

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### Veterans Employment Coordinators:

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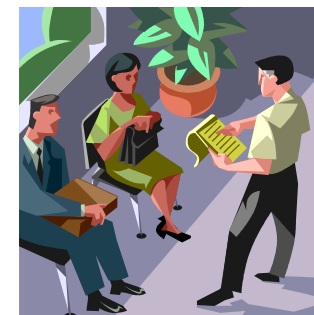
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**Department of Veterans  
Affairs**  
**VISA 3 HUMAN RESOURCES**



**Primer for OEF/OIF  
Veterans Seeking  
Employment at VISA 3  
VA Facilities**



**Best Care, Best Careers**

 **Department of  
Veterans Affairs**  
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# Primer for OEF/OIF Veterans Seeking Employment at VISN 3 VA Facilities

VISN 3 is a network of healthcare facilities in the Metropolitan NY/NJ area. We are composed of healthcare systems, medical centers, and community based outpatient clinics throughout this geographic region. The number of employees employed in VISN 3 exceeds 12,000.

As a component of a Federal agency, the process for obtaining employment with us can often be complex and may pose challenges that aren't part of the job search process in the private sector.



Joining the Team

By law, all qualified US citizens seeking employment within the Federal government are to be given fair and objective consideration for vacancies in the federal sector. In general, agencies are prohibited from using employment practices that give some applicants illegal advantages over others. However, the processes that are in place to obtain consideration will vary based on such factors as the specific occupation, a veteran's eligibility for consideration through special hiring authorities, veterans preference, and whether the consideration is open to external and/or internal applicants. The process is often not the same for all applicants for the same vacancy.

Although our major mission involves the delivery of the best healthcare to our nations veterans, we cannot guarantee that every veteran seeking VA employment will be hired. The purpose of this pamphlet is to acquaint you with the processes involved and to provide information on where you can obtain additional assistance in navigating the hiring process.

## How Do I begin?

Nationally, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) employs staff in over two hundred occupations. Our recruitment needs can change practically everyday and are based on specific budgetary limits. It is important that as you begin your VA job search that you identify the specific occupations for which you are seeking employment. It is also necessary that you ensure that you have the qualification required in order to be considered as a qualified candidate. Assistance with locating qualification requirements will be discussed later in this pamphlet.

## Internal versus External Recruitment

Some vacancies are only open for the consideration of permanent employees currently working for the VA or other Federal agencies; while other vacancies are open to all interested applicants (employees and non-employees). Sometimes, veterans visiting a VA healthcare facility will see vacancy announcements displayed in public areas. If you see a vacancy that is of interest to you, it is important that you first determine whether applications are open to external candidates, before submitting your application material for consideration. Obtaining assistance with making this determination will be discussed later in this pamphlet.

## Ways to Receive Consideration

Veterans can receive consideration for vacancies in several different ways. There are special hiring authorities for some veterans that allow them to apply directly to the VA. There is another hiring process, which requires veterans and non-veterans to apply through an examining process serviced by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) or an OPM Delegated Examining Unit (DEU).

### Special Hiring Authorities—

#### Veterans Recruitment Appointment (VRA) Authority

The VRA is a special authority by which agencies can, if they wish, appoint eligible veterans without competition to positions at any grade level through General Schedule (GS) 11 or equivalent. (The promotion potential of the position is not a factor.) VRA appointees are hired under excepted appointments to positions that are otherwise in the competitive service. There is no limitation to the number of VRA appointments an individual may receive, provided the individual is otherwise eligible and qualified.

#### Eligibility Criteria:

Those who are eligible:

- Disabled veterans; or
  - Veterans who served on active duty in the Armed Forces during a war, or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized; or
  - Veterans who, while serving on active duty in the Armed Forces, participated in a United States military operation for which an Armed Forces Service Medal was awarded; or
  - Recently separated veterans.
- Veterans claiming eligibility on the basis of service in a campaign or expedition for which a medal was awarded must be in receipt of the campaign badge or medal.

In addition to meeting the criteria above, eligible veterans must have been separated under honorable conditions (i.e., the individual must have received either an honorable or general discharge).

#### 30 Percent or More Disabled Veterans

An agency may give a noncompetitive temporary appointment of more than 60 days or a term appointment to any veteran:

- retired from active military service with a disability rating of 30 percent or more; or
- rated by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) since 1991 or later to include disability determinations from a branch of the Armed Forces at any time, as having a compensable service-connected disability of 30 percent or more.

There is no grade level limitation for this authority, but the appointee must meet all qualification requirements, including any written test requirement.

#### Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998 (VEOA)

The Veterans Employment Opportunities Act (VEOA) of 1998 as amended by Section 511 of the Veterans Millennium Health Care Act (Pub. Law 106-117) of November 30, 1999, provides that agencies must allow preference eligibles or eligible veterans to apply for positions announced under merit promotion procedures when the agency is recruiting from outside its own workforce. ("Agency" in this context, means the parent agency, i.e., Treasury, not the Internal Revenue Service and the Department of Defense, not Department of the Army.) A VEOA eligible who competes under merit promotion procedures and is selected will be given a career or career conditional appointment. Veterans' preference is not a factor in these appointments.

#### Competitive Examining Process

When an agency is filling a vacancy through the competitive examining process, they are considering external applicants. To fill a vacancy by selection through the competitive examining process, the agency makes a request for list of eligible applicants from the examining office. The examining office must announce the vacancy through USAJOBS. Subsequently, the examining office determines which applicants are qualified, rates and ranks them based on their qualifications, and issues a certificate of eligible candidates to the agency. The eligibles are listed on the certificate in an order starting from the highest to the lowest scores.

Since the time of the Civil War, veterans of the Armed Forces have been given some degree of preference in appointments to Federal jobs. Not all veterans are entitled to veterans preference. Congress, recognizing the sacrifice of those serving on active duty during times of war, enacted laws to prevent these veterans from being penalized for their time in military service when seeking Federal employment. These laws provide for a system of veterans preference.

The following link opens an OPM web-page that describes the various types of preference and the eligibility requirements for each type:

<http://www.opm.gov/staffingPortal/Vetguide.asp#2>

Unlike non-preference eligibles, preference eligibles who are qualified for a position and achieved a passing score have 5 or 10 extra points added to their numerical rating depending on which category of preference they meet. This means the highest possible rating is 110 (a disabled veteran who earns a score of 100 has 10 extra points added).

## WHERE CAN I FIND HELP?

The information in this pamphlet are brief summaries, rather than the full text of applicable rules and regulations.

Because the Federal rules governing Federal employment are often complex and can be overwhelming to understand, the VA has implemented a practice of having Veterans Employment Coordinators at VHA medical centers and health care systems. These coordinators are specifically designated to assist you with navigating the employment process. The names and contact information for the VISN 3 coordinators are provided for you on the back of this pamphlet and can be contacted when you need specific guidance, information, or understanding regarding employment at their specific facility.

The local facility OEF/OIF Program team may also be a source of information, direction, and support as you undertake the Federal employment process. It is highly encouraged and beneficial to involve the local facility team prior to beginning your employment search.