Department of Veterans Affairs
Washington, DC 20420

VA HANDBOOK 5005/133
Transmittal Sheet
July 21, 2020

STAFFING

1. **REASON FOR ISSUE:** To establish the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) qualification standard for Rehabilitation Counselor, General Schedule (GS) 0101, under 38 U.S.C. § 7401(3) and 38 U.S.C. § 7405(a)(1)(B).

2. **SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES:** This handbook contains mandatory procedures on staffing. This policy establishes qualification standards for the Rehabilitation Counselor occupation. The policy is established under VA's title 38 hybrid excepted service employment system and the authority of P.L. 111-163, "Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010." Authority is given to the Secretary of VA under 38 U.S.C. § 7402(b), to prescribe qualifications for occupations identified in or established under 38 U.S.C. § 7401(3) and 38 U.S.C. § 7405(a)(1)(B). The new standards are effective on the date of this publication. These changes will be incorporated into the electronic version of VA Handbook 5005 that is maintained on the Office of Chief Human Capital Officer website.

3. **RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** Recruitment and Placement Policy Service (059), Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer.

4. **RELATED DIRECTIVE:** VA Directive 5005, Staffing.

5. **RESCISSION:** None.

CERTIFIED BY:

/s/
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BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS:

/s/
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DISTRIBUTION: Electronic only

NOTE: This transmittal page accompanied the former VA Handbook 5005, Staffing publication. It is provided for reference to the establishment of this qualification standard.

FORMER VA HANDBOOK REFERENCE: PART II APPENDIX G62
EFFECTIVE DATE: July 21, 2020

REHABILITATION COUNSELOR QUALIFICATION STANDARD GS-0101 Veterans Health Administration

1. **COVERAGE.** The following are requirements for appointment as a Rehabilitation Counselor (RC) in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). These requirements apply to all VHA RCs in the General Schedule (GS) 0101 series, including those assigned to VA medical centers, Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs), Vet Centers, Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) offices and VHA Central Office. This work may include the provision of a wide array of clinical rehabilitation services to support Veterans with disabilities reintegration into community, employment and independent living.

2. **AUTHORITIES.**

   a. P.L. 111-163, Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010;

   b. 38 U.S.C. § 7401, Appointments in Veterans Health Administration;

   c. 38 U.S.C. § 7402, Qualifications of appointees;

   d. 38 U.S.C. § 7403, Period of appointments; promotions;

   e. 38 U.S.C. § 7405, Temporary full-time appointments, part-time appointments and without-compensation appointments;

   f. 38 U.S.C. § 7407, Administrative provisions for section 7405 and 7406 appointments.

3. **DEFINITIONS.**

   a. **Appointing Official.** The Human Resources Management Officer is delegated appointing authority to process and authenticate notifications of personnel actions and to effect management-approved employment actions on behalf of officials, employees and facilities for which service is provided.

   b. **Approving Official.** The Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) Director, Facility Director, or designee is the approving official and will determine whether to approve or disapprove the appointment of employees in the hybrid occupations.

   c. **Journey Level**. The full performance level for this qualification standard is the GS-11 grade level.

d. **Creditable Experience**. Creditable experience must have required the use of knowledge, skills and abilities associated with current professional rehabilitation counseling practice. Creditable experience can be obtained through employment as a RC. This may be evidenced by providing direct rehabilitation counseling services to individuals with disabilities in the context of a professional counseling relationship which may include vocational rehabilitation and personal adjustment counseling, case management, assessment, or rehabilitation, training and employment services coordination.

e. **Quality of Experience.** The quality of creditable experience must have been obtained post-graduate as a professional RC directly related to the duties to be performed. Qualifying experience must also be at a level comparable to professional rehabilitation counseling experience at the next lower level. For all assignments above the journeyman level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, administrative independence, complexity (difficulty) and range of variety as described in this standard at the specified grade level and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time.

f. **Part-Time Experience**. Part-time experience is creditable according to its relationship to the full-time work week. For example, an RC employed 20 hours per week, or on a half time basis would receive one full-time work week of credit for each two weeks of service.

