

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Veterans' Preference

Question: How do I determine if I am eligible for Veterans' Preference?

Answer: In general, Veterans' Preference eligibility is based on dates of active duty service, receipt of a campaign badge, Purple Heart, or a service-connected disability. Only veterans discharged or released from active duty in the Armed Forces under honorable conditions (honorable or general discharge) are eligible for Veterans' Preference. If you are not sure of your preference eligibility, visit <https://www.fedshirevets.gov/job/vetpref/index.aspx>.

Question: How many types of preference eligibles are there?

Answer: There are basically three types of preference eligible: disabled (10-point preference eligible), non-disabled (5-point preference eligible), and sole survivorship preference (0-point preference eligible).

Question: Do I have to be disabled in order to be eligible for Veterans' Preference?

Answer: No. Veterans' Preference eligibility is based on dates of active duty service, receipt of a campaign badge, Purple Heart, OR a service-connected disability. Only veterans discharged or released from active duty in the Armed Forces under honorable conditions are eligible for Veterans' Preference.

Question: What is 0-point preference and who is eligible?

Answer: 0-point preference is a category for veterans released or discharged from active duty from the Armed Forces, after August 29, 2008, by reason of a "sole survivorship discharge."

No points are added to the passing score or rating of a veteran who is the only surviving child in a family in which the father or mother or one or more siblings:

1. Served in the Armed Forces, and
2. Was killed, died as a result of wounds, accident, or disease, is in a captured or missing in action status, or is permanently 100 percent disabled or hospitalized on a continuing basis (and is not employed gainfully because of the disability or hospitalization), where

3. The death, status, or disability did not result from the intentional misconduct or willful neglect of the parent or sibling and was not incurred during a period of unauthorized absence.

The veteran must have been discharged under an honorable or general discharge.

Question: *What is 5-point preference and who is eligible?*

Answer: A 5-point preference eligible is a veteran whose discharge or release from active duty in the Armed Forces was under honorable conditions and service meets the following criteria:

1. During a war; or
2. During the period April 28, 1952, through July 1, 1955; or
3. For more than 180 consecutive days, other than for training, any part of which occurred after January 31, 1955, and before October 15, 1976; or
4. During the Gulf War from August 2, 1990, through January 2, 1992; or
5. For more than 180 consecutive days, other than for training, any part of which occurred during the period beginning September 11, 2001, and ending on August 31, 2010, the last day of Operation Iraqi Freedom; or
6. In a campaign or expedition for which a campaign medal has been authorized. Any Armed Forces Expeditionary medal or campaign badge, including Afghanistan (Operations Enduring Freedom (OEF), Iraqi Freedom (OIF)), Bosnia (Operations Joint Endeavor, Joint Guard, and Joint Forge), Global War on Terrorism, Persian Gulf, and others may qualify for preference.

The veteran must have been discharged under an honorable or general discharge.

Question: *What is 10-point preference and who is eligible?*

Answer: A 10-point preference eligible is a veteran or eligible family member of a veteran who served at any time, was discharged or released from active duty in the Armed Forces under honorable conditions and:

1. Has a compensable service connected disability,
2. Has a present service-connected disability or is receiving compensation, disability retirement benefits, or pension from the military or the Department of Veterans Affairs, OR
3. Has received a Purple Heart.

The veteran must have been discharged under an honorable or general discharge.

NOTE: Certain spouses, widows, widowers, or parents of veterans may also be entitled.

Question: What are the different preference groups?

Answer: Preference eligibles are divided into five basic groups as follows:

1. CPS - Disability rating of 30% or more (10 points)
2. CP - Disability rating of at least 10% but less than 30% (10 points)
3. XP - Disability rating less than 10% (10 points)
4. TP - Preference eligibles with no disability rating (5 points)
5. SSP - Sole Survivorship Preference (0 points)

These codes are used to designate on rating sheets and certificates the category of Veterans' Preference to which an applicant is entitled.

Question: Where can I go to find out if I am a preference eligible?

Answer: Visit <https://www.fedshirevets.gov/job/vetpref/index.aspx>.

Question: I am a current Federal employee; can I use my Veterans' Preference when applying for job opportunity announcements open to all U.S. citizens?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Is there a limit to the number of times I can use my Veterans' Preference when applying for Federal jobs?

Answer: No. There is no limit to the number of times you can use Veterans' Preference.

