

Compensation & Pension Psychologist

Titus Hamlett, PhD



Please describe the area of psychology you practice. For example, what does your day-to-day schedule look like?



I work full-time at the Charles George VA Medical Center in Asheville, North Carolina. I work as a Compensation and Pension psychologist, which requires me to evaluate/assess veterans to determine if they have a mental condition that is related to their military service. I currently work a 4-10 schedule in which I am physically at the Charles George VA Medical Center two days per week. I telework the other two days and I'm off three days per week. I evaluate up to seven veterans per day for the two days I'm at the Charles George VA Medical Center and I complete my reports and medical opinions during my two telework days.

I work part-time as an independent contractor for both Veterans Evaluation Services (VES) and the Social Security Administration. VES is a company that provides Compensation and Pension evaluations in partnership with the VA. Similar to my role at the VA, I evaluate/assess veterans to determine if they have a mental condition related to their military service.

As a medical expert for Social Security Administration appellant judges, I provide psycho-legal medical opinions in the form of interrogatories. I am usually requested to provide approximately four medical opinions/interrogatories per month. The medical opinions are designed to help appellant judges determine if a social security disability claim appeal should be denied or granted. In this role, I review available mental health records including psychological assessment reports to form my medical opinion. Because my role is to assist judges in their rulings, I am not required to evaluate the claimant directly. My role is to evaluate medical evidence.

Were there specific factors that led you to choose this area of psychology? Was there a critical moment that changed your career trajectory?



After serving in the navy on an aircraft carrier, I wanted a break from the treatment side of clinical practice and so I decided to focus on assessment within the veteran population. I believe burnout, COVID, and wanting to start a family were critical in my decision to try a new area of psychology. My

current roles provide for greater flexibility and autonomy to effectively balance my professional and personal goals.

What advice would you give to an ECP who wants to pursue a position or additional training opportunities in this area of psychology?

I would recommend ECPs seek training in forensic psychology, military psychology, and psychological assessment. Attending the annual APA Convention is a great way to obtain continuing education specifically targeted to the skills needed to be a successful Compensation and Pension psychologist for the VA. Having any form of legal experience is also extremely helpful. ECPs can take training courses (see link below) by the Office of Disability and Medical Assessment (DMA) that are designed to certify Compensation and Pension examiners. All Compensation and Pension psychologists are required to complete this training.

https://www.sharedfedtraining.org/external_content/2019_12_16_0808_DMA_General_Certification_v3/lesson00/00_001.htm



Contact Us: earlycareer@apa.org

For further resources, please click [here](#) to check out our ECP website.