4. BASIC REQUIREMENTS.

a. **Citizenship.** Candidates must be a citizen of the United States. Non-citizens may be appointed when it is not possible to recruit qualified candidates in accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 7407(a).

b. **Education.**

(1) A master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or clinical rehabilitation counseling from a rehabilitation counseling program accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). If the applicant's degree was granted prior to July 1, 2017, the program must be accredited by the Council on Rehabilitation Education.

OR

(2) A master's degree in counseling or clinical rehabilitation counseling from a college or university accredited by a national or regional accrediting body accredited by Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA).

OR

(3) A master's or doctoral degree in a related field of study with course content that

emphasized rehabilitation, counseling, disability, therapy, health, employment, wellness, or human development from a college or university accredited by a national or regional accrediting body accredited by CHEA.

OR

(4) Foreign graduates with a degree acceptable by the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC).

c. **Certification.** Current, full and unrestricted certification as a certified rehabilitation counselor (CRC) from the CRCC to practice vocational rehabilitation counseling**.**

(1) **Exceptions for Graduate RCs.**

(a) RC graduates from an approved counseling or rehabilitation counseling program who otherwise meet the basic qualification requirements and the additional degree requirements for CRC certification by the CRCC, but do not possess the required certification, may be appointed, pending certification, as a graduate RC on a full-time temporary appointment not-to-exceed two years under the authority of 38 U.S.C. § 7405(a)(1)(D).

(b) Graduate RCs may only be appointed at the entry grade level and may not be promoted/converted until certification is obtained.

(c) Temporary graduate RC appointments may not be extended beyond two years or converted to a new temporary appointment.

(2) **Failure to Obtain Certification.** In all cases, RCs must actively pursue meeting prerequisites for certification starting from the date of their appointment. This includes working towards completion of CRCC's required acceptable employment experience and completing required CRCC documentation to verify employment experience and supervision by a CRC. At the time of appointment, the RC supervisor will provide the RC with the written requirements for certification, including the time by which the certification must be obtained and the consequences for not becoming certified by the deadline. Failure to become certified within the prescribed amount of time will result in removal from the GS-0101 RC series and may result in termination of employment.

(3) **Loss of Certification.** An employee in this occupation who fails to maintain the required certification must be removed from the occupation, which may also result in termination of employment.

d. **Grandfathering Provision.** All individuals employed as RCs within VHA on the effective date of this qualification standard are considered to have met all qualification requirements for the title, series, and grade held including positive education and certification. For employees who do not meet all the basic requirements required in this standard, but who met the qualifications applicable to the position at the time they were appointed to it, the following provisions apply:

(1) They may be reassigned, promoted up to and including the journeyman level (full performance level), or changed to lower grade within the occupation, but may not be promoted beyond the journeyman level or placed in supervisory or managerial positions.

(2) If a RC who was retained under this provision leaves the occupation, the employee will lose protected status and must meet the full VA qualification standard requirements in effect at the time of reentry to the occupation.

(3) RCs initially grandfathered into this occupation, who subsequently obtain additional education and/or licensure/certification/registration that meet all the basic requirements of this qualification standard, must maintain the required credentials as a condition of employment in the occupation.

(4) RCs who are appointed on a temporary basis prior to the effective date of the qualification standard may not have their temporary appointment extended or be reappointed, on a temporary or permanent basis, until they fully meet the basic requirements of the standard.

e. **Physical Requirements**. See VA Directive and Handbook 5019, Employee Occupational Health Service.

f. **English Language Proficiency**. Candidates must be proficient in spoken and written English to be appointed as authorized by 38 U.S.C. § 7403(f).

5. GRADE DETERMINATIONS. In addition to the basic requirements for employment, the following criteria must be met when determining the grade of candidates.

a. **Rehabilitation Counselor, GS-09**

(1) **Experience.** None beyond the basic requirements.

