

DYNAMIC

INNOVATIVE

COLLABORATIVE

# OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY



VA CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

*VA – The career you want, the future you deserve*



*“To Care for Him Who Shall  
Have Borne the Battle and for  
His Widow, and His Orphan.”*

*- Abraham Lincoln, March 1865*

## WHY VA?

### ★ THE BEST CARE

#### **VA – Keeping the Promise to Those Who Served**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is one of the largest, most technologically advanced health care systems in the United States. Our employees work at 154 medical centers, 875 ambulatory and community-based outpatient clinics, 136 nursing homes, and many other facilities, such as domiciliaries and readjustment counseling centers. More than a century ago, President Lincoln made a promise to America’s servicemen and women, pledging the care and concern of a grateful Nation for the sacrifices they made to preserve freedom. Since 1930, VA’s mission has been to keep that promise.

### ★ THE BEST CAREERS

#### **VA and Occupational Therapy**

A career as an occupational therapist with VA offers a future that is dynamic, innovative, and collaborative. As valued members of the VA system’s patient care teams, occupational therapists contribute directly to the interdisciplinary process of planning for patient care, and they apply the latest advances in rehabilitative treatment. In return for their commitment to quality health care for our Nation’s Veterans, VA offers its occupational therapists competitive salaries, first-rate employment benefits, nationwide job transfer opportunities, and ample paid leave. Consider a career as a VA occupational therapist and be rewarded by the essential role you’ll play in helping VA keep the promise to those who served.

## THE BEST PATIENTS

Young or old, male or female, it doesn't matter: Veterans have a special camaraderie with each other. And as any VA occupational therapist will explain, Veterans extend that bond to their rehabilitation care team. From injured active duty personnel to middle age and elderly Veterans, our patients rely on their VA caregivers to develop unique and resourceful treatment interventions, often for complex medical conditions. Veterans count on VA for rehabilitative care – some for the rest of their lives. Regardless of financial resources, the enrolled Veteran is assured treatment from the onset of a condition through goal achievement, or until maximum benefit from interventions is achieved. As a result, VA occupational therapists form lasting relationships with many brave, grateful individuals who have served our Nation.

## THE BEST TECHNOLOGY

VA is committed to technology-driven care that enhances staff performance and improves patient results. After years of development, VA now has the most comprehensive Computerized Patient Records System in the Nation. The system puts each Veteran's medical records, lab results, x-rays, EKGs, and more at the fingertips of occupational therapists and the entire patient care team as they work together to design treatment interventions. In addition, VA rehabilitation teams also experience the benefit of working with today's state-of-the-art assistive technologies with the goal of improving patient independence.

## THE BEST NETWORKING

Like no other health care system, VA offers vast networking opportunities for occupational therapists. Through online mail groups and regular conference calls, VA's occupational therapists have access to hundreds of their peers to share and learn new information and rehabilitative techniques. Many VA occupational therapists are leaders in the field who serve as in-house mentors and regularly share their research and best practices. The National VA Occupational Therapy Advisory Council also partners with the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) to advocate for needed change at the national level. When you join the VA health care team, you join a large, organized voice for occupational therapy.



*“Having worked in the private sector, I can honestly say that this is the best place I have ever worked. We have flexibility with our programs. We have a pet therapy program, work with both inpatients and outpatients, and we are involved in many hospital-wide projects. We truly make a difference, for Veterans and in our profession.”*

— Liz Downes  
OTR/L, Chief Occupational Therapist, White River Junction

— Wilbur  
CTD (Certified Therapy Dog), CGC (Canine Good Citizen)

### Urban Beat

*Nightlife doesn't get any better when you live in urban America. From New York City to Chicago, VA offers employment opportunities in rhythm with the Nation's coolest hotspots.*





# OPPORTUNITIES

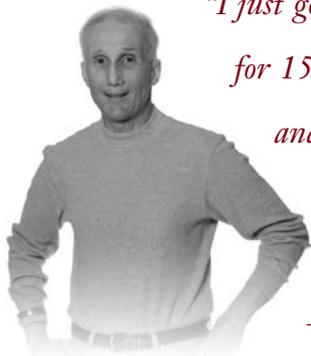
## OFFERING A WIDER RANGE OF CLINICAL CARE SETTINGS FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS

As one of the largest health care systems in the Nation, and the single largest employer of occupational therapists, VA provides you with a wider range of opportunities across the continuum of clinical care practice settings, including:

