



THE AMERICAN LEGION

VETERANS' PREFERENCE INFORMATION



NATIONAL ECONOMIC COMMISSION



Introduction

Veterans' preference in federal hiring and retention is extremely complex. As a result, those who earned this entitlement through service to the country often misunderstand it. The purpose of this publication is to provide basic information on veterans' preference.

The federal government, as well as the nation as a whole, recognizes the enormous debt owed to those who serve in the military services and has always been a leading employer of veterans.

History

America's war veterans have usually received some type of recognition for their military service. In the beginning, that recognition was informal and varied from one war to the next.

There are several programs designed to provide eligible veterans with special consideration when applying for federal jobs. Unfortunately, many veterans are unaware of what may be available to them. Here's a quick look at several especially helpful programs for qualified veterans in finding federal employment.

IMPORTANT WEBSITES

The following website provides current, in-depth information regarding veterans' employment within the federal government:

<http://www.opm.gov/veterans/>

The following website contains the most current nationwide federal job listings:

<http://www.usajobs.gov/>

The American Legion Career Center

<http://www.legion.org>



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VETERANS EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES ACT OF 1998

Qualified veterans may apply for any federal agency vacancy announcement that is open to applicants outside the hiring agency's workforce under merit promotion. For example, if an agency is recruiting among all federal employees (i.e. status applicants), qualified preference eligibles and veterans may apply. The preference eligibles and veterans will compete with other eligible applicants for the job under normal merit promotion procedures. To be eligible for a VEOA appointment, a veteran must be honorably separated and either a preference eligible or have substantially completed 3 or more years of active service.

VETERANS' PREFERENCE

For vacancy announcement open to "all sources", preference is given to qualified veterans who are disabled or who served during certain time periods or in military campaigns and those eligible for derived preference. This preference takes the form of having points added to the veteran's examination or evaluation score.

Military retirees at the rank of major, lieutenant commander, or higher are not eligible for this preference unless they are disabled.

To receive a 5-point preference, you must have:

- Served during 12/7/41-7/1/55;
- Or for more than 180 consecutive days, any part of which occurred between 1/31/55 and 10/15/76;
- Or during the Gulf War from 8/2/90-1/2/92;
- Or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign medal has been authorized

including El Salvador, Grenada, Haiti, Lebanon, Panama, Somalia, Southwest Asia, and Bosnia;

- Or for more than 180 consecutive days, any part of which occurred during the period beginning September 11, 2001, and ending on the date prescribed by Presidential proclamation or by law as the last day of Operation Iraqi Freedom

Medal holders and Gulf War veterans who enlisted after September 7, 1980 or entered active duty after October 13, 1982, must have served continuously for 24 months or the full period called to active duty.

For ten-point preference, you must have a present service-connected disability or be receiving compensation, disability retirement benefits, or pension from the military or the Department of Veterans Affairs. Unmarried spouses of certain deceased veterans and spouses of disabled veterans as well as mothers of veterans who died in service or are totally disabled are also eligible.

VETERANS READJUSTMENT APPOINTMENT AUTHORITY (VRA)

This is a special authority that allows an agency, if they wish, to appoint an eligible veteran to a job without competition. VRA appointments begin as two-year appointments and, when successfully completed, are then converted to permanent appointments. Initial appointment must be at a grade or pay level no higher than GS-11. Unless you are 30 percent or more disabled, your eligibility to receive a VRA appointment will terminate ten years after your discharge from active duty.

The following individuals are eligible for a VRA appointment:

- Disabled veterans; or
- Veterans who served on active duty in the Armed Forces during a war, or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized; or
- Veterans who, while serving on active duty in the Armed Forces, participated in a United States military operation for which an Armed Forces Service Medal was awarded; or
- Recently separated veterans.

30 PERCENT OR MORE DISABLED VETERANS

Those eligible may be hired non-competitively (at any grade level for which they are qualified) under an appropriate temporary appointment even though the position filled is permanent. At its discretion, the agency may convert the employee to permanent status after a brief period (61 days or longer) of service.

DISABLED VETERANS AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAM

The Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP) was developed to promote recruitment, employment, and job advancement opportunities within the Federal Government for qualified disabled veterans.

Individuals interested in receiving more information on how they may benefit from this program should contact directly the human resources office of the agency in which they wish to be employed.