(2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to meeting the experience or educational requirements for this grade level, the candidate must demonstrate all of the following KSAs:

(a) Knowledge of human development and behavior, medical, psychosocial, and vocational aspects of disability and differential influences of environmental factors to assist persons with disabilities in determining suitable vocational goals.

(b) Knowledge of history, philosophy and disability rights legislation in the field of rehabilitation to apply in the practice of rehabilitation counseling.

(c) Ability to synthesize assessment and diagnosis information in conjunction with labor market trends and community/educational resources to develop an effective individual service delivery plan.

(d) Knowledge of caseload management strategies to maximize an individual's independent functioning from assessment through provision of post-employment services.

(e) Ability to employ person-centered job development strategies to facilitate successful job placement.

(f) Knowledge of assessment tools and methods, functional capacity evaluations and specific vocational preparation to evaluate transferrable skills, residual capacities and needs for accommodations and assistive technology.

(3) **Assignments.** Employees at this level serve as entry level RCs. Provide vocational and personal adjustment counseling, case management and transferrable skills analyses to aid Veterans with severe disabilities in pursuit of their self-determined employment, educational and independent living goals. Conduct assessments through record reviews, observations and interviews with Veterans and their support systems to generate and document personal, vocational and educational histories. Customize evaluation of abilities, aptitudes, interests, values and preferences. Assist Veterans in vocational exploration activities to include informational interviews and labor market research. Examine the impact of employment income on Veteran's benefits. In coordination with Veteran's interdisciplinary teams (IDT), develop and amend patient-centered treatment plans utilizing specific, measurable, agreed upon, realistic and time-based (SMART) goals. Promote employment programs to community employers to establish relationships that will result in providing work opportunities for Veterans with significant behavioral, physical, emotional and/or cognitive challenges under the general supervision of certified RCs. Conduct outreach and job development to match Veterans strengths to local workforce needs. Facilitate job placement for Veterans by teaching valuable job search skills, resume/application development, interview skills and basic computer skills. Coordinate transportation to interviews/hiring events. Complete job analyses to facilitate job coaching and retention services to aid Veterans in learning and maintaining proficiency in performance of essential job tasks. Counsel Veterans regarding importance of soft skills (e.g. personal hygiene, cooperation with co-workers, and following instructions) when employed to enhance job satisfaction and foster natural supports in the workplace. Coordinate job search clubs for Veterans to improve in self-directed job search activities. Complete clinical charting and participate in professional peer reviews.

b. **Rehabilitation Counselor, GS-11**

(1) **Experience.** Completion of one year of professional experience equivalent to the next lower grade level directly related to the position being filled.

OR

(2) **Education.** A doctoral degree in rehabilitation counselor education or related field (e.g. rehabilitation psychology) from a CACREP accredited institution or from an institution accredited by a national or regional accrediting body accredited by CHEA.

(3) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills and Abilities.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate all of the following KSAs:

(a) Knowledge of physical and psychological disabilities, appropriate accommodations and assistive technology principles to mitigate and reduce or eliminate barriers to integrate into the community.

(b) Knowledge of counseling theory, medical and psychiatric terminology and signs and symptomology of suicidal and homicidal ideations, to communicate appropriately with community health care professionals to provide useful input to other team members and employers in relation to the Veteran and/or his/her family's psychosocial needs and to recommend and help implement suitable treatment plans.

(c) Ability to use evidence-based and evidence informed vocational and professional counseling practices to include individual placement and support (IPS), customized employment and supported employment models and motivational interviewing skills to promote self-awareness, adjustment to disability, enhanced job retention and successful integration to the community.

(d) Knowledge of career development processes and job analysis methodology to determine essential functions of jobs, worksite modifications and/or alternative vocational goals given the work history and residual functional capacities of individuals with disabilities.

(e) Ability to administer and interpret a wide variety of assessment methods including transferrable skills and labor market analyses to evaluate for individual interests, aptitudes and abilities and to identify suitable vocational goals for the development of an effective individual service delivery plan.

(f) Knowledge of marketing strategies to develop collaborative partnerships/Memorandums of Agreement within VA and local business community to enhance employment and/or work opportunities.

