

**TOMPKINS COUNTY CIVIL SERVICE
VACANCY
Inclusion Through Diversity**

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Tompkins County Department of Human Resources Office
125 E. Court Street
Ithaca, NY 14850
(607) 274-5526

Tompkins County is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer. Minorities and women are encouraged to apply

TITLE: Veterans Services Officer

SALARY: \$50,213.80 (hire rate); \$52,871.00 (work rate)

TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT: Full

ISSUE DATE: 01/21/25

THE FINAL DATE TO FILE APPLICATIONS: 03/03/25

DATE THAT THIS ANNOUNCEMENT SHOULD BE REMOVED FROM POSTING: 03/04/25

RESIDENCY WAIVED

There is one vacancy in the title of Veterans Services Officer located with the Tompkins County Department of Veterans Services. This is a 35-hours/week position dedicated to connecting those who served in the U.S. military to eligible benefits and activities on the local, state, and federal levels. Work hours include occasional evenings and weekends.

Applications will be reviewed upon receipt.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

1. Graduation from a regionally accredited college or university or one accredited by the New York State (NYS) Board of Regents with a bachelor's degree and one (1) year of experience in Veterans benefits counseling, human services, journalism, labor relations, or public relations, or significantly similar work*; OR
2. Completion of a minimum of sixty (60) credit hours at a regionally accredited college or university or one accredited by the NYS Board of Regents and three (3) years of experience in Veterans benefits counseling, human services, journalism, labor relations, or public relations, or significantly similar work*; OR
3. High School Diploma or possession of a GED and five (5) years of experience in Veterans benefits counseling, human services, journalism, labor relations, or public relations, or significantly similar work*.

NOTE: Time in military performing similar duties may be substituted for years of experience. 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 those who have served in the U.S. military.

MILITARY REQUIREMENTS: Must be honorably discharged from military active duty, other than for active duty for training purposes, or released under honorable circumstances. Candidates must submit a copy of their DD214 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:

Must meet, successfully, civil service examination requirements for this Competitive position.

Must obtain accreditation as a Veterans Service Officer by the Department of Veterans Affairs within one (1) year of appointment.

Must maintain accreditation for the duration of employment through ongoing training/meeting requirements.

Must be able to pass a background and fingerprint check.

Must be eligible for membership in a National Veterans Organization chartered by the United States Congress, or be a current member in good standing, and retain said membership and standing during appointment. (Verification Required)

Must be able to create, supervise, or facilitate peer-to-peer activities and programs for Military Veterans that combat isolation and promote connectedness with community.

Must possess a valid New York State Driver's License and demonstrate the ability to meet the transportation needs of the job at time of appointment.

Must be able to work occasional evenings and weekends. Advance notice will be given when such hours are necessary.

Preference in appointment may be given to residents of Tompkins County.

DISTINGUISHING FEATURES OF THE CLASS:

County Veterans Service Officers (VSO) are recognized under Federal law by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to provide legal representation for individuals in matters relating to VA law. By virtue of accreditation, the County VSO has access to a nationwide network of Accredited Representatives who can provide expanded assistance including before the Board of Veterans' Appeals in Washington, D.C. The work is carried out in accordance with well-established procedures under the authority of Article 17, Sections 357, 358, and 359 of the NYS Executive Law. 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. As such, the successful candidate must have excellent interpersonal and networking skills to deploy in serving the diverse clientele seeking service. Work involves responsibility for substantial operation of technology in the performance of difficult and responsible claims filing and performing record keeping associated with Veterans. The work is performed under the general supervision of the Director of the Veterans Services Department. Wide leeway, accompanied by strong accountability, is allowed for the exercise of independent judgment in scheduling and arranging details of work to accomplish assigned duties.

TYPICAL WORK ACTIVITIES:

- Maintains a program consisting of counseling, outreach, informational sessions and other services to Veterans, servicemembers, their dependents and survivors;
- Maintains education of most current laws, regulations, rules, procedures, and directives in order to assist, advise, and advocate for Veterans, members of the Armed Services, and their families and survivors concerning their rights and benefits, including matters pertaining to education, medical, employment, and more;
- Assists Veterans and their dependents in the preparation of their entitled claims for disability, pension, and death benefits; and in accessing eligible benefits and resources through the VA and other national, state, and local service agencies;
- Maintains confidential written or electronic records pertaining to Veterans and their families including psychological, social, medical, financial, and legal matters;
- Counsels Veterans on review and upgrade of discharges;
- Visits clients with serious disabilities at their residence, hospital, or nursing home when necessary to assist them with claims, counseling, or other services related to benefits or other needs;
- May accompany Veterans to appeal hearings, when appropriate;
- Assists the Director with reports, presentations, and liaison responsibilities to various personnel and government bodies, private, fraternal, civic and Veterans' groups;
- Dissemination of Veteran-related public information to media, Veterans groups, community groups, social media, and others in person or in written or video form and through outreach activities;
- 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 programs and services to which they may be entitled;
- High level of reasoning skills in dealing with many complex issues and ideas, and ability to work well in high-stress situations;
- Good knowledge of interviewing and counseling techniques;
- Ability to work with diverse staff and 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 express ideas clearly and effectively, both orally and in writing;
- Ability to use computer-related technology to retrieve records and prepare forms and reports;
- Ability to exercise sound judgement, emotional maturity, resourcefulness, tact, initiative and interest in Veterans' programs;
- Ability to be organized, dependable, and make sound autonomous decisions

PHYSICAL, MENTAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEMANDS:

Physical: Work 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, handling light boxes or supplies, and manually transporting equipment for outreach-related activities.

