# POSITION DESCRIPTION

# Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning, 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 assistant secretary for policy and planning serves as the principal advisor to the secretary on all matters of policy and organizational strategy.[[1]](#endnote-1) This appointee acts as chief strategy officer for the secretary and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Previous office holder interacted daily with the deputy secretary and chief of staff  |
| Compensation | Level IV $155,500 (5 U.S.C. § 5315)[[2]](#endnote-2) |
| Position Reports to | Secretary of Veterans Affairs  |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| Management Scope | The Department of Veterans Affairs’ budget for fiscal 2018 is over $185 billion. The Office of Policy and Planning has 200 direct employees and indirect oversight of about 20,000 employees across the secretarial initiatives throughout the department, The office has a budget of $100 million and oversight of $2 billion in secretarial initiatives. The assistant secretary manages the offices of Enterprise Integration, Corporate Analysis and Evaluation, Data Governance and Analysis, Policy, Interagency Collaboration and Integration, Operations and Performance Management.[[3]](#endnote-3) |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Leads the department’s strategic future foresight and assessment
* Leads the collaboration with the Department of Defense (DOD), the Department of Health and Human Services, and other agencies
* Coordinates business strategy development
* Integrates mission requirements
* Conducts forward-thinking strategic planning to address long-range issues
* Ensures integration of business requirements and alignment of the planning and execution activities of the department’s programs and initiatives
* Leads and manages the department’s policy management process and provides policy analysis support to the secretary
* Is responsible for overall data management, data analysis and business intelligence strategies to inform VA-wide decision-making and respond to congressional queries for statistics on veterans[[4]](#endnote-4)
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| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** |
| Requirements | * Advanced degree in public policy, public health or military strategy (ideal)
* More than 25 years of experience in strategy formulation and management, as well as prior assignments in senior federal service (a plus)
* Understanding of how the legislative process works and awareness of the legislative issues impacting the agency
* Closeness and alignment with the secretary
* Experience in health care, insurance or military industries (preferred)
* Familiarity with statistics and actuarial processes (a plus)
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| Competencies | * Strong communication and interpersonal skills
* Ability to coordinate among all areas of VA (essential to the strategic planning process)
* Excellent leadership skills
* Strong policy skills
* Ability to deal with short deadlines from Congress with detailed data accuracy
* Ability to handle sensitive matters
* Ability to work in a matrixed agency
* Willingness and ability to be part of a committed leadership team, since there is a great deal of interaction with the undersecretaries to coordinate the VA strategic plan and respond to data requests from Congress
* Strong track record in turnarounds and change management
* Willingness to meet with direct reports and the secretary, but also with those one to two levels down
* Willingness to spend time learning the history of the VA
* Strong relationships with the secretary and the White House so policy formulation and decision-making are integrated across VA, the Office of Management and Budget, the National Security Council and the Office of the President
* Ability to network within VA and with counterparts in DOD (a plus)
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| **CURRENT AND PAST APPOINTEES** |
| Melissa Sue Glynn (2017 to Present): Managing Director, Alvarez and Marsal; Principal, PricewaterhouseCoopers; Co-Director of the Center for the Management of Information at the University of Arizona [[5]](#endnote-5) |
| Dr. Linda Schwartz (2014 to 2017) Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs; Associate Clinical Professor of Nursing at the Yale School of Nursing; caseworker in the Office of the Field Director of the American Red Cross at Rhein-Main Air Base[[6]](#endnote-6) |
| Raul Perea-Henze, MD, MPH (2010 to 2013): Head of Global Medical and Regulatory Policy at Merck & Co.; Team Leader for Global Medical Affairs and Science Policy at Pfizer, Inc.; Assistant Secretary for Management and Budget, Department of Commerce[[7]](#endnote-7) |
| Patrick W. Dunne (2006 to 2008): Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy; Special Assistant to the Chief of Naval Operations for Joint Chiefs of Staff Matters/Navy Planner; Congressional Liaison Officer for Submarine Programs, Department of the Navy[[8]](#endnote-8) |

1. VA.gov [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. 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-2)
3. Leadership Directories [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. VA.gov [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Whitehouse.gov [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. VA.gov [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. ObamaWhiteHouse.archives.gov [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. VA.gov [↑](#endnote-ref-8)