- Acute Care
- Community-based care
- Drivers' rehabilitation
- Ergonomics
- Geriatrics and psychogeriatrics
- Hand therapy
- Inpatient rehabilitation
- Mental health
- Neurology
- Oncology
- Orthopedics
- Outpatient Care
- Pain management
- Post-traumatic stress
- Rheumatology
- Spinal cord injury
- Substance abuse
- Traumatic brain injury
- Wheelchair seating and positioning
- Work hardening

## PROVIDING A RICH ENVIRONMENT FOR CLINICAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Occupational therapists with a special interest in clinical education or research find a rich environment at VA because of our numerous affiliations with colleges and universities. Many VA occupational therapists help guide students' fieldwork experiences. Others conduct ongoing research in conjunction with various learning institutions in geriatrics, assistive technology, hand rehabilitation, and mental health. VA occupational therapists are well published in nationally recognized professional journals, and many have been elected to leadership positions in regional and national health care organizations.



*"I just got lucky. After having worked for 15 years in a variety of private and public hospitals, it is not an exaggeration to say that the VA feels like the Promised Land."*

— Rob Gallup  
OT, San Francisco

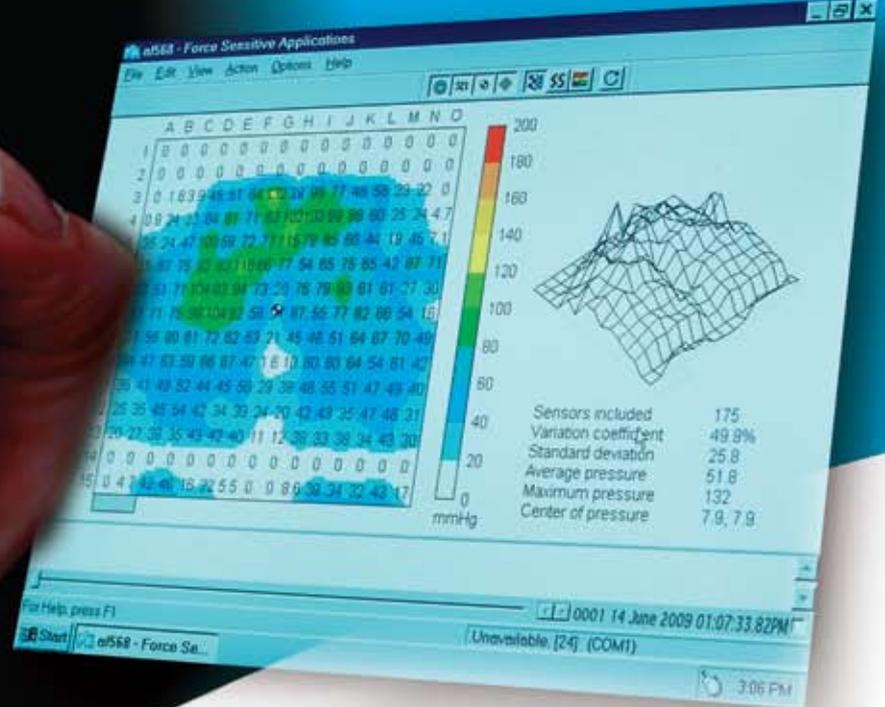


*"VA is the first place I have worked as an occupational therapist where I feel like I have the time, resources, and support to provide the services the patient truly needs."*

— Jennifer Boyce  
OTR/L, Seattle

## Did you know that VA:

- ★ Employs nearly 800 registered occupational therapists
- ★ Provides clinical education each year to more than 460 occupational therapy students
- ★ Provides inpatient care to about 750,000 Veterans and manages more than 40 million outpatient visits each year through medical centers and supporting facilities
- ★ Has facilities in all 50 states, U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia
- ★ Is committed to improving patient care through the use of technology, including a Computerized Patient Records System, wireless handheld connectivity, and more
- ★ Works cooperatively with the Department of Defense to provide special care programs to active duty military personnel with spinal cord injuries, traumatic brain injuries, and amputations
- ★ Provides medical care backup to military hospitals during national emergencies, and operates command centers to coordinate services through the National Disaster Medical Service during major disasters



## BENEFITS

VA's mission is to provide the best possible care for America's Veterans. In return for helping VA achieve this goal, VA offers extensive employment benefits.

