

# LIVINGSTON COUNTY JOB DESCRIPTION

## VETERANS BENEFITS COUNSELOR I, II, III

**Supervised By:** Director of Veterans Affairs

**Supervises:** No supervisory responsibility

**Department:** Veterans

**FLSA Status:** Non-Exempt

### **Position Summary:**

Under the supervision of the Director of Veterans Affairs, this position is responsible for assisting veterans, dependents, and survivors with preparing claims for services and programs to obtain federal, state and local benefits. This position assists with administration of the Veterans Relief Fund and assists indigent veterans in securing benefits as warranted. The Veterans Benefits Counselor position has a career ladder within Livingston County's pay grade structure. ~~Ideally, but not always,~~Typically, incumbents are hired at the level of Veterans Benefits Counselor I and progress through the career ladder 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~~the Veterans Benefits Counselor Series may be called upon to do any or all of the following essential functions depending on their certification and experience level. 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 claims 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 claims for veterans and their families.

5. Follows up on denied claims by reviewing decisions and assisting with appeals to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Represents clients at hearings and assists supervisors of other agencies with appeals to military boards and courts.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. Attends annual training conferences needed to earn continuing education credits to obtain or maintain accreditation through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.
10. Assists the Director at committee meetings as needed by attending and providing specific information regarding benefit provision and presenting relief applications.
11. Attends community functions to inform the public of services and programs available.
12. Interacts with other human service providing agencies to provide expanded services for clients.
13. Recommends and prepares applications for county burial and marker foundations for posting and submitting payments.
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. Perform all other duties as assigned.

**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 I:**

- High school diploma or GED with supplementary vocational or college-level training in secretarial science, office management or similar instruction and four years of progressively more complex experience in providing clerical and administrative support.
- The County, at its discretion, may consider an alternative combination of formal education and work experience.
- Familiarity with military terminology and a basic understanding of medical terminology.
- Amenable to successfully completing Training, Responsibility, Involvement and Preparation of Claims (T.R.I.P.) training and state and/or national accreditation as soon as possible.
- Michigan Vehicle Operator's License.
- Skill in effectively communicating ideas and concepts orally and in writing.
- Maintain accurate records and report on clients' status.
- Act as a key worker and cooperate 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, communicate, employ critical thinking and adapt as needed.
- Ability and knowledge to refer clients to community services to help them with specific needs.
- 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 and events scheduled at times other than normal business hours.

- Ability to conduct off-site indigent relief investigations and home checks.

### **Veterans Benefits Counselor II:**

- All the above qualifications as well as an associate degree in sociology, psychology or a related field and one year of experience in benefits counseling or 3 years of claims processing.
- Obtains and maintains Veteran Service Officer accreditation by completing annual continuing education credits.
- The County, at its discretion, may consider an alternative combination of formal education and work experience.
- Certified as a Notary Public.
- Successful completion of Training, Responsibility, Involvement and Preparation of Claims (T.R.I.P.) from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Accredited through National Association of County Veterans Service Officers (NACVSO). Limited to three attempts. Must maintain required continuing education credits (annually).
- ~~Obtains and maintains Veteran Service Officer accreditation by completing annual continuing education credits.~~
- Thorough knowledge of the principles and practices of Veteran's 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 benefit operations.
- Director approval required for progression to Veterans Benefit Counselor II.

### **Veterans Benefits Counselor III:**

- All the above qualifications as well as an associate degree in sociology, psychology or related field or five years of progressively more responsible claims experience.
- Possesses and maintains qualifications for Veteran Service Officer (VSO) accreditation by completing annual continuing education credits.
- The County, at its discretion, may consider an alternative combination of formal education and work experience.

- Expert knowledge of veterans' claim-specific programs to include, but not limited to, Vetra Spec and VBMS.
- Assists the Director in developing and implementing plans and goals for the department.
- Provides comprehensive reports to the Director as needed.
- Provides claims coaching and mentoring at the discretion of the Director.
- Ability to nurture a team environment for other employees with an open communication culture.
- Ensures compliance with regulations and policies pertaining to veterans' claims.
- Ability to organize team members and lead by example and experience.
- Expert knowledge of veteran claim process that is shared with other employees.
- Director approval required for progression to Veterans Benefit Counselor III
- Assists clients with reviewing and understanding veteran programs and benefits.
- Assists veterans, dependents, and survivors with preparing and completing claims for benefits, services, and programs.
- Provides assistance to those who cannot come into the office by conducting visits where the client resides.
- Performs case management by following up with clients, tracking circumstances and conditions, responding to questions and complaints and preparing related documents.
- Review local, state, federal laws, rules, and regulations as they relate to veteran benefits, services and programs, interpreting and applying veterans benefit programs, screening
- ~~Obtains and maintains Veteran Service Officer accreditation by completing annual continuing education credits.~~

**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.

Close vision (clear vision at 20 inches or less) is also required.