

February 25, 2008

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT LETTER 05-08-02

FLYER

March 12, 2008

TO: Chief, Human Resources Management Office

SUBJ: Corrected Copy of Human Resources Management Letter No. 05-08-02,
Position Classification and Staffing Guidance for Veterans Outreach Program
Specialists Positions in Vet Centers, dated February 25, 2008

Attached is a corrected copy of HRML No. 05-08-02. This flyer advises you of the items being corrected. Please locate, and recycle or otherwise discard, any paper copies of the original HRML. Both have been posted on the HRMLs' website at:
<http://vaww1.va.gov/ohrm/HRLibrary/hrmls.htm>.

The corrections which have been made are listed in **bold** below:

- On page 1, paragraph 1, the first sentence has been amended to state that Veterans Outreach Program Specialists assist in providing a seamless transition for veterans **with readjustment needs**, rather than **receiving health care**.
- On page 1, paragraph 2(b), the first sentence has been amended as follows:
"During the past 3 years, **100** new positions – one per **designated** Vet Center – have emerged which have the responsibility as outreach workers, transition managers, and case managers to assist in facilitating a seamless transition for Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) veterans **and their families**." The reference to veterans receiving health care has been deleted.

Questions about this flyer or the staffing-related aspects of this corrected HRML may be referred to the Recruitment & Placement Policy Service (059) at e-mail address:
Staffing_policy_059/VACO@va.gov.

Questions concerning the classification aspects of this HRML may be referred to the Compensation & Classification Service (055). A current list of the Classification Team staff can be found at: <http://vaww1.va.gov/ohrm/Classification.Contacts.htm>.

Recruitment & Placement Policy Service (059)
Office of Human Resources Management

Attachment



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR
HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
WASHINGTON DC 20420

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT LETTER NO. 05-08-02

**Position Classification and Staffing Guidance for
Veterans Outreach Program Specialist Positions in Vet Centers**

February 25, 2008 (corrected copy)

1. Purpose. This Human Resources Management Letter (HRML) provides guidance on classifying and staffing Veterans Outreach Program Specialist, GS-301-5/7/9/11, positions that function as outreach workers, transition managers, and case managers in Vet Centers, to assist in facilitating a seamless transition for veterans with readjustment needs from the military to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) has coordinated the guidance in this HRML with the Veterans Health Administration (VHA).

2. Background

a. Vet Centers in VHA employ staff in a variety of occupations that historically encompassed only Psychologists, Social Workers, and Readjustment Counseling Therapists and Specialists. Those occupations provide a number of services to veterans within the framework of their individual disciplines.

b. During the past 3 years, 100 new positions – one per designated Vet Center – have emerged which have the responsibility as outreach workers, transition managers, and case managers to assist in facilitating a seamless transition for Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) veterans and their families. Until now, classification and staffing of these positions generally occurred in the GS-101 Social Science series or GS-102 Social Science Aid and Technician series, at grade levels ranging from GS-3 to GS-11. Facilities made selections of individuals for these positions using a variety of legal authorities and types of appointment. These authorities vary from time-limited term and temporary appointments to Veterans Recruitment Appointments (VRAs) and other excepted service appointments with the possibility of conversion to career-conditional or, when appropriate, career appointments. There are 100 Outreach Specialist positions currently authorized in the Vet Centers VA-wide.

3. Guidance

a. At VHA's request, OHRM recently reviewed the Vet Center outreach assignments and established new position descriptions for this function. Facilities should now begin classifying these positions as Veterans Outreach Program Specialists in the GS-301 series, with a career ladder of GS-5/7/9/11 (target GS-11). As attachments to this

HRML, OHRM is providing position descriptions to assist servicing Human Resources (HR) offices in establishing these positions and to ensure consistency in the evaluation and classification process, as well as staffing guidance on converting these positions to the new occupational series, title, and career ladder.

