



TOWN OF TEWKSBURY

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES

Senior Center

175 Chandler Street

TEWKSBURY, MASSACHUSETTS 01876

To: Richard Montuori
Town Manager

From: Lisa Downey
Veterans Service Officer

Date: November 13, 2023

Re: Department Narrative: Priority Request: Position Reclassification and Grade Increase

The core mission of the Department of Veterans Services is to honor and serve our nation's Veterans and their families by providing comprehensive support and assistance with accessing benefits from government and local agencies, organizations, and the community.

The pivotal role played by the Veterans Service Officer is central to the well-being of the community's Veterans. The multi-faceted nature and responsibilities are crucial to guarantee Veterans receive comprehensive support in the crucial areas outlined below.

1. **Chapter 115 of Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L. Ch. 115):** Assisting indigent Veterans and their dependents in obtaining financial and medical assistance, ensuring they receive the support they are entitled to under state law.
2. **Veterans Affairs Claims:** Helping Veterans navigate the complex process of applying for various VA benefits, including disability, pension, discharge upgrades, long-term care, caretaker support, burial benefits, debt management, and GI Bill benefits.
3. **Healthcare Access:** Facilitating access to healthcare services including medical, dental and mental health services.
4. **Housing:** Supporting Veterans in finding suitable housing, whether it's through VA programs or other housing initiatives, and helping them maintain stable housing situations.
5. **Homeless Veterans:** Aiding homeless Veterans by connecting them with shelter, support services, and programs aimed at helping them regain stable housing and self-sufficiency.
6. **Transportation:** Assisting Veterans in accessing transportation services from the Senior Center and outside resources, especially for medical appointments and other essential needs.
7. **Food and Clothing:** Providing food, gift cards, clothing but also connecting Veterans with resources for future needs.
8. **Assisting with Transition from Military to Civilian Life:** Guiding Veterans through the process of transitioning from the military to civilian life, including addressing their unique needs and challenges.
9. **Job and Education Assistance:** Helping Veterans with job placement, vocational training, and education programs to aid in their successful transition to civilian life.
10. **Unemployment Compensation:** Providing information and support for Veterans seeking unemployment compensation when transitioning to civilian employment.
11. **Military Records:** Assisting Veterans in obtaining and updating their military records for various purposes, including applying for benefits and services.

12. **Social Security Applications:** Help Veterans through the application process for Social Security benefits, including disability and supplemental income.
13. **Medical Care and Counseling Referrals:** Referring Veterans to healthcare services and counseling resources for their physical and mental health needs.
14. **Outreach and Crisis Intervention:** Engaging in community outreach to ensure Veterans are aware of available services and intervening during crises to provide immediate assistance.
15. **Annuities and Bonuses:** Assisting Veterans and families in accessing any annuities or bonuses they may be entitled to based on their service.
16. **Tax Exemptions:** Informing Veterans about tax exemptions and helping them apply.
17. **Graves and Memorials:** Assist Veterans and their families in obtaining information and applying for grave markers, memorials, and related services.
18. **Flags:** Assisting with the provision of flags for Veterans' ceremonies, funerals, and other events.
19. **Events and Ceremonies:** Organizing and participating in events and ceremonies that honor and recognize Veterans' service and sacrifice. (*Ceremonies, Weekly Coffee Social-1st Christmas Yankee Swap this year, BBQ, Breakfast, Raffles, Thanksgiving dinners, Christmas dinners/presents, Stockings for Veterans in Nursing homes/Assisted Living, community events*)

The addition of the 21 housing units for Veterans will increase the workload depending on the need.

I am requesting the Veterans Services Officer position be reclassified as the Director of the Department of Veterans Services in a higher grade (Grade 10, Step 1). Over the past 10 years, I have consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to the well-being of our Veterans. I have also developed essential relationships with local and state agencies as well with community organizations that have proven to be invaluable in support of our Veteran's needs. I strongly believe that my experience, knowledge, and dedication align with the department's goals, and I am committed to upholding the highest standards of service excellence.

It is an honor and a privilege to serve the Veterans and families of the town of Tewksbury.