(g) Knowledge of military lifestyle, specific factors, and dynamics associated with Veterans, particularly combat Veterans, to assist those who are returning to community and community based-work.

(4) **Assignment.** This is the journey level for this assignment. Provide personal adjustment counseling, therapeutic rehabilitation interventions and case coordination services, utilizing evidence-informed and evidence-based modalities to aid Veterans with severe disabilities in achieving competitive employment and educational and independent living goals. Conduct biopsychosocial assessments using medical records, pertinent disability documentation, observation and interviews with Veterans and their support systems to generate personal, vocational, and educational histories. Select, administer and interpret vocational instruments to evaluate abilities, aptitudes, interests, values, preferences, transferrable skills and overall work resilience. Customize vocational exploration activities for identification of self-

determined rehabilitation needs and goals. Consult with interdisciplinary teams (IDT) to enhance coordination of care, ensure medical clearance, and provide for optimal timing of further interventions. Synthesize assessment information to identify barriers to employment and their vocational implications. Determine clinical need for and capacity to benefit from therapeutic and rehabilitation services to include: work restoration/resilience treatment, transitional work placement and compensation, supported employment, assistive technology, financial benefits counseling and potential benefits protections. Develop patient-centered treatment plans utilizing SMART goals and provides ongoing assessment of Veteran's progress. Procure and manage transitional work agreements from community, state and federal agencies. Monitor work site compliance with agreements to ensure Veterans are appropriately trained and evaluated consistent with industry standards. Devise solutions to reduce and/or eliminate barriers and meet Veterans' placement needs which may require substantial modification to environmental or functional demands within a work setting. Provide psychoeducational groups to teach effective job search skills, employer-desired soft skills and life skills fostering independence. Complete interpretive data reports. Provide disability education and program-specific training to staff and stakeholders. May supervise vocational rehabilitation students.

c. **Rehabilitation Counselor (Coordinator), GS-12**

(1) **Experience.** Completion of one year of professional experience at the next lower grade level directly related to the position being filled.

(2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills and Abilities.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate all of the following KSAs:

(a) Ability to address complexity of psychosocial rehabilitation factors and deliver timely and high-quality outcomes consistent with statutes, regulations and policies.

(b) Theoretical and practical knowledge of a range of rehabilitation service delivery systems for the administration and management of a clinical rehabilitation program.

(c) Ability to initiate and lead interdisciplinary groups of staff utilizing sound judgement and decision-making to improve customer service while delivering Veteran-focused and outcome-oriented health care.

(d) Knowledge of applicable accreditation bodies and standards to ensure long-term compliance.

(e) Knowledge of business administration practices such as managing participant payroll, accounting, billing, marketing, workforce development (vocational, educational and placement of Veterans) services and/or customer service to successfully operate a rehabilitation employment program.

(3) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level

duties must consist of significant scope, administrative independence, complexity (difficulty) and range of variety as described in this standard at the specified grade level and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Assists with the management of a clinical rehabilitation service delivery system within an organization which may include housing, independent living, vocational and educational services. Utilize complex rehabilitation counseling skills and motivational interviewing techniques not typically required in routine practice to assess a Veteran's self-awareness, adjustment to disability and work resilience. Exhibit clinical expertise through timely application of therapeutic interventions, case coordination, crisis intervention, IDT consultation, rehabilitation plan development and ongoing assessment and job development practices. Exercise professional judgement to arrange for suitable placement of Veterans with the most severe disabilities and employment challenges through skillful analysis of their abilities, aptitudes, preferences, disability conditions and resulting impairments. Ensure timely and accurate Veteran Compensated Work Therapy-Transitional Work (CWT-TW) payrolls, bills of collection, CWT Account balances, deposits to CWT Account and ensure all expenditures utilize approved budgeting procedures, including internal controls and separation of duties. Provide input and guidance on program evaluations, strategic plans and policy considerations to supervisor as appropriate for all interested VA entities and accrediting bodies. Monitor progress towards accomplishment of program goals and examines the benefits of process improvements. Provide oversight, support and feedback to lower level RCs and student interns on work assignments, time and caseload management and employment outcomes.

d. **Rehabilitation Counselor, GS-12**

(1) **Experience.** Completion of one year of professional experience equivalent to the next lower grade level directly related to the position being filled.

