

# County of Berks

## POSITION DESCRIPTION FORM

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<b>Position Title</b>	<u>Director, Veterans Affairs</u>		
<b>Department</b>	<u>Veterans Affairs</u>	<b>Reports To (Title)</b>	<u>Chief Operations Officer</u>
<b>Effective Date</b>	<u>8/28/2006</u>	<b>Revision Date</b>	<u>11/02/2015</u>
<b>Wage Category:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Exempt</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Non-Exempt</b>	
<b>EEO-1 Category</b>	<u>Officials/Administrators</u>	<b>Union Classification</b>	<u>N/A</u>

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### POSITION SUMMARY:

This position serves as head of Berks County Department of Veteran Affairs Director and the incumbent employee is the County's Veterans Services Officer (CVSO). The employee provides capable staff (Benefits Assistants) to meet with Berks County veterans, their widows, dependents and orphans and provide assistance and coordination of information and programs for veterans.

The Director/CVSO through the Benefits Assistants advises veterans or family members about what types of disability compensation, education, home loan, health care, insurance, pension and burial benefits to which they may be entitled and performing investigations to determine their eligibility. Benefits Assistants also obtain or update records when asked by veterans or family members.

Responsibilities of the department include performing a variety of administrative tasks, but primarily in developing claims for benefits that are sent to the CVSO for review and release to the county, state and federal state decision authorities. The Director/CVSO is responsible for the administration of the department's services and for coordinating efforts with all federal, state and local agencies for the benefit of Berks County veterans.

The Director/CVSO provides leadership and assistance to staff as they assist veterans and family members. The Director/CVSO will act on behalf of claimants for benefits and services as an accredited service officer at the VA for all claims and will address the Decision Review Officers and Board of Veteran's Appeals, as necessary to advocate for a claimant/appellant. The Director/CVSO is not available to represent an appellant before the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Affairs. [The Director/CVSO may assist an attorney with the development of an appeal before the US Court, but once a client has taken on an attorney, Berks County must detach from the claim or appeal.]

This position will seek, establish and maintain all available resources essential to assisting veterans with their claims through government and private sector networking.

The Director is responsible for ensuring compliance with the provisions of United States Title 38 of the Code for Federal Regulations, the United States Codes Service, as well as Article 19 of the Pennsylvania County Code and all other relevant laws.

**POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES:**

***Essential Functions***

1. Coordinates with the Office of the Pennsylvania Deputy Adjutant General for Veteran Affairs (ODAGVA), the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense and federal, state and local agencies on behalf of Berks County veterans or their family members.
2. Directs staff and guides/assists them in researching solutions to a veteran's needs and developing claims for benefits, then reviews and authorizes release of claims to the VA's regional office (VARO) or the ODAGVA.
3. Oversees readiness and development of Notices of Disagreement and formal Appeals for claimants/appellants. Addresses Decision Review Officers or the Board of Veteran's Appeals, and/or the Military Discharge Review Board on behalf of veterans or their family members. Does not represent an appellant to the US Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims but may advise appellant and/or appellant's attorney.
4. Coordinates with Berks County veterans' organizations on various programs, parades, and special events. Incumbent may not hold any appointed or elected positions within any veterans group to avoid any perception of conflict of interest between private veterans' organizations and the County of Berks.
5. Establishes and maintains open communication with all veterans' organizations within Berks County by attending various meetings and events.
6. Travels to communities within the county to meet with civic groups, veterans and families regarding benefits.
7. Develops and implements new initiatives that affect or involve veterans, such as a volunteer program throughout the county.
8. Seeks to procure additional funding for veterans through grants from federal, state and charitable organizations.
9. Supervises the staff assigned to Berks County Department of Veteran Affairs, as well as volunteers to the organization.
10. Performs County administration duties such as payroll processing, staffing, department budget preparation, etc.

11. Sets performance expectations/standards, trains employees or arranges for training, reviews work and performance, guides employees and admonishes employees when appropriate.
12. The Deputy Director shall be prepared to assume leadership of the department during the Director's absence by managing the daily operations of the department to include coordination of work schedules, assignment of staff, troubleshooting problems and supporting internal County customers (IS, Budget, HR, etc).
13. The Director is responsible for development and coordination of department support to community relations events.
14. Provides a shuttle service for veterans without transportation to and from the Lebanon VA Medical Center.

### ***Non-Essential Functions***

1. Conduct presentations on benefits each week at the office and per community requests for citizens.
2. Provide a television show on veterans' benefits through Berks Community Television.
3. Provides an identification card incentive for veterans to file their discharges at the Recorder of Deeds in accordance with Pennsylvania law and procedure.
4. Present awards to veterans, students and community leaders.
5. Participate as member of the Lebanon VA Medical Center Advisory Council.
6. Participate as member to the Coatesville VA Medical Center Advisory Council.
7. Coordinate the nominations, selection and induction steps for the Berks County Military Hall of Fame.
8. Provides a museum of artifacts donated or loaned for display by veterans and community members to the department.
9. Serve as a member to the Southeastern Pennsylvania Veterans Center Advisory Council, when nominated by the Pennsylvania Association of County VA Directors and appointed by the Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
10. Serve as an officer or committee member of professional associations, when nominated and selected by our peers.
11. Serve on veterans-focused community committees, with support of County leadership and not before obtaining it.

12. Assist citizens with their military history research for awards and decorations, when time allows. Referral to the service branch heritage centers and other resources will be a first priority always, with assistance only provided when time may allow for it.

