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 7th numerically with almost 470,000 veterans comprising 9% of Working – Age Virginians.

• 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?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Veteran</th>
<th>Surviving Spouse or Child</th>
<th>Member of the Virginia National Guard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Any person who has received an <strong>honorable discharge</strong> and (i) has provided more than <strong>180 consecutive days of full-time, active-duty service</strong> in the armed forces of the United States or reserve components thereof, including the National Guard; or (ii) has a <strong>service-connected disability</strong> rating fixed by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.</td>
<td><strong>Surviving spouse</strong> means the surviving spouse of a veteran who was killed in the line of duty. <strong>Child</strong> means any surviving child or children under the age of 27 years of a veteran who was killed in the line of duty.</td>
<td>A person who: (i) is presently serving as a member of the Virginia National Guard; and (ii) has satisfactorily completed required initial active-duty service. <strong>Note:</strong> Members of the Virginia National Guard do not receive preference if there are any veterans in the applicant pool.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is the preference?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selections with validated <strong>scored tests</strong></th>
<th>Selections <strong>without scored tests</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Applicant must first achieve a passing score.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• If applicant is eligible for preference, then 5% is added to the score.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The preference is credited once and remains with the applicant throughout the process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>Veteran</strong> status is considered as a preferred criteria.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• If the veteran also has a service <strong>connected disability</strong> then this is considered as a second preferred criteria.</td>
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<td>• The preference is credited once and remains with the applicant throughout the process.</td>
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</table>
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.