

This document is intended to serve as a guide for hiring departments on how to determine the appropriateness of a veteran's preference claim, and how to give preference throughout the hiring process.

Veterans' Preference is ONLY given for Staff positions. Veteran's Preference does not apply to Temporary, Administration, or Faculty positions at USF.

If an applicant has indicated on the application that they are claiming Veterans' Preference, he/she must provide supporting documentation. The documentation must include:

- DD-214 Form or military discharge forms
- Applicants claiming Veterans' Preference because they are currently an active Reservist in the US Armed Forces or an active member of the Florida National Guard must submit the certification of Current Member of Reserve Component of the United States Armed Forces or the Florida National Guard.
- Applicants claiming Veterans' Preference as an un-remarried widow or widower of a veteran must submit the Certification of Un-remarried Widow or Widower.
- Certain categories of preference may require additional documentation to be submitted by the claimant. Human Resources will contact the applicant should additional documentation beyond the listed above be required.

Responsibilities of the Hiring Department

1. Preference in employment requires that an eligible applicant (i.e., an applicant who is eligible for Veterans' Preference) be given special consideration at each step of the employment selection process but does not require you to employ a veteran over a non-veteran who is better qualified.
2. If an eligible applicant meets the minimum qualifications OR is equally qualified as other applicants identified to be interviewed, the eligible applicant must be interviewed.
3. If all factors are equal, employment preference is given to an eligible applicant.
4. If you have two eligible applicants, the order of veterans' preference, under Florida law, is given first to:
 - Disabled Veterans who have served on active duty in any branch of the Armed Forces and who presently have an existing service-connected disability which is compensable under public laws administered by the DVA or are receiving compensation, disability retirement benefits, or pension by reason of public laws administered by the DVA and the Department of Defense.

- The spouse of a Veteran:
 - a) Who has a total and permanent service-connected disability and who, because of this disability, cannot qualify for employment; or
 - b) Who is missing in action, captured in line of duty by a hostile force, or detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power
- A veteran of any war who has served on active duty for one day or more during a wartime period, excluding active duty for training, and who was discharged "HONORABLY" from the Armed Forces of the United States of America; or who has been awarded a campaign or expeditionary medal.

The war-time periods are defined as follows:

- World War II: December 7, 1941 to December 31, 1946
 - Korean Conflict: June 27, 1950 to January 31, 1955
 - Vietnam Era: February 28, 1961 to May 7, 1975
 - Persian Gulf War: August 2, 1990 to January 2, 1992
 - Operation Enduring Freedom - October 7, 2001 to date to be determined
 - Operation Iraqi Freedom - March 19, 2003 to date to be determined
 - Operation New Dawn: September 1, 2010 to date to be determined
- The un-remarried widow or widower of a Veteran who died of a service-connected disability.
 - The mother, father, legal guardian, or unmarried widow or widower of a service member who died as a result of military service under combat-related conditions as verified by the U.S. Department of Defense.
 - A Veteran as defined in section 1.01m (14) Florida Statutes. "Active Duty for Training" may not be allowed under this paragraph. The term "veteran" is defined as a person who served in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released therefrom under honorable conditions only or who later received an upgraded discharge under honorable conditions.
 - A current member of any reserve component of the U.S. Armed Forces or the Florida National Guard.

5. If a Veterans' Preference eligible applicant does NOT include documents in order to claim Preference during the application process, such as DD-214 or military discharge papers, the Hiring Department MUST reach out to the applicant a minimum of three times with a variety of methods (i.e.: phone, email) and request the correct documents. These efforts must be documented as part of the supporting documentation of the recruitment process. It is recommended to upload the documented efforts to the posting under the Activity & Attachments tab.
6. Departments must notify all veterans who apply and are not selected (even if not interviewed) informing them that the position has been filled. Electronic notifications can be sent out through Careers@USF by sending the applicant a correspondence. The Careers@USF applicant tracking system will automatically keep all records of sent correspondences for record retention purposes. You may use the following correspondence as a template:

Thank you for your time and interest in the (Name of Job) position with the University of South Florida. Although your qualifications were impressive, we have decided to offer the position to another candidate. (Provide justification for hiring a non-veteran over the veteran claiming preference.)

Please feel free to apply for open positions, for which you qualify, throughout the university.

We wish you every personal and professional success with your job search and in the future. Thank you for your interest in the University of South Florida.

7. Applicants have 60 calendar days from the date that this notice is received to file a complaint with the Department of Veterans Affairs regarding the hiring decision. If no notice is given, then applicants have 3 months of the date the application is filed with the employer to file a complaint.
8. Document your hiring and selection process. Keep copies of the interview questions and assessments, and selection criteria. The law requires you to document the manner of selection and this documentation will be needed if a complaint is filed.
9. A Veterans' Preference eligible individual who is an internal applicant submitting an application for an internal job posting, cannot ask for Veterans' Preference unless entitled to Preference as a result of deployment.