Mental: The employee may experience tight deadlines and frequent exposure to distressing human situations. As a result, considerable interpersonal skills are needed.

Environmental: The work is generally performed indoors, in an office setting, in a temperature-controlled environment. The incumbent is not generally exposed to disagreeable working conditions. Weather permitting, there will be attendance required at occasional outdoors events for outreach purposes.

Created 12/2022; Revised 08/2024

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FURTHER INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

Falsification of any part of the "Application for Employment" will result in disqualification.

Accepted candidates will be notified when and where to appear for the examination. If you do not receive your notice to appear at least three days before the date of the written examination, call Tompkins County Department of Human Resources at 274-5526. If an application is disapproved, due notice will be sent. This department does not make formal acknowledgment of the receipt of an application or take responsibility for non-delivery or postal delay.

Applicants must answer every question on the application form and make sure that the application is complete in all respects. Incomplete applications will be disapproved.

ACTIVE MILITARY PERSONNEL, VETERANS OR DISABLED VETERANS desiring to claim additional credit will request the Veterans Credits application form, at any time between the date of application for examination(s) and the date of the establishment of the resulting eligible list. You must meet the requirements set by NYS for these credits and they may be used only once. **YOU MAY NOT CLAIM ADDITIONAL CREDITS AFTER THE ELIGIBLE LIST HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED. IT IS THE CANDIDATE'S RESPONSIBILITY TO REQUEST THE VETERANS CREDIT APPLICATION FORMS AND TO SUBMIT THESE FORMS AND ANY SUPPORTING PAPERWORK BEFORE THE ELIGIBLE LIST IS ESTABLISHED.**

Tompkins County's written examinations are prepared and rated by the New York State Department of Civil Service in accordance with Section 23-2 of Civil Service Law. The provisions of the New York State Civil Service Rules and Regulations, which deal with the rating and review of the examinations apply.

The duration of the eligible lists may be fixed for a minimum of one and a maximum of four years and may be extended beyond four years if there has been a restriction against the filling of vacancies in that title.

The candidates must complete a separate "Application for Employment" for each open-competitive and/or promotional examination that the candidate is eligible to take.

All experience required meeting the acceptable training and experience is full-time experience. (Part-time experience will be credited on a prorated basis).

Appointment from an eligible list must be made from the top three candidates willing to accept the appointment.

Tompkins County is an Equal Opportunity Employer. As part of its efforts to provide employment opportunities to the physically handicapped, Tompkins County Civil Service has adopted a rule permitting the employment of qualified physically handicapped persons without competitive examination (pursuant to Section 55 of Civil Service Law). If you meet the minimum qualifications for this position and wish to know more about this rule, please contact the Tompkins County Department of Human Resources Office.

Unless otherwise notified, candidates are permitted to use quiet, hand-held, and solar or battery powered calculators. Devices with Typewriter Keyboards, Spell Checkers, Personal Digital Assistants, Address Books, Language Translators, Dictionaries or any similar devices are prohibited. You may not bring books or other reference materials.

CROSS-FILING - APPLYING FOR CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATIONS IN MULTIPLE JURISDICTIONS WHEN EXAMINATIONS ARE SCHEDULED ON THE SAME DATE: When applying for examinations across multiple jurisdictions - all of which are scheduled on the same day - you must submit a Tompkins County Cross-Filing Form. This form must be submitted no later than 4:30 PM on the final filing date of the examination. On this form, list each examination that you are taking and then tell us where you would like to sit. The purpose is to ensure that all of the test materials for the various examinations that you are taking will be available in one location. If you do not provide the cross-filing form to us by the final filing date, we cannot ensure that we can accommodate your desire to cross-file. If any of the examinations are State level examinations, you must sit at the State test center. You will still need to complete the Tompkins County cross-filing form. If sitting at the State site, the State will notify you of when and where to report for your examination(s) and you should bring all admittance letters to the State site. If you are not taking a State examination, bring all admittance letters to your chosen testing site. If you have any question please call Tompkins County Department of Human Resources Department (607) 274-5526. The Cross File form is located at <http://www.tompkins-co.org/personnel/CivilSrvForms/index.html>

FOR RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION AND HANDICAPPED PERSONS: If special arrangements for testing are required, please indicate this on your application.

ALL CANDIDATES FOR EMPLOYMENT FOR POSITIONS IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND BOCES GOVERNED BY TOMPKINS COUNTY CIVIL SERVICE MAY HAVE THE FOLLOWING SPECIAL REQUIREMENT. PER CHAPTER 180 OF THE LAWS OF 2000, AND BY REGULATIONS OF THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION, TO BE EMPLOYED IN A POSITION DESIGNATED BY A SCHOOL DISTRICT OR BOCES AS INVOLVING DIRECT CONTACT WITH STUDENTS, A CLEARANCE FOR EMPLOYMENT FROM THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT IS REQUIRED.

In conformance with Section 85-a of the Civil Service Law, children of firefighters and police officers killed in the line of duties shall be entitled to receive an additional ten points in a competitive examination for original appointment in the same municipality in which his or her parent has served. If you are qualified to participate in this examination and are a child of firefighter or police officer killed in the line of duties in this municipality, please inform this office of this matter when you submit your application for examination. A candidate claiming such credit has a minimum of two months from the application deadline to provide the necessary documentation to verify additional credit eligibility. However, no credit may be added after the eligible list has been established.

BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION: Applicants may be required to undergo a State and national criminal history background investigation, which will include a fingerprint check, to determine suitability for appointment. Failure to meet the standards for the background investigation may result in disqualification.

TOMPKINS COUNTY PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT, 125 EAST COURT STREET, ITHACA, NY 14850