Question: As an officer, O-4 and above, why can't I receive Veterans' Preference unless disabled?

Answer: In 1978, the Civil Service Reform Act amended the employment preference for retired officers by denying it to those retiring at the rank of major (O-4) and above.

Question: I am currently on active duty and will not get my DD-214 until I am separated or retired. Is there any other official documentation that I can submit with an application package in lieu of the DD-214 to verify that I am eligible for Veterans' Preference or one of the special hiring authorities for veterans?

Answer: Yes. You can request a "certification," which is a written document from the Armed Forces that certifies the service member is expected to be discharged or released from active duty service in the Armed Forces under honorable conditions not later than 120 days after the date the certification is signed.

Question: Where can I get a "certification"?

Answer: You can request "certification" through your Military Personnel Office.

Question: I have never been in the military, however; my son/daughter is a severely disabled veteran and unable to work. Am I eligible for Veterans' Preference when applying for Federal jobs?

Answer: Maybe. The parent of a disabled veteran may be eligible to claim Veterans' Preference when the veteran is unable to use it. Further details on the specific criteria that must be met can be found at:
<http://www.fedshirevets.gov/job/familypref/index.aspx>

Question: 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?

Answer: No. You may not receive Veterans' Preference in Federal employment as the spouse of a veteran if the veteran is living and qualified for Federal employment.

Question: If I qualify for veteran benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) does that mean that I am eligible for Veterans' Preference in Federal employment?

Answer: Maybe. Eligibility for Veterans' Preference in Federal employment is dependent on military service dates or service-connected disability and having served honorably. The FedshHireVets website (www.fedshirevets.gov) provides guidance on Veterans' Preference and special hiring authorities for veterans.

Question: Can I claim Veterans' Preference when applying to merit promotion jobs?

Answer: No. Veterans' Preference does not apply when the agency is using merit promotion procedures to fill a position.

Question: Do veterans receive preference when applying to Veterans Employment Opportunities Act (VEOA) eligible positions?

Answer: No. Your Veterans' Preference does not apply to internal agency actions such as promotions, transfers, reassignments, and reinstatements.

Question: Is there an end date for Operation Iraqi Freedom?

Answer: Yes. The President declared the end of Operation Iraqi Freedom August 31, 2010.

Question: Where can I get information about Veterans' Preference?

Answer: The FedshireVets website. Go to:
<http://www.fedshirevets.gov/job/vetpref/index.aspx>

Question: Who determines eligibility for Veterans' Preference?

Answer: Congress determines eligibility for Veterans' Preference through law in 5 U.S.C. 2108. However, the Federal agency to which a veteran applies for employment will adjudicate claims for Veterans' Preference. The agency will request a copy of your DD-214, Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, or other acceptable documentation in order to adjudicate claims for Veterans' Preference.

Question: I am waiting on the VA to give me my service-connected disability rating but I have a Schedule A letter. Can I still claim Veterans' Preference?

Answer: Maybe. If you meet the criteria for Veterans' Preference in absence of disability, then yes, you can claim Veterans' Preference. However, if eligibility for Veterans' Preference is contingent upon a service-connected disability rating, then no.

Question: My spouse is a disabled veteran, am I eligible for Veterans' Preference?

Answer: It depends. Spouses may be eligible when the veteran has a service-connected disability and has been unable to qualify for any position in the civil service.

Question: *My spouse works but not for the Federal government. Can I claim Veterans' Preference when I apply for jobs with the Federal Government?*

Answer: Probably not if you are claiming Veterans' Preference based on your spouse's military service. Derived preference is a method where you, as the spouse of a veteran, may be eligible to claim Veterans' Preference when your veteran is unable to use it. Additional information on derived preference can be found at: <https://www.fedshirevets.gov/job/familypref/index.aspx>.

Question: *What is Military Spouse Preference?*

Answer: The Department of Defense (DOD) Military Spouse Preference Program applies to spouses of active duty military members of the U.S. Armed Forces, including the U.S. Coast Guard and full-time National Guard, who desire priority consideration for competitive service positions at DOD activities in the U.S. and its territories and possessions. For more information, contact your local Department of Defense Civilian Personnel Office.

Question: *Does Veterans' Preference apply in the selection process for employment under the Pathways Programs?*

Answer: Yes.

Special Hiring Authorities

Question: *Is there a limit to the number of times I can apply using the Veterans' Recruitment Appointment (VRA) authority?*

Answer: No. There is no limit to the number of times you can apply for positions when agencies are accepting applications under VRA.

