



District School Board of Pasco County **VETERANS' PREFERENCE GUIDELINES**

The District School Board of Pasco County honors the contributions and sacrifices made by veterans and their families. In doing so, the District is proud to award veterans' preference to qualified applicants and employees as part of the employment, promotion, and retention process, in compliance with state and federal law.

All worksite administrators and their staff who assist in screening both internal and external job applicants are expected to embrace the District's vision for employing a diversified workforce, to include qualified veterans and their spouses and are required to adhere to the guidelines outlined below. While these guidelines pertain to the hiring and promotion of employees, veterans' preference status will also be considered in decisions regarding reduction in force.

HIRING/PROMOTION GUIDELINES:

- I. DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY: (All criteria in this section must be satisfied.)
 - a. The applicant must claim veterans' preference (VP) on the application and meet the minimum requirements of the position. (For example, if the job requires a master's degree, but the applicant has only a bachelor's degree, the applicant is not considered a qualified VP candidate for that particular position, despite having met the remaining criteria in this section.)

AND

- b. Applicants must fall into one of the following seven categories, which are included on the employment application:

Category One: Veteran with a service-connected disability who is eligible for or receiving compensation, disability retirement, or pension under public laws administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense.

Category Two: Spouse of a veteran who cannot qualify for employment because of a total and permanent service-connected disability, or the spouse of a veteran missing in action, captured, or forcibly detained by a foreign power.

Category Three: Veteran of any war who has served on active duty for at least one day during a wartime period, excluding active duty for training, and who was discharged under honorable conditions from the Armed Forces of the United States of America (See FAQ's for list of qualifying war periods.) OR who has received any Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, including the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal.

Category Four: Unremarried widow or widower of a veteran who died of a service-connected disability.

Category Five: The mother, father, legal guardian, or unremarried widow or widower of a veteran who died in the line of duty under combat-related conditions, as verified by the United States Department of Defense.

Category Six: A current member of any reserve component of the United States Armed Forces or the Florida National Guard.

Category Seven: A veteran who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under honorable conditions (or later received an upgraded discharge under honorable conditions)

AND

- c. Applicants must submit required documentation to prove they fall into one of the seven categories listed above and evidencing discharge under honorable conditions. (See FAQ's for a list of acceptable documentation for each category.) Any supporting documentation must be received by the Office for Human Resources and Educator Quality (HREQ) on or before the closing date of the job advertisement.

II. APPLY PROPER SCREENING PROCEDURES: Hiring managers utilize various methods of applicant screening. These guidelines are not intended to specify or to recommend a particular method of screening. However, to ensure that VP is properly considered, hiring managers must incorporate the following screening protocols, depending upon whether a numerically scored test or rating is used as part of the screening or final selection process:

- a. If numeric scoring is used, apply extra points as follows (based upon a 100 point scale):

Category One: 15 points

Categories Two through Six: 10 points

Category Seven: 5 points

Minimum Passing Score is Required. A VP candidate must first satisfy the established minimum passing score before extra points are added. If a VP candidate does not reach the minimum passing score, the candidate is not entitled to progress.

Keep in mind that a qualified VP candidate must be given preference at every stage of the selection process.

- b. If numeric scoring is not used, you must utilize another objective method of screening that clearly demonstrates how VP was considered and applied in your selection process. For example, if two applicants (one of whom is a qualified VP candidate) are considered equal in terms of job related qualifications or experience, the qualified VP candidate must be offered the position. However, there may be instances where a qualified VP candidate does not advance to the next step in the selection process. For example, another candidate's qualifications or experience may far outweigh those of the qualified VP candidate. If two VP candidates are considered equal in terms of job related qualifications or experience, a VP candidate in category one must be given preference over the VP candidate in categories two through seven. Likewise, candidates in categories two through six must be given preference over candidates in category 7. Always keep in mind that a qualified VP candidate must be provided preference every stage of the selection process.

III. ENFORCEMENT: If an employee or applicant believes he or she was not afforded employment/retention preference, refer the person to the Sr. Manager of Human Resources, HREQ, who will provide the following information, which is also listed on the employment application: *An applicant or employee who believes he or she was not afforded employment/retention preference may file a complaint with the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs, located at 11351 Ulmerton Road, Suite 311-K, Largo, Florida, 33778. For more information, call (727) 319-7462. A complaint must be filed within 21 calendar days of the applicant receiving notice of the hiring decision or within three months of the date the application is filed if no notice is given.*

*****See Following Pages for Frequently Asked Questions*****

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Who is considered a “qualified VP candidate?”

