SERVICES PROVIDED:

The Oregon Paralyzed Veterans of America (Oregon PVA) is a chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America which was founded in 1947 and congressionally chartered in 1971. It is the only congressionally chartered veterans organization dedicated solely to serving the needs of veterans who have an injury to or disease of the spinal cord (SCI/D). The Oregon Chapter was chartered in 1976 and is a 501 (c)(3) organization which funds its programs through general donations and grants; the organization does not receive state or federal funding.

Oregon PVA services paralyzed veterans in all of Oregon and SW Washington. For almost four decades, Oregon PVA’s main focus has been maximizing the quality of life for its members and all people with spinal cord injury or disease as a leading advocate for health care, SCI/D research and education, veterans' benefits and rights, sports programs, disability rights, accessibility and the removal of architectural barriers.

The Oregon PVA has a program in which a Hospital Liaison is maintained with all VA medical facilities within the state, as well as private nursing homes, hospitals and respite centers. The purpose of the liaison is to ensure that PVA members who are patients and/or residents in such facilities are being cared for in accordance with Veterans Administration policy, with generally accepted health care policy and procedure, and with common sense treatment.

The Oregon PVA maintains a program of advocacy in which local, state and federal laws are monitored and litigated in order to ensure compliance with mandates relative to accessibility and barrier-free design issues. The director of the program, through testimony, public speaking, and representation of disabled persons, advocates on their behalf using all available resources.

The mission of the Membership Program is to recruit new members to the Oregon Chapter in all categories, and to monitor their continued membership, health status, and concerns about home accessibility and benefits. Additionally, the program director ensures that appropriate membership records are maintained and that reports are submitted to the national organization as required.

The Oregon PVA maintains a Legislation Program in which employees and volunteers report on and testify on legislation affecting veterans, disabled citizens, and other areas of concern or impact on the organization and its members. The Legislation program ensures that the State of Oregon has an adequate barrier-free design law and will lobby for changes when necessary. The program director monitors state agencies that have a direct affect on the communities of veterans and disabled persons.

The Parking Enforcement Program is a team of volunteers recruited around the State of Oregon in which training and certification is provided by law enforcement agencies for the enforcement of statutes relative to parking for the disabled. The program director is a certified enforcement officer who works closely with law enforcement agencies in the development and expansion of such local enforcement programs.
The Sports and Recreation Program shall facilitate the participation of veterans and other disabled persons, especially those involving the central nervous system, in sports and recreation activities and to encourage the development of sports and recreational programs and facilities. It is the policy of Oregon PVA to sponsor individual and team sports activities to the extent that resources permit.

The Community Liaison Director promotes community relations and increased public awareness through coordinating fundraising and community events, at the same time promoting volunteerism, networking, and partnering with likeminded organizations thus allowing Oregon PVA to expand our programs and benefits to serve a larger population of the disabled veterans in Oregon and Southern Washington.

ROLE OF THE PRACTICUM STUDENT:

- Assist the Legislation Program in researching laws and directives that directly affect persons with disabilities. Assist the Legislative Program Director in providing information for testimony on these laws and directives.
- Assist the Membership Director with contacting members during annual wellness checks, and to convey any concerns our members have about benefits or legislation to the Legislative Program Director, and convey any health concerns to the Hospital Liaison.
- Assist the Community Liaison Director in promoting awareness of the Oregon PVA by assisting with the various projects and events the Oregon PVA participates in.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PRACTICUM STUDENTS:

- Students should be veterans, family members of veterans, or desire to assist veterans or those persons with disabilities, regardless of military affiliation.
- Capable of communicating clearly and distinctly, both verbally and in writing. Accommodations will be made for those with disabilities in these areas.
- Computer skills at the user level needed. This position may require on-line research and documenting.
- Ability to travel and work unusual hours, and to maintain a positive attitude and outlook in public forums.
- Ability to diffuse situations regarding upset or impatient partners or members.
- Ability to criticize others and accept criticism from others in a manner that does not denigrate the individual and promotes a team atmosphere.

EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK:

As of now, this office employs four full time staff members and acts as mentors to VA workstudy students as they are eligible to receive compensation directly from the Veterans Administration. The Oregon PVA has limited funds to hire additional staff and relies heavily on volunteers from the community and by the members of the Oregon PVA acting as Directors of Programs. The training received by our practicum students and by the VA workstudies is transferrable to any office situation, but is extremely valuable when applying for positions with governmental agencies and organizations that provide services to persons with disabilities.

CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECK MAY BE REQUIRED

As of April 15, 2011, practicum sites that use the Department of Human Services Background Check Unit will now conduct a weighing test and fitness determination when an individual has been identified as the perpetrator of abuse in certain cases of sexual abuse, physical abuse or financial exploitation. The Background Check Unit will specifically consider the most serious cases of abuse reported and substantiated from January 1, 2010, forward.

Updated: 2/11/2014