

Veterans' Preference for Employment Applicants

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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 or 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 or 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 or their eligible spouse or registered domestic partner must provide documentation of a "qualifying discharge," consistent with [RCW 73.04.005](#).

POLICY

An applicant may request veterans' preference with their initial application to a King County position. 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 a qualifying discharge as part of their onboarding documentation.
2. Human Resources staff will review the applicable documentation to verify eligibility.

3. Veterans, or their spouses or registered domestic partners, qualify for applying preference as described below.
- a. 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 is 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:
 - i. 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.
 - ii. 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.
 - iii. 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.
 - b. 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:
 - i. qualifying discharged veterans;
 - ii. surviving spouses or registered domestic partners of eligible veterans; and
 - iii. spouses or registered domestic partners of qualifying discharged veterans who have a service-connected permanent and total disability.
- The non-competitive examination preference 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.
4. 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.a.iii. above. RCW 41.04.010(3).

QUESTIONS

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