

To: Commissioners Court

From: Cynthia Jacobson

Re: Reclass Request

Veterans Services is facing an unprecedented situation where there are no employees in this department and all of the positions have to be filled. With the loss of two extremely experienced personnel it has become necessary for us to reorganize the department.

Unfortunately, both the Veterans Services Officer and the Assistant Veterans Services Officer retired on the same day. The prior Veterans Services Officer used his years of experience to process one of the largest volumes of veterans claims in the State. With his loss, we are having to hire a new Veterans Services Officer and unfortunately we were not able to recruit an experienced individual. With the large number of claims this office sees it will overload one new VSO, especially given that the experienced VSO had indicated concerns over the ability to handle the volume and referenced the high workload with not enough staff as one of his reasons for leaving. Given the complete transition of personnel, two Veterans Services Officers are needed for the county. This can be accomplished without adding any staff and instead, reclassing the Assistant Veterans Services Officer to a Veterans Services Officer. Both individuals will be learning in a similar time frame and will be able to provide support and backup for each other. If we only have one VSO, when that person is out there is no one authorized to process claims. There are extremely strict guidelines for processing veterans claims. Having two people to serve the veterans of Collin County rather than one with an assistant will ensure that claims can get processed even if one of the individuals is out of the office. It will also hopefully prevent us from ever being without a Veterans Services Officer should one of them decide to leave their employment with the county. The formalized training class for VSO's is only offered once per year so we could be left in a difficult situation again if one left and we did not have another VSO trained.

In addition to the VSO reclass, we are also requesting a reclass of two part time positions into one full time Secretarial position. Veterans previously had a full time position but in an effort to control costs for the county Veterans agreed to change the positions to two part time positions. As stated previously, with the loss of the experienced personnel in the office, it has become necessary to request a full time position that can handle the day to day management of purchasing, responding to phone calls and dealing with the large volume of paperwork which much be input into the computer. In an effort to provide as much assistance as possible to the new VSO's, our current plan is to hire a veteran for this position so that the individual can qualify for training and will be able to respond to basic questions that the veterans may have, thus freeing up the VSO's for the difficult issues. We respectfully request to reclass our two part time tech positions to one full time Secretary.

Current plans are to bring on all new personnel at the beginning of the pay range resulting in significant cost savings from the prior budgeted amounts.

I understand that it is out of timing for requesting a reclass, however I know of no situation in the county where an entire department has to be staffed for all positions. The request is consistent with allowing reclasses for new elected officials who may need to reorganize their department. We have allowed reclasses in those instances to be out of cycle. These reclasses need to be done now so that we can properly hire individuals who can serve those who have given so much to serve our country.

Thank you for your consideration.