A qualified VP candidate is a person who asserts VP status on the employment application; meets the minimum qualifications for a position; falls into one of the seven qualifying categories; and submits the required supporting documentation, which also reflects discharge under honorable conditions, on or before the closing date of the advertisement. If a person does not meet all of these criteria, the person does not qualify for VP.

To be awarded VP, does an applicant have to claim it each and every time he/she applies for a position?

YES. An applicant is responsible for claiming VP each and every time the applicant applies for a position. This is done on the employment application. Applicants must also timely upload directly to the employment application or submit to the Office for Human Resources and Educator Quality any required supporting documentation each time they claim VP. An applicant is not considered a qualified VP candidate if he/she fails to timely submit the required documentation for each position where the applicant has claimed VP.

By when does an applicant have to submit documentation supporting the applicant’s VP claim?

Any required supporting documents must be received by 11:59pm on the closing date of the advertisement. Applicants have the ability to upload supporting documents into the applicant file, so that hiring managers can view and consider the documents. If you are unable to view the documents and the job had already closed, contact HREQ to confirm whether documents were received by HREQ on or before the closing date.

Can an applicant claim and be considered for VP more than once?

YES, if an external applicant. There is no limit on how many times an external applicant (person who is not currently employed by the District) may claim and be considered for VP. (Keep in mind that supporting documents must be timely submitted each time a person applies for a position and claims VP.) This rule regarding unlimited claims applies only to external applicants seeking initial employment with the District. VP does not apply to current employees applying for promotions or transfers.

If someone forgets to use VP for initial employment but gets the job anyway, can the person get VP when applying for a promotion or transfer?

NO. If a VP eligible applicant fails to claim VP for the initial hiring, the person may not use it later for promotion. An employee may not successfully justify that failure to use it previously is a reason to use it later.

Do current substitutes qualify for VP when applying for a benefit-earning position?

NO, because substitutes are already District employees and are not external applicants.

Do temporary service contract teachers (TSC’s) and teachers on mini-contracts get to claim and be considered for VP?

YES, if they are applying for a position that begins in the following school year.

If a teacher has been reappointed for the following school year but wants to apply for a different position, does the teacher get to claim and be considered for VP?

NO, because the teacher has already been guaranteed a position for the following school year.

If an applicant has already been employed by the State of Florida or one of its political subdivisions, does the person get to claim VP for a District position?

YES. The law changed in 2007 to allow persons to claim VP when applying to public employers such as the District, even if they had been previously been employed by another public employer.

Does a prior employee who previously claimed VP get to claim and be considered for VP when seeking reemployment with the District?

YES, because the applicant is not currently employed, and therefore, entitled to claim and be considered for VP when seeking to be reemployed.

Is a veteran who was previously employed by the District entitled to reinstatement or reemployment following separation of employment due to military service?

YES, the returning veteran is entitled to reinstatement or reemployment to the same or similar position, provided that the reinstatement or reemployment is within one year of the date of separation from military service or extended active duty.

Can internal applicants (including current substitutes) be awarded VP when applying for a promotion?

NO. Promotional preference applies only to a veteran's first promotion after reinstatement or reemployment, without exception.

Does the law require that a preference-eligible applicant be appointed to a position when a non-preference eligible applicant is better qualified?

NO. However, proper screening protocols should be applied and documented.

What are the eligible war-time periods that qualify a person under Category 3)?

Spanish-American War	April 21, 1898 – July 4, 1902 (includes the Philippine Insurrection and the Boxer Rebellion)
Mexican Border Period	May 9, 1916 – April 5, 1917 (in the case of a veteran who during such period served in Mexico, its borders, or in the waters adjacent to Mexico.
World War I	April 6, 1917 - November 11, 1918 • <i>Extended through April 1, 1920, for those veterans who served in Russia</i> • <i>Extended through July 1, 1921, for those veterans who served after November 11, 1918, and before July 2, 1921, provided such veterans had at least one day of service between April 5, 1917, and November 12, 1918.</i>
World War II	December 7, 1941 - December 31, 1946
Korean Conflict	June 27, 1950 - January 31, 1955
Vietnam Era	February 28, 1961 - May 7, 1975
Persian Gulf War	August 2, 1990 - January 2, 1992
Operation Enduring Freedom	October 7, 2001 - date to be determined
Operation Iraqi Freedom / Operation New Dawn	March 19, 2003 – date to be determined/ September 1, 2010 – date to be determined

How do I know if an applicant served during an eligible wartime period?

