

STATE OF OREGON – DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES  
HUMAN RESOURCE SERVICES DIVISION  
CLASS SPECIFICATION

<b>Title</b>	<b>Class Number</b>
<b>Veterans Service Officer Entry</b>	<b>0798</b>
<b>Veterans Service Officer</b>	<b>0799</b>

**SERIES CONCEPT**

The Veterans Service Officer provides counseling, technical assistance, represents and advocates for veterans of the United States Armed Forces, their dependents, and survivors in obtaining benefits to which they are entitled to under Federal, State or local laws.

Plans, prepares and presents cases of varying complexity; completes in-depth legal analysis and legal research and reviews case facts for legal sufficiency; obtains a power of attorney to present appeals on behalf of clients; reviews all testimony, exhibits, and arguments to be submitted at hearing before the Board of Veterans Appeals; prepares written summaries of findings and contentions; ensures that client understands application of law regarding their claim; advises client about procedural rights; advises client on preparation for hearings and examinations. Prepares written claims to the Board of Corrections of Military Records to the appropriate branch of the United States Armed Forces and Discharge Review Board for discharge upgrades and corrections of individual military records; refers clients to other resources as required.

The Veterans Service Officer considers a wide range of legal, medical, occupational and other factors to develop cases based upon complicated facts. The Veterans Service Officer acts as an advocate and represents veterans of the United States Armed Forces, their dependents, and survivors in the preparation, presentation and prosecution of claims under the laws administered by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA); represents claimants as federally authorized representative to file claims and actions on behalf of veterans, their survivors and dependents to ensure they receive the maximum entitlement of benefits.

Analyzes claims decisions made by the USDVA Rating Teams and acts as a negotiator with the USDVA Ratings Teams and/or the USDVA Decision Review Officers. Appears and presents oral arguments before USDVA Rating Boards in support of claims and re-consideration of cases; acts as an attorney-in-fact in advocating a claim and considers wide range of legal, medical, occupational and other factors. Reviews USDVA claim folders, correspondence and rating decisions.

Analyzes decisions issued by the USDVA for factual accuracy, legal consistency, and consistency with federal law for purposes of determining whether the decision, in whole or in part, should be appealed. Reviews and analyzes the case file to determine that a full and fair inquiry occurred and a fair decision was rendered by the Hearings Officer or Appellate Judge. Reviews and examines all or appropriate portions of the case record to respond to issues addressed on appeal.

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Prepares written appellate arguments, appeal documents, and orally argues cases; apply relevant state and federal law and precedent setting court decisions to plan case presentation.

Determines merit and status of claims; completes appropriate forms required to file and develop claims; ensures proper certification of documentation based upon the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) laws and regulations. Investigates circumstances upon which claims are based; develops information and/or evidence necessary for disability and other claims; identifies, locates, contacts, interviews and obtains affidavits and personal statements from military, medical and lay witnesses to substantiate claim; assists veterans in locating and obtaining documentation to support claims such as medical records, military service records, military unit activity reports; establishes medical aspects of a claim by evaluating medical reports, laboratory findings, medical opinions, medical journals and related medical research publications; monitors progress of claims and keeps client informed of the status of claims. Remains current on statutory and regulatory changes; responsible for knowing current court decisions and their precedent weight, researches legal problems; and maintains accurate case files.

Conducts interviews with veterans, their dependents and survivors to determine eligibility for benefits; evaluates applications for Veterans benefits interpreting and applying applicable federal and state laws, court orders, decisions by the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC), rulings, and regulations; reviews the record (medical reports, military records, appeal hearings transcripts, claims documents, witness statements, etc.) to determine the facts of the case; prepares, submits and presents claims for benefits including pension, service related disability compensation, non-service related disability compensation, rehabilitation, insurance and housing, education, vocational training, employment rights, hospitalization, outpatient medical and dental care, and social security benefits.

Provides information to veterans on the telephone, computer and by letter regarding benefits; makes public presentations to groups regarding veterans benefits as a subject matter expert; provides technical advice and status reports to County Veterans' Service Officers; responds to inquiries from the public, county, state and federal agencies, legal representatives, witnesses and other involved parties, such as State or Federal Legislators.

Interviews, counsels and represents veterans, their dependents, and survivors in state and federal institutions (including prison), nursing home/foster care homes, and shut-in veterans' homes. May provide crisis intervention involving medical, psychiatric, financial or other emergencies by making appropriate referrals to community providers.

Provides developed expertise in specific veterans benefits issues and trains County Veterans Services Officers; remains current on statutory and regulatory changes; responsible for knowing current court decisions and their precedent weight, researches legal problems; and maintains accurate case files.

