

Director of Veterans Services Tompkins County

Department: County Veterans Services Agency
Classification: Non-competitive
Labor Grade: Management Grade 86
Approved: 2018 Year-end Resolution
Revised: 1/7/19; 3/6/19
By: AG, Commissioner of Human Resources

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- (A) Graduation from a regionally accredited or New York State registered university with a Master's Degree AND at least two (2) years of full-time paid experience, or its part-time equivalent, which must have involved administering a human services program; counseling or social casework; financial, employment, or benefit claims processing; or significantly similar work*; OR
- (B) Graduation from a regionally accredited or New York State registered college or university with a Bachelor's Degree AND at least three (3) years of experience as described in (A) above; OR
- (C) Graduation from a regionally accredited or NYS registered two-year college with an Associate's Degree AND at least five (5) years of experience as described in (A) above; OR
- (D) Graduation from high school; or possession of a recognized high school equivalency diploma; AND at least seven (7) years of experience as described in (A) above.

NOTE:

Determination of relevancy, nature, and scope of experience is subject to the discretion of the Commissioner of Human Resources.

* **Preferred Qualifications:** It is highly desired that the experience described above shall have directly involved the provision of services to veterans.

MILITARY REQUIREMENTS:

New York State Executive, § 357 provides that any Director of a County Veterans Service Agency appointed after April 9, 1996 shall be a veteran as defined in New York State Statute.

1. Must have served on active duty in the armed forces during a period of war, (as required by Article 17 of the New York State Executive Law, Chapter 43 of the Laws of 1996); AND
2. Must have been honorably discharged or released under honorable circumstances.

NOTE: Candidates must produce a DD 214 substantiating that they meet these requirements at the time of application.

Tompkins County is Committed to Equity and Inclusion. We encourage those with similar values to apply.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

1. Must obtain accreditation by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs within one (1) year of appointment.
2. Must be a member in good standing of a major Veterans' Service Organization at the time of appointment, and must retain said membership in good standing during tenure of appointment.

3. Public Officers Law, § 3: This position is considered to be a public officer, and the incumbent must be a United States citizen and a resident of Tompkins County. Residency has been waived for recruitment but is required by law to maintain employment.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS:

The Director of Veterans Services is a department head position responsible for the planning, development, coordination, and direction of services, programs and activities offered through the County's Veterans Service Agency. The Director will act as a steward of the County, and have considerable interaction with internal and external stakeholders, and the public, in the coordination, promotion, and delivery of services. This specialized role involves counseling and assisting members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and their families concerning the rights, benefits and services to which they are entitled under law. The incumbent is appointed by the Tompkins County Administrator, and the work will be performed under the general direction of the County Administrator in conformance with local, state and federal laws, rules and regulations with wide latitude allowed in the administration of the overall program. Consultative assistance for the position is provided through contact with officials of New York State and Federal Veterans Agencies. The department consists of a single incumbent at this time, however, the Director may supervise assigned personnel in leading work groups or projects. The incumbent will perform all related work as required.

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES (Illustrative Only):

- Develops and implements a program consisting of counseling, outreach, informational programming and other services to veterans, servicemen/women, their dependents and survivors;
- 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, transportation, medical and rehabilitation services and facilities, and the provisions of laws relating to veterans' rights and privileges;
- Assists veterans and their dependents in the preparation of their entitled claims for disability, pension and death benefits;
- Counsels veterans on review and upgrade of discharges;
- Visits seriously disabled clients at their residence, hospital or nursing home when necessary to assist them;
- May accompany veterans to appeal hearings, when appropriate;
- Maintains confidential written or electronic records pertaining to veterans and their families including psychological, social, medical, financial, and legal matters;
- Cooperates with other County departments to assist veterans and dependents;
- Contacts other Veterans Service Agencies, officials of the US Department of Veterans Affairs, national Veterans Service Organizations and various other federal, state and local governmental agencies or individuals;
- Contacts private and public social service agencies in investigating claims and status of veteran clients;
- Advises and updates the County Administrator and Legislature regarding important veterans' related issues, events and information;
- Prepares required reports for the County Administrator, County Legislature, and NYS Division of Veterans Affairs;
- Prepares departmental budget and submits for Legislative approval;
- Interprets and explains current and new laws, regulations, rules, procedures and directives to staff, clients, veteran or civic organizations or others seeking such information;
- Prepares news releases for the dissemination of information relating to veterans' benefits, or other veterans related information;
- Appears on radio and television or before community groups to discuss issues concerning veterans and their benefits;
- Maintains liaison with governmental, private, fraternal, civic and veterans groups and agencies;
- Performs a variety of other responsible administrative duties.

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;
- High level of reasoning skills in dealing with many complex issues and ideas, including the ability to understand and interpret laws, legal opinions, court decisions, medical text, medical records and opinions, financial records and

- statements, procedural regulations, current events, military regulations and military records;
- Good knowledge of interviewing and 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 to promote the needs of veterans, to secure provision of services and to represent one's program while maintaining good public relations;
 - Familiarity with medical and psychiatric conditions associated with the veteran population and related resources;
 - 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 work effectively with representatives of Federal and State Veterans' agencies, veterans' organizations and the general public;
 - Ability to use good judgment to determine legitimacy of client claims/needs;
 - Ability to prepare and maintain confidential information;
 - Ability to express ideas clearly and effectively, both orally and in writing;
 - Ability to use computer software programs to retrieve records and prepare forms and reports;
 - Sound judgement, emotional maturity, resourcefulness, interest in veterans' programs, tact and initiative;
 - The employee's physical and mental condition shall be commensurate with the demands of the position, either with or without reasonable accommodation.

PHYSICAL, MENTAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEMANDS:

Physical:

In respect to the physical demands of this position, the job entails considerable visual effort and repetitive hand/finger movements associated with the execution of the tasks delegated with this role. The incumbent must be able to accurately manage and manipulate information, using computer software and hardware systems, with or without reasonable accommodations. Otherwise, the position requires only minimal physical effort which, for the most part, is performed while seated or standing at a desk, but can include some walking and/or handling light boxes or supplies. The employee must possess the knowledge and ability needed to utilize office equipment, including computer systems, inclusive of necessary software and operating systems, with or without reasonable accommodations. Operation of such machinery requires considerable precision, manual dexterity, knowledge and skill.

Mental:

The employee's ability to communicate (verbally and in writing) must be such that they are able to understand and carry out complex detailed instructions and/or share information to ensure adequate delivery of services. The employee may experience tight deadlines and frequent exposure to distressing human situations. As a result, considerable interpersonal skills are needed to advise and guide program participants on the best use of their benefits and/or to plan and coordinate inter-group cooperation when it comes to coordinating with third-party providers

Environmental:

There are minimal hazards or risks associated with the performance of this work. The work is performed indoors, in an office setting, in a temperature-controlled environment and the incumbent is not generally exposed to disagreeable working conditions.

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