

Veterans' Preference for Employment Applicants

Policy Number: 2009-0006
Issue Date: 8-12-2009
Revision Date: 3-5-2024

PURPOSE

In recognition of the sacrifices made by those who serve in the U.S. Armed Forces, Washington State law provides for certain preferences for eligible veterans seeking employment with the state, or any of its political subdivisions or municipal corporations, including King County. In certain limited circumstances, spouses/state registered domestic partners of eligible veterans may also be entitled to preference in hiring.

This policy is intended to guide King County in providing appropriate preference when hiring eligible veterans or their spouses/state registered domestic partners, consistent with state law.

POLICY APPLICABILITY

The county's Veterans' Preference for Employment Applicants Policy applies to all executive branch departments, offices, and divisions, including the Assessor's Office and King County Elections.

DEFINITIONS

"Veterans" eligible for preference are defined in RCW 41.04.005, RCW 41.04.007 and/or RCW 73.16.010. To qualify for Washington state veterans' preference, an eligible veteran, surviving spouse/registered domestic partner must provide documentation of the veteran's honorable discharge or documentation of a discharge for medical reasons with an honorable record.

POLICY

An applicant may request veterans' preference and is given the opportunity to request veterans' preference in the countywide application. The requirements for applying preference are dependent on whether the recruitment includes a scored, competitive examination as defined in Washington law.

PROCEDURES

Requesting and Applying Veterans' Preference in Hiring

1. King County applicants requesting veterans' preference will request the preference at the time of application. When Veteran's Preference is applied and results in an employment offer, the individual will provide Armed Forces discharge documentation (typically form DD-214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, NGB Form 22, or an equivalent, or successor discharge paperwork, that characterizes the veteran's service as honorable) as part of their onboarding documentation.

2. Human Resources staff will review the applicable documentation to verify eligibility. Veterans, or their spouses/registered domestic partners, qualify for applying preference as described below.
3. Competitive Examination Recruitment (RCW 41.04.010) – If a recruitment administers a competitive examination (i.e., a scored competitive written, oral or performance test, and the examination score needs to be equivalent to a 0-100% scale), an eligible veteran as defined in RCW 41.04.007 may request veteran preference. The preference as described below and as contained in RCW 41.04.010 would add a percentage to the passing mark, grade or rating for honorably discharged veterans and disabled veterans, as follows:
 - a. Ten percent (10%) is added for a veteran who served during a period of war or in armed conflict and is not receiving military retirement, until the first appointment. This percentage is not applied for promotional appointments.
 - b. Five percent (5%) is added for a veteran who did not serve during a period of war or in an armed conflict or is receiving military retirement, until the first appointment. This percentage is not applied for promotional appointments.
 - c. Five percent (5%) is added for a veteran who was called to active duty while employed with King County. The percentage shall be added to promotional examinations until the first promotion only.
4. Non-Competitive Examination Recruitment (RCW 73.16.010) – If a recruitment does not administer a competitive examination, the following applicants may request veterans' preference under RCW 73.16.010, if the applicant meets the competencies and other position requirements:
 - a. honorably discharged veterans;
 - b. surviving spouses/registered domestic partners of eligible veterans; and
 - c. spouses/registered domestic partners of honorably discharged veterans who have a service-connected permanent and total disability.

This is not an absolute preference, it operates as a tiebreaker where two or more candidates have equal qualifications at the time of the hiring decision, including performance on examinations, interviews and other testing.

5. Applicants will only receive veterans' preference once with King County in their initial appointment. The exception to this is if an employee is called to active duty while employed by King County, upon their return they will be eligible for veterans' preference for their first promotion, see 3.c above. RCW 41.04.010(3).

STATUTORY REFERENCES

RCW 41.04.005 “Veteran” defined for certain purposes.