(2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills and Abilities.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate all the following KSAs:

(a) Ability to apply and teach principles and practices of the evidence-based model of individual placement and support, supported employment (IPS, SE), by engaging others in multiple training methods including hands-on, virtual and telephone trainings, utilizing excellent consultative, facilitative and organizational skills as well as coaching/listening skills.

(b) Ability to conduct in person coaching, develop community-wide learning events, and lead mock SE fidelity reviews to provide feedback regarding SE program services and adherence to the SE model.

(c) Skill to apply principles and practices of IPS, SE, psychiatric rehabilitation and recovery principles, customized employment and fidelity scale measures to successfully engage Veterans and care providers in the rehabilitation process.

(d) Skill to apply advanced counseling skills, crisis intervention and personal and

family counseling to intercede on behalf of Veterans, their families and significant others needing specific assistance with employment, housing and finances.

(3) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, administrative independence, complexity (difficulty) and range of variety as described in this standard at the specified grade level and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Serve as a CWT-SE trainer. Expand and guide VISN-wide recovery-oriented rehabilitation services within existing CWT-SE sites and/or provide training and guidance on establishment of new evidence-based CWT-SE programs. Develop curricula and uses teaching methods contextualized for adult learning styles. Lead learning communities consisting of all SE providers by developing workshops, scheduling guest speakers, facilitating discussions on email groups, sharing resource materials and facilitating networking among VISN SE sites. Participate in and/or facilitate regularly scheduled SE clinical conference calls and the national mentor trainer meetings. Review outcome data and discuss data implications for the delivery of employment services with the VISN learning community of SE providers. Organize training events on CWT-SE services. Lead other CWT-SE programs on best practices, use of fidelity scale to guide service delivery and in the analysis, development and implementation of the IPS, SE model as directed by VA Central Office (VACO). Disseminate communications with supervisors and staff of CWT-SE, provide technical assistance to staff and managers and collaborate with programs to prepare for periodic fidelity reviews and accreditation surveys.

e. **Supervisory Rehabilitation Counselor, GS-12**

(1) **Experience.** Completion of one year of professional experience equivalent to the next lower grade level directly related to the position being filled.

(2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills and Abilities.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate all of the following KSAs:

(a) Ability to supervise (e.g. plan, direct, oversee, review work of subordinate staff), assess employee strengths, opportunities for growth, and qualifications to accomplish program goals, adapt work operations, and guide staff.

(b) Knowledge of labor/management agreements to effectively manage issues and concerns.

(c) Knowledge of applicable accreditation bodies (i.e. Joint Commission and Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities) and their standards to ensure continuous compliance.

(d) Theoretical and practical knowledge of a range of rehabilitation delivery systems for the development, implementation, management and growth of rehabilitation programs and services.

(e) Knowledge of business administration practices such as managing participant

payroll, accounting, budget planning, to successfully operate a rehabilitation program.

(3) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, administrative independence, complexity (difficulty), and range of variety as described in this standard at the specified grade level and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. The incumbent must serve as first-level supervisor. Provide oversight of a group of RCs at the full performance level and below with administrative responsibility for planning and directing the work. They oversee attendance and leave, including approval of sick and annual leave and vacation schedules. Inform higher-level management of anticipated vacancies or increases in workload. Recommend promotions, reassignments, performance ratings, and retention or release of probationary employees or other changes of assigned personnel. Hold corrective interviews with employees, referring disciplinary problems to higher levels of management. Resolve informal complaints of employees and deals with union representatives on personnel matters. Provide clinical and technical supervision necessary for accomplishing the work of the organizational unit including adherence to the IPS model. Assist in development and revision of comprehensive policies, risk management, and strategic plans based on feedback from stakeholders, accrediting bodies, and program evaluation data. Estimate budgetary needs based on history, anticipated workload, and the production capability of the unit and makes justified requests or proposals. Maintain accounting controls, purchase cards, payroll, and fund control point specific to the CWT-TW Program. Compile statistical reports and data for local and national leadership.

f. **Rehabilitation Counselor, GS-12**

(1) **Experience.** Completion of one year of professional experience equivalent to the next lower grade level directly related to the position being filled.

