# POSITION DESCRIPTION

**Deputy Secretary, Department of Veterans Affairs**

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| **OVERVIEW** |
| Senate Committee | Veterans’ Affairs  |
| Agency Mission | To fulfill President Lincoln's promise "To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan" by serving and honoring the men and women who are America's veterans. |
| Position Overview | The Deputy Secretary serves as the department’s chief operating officer, directing the policy and operations of the department and providing broad direction to the department’s employees to ensure coordinated action and conformance with the secretary’s directives. The Deputy Secretary shall perform such functions as the Secretary requests. The Deputy Secretary chairs the department’s governance process through the Strategic Management Council and leads the Business Oversight Board and the Capital Investment Board. The Deputy Secretary also co-chairs the VA-Department of Defense (DOD) Senior Oversight Committee.Unless the President designates another officer of the government, the Deputy Secretary becomes Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs during the absence or disability of the Secretary or in the event of a vacancy in the Office of the Secretary. (38 U.S.C. § 304) |
| Compensation | Level II $179,700 (5 U.S.C. § 5313)[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | Secretary of Veterans Affairs |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| Management Scope | The VA is the second-largest federal department and employs more than 340,000 individuals in a nationwide network of 144 medical centers, 1,203 community-based outpatient clinics, 300 vet centers and 56 regional offices. The VA also oversees a network of cemeteries, 131 of them national and 90 of them state or tribal. The VA administers its work through three major organizations: the Veterans Health Administration, the Veterans Benefits Administration and the National Cemetery Administration Services. The Department of Veterans Affairs’ budget for fiscal 2018 is over $185 billion. As chief operating officer, the Deputy Secretary manages staff across the organization, not just those in his or her direct office. |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Oversees the activities of the VA’s executive director, Office of Acquisitions, Logistics and Construction
* Oversees the department’s governance process
* Chairs the department’s Strategic Management Council, Business Oversight Board and Capital Investment Board
* Co-chairs the VA-DOD Senior Oversight Committee
* Executes the President’s and Secretary’s strategic plan for the agency by dealing with the overall operations, managing the individual departments and integrating mission-support functions with program and policy objectives
* Works with peers in other agencies, the Office of Management and Budget, stakeholders (e.g., local or state governments) and Congress, as needed
* Resolves interagency conflict
* Serves as a key advisor to the secretary on all matters pertaining to the agency
* Ensures that the agency’s components are delivering their programs and services with integrity, and in an effective and efficient manner
* Develops and manages complementary internal management processes that coordinate across programs
* Represents the secretary in public and private meetings including dealings with the White House, Congress, state governments and trade groups
* Oversees internal Government Performance and Results Act processes
* Works closely with the Secretary, Chief of Staff and CXOs
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| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** |
| Requirements | * Relationships with and understanding of missions and purpose of major national veteran service organizations and national military service organizations
* Strong knowledge of VA health care and benefit programs
* Understanding of joint VA-DOD veteran-related programs and collaborations
* Strong understanding or experience in federal procurement
* Proven ability and experience leading and managing a large and complex enterprise
* Previous experience with federal government enterprise operations
* Understanding of core services, programs and initiatives delivered by the agency’s key departments
* Experience dealing with high-profile stakeholders
* Veteran status (strongly preferred)
* Experience leading through unexpected crisis situations (preferred)
* Familiarity with the federal budget process (preferred)
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| Competencies | * Demonstrated ability to resolve conflicts within a large organization
* Comfortable taking charge when leading and managing the agency, since deputy secretaries often have very vague or undefined statutory responsibilities and authorities
* Ability to establish positive relationships with co-workers and external stakeholders
* Ability to forge strong congressional relationships (preferred)
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| **PAST APPOINTEES** |
| Thomas G. Bowman (August 2017 – June 2018): Majority Staff Director, Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee; Chief of Staff, Deputy Chief of Staff, Senior Advisor to the Secretary, and Deputy Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Legislative Affairs, VA; Infantry and Judge Advocate Officer, United States Marine Corps |
| Sloan D. Gibson (February 2014 – 2017): President and CEO of the USO; Chairman and Chief Financial Officer, AmSouth Bancorporation (20+ years in banking overall); Chair, United Way campaign, Central Alabama |
| W. Scott Gould (April 2009 – May 2013): Vice President for Public Sector Strategy, IBM Global Business Services; CEO, The O'Gara Company (an investment services firm); COO, Exolve (a technology services company) |
| Gordon H. Mansfield (January 2004 – January 2009): Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Legislative Affairs, VA; Executive Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America; Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, Department of Housing and Urban Development |
| Dr. Leo S. Mackay, Jr. (May, 2001 – September 2003): Vice President, Aircraft Services Business Unit, Bell Helicopter; Director of Market Development, Lockheed Martin |

1. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31, May 5, 2017), contains a provision that continues the freeze on the payable pay rates for certain senior political officials at 2013 levels during calendar year 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)