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## **DISTINGUISHING FEATURES**

The **Veterans Service Officer Entry** is the entry and training level. The Veterans Service Officer Entry is given assignments appropriate for the degree of learning and understanding attained and assists the Veterans Service Officer with counseling, technical assistance, representation and advocacy for veterans, their dependents and survivors in obtaining benefits to which they are entitled to under Federal, State or local laws.

The limited nature of the assigned work and the on-the-job training and guidance distinguish this classification from the Veterans Service Officer. Upon completion of the training and meeting minimum qualifications of the Veterans Service Officer, employees will be placed in the Veterans Service Officer classification.

The **Veterans Service Officer** is the full professional level of the series. The Veterans Service Officer is responsible to provide counseling, technical assistance, representation and advocacy for veterans, their dependents and survivors in obtaining benefits to which they are entitled to under Federal, State or local laws. The Veterans Service Officer may provide instruction, guidance and technical advice to officers at the entry level.

## **MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS & SKILLS**

**Veterans Service Officer Entry:** Three years of experience interpreting and explaining programs, benefits or services; including interviewing individuals to obtain personal or technical information and processing claims to obtain benefits; **OR**

Three years experience preparing, developing and/or presenting cases before an administrative hearing or preparing written administrative decisions; **OR**

A Bachelor's degree in health or social sciences, Business Administration, Public Administration, Law, Education or a related field.

**NOTE:** Applicants must have the ability to obtain accreditation from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA).

**Veterans Service Officer:** Two years of experience in a local, state or federal government Veteran's program consulting with veterans providing technical assistance, representation, and advocacy, developing and/or presenting cases before an administrative hearing or preparing written administrative decisions; **AND**

A Bachelor's degree in health or social sciences, Business Administration, Public Administration, Law, Education or a related field. **OR**

Five years of experience in a local, state, or federal government Veterans' program consulting with veterans providing technical assistance, representation, and advocacy, developing and/or presenting cases before an administrative hearing or preparing written administrative decisions.

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**NOTE:** Applicants must have the ability to obtain accreditation from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (UUDVA).

**NOTE:** One year of experience as an accredited representative of the USDVA as a Veterans Service Officer, County Veterans Service Officer, National Veterans Service Officer may substitute for one year of the required experience.

**SKILL TO:**

Conduct and document sensitive fact-finding interviews of clients to obtain and exchange information, gather evidence, resolve problems and determine eligibility for various programs and services.

Define issues, analyze problems, evaluate alternatives and make appropriate recommendations to veterans, their dependents, and/or the USDVA.

Develop and process veteran benefit claims; analyze conflicting allegations, testimony, and documentary records; complete appropriate forms; locate and document medical records, military service records and other materials necessary to support a claim; establish medical aspects of a claim by evaluating medical reports, and medical opinions.

Analyze, interpret, and apply legal decisions, laws, rules, precedents, regulations, policies and procedures; perform legal research and investigation; Identify essential facts and issues and apply appropriate law; draft written arguments setting forth issues and analysis of a case, pleadings, memoranda and briefs.

Understand and apply federal and state case and statutory law and contested case procedures relating to Veterans benefits. Plan case presentation; prepare and process legal documents necessary to substantiate claims; prepare appeals and represent veterans and their family members at USDVA hearings; prepare written appellate arguments, appeal documents, and orally argue cases before the Board of Veterans Appeals.

Prepare clear, concise, well-organized and legally sufficient materials and arguments; communicate orally and in writing complicated legal and factual issues.

**DISTINGUISHING FEATURE FROM SIMILAR SERIES**

The Disability Analyst classification series differs from the Veterans Service Officer because the Disability Analyst class series makes judgments and findings of fact as to the nature and severity of physical and mental impairments and evaluates applications for Social Security disability benefits by applying social security laws, court orders, rulings, regulations and state laws and regulations in light of such judgments and findings of fact. Employees in the Veterans Service Officer classification evaluate applications for Veterans benefits and file claims on behalf of

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veterans and their dependents by applying United States Department of Veterans Affairs laws, court orders, rulings, regulations and state laws. The Veterans Service Officer also represents veterans by preparing, presenting and prosecuting veterans claims before the USDVA.

The Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist classification differs from the Veterans Service Officer because the Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist provides rehabilitation services and career and vocational counseling to eligible, severely vocationally handicapped individuals to return them to, or acquire gainful employment and self-sufficiency.

The Business and Employment Specialist classification series differs from the Veterans Service Officer because the Business and Employment Specialist helps applicants find work, takes information for employers' job openings and matches job seeker to job openings. The B&ES also processes unemployment insurance claims by reviewing applications and obtaining missing information to assist claimants in filing for benefits.