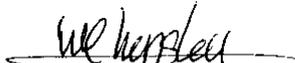
b. Attachment A provides guidance on staffing the newly established positions of Veterans Outreach Program Specialist, GS-301-5/7/9/11 (target GS-11), and providing placement consideration to the incumbents of existing Vet Center Outreach Specialist positions in the GS-101 or GS-102 series, along with other qualified and eligible Vet Center employees.

c. The position descriptions provided in Attachments B, C, D, and E, should be reviewed to ensure consistency with the duties and responsibilities being assigned at the specific Vet Center before being classified. In consultation with Vet Center management, servicing Human Resources (HR) offices should modify and tailor these position descriptions to reflect actual local situations, as necessary. HR offices are **not** to use this guidance in lieu of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) position classification standards.

4. Questions

a. Any questions concerning the classification aspects of this HRML may be referred to the Compensation and Classification Service (055). A current list of the Classification Team staff can be found at:
<http://vaww1.va.gov/ohrm/Classification.Contacts.htm>.

b. Any questions concerning the staffing aspects of this HRML may be referred to the Recruitment & Placement Policy Service (059) at e-mail address: **Staffing policy 059/VACO@va.gov**.


Willie L. Hensley

Attachments

Options for Staffing Newly Established Vet Center Positions of Veterans Outreach Program Specialist, GS-301-5/7/9/11 (Target GS-11)

General Guidance

Servicing Human Resources (HR) offices should now begin to re-classify, advertise, and fill existing GWOT/OEF/OIF Outreach Specialist vacancies that are currently classified in the GS-101 and GS-102 series as career-ladder positions entitled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist in the GS-301 series at grades 5/7/9, target GS-11, or GS-11, utilizing the prototype position descriptions provided as Attachments B, C, D, and E. However, for currently encumbered positions not already targeted to the GS-11 grade level, there is no "one-size-fits-all" guidance for transitioning from those positions and properly considering their incumbents and other qualified and eligible Vet Center employees. Please note that each Vet Center will continue to have only one Outreach Program position on its rolls. Since facilities have appointed incumbents of these positions via a number of hiring authorities and classified their positions in different occupational series, titles, and grade levels, servicing HR offices, in consultation with Vet Center management, will need to determine which staffing strategy/ies appropriately address the local situation.

Given the now-established career path for these positions, the servicing HR office should review with local Vet Center management the hiring eligibility/ies and employment status of its incumbent in a Vet Center Outreach Program position to determine the most appropriate method of transitioning to the newly established Veterans Outreach Program Specialist, GS-301-5/7/9/11 career-ladder. Although a Vet Center has discretionary authority to choose the most appropriate method for converting its encumbered position, the servicing HR office must ensure that any incumbent is eligible for the staffing option chosen and receives selection consideration under any announcement. The servicing HR office must also ensure that, while conducting any staffing activities on a Veterans Outreach Program Specialist position, it adheres to 5 U.S.C. 2301 merit system principles during the staffing process and that the selected individual meets the eligibility and qualification requirements for the position grade and staffing method used.

If local management chooses to announce the new Veterans Outreach Program Specialist, GS-301-5/7/9/11, position under an appropriate internal announcement, such as merit promotion, the area of consideration may be limited to that Vet Center since there is no accompanying increase in any Vet Center's employment ceiling. To receive consideration for a new Veterans Outreach Program Specialist, GS-301-5/7/9/11, position at a Vet Center, a current permanent employee occupying an existing Outreach

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT LETTER NO. 05-08-02 February 25, 2008
ATTACHMENT A

Program position at that Vet Center must apply and compete under an appropriate announcement, along with any other interested qualified and eligible employees of that Vet Center.

When a local Vet Center manager determines that he or she wishes to convert a staff member currently employed on a time-limited appointment in a Vet Center Outreach Program position to a permanent appointment as a Veterans Outreach Program Specialist, the manager is to request that the servicing HR office initiate an appropriate staffing action that takes the time-limited incumbent's eligibility/ies and qualifications into account, as well as ensures consideration of any other interested qualified and eligible employees of that Vet Center.

**Prototype Position Description
Veterans Outreach Program Specialist, GS-301-11**

Introduction

The primary purpose of this position is to serve as the principal outreach staff member for the Military, Reserve, and National Guard members returning from the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Major Duties and Responsibilities

Outreach Services:

70%

Establishes outreach service provision with military installations, Reserve, and National Guard facilities within a designated geographical area. The incumbent provides transitional assistance program briefings to Military, Reserve, and National Guard personnel transitioning from combat service/active duty.

