U.S. Senate
Office of the Secretary

HUMAN RESOURCES

Vacancy Announcement
Reposting-Applicants who applied to original posting are being considered and need not reapply

POSITION:

Career Ladder Position-Employee Benefits Assistant
Phase I to Phase II and subsequently to **Employee Benefits Specialist I** position

DEPARTMENT:

DISBURSING OFFICE

SALARY RANGE:

CL Phase I - $50,894 to $78,886 (salary dependent upon experience)
CL Phase II - $56,639 to $87,791 (salary dependent upon performance)

Employee Benefits Specialist I (Upon successful completion of CL Phases I & II) – Salary $68,574 to $106,288 per year.

CONTACT

Applications for the position must be submitted online; see the link below. If you need an accommodation to submit an application for this position, please contact Human Resources at 202-224-3625 or stop by the Human Resources office at SH231B.

FEDERAL RELAY SERVICE

Speech/Hearing impaired persons may contact the Federal Relay Service at 1 (800) 877-8339 TTY

POSTING DATE:

May 1, 2014

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS:

May 15, 2014 Applications will NOT be accepted after 11:59 p.m.

The new online application can be found in the Employment section of Senate.gov - http://www.senate.gov/employment.

All applicants should complete a Secretary of the Senate Application for Employment and attach a cover letter and current resume to the Human Resources Department at the link listed above. Qualified candidates will be contacted if selected for an interview. Do NOT mail. No phone calls please.

VETERANS' PREFERENCE:

Hiring for this position will be governed by the Veterans Employment Opportunity Act of 1998 ("VEOA"), as made applicable by the Congressional Accountability Act of 1995. Pursuant to the VEOA, qualified applicants who are not current employees of the Office of the Secretary of the Senate and who are disabled or who have served on active duty in the Armed Forces during certain specified time periods or in certain military designated campaigns ("veterans") may be eligible to receive a preference over non-veterans in hiring decisions. Family members of veterans may also be eligible to receive a veterans' preference if the veteran cannot claim his or her veterans' preference.

To be eligible for a veterans' preference, applicants must meet all of the requirements set forth in the VEOA and applicable regulations. Those eligibility requirements are summarized in the Application for Veterans' Preference, which may be obtained by visiting www.senate.gov, click "Visitors," then "Employment." The Application for Veterans' Preference will appear under "Secretary of the Senate Office of Human Resources."

If claiming a veterans' preference, an applicant must indicate that he/she is preference eligible on the application or resume and must submit a completed copy of the Application for Veterans' Preference along with the supporting documentation specified on that form. If the Office of the Secretary of the Senate does not receive the Application for Veterans' Preference and supporting documentation by the closing date, the applicant's claim for a veterans' preference may be denied.

Applicants may obtain a copy of the Office's Veterans' Preference in Appointments policy by submitting a written request to vets@sec.senate.gov.

Individuals who are entitled to a veterans' preference are invited to self-identify voluntarily. This information is intended solely for use in connection with the Office of the Secretary of the Senate's obligations and efforts to provide veterans' preference to preference-eligible applicants in accordance with the VEOA. An applicant's status as a disabled veteran and any information regarding an applicant's disability, including the applicant's medical condition and history, will be kept confidential and will be collected, maintained and used in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as made applicable by section 102(a)(3) of the CAA, 2 U.S.C. §1302(a)(3). An applicant who declines to self-identify as a disabled veteran and/or to provide information and documentation regarding his/her disabled veteran's status will not be subjected to an adverse employment action, but the individual may be ruled ineligible for a veterans' preference.

UNITED STATES SENATE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

CAREER LADDER – EMPLOYEE BENEFITS ASSISTANT Phase I to Phase II and subsequently to Employee Benefits Specialist I

Department: Disbursing Office
Reports to: Employee Benefits Manager

This is a career ladder position within the Senate Disbursing Office in the Employee Benefits Section. The individual selected for the career ladder position will be placed into SecSen pay band 6 as an Employee Benefits Assistant in Phase I for a period of twelve (12) to eighteen (18) months maximum. During which time, he/she will be on a training plan and will be provided opportunities for development and increased responsibility. Upon successful completion of the development and performance goals, as specified in an Individual Development Plan for Phase I, the individual will be granted a promotional increase and placed on an Individual Development Plan in Phase II position in SecSen pay band 7. This placement will be for another twelve (12) to eighteen (18) months maximum working on increasingly more complex employee benefits and retirement issues. Successful completion of Phase II will result in a non-competitive promotion to an Employee Benefits Specialist I position in SecSen pay band 9.

