

Barnes County Veterans Service Officer

Grade 9

NECESSARY QUALIFICATIONS

- Shall be a resident of the State of North Dakota.
- Shall be a citizen of the United States.
- Shall meet the qualifications as a veteran and have an honorable discharge/separation.
- Shall have an Associate's Degree in management and/or counseling and experience in claims processing or an equivalent combination of education and experience, and certification by the Veteran's Administration as a claims representative.
- Shall be an active member of County veteran's organizations.
- Shall satisfactorily pass a background investigation by a local law enforcement agency.
- This appointment will be in accordance with veteran's preference as provided in NDCC 37-19.1-02. Service connected disabled veterans shall be given special consideration.
- All county veterans' service officers must be accredited by the national association of county veterans' service officers NDDC 37-14-18.
- Veteran Service Officer must also be accredited by the NDDVA.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- I. **Assist veterans/dependents in applying for available federal benefits from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Office (VARO), by initiating or reopening claims.**
 - A. Complete initial application, or reopen existing claims, for compensation (service-connected disabilities) or pension (non-service-connected disability).
 - B. Research medical conditions and obtain necessary medical records and statements from physicians to support the claim(s).
 - C. Obtain necessary financial information and corroborating information and documents from the veteran's family members, military buddies, or other sources.
 - D. File application for eligible veterans for education under the GI Bill, or for vocational rehabilitation.
 - E. Contact and assist survivors of a deceased veteran in obtaining death benefits such as burial in a state or national cemetery, burial allowances, government grave marker, government life insurance proceeds and survivor benefits.
 - F. Advise and assist veterans on all phases of government life insurance.
 - G. Assist the veteran, or the eligible survivor of a veteran, in obtaining all benefits due them.
 - H. Assist the veteran in obtaining Veterans Administration home loan benefits.
 - I. Ensure that all timelines are met so the veteran does not lose any potential benefits.
 - J. Enter all claims information on the computer.
 - K. Keep in contact with VA Officials and the Power of Attorney (POA) concerning the status of individual claims.
- II. **Assist veterans/dependents in appealing denied claims to the local VA Regional Office (VARO), the local Decision Review Officer, or the Board of Veterans Appeals in Washington D.C.**

- A. Assist veterans in obtaining medical, financial, or other information necessary for the appeal.
- B. Assist veterans in preparation for personal hearings at the VARO, to include accompanying them to the hearing, if necessary.
- C. Ensure that all timelines are met so that the veteran does not lose any potential benefits.

III. Assist veterans in obtaining necessary inpatient and outpatient care from the VA Medical Centers (VAMC) and Community Based Outreach Clinics (CBOCs).

- A. Complete all required paperwork, and obtain all necessary records for the VAMCs or CBOCs to accept the veteran for care as an inpatient or outpatient.
- B. Work with the VAMCs or CBOCs to schedule necessary appointments for the veteran.
- C. Assist the veteran in obtaining transportation to the VAMCs and CBOCs.
- D. Work with VA professionals in obtaining public health services, home health care, or placement in local nursing homes or the North Dakota Veterans Home in Lisbon.

IV. Assist veterans in applying for available state benefits from the North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (NDDVA) by initiating or reopening claims.

- A. Complete initial application, or reopen existing claims, for the following state benefits for veterans and their dependents:
 - a. Grants (dental, optical, hearing, dental procedure)
 - b. Loans
 - c. Transportation
 - d. Special
- B. Appeal denied claims when appropriate.

V. Assists military retirees and their dependents or survivors in obtaining their benefits from the Department of Defense (DOD).

- A. Assist retirees in medical insurance benefits or TRICARE, and helps in filling of those claims.
- B. Assist in applying for or troubleshooting military retiree benefits, or other problems that arise.
- C. Helps retirees or their dependents with military I.D. Card applications.

VI. Assist veterans in claims and proceedings involving the military services.

- A. Investigate the history of unit through the Department of Defense (DOD) to prove that the veteran was in a combat zone or a specific battle to qualify for a specific benefit.
- B. Assist a veteran in applying for a correction of military records or an upgrade of character of separation from the service.

VII. Assists veterans in obtaining benefits or services from other agencies.

- A. Works with County Social Service agency to maximize all potential benefits.
- B. Assists veterans in obtaining help from local hospitals, clinics, and nursing homes.
- C. Advises veterans and their dependents on services from Social Security, Job Service, Vocational Rehabilitation, Small Business Administration (SBA), and other agencies.

VIII. Attends workshops, seminars, and conferences and confers with professionals in order to keep up to date on the latest changes in Federal and State Laws and regulations.

- A. Keeps current on legislative and legal actions of federal and state veteran's benefits.

