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, including 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.

Visit our Website:

- Log onto: https://www.va.gov/OGC
- 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.
- Applications and any and all questions can be emailed to: OGCHonorsProgram@va.gov

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 March 15, 2023, and will close on April 15, 2023.

- 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 - no less than 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

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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.

Eligibility:

- Highly qualified third-year law students expected to be awarded a J.D. prior to July of 2023.
- 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