

# LARRI GERSON, M.S.

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My career path reflects my core values: I believe in social justice and the responsibility of public services in helping the community. My skillset is well-suited for helping constituents resolve problems with Local, State and Federal agencies effectively and with compassion. There is always a better way. I am adept at research, interpreting laws and applying regulations creatively when advocating for my clients.

## Experience

### **ACCREDITED CLAIMS AGENT (AN 41371) April 3, 2017 - to present**

Concentration on VA law and benefits that may be available to the Veteran and their families. Outreach and on-going education regarding Veteran's disability, health and death benefits. Pro-Bono assistance, "Free Assistance for U.S. Military Veterans and Their Families."

**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS, VA REGIONAL OFFICE, ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA**

### **Retired from the State of Florida with 30 years of Credit Service**

**Supervisor of Claims August 2, 2013 - February 29, 2016 (Retired)**

**Veterans Claims Examiner May 9, 2003 - August 1, 2013**

Advocate on behalf of Florida veterans to ensure appropriate awards, payments, and settlements on claims for benefits in accordance with VA statutes, rules, and case law. Apply extensive knowledge about VA internal processes, procedures and policies to monitor the award promulgation process.

- Supervisor of fifteen Veterans Claims Examiners and one Women-Veterans Coordinator (since 2013).
- Facilitate special interest inquiries from the Governor's Office, Congressional Offices, Florida Department of Health, MacDill AFB Sexual Awareness Responder Course (SARC), VA Center for Women-Veterans and political entities from within and outside of Florida to discuss issues, coordinate activities, and resolve problems regarding women veterans.
- Extensive knowledge of VA laws and regulations. Assist the Director of Benefits and Assistance and the Claims Bureau Chief with correct application of VA law within FDVA and outside agencies.
- Develop policy and procedures for the FDVA Women-Veterans Program and FDVA Claims division.
- Dynamic administrator, conscientious and meticulous in detail with organizational skills and follow through.
- Instructor for the FDVA Accreditation School covering State Benefits, Waivers and Burial Benefits.
- Develop training on VA benefits (38 CFR & 38 USC) for new Veterans Claims Examiners.
- Develop and conduct community education on VA benefits and procedures for veterans.
- Develop instrument and rubric for assessing Veterans Claims Examiner annual performance.
- Seated member of the FDVA procurement committee for Next-Gen VA D2D compatible Case Management Software.
- Previously accredited by the VA to represent clients with the American Legion, Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs, Jewish War Vets, World War I of the USA, Inc., Blinded Veterans Assn., American Red Cross, War Veterans of USA, Assn of County Veterans Service Officers, Marine Corps League, Fleet Reserve Assn, X-POW, American Ex-Prisoners of War and The Retired Enlisted Assn.

**State of Florida Women Veterans Coordinator (2007-2010)**

- Develop, coordinate and represent the State of Florida FDVA Women-Veterans Program.
- Meet with women veterans to assist in the submission of claims and appeals. Provide empathetic customer service and support.
- Address inquiries by political entities from within and outside of Florida to discuss issues, coordinate activities, and resolve problems regarding women veterans.
- Attend veteran events sponsored by local politicians and advocate on behalf of women veterans in Tallahassee and Washington, DC.
- Plan and develop an educational outreach program featuring a display highlighting women veterans implemented statewide.
- Develop cooperative relationships and partnerships with community organizations including the VARO VBA Women Veterans Personal Trauma Coordinator, Chief of the SARC Program at MacDill AFB, Army Reserve Center, Army National Guard at the Bill Young Center, the Florida Department of Health, and the VISN 8 Women Health Program Manager, VHA Women Health Coordinators at Bay Pines VAMC and James Haley VAMC.

**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS, TAMPA AREA, FL****Correctional Probation Specialist (1999-2003)****Drug Probation Officer (1997-1999)****Court Officer (1990-1997)****Probation Officer (1988-1990)**

- Represent the Department of Corrections as Court Officer in Pasco and Hillsborough County Circuit Courts. Foster communication between the Department of Corrections and other agencies in Pasco and Hillsborough counties including the Judiciary, State Attorney's Office, Public Defender's Office, Clerk of Courts and treatment facilities.
- Participate in a multijurisdictional community policing program with local law enforcement agencies.
- Supervise a monthly caseload of sex offenders, prison releasees, high-risk and mental health offenders who pose a risk to the community. Investigate, assess, supervise, counsel offenders and coordinate with the specialized programs within the community. Monitor offender financial accounts.
- Coordinate with the Community Oriented Policing program (COPS). Train and mentor new Probation Officers as Field Training Officer. Perform as Contact Supervisor for staff of 30 officers. Supervise five support staff employees for eleven months.
- Certified Instructor by Criminal Justice Standards and Training (CJST).

**AMERICAN RED CROSS - GREAT FALLS, MT. - Service to the Armed Forces Coordinator (1985-1987)**

- Manager of the Malmstrom Air Force Base Red Cross Office. Supervised thirteen caseworkers.
- Responsible for counseling service members and their families; prepare loans and grants to service members and their families. Coordinate with the local chapter for case management and disaster preparedness. Represent the Red Cross at all base functions. Assistant to the Emergency Services Director at the Cascade County Chapter.