- B. Maintain certification with the North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs and the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers.

IX. Assist members and dependents of the National Guard and Reserve Components in obtaining appropriate benefits and assistance.

- A. Provide information to deployed service members and their dependents about assistance programs during deployment and benefits upon their return from active duty.
- B. Work with Family Assistance Centers in obtaining help for deployed service member's families.
- C. Visit local National Guard Units and have high visibility in the County at various events.

X. Serve as the County's liaison to the veteran's organizations in the county.

- A. Appears regularly before the county veteran's organizations to brief members on current information on veteran's benefits.
- B. Speaks to other community organizations at their request.
- C. Provides information to county media about veteran's benefits.

XI. Keeps office records, including file generation, privacy provisions, and retention policy and standards.

- A. Maintains confidential records in accordance with all the requirements of the data privacy laws and HIPAA.
- B. Maintains record retention according to written policy for the county.

XII. Performs county-requested duties.

- A. Compiles reports for county and State regarding office activities.
- B. Prepares and operates within annual budget with Commissioners approval.
- C. Orders supplies and services for the Veterans Service Office.

RELATIONSHIPS

The Barnes County Veterans Service Officer must:

- Maintain a proper working relationship with clients, many of whom have complex physical and mental health issues.
- Develop a working relationship with employees of the United States Department of Veteran Affairs and the North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, as well as other federal and state agencies working with veterans.
- Develop and maintain a good working relationship with other County Veterans Service Officers and their staff.
- Develop and maintain good working relationships with other entities to include legal and medical professionals, financial institutions, local chapters and posts of the veterans' organizations, Department of Defense, State and local employment offices, Public Health Offices, funeral Homes, Police and Sheriff's Offices, and the general public.
- Develop and maintain good relationships with other staff within the County.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES

The Barnes County Veterans Service Officer must have extensive knowledge of:

- Federal rules, regulations, and statutes of the VA and NDDVA.
- Case law of the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.
- Etiology and relationships of medical conditions.
- Medical terminology, human anatomy, and physiology.
- Social Security, Medicare, and all needs-based federal and state programs.

The Barnes County Veterans Service Officer must have the skills to:

- Read, analyze, and interpret common scientific and technical journals, financial reports, and legal documents.
- Respond to common inquiries or complaints from customers, regulatory agencies, or members of the business community.
- Effectively present information to commissioners, public groups, or other groups.
- Define problems, collect data, establish facts, and draw valid conclusions.

The Barnes County Veterans Service Officer must have the ability to:

- Understand, interpret, and apply state and federal laws and regulations.
- Understand and interpret medical records and statements.
- Prepare written statements on behalf of claimants.
- Assist in preparation of oral presentations on behalf of claimants.
- Express technical information in clear oral or written manner.
- Counsel and advise distraught claimants, some whom are mentally ill and/or chemically dependent.
- Handle multiple complex claims simultaneously in an organized manner.
- Use a PC for word processing, the VETRSPEC and VIMS database program, and other appropriate software.

PROBLEM SOLVING

An employee in this position:

- Is responsible for determining the best course of action for each veteran or dependent. Since each claim is unique, individual judgment and strategy is necessary.
- Must be able to inquire into, troubleshoot, and expedite claims when necessary. Solving complex problem cases involves arbitrarily utilizing comprehensive knowledge of all pertinent rules, regulations, and statutes.
- Must review each action or decision thoroughly to ensure that everything was done correctly.

FREEDOM TO ACT

An employee in this position is responsible for the performance of all aspects of this job. The freedom to act is limited only by the legal restraints of the benefits sought and the desires of the County Commissioners (or their appointed representative). The Veteran's Service Officer works under the supervision of the County Commissioners. This position is also under the supervision of the North Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs in accordance with NDCC 37-14-18. There is limited supervisory oversight and intervention.

WORKING CONDITIONS AND PHYSICAL DEMANDS

This position normally performs required work in an office environment working Monday through Friday during normal office hours, although on occasion may be required to work other or additional hours. It requires the use of various types of filing systems, a computer, computer printer and other office equipment. It will require occasional light lifting, stretching, reaching, bending, kneeling and climbing short ladders. It requires occasional road travel using a county vehicle, therefore the employee is subjected to random drug testing as stated in appendix A of the Barnes County Employee Policy and Procedure manual.

OTHER ASSIGNMENTS

County Department heads and supervisors reserve the right to amend the functions assigned this position, whether temporarily or permanently, at any time as they determine in the best interest of their department. Further, employees may be assigned other or additional functions to fill-in during the absence of other employees or vacancies in other positions.

NOTE: The duties listed are not intended to be all-inclusive. Duties assigned any individual employee are at the discretion of the appointing authority.