Thank you for your consideration into this.

Lisa Downey

Lisa Downey
Veterans Service Officer
175 Chandler Street
Tewksbury, MA 01876
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Email: vets@tewksbury-ma.gov

VETERANS AGENT	FY2021 BUDGETED	FY2021 EXPENDED	FY2022 BUDGETED	FY2022 EXPENDED	FY2023 BUDGETED	FY2023 EXPENDED	FY2024 BUDGETED	FY2025 DEPT REQ	FY2025 TM REC	FY2025 FIN COM REC
<i>Salaries</i>										
5111 Regular	102,155	99,846	108,449	92,022	111,313	91,677	126,860	129,366	129,366	
5112 Permanent Part-time	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
5150 Car Allowance	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800	2,400	2,400	2,400	
Total Salaries	103,955	101,646	110,249	93,822	113,113	93,477	129,260	131,766	131,766	
<i>Operating</i>										
5340 Communications	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5380 Medical	66,749	19,592	63,251	33,325	66,986	38,986	40,000	40,000	40,000	
5420 Office Supplies	582	582	987	425	3,100	2,739	1,750	3,000	3,000	
5423 All Other Supplies	5,041	3,499	1,991	762	4,136	1,218	500	500	500	
5561 Flags	1,737	1,737	1,793	1,793	1,556	1,556	2,000	3,000	3,000	
5563 Decorations	1,107	1,107	2,551	2,536	4,108	3,824	2,500	4,000	4,000	
5701 Travel	472	462	509	259	900	741	500	800	800	
5730 Dues and Memberships	120	120	120	120	120	50	120	120	120	
5775 Veterans Aid	335,891	199,415	324,221	200,042	336,840	192,820	235,000	220,000	220,000	
5790 Staff Development	-	-	3,300	3,052	2,759	2,200	500	2,000	2,000	
Total Operating	411,697	226,513	398,722	242,314	420,505	244,133	282,870	273,420	273,420	
<i>Capital Outlay</i>										
5833 Capital Outlay	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Capital Outlay	-	-	-							
Total Budget	515,652	328,159	508,971	336,136	533,618	337,610	412,130	405,186	405,186	-

	FY2021 BUDGETED	FY2022 BUDGETED	FY2023 BUDGETED	FY2024 BUDGETED	FY2025 DEPT REQ	FY2025 TM REC	FY2025 FIN COM REC
Position	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE	FTE
Veterans Agent	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Sen Clerk Sec.	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Total Staffing	2	2	2	2	2	2	-

FISCAL YEAR 2025
VETERANS AGENT DEPARTMENT SALARY INFORMATION TOWN MANAGER RECOMMENDED

Regular Salaries

Name	Position	Ann. Date	Grade	Step	Base Salary	Longevity %	Longevity \$	Wage Def.	Total Salary
Lisa Downey	Veterans Agent	7/21/2014	6	10	74,917	\$ 1,661			76,578
Diane Joy	Sr Acct Clerk	3/1/2023	1	7	52,788				52,788
Total Regular Salaries					127,705	\$ 1,661	-	-	129,366

Temporary Part Time Salaries

Name	Position	Ann. Date	Grade	Step	Base Salary	Longevity %	Longevity \$	Wage Def.	Total Salary
Total Temporary Part Time Salaries					-	-	-	-	-

Car Allowance

Name	Position				Per/Month	# Months		Total Benefit
Lisa Downey	Veterans Agent				200	12		2,400
Total Car Allowance								2,400

Department Total								131,766
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FISCAL YEAR 2025
VETERANS AGENT DEPARTMENT SALARY INFORMATION DEPARTMENT REQUEST

Regular Salaries

Name	Position	Ann. Date	Grade	Step	Base Salary	Longevity %	Longevity \$	Wage Def.	Total Salary
Lisa Downey	Veterans Agent	7/21/2014	6	10	74,917	\$ 1,661			76,578
Diane Joy	Sr Acct Clerk	3/1/2023	1	7	52,788				52,788
Total Regular Salaries					127,705	\$ 1,661	-	-	129,366

