

## **VETERANS SPECIALIST**

**DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS:** This is specialized veteran advocacy and support work which involves counseling, guiding, and assisting members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and members of their families in obtaining the rights, benefits, and services to which they are entitled. An employee in this class may be referred to as a Veteran Service Officer (VSO). The work is performed under the general supervision of the Director, County Veteran's Service Agency and in accordance with specific policies and regulations. Work guidance (e.g. lead work) may be provided to others. Does related work as required.

### **TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:**

Conducts in-depth interviews with clients in person or over the telephone seeking information, advice or assistance regarding veterans' benefits and services, and assists clients with the preparation and processing of claims for government benefits;

Provides guidance and assistance to veterans in preparing applications for benefits and claims, procuring documents and obtaining insurance due, back pay, allowances and related benefits to which they may be entitled under state and federal legislation;

Counsels clients in order to evaluate their military knowledge, education and training in relation to civil occupations;

Reviews and evaluates eligibility requirements of veterans and family applications for veteran's benefits;

Establishes and maintains individual case histories;

Acts as liaison with local, New York State and federal agencies, veterans' organizations, community groups, etc. in order to exchange information and obtain services;

Maintains liaison with community and mental health agencies and other departments to coordinate services;

Advises veterans regarding local employment, vocational training and educational opportunities;

Maintains statistical records and prepares reports as required;

Obtains resources for the agency through grants, media contact, etc., in accordance with established guidelines and agency policy;

Assists the Director by performing assigned administrative duties, representing the agency at meetings and on committees, etc.;

Assists in the maintenance of agency files and records;

Keeps informed of new and revised laws and regulations, as required;

Provides input regarding the preparation of news and publicity releases;

Develops and maintains a variety of routine statistical reports;

May prepare routine correspondence and bulletins;

May accompany veterans to appeal hearings.

### **FULL PERFORMANCE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ABILITIES AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:**

Thorough knowledge of federal and state laws and regulations pertaining to veterans benefits; good knowledge of interviewing techniques; good knowledge of available benefits and services available to veterans; ability to arrange for services and carry through appropriate action in a variety of veteran service-related activities; ability to prepare applications for benefits and claims; ability to establish and maintain cooperative relations with others; ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing.

(over)

**MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:** A Bachelor's degree or higher and four (4) years of paid work experience that substantially involved counseling\* or advising individuals or assisting individuals in obtaining services.

\*Counseling involves interviewing individuals and/or families, discussing and evaluating their problems and/or needs (e.g., drug & alcohol abuse, family conflicts, disabilities) and developing and carrying out plans to resolve problems and/or accomplish goals. Those who perform counseling duties work directly with individuals and/or families on an on-going basis in order to assist them and monitor and evaluate their progress.

**NOTES:**

1. Additional years of the required experience may be substituted for the college degree on a year-for-year basis.
2. An honorably discharged veteran of the armed services may substitute their military service:
  - a) Active military as a Sergeant rank (E-5 or branch equivalent) or higher (or officer) may be substituted on a one-for-two basis for up to four (4) years of the required experience **or**
  - b) Active military service other than (a) above may be substituted on a one-for-one basis for up to four (4) years of the required experience.

**SPECIAL REQUIREMENT:** A candidate to this title must be a veteran as defined by the 38 U.S. Code § 101, section (2), (21), (22), (24) and (27). 38 U.S. Code § 101, section (2) defines a veteran as a person who served in the active military, naval, or air force, and who was discharged or released therefrom under honorable conditions (specified on DD214).

For purposes of appointment to this title, an individual must become accredited by a US Department of Veterans Affairs recognized Veterans Service Organization (which, for Rockland County, is the American Legion). The incumbent in the position must be eligible to gain membership (as defined in the Charter of the American Legion National Constitution and By-Laws § 21703) in order to qualify for and maintain VSO accreditation from the American Legion; must achieve such accreditation with one (1) year of appointment, remain a member in good standing, and otherwise meet qualifications in Federal 38 CFR § 14.629.