PHASE I – EMPLOYEE BENEFITS ASSISTANT – Pay band 6

NATURE OF WORK

This is administrative work counseling employees on the federal benefits and other employment-related services for the Senate Disbursing Office. Work includes providing confidential benefits counseling and related assistance, interpreting rules and regulations, assisting in the development of office policies and procedures, processing of benefit elections and reports, and working on benefits involving sensitive issues. Work is bound by laws and regulations regarding retirement and insurance benefits, Office of Personnel Management (OPM) retirement and benefits manuals and standard office policy and procedures. Work is performed under the immediate supervision of the Employee Benefits Manager.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Send information to all separating staff regarding benefits, unemployment and other necessary documentation.

Examine health insurance enrollments for eligibility, accuracy and effective date. Input health enrollments/changes into the payroll system. Order reports to be transmitted to health insurance carriers. Make corrections to payroll section and health insurance carriers. Process elections to continue health insurance after employment ends.

The statements contained herein reflect general details necessary to describe the principal functions of this class, knowledge and skill typically required and the physical demands and working conditions, but should not be considered an all-inclusive listing of work requirements.

PB: 6/7/9 *FLSA: NE* *VEOA:C*

08/10/2012

Examine Life Insurance Elections for eligibility, accuracy and effective date. Process designations of beneficiaries. Complete life insurance certifications and notices of conversion and process requests for insurance.

Assist employees with understanding of the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP/401k), completion of election form and help employee to "maximize" matching contributions.

Perform verifications of employment for mortgage companies, lenders, State Bar Associations, and OPM Requests and provide letters to employees certifying job-related information and accurate service history transcripts upon employee request.

Process unemployment forms from states & DC.

Become Coordinator or Administrator of a major job function, such as Benefits Open Season, Benefits Fair, UCFE Billing, Inventory or TSP Administrator.

Answer phone & Front Office Senate staff questions and provide assistance to the Front Office in dealing with employee questions when able.

Assist more senior staff with duties and projects.

Maintains current knowledge of the Disbursing office's Emergency Action Plan (EAP) and Continuity of Operations (COOP) plan; participates in periodic exercises and drills.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS - PHASE I

Work requires a High School Diploma or G.E.D. (Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration, Accounting, Finance or related field is preferred) with a minimum of one to three years of benefits administration and/or payroll experience, preferably in a Federal environment; or an equivalent combination of education and experience that provides the following knowledge, skills and abilities:

Ability to use a calculator and perform math calculations.

Ability to use computers and relevant software; knowledge of Microsoft Office programs a plus.

Ability to perform research and utilize the internet.

Ability to gather and analyze information to develop appropriate information and evidence; determine accuracy and application of facts; and reach sound and correct conclusions.

Ability to follow departmental rules, regulations, procedures and functions.

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08/10/2012

Ability to professionally handle confidential/sensitive matters and materials.

Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships.

Ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing.

Knowledge of PeopleSoft a plus.

Knowledge of benefit programs, retirement and 401(k) programs a plus.

PHASE II – EMPLOYEE BENEFITS ASSISTANT – Pay band 7

NATURE OF WORK

This is experienced administrative work counseling employees on Federal retirement, benefits and other employment-related services for the Senate Disbursing Office. Work includes providing confidential retirement counseling and related assistance, interpreting rules and regulations and assisting in the development of office policies and procedures, and working on difficult retirement cases involving sensitive or controversial issues. Work is bound by laws and regulations regarding Federal retirement and insurance benefits, Office of Personnel Management (OPM) operating manual and standard office policy and procedures.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Learn all Qualifying Life Events (QLE) that allow for a change under the FEHB Program. Counsel employees as to what changes may be made based on the QLE, the time frame for making the change and the effective date of the change. Also, advise employee of documentation that may be required as proof of QLE. Become familiar with all reference material.

Compute costs for all options of life insurance available. Calculate face value of coverage for all options, as well as additional amounts of life insurance due to extra benefit for young age, accidental death benefits and dismemberment coverage. Also, learn all Qualifying Life Events that allow for an increase in life insurance coverage and the effective date of change. Also, advise employee of documentation that may be required as proof of QLE. Become familiar with all reference material.

