

Per California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 548.5, the following information will be posted to CalHR's Career Executive Assignment Action Proposals website for 30 calendar days when departments propose new CEA concepts or major revisions to existing CEA concepts. Presence of the department-submitted CEA Action Proposal information on CalHR's website does not indicate CalHR support for the proposal.

A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Date

2026-04-30

2. Department

California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet)

3. Organizational Placement (Division/Branch/Office Name)

Equal Employment Opportunity Office

4. CEA Position Title

Equity Officer

5. Summary of proposed position description and how it relates to the program's mission or purpose. (2-3 sentences)

The proposed CEA position will be part of the Executive team at CalVet. The Equity Officer will have direct oversight of the EEO office and is the primary advisor for the Department's EEO program. This incumbent will lead and implement initiatives supporting diverse, equitable and inclusive work and program environments directly related to CalVet's mission of providing benefits for California veterans and their families.

6. Reports to: (Class Title/Level)

Secretary

7. Relationship with Department Director (Select one)

- Member of department's Executive Management Team, and has frequent contact with director on a wide range of department-wide issues.
- Not a member of department's Executive Management Team but has frequent contact with the Executive Management Team on policy issues.

(Explain):

8. Organizational Level (Select one)

- 1st
- 2nd
- 3rd
- 4th
- 5th (mega departments only - 17,001+ allocated positions)

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST

9. What are the duties and responsibilities of the CEA position? Be specific and provide examples.

The incumbent will perform the following duties:

Under the direction of the Secretary the CEA serves as the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Equity Officer and has statewide authority and responsibility for administration of the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) EEO Program which includes but is not limited to; the discrimination complaint process, sexual harassment prevention and training, annual workforce analysis, Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) oversight, and the administration of the Bilingual Services Programs and religious accommodations. The incumbent serves as the primary resource and policy advisor within the agency for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives and EEO-related matters.

The Equity Officer provides oversight of the EEO Office and direct supervision of personnel, planning and directing CalVet's EEO Program. Serves as a key advisor and resource to departmental management with regards to EEO, civil rights, and work force diversity laws and rules. Provides consultation and guidance to CalVet's Secretary and executive team on the development, implementation, and coordination of the EEO program. Manages, implements and monitors EEO programs including, but not limited to the discrimination complaint process, EEO investigations, bilingual services, Annual Workforce Analysis, equity advancement, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, and DAC. Evaluates, updates and develops EEO policies and practices that are equitable and inclusive to support a discrimination-free workplace; uses data and metrics to monitor and drive improvements; and ensure consistency throughout each of the CalVet facilities and adherence to federal, state, and local anti-discriminations laws.

Oversees investigations and the formulation of responses on behalf of CalVet regarding complaints filed through the State Personnel Board, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the California Office of Civil Rights (CRD). Reviews internal EEO complaints, investigations, including the maintenance of the Discrimination Complaint Tracking System, management inquiries, religious accommodation requests; and recommends final decisions to the Secretary, Undersecretary, Chief Counsel, Deputy Secretary of Administrative Services, or Human Resource Branch (HRB) Director as appropriate. Collaborates with internal entities (i.e. Human Resources, Legal, Veteran Home Administrators, etc.) and external agencies such as the CRD, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the U.S. Department of Justice, California Department of Human Resources. Represents the agency in conferences, meetings, settlement negotiations, civil court proceedings, and administrative hearings which includes providing testimony and depositions, and presenting the agency's decision on cases.

Works collaboratively with the HRB to increase and retain diversity within candidate pools, focusing on recruitment, examination, hiring and retention, promoting equitable opportunities by removing non-essential barriers and preventing discriminatory practices, focusing on equity, inclusion and objective evaluation.

Oversees the development and implementation of training for CalVet employees on EEO-related matters, including Civil Rights, Sexual Harassment Prevention, Abusive Conduct, ADA etc.

Attends Executive Leadership Team monthly meetings and other EEO-related meetings as necessary.

