

# Virginia's Veteran Preference in Hiring

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# Agenda

- Veteran Workforce Participation
- Virginia's Veteran Preference
  - Background
  - Provisions
  - Practical Implementation
- Overall Best Practice Recommendations
  - Hiring Manager Notification
  - Clarifying Qualifications



# Veteran Workforce Participation



- There are approximately 11 million military service veterans in the “working-age” population with a growing percentage of female veterans.
  - Virginia is ranked **7<sup>th</sup>** numerically with almost 470,000 veterans comprising **9%** of Working – Age Virginians.
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- Nationwide 23.6% of veterans have a service connected disability and in Virginia the estimate is **27.4%** of working age veterans.

Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

# Veteran Workforce Participation

- While still relatively close, the unemployment rate of military service veterans is typically higher than that of non-military peers.
- The largest gap has been among those recently separated from the military (known as the Gulf Era II Veterans).
- Many programs encouraging the participation of veterans in the workforce have been initiated since 2009 and veterans have made appreciable gains.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics



# Virginia Veteran Preference (§2.2-2903)

- Virginia first enacted a hiring preference for veterans in the early 1950s
- It was last modified in 2012 to add the spouse or surviving child of a service member killed in action to those eligible to receive the preference
- In summary, hiring officials **must take** an individual's status as a veteran **into consideration** in the employment selection process **as a plus** factor.

# Who is eligible for the preference?

Veteran	Surviving Spouse or Child	Member of the Virginia National Guard
<p>Any person who has received an <b>honorable discharge</b> and</p> <p>(i) has provided more than <b>180 consecutive days of full-time, active-duty service</b> in the armed forces of the United States or reserve components thereof, including the National Guard; or</p> <p>(ii) has a <b>service-connected disability</b> rating fixed by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.</p>	<p><b>Surviving spouse</b> means the surviving spouse of a veteran who was killed in the line of duty.</p> <p><b>Child</b> means any surviving child or children under the age of 27 years of a veteran who was killed in the line of duty.</p>	<p>A person who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) is presently serving as a member of the Virginia National Guard; and</li> <li>(ii) (ii) has satisfactorily completed required initial active-duty service.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> Members of the Virginia National Guard do not a receive preference if there are any veterans in the applicant pool.</p>



# What is the preference?

Selections with validated <b>scored tests</b>	Selections <u>without</u> scored tests
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Applicant must first achieve a passing score.</li><li>• If applicant is eligible for preference, then 5% is added to the score.</li><li>• If applicant is a veteran who also has a service-related disability an additional 5%, for a total of 10%, is added to the score.</li><li>• The preference is credited once and remains with the applicant throughout the process.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Veteran</i> status is considered as a <b>preferred criteria</b>.</li><li>• If the veteran also has a <b>service connected disability</b> then this is considered as a <b>second</b> preferred criteria.</li><li>• The preference is credited once and remains with the applicant throughout the process.</li></ul>

# What is the preference?

- If there are distinctions in how individual criteria are weighted
  - Ex. 5 years of related job experience is more important than familiarity with Microsoft Excel - then veteran's status is considered as one of the **lower weighted** preferred criteria.
- If possible, use a compensatory model
  - Several lesser weighted criteria could possibly counter balance a more heavily weighted criteria.



# Practical Implementation

1. Include questions to applicants on the job application that provide information on veteran, surviving spouse/child, service-connected disability rating, and Virginia National Guard status.
2. Screen all applicants for minimum qualifications to be given full consideration for the position.
3. Consider Veteran Status (refer to “Treatment & Verification” table) and service-connected disability status in the screening process of all minimally qualified applicants and mark as a preferred qualification.

# Practical Implementation

- §2.2-2903 also states that **if** any one defined as eligible for preference is **denied** employment - they **are entitled to request** and inspect information regarding **the reasons** for such denial.
- Hiring Officials must be prepared to provide the **specific reason** the individual was not selected.
  - This could be citing the job specific experience, degree/certification, proficiency, or behavioral competency that was lacking or insufficiently demonstrated.
  - Contact UHR and General Counsel if the applicant requests more information.

# Value of a Veteran

- Military service veterans benefit from sophisticated training and leadership experience:
  - Contrary to stereotypes the learning model of the military is action on the basis of decision making (not rote memorization) which “expects the unexpected”
  - While still combat-ready, a large percentage of jobs held by people in the military directly mirror those in the civilian workforce with many in Healthcare professions.
  - While the percentage of Veterans with a Bachelor’s is somewhat below the non-veteran population, the Veteran population has a higher percentage of Advanced Degrees

Source: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

# General Best Practices

- Make sure the hiring manager is aware of their responsibility to give positive consideration to veteran status.
  - A screening sheet with those categories identified as preferred is a best practice.
  - Notifying the hiring manager of any minimally qualified veterans in their applicant pool via email should be standard.
- If the information a veteran provides about their specific job training and duties is unclear to you - inform yourself. Ask the applicant to provide more information on the actual knowledge, skills and abilities they gained in that role.



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