**LUCAS COUNTY BUREAU OF SUPPORT – TOLEDO, OH - Enforcement Officer (1982-1984)**

- Enforce court-mandated child support and alimony. Perform interviewing, analysis of evidence and make sentencing recommendations based on statutory requirements. Assist office manager with court related projects. Supervise two employees.

**U.S. AIR FORCE - Enlisted (1977-1979)**

- Law Enforcement Specialist, Military Working Dog Qualified (MOS 81152A) 305<sup>th</sup> Security Police Squadron (SAC), Grissom AFB, IN.

**Education**

- **M.S., Human Services in Management**, Nova Southeastern University, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 1990
- **B.S., Criminal Justice Probation and Parole**, University of Toledo, Toledo, OH 1983

**Professional Associations**

- Dunedin U.S. Military Veterans Advisory Committee 2017-present
- Dunedin Storm Water Advisory Committee 2017-present
- Dunedin Public Safety Advisory Committee 2016-2017
- VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, Washington DC 2012-2015
- National Association of State Women Veteran Coordinators (Secretary 2010-2012) 2007-2013
- Bay Pines Women Health Advisory Committee 2007-2010
- Bay Pines Mental Health Committee 2007-2010
- Florida Council Crime and Delinquency (FCCD Tampa) - President and Treasurer 1998-1999

**Certifications**

- Sexual Awareness Responder Course (SARC) Advanced Training MacDill AFB 2009
- Service Officers Accreditation FDVA 2003-2016
- Certified Arbitrator 6th Circuit Court of Pinellas County, Clearwater FL
- Guardianship Certification 13th Circuit Court of Hillsborough County, Tampa FL
- Instructor Technique Certification Criminal Justice Standards & Training
- Correctional Probation Officer Cert. #66-88-602-O7 (CJST)

**Conference Presentations and Public Speaking**

- "How to File an Appeal", 2<sup>nd</sup> Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs Women Veterans Training Conference, University of South Florida, Tampa FL 7/31/2015
- "Special Challenges of Single Mother Vets" with Dr. Linda S. Schwartz, VA Assistant Secretary For Policy and Planning, Yale Club of the Suncoast of Sarasota, FL 4/8/2014
- "PTSD - MST and Combat", National Assn. of State Women Veterans Coord., Portland, OR 2011
- Appearance before the Hillsborough County Commission on the Status of Women 11/29/2011
- "Update on Women Veterans", WOVEN, Bradenton Chapter, FL 2010
- "Update on Women Veterans", Veteran County Service Officer Conference, Safety Harbor, FL 2008 - 2009

- "Veterans Benefits", Jewish War Veterans, James Haley Tampa Chapter, Tampa, FL 2007 - 2009
- "Veterans Issues", VFW State of Florida Commanders and Auxiliary Conference, Ocala, FL 2003

### News Articles, Radio and Online

- "Calling All Florida Women Veterans", WUSF 89.7 Bobbie O'Brien 7/17/2015
- "Florida Hosts Women Only Vets Conference", WUSF 89.7 Bobbie O'Brien 2/21/2014
- "A Florida Voice for Women Veterans Goes to Washington", WUSF 89.7 Bobbie O'Brien 1/4/2013
- "Women Veterans: Military Sexual Trauma and Resources", WUSF 89.7 Bobbie O'Brien 5/16/2013
- "FDVA women veteran's PSA in Florida Senate chambers", sachsmidia.com 3/24/2013
- "New members appointed to the VA Committee on Women Veterans", va.gov 11/29/2012
- "Hillsborough's Commission on the Status of Women wants more collaboration to help female veterans", WMNF 88.5 11/29/2011
- "Operation Home Front Helps Women Veterans Heal", Christian Science Monitor of Boston 4/27/2010
- "Women Veterans' Needs Get Recognized", Bradenton Herald 2/27/2010
- "Women Veterans", Florida Matters, WSLR 96.5 LPFM, Sarasota Community Radio 5/27/2008
- "Clinton wins, but does it matter?", Tampa Bay Times 1/30/2008
- "Campaign for governor in Pinellas: rookie vs. veteran", St. Petersburg Times 10/23/2002

### Training Attended

- County Veteran Service Officers (CVSO) Training, Safety Harbor, FL 2004, 2006, 2009, 2013- 2015
- "Women Veteran Leaders, Champions of Change", The White House, Washington, DC 3/25/2014
- VA Women Veterans National Summit Washington DC 2008, 2011
- VA Homeless Veterans Conference, Washington DC 2006
- American Legion VCE Training, Washington DC 2004

### Computer Skills

- Online research using search engines, public databases, VA applications, 38 CFR and 38 USC, and WARMS, VA D2D database case management software, SEP, E-Benefits, MyHealthyVet, Social Security Administration portal
- Microsoft Office Suite including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and SharePoint
- Connecting PCs, installing software, making CD/DVDs
- Mobile software IOS and Android