Regular and consistent attendance is critical to the successful performance of this position due to the heavy workload and time-sensitive nature of the work. The incumbent routinely works with and is exposed to sensitive and confidential issues and/or materials and is expected to maintain confidentiality at all times.

Travel to the Veteran Homes and Cemeteries throughout the state for training and meetings is required. Consistently providing exceptional customer service to internal and external customers is required.

Incumbent will be held accountable for maintaining the program expenditures within budgeted allocations and to use funds for proper needs while tracking and reporting expenditures to ensure fiscal transparency and accountability.

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

10. How critical is the program's mission or purpose to the department's mission as a whole? Include a description of the degree to which the program is critical to the department's mission.

- Program is directly related to department's primary mission and is critical to achieving the department's goals.
- Program is indirectly related to department's primary mission.
- Program plays a supporting role in achieving department's mission (i.e., budget, personnel, other admin functions).

Description: The position is critical to the Department's mission to serve and honor all California veterans and their families by connecting them with their earned benefits through education, advocacy and direct services. The policies and processes established by the CalVet Equity Officer position are vital to the mission and its success as a healthcare system and state agency. The Equity Officer's work will directly support the Department's 2025-2027 strategic goals.

The EEO office plays a crucial role in ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local equal employment opportunity laws and regulations. A higher-level manager provides the necessary strategic vision and leadership to align EEO initiatives with organizational goals, ensuring equity and inclusion are embedded across all departments. This role elevates the Department's authority, enabling stronger collaboration with executive leadership and decision-makers.

The EEO office is central to fostering a workplace culture of fairness, respect, and inclusion. A higher-level manager can champion initiatives that go beyond compliance, such as inclusive recruitment, retention strategies, and leadership development programs. This role signals the organization's commitment to equity, which enhances employee morale, engagement, and retention.

The establishment of a higher-level manager in the EEO office is not simply an organizational upgrade; it is a strategic necessity. This role strengthens compliance, mitigates risk, enhances organizational culture, and ensures that equity and inclusion remain at the forefront of CalVet's mission.

B. SUMMARY OF REQUEST (continued)

11. Describe what has changed that makes this request necessary. Explain how the change justifies the current request. Be specific and provide examples.

The scope of EEO work has expanded significantly, encompassing equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives, workplace investigations, training, and policy development. A higher-level manager is essential to oversee these complex functions, ensuring consistency, accountability, and timely resolution of sensitive matters. Without elevated leadership, the office risks fragmented oversight, diminished effectiveness and non-compliance with state and federal laws.

CalVet has seen growing caseloads and an increased demand for training and consultation. The EEO office requires streamlined processes and increased resource allocation. A higher-level manager provides the authority to prioritize initiatives, allocate resources effectively, and implement performance metrics. This ensures the office operates efficiently while meeting both compliance and organizational development needs.

The Equity Officer will serve as a key component toward advancing CalVet's 2025-27 Strategic Plan goals.

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE

12. Provide 3-5 specific examples of policy areas over which the CEA position will be the principle policy maker. Each example should cite a policy that would have an identifiable impact. Include a description of the statewide impact of the assigned program.

The following are among the specific policy areas and responsibilities that would be assigned to the new CEA-A:

The CEA will be responsible for creating policies and initiatives that address the Department's guiding principle of inclusion: To celebrate the diverse makeup of California's veterans and our CalVet employees who serve them. Striving to ensure that everyone, regardless of age, ability, cultural background, ethnicity, faith, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, or citizen status can reach their full potential with dignity and a sense of belonging; as well as the Department's Strategic Plan goal #2: Foster a work culture that empowers our employees to achieve CalVet's mission, vision and goals, and which supports their career development; and goal #3: Ensure diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) are advanced in all aspects of CalVet's internal and external policies, programs and operations.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility:

In alignment with CalVet's principles and strategic goals, develop Department-specific DEIA policies and initiatives which foster, support and inform an employee culture of inclusion and diversity; as well as support equity and accessibility in delivery of services and care to veterans who are in the care of the Department or who seek services from the Department.