(2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills and Abilities.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate all of the following KSAs:

(a) Skill in program management/administration of a wide range of rehabilitation program, including such areas as clinical specialties, finance and application of specialized practices for effective rehabilitation service delivery.

(b) Theoretical and practical knowledge of a range of rehabilitation delivery systems for the development, implementation, management and growth of rehabilitation programs and services.

(c) Ability to analyze organizational and operational problems and to develop and implement solutions that result in sound operation of the major specialty treatment program, such as a CWT program.

(d) Ability to communicate, both orally and in writing, to make clear, convincing presentations and reports, represent the agency and assigned program areas

and explain recommended proposals to local and national leadership.

(3) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, administrative independence, complexity (difficulty) and range of variety as described in this standard at the specified grade level and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. RCs at this level serve as program managers. Manage the administrative and clinical aspects of a major specialty treatment program, such as a CWT program (including CWT-TW and SE as required by VHA Handbook 1160.01, Uniform Mental Health Services in VA Medical Centers and Clinics). Manage work assignments, marketing, treatment services provided and admission, transition and discharge criteria for the programs. Develop strategic plans to meet major goals after conducting thorough assessment of priorities for vocational rehabilitation and CWT programming. Serve on local task forces and/or represents VA at professional/program community group/events and committees. Provide overall maintenance of accounting controls, billings, payroll, pay records and fund control point specific to the CWT-TW Program. Ensure accuracy of all financial reports connected with the program which are submitted to VACO. Manage the administrative and programmatic resource allocations (e.g., budgets, purchasing, labor mapping) within the CWT programs, including oversight for contracts related to CWT-TW. Ensure CWT operations, documentation, and information reporting systems are compliant with the standards of all relevant accrediting bodies.

g. **Supervisory Rehabilitation Counselor, GS-13**

(1) **Experience.** Completion of one year of professional experience equivalent to the next lower grade level directly related to the position being filled.

(2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate all of the following KSAs:

(a) Skill in leading others, assessing employee strengths, opportunities for growth and qualifications to accomplish program goals, adapt work operations and guide staff.

(b) Knowledge of labor/management agreements and how to follow their provisions to effectively manage issues and concerns.

(c) Knowledge of applicable accreditation bodies and their standards to ensure continuous compliance and successful maintenance of program accreditations.

(d) Ability to use both qualitative and quantitative methods for the development and implementation of meaningful program evaluation tools, study of program trends and program improvement.

(e) Knowledge of business administration practices such as managing payroll, accounting, budget planning, marketing, workforce development and customer service to successfully operate a rehabilitation program.

(3) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, administrative independence, complexity (difficulty) and range of variety as described in this standard at the specified grade level and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Supervisory RCs typically supervise a significant number of professional staff at the SE/Mentor Trainer and RC (Coordinator) level and below as well as other equivalent clinical staff. Lead, coordinate and manage all aspects of a clinical rehabilitation service delivery system within an organization. Supervise daily operations to include coordinating interdisciplinary staffing, treatment services, work assignments, budget, staff schedules, safety in the community, training requirements and conducts meetings. Determine which programs/projects should be initiated, expanded, revised or replaced through systematic analyses, program evaluations and accountability measures. Develop and revise comprehensive policies, risk management and strategic plans based on feedback from stakeholders, accrediting bodies and program evaluation data. Allocate program resources to improve quality and delivery of care provided to Veterans while considering staff talents and achieving program mission. Establish staff performance expectations and conduct staff work performance reviews. Effect disciplinary measures as appropriate based on the authority delegated to this area. Write position descriptions and/or functional statements and recommend or select for positions, career ladder promotions, within-grade increases, status changes, awards, staff travel and overtime. Maintain effective labor/management relationships and manage personnel in accordance with applicable laws, policies, directives and labor/management agreements. Resolve formal and informal complaints and grievances. Project budget based on historical and anticipated workload taking into consideration the production capability of the unit to make justified requests or proposals. Oversee the maintenance of billings, payroll, pay records, specific to the CWT-TW program and the accuracy of all financial reports connected with the program which are submitted to VACO. Maintain oversight of the administrative and programmatic resource allocations (e.g., budgets, purchasing, labor mapping) within the VHA Vocational Rehabilitation (VHA VR) programs, including oversight for Memorandum of Agreements (MOA) related to CWT-TW. Maintain accounting controls, functions as an approving official for purchase cards and fund control points.

