

# Veterans' Preference for Employment Applicants and Testing

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## PURPOSE

Per Chapter 41.04 RCW, in all scored competitions to determine the qualifications of employment applicants for public offices, including King County applicants, a "Veterans' Preference" may be requested by veterans. This means that, depending on the veteran's status, a certain percentage is added to the veteran's scores on employment applications and examinations. This HR Bulletin provides information on the applicability of the preference for King County employment application and examination processes.

In addition to the scoring preference described above, per Chapter 73.16 RCW, where two or more employment candidates have equal qualifications, including performance on examinations, interviews and other testing, the veteran receives a preference. In some cases, this preference extends to employment candidates who are also widows, widowers, and spouses of veterans.

This HR Bulletin revises and supersedes "Veterans' Preference for Job Applicants" 2007-0006 (Revised June 25, 2009).

## OVERVIEW

### ***RCW 41.04 Et Seq.***

Under Washington State law, RCW 41.04.005, "veteran" includes every person who 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 following criteria:

1. The person has served between World War I and World War II or during any period of war as either:
  - A member in any branch of the armed forces of the United States;
  - A member of the women's air forces service pilots;
  - 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
  - A civil service crew member 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
2. The person has received the armed forces expeditionary medal, or Marine Corps and navy expeditionary medal, for opposed action on foreign soil, for service:
  - In any branch of the armed forces of the United States; or
  - As a member of the women's air forces service pilots.

A "period of war" includes:

- World War I;
- World War II;
- The Korean conflict;
- The Vietnam era, which means: 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; The period beginning August 5, 1964, and ending on May 7, 1975;
- The Persian Gulf War, which was the period beginning August 2, 1990, and ending on the date prescribed by presidential proclamation or law;
- 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
- The following armed conflicts, if the participant was awarded the respective campaign badge or medal: the crisis in Lebanon; the invasion of Grenada; Panama, Operation Just Cause; Somalia, Operation Restore Hope; Haiti, Operation Uphold Democracy; Bosnia, Operation Joint Endeavor; Operation Noble Eagle; southern or central Asia, Operation Enduring Freedom; and Persian Gulf, Operation Iraqi Freedom.

RCW 41.04.010 provides the specific guidance for application of the Veterans' Preference 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 the first promotional examination only;

(4) All veterans' scoring criteria may be claimed upon release from active military service.

The Veterans' Preference may only be used once when the employee is first hired by the county and once when the employee is first promoted within the county. The "veteran's first appointment" set forth in subsections (1) and (2) above means the first time that the veteran applicant obtains a county position. The Veterans' Preference is not provided to the employee for subsequent hiring processes. If a current employee is requesting a Veterans' Preference for something other than their first county promotion under subsection (3) above, it must be declined.

The "first promotional examination" set forth in subsection (3) above means first time that an employee, or qualifying applicant (currently employed with the state or any of its political subdivisions or municipal corporation) obtains a promotional county position. The Veterans' Preference is not provided to the employee for subsequent promotional processes. If a current employee has already been promoted and is requesting a Veterans' Preference for a subsequent promotion, it must be declined.

**RCW 73.16 Et Seq.**

Of note, whether or not the Veterans' Preference is utilized, where two or more employment candidates have equal qualifications, including performance on examinations, interviews and other testing, the veteran receives a preference.

In addition, RCW 73.16.010 further extends the preference as follows:

. . . 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.

(Bolded emphasis added.)

As set forth above, veterans eligible for the preference must have received an honorable discharge, must be actively serving honorably, or must have received a discharge for physical reasons. This information is provided on the Department of Defense Form 214 and the veteran should be able to provide a copy. However, please note that many short-term tours of duty may not result in an official separation or the issuance of a Form 214. In that case, he or she is considered honorably separated and you may need to ask for some alternative form of documentation.

**QUESTIONS/COMMENTS**

Refer all questions or comments via e-mail to the Human Resources Division Employment Section



VETERANS  
PREFERENCE TABLES