### LEAVE AND INSURANCE

- 13 to 26 days annual paid vacation depending on years of service
- 13 sick days and 10 holidays
- 15 days paid annual military leave
- Family and Medical Leave Act, which allows employees to take up to 12 weeks of leave for medical reasons, for the birth or adoption/foster care of a child, and for the care of a child, spouse, or parent who has a serious health problem
- Choice of group health insurance plans with the majority of premiums paid by the Federal Government; insurance may become effective as soon as the first full pay period after beginning duty
- Term life insurance, family, and additional coverage options are available with the cost shared by the Federal Government

### RETIREMENT

Employees are covered by the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS). FERS, a three-tier retirement plan, is comprised of Social Security benefits, FERS basic benefits, and the Thrift Saving Plan (TSP). TSP is a tax-deferred savings plan with an automatic base contribution and partial matching of employee contributions by the Federal Government.



*"I accepted a position within a VA Spinal Cord Injury Unit just several weeks after graduating from OT school. Since then, VA*

*has afforded me continuing education and research opportunities that the private sector could not offer."*

*— Julie Blakey  
OT, Augusta*



## MOBILITY AND LICENSURE

VA medical facilities are located in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. An employee may transfer to any location where there is an available vacancy without loss of benefits and usually no loss in pay. Multiple certifications are not required. Occupational therapists may practice in any VA medical facility, regardless of location, with possession of written documentation that they have passed the Certification Examination for Occupational Therapists Registered, which is administered by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy.

## LIABILITY PROTECTION

VA occupational therapists are protected by the Federal Tort Claims Act when functioning within their Federal scope of practice. This statute provides immunity from personal liability for damages arising from medical malpractice or negligence by health care personnel of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) in furnishing medical care or treatment in the exercise of their official duties in or for VHA.

## WORKPLACE BENEFITS

- Smoke-free and drug-free workplace
- Childcare at some facilities
- Childcare subsidy program
- Free parking at most facilities
- Uniform allowance (if applicable)
- Credit unions
- Employee association
- Dining facilities
- Tax-free retail store, and online military exchange shopping
- Employee wellness programs



*“My primary duties are to provide direct patient care. However, unlike many other occupational therapy work settings, we’re also encouraged to join the various committees that help run the medical center. I’ve been a member of the ethics committee, the safety committee, and other task groups that have offered personal and professional growth, as well as variety to my job.”*

— James Pottenger  
OTR/L, San Francisco



## Coastal Living

*Hot sun, sandy beaches, and great times with friends – all are yours when you live near the coast. Choose a VA facility near the West Coast or East Coast and all your downtime is beach time.*



*“When I started working at VA, it was just a job with a good salary and excellent benefits. As the years passed and I got to know the Veterans, I became proud of being able to serve them. After almost 19 years, I enjoy every working day and return home feeling completely satisfied with my professional life.”*

*— Zaida E. Garrett-Acosta  
OTR/L, San Juan*



# EDUCATION

## EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Department of Veterans Affairs recognizes the importance of ongoing education and the benefit it provides to both Veteran patients and employees. VA encourages career development for occupational therapists through the following programs (all of which are subject to the availability of funding at each facility):

**Upward Mobility Training Programs** – These programs offer, on a competitive basis, opportunities to advance to higher level positions.

**In-service Education Programs** – These programs are offered locally and through the VA Employee Education System (EES).

**Employee Incentive Scholarship Program (EISP)** – This scholarship program allows VHA employees to further their education and obtain degrees qualifying them for health care positions for which recruitment and retention is difficult.

**Tuition Support Program** – Employees in health care disciplines identified as VA shortage categories are eligible for funding to enroll in job-related courses, continuing education courses, and conferences.

Additional educational opportunities for VA occupational therapists include:

- Preceptorships for occupational therapy students in affiliated clinical education programs
- Tuition support for job-related and continuing education courses
- National and regional education programs developed for occupational therapy staff
- Paid time off for approved continuing education programs
- On-site formal and informal education programs

VA offers five programs that advance my professional career as an occupational therapist.