Develops and distributes outreach materials to include brochures, fact sheets, web content, and other targeted information which highlights vet center services and locations. Works with local and regional media including television, radio, and print media to alert newly returning service members and their families to Vet Center services and activities.

Provides training and information to VA staff, other federal agencies and community agencies regarding both Vet Center services and the GWOT experience. Develops and maintains working relationships with a network of service provision agencies and individuals in all areas relevant to returning GWOT service members and their families. Both organizes and participates in a myriad of community activities and events that have high probability of GWOT veterans present such as "Welcome Home" parades and picnics, Veteran Service Organization meetings and events, GWOT service recognition events, etc.

Patient Entitlements:

10%

Assists GWOT veteran clients and their families in understanding their rights in addition to their responsibilities. Maintains a liaison with veteran's service organizations, community groups, and others whose interest is in helping and protecting veterans, their families, and their representatives. The incumbent interprets the Vet Center mission, policies, procedures, and available resource/services to the client and presents GWOT veteran problems, opinions, and needs to appropriate staff and management. Explains entitlements to GWOT veteran clients and their families. May assist with congressional and/or patient inquiry letters as requested by the Vet Center Team Leader. May be called upon to provide information with which to answer these inquires and/or complaints.

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT LETTER NO. 05-08-02 February 25, 2008
ATTACHMENT B

Clinical Liaison: 10%
Assists patients, their families and representatives, and facility staff members in recognizing and removing institutional barriers to the provision of optimum readjustment counseling to GWOT veterans and their families. Identifies existing and potential problem areas, suggests solutions or alternatives to existing procedures which contribute to these problems.

Acts to resolve problems, expedite services, or implement necessary corrective measures within established policies and where appropriate. Has overall responsibility for the resolution of client problems which arise. Serves as an "advocate" for clients throughout the facility. Identifies existing/potential problems areas and suggests solutions or alternatives to existing procedures which contribute to these problems. Provides input into the conduct of, and may be responsible for the maintenance of the files and records pertaining to client surveys.

Administrative Functions: 10%
Prepares and maintains client records/administrative records and reports in accordance with program guidelines and policies; implements legal and ethical standard of conduct, privacy, and confidentiality. Participates in administrative, staff, clinical, and in-service meetings at the vet center and at other locations as directed by the team leader. Completes all required VA, VHA, and RCS mandatory training annually.

Performs other related duties as assigned.

Factor 1. Knowledge Required by the Position: FL 1-7, 1250 Points

Knowledge of military service and procedures sufficient to provide comprehensive readjustment assistance to military, reserve, and National Guard personnel, with special emphasis on GWOT, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans.

Knowledge of community outreach and referral procedures sufficient to provide outreach services to veterans. Knowledge of oral and written techniques sufficient to develop and present: formal briefings; outreach materials; statistical data; and reports.

Knowledge applicable to a wide range of duties involving oral and written communication principles, practices, techniques and methods; analytical methods; and interpersonal relations practices. Skill in applying such knowledge in the modification of standard methods and adaptation of approaches in developing new information materials aimed at enhancing the understanding of groups or individuals of the significant issues of the Department's outreach program.

Knowledge applicable to and skill in assessing public reaction and identifying extent of understanding achieved to evaluate effectiveness of information programs. Knowledge and skill to explain significant issues to generally responsive groups or individuals interested in the Department's outreach programs.

Knowledge of, and skill in applying analytical and evaluative methods and techniques to issues or studies concerning the efficiency and effectiveness of the outreach program.

Knowledge of pertinent laws, regulations, policies and precedents which affect the use of the RCS program and related support resources (people, money, or equipment) in the area studied. Outreach projects and studies typically require knowledge of the major issues, program goals and objectives, work processes, and administrative operations of the organization in order to plan, schedule, and conduct projects and studies to evaluate and recommend ways to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of work operations in a program or support setting.

Thorough knowledge of and skill in adapting analytical techniques and evaluation criteria to the measurement and improvement of program effectiveness.