**MINIMUM EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE:**

1. Bachelor's degree in human services, Counseling and Guidance, Public Administration or related field from an accredited college or university. Demonstrated successful completion of the National Veterans Legal Services Program's basic services officer course or equivalent submitted for consideration is a plus.
2. A minimum of five (5) years of related human service, counseling and guidance or public administration experience, including supervisory experience.
3. Must be an Honorably Discharged veteran. Preferably a service-disabled veteran. Documented proof of honorable service in the armed forces of the United States of America is required.
4. Service officer accreditation through the Office of the Pennsylvania Deputy Adjutant General for Veteran Affairs and United States Department of Veteran Affairs is required within one year of employment. Service officer accreditation and even certification from any of the veterans' service organizations (VFW, Disabled American Veterans, American Legion, National Veterans Legal Services Program, etc.) is a plus.
5. Documented proof of related-education achievement and five (5) years of experience in counseling or human services support for persons living with physical, psychological and/or addictions-related disabilities.
6. Documented proof of related-education achievement and two (2) years of experience in accounting and reporting of household income, expenses and net worth for benefit claims that require a financial means test.
7. Required to successfully pass the verbal presentation of summary of benefits before the Chief Operations Officer and other County or selected leadership, as available.

**MINIMUM KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:**

1. Applied knowledge of federal, state and local laws, rules, and regulations governing veteran's services, benefits and assistance.
2. The ability to interpret medical data and legal terminology and communication and interpersonal skills is necessary for the position.

3. The ability to interpret household financial data (income, expense and net worth) to be applied in financial means tests is necessary for the position.
4. Because much work involves computers, demonstrated competence with the basic operation of a computer, Microsoft Office suite of software, data entry and the ability to learn new software programs is necessary to the work of veteran benefits assistants.
5. Excellent customer service skills, as well as a strong desire to assist military service members, military veterans and the family members of deceased military personnel/veterans.
6. Highly professional interpersonal, writing, and verbal skills. Demonstration of speaking ability is required by presenting the summary of benefits to the Chief Operations Officer and other County of Berks leadership, as available. Writing samples provided are a plus.
7. Excellent telephone etiquette and friendly demeanor. Must have amiable personality with team player attitude.
8. Demonstrated proof of being detail and procedure oriented and compliant.
9. Understand the federal employment process, veteran's employment priorities, the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve program and the Uniformed Services Employment Return Rights Act (USERRA).
10. Understand the Commonwealth Workforce Development process and the roles of Veterans Employment Representatives at Pennsylvania's *CareerLink* departments.
11. Understand limitations on National Guard and Reservists for access to benefits and know the deployment lifecycle for National Guard and Reservists.
12. Previous call center experience is a plus.
13. Federal, state or county civilian employee experience is a plus.
14. Knowledge of veterans' organizations along with their legislative agenda, program benefits, and community activities.
15. Knowledge of Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) regulations and policies pertaining to the protection of personal health information.
16. Ability to establish and maintain working relationships with officials and representatives of state, federal, and community agencies, veterans, families, and the public.
17. Ability to multi-task in a fast-paced working environment.
18. Considerable working knowledge of the VA central office, health care, benefits and national cemetery administrations, as well as knowledge of federal, state and local regulations pertaining to veterans' affairs.

19. Considerable working knowledge of the Reserves component operating in Pennsylvania, to include the administration of the US Army Reserve Command, US Marine Corps Reserves 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Division, the Air Force Reserves, Navy Reserve Command and the Pennsylvania Army and Air National Guards.
20. Demonstrated expertise in developing claims for benefits and types of services available to veterans to include the eligibility and documentation requirements.
21. Skill in representing veterans during appeals and board reviews.
22. Skill in operation of a variety of computer software programs, including Microsoft Word, Excel and Power Point. Demonstrated skill at using and applying databases is a plus.
23. Ability to communicate effectively to the individual veteran, veterans' groups and the general public.
24. Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with employees, county officials, veterans' groups, veterans, and the general public.
25. Ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing.
26. Ability to effectively manage department budget and purchase of products and services.
27. Ability to compile and analyze information/data and prepare corresponding reports.
28. Ability to provide leadership, counsel, motivation and constructive performance reviews to staff, securing their respective commitments to the department and County of Berks.
29. Ability to plan and organize the work of self and others; ability to delegate; ability to meet project/activity deadlines of self and others.

**PHYSICAL DEMANDS:**

- Position requires the ability to sit or stand for long periods of time.
- Position requires on occasion for the employee to work outdoors or indoors at sites away from the main office.
- Position requires that the employee be able to operate the type of vehicle assigned or rented for the department.
- Position requires the employee to have an ability to lift and carry chairs, tables office documents (up to 20 lbs, load); load and unload a vehicle; set up and break down a

special events tables, chairs and displays; and move boxes of flags (up to 10 lbs per box) and flag holders (up to 20 lbs per box).

- Position requires the employee to be able to set up and tear down the museum displays, clean the interior and exterior of the displays and store display items.
- Position requires the employee to be able to move rolling racks of items stored in the supply room at the department.
- Accommodations may be requested based on disability.

**WORKING ENVIRONMENT:**

- Normal office environment in urban setting with access directly to street level.
- Position may require travel throughout and beyond Berks County. Employees are provided transportation or use their own vehicle or public transportation to perform work in the community. Work in the community is only performed in partnership with human service professionals or other professional safety escort when requested to go to a person's residence or contacts are arranged at mutually convenient public sites.

*This position description serves as a guideline for communicating the essential functions and other information about the position to the applicant/employee. It is not intended to create a binding employment contract nor cover every detail of the position and may be changed where appropriate.*