

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

VETERANS

Q. I served on active duty in the armed forces. Am I able to claim veterans' preference when applying for Federal jobs?

A. Maybe. Not all veterans are considered veterans for the purpose of Federal civilian employment under title 5 United States Code section 2108 and not all active duty service qualifies for veterans' preference. Veterans' preference is based on dates of active duty service, receipt of campaign badges or purple heart, or having a service-connected disability.

Q. What determines whether I am eligible to claim 5-point or 10-point preference?

A. You are a 5 point preference eligible if your active duty service meets any of the following:

- 180 or more consecutive days, any part of which occurred during the period beginning September 11, 2001 and ending on a future date prescribed by Presidential proclamation or law as the last date of Operation Iraqi Freedom, **OR**
- Between August 2, 1990 and January 2, 1992, **OR**
- 180 or more consecutive days, any part of which occurred after January 31, 1955 and before October 15, 1976, **OR**
- In a war, campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized or between April 28, 1952 and July 1, 1955.

You are a 10 point preference eligible if you served at any time, and you:

- have a service connected disability, **OR**
- received a Purple Heart.

If you are still unsure on your ability to claim veterans' preference eligibility, you may also visit the Department of Labor's Veterans' Preference Advisor at <http://www.dol.gov/elaws/vets/vetpref/mservice.htm>

Q. Who determines whether I am eligible to claim veterans' preference?

A. The Federal agency you are applying to for employment will request a copy of the DD-214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, or other acceptable documentation to support and adjudicate your claim for veterans' preference.

Q. How do I claim my veterans' preference?

A. The vacancy announcement will indicate when veterans' preference is applicable, and what documents to submit in order to claim preference. For more information on veterans' preference, visit <http://dev.fedshirevets.gov/job/vetpref/index.aspx>

Q. Is there a limit to the number of times I can use my veterans' preference when applying for Federal jobs?

A. No. There is no limit on how many times you can apply and claim an entitlement to veterans' preference. However, it is important to remember that veterans' preference does not apply when the agency is using merit promotion procedures to fill a position.

Q. I have never been in the military however; my spouse is a veteran and currently works for the Federal Government. Am I able to claim veterans' preference as a spouse when applying for Federal jobs?

A. No. When the veteran is able to use his or her entitlement to veterans' preference in Federal employment, the spouse may not use that entitlement at the same time. However, further details on the specific criteria that must be met to claim derived veterans' preference as a spouse can be found at: <http://www.fedshirevets.gov/job/familypref/index.aspx>.

Q. I have never been in the military however; my daughter is a severely disabled veteran and unable to work. Am I eligible for veterans' preference when applying for Federal jobs?

A. Maybe. Mothers and spouses of a severely disabled veteran are able to claim entitlement to derived veterans' preference when the veteran is unable to use it due to his or her service connected disability. Further details on the specific criteria that must be met can be found at: <http://www.fedshirevets.gov/job/familypref/index.aspx>.

Q. Where can I get information on special hiring authorities for veterans such as the Veterans Employment Opportunity Act of 1998 (VEOA), Veterans Recruitment Act (VRA), and the 30% or More Disabled Veteran Hiring Authority?

A. You will find the most current information regarding special hiring authorities on the Feds Hire Vets website at: <http://www.fedshirevets.gov/job/shav/index.aspx>. Also, if you have questions about the applicability and use of veterans' preference and these authorities, please contact the agency posting the announcement or where you are interested in working.

Q. Does veterans' preference points apply to appointments made under VEOA?

A. No. Veterans' preference points do not apply to merit promotion announcements using VEOA. VEOA allows certain veterans to apply to vacancy announcements that are open under merit promotion procedures outside of the agency's workforce.

Q. I am currently a Federal employee. When I apply for a position as a VEOA eligible, am I subject to the time-in-grade restrictions?