Ability to analyze and make recommendations concerning the centralization or decentralization of outreach operations.

Factor 2. Supervisory Controls:

FL 2-4, 450 Points

The incumbent functions independently within the framework of established laws, guidelines and objectives of the Readjustment Counseling Program and professional standards of practice. Work is performed under the general supervision of the Team Leader and is reviewed in terms of results achieved. Within a framework of priorities, funding and overall project objectives the employee and supervisor develop a mutually acceptable project plan which typically includes identification of the work to be done, the scope of the project, and deadlines for its completion.

Within the parameters of the approved project plan, the employee is responsible for planning and organizing the work, coordinating with staff and line management personnel, and conducting all phases of the project. This frequently involves the definitive interpretation of regulations and study procedures, and the initial application of new methods.

The employee informs the supervisor of potentially controversial findings, issues, or problems with widespread impact. Completed projects, evaluations, reports, or recommendations are reviewed by the supervisor for compatibility with organizational goals, guidelines, and effectiveness in achieving intended objectives.

staff) in a courteous, tactful, and respectful manner. Provides the customer with consistent information according to established policies and procedures. Handles conflict and problems in dealing with the customer constructively and appropriately.

ADP Security:

Protects printed and electronic files containing sensitive data in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974 and other applicable laws, federal regulations, VA statutes and policy, and VHA policy. Protects the data from unauthorized release or from loss, alteration, or unauthorized deletion. Follows applicable regulations and instructions regarding access to computerized files, release of access codes, etc., as set out in the computer access agreement that the employee signs.

Prototype Position Description
Veterans Outreach Program Specialist, GS-301-9

STATEMENT OF DIFFERENCE

DUTIES:

The subject position is established to perform assignments similar to duties contained in the full performance position of Veterans Outreach Program Specialist, GS-301-11, PD #_____.

Full performance level knowledge, skills and personal qualities are adequately obtained through satisfactory performance of assignments at the GS-301-9 level. Knowledge, skills and abilities will be applied with greater proficiency and independence as the incumbent gains necessary experience and becomes more familiar with the full range of duties and responsibilities at the full performance level.

Performs essentially and substantially identical duties and responsibilities in nature as described in the full performance GS-301-11 Veterans Outreach Program Specialist position description; however assignments are limited in scope and depth.

II. SUPERVISORY CONTROLS

The Vet Center Team Leader defines objectives, priorities and deadlines; and assists the specialist with unusual situations which do not have clear precedents. The outreach program specialist plans and carries out assignments or projects and resolves problems or deviations in the work according to instructions, policies, previous training or accepted communication practices. The Vet Center Team Leader evaluates completed work primarily for technical soundness, responsiveness, appropriateness, and conformance to policy and program requirements, and secondarily for methods or techniques used.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT FACTS

The position is established with known promotion potential to the targeted full performance GS-301-11 level without further competition upon the successful completion of administrative, statutory/regulatory requirements; demonstrated satisfactory performance and minimum qualification requirements for advancement to the full performance level.

Prototype Position Description
Veterans Outreach Program Specialist, GS-301-7

Introduction

The primary purpose of this position is to serve in a developmental capacity as an outreach staff member for the Military, Reserve, and National Guard members returning from the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Assignments are designed to train and prepare the Specialist for independent responsibilities.

Major Duties and Responsibilities

Outreach Services: 70%
Assists higher graded Outreach Program Specialists in establishing outreach service provisions with military installations, Reserve, and National Guard facilities within a designated geographical area. The incumbent participates in transitional assistance program briefings to Military, Reserve, and National Guard personnel transitioning from combat service/active duty.

Distributes outreach materials to include brochures, fact sheets, web content, and other targeted information which highlights vet center services and locations.

Participates and assists higher graded Outreach Program Specialists in providing training and information to VA staff, other federal agencies and community agencies regarding both Vet Center services and the GWOT experience. Participates in community activities and events that have high probability of GWOT veterans present such as parades and picnics, Veteran Service Organization meetings and events, GWOT service recognition events, etc.

Patient Entitlements: 20%
Explains basic entitlements to GWOT veteran clients and their families. May assist with congressional and/or patient inquiry letters as requested by the Vet Center Team Leader by researching and organizing information.