h. **Supervisory Rehabilitation Counselor, GS-13**

(1) **Experience.** Completion of one year of professional experience equivalent to the next lower grade level directly related to the position being filled.

(2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills and Abilities.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate all of the following KSAs:

(a) Skilled in program management/administration of a wide range of rehabilitation programs, including such areas as clinical specialties, finance, accountability, oversight of work performed by program staff, consultation, negotiation and monitoring to successfully operate and enhance all programs.

(b) Ability to provide individual and group training, orientation, consultation and guidance within clinical specialization of rehabilitation counseling practice to develop, improve and maintain programming.

(c) Ability to monitor program outcomes using a data driven quality assurance process to make decisions associated with program management and the development of productivity standards appropriate to the service provided.

(d) Ability to translate leadership goals and objectives into well-coordinated and controlled work processes for effective program operations.

(e) Extensive knowledge of all legal guidelines governing the operation of CWT programs, their scope and their effect on clinical programming and service delivery.

(f) Skill in leading others, assess employee strengths, opportunities for growth and qualifications to accomplish program goals, adapt work operations and guide staff.

(3) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, administrative independence, complexity (difficulty) and range of variety as described in this standard at the specified grade level and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Serve as supervisor and program manager. Manage the administrative and clinical aspects of a major specialty treatment program, such as CWT, physical medicine & rehabilitation program, CWT-transitional residence (CWT-TR), homeless Veterans program, mental health residential rehabilitation treatment program or a psychosocial rehabilitation and recovery center located at one facility or multiple divisions of a facility. Coordinate interdisciplinary staffing, work assignments, budget, treatment services provided and admission, transition and discharge criteria for the programs. Supervise employees assigned to the program. Serve on local, VISN, and/or national VA committees or task forces and/or represents VA at professional/program community group/events and committees. Manage allocated budgetary resources and supervises the expenditure of funds; e.g., administrative travel, supplies, equipment and staff development in an efficient and economical manner. Utilize wide latitude and independent judgment in exercising line and staff authority for administrative and programmatic resource allocations (e.g., budgets, purchasing, labor mapping) within major specialty programs. Integrate major specialty treatment programs and services into the entire mental health continuum of care in collaboration with the senior leadership. Conduct surveys of rehabilitation facilities and agencies to promote the establishment of suitable medical and rehabilitation services not currently available, or to develop and implement pilot rehabilitation projects.

i. **Rehabilitation Counselor, GS-14**

(1) **Experience.** Completion of one year of professional experience equivalent to the

next lower grade level directly related to the position being filled.

(2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills and Abilities.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate all of the following KSAs:

(a) Ability to perform analytical studies and interpretation of results to coordinate the evaluation of programs, projects and to recommend improvements.

(b) Ability to communicate, both orally and in writing, to complete interpretative data reports and review outcomes to discuss implications of effectiveness and efficiency of services.

(c) Ability to guide the development of productivity standards appropriate to each service provided to optimize efficiency of resources.

(d) Ability to represent VHA rehabilitation related programs within VISN leadership and local stakeholders of public interest groups and/or events.