Question: *Is there a limit to the number of times I can use 30% or More Disabled Veteran appointing authority?*

Answer: No. There is no limit to the number of times you can apply for positions when agencies are accepting applications as a 30% or More Disabled Veteran.

Question: *Are there other special appointing authorities that a veteran can use when applying for Federal civil service?*

Answer: Yes. There are a number of special appointing authorities not specific to veterans such as Pathways (for students and recent graduates), Schedule A for persons with disabilities, etc. However, the most common special appointing authorities for veterans are the Veterans Recruitment Appointment (VRA), 30% or More Disabled Veteran appointing authority, and Veterans Employment Opportunity Act (VEOA). The veteran should apply under any special hiring authorities for which he or she is eligible.

Question: *What is Schedule A for persons with disabilities?*

Answer: Schedule A is a special appointing authority that agencies can use to non-competitively appoint individuals, including eligible veterans, who have a severe physical, psychiatric, or intellectual disability. For more information visit: www.USAJOB.gov, Individuals with Disabilities.

Question: *I don't have Veterans' Preference. Am I still eligible for a special appointing authority?*

Answer: It depends on the appointing authority. For instance, the VRA and Schedule A for persons with disabilities appointing authorities do not require the veteran to be a preference eligible.

Question: *What are the criteria to be eligible for a VRA appointment?*

Answer: To be eligible for VRA, the veteran must be:

- In receipt of a campaign badge for service during a war or in a campaign or expedition, OR
- A disabled veteran, OR
- In receipt of an Armed Forces Service Medal or Global War on Terrorism Service Medal for participation in a military operation, OR
- A recently separated veteran (within the last 3 years), AND
- Separated under honorable conditions (this means an honorable or general discharge).

Question: *I have a Global War on Terrorism Service Medal (GWOTSM), not an Armed Forces Service Medal (AFSM). Am I eligible for VRA?*

Answer: Yes. For VRA purposes, the GWOTSM is a qualifying medal for VRA eligibility.

Question: *What are the criteria for 30% or More Disabled Veteran appointment?*

Answer: To be eligible, the veteran must be honorably discharged AND:

- Retired or discharged from active military service with a service-connected disability rating of 30% or more; OR
- Have a rating by the Department of Veterans Affairs showing a compensable service-connected disability of 30% or more.

Question: *I am a 30% or more disabled veteran; can I apply as a Schedule A eligible?*

Answer: It depends. If the applicant is eligible for both appointing authorities, he or she should indicate their desire to receive consideration under both appointing authorities. However, the criteria for 30% or More Disabled Veteran appointing authority are different from Schedule A persons with disabilities appointing authority. For additional information on the eligibility criteria visit:

<https://www.fedshirevets.gov/job/shav/index.aspx>.

Question: *What documentation do I need to be appointed under the VRA authority?*

Answer: You must provide acceptable documentation of your appointment eligibility. The member 4 copy of your DD-214 ("Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty") is preferable. If eligibility is based on a service-connected disability, you will need to submit a Standard Form 15 ("Application for 10-point Veterans' Preference"), along with the appropriate documentation. A fillable SF-15 is available at:

https://www.opm.gov/forms/pdf_fill/sf15.pdf.

Question: *What documentation do I need to be appointed under the 30% or More Disabled Veteran authority?*

Answer: You must provide acceptable documentation of your preference or appointment eligibility. The member 4 copy of your DD-214, ("Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty") is preferable, along with supporting documentation showing a service-connected disability rating of 30% or more.

Question: *My spouse is 100% disabled. Am I eligible for the 30% or More Disabled Veteran appointing authority?*

Answer: No.

Question: *What is the Veterans Employment Opportunity Act (VEOA) appointing authority?*

Answer: Veterans Employment Opportunity Act of 1998, as amended (VEOA), is a competitive service appointing authority that can only be used when filling permanent, competitive service positions. It allows veterans to apply to announcements that are open to "status" candidates, which typically includes "current and former competitive service employees."

Question: *What are the criteria for VEOA eligibility?*

Answer: To be eligible for a VEOA appointment, your latest discharge must be issued under honorable conditions (this means an honorable or general discharge), AND you must be either:

- A preference eligible (defined in title 5 U.S.C. 2108(3)), OR
- A veteran who substantially completed 3 or more years of active service.

