

I'm not just an
occupational therapist.

I'm helping Veterans
regain their
independence.



Kelly, VA Occupational Therapist



Become a VA occupational therapist.



**Veterans Health
Administration**

Why VA?

The **best care** starts with the **best opportunities.**

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, the mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has been to keep that promise.

Today, Department of Veterans Affairs has grown into one of the largest, most technologically advanced health care systems in the United States. We have employees who work at more than 153 medical centers, 909 ambulatory and community-based outpatient clinics, 135 nursing homes, and a number of other facilities across the country.

At VA we strive to provide a professional, supportive environment where our patients, *and you*, can thrive.



VA and Occupational Therapy.

If you're looking for an opportunity that is dynamic, innovative and collaborative, then a career as an occupational therapist could be the one for you.

As valued members of VA's patient care teams, our occupational therapists contribute directly to the interdisciplinary process of planning for patient care, and they apply the latest advances in rehabilitative treatment to create the very best patient care plans.

In return, we offer them competitive salaries, first-rate employment benefits, and nationwide job transfer opportunities.

If you have an interest in serving those who have served our country, all while pioneering the way in occupational therapy, then a career as an occupational therapist with VA could be the one for you.



The **best** patients.

There is a certain camaraderie that Veterans share with each other regardless of when they served. During their therapy participation, those who served our country enjoy the company of others who have experienced the same. VA occupational therapy personnel understand that Veterans extend that bond to their rehabilitation care team.

Because our enrolled Veterans are assured treatment from the onset of a condition through goal achievement, our occupational therapists have the opportunity to form lasting relationships with their patients.

From injured active duty and returning servicemen and women to middle aged and elderly Veterans, our patients grow to rely on their VA health care professionals to develop the most unique and resourceful treatment options — and at VA, our occupational therapists are supported in doing so. Perhaps this is why so many occupational therapists have made a career at VA, averaging more than 10 years as part of the VA family.



The best networking.



Nothing motivates a professional environment like the sharing of knowledge and mentorship. Unlike any other health care system, VA offers vast networking opportunities for its occupational therapists to do just that.

Through online mail groups and regular conference calls, VA's occupational therapists have access to hundreds of their peers to share and to learn new information and techniques. Most of our occupational therapists are leaders in their fields who serve as in-house mentors, and can regularly share their research and best practices.

In fact, our National VA Occupational Therapy Advisory Council partners with the rehabilitation program office, the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA), and VA occupational therapy clinicians to advocate for best practices in rehabilitation.

When you join the VA health care team, you'll become part of an organized voice that not only advocates for, but also facilitates the continued development of its occupational therapists.

VA offers a **clinical setting with heart.**

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
- Assistive technology
- Cognitive rehabilitation
- Community-based care
- Drivers' rehabilitation
- Ergonomics
- Geriatrics
- Geriatrics and Geropsychiatric
- Hand therapy
- Home care
- Inpatient rehabilitation
- Mental health
- Neurology
- Oncology
- Orthopedics
- Outpatient Care
- Pain management
- Polytrauma
- Post-traumatic stress
- Rheumatology
- Spinal cord injury
- Substance abuse
- Traumatic brain injury
- Wheelchair seating and positioning
- Work hardening
- Women's health



Supporting **education.** **Advocating** research. Providing the **opportunities.**

No matter which direction you choose, VA offers our occupational therapists a rich environment primed to develop their interest in either clinical education or research. And because of numerous affiliations with colleges and universities, some VA occupational therapists help guide students' fieldwork experiences. Others conduct ongoing research in conjunction with various learning institutions, in geriatrics, assistive technology, cognitive rehabilitation, hand/musculoskeletal rehabilitation, mental health, and a wide breadth of other areas.

VA occupational therapists are well published in national recognized peer-reviewed professional journals, and many have been elected to leadership positions in regional and national health care organizations. And today, VA therapists are at the forefront meeting the needs of Veterans well into the 21st century.



Did you know **that VA:**

- Is the single largest employer of occupational therapists, employing nearly 1,065 occupational therapists and 129 certified occupational therapy assistants
- Office of Academic Affiliations supports nearly 200 pre-professional occupational therapy students with stipends during their clinical training
- In 2011, occupational therapy personnel treated over 260,000 unique patients, accounting for nearly 1.2 million encounters
- 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 Record System (CPRS), 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 and active duty service members and their families during national emergencies, and operates command centers to coordinate services through the National Disaster Medical Service during major disasters such as hurricanes



Mobility is just one of the advantages of working for VA. We offer employment opportunities from coast to coast and beyond. So, whether you enjoy living beachside, in a bustling metropolis or in the serene countryside, there's likely a VA facility nearby.

Better benefits. The best care.

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 benefits to all of our employees.

LEAVE AND HOLIDAYS

- 13 to 26 days annual paid vacation depending on years of service
- 13 paid sick days and 10 Federal holidays 15 days paid annual military leave
- The Family and Medical Leave Act, also allows employees to take up to 12 weeks of leave for medical reasons, including 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.

HEALTH AND LIFE INSURANCE

- 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.



MOBILITY AND LICENSURE

A career with VA can take you here, there or just about anywhere. VA has medical facilities located in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines. VA employees may transfer to any location where there is an available vacancy without loss of benefits and usually no loss in pay. As long as they hold a full, current, and unrestricted state license, certification, registration or trademark to practice occupational therapy in a state, territory, commonwealth of the United States, or in the District of Columbia, occupational therapists may practice in any VA medical facility, regardless of location.

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.

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

- Smoke-free and drug-free workplace
- 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

Testimonial

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, VA OTR/L

More education equals **more 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 by VA as "shortage categories" are eligible for funding to enroll in job-related courses, continuing education courses, and conferences.

EDUCATION DEBT REDUCTION PROGRAM (EDRP)

Reduce your qualifying school loan debt with a VHA loan reimbursement program. To qualify, EDRP must be offered within the recruiting VHA Medical Center's vacancy announcement for a qualifying position that provides patient care services.

ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- Level II field work 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 hiring policies.

QUALIFICATIONS

Minimum qualifications for appointment as a VA occupational therapist are:

- U.S. citizenship (non-citizens may be hired when it is not possible to recruit qualified citizens)
- 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

- VA offers competitive salaries
- 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
- In some cases, VA may offer compensation for occupational therapists asked to work overtime, on-call, night, weekend, or holiday duty

Call the Human Resources Management Office at your local VA health care facility or visit VAcareers.va.gov to learn more. For more information, call **1-800-949-0002**.

How to Apply:

VAcareers.va.gov

VA can take you anywhere you want to live and work. We have facilities in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. Territories. So, whether you're a confirmed urbanite, fond of the beach, or in search of peaceful Midwestern landscapes, you can explore VA occupational therapist opportunities.

Because hiring decisions are made locally, you should apply directly to the Human Resources Management Office at the VA health care facility where you desire employment consideration. Information about VA Occupational Therapy and application procedures may be obtained from any VA facility.

Veteran employment information can also be obtained by contacting

VAplacementservice@va.gov

The toll-free number is **1-800-949-0002**

Employment information and job applications can also be found on the Internet

VAcareers.va.gov



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