(3) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, administrative independence, complexity (difficulty), and range of variety as described in this standard at the specified grade level and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. RCs at this level are located at the service line or VISN level. Provide oversight of the service line or VISN to ensure administrative management of the clinical rehabilitation service delivery system by securing the resources necessary to implement and integrate emerging practices into existing programs. Develop strategic plans for this continuum of care involving work restoration/resilience, supported employment and residential rehabilitation programs through assessing, organizing and evaluating network and/or local outcome data. Develop network and/or local program standards utilizing clinical practice guidelines to include program specific manuals, memoranda, issue briefs, information letters and other documentation pertaining to clinical rehabilitation and employment programs. Collaborate with VISN and/or facility leadership and supervisors in a wide variety of areas including workload data capture, decision support systems, managerial cost accounting, reporting and data analysis, strategic analytics for improvement and learning, Northeast Program Evaluation Center, homeless operations management, and evaluation system program monitoring. Collect relevant program outcome data from various program evaluation systems to monitor and support facility and/or network compliance with national directives and guidelines. Prepare and maintain accurate statistical and narrative records and reports for VISN and/or facility leadership. Maintain efficient management of clinical rehabilitation services through ongoing assessment of cost effectiveness and adherence to procurement regulations thereby ensuring solvency for funds used in the operation of major programs such as the CWT and CWT-TR programs.

j. **Rehabilitation Counselor, GS-14**

(1) **Experience.** Completion of one year of professional experience equivalent to the

next lower grade level directly related to the position being filled.

(2) **Demonstrated Knowledge, Skills and Abilities.** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate all of the following KSAs:

(a) Ability to communicate, both orally and in writing, to make clear, convincing presentations and reports, explain or justify recommendations, represent the agency and assigned program areas, provide guidance and advise VISN/local program managers and supervisors.

(b) Ability to make appropriate decisions in a wide variety of situations in the absence of written guidelines without being able to consult with senior staff.

(c) Knowledge of legislative and statutory authorities, laws, policies, precedents, mandates of the US Code of Federal Regulations, Board of Veterans Appeals and Office of General Counsel for application to the administration and guidance of VA VISN/Central Office programs.

(d) Ability to represent VHA rehabilitation related programs with leadership from state and local governments, congressional district office staff, and professionals of local public interest groups and/or events.

(3) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, administrative independence, complexity (difficulty) and range of variety as described in this standard at the specified grade level and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. RCs at this level are located at Central Office and provide administrative management of a major organizational component within VHA's clinical rehabilitation service delivery system. Create instruments for data collection and perform program analyses for trends and operational quality to lead program and service expansion within VHA. Consult with multidisciplinary elements within the organization, academia, community and private industry to develop research projects and enhanced clinical opportunities utilizing evidence-based practices that support the VHA rehabilitation programs' mission and objectives. Develop strategic plans and program guidelines for VHA's clinical rehabilitation programs through assessing, organizing, and evaluating national outcome data. Provide expert advice and technical assistance to VACO, program managers and field supervisors concerning all program evaluation systems and relevant outcome data to improve efficacy of VHA clinical rehabilitation programming. Prepare and maintain accurate statistical and narrative records and reports for VHA leadership on issues regarding legal or legislative matters that may require consultation within a specified time. Provide oversight and development of standard policies for all financial operations of VHA's clinical rehabilitation service delivery system. Represent the organization with respect to contract changes, adjustments, resolution of contract claims, work delays and settlements.

6. DEVIATIONS.

a. The approving official may, under unusual circumstances, approve reasonable

deviations to the grade determination requirements for an employee whose composite record of accomplishments, performance, and qualifications, as well as current assignment, warrants such action based on demonstrated competence to meet the requirements of the proposed grade.

b. Under no circumstances will the education requirements be waived.

c. The placement of individuals in grade levels or assignments not described in this standard may only be approved by the Under Secretary for Health, or designee, in VHA Central Office prior to placement in the position.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: Human Resources and Administration/Operations, Security and Preparedness (HRA/OSP) (006), Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO) (05), Recruitment and Placement Policy Service (059)