Preference eligible under VEOA includes those family members entitled to derived preference.

Question: *Can a current career/career conditional employee who lacks time-in-grade apply as a Veterans Employment Opportunity Act (VEOA) candidate under an agency merit promotion announcement when the agency is accepting applications from outside its workforce?*

Answer: No. Such an employee remains subject to time-in-grade restrictions.

Question: *I currently work for the Federal Government. Do I have to meet time-in-grade requirements for positions announced as VEOA eligible?*

Answer: Yes. Current employees applying under VEOA are subject to time-in-grade restrictions like any other employee.

Question: *I recently applied to a VEOA announcement and the agency did not give me preference. Why not?*

Answer: Veterans' Preference does not apply to internal agency actions such as promotions, transfers, reassignments, and reinstatements.

Question: *What is the Military Spouse Non-competitive Appointing Authority?*

Answer: Military Spouse Non-competitive Appointing Authority (Executive Order 13473) allows agencies to appoint certain military spouses without competition. The authority does not entitle spouses to an appointment over any other applicant. For additional information, visit: <https://www.fedshirevets.gov/job/shams/index.aspx>.

Question: *My spouse recently separated/retired from active duty. Am I eligible for the Military Spouse Appointing Authority?*

Answer: You may be eligible if your active duty spouse:

1. Retired under Chapter 61 of title 10, United States Code, with a 100% disability rating from the military department;
2. Retired or was released from active duty and has a disability rating of 100% from the Department of Veterans Affairs or the military department.

Forms

Question: *What is a Standard Form 50 (SF-50)?*

Answer: The SF-50 is the Notification of Personnel Action. It contains certain employment information useful to the applicant or required if applying for another Federal job. It's used by current and former Federal employees.

Question: *How do I obtain a copy of my SF-50?*

Answer: Visit the National Archives website for information pertaining to replacement of the SF-50, or contact the agency's Human Resources Office where you worked for assistance.

Question: *I never worked for the Federal Government. Do I need to submit an SF-50 with my application?*

Answer: No.

Question: *What is the Standard Form 15 (SF-15) application for 10-point Veterans' Preference?*

Answer: The SF-15 is used by Federal agencies to adjudicate an individual's claims for Veterans' Preference. Veterans and certain family members who claim 10-point preference must fill out and submit the SF-15, to include supporting documentation, when applying for Federal positions.

Question: *How do I obtain the signature of the Appointing Officer on the Standard Form 15 (SF-15)?*

Answer: The SF-15 "Application for 10-point preference" no longer requires a signature. Make sure you are using the correct version, dated October 2013, as all other previous editions are unusable.

Question: *Where can I get a copy of the SF-15?*

Answer: The SF-15 can be found on the OPM website. Go to:
https://www.opm.gov/Forms/pdf_fill/SF15.pdf.

Question: *What documentation should I submit with the SF-15?*

Answer: The required documentation column on the SF-15 refers you to page 2 of the form regarding the types of documents that are acceptable proof of your claim for preference.

Question: *Where do I send my SF-15?*

Answer: The SF-15, along with supporting documentation, should be submitted with your application to the agency where you are applying for Federal employment.

Question: *Does OPM get the SF-15?*

Answer: No. The SF-15, along with supporting documentation, should be submitted with your application to the agency where you are applying for Federal employment.

Question: Do I need to submit an SF-15 when applying for jobs with the Federal Government?

Answer: If you are claiming Veterans' Preference based on a service-connected disability, receipt of a Purple Heart, or derived preference, you may be required to submit a SF-15 along with supporting documentation.

Question: The job posting that I am applying to indicates that I must submit proof of my service-connected disability rating. What do I send as proof of my service-connected disability?

Answer: Page 2 of the SF-15 provides information on acceptable documentation based on the criteria for claiming 10-point preference.

Employment

Question: How do I apply for Federal jobs advertised on USAJOBS.gov?

