO Career Advancement program. The Veterans Service Officer I is responsible for providing information and assistance for veterans and their eligible family members to obtain benefits through the federal Department of Veterans Affairs (VA); prepare, submit and monitor benefit claims products to the VA, perform case management of veterans' benefit claims processes, and advocate for the veteran/veteran family member clients throughout all associated processes. Other duties include administrative tasks of the veterans service office; including, but not limited to, maintaining office files, calculating and reporting statistics of the veterans served in the service office's outreach area of responsibility, and other duties as assigned. The VSO I is entry level and supports and reports to the supervising Veterans Service Officer II, co-located in the veteran's service office.

The non-supervisory Veterans Service Officer II is journey level and is the subject matter expert on VA case management, performing the same duties as VSO I with progressively responsible duties in conducting outreach, conducting quality assurance checks on own claims processing, represents the client in appeals hearings. Supports and reports to the supervising Veterans Service Officer II, co-located in the veteran's service office.

To qualify for advancement, the incumbent must demonstrate and proficiency in case management, claims processing among other responsibilities outlined in the VSO Career Advancement program and must retain required certification and accreditation.

Essential Functions (Major Duties or Responsibilities):

Case Management

95%

1. Within six months from hire date: Attain and maintain formal accreditation and certification status by pertinent, nationally recognized veteran's service organizations and the federal Department of Veterans Affairs, respectively. Formal and on-the-job training are provided.

2. Successfully produce veteran and veteran family member benefits claim products for submission to the federal VA for processing and subsequent determinations. Formal, legal relationships with clients allow continual follow-up services, as authorized and necessitated.
3. Effectively communicate with veterans, veteran family members and associated/authorized personnel in a frequently emotional and stressful environment.
4. Establish individual cases by conducting in-person and telephone interviews to build rapport, gather client information, and determine eligibility. Must become knowledgeable in the difference between Reserve, Active Forces, National Guard Forces and the claims qualifications for each category.
5. Researches and reviews medical records and prior claims to determine what qualifies and to make sound eligibility determinations.
6. Performs claim processing based on the type of claim, medical evidence, and other pertinent information and evidence gathered through the in-take/interview process.
7. Responsible for progressive expertise of various claim types: service connected disability, non-service connected pension, education, vocational rehabilitation, Dependency Indemnity Compensation (DIC), death pension, healthcare enrollment, discharge paperwork, debt management, dependency claims, apportionments.
8. Adheres to agency and federal rules and regulations in regard to claims processing timeliness from start to finish.
9. Provides effective caseload management which includes working directly with the federal Veterans Affairs to schedule client appointments, provide assistance and conduct after action follow-ups to ensure the client is served well,
10. Works with case workers and social workers to coordinate services for client, when necessary.
11. Coordinates with other resource services for client and family members to ensure they receive outside resource eligible program benefits.
12. Stays current on VA program training and software updates as provided by the Department.
13. Conducts outreach activities requiring travel within town and to surrounding towns to visit with veterans and family members, especially those who are house bound, require home care, or adult protective care.
14. Assists veterans receive grants associated with disability to purchase, make improvements or adaptations on home and auto.
15. Proficiently utilize computer, IT resources and associated software/applications/processes in the conduct of daily duties.
16. Coordinates and/or contributes to quarterly statistical reporting.
17. Conducts quality assurance checks on own claims processing.
18. Represents clients in appeal hearings.
19. Conducts self-study of medical and financial terminology, social services and treatment and fine tunes soft skills to maintain VSO subject matter expertise on the various claims and customer service.

All other duties as assigned

5%

Supervision

This position does not supervise others.

Physical and Environmental Demands:

Routine office and outreach services travel to specified communities of office coverage responsibility. Physical demands are those typically associated with an office environment. The environmental demands are predominately resultant of emotional contexts when dealing with clients who may be – in varying levels – emotionally compromised, e.g., angry, frustrated, confused, impatient, depressed and/or emotionally vulnerable.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

Knowledge: Research methods and techniques, accompanied by understanding of organizational goals, objectives, policies and procedures. Effective reading and writing skills; to include the ability to understand and competently accomplish technical writing, business English, spelling, grammar and punctuation. Computer, associated technology (scanners, copiers, etc.) and related applications (databases, spreadsheets, email, Internet browsers, protected databases). Experience with working in an office setting and utilizing personal computers. Must become extensively knowledge of VA law, regulations, obtained primarily through on the job training.

Skills: Independent research, interpret and analyze information, provide clear and concise explanations of issues and procedures to the general public and employees of other agencies. Ability to competently utilize computer, associated technology and related applications fundamental to successful duty accomplishment. Proficiently utilize computer, IT resources and associated software/applications/processes in the conduct of daily duties

Abilities: Effectively communicate both verbally and in writing; elicit information from clientele to determine potential eligibility for benefits as well as the client's details of military-service related experience and any associated conditions (mental/physical/emotional) resultant of said service; coordinate concurrent activities/referral processes with close attention to detail and accuracy; establish and maintain effective communication and working relationship with veterans and/or veteran family members, oftentimes under difficult conditions; capably make presentations and informational briefings to groups of various size and composition (e.g., general public, veterans service organizations, social services professionals, etc.), and be adept at working independently within program goals, procedures and objectives. Maintain confidentiality of clients and respect diversity of clientele and contacts. Must have demonstrated ability to work and engage in diverse working environments within and outside the Department.

Professionalism: Project a positive image of the agency to clients and others, establish and maintain productive working relationships with co-workers, other agencies, and members of the general public. Confidentiality of work effort/products and client interactions paramount, concurrent with absolute confidentiality and security of protected data bases with are routinely accessed. Working environment can be highly stressful, which necessitates the ability to engage in a positive manner and maintain composure with those in contact with. A positive working attitude is crucial, as are the abilities to maintain a mutually supportive, communicative relationship with supervisors and agency staff. Maintains self-awareness for a safe working environment and for safety of coworkers.

Organization and Accuracy: Organize and prioritize work effort and effectively follow verbal and written instructions; and perform work effort in accordance to the agency's policies and procedures, while maintaining requisite accreditation and certification necessary for conduct of duties. Strong attention to detail for accurate and timely claims processing.

Minimum Qualifications (Education and Experience):

Associates degree or equivalent in office management, medical terminology, law enforcement, business communication or social services, and/or military service. Working with clients and claims processing is helpful.

Alternative Qualifications: Other combinations of education and experience may be considered.

Special Requirements:

- Background check
- Valid driver's license
- Condition of employment: Incumbent must be able to attain (within six months from hire date) and