# HIRING POLICIES

## QUALIFICATIONS

Minimum qualifications for appointment as a VA occupational therapist are:

- U.S. citizenship (non-citizens may be appointed on a temporary basis when qualified citizens are not available)
- Must have graduated from a degree program in occupational therapy approved by the Accreditation Council for Occupational Therapy Education (ACOTE) or predecessor organizations to include an internship (supervised fieldwork experience required by the educational institution).
- Must hold a full, current, and unrestricted state license, certification, or registration or trademark to practice occupational therapy in a state, territory, commonwealth of the United States, or in the District of Columbia.
- Certification by the National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy
- English language proficiency
- Personal interview
- Satisfactory physical examination; may include drug screening

## SALARY INFORMATION

- VA offers competitive salaries that meet or exceed the community standard.
- Starting salaries and grades are recommended by the Occupational Therapy Professional Standards Board based on professional education, training, and experience.
- Special entrance salary rates and ongoing special salary rates are in effect at many locations based on pay-related staffing needs and locality cost of living.
- The GS scale is revised periodically based on the rate of increase in private sector salaries.
- Occupational therapists are awarded regular increases within each grade based on demonstrated performance. Accelerated increases within each grade may be awarded for outstanding performance and achievement. Achievement increases may be given for research, publication, academic appointments, advanced degrees, and election to an office of a professional organization.
- Occupational therapists receive periodic consideration for promotion to higher grades with correspondingly higher salaries as experience requirements and performance standards are met.
- VA offers premium pay for occupational therapists asked to work overtime, on-call, night, weekend, or holiday duty.



### **The Heartland Choice**

*Sun-soaked prairies in summer, snow-covered rolling hills in winter – the Midwest is a nature lover’s dream. Working for VA, you have a broad choice of locations in the Nation’s heartland.*



*“I consider myself fortunate to work at VA. It’s one of the few places where you can be true to the core values of occupational therapy, and there are limitless opportunities for learning and career growth. It’s perfect for new graduates. Our therapists gain experience in various areas of patient care, we have many continuing education programs, and our highly qualified staff is always eager to provide mentorship.”*

— Nancy Morris  
OTR/L, Richmond

## HOW TO APPLY

You should apply directly to the occupational therapy supervisor or to the Human Resource Management Service at the VA health care facility where you desire employment consideration. Hiring decisions are made locally. However, information about VA occupational therapy programs and application procedures may be obtained from any VA facility. Arrangements can be made to have the required personal interview and physical examination conducted at the facility most convenient to you.

Employment information can also be obtained by contacting the Department of Veterans Affairs, Placement Service (10A2D), 1555 Poydras Street, Suite 1971, New Orleans, LA 70112. The toll-free number is **1-800-949-0002**. Employment information can also be found on the Internet at **[www.VAcareers.va.gov](http://www.VAcareers.va.gov)**.



# VA HEALTH CARE FACILITIES



To gain a first-hand view of VA health care, you are invited and encouraged to visit. Please call or write to arrange for an appointment. Telephone numbers for each facility are listed in local telephone directories under "U.S. Government." Or you can address correspondence to: Human Resource Management Service, VA Medical Center, [City, State, ZIP Code] (listed below).

## ALABAMA

Birmingham (35233)  
Montgomery (36109)  
Tuscaloosa (35404)  
Tuskegee (36083)

## ALASKA

Anchorage (99508)

## ARIZONA

Phoenix (85012)  
Prescott (86313)  
Tucson (85723)

## ARKANSAS

Fayetteville (72703)  
Little Rock (72205)

## CALIFORNIA

Bakersfield (93301)  
Fresno (93703)  
Livermore (94550)  
Loma Linda (92357)  
Long Beach (90822)  
Los Angeles (90012)  
Martinez (94553)  
Menlo Park (94025)  
Palo Alto (94304)  
San Diego (92161)  
San Francisco (94121)  
Santa Barbara (93110)  
Sepulveda (91343)  
West Los Angeles (90073)

## COLORADO

Denver (80220)  
Grand Junction (81501)  
Pueblo (81004)

## CONNECTICUT

Newington (06111)  
West Haven (06516)

## DELAWARE

Wilmington (19805)

## DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Washington (20422)

## FLORIDA

Bay Pines (33708)  
Gainesville (32608)  
Lake City (32055)  
Miami (33125)  
Tampa (33612)  
West Palm Beach (33410)

## GEORGIA

Augusta (30904)  
Decatur (Atlanta 30033)  
Dublin (31021)

## HAWAII

Honolulu (96819)

## IDAHO

Boise (83702)

## ILLINOIS

Chicago (Lakeside 60611)  
Chicago (West Side 60612)  
Danville (61832)  
Hines (60141)  
Marion (62959)  
North Chicago (60064)

