



United States Department of Veterans Affairs

Office of General Counsel Honors Program

The Honors Attorney Program in the Office of General Counsel (OGC) at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs seeks outstanding law school graduates committed to public service. This program is designed to attract eligible individuals interested in a legal career with a federal agency practicing a wide array of legal fields, such as: government contracts law, real estate law, administrative law, labor/personnel law, and litigation. This program provides new attorneys with challenging legal work, professional development opportunities, and an opportunity to serve United States Veterans.

About VA

The Department of Veterans Affairs is the second largest federal agency and runs programs benefitting Veterans and members of their families and includes three primary organizations, Veterans Health Administration, Veterans Benefits Administration, and National Cemetery Administration. The VA employs over 425,000 employees. OGC is comprised of approximately 850 employees. VA offers education opportunities, rehabilitation services, and provides compensation payments for disabilities or death related to military service. It facilitates home loan guaranties, pensions, burials, and health care that includes the services of nursing homes, clinics, and medical centers. The VA's mission is to provide Veterans with the world-class benefits and services they have earned - and to do so by adhering to the highest standards of compassion, commitment, excellence, professionalism, integrity, accountability, and stewardship.

Interested to work with us?

The Office of General Counsel identifies and meets the legal needs of the large and complex Department of Veterans Affairs. OGC is committed to providing the best legal service to those who are carrying out the promise to Veterans made by Abraham Lincoln in his 2nd inaugural address of 1865: To care for those who have served in our nation's military and for their families, caregivers, and survivors. OGC's primary objective is to ensure the just and faithful execution of the laws, regulations, and policies that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs has responsibility for administering, thereby enabling the Department to accomplish its mission of service to our Nation's Veterans.

OGC serves as VA's in-house counsel and is committed to ensuring that every member of OGC is focused on how OGC's work impacts Veterans and has an understanding and commitment to the business priorities of VA clients, many of whom directly serve Veterans. The General Counsel is a Presidential Appointee and by statute, the Department's Chief Legal Officer. OGC attorneys also act as business partners, providing sound legal expertise, and as needed, critical problem-solving skills, and risk management advice.

OGC attorneys work with Congress to support VA's efforts to offer the best care for Veterans. OGC attorneys provide technical assistance on legislative proposals, advise on pending legislation, and review Congressionally - mandated reports. For example, OGC has been providing legal support on up-and-coming issues delegated to the VA by the Mission Act (authorizing VA providers to use Telehealth technologies to deliver care to Veterans' homes) and the PACT Act (expanding VA healthcare and benefits for Veterans exposed to toxic substances). OGC provides a full range of legal and litigation services, as well as support for legislative and regulatory activities through its Chief Counsels who lead the Washington D.C based Law Groups, five regional law Offices, two National Practice Groups, the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims Litigation Group, and the Ethics Specialty Team.

Honors Program

The OGC Honors program seeks eligible individuals interested in an intellectually stimulating career serving United States Veterans. The program will select a limited number of applicants to begin working in the Summer or Fall of 2025. OGC will designate the number and location of positions based on current agency needs. Honors

attorneys will gain valuable experience in the Federal sector and benefit from OGC training in a wide variety of orientations and various Education and Training Committee presentations.

Eligibility

- Highly qualified third-year law students expected to be awarded a J.D. prior to July of 2025.
- Fourth-year students graduating from four-year programs, combination programs, or L.L.M. programs immediately after law school from accredited schools.
- Federal or state judicial law clerks with no more than two years of clerkship experience prior to the start date for the Honors Attorney Program.
- Recent law school graduates who entered judicial clerkships, graduate law programs or qualifying legal fellowships within 9 months of law school graduation.
- Only U.S. citizens are eligible for employment in the Honors Attorney Program.

Selection Criteria

- Demonstrated Academic Excellence
- The top third of law school class
- Involvement in extra-curricular activities (law school journal, moot court, other bar/law student organizations)
- Internship Experience Commitment to Public Service

Compensation & Benefits

Individuals hired into a position within one year of graduation from law school are hired at the GS-11 pay grade. Attorneys hired following judicial clerkships may be considered for a GS-12 pay grade depending on the duration of the clerkship.

Individuals may be eligible for Public Service Loan Forgiveness.

Individuals will receive federal employee benefits including:

Annual and Sick Leave

Federal Employee Health Benefits Federal Employee Life Insurance Program

Participation in Federal Employee Retirement System

Participation in Thrift Savings Plan

Application Process

The application period begins January 20, 2025, and will close on February 18, 2025.

Application materials must be combined as a single PDF and must include:

Cover Letter - no more than one-page Resume

Law School Transcripts

Writing Sample - between 5-10 pages References

No more than three references

- One reference must be from a member of the law school staff or a current or former employer.

Visit our Website!

- Log onto: <https://www.va.gov/OGC/opportunities.asp>.
- Click on Office of General Counsel VA Honors Program for more information.
- Program updates and additional information on the application process will be posted on the OGC website.
- Questions can be emailed to: trevor.falnes@va.gov and OGCHonorsProgram@va.gov

VA Central Office (VACO) 810 Vermont Avenue, NW Washington, D.C. 20420



202-461-4998



202-273-9384



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