Administrative Functions: 10%
Prepares and maintains client records/administrative records and reports in accordance with program guidelines and policies; implements legal and ethical standard of conduct, privacy, and confidentiality. Participates in administrative, staff, clinical, and in-service meetings at the vet center and at other locations as directed by the team leader. Completes all required VA, VHA, and RCS mandatory training annually.

Performs other related duties as assigned.

Factor 1. Knowledge Required by the Position: FL 1-6, 950 Points

Knowledge of military service and procedures sufficient to explain basic entitlements, programs, and services to military, reserve, and National Guard personnel, with special emphasis on GWOT, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans.

Knowledge of community outreach and referral procedures sufficient to provide outreach services to veterans. Knowledge of oral and written techniques sufficient to draft outreach materials; statistical data; and reports.

Knowledge of pertinent laws, regulations, policies and precedents which affect the use of the RCS program and related support resources (people, money, or equipment) in order to perform data gathering and review for outreach projects.

Factor 2. Supervisory Controls: FL 2-2, 125 Points

The incumbent is under the supervision of the Vet Center Team Leader. The supervisor provides continuing and individual assignments with clear instructions and additional guidance for new, difficult, or unusual assignments. The incumbent refers problems or unusual situations to the supervisor or higher graded specialist for assistance. Work products are reviewed for adherence to requirements.

Factor 3. Guidelines: FL 3-2, 125 Points

Incumbent uses a variety of established policies and procedures, and follows past practices. The incumbent selects and applies the appropriate guidance for the assignment and is expected to adapt guidance to specific situations. Circumstances requiring significant deviation from guides or past practice are referred to the supervisor or higher graded specialist for decision.

Factor 4. Complexity: FL 4-3, 150 Points

Assignments are varied and designed to expose the incumbent to the full range of outreach functions. The incumbent participates in the development and distribution of outreach material; the delivery of training and information to a variety of audiences; attends community events; and is expected to explain basic entitlements and program services to veterans and their families. The incumbent uses basic analytical and good

Other Significant Facts

Customer Service:

Meets the needs of customers while supporting VA missions. Consistently communicates and treats customers (veterans, their representatives, visitors, and all VA staff) in a courteous, tactful, and respectful manner. Provides the customer with consistent information according to established policies and procedures. Handles conflict and problems in dealing with the customer constructively and appropriately.

ADP Security:

Protects printed and electronic files containing sensitive data in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974 and other applicable laws, federal regulations, VA statutes and policy, and VHA policy. Protects the data from unauthorized release or from loss, alteration, or unauthorized deletion. Follows applicable regulations and instructions regarding access to computerized files, release of access codes, etc., as set out in the computer access agreement that the employee signs.

Prototype Position Description
Veterans Outreach Program Specialist, GS-301-5

STATEMENT OF DIFFERENCE

Introduction

The primary purpose of this position is to serve in a trainee capacity as an outreach staff member for the Military, Reserve, and National Guard members returning from the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT), Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. Assignments are designed to train and prepare the Specialist for participation in program functions in a developmental capacity.

Duties

The subject position is established to perform assignments in a trainee capacity leading to the full performance position of Veterans Outreach Program Specialist, GS-301-11, PD # _____. This is a statement of difference to the Veterans Outreach Program Specialist, GS-301-7, PD # _____ leading to the full performance level GS-11 PD.

The incumbent participates with and assists higher graded Veterans Outreach Program Specialists in providing Vet Center outreach program services. This includes assisting in developing materials and training; disseminating materials and delivering training; attending community events; and providing information on entitlements and programs to veterans and their families.

Knowledge Required

FL 1-5, 750 points

Knowledge of basic veteran outreach programs and entitlements.

Ability to gather and organize data to draft information materials in a variety of formats.

Oral and written communication and interpersonal skills to communicate factual information.

Supervisory Controls

FL 2-1, 25 points

The incumbent is given assignments with specific instructions as to what is expected and how work is to be performed. The supervisor or higher graded specialist is available to answer questions or provide assistance if guidelines do not apply. All work is technically reviewed.