Acquire knowledge of all aspects of the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) including tax-deferred contributions versus the "Roth Option", IRS maximum contribution limits and eligibility for TSP "Catch-up" contributions. Process TSP corrections to Payroll, including adjustments for make-up contributions with "breakage". Become familiar with all investment options within

the TSP Program and 'interfund" versus "future contribution" allocations between investment funds. Understand how the TSP loan program works.

Provide assistance to the Front Office in dealing with employee questions and cover Front Office staff during lunch hours.

Learn procedures for closing-out retirement records to OPM. Check records for accuracy and correcting service history and/or retirement contribution record when necessary. Transmit retirement records to OPM on a register and keeping accurate accounting of cumulative contributions.

Process retirement service credit applications.

Research previous federal service for new employees who claim prior service to determine correct retirement category and transfer of other benefits. Contact the prior employing agency and send letter requesting Official Personnel Folder (OPF) or documentation to agency or National Personnel Records Center (NPRC). Contact OPM for new employees who are being hired as reemployed annuitants and follow procedures for coordinating with OPM based on type of appointment.

Process replies from other federal agencies and NPRC. Check to see that all benefits given by employee with prior federal service were correct and establish Service Computation Date. Make corrections and adjustments where necessary.

Perform final check on all entry level employees' work.

Assist senior staff with at least three major EBS jobs and subsequently take over as Primary Administrator/Coordinator of two of these jobs.

Make retirement coverage determinations. Calculate Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) retirement estimates in assistance to, and under the guidance of, more senior staff.

Maintains current knowledge of the Disbursing office's Emergency Action Plan (EAP) and Continuity of Operations (COOP) plan; participates in periodic exercises and drills.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS – PHASE II

Knowledge of all PeopleSoft and HRMS payroll and benefits screens and how to find information on system.

Ability to use WordPerfect, Word, Adobe Acrobat, Excel, Reveal, Document Imaging System as well as other system based EBS/Payroll references.

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08/10/2012

Familiar with Front Office, Payroll and File Room sections and how each interacts with EBS.

General knowledge of the rights under the USERRA law and familiar with EBS fact sheets provided to employees entering or returning from LWOP-Military.

Advanced understanding of all aspects of the Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHB) Program and should be familiar with all terminology and able to counsel employees regarding basic information for the choices available. Familiar with reference material.

General knowledge of all aspects of the TSP Program.

General knowledge of the overall workings of the FEHB Centralized Enrollment Reconciliation Clearinghouse System (CLER).

General knowledge of the overall working of the Flexible Spending Account (FSA) including but not limited to contribution limits, Healthcare versus Dependent care, effect on taxable earnings and FICA and enrollment process.

General understanding of how the Long Term Care Insurance (LTCI) Program works, including but not limited to eligibility for short underwriting versus long underwriting and the application process.

General understanding of how the Dental & Vision Programs (FEDVIP) work, effect on taxable earnings and FICA, and eligibility to sign up and the enrollment process.

More comprehensive understanding of retirement and FICA withholdings. Knowledge of the requirement for vesting and eligibility for immediate retirement. General understanding of the Civil Service Retirement System.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS SPECIALIST I – Pay band 9

NATURE OF WORK

This is experienced administrative work counseling Members and employees on Federal retirement, benefits and other employment-related services for the Senate Disbursing Office. Work includes providing confidential retirement counseling and related assistance, interpreting rules and regulations and assisting in the development of office policies and procedures, and working on difficult retirement cases involving sensitive or controversial issues. Work is bound by laws and regulations regarding Federal retirement and insurance benefits, Office of Personnel Management (OPM) operating manual and standard office policy and procedures.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Learn all aspects of the Civil Service Retirement Program. Take on more difficult retirement cases. Process more unusual and difficult cases, such as death and disability cases. Provide retirement and benefits information for Senators and Officers of the Senate and counsel them on a one-on-one basis.

Research and develop an understanding of the different health insurance offerings, to include: Fee for Service plans with Preferred Provider Organizations; Plans that offer a Point of Service Product; Health Maintenance Organization plans; High Deductible plans and Consumer Driven plans and eligibility for Health Savings Account versus Health Reimbursement Accounts.