## INDIANA

Fort Wayne (46805)  
Indianapolis (46202)  
Marion (46953)

## IOWA

Des Moines (50310)  
Iowa City (52246)  
Knoxville (50138)

## KANSAS

Leavenworth (66048)  
Topeka (66622)  
Wichita (67218)

## KENTUCKY

Lexington (40511)  
Louisville (40206)

## LOUISIANA

Alexandria (71306)  
New Orleans (70146)  
Shreveport (71101)

## MAINE

Togus (04330)

## MARYLAND

Baltimore (21201)  
Fort Howard (21052)  
Perry Point (21902)

## MASSACHUSETTS

Bedford (01730)  
Boston (02130)  
Northhampton (01053)  
Brockton (02401)  
West Roxbury (02132)

## MICHIGAN

Ann Arbor (48105)  
Battle Creek (49015)  
Detroit (48201)  
Iron Mountain (49801)  
Saginaw (48602)

## MINNESOTA

Minneapolis (55417)  
St. Cloud (56303)

## MISSISSIPPI

Biloxi (39531)  
Jackson (39216)

## MISSOURI

Columbia (65201)  
Kansas City (64128)  
Poplar Bluff (63901)  
St. Louis (63125)

## MONTANA

Fort Harrison (59636)  
Miles City (59301)

## NEBRASKA

Grand Island (68803)  
Lincoln (68510)  
Omaha (68105)

## NEVADA

Las Vegas (89106)  
Reno (89520)

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

Manchester (03104)

## NEW JERSEY

East Orange (07018)  
Lyons (07939)

## NEW MEXICO

Albuquerque (87108)

## NEW YORK

Albany (12208)  
Bath (14810)  
Bronx (10468)  
Brooklyn (11209)  
Buffalo (14215)  
Canandaigua (14424)  
Castle Point (12511)  
Montrose (10548)  
New York (Manhattan 10010)  
Northport (Long Island 11768)  
St. Albans (11425)  
Syracuse (13210)

## NORTH CAROLINA

Asheville (28805)  
Durham (27705)  
Fayetteville (28301)  
Salisbury (28144)

## NORTH DAKOTA

Fargo (58102)

## OHIO

Chillicothe (45601)  
Cincinnati (45220)  
Cleveland (44106)  
Columbus (43203)  
Dayton (45428)

## OKLAHOMA

Muskogee (74401)  
Oklahoma City (73104)

## OREGON

Portland (97207)  
Roseburg (97470)  
White City (97503)

## PENNSYLVANIA

Altoona (16602)  
Butler (16001)  
Coatesville (19320)  
Erie (16504)  
Lebanon (17042)  
Philadelphia (19104)  
Pittsburgh (Highland Drive 15206)  
Pittsburgh (University Drive 15240)  
Wilkes-Barre (18711)

## PHILLIPPINES

Manila (96515) (FPO AF)

## PUERTO RICO

San Juan (00921)

## RHODE ISLAND

Providence (02908)

## SOUTH CAROLINA

Charleston (29401)  
Columbia (29209)

## SOUTH DAKOTA

Fort Meade (57741)  
Hot Spring (57747)  
Sioux Falls (57117)

## TENNESSEE

Memphis (38104)  
Mountain Home (37684)  
Murfreesboro (37129)  
Nashville (37212)

## TEXAS

Amarillo (79106)  
Austin (78741)  
Big Springs (79720)  
Bonham (75418)  
Dallas (75216)  
El Paso (79925)  
Houston (77030)  
Kerrville (78028)  
Martin (76661)  
San Antonio (78284)  
Temple (76504)  
Waco (76711)

## UTAH

Salt Lake City (84148)

## VERMONT

White River Junction (05009)

## VIRGINIA

Hampton (23667)  
Richmond (23249)  
Salem (24153)

## WASHINGTON

American Lake (Tacoma 98493)  
Seattle (98108)  
Spokane (99205)  
Walla Walla (99362)

## WEST VIRGINIA

Beckley (25801)  
Clarksburg (26301)  
Huntington (25704)  
Martinsburg (25401)

## WISCONSIN

Madison (53705)  
Milwaukee (53295)  
Tomah (54660)

## WYOMING

Cheyenne (82001)  
Sheridan (82801)

Learn more online about our VA Health Care facilities at [www.VAcareers.va.gov](http://www.VAcareers.va.gov)