Temporary Part Time Salaries

Name	Position	Ann. Date	Grade	Step	Base Salary	Longevity %	Longevity \$	Wage Def.	Total Salary
Total Temporary Part Time Salaries									

Car Allowance

Name	Position				Per/Month	# Months			Total Benefit
Lisa Downey	Veterans Agent				200	12			2,400
Total Car Allowance									2,400

Department Total									131,766
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**FISCAL YEAR 2024
VETERANS AGENT DEPARTMENT SALARY INFORMATION**

Regular Salaries

Name	Position	Ann. Date	Grade	Step	Base Salary	Longevity %	Longevity \$	Wage Def.	Total Salary
Lisa Downey	Veterans Agent	7/21/2014	6	9	73,082		1,000		74,082
Vacant	Sr Acct Clerk	3/1/2023	1	7	52,778				52,778
Total Regular Salaries					125,860	\$ -	1,000	-	126,860

Temporary Part Time Salaries

Name	Position	Ann. Date	Grade	Step	Base Salary	Longevity %	Longevity \$	Wage Def.	Total Salary
Total Temporary Part Time Salaries									
					-	-	-	-	-

Car Allowance

Name	Position				Per/Month	# Months			Total Benefit
Lisa Downey	Veterans Agent				200	12			2,400
Total Car Allowance									2,400

Department Total									129,260
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**FISCAL YEAR 2023
VETERANS AGENT DEPARTMENT SALARY INFORMATION**

Regular Salaries

Name	Position	Ann. Date	Grade	Step	Base Salary	Longevity %	Longevity \$	Wage Def.	Total Salary
Lisa Downey	Veterans Agent	7/21/2014	6	8	69,729		1,000		70,729
Vacant	Sr Acct Clerk	2/1/2022	1	2	23,115				23,115
Vacant	Sr Acct Clerk	2/1/2023		3	17,469				17,469
Total Regular Salaries					110,313	\$ -	1,000	-	111,313

Temporary Part Time Salaries

Name	Position	Ann. Date	Grade	Step	Base Salary	Longevity %	Longevity \$	Wage Def.	Total Salary
Total Temporary Part Time Salaries									
					-	-	-	-	-

Car Allowance

Name	Position				Per/Month	# Months			Total Benefit
Lisa Downey	Veterans Agent				150	12			1,800
Total Car Allowance									1,800

Department Total									113,113
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DESCRIPTION/DETAIL

VETERANS AGENT OPERATING

5380 Medical

FY2021 BUDGETED	FY2021 EXPENDED	FY2022 BUDGETED	FY2022 EXPENDED	FY2023 BUDGETED	FY2023 EXPENDED	FY2024 BUDGETED	FY2025 DEPT REQ	FY2025 TM REC
66,749	19,592	63,251	33,325	66,986	38,986	40,000	40,000	40,000

Prescriptions, hospital bills, copays, dental, hearing aids for Veterans, Surviving Spouses and eligible dependents 40,000 40,000

Total 5380 Medical: 40,000 40,000

DESCRIPTION/DETAIL

VETERANS AGENT OPERATING

5420 Office Supplies

FY2021 BUDGETED	FY2021 EXPENDED	FY2022 BUDGETED	FY2022 EXPENDED	FY2023 BUDGETED	FY2023 EXPENDED	FY2024 BUDGETED	FY2025 DEPT REQ	FY2025 TM REC
582	582	987	425	3,100	2,739	1,750	3,000	3,000

General Office Supplies	800	800
RICOH Printer/Copier 5 yr contact \$97.47 monthly	2,200	2,200
<i>Total 5420 Office Supplies:</i>	3,000	3,000

DESCRIPTION/DETAIL

VETERANS AGENT OPERATING

5423 All Other Supplies

FY2021 BUDGETED	FY2021 EXPENDED	FY2022 BUDGETED	FY2022 EXPENDED	FY2023 BUDGETED	FY2023 EXPENDED	FY2024 BUDGETED	FY2025 DEPT REQ	FY2025 TM REC
5,041	3,499	1,991	762	4,136	1,218	500	500	500

Vetrospec Software License 500 500

Total 5423 All Other Supplies: 500 500

VetraSpec is a web-based, Veteran claims management solution built for the veteran's service officer at any level. unless otherwise noted.