Provide confidential retirement counseling and related assistance to Members, Officers and staff to explain various options, interpret regulations, determine entitlements and clarify issues about federal benefits programs; compute retirement annuity estimates and survivor benefits; verify, compute and credit prior federal service to retirement and benefits; advise customers of impact of Social Security on federal benefits and continuing health and life insurance benefits into retirement; and seek technical guidance from more senior staff on more difficult cases that establish precedents for future actions.

Determine retirement system coverage for employees; verify prior federal service and make creditable service determinations and computations; provide advice and assistance to employees concerning deposits to retirement funds; review benefits application forms and related documents for accuracy; coordinate the processing of forms, applications and related documents within department and OPM or other appropriate agencies to substantiate claims; and participate in retirement seminars to assist employees with retirement planning.

Counsel employees on federal benefits and the impact of waiving coverage and delaying participation; explain procedures for designating beneficiaries, electing living life insurance benefits and obtaining temporary continuation of benefits; determine entitlements of spouses and eligible family members of deceased employees; request and processes death gratuity payments approved by the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration; explain unemployment compensation procedures; process requests for state wage and separation information; and reconcile state and federal billings for unemployment compensation and request adjustments as necessary.

Assist with planning and administration of benefits program open season and Senate Health Fair; reconcile health insurance data; process personnel actions; ensure periodic reports are provided to appropriate parties within the Disbursing Office, the Senate, and agencies or organizations outside the Senate; establish employment and retirement records for staff; verify employment of staff; prepare transcripts of Senate service for separated employees; verify accuracy of data in HRMS and makes adjustments or corrections to records as

necessary; and participate in testing new subsystems for collecting and reporting personnel data.

Conduct final check on all levels of work output from the Section.

Maintains current knowledge of the Disbursing office's Emergency Action Plan (EAP) and Continuity of Operations (COOP) plan; participates in periodic exercises and drills.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS - EMPLOYEE BENEFITS SPECIALIST I:

Comprehensive understanding of the differences in FEHB plans offering Fee-for-Service, Preferred Provider Organization, Health Maintenance Organization, Consumer Driven Health Plans and High Deductible Health Plans including HSAs and HRAs, familiar with all reference material.

Complete understanding of all aspects of the Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) Program, familiar with all options available and able to counsel employees in regard to costs and coverages, including the extra benefit (age based), the accidental death benefits and all qualifying life events that allow increases and all the available reference material.

Complete understanding of all aspects of the TSP Program. Familiar with IRS limits and maximizing of matching contributions, and all investment funds. Complete knowledge of regulations regarding Loans, In-Service withdrawals, and all options for withdrawal upon separation and all reference material.

Demonstrate the ability to perform confidential benefits counseling and related assistance to the Senate community; compute basic retirement annuity estimates and survivor benefits; verify, calculate and credit prior Federal service to retirement and benefits; advise employee and Members on Federal benefits and continuing health and life insurance benefits into retirement.

Demonstrate ability to verify prior Federal and military service and make creditable service determinations and computations; provide advice and assistance to employees concerning deposits to retirement funds; review benefit application forms and related documents for accuracy and completion; coordinate the processing of forms, applications and related documents within DO and OPM or other appropriate agencies to substantiate claims; close out Senate retirement records and transfer records to OPM upon separation from the Senate.

Demonstrate ability to do the following:

- Counsel employees on Federal benefits and the impact of waiving coverage or delaying participation;

- Explain procedures for electing coverage, designating beneficiaries and obtaining temporary continuation of benefits;
- Explain unemployment compensation procedures and process requests for state wage and separation information; and,
- Reconcile state and Federal billings for unemployment compensation and requests adjustments, if necessary.

Demonstrate ability to write internal procedures manuals, training materials and user guides for work functions and be able to represent the Senate at advisory group meetings involving matters related to benefits administration.

Demonstrate ability to draft correspondence with official certification and documentation of benefits to present to the Financial Clerk for signature.

Demonstrate ability to keep abreast of legislative changes impacting benefits for Senate employees (i.e. Long Term care, flexible spending accounts, sick leave credit for FERS and CSRS, changes in retirement contribution percentages and Roth Option with TSP); coordinate seminars, update materials and communicate changes to the Senate community.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS AND WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Work is performed in an office environment and involves everyday risks or discomforts which requires normal safety precautions when operating equipment and performing the work. Work is essentially sedentary with occasional walking, standing, bending, carrying items under 25 pounds such as books, papers, small parcels, etc.

LICENSES, CERTIFICATION AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

None.

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