GAIN FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT
USING YOUR VETERANS' PREFERENCE

INTRODUCTION

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

Congress has enacted laws protecting veterans seeking federal employment from being penalized due to their service. Veterans who are disabled or who were on active duty during specific time periods are generally entitled to preference over non-veterans.

Veterans' preference laws do not, however, guarantee veterans a job. The laws also do not give veterans preference when it comes to promotions, transfers, reassignments or reinstatements within an agency.

The U.S. government offers several programs designed to provide eligible veterans with special consideration when applying for federal jobs. However, 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 and resources regarding veterans' preference.

IMPORTANT WEBSITES

For in-depth information regarding veterans' employment within the federal government:
www.fedshirevets.gov

For more resources:

www.veterans.gov

For current nationwide federal job listings:
www.usajobs.gov/veterans

For The American Legion's Career Center, including resource information and a job fairs calendar:
www.legion.org/careers

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THE AMERICAN LEGION

VETERANS' PREFERENCE

INFORMATION

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES ACT OF 1998

Provides qualified veterans the opportunity to compete for certain positions announced under an agency's merit promotion procedures. It applies only when the agency is filling a permanent, competitive service position and has decided to solicit candidates from outside its workforce. It allows eligible veterans and preference eligibles to apply to announcements that would otherwise be open to so-called "status" candidates, i.e., "current competitive service employees and certain prior employees who have earned competitive status." The veteran must be honorably separated, and either a preference eligible or have substantially completed three or more years of active service.

VETERANS' PREFERENCE

For vacancies open to "all sources," preference is given to qualified veterans who are disabled or who served during certain 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 five-point preference, a veteran must have served:

- Between Dec. 7, 1941 and July 1, 1955.
- For more than 180 consecutive days, any part of which occurred between Jan. 31, 1955 and Oct. 15, 1976.
- During the Gulf War, Aug. 2, 1990 to Jan. 2, 1992.
- 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.
- For more than 180 consecutive days, any part of which occurred beginning Sept. 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 Sept. 7, 1980 or entered active duty after Oct. 13, 1982, must have served continuously for 24 months or the full period called to active duty.

For 10-point preference, a veteran 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 RECRUITMENT APPOINTMENT

Veterans Recruitment Appointment (VRA) authority allows an agency to appoint an eligible veteran to a job without competition. VRA appointments begin as two-year terms and, when successfully completed, are then converted to permanent positions. 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 10 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 participated in a United States military operation for which an Armed Forces Service Medal was awarded, OR
- Recently separated veterans (within 3 years of discharge), AND separated under honorable conditions (this means honorable or general discharge).

30 PERCENT OR MORE DISABLED VETERANS

This authority can be used to make temporary (at least 60 days but not to exceed 1 year) or term (more than 1 year, but not more than 4) appointments in the competitive service. There is no grade level restriction. At its discretion, the agency may convert the employee to permanent status after a period of service.

DISABLED VETERAN LEAVE

By law, Disabled Veteran Leave (DVL) must be provided to any federal employee hired on or after Nov. 5, 2016, who is a veteran with a service-connected disability rating of 30 percent or more for purposes of undergoing medical treatment for such disability. DVL is available as a one-time benefit during 12 months beginning on an eligible employee's "first day of employment" and may not exceed 104 hours for a regular full-time employee.

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 the human resources office of the agency in which they wish to be employed.