VetraSpec allows veteran service officers to access their data from any computer with Internet access. No more exporting and importing records across machines - all data is stored in one, centralized, secure location.

DESCRIPTION/DETAIL

VETERANS AGENT OPERATING

5561 Flags

FY2021 BUDGETED	FY2021 EXPENDED	FY2022 BUDGETED	FY2022 EXPENDED	FY2023 BUDGETED	FY2023 EXPENDED	FY2024 BUDGETED	FY2025 DEPT REQ	FY2025 TM REC
1,737	1,737	1,793	1,793	1,556	1,556	2,000	3,000	3,000

Flags for Veteran's graves for Memorial Day 75% Reimbursement from EOVS 3,000 3,000
Total 5561 Flags: 3,000 3,000

DESCRIPTION/DETAIL

VETERANS AGENT OPERATING

5563 Decorations

FY2021 BUDGETED	FY2021 EXPENDED	FY2022 BUDGETED	FY2022 EXPENDED	FY2023 BUDGETED	FY2023 EXPENDED	FY2024 BUDGETED	FY2025 DEPT REQ	FY2025 TM REC
1,107	1,107	2,551	2,536	4,108	3,824	2,500	4,000	4,000
Veteran's Day, Memorial Day, Holidays, Special events (Breakfast, BBQ), Misc supplies							4,000	4,000
Wreaths								
Ribbons								
Flowers								
Potted Flowers								
<i>Total 5563 Decorations:</i>							4,000	4,000

DESCRIPTION/DETAIL

VETERANS AGENT OPERATING

5703 Dues and Memberships

FY2021 BUDGETED	FY2021 EXPENDED	FY2022 BUDGETED	FY2022 EXPENDED	FY2023 BUDGETED	FY2023 EXPENDED	FY2024 BUDGETED	FY2025 DEPT REQ	FY2025 TM REC	
120	120	120	120	120	50	120	120	120	
							Veteran's Associations	120	120
							MVSOA NEMVSOA		
							<i>Total 5703 Dues and Memberships:</i>	120	120

DESCRIPTION/DETAIL

VETERANS AGENT OPERATING

5775 Veterans Aid

FY2021 BUDGETED	FY2021 EXPENDED	FY2022 BUDGETED	FY2022 EXPENDED	FY2023 BUDGETED	FY2023 EXPENDED	FY2024 BUDGETED	FY2025 DEPT REQ	FY2025 TM REC
335,891	199,415	324,221	200,042	336,840	192,820	235,000	220,000	220,000

Financial stipend for lower income veterans, surviving spouses and dependents who qualify for the Chapter 115
 The Program provides financial aid for food, shelter/housing, clothing, medical care and burial expenses to Veterans
 and their dependents.

75% Reimbursement from EOVS *Total 5775 Veterans Aid:* 220,000 220,000

DESCRIPTION/DETAIL

VETERANS AGENT OPERATING

5790 Staff Development

FY2021 BUDGETED	FY2021 EXPENDED	FY2022 BUDGETED	FY2022 EXPENDED	FY2023 BUDGETED	FY2023 EXPENDED	FY2024 BUDGETED	FY2025 DEPT REQ	FY2025 TM REC	
-	-	3,300	3,052	2,759	2,200	500	2,000	2,000	
							Training and Conferences	2,000	2,000
							<i>Total 5790 Staff Development:</i>	2,000	2,000

DESCRIPTION/DETAIL

VETERANS AGENT

5833 Capital Outlay

FY2021 BUDGETED	FY2021 EXPENDED	FY2022 BUDGETED	FY2022 EXPENDED	FY2023 BUDGETED	FY2023 EXPENDED	FY2024 BUDGETED	FY2025 DEPT REQ	FY2025 TM REC
-		-		-	-	-	-	-

Total 5833 Capital Outlay: - -