Answer: To apply for a job, there are five basic steps:

- 1. If you haven't already, create a USAJOBS account here:**
<https://login.usajobs.gov/Account/Create>. Visit USAJOBS' Help Center for more information on Getting Started.
Please note that you do not need to create an account to search for jobs, but you must do so to save searches and apply for jobs online.
- 2. Search for jobs.**
You can use the basic, advanced, or map search. You can also use different filters such as location, salary, work schedule, or agency to narrow your results. Learn how to search for jobs.
- 3. Review job announcements.**
Read the **Who May Apply** section to determine if you're eligible to apply for the position. Read the **Qualifications** section to see if you meet the qualifications of the position. Understand the job announcement. Prepare your application in USAJOBS
- 4. Read the How to Apply section of the job announcement before starting your application.** Prepare your application in USAJOBS. Learn how to create an application.
- 5. Submit application to agency.**
Once your application is ready, you'll be sent from USAJOBS to the agency application system.

Question: Where can I find a listing of available Federal jobs?

Answer: Most positions within the Federal Government can be found on the USAJOBS website: www.USAJOBS.gov. Additionally, individual agency websites may list employment opportunities.

Question: Who do I contact if I have questions about a posted USAJOBS job opportunity announcement?

Answer: If you have questions regarding a position to which you are applying, or to find out the status of your application, please communicate with the point-of-contact listed for each job opportunity announcement (JOA), usually contained in a block at the bottom of the JOA when you scroll down.

Question: What does it mean when the job opportunity announcement's "Who May Apply" section says "All Sources" or "Status Applicants" and/or "Reinstatement Eligibles"?

Answer: The agency may identify these as specific individuals from which it will accept applications to compete for its vacancy. When a job opportunity announcement is open to **"All Sources,"** or **"All U.S. Citizens,"** it means anyone may apply. While there are no restrictions on the individuals who may apply to these types of announcements, in most cases, U.S. citizenship is required.

"Status Applicants" or **"Status Candidates"** refers to those individuals who are current or former Federal civilian employees who hold or held non-temporary appointments in the competitive service, not the excepted service.

NOTE: Certain veterans eligible under the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act (VEOA) may also apply and be considered under job opportunity announcements limited to status candidates. For information on VEOA eligibility, please visit: <https://www.fedshirevets.gov/job/shav/index.aspx#veoa>.

Reinstatement eligibility refers to the ability of those individuals who previously held a career or career-conditional appointment to apply for jobs in the competitive civil service that are open to status applicants. There is no time limit on reinstatement eligibility for those who either have Veterans' Preference, or acquired career tenure by completing 3 years of substantially continuous creditable service.

Question: *As a veteran, is there anyone who can help me with locating Federal employment opportunities?*

Answer: Yes. There are 24 Veteran Employment Program Offices (VEPOs) 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. For a complete listing of VEPOs, visit:
<https://www.fedshirevets.gov/AgencyDirectory/index.aspx>.

Question: *As a veteran without preference, will the Veteran Employment Program Offices (VEPOs) assist me?*

Answer: Yes.

Question: *If I am found to be qualified, will I get an interview?*

Answer: Agencies develop their own procedures for interview practices. The decision to interview may depend on a variety of factors, including your ranking against other candidates, the number of positions being filled, and the number of people who applied.

Question: *Who can I contact to learn about Schedule A for persons with disabilities opportunities?*

Answer: Most Federal agencies have a Selective Placement Program Coordinator (SPPC) who helps management recruit, hire, and accommodate people with disabilities. Find a Selective Placement Program Coordinator (SPCC).

Question: *Where can I get information about Schedule A hiring?*

Answer: The OPM website has a wealth of information for individuals interested in Schedule A for persons with disabilities appointments. Visit
<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/disability-employment/getting-a-job/#url=Schedule-A-Hiring-Authority>.

Question: *Is there a list of non-competitive employment opportunities for veterans?*

Answer: No. However, eligible veterans should contact any of the 24 Veteran Employment Program Offices (VEPOs) for information about non-competitive opportunities that may exist at their respective agencies. A complete listing of Federal agency VEPOs is located on the FedshireVets website: <http://www.fedshirevets.gov/AgencyDirectory/index.aspx>. Additional resources include the FedshireVets Facebook and Twitter webpages:

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Feds-Hire-Vets/262183904582>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/fedshirevets/>

Question: *Where can I get help with writing my résumé?*

Answer: The FedshireVets.gov website has a Résumé Writing guide posted at: <http://www.fedshirevets.gov/job/links/Resume%20Writing%20Participant%20Handout.pdf>.

Further resources include:

- USAJOBS.gov Help Center: <https://www.usajobs.gov/Help/how-to/account/documents/resume/>
- OPM: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XF7j03wGV6A>

Question: *Can I submit a late application package after a closing date on a job posting?*

Answer: A 10-point preference eligible may file an application under certain circumstances after the closing date. If you want to apply after the closing date of the vacancy announcement, you should contact the agency that announced the position for further information.

