

# **SPTA FEDERAL ADVOCACY COORDINATOR**

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

### **GOALS**

To cultivate and strengthen relationships with each Member of Congress from your state, to have yourself identified as an essential key contact on mental health issues before Congress, and to develop and maintain an effective grassroots network of psychologists within your state.

### **SELECTION AND RETENTION**

Decisions regarding the selection and retention of Federal Advocacy Coordinators who meet the qualification requirements below are made by each state and territorial psychological association and each of the 23 divisions in which a significant number of members pay the practice assessment. The APA Practice Organization Director of Field and State Operations and regional field consultants are available to confirm the eligibility of potential Federal Advocacy Coordinators and consult upon request with association and division leaders on this important appointment.

### **NUMBER**

Each state and territorial psychological association and each of the 23 divisions in which a significant number of members pay the practice assessment will appoint one Federal Advocacy Coordinator, with the exception of the highly populated states of California, Florida, New Jersey, New York and Texas, which will appoint two.

### **QUALIFICATIONS**

The Federal Advocacy Coordinator is a volunteer position requiring a high level of personal motivation and dedication to the advancement of professional psychologists. The Federal Advocacy Coordinator should be familiar with current federal issues affecting the practice of psychology and should have a general understanding of our political system. Most importantly, the Federal Advocacy Coordinator should be committed to strengthening the involvement of the psychologists in his/her state in advocating for legislation that advances the profession of psychology.

All SPTA Federal Advocacy Coordinators must be both (1) doctoral-level psychologists licensed to practice in their state or territory and (2) either (a) current payers of the practice dues or (b) qualified as exempt from paying the practice dues. These limited eligibility requirements may be waived by the APA Practice Organization for individuals who are either paid staff of state and territorial psychological associations or current APAGS members who are studying to become doctoral-level practicing psychologists.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Federal Advocacy Coordinator organizes and supervises grassroots initiatives for federal issues in their state. It is recommended that state and territorial psychological associations appoint a separate State Advocacy Coordinator to assist in managing the workload when state and federal issues require legislative action at the same time. State and territorial psychological association presidents are expected to participate by monitoring grassroots activities and ensuring that legislative requests from the Practice Organization are carried out.

Notification of all federal legislative and regulatory requests-for-action from the APA Practice Organization come by way of ACTION ALERTS (via email), contact from Government Relations staff or contact from the regional field consultants. The Federal Advocacy Coordinator will distribute these ACTION ALERTS to special assessment payers in their state or territory using the CapWiz pass through procedure. In some cases Federal Advocacy Coordinators may have lists of psychologists billed the practice assessment in their state or territory provided by the APA Practice Organization. These lists are highly confidential and provided solely for the purpose of mobilizing federal grassroots activity in coordination with the APA Practice Organization. Advocacy activity may take the form of emails, social media postings, letters or calls to Congress, meetings with Members of Congress, attendance at town hall meetings, op-eds, or letters-to-the-editor.

## OVERVIEW OF RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Respond** to requests for grassroots action in a timely fashion;
- **Provide** feedback on your grassroots efforts to the regional field consultant and/or the Government Relations team, also in a timely fashion;
- **Maintain** a grassroots network of psychologists in each Congressional district;
- **Identify** at least one KEY CONTACT for each Member of your state's Congressional delegation;
- **Create** a contingency plan with your state association should the occasion arise that you are unavailable to take time-sensitive action;
- **Update** psychologists in your state on the status of current legislative initiatives (e.g., write a column for your state association newsletter, send issue updates to volunteers via email, report at board meetings and at state association conventions);
- **Attend** the APA Practice Organization State Leadership Conference in Washington, DC each March and lead the state or territory delegation in planning and executing Hill visits during the Congressional lobby day at the end of the conference;
- **Recruit** psychologists to join the APAPO Political Action Committee;
- **Educate** volunteers on the value of political giving and the importance of political action to the legislative agenda;
- **Recognize** legislators from your state who support APA sponsored legislation (honor with award, article/picture in state association newsletter, etc.);
- **Honor** grassroots volunteers from your state who show initiative and leadership in federal advocacy;
- **Ensure** transition of materials and knowledge to new Federal Advocacy Coordinator upon retirement from the position.