You can verify the applicant's dates of service on the DD-214 form or other official documentation. Then, refer to the chart of applicable war-time periods included above.

How do I know if a person was discharged under honorable conditions?

If the DD Form 214 or other comparable discharge document designates the discharge as "Honorable" or "General – Under Honorable," the candidate may qualify for VP. Types of discharge that disqualify a candidate from being awarded VP include "Dishonorable," "Bad Conduct" (BCD); "Undesirable," and "General – Under Less Than Honorable."

How do I know if the documentation submitted is valid?

The required documentation depends upon the category under which the qualified VP candidate falls. The following is a list of required documentation by category:

CATEGORY 1) – Veterans with Service-Connected Disability:

- DD-214 (Member 4 long form preferred. If short form is submitted, it must be accompanied by official documents detailing military status, dates of service, and discharge type.); OR Certificate of Discharge or Separation from Active Duty ; OR other official documents (including military discharge papers or certification from the VA listing military status, dates of service, and discharge type) issued by the branch of service.

AND

- Official documentation from the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs dated within one year, reflecting a service-connected disability and disability percentage rating.

CATEGORY 2) - Spouse of a Veteran with a Total and Permanent Service Connected Disability or Spouse of a Veteran Missing in Action, Captured, or Forcibly Detained by a Foreign Power:

- Official documentation from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs showing the member of the armed forces was released or discharged from active duty due to a permanent service-connected disability, with a disability rating of 100 percent; OR official documentation from the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs reflecting that the service member while on active duty is missing in action, captured, or forcibly detained by a foreign power

AND

- Documentation verifying marriage to the member of the armed forces (marriage license or other legal document verifying marriage).

CATEGORY 3) - Veteran of any war who has served on active duty for one day or more during a wartime period or received expeditionary medal:

- DD-214 (Member 4 long form preferred. If short form is submitted, it must be accompanied by official documents detailing military status, dates of service, and discharge type.); OR Certificate of Discharge or Separation from Active Duty ; OR other official documents (including military discharge papers or certification from the VA listing military status, dates of service, and discharge type) issued by the branch of service
- Verify the service dates fall into one of the qualifying war-time periods. See below for list of war-time periods.
- For expeditionary medal eligibility: Contact the appropriate HREQ Staffing Manger (who oversees either school-based or district office) for assistance.

CATEGORY 4) – Unmarried Widow or Widower of a veteran who died of a service-connected disability.

- Official documentation from the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs reflecting that the service member was released or discharged from active duty due to his or her death while on active duty;

AND

- Documentation verifying marriage to the member of the armed forces (marriage license or other legal document verifying marriage)

AND

- a notarized statement certifying that he or she is the un-remarried widow or widower of the service member

CATEGORY 5) – Mother, father, legal guardian, or unmarried widow/widower of veteran who died in line of duty.

- Official documentation from the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs reflecting that the service member was released or discharged from active duty due to his or her death while on active duty;

AND

- Documentation verifying relationship to the member of the armed forces (marriage license, birth certificate, or other legal document verifying relationship)

AND

- (If widow/widower) a notarized statement certifying that he or she is the un-remarried widow or widower of the service member

CATEGORY 6) – Current member of any reserve component of the United States Armed Forces or the Florida National Guard.

- Letter from Commanding Officer confirming the dates of military service and that person is currently an active reservist.

CATEGORY 7) – Veteran who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under honorable conditions (or later received an upgraded discharge under honorable conditions)

- DD-214 (Member 4 long form preferred. If short form is submitted, it must be accompanied by official documents detailing military status, dates of service, and discharge type.); OR Certificate of Discharge or Separation from Active Duty ; OR other official documents (including military discharge papers or certification from the VA listing military status, dates of service, and discharge type) issued by the branch of service

What if an employee or applicant believes he or she was not afforded employment/retention preference?

Refer the person to the Sr. Manager of Human Resources, HREQ, who will provide the following information, which is also included on the employment application: An applicant or employee who believes he or she was not afforded employment/retention preference may file a complaint with the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs, located at 11351 Ulmerton Road, Suite 311-K, Largo, Florida, 33778. For more information, call (727) 319-7462. A complaint must be filed within 21 calendar days of the applicant receiving notice of the hiring decision or within three months of the date the application is filed if no notice is given.

What if I have additional questions not addressed in this document?

Contact the appropriate HREQ Staffing Manager (either school-site or district complex), the Senior Manager of HR, or the Director of HR.