Recruitment, Hiring and Retention:

Development of equity policies and initiatives for recruitment, examinations, hiring and retention. Develop workforce targets for hiring and retention of specific populations, including military veterans, minorities, women, employees with disabilities, and employees with English as a second language. Monitoring and oversight to enhance equity in recruitment, examination, hiring and retention. In collaboration with HR, efforts will identify barriers that may exist within these processes; ensure that recruitment and hiring practices are uniform across the Department; utilize data to forecast workforce needs; develop programs to promote equitable professional development; and track retention and workforce demographic data. The CEA-A will work closely with departmental hiring managers to create strategies for the department for improved retention rates.

EEO Complaint and Investigation Process:

Development of policies, practices, and Department objectives/initiatives/key results related to the administration of EEO investigations and discrimination complaint process. Efforts will establish consistency and standardization to reduce disparities in how investigations are conducted; foster a culture of objectivity, trust and transparency in the process; minimize exposure to lawsuits and costly settlements by ensuring investigations meet federal and state legal standards and mandates; and enhance the Department's reputation as a fair employer. The CEA-A will be responsible for implementing and maintaining a continual evaluation of the CalVet EEO policy which sets the foundation for maintaining a workplace free from discrimination, harassment and retaliation. Development of policies, objectives/initiatives/key results and training to ensure compliance with EEO laws, civil service rules and anti-discrimination statutes. Efforts will reduce employee discrimination through training and policies; promote workplace equity; and reduce the risk of lawsuits, grievances and costly settlements.

Sexual Harassment Prevention and Training Program:

Development of policies and initiatives related to sexual harassment prevention. Training of staff and establishing uniform standards across the Department. Efforts will ensure consistent expectation for behavior and accountability; ensure that employees throughout the Department are protected under the same framework; reduce gaps and inconsistencies in training and reporting; ensure the Department is in compliance with federal and state laws.

This position will report directly to the Secretary and work with executives and stakeholders to ensure communication and collaboration regarding equity remain at the forefront of employee culture and serving veterans. The CEA-A will be responsible for continual evaluation of all policies around gender discrimination and sexual harassment prevention to ensure they are updated to meet the needs of the department and align with the expectations of a discrimination-free workplace.

C. ROLE IN POLICY INFLUENCE (continued)

13. What is the CEA position's scope and nature of decision-making authority?

The Equity Officer will provide oversight and expert advice to CalVet's executive leadership and report directly to the Secretary. The position will be responsible for creating, implementing and overseeing policies and initiatives that promote fairness, belonging and equal opportunity across the Department. The Equity Officer will be responsible for drafting and enforcing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) policies that align with the Department's strategic goals and all statutory requirements. They will have decision making authority over the EEO investigation process, religious accommodations, including setting program goals and standards, establishing policy and program reforms, and making determinations that execute the vision and strategic plans of the Department.

The Equity Officer will serve as the key advisor and resource to the Secretary, executive leadership and Department management for efforts in achieving a discrimination-free workplace. The Equity Officer's expertise and work products inform Department executive leadership on workforce diversity practices, including policy research and analysis.

The coordination of these tasks requires extensive collaboration with internal and external stakeholders, which requires the Equity Officer to operate at the highest levels of leadership while addressing complex and sensitive issues.

14. Will the CEA position be developing and implementing new policy, or interpreting and implementing existing policy? How?

The Equity Officer will fulfill both of these responsibilities. The Department has existing EEO and associated policies, procedures, and regulations, but as departmental goals continue to evolve, these are in need of reviews and revisions. Additionally, as the Department continues to explore new programs to advance and modernize Department program offerings and meet new expectations, the Equity Officer will research and implement new policies, procedures, and regulations accordingly, and partner with the Director of Policy and Compliance, to advise the Department executives on major program reforms and developments.

As new laws, rules and regulations come into effect, the Equity Officer will continue to ensure the Department remains in compliance; promoting a culture of fairness and belonging by ensuring policies meet legal requirements.