A. Yes. Such an employee remains subject to time-in-grade restrictions.

- Q. I am a Federal employee. When I apply for a position as a VEOA eligible candidate, am I subject to the demographic area restrictions listed on the area of consideration?
- A. No. VEOA eligibles are not restricted to demographic restrictions. Any individual eligible under VEOA, regardless of where they are located, may compete for a vacancy whenever the hiring agency will accept applications from outside its own workforce.
- Q. I am a current Federal employee; can I use my veteran's preference when applying for another competitive position opened under all sources in a different Federal agency?
- A. Yes. There is no limit to the number of times you can use veterans' preference.
- Q. I lost my DD-214 Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, how can I obtain a copy?
- A. A copy of the DD-214 and other military service records can be obtained from the National Archives. Visit <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/get-service-records.html> for additional information.
- Q. I don't have a DD-214. I am still on active duty and interested in applying for Federal jobs. What documentation can I provide to the agency when applying for Federal jobs?
- A. You may submit an official letter from your military unit verifying your terminal leave status and dates. Additionally, the letter must include a statement that your service has been performed under honorable conditions as the agency needs this documentation prior to making your appointment. Once you complete terminal leave and receive a DD-214, provide a copy of member copy 4 to your agency HR office to validate dates and character of service.
- Q. The job I am interested in applying for says that I have to submit a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) letter? What is the purpose of this letter and where can I get one?
- A. The VA Letter is a rating of disability. The letter provides information useful for determining the type of veterans' preference being claimed on the Application for 10-Point Veteran Preference (SF 15) SF-15 and establishing eligibility for a special hiring authority. To obtain the VA letter, contact your local VA regional office by calling 1-800-827-1000 or visiting www.va.gov.
- Q. What is the Standard Form (SF) 15 Application for 10-Point Veteran Preference?
- A. The SF-15 is used by Federal agencies and OPM examining offices to adjudicate individuals' claims for veterans' preference in accordance with the Veterans' Preference Act of 1944.
- Q. Where can I find the SF-15 to submit as part of my application package?

- A. The SF-15 can be found on OPM's Electronic Forms page at <http://www.fedshirevets.gov/pdf/SF15.pdf>
- Q. How do I obtain the signature for the certifying official on the SF-15?
- A. The certifying officer block on the SF-15 is signed by the agency representative. You do not need to have this signed when submitting with your application.
- Q. Where do I send the completed SF-15?
- A. The SF-15 and any other requested documentation is submitted to the agency where you are applying for employment.
- Q. If I accept an appointment at one grade level, am I eligible to accept another appointment at a higher grade level without meeting time-in-grade requirements?
- A. Maybe. If you are applying under merit promotion procedures, time-in-grade is required. However, if your appointment is based on a selection from an open competitive examination of eligibles or under a direct hire authority then the answer may be no. Check with the agency HR office you are applying to find out how this will apply in your case.
- Q. When applying for a civil service positions in the Federal Executive Branch, am I considered a former Federal employee for having served in the armed forces?
- A. No.
- Q. Who do I contact if I have a question about a posted job opportunity announcement?
- A. If you have a question about a particular job opportunity announcement, you will need to contact the Federal agency representative who posted the announcement. The point of contact information is generally listed at the bottom of the announcement.
- Q. Does OPM have employment data that demonstrates Federal agencies are hiring veterans?
- A. Yes. On the Feds Hire Vets website, OPM posts employment data that shows Federal agency hiring of veterans. The report, Employment of Veterans in the Federal Executive Branch of Government, shows data for veterans being hired in the Federal Government.
- Q. I am a Veteran and am interested in Federal employment. Where can I find a listing of available Federal jobs?
- A. On the USAJOBS website, OPM posts employment openings showing Federal agency hiring opportunities of veterans. The website can be found at www.usajobs.gov. Additionally, individual agency websites will list employment information.

Q. What is the Veterans Employment Program Office (VEPO)?

A. The VEPO is responsible for promoting veterans' recruitment, employment, training and development, and retention within their respective agencies. Veterans are encouraged to contact these individuals for specific information on employment opportunities in those agencies.

Q. How can I find the contact information for Federal agency VEPOs?

A. A complete listing of Federal agency VEPO's can be found on the Feds Hire Vets website under the Agency Directory tab. On this web page, you will have access to their name, background information, e-mail, and phone number. The web address to access the Agency Directory is <http://www.fedshirevets.gov/AgencyDirectory/index.aspx>.

Q. I believe that a Federal agency is conducting prohibited personnel practices. Will OPM investigate my complaint against this agency?

A. No. While OPM provides governmentwide leadership on Federal programs and policies, OPM does not investigate individual complaints alleging prohibited personnel practices. Complaints alleging prohibited personnel practices and retaliation should be directed to the Office of Special Counsel (OSC). OSC receives, investigates, and prosecutes allegations of prohibited personnel practices and can be visited at www.osc.gov.

Q. I believe my veterans' preference rights were violated when I applied to a vacancy announcement in a Federal agency. How do I file a complaint?

A. You may file a complaint with the Department of Labor's Veterans Employment and Training Service. This agency is charged with investigating violations of veterans' preference in Federal employment. Information on how to file a complaint may be found at: <http://www.dol.gov/elaws/vets/vetpref/1010.htm>.

Q. Now that I am a Federal employee, where can I find guidance on using my creditable military service time for leave accrual and retirement purposes?

A. Speak with your agency HR office and they will be able to provide you the necessary information.

<http://www.opm.gov/staffingportal/vetguide.asp>