

Date: October 4, 2023

From: Chief Counsel, Benefits Law Group

Subj: TEF Training Plan – Benefits Law Group

To: Management, Planning, and Analysis

1. Initial Onboarding and Training Period: It takes 1 year of training for attorneys to become qualified to handle TEF matters.

2. Nature of Work: In the Benefits Law Group (BLG), TEF attorneys are required to handle a wide variety of legal matters related to benefits based on toxic exposure including, but not limited to, the following:

- Preparing legal briefs in litigation before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.
- Assisting in the drafting and review of VA regulations implementing the PACT Act or other authorities.
- Legislative work, including drafting and reviewing testimony for legislative and oversight hearings, views letters, and technical assistance.
- Providing written and oral guidance to program officials and senior leaders.
- Advising on and participating in VA processes under Title II of the PACT Act for evaluating conditions for new presumptions of service connection.

3. Issues related to toxic exposures and VA benefits are often complex, raising a combination of legal, scientific/medical, and procedural questions. Addressing such issues requires not only strong legal research, analysis, and writing skills but also knowledge and understanding of the law and procedures governing entitlement to VA disability compensation benefits and the legislative and regulatory process.

4. Nature of Training: Training for this position is primarily experiential on-the-job training acquired through supervised assignments of progressive complexity designed to provide an introduction to the law and procedures governing VA benefits. Supervisors will provide guidance and tailored feedback to ensure progression. An experienced attorney will be assigned as a peer mentor during the first year in the position, to further aid in knowledge and skill development. Formal training on administrative and operational matters will be provided through OGC's New Employee Orientation program and assigned coursework in VA's Talent Management System. Formal training on substantive law will be provided through contracted training in regulatory law and the legislative process and such other training as may be identified. Additional informal training will be provided through relevant reading materials (including statutes, regulations, case law, and treatises) and observation of

moot courts and oral arguments. Through this process, attorneys generally are expected to possess the knowledge and skills to handle most matters relating to VA benefits based on toxic exposure within approximately one year from onboarding.

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