1. As used in this section and RCW 41.16.220, 41.20.050 and 41.40.170 “veteran” includes every person who at the time he or she seeks the benefits of this section and RCW 41.16.220, 41.20.050, or 41.40.170 has received an honorable discharge, is actively serving honorably, or received a discharge for physical reasons with an honorable record and who meets at least one of the follow criteria:
 - a. The person has served between World War I and World War II or during any “period of war,” as defined in subsection 2 of this section, as either:
 - i. A member in any branch of the armed forces of the United States;
 - ii. A member of the women’s air forces service pilots;
 - iii. A U.S. documented merchant mariner with service aboard an oceangoing vessel operated by the war shipping administration, the office of defense transportation, or their agents, from December 7, 1941, through December 31, 1946; or
 - iv. A civil service crewmember with service aboard a U.S. army transport service or U.S. naval transportation service vessel in oceangoing service from December 7, 1941, through December 31, 1946; or
 - b. The person has received the armed forces expeditionary medal, or marine corps and navy expeditionary medal, for opposed action on foreign soil, for service:
 - i. In any branch of the armed forces of the United States; or
 - ii. As a member of the women’s air forces service pilots.
2. A “period of war” includes:
 - a. World War I;
 - b. World War II;
 - c. The Korean conflict;
 - d. The Vietnam era, which means:
 - i. The period beginning on February 28, 1961, and ending on May 7, 1975, in the case of a veteran who served in the Republic of Vietnam during that period;
 - ii. The period beginning August 5, 1964, and ending on May 7, 1975;
 - e. The Persian Gulf War, which was the period beginning August 2, 1990, and ending on February 28, 1991, or ending on November 30, 1995, if the participant was awarded a campaign badge or medal for such period;
 - f. The period beginning on the date of any future declaration of war by the congress and ending on the date prescribed by presidential proclamation or concurrent resolution of the congress; and
 - g. Any armed conflicts, if the participant was awarded the respective campaign or expeditionary badge or medal, or if the service was such that a campaign or expeditionary badge or medal would have been awarded, except that the member already received a campaign or expeditionary badge or medal for a prior deployment during that same conflict.

RCW 41.04.007 – “Veteran” defined for certain purposes.

“Veteran” includes every person who, at the time he or she seeks the benefits of RCW 46.18.212, 46.18.235, 72.36.030, 41.04.010, 73.04.090, or 43.180.250, has received an honorable discharge, received a discharge for medical reasons with an honorable record, where applicable, or is in receipt of a United States department of defense discharge document DD form 214, NGB form 22, or their equivalent or successor discharge paperwork, that characterizes his or her service as honorable, and who has served in at least one of the following capacities:

1. As a member in any branch of the armed forces of the United States, including the national guard and armed forces reserves, and has fulfilled his or her initial military service obligation;
2. As a member of the women's air forces service pilots;
3. As a member of the armed forces reserves, national guard, or coast guard, and has been called into federal service by a presidential select reserve call up for at least one hundred eighty cumulative days;
4. As a civil service crewmember with service aboard a U.S. army transport service or U.S. naval transportation service vessel in oceangoing service from December 7, 1941, through December 31, 1946;
5. As a member of the Philippine armed forces/scouts during the period of armed conflict from December 7, 1941, through August 15, 1945; or
6. A United States documented merchant mariner with service aboard an oceangoing vessel operated by the department of defense or its agents, from both June 25, 1950, through July 27, 1953, in Korean territorial waters and from August 5, 1964, through May 7, 1975, in Vietnam territorial waters, and who received a military commendation.

RCW 41.04.010 – Veterans' scoring criteria status in examinations

In all competitive examinations, unless otherwise provided in this section, to determine the qualifications of applicants for public offices, positions, or employment, either the state, and all of its political subdivisions and all municipal corporations, or private companies or agencies contracted with by the state to give the competitive examinations shall give a scoring criteria status to all veterans as defined in RCW 41.04.007, by adding to the passing mark, grade or rating only, based upon a possible rating of one hundred points as perfect a percentage in accordance with the following:

1. Ten percent to a veteran who served during a period of war or in an armed conflict as defined in RCW 41.04.005 and does not receive military retirement. The percentage shall be added to the passing mark, grade, or rating of competitive examinations until the veteran's first appointment. The percentage shall not be utilized in promotional examinations;
2. Five percent to a veteran who did not serve during a period of war or in an armed conflict as defined in RCW 41.04.005 or is receiving military retirement. The percentage shall be added to the passing mark, grade, or rating of competitive examinations until the veteran's first appointment. The percentage shall not be utilized in promotional examinations;
3. Five percent to a veteran who was called to active military service from employment with the state or any of its political subdivisions or municipal corporations. The percentage shall be added to promotional examinations until the first promotion only;
4. All veterans' scoring criteria may be claimed:
 - a. Upon release from active military service with an honorable discharge or a discharge for medical reasons with an honorable record, where applicable; or
 - b. Upon receipt of a United States department of defense discharge document DD form 214, NGB form 22, or their equivalent or successor discharge paperwork, that characterizes his or her service as honorable.

RCW 73.16.010 - Preference in Public Employment

In every public department, and upon all public works of the state, and of any county thereof, honorably discharged soldiers, sailors, and marines who are veterans of any war of the United States, or of any military campaign for which a campaign ribbon shall have been awarded, and their

widows or widowers, shall be preferred for appointment and employment. Age, loss of limb, or other physical impairment, which does not in fact incapacitate, shall not be deemed to disqualify them, provided they possess the capacity necessary to discharge the duties of the position involved: PROVIDED, that spouses of honorably discharged veterans who have a service-connected permanent and total disability shall also be preferred for appointment and employment.

QUESTIONS

Refer questions or comments to your department's [Human Resources Manager](#) or the Department of Human Resources.