

LIVINGSTON COUNTY JOB DESCRIPTION

VETERANS BENEFITS COUNSELOR II, III - RELIEF

Supervised By: Director of Veterans Affairs

Supervises: No supervisory responsibility

FLSA Status: Non-Exempt

Position Summary:

Under the supervision of the Director of Veterans Affairs is responsible for assisting veterans, dependents, and survivors with preparing relief for services and programs to obtain federal, state and local benefits. Assists with administration of the Veterans Fund and assists indigent veterans in securing benefits as warranted. The Veterans Benefits Counselor – Relief position has a career ladder within Livingston County's pay grade structure. Ideally, but not always, incumbents are hired at the level of Veterans Benefits Counselor II – Relief and progress to the next level based on certifications and the assumption of more complex duties at the discretion of the Director of Veterans Affairs.

Essential Job Functions:

An employee in this position may be called upon to do any or all of the following essential functions. These examples do not include all of the duties, which the employee may be expected to perform. To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential function satisfactorily.

1. Assists clients with reviewing and understanding veterans' programs and benefits. Assists veterans, dependents, and survivors with preparing and completing relief for benefits, services, and programs. Provides assistance to those who cannot come into the office by conducting visits where the client resides.
2. Performs case management by following up with clients, tracking circumstances and conditions, responding to questions and complaints and preparing related documents.
3. Researches military and medical history, obtains medical and military records, and reviews other documentation to assist veterans in applying for assistance and programs. Corresponds with appropriate agencies to secure affidavits, certificates and other required papers to properly submit necessary documentation for clients to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and other agencies.
4. Interviews clients, families, community partners and medical personnel, and prepares and files death benefits claims for veterans and their families.
5. Recommends and prepares applications for county burial and marker foundations for

posting and submits payments.

6. Follows up on denied death claims by reviewing decisions and assisting with appeals to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.
7. Assists the Director in administering the Veterans Relief Fund. Initiates or investigates benefit requests and maintains all related case files. Develops service plans for successful applicants.
8. Works with the court system to assist the courts in handling indigent veterans and post-sentencing treatment. Serves as liaison to the Veterans Court and assists in program development.
9. Researches changes in veteran laws, regulations, court decisions and U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs procedures, and implements appropriate changes and operations. Assists state and local governments in implementing and understanding changes in the law.
10. Attends annual training conferences needed to earn continuing education credits to obtain or maintain accreditation through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.
11. Assists the Director at committee meetings as needed by attending and providing the more specific information regarding benefit provision and presenting relief applications.
12. Attends community functions to inform the public of services and programs available.
13. Interacts with other human service providing agencies to provide expanded services for clients.
14. Assists clients in obtaining emergency medical treatment and provides related referrals.
15. Provides assistance at the reception desk.
16. Back up MUNIS data input for payables and claims as needed.
17. Assists with filing "intent to file" and basic claims processes.
18. Performs other duties as directed.

Required Knowledge, Skills, Abilities and Minimum Qualifications:

The requirements listed below are representative of the knowledge, skills, abilities and minimum qualifications necessary to perform the essential functions of the position. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the job.

Requirements include the following:

- **Veterans Benefits Counselor II – Relief:** Associate's Degree in sociology, psychology or a related field and one year of experience in benefits counseling.
- Successful completion of Training, Responsibility, Involvement and Preparation of Relief (T.R.I.P.) from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs within six months of hire.
- Successful completion of State of Michigan claims accreditation within one year.
- The County, at its discretion, may consider an alternative combination of formal education and work experience.
- Certified as a Notary Public within six months of hire.
- Michigan Vehicle Operator's License.
- Obtain HQS (housing quality standards) certification within the first year.
- Obtain HMIS (Homeless Management Information Systems) training within the first year.
- Maintain accurate records and report on clients' status.
- Act as a key-worker and cooperates with a multidisciplinary team.
- Skill in assembling and analyzing data, and preparing comprehensive and accurate reports.
- Ability to plan, coordinate, manage and implement support packages to help clients deal with difficulties and overcome dependencies.
- Knowledge of crisis intervention.
- Ability to actively listen and communicate.
- Ability to employ critical thinking and adapt as needed.
- Ability and knowledge to refer clients to community services to help them with specific needs.
- Knowledge and a basic understanding of medical terminology and principles of legal research.
- Skill in effectively communicating ideas and concepts orally and in writing.

- Ability to establish effective working relationships and use good judgment, initiative and resourcefulness when dealing with County employees, contractors to the County, representatives of other governmental units, professional contacts, elected officials, and the public.
- Ability to assess situations, solve problems, work effectively under stress, within deadlines, and in emergency situations.
- Skill in the use of office equipment and technology, including Microsoft Suite applications, County applications and federal databases.
- Ability to attend meetings scheduled at times other than normal business hours.
- Ability to conduct off-site indigent relief investigations and home checks.
- **Veterans Benefits Counselor III – Relief:** All the above qualifications as well as a Bachelor's Degree in sociology, psychology or related field and one year of experience in the position or three years of progressively more responsible relief experience.
- The County, at its discretion, may consider an alternative combination of formal education and work experience.
- Competency in filing basic VA claims.
- Thorough knowledge of the principles and practices of veterans' affairs, social work, counseling, and advocacy for veterans, dependents, and survivors.
- Considerable knowledge of local, state, and federal laws, rules and regulations as they relate to veteran benefits, services and programs, interpreting and applying veterans benefit programs, screening and assessment, conducting investigations, and researching veterans benefits operations.
- Director approval required for progression to Veterans Benefit Counselor III – Claims.

Physical Demands and Work Environment:

The physical demands and work environment characteristics described here are representative of those an employee encounters while performing the essential functions of the job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

While performing the duties of this job, the employee is regularly required to communicate in person and by telephone, read regular and small print, view and produce written and electronic documents, and enter data on a computer keyboard with repetitive keystrokes. The employee must be mobile in an office setting, stand, sit, stoop and kneel, use hands to finger, handle, or feel and reach with hands and arms. The employee must lift or push/pull objects of up to 15 lbs. without assistance. Accommodation will be made, as needed, for office employees required to

lift or move objects that exceed this weight.

The typical work environment of this job is a business office setting where the noise level is quiet and sometimes moderate but the employee must also periodically travel to other sites. The employee may be exposed to home situations in which unsanitary or unhygienic materials, individuals and situations are encountered in the course of performing required duties.