

**To:** Ms. Jennifer Palmbos  
**From:** Rick Labib-Wood, MGT Consulting Group  
**Date:** 01/10/2023  
**Re:** Job Description, Pay Grade Allocation, FLSA Recommendation

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This memo responds to your request for a classification review of the Veterans Benefit Counselor series in the Veterans Services Department.

## **1. VETERANS BENEFITS COUNSELOR SERIES**

- It is estimated that about 5% of the population of Livingston County has status as a Veteran of military service in one or more branches of the United States Uniform Services (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and/or National Guard). Livingston County Veterans Services Department plays a key role in serving the needs of this community. Direct services to most of the County's veterans are provided through the work of the Department's Veterans Benefits Counselor positions that traditionally have been organized into two distinct series: Relief and Claims.

The Department has proposed combining the two existing Counselor series (Claims and Relief) into a single series titled Veterans Benefits Counselor I, II, III as a more efficient organization of the work and more effective delivery of the full range of services to the target population.

In order to provide claims services (but not needed to provide relief services) to veterans, the Veterans Benefits Counselors have to successfully complete the "Training, Responsibility, Involvement and Preparation of Claims (T.R.I.P.)" program from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, be accredited through either National Association of County Veterans Service Officers (NACVSO) or Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency (MVAA), and receive clearance from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs achieved through issuance of its OSG. Such is the stringency of requirements to qualify to process claims that without successfully completing all of these certification hurdles, a Veterans Benefits Counselor cannot provide service to a veteran needing to initiate filing a claim or the processing of a previously filed claim.

The Department's proposed single-series job classification levels address this issue creatively and efficiently. The key differentiating features of the proposed levels is the minimum qualifying knowledge, skills, abilities, and required training and certifications stipulated at each level. The Veterans Benefits Counselor I is the entry level to the series and does not require the Federally-mandated qualifications needed to perform claims intake and claims processing. However, this first level of the series would over time be assigned and be able to perform a greater range of non-claims activities as incumbents develop skill and expertise in the program during the time that they are undergoing the training and certifications that meet all qualification requirement of the U.S. Veterans Administration to be allowed to perform the tasks unique to claims

processing that are restricted to the Veterans Benefits Counselor II and III levels. As incumbents acquire the required training and certifications plus the requisite experience, they become eligible to move up in the series such that it would be possible for all four of the positions to be at Counselor III level.

MGT reviewed the proposed duties and responsibilities to determine the classification and salary allocation of the job. The proposed series combines at the II level and the III level the previous separate classes designated as Relief and Claims. This does not increase the complexity and responsibility level of the work for incumbents and therefore the three proposed classifications remain appropriately allocated at their current pay levels as determined by the recent system-wide review. The advantage is that this structure provides incentive and career growth for incumbents who qualify for and are selected for the Veterans Benefits Counselor I and then with the successful completion of training and certification from the U.S. Veterans Administration are able to advance within their employment with the county and service to their target population.

The recommended grade allocation and placement is as follows:

- Veterans Benefits Counselor I at Grade 106. The minimum annual salary for this recommended grade is \$48,584 and the maximum is \$61,545.22.
- Veterans Benefits Counselor II at Grade 107. The minimum annual salary for this recommended grade is \$53,442.80 and the maximum is \$67,699.75.
- Veterans Benefits Counselor III at Grade 108. The minimum annual salary for this recommended grade is \$58,787.22 and the maximum is \$74,469.72.
- FLSA: MGT recommends this all three levels in this series be classified as Non-Exempt as they have no supervisory duties assigned.

Attached are the proposed new job series description for Veterans Benefits Counselors I, II, and III.

Thank you for this opportunity to be of service to Livingston County. This information serves as the starting point for final review and recommendation to the Personnel Committee and then to the full Board of Commissioners regarding the changes proposed for this job classification / position.