Question: *I am still on active duty. When can I start applying for a Federal job?*

Answer: There are no regulations that dictate when a service member can apply for a position with the Federal Government. However, agencies typically will not adjudicate Veterans' Preference unless the service member has a DD-214 or "certification" that is a written document from the Armed Forces certifying that the service member is expected to be discharged or released from active duty service in the Armed Forces under honorable conditions not later than 120 days after the date the certification is signed.

Question: *Can I work for the Federal Government while on terminal leave?*

Answer: Yes. A service member who is on terminal leave pending separation from active duty under honorable conditions may accept a civilian position in the Federal Government.

Question: *There is a maximum age to go into positions such as law enforcement or firefighters. Does my military time extend the age of my cutoff date for those types of positions?*

Answer: Qualified preference eligibles may apply and be considered for vacancies regardless of whether they meet the maximum age requirements identified at 5 U.S.C. 3307, unless the hiring agency has determined age is essential to the duties of the job.

Question: *All of my work experience was obtained while serving in the military. Based on my military rank/grade, how can I find out the civilian salary, pay, and grade level I qualify for?*

Answer: Your military pay, grade, and rank alone cannot determine your eligibility for a specific civilian salary, grade level, or pay range. On your job application, it is important that you completely and accurately describe the duties you performed during your military service, particularly those military duties that relate directly to the position you are applying for. The agency will then evaluate your qualifications to determine whether you are eligible for the occupation and grade levels advertised on the vacancy announcement. Please be sure to submit all requested documents in a timely manner and follow the application procedures described in the vacancy announcement.

Question: *Once I have located a job, how do I get hired?*

Answer: Follow the instructions in the job opportunity announcement to apply.

Complaints

Question: *I believe my Veterans' Preference rights were violated. What can I do?*

Answer: You may file a complaint with the Department of Labor's Veterans Employment and Training Service. This is the agency designated by law, to investigate violations of Veterans' Preference. Information on how to file a complaint may be found at: <http://www.dol.gov/elaws/vetspref.htm>.

Question: *How do I submit a complaint about discrimination in the application process?*

Answer: If you believe that you have been the victim of unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, or disability, you must contact an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) counselor within 45 calendar days of the alleged discriminatory action—or, in the case of a personnel action, within 45 calendar days of the effective date of the action—before you can file a formal complaint of discrimination with the agency. See, e.g. 29 CFR 1614.

If you believe that you have been the victim of unlawful discrimination on the basis of age, you must either contact an EEO counselor as noted above or give notice of intent to sue to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory action. For further information, check the EEOC's website at <https://www.eeoc.gov/>.

If you are alleging discrimination based on marital status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other factor that is not related to job performance, you may file a written complaint with the United States Office of Special Counsel (OSC). For further information check the OSC's website at <https://osc.gov/>.

Alternatively, you may pursue a discrimination complaint by filing a grievance through the agency's administrative or negotiated grievance procedures, if such procedures apply and are available.

Question: *I believe that a Federal agency is conducting prohibited personnel practices. What can I do?*

Answer: Complaints alleging prohibited personnel practices should be directed to the Office of Special Counsel (OSC). The OSC receives, investigates, and prosecutes allegations of prohibited personnel practices. Information can be found at <https://osc.gov/>.

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

Answer: No. While OPM provides Government-wide 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). The OSC receives, investigates, and prosecutes allegations of prohibited personnel practices and can be visited at <https://osc.gov/>.

Miscellaneous

Question: *How can I file for VA disability and/or Vocational Rehabilitation benefits?*

Answer: You should contact the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Visit <http://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/>.

Question: *How do I apply to upgrade my military discharge?*

Answer: Each of the military services maintains a discharge review board with authority to change, to correct, or to modify discharges or dismissals that are not issued by a sentence of general courts-martial. You can apply for a review of discharge by writing to the military department concerned, using DoD Form 293 available at: <http://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/forms/dd/dd0293.pdf>

Question: *What is a Reduction in Force?*

Answer: In the Federal Government, layoffs are called reduction in force (RIF) actions. When an agency must abolish positions, the RIF regulations determine whether an employee keeps his or her present position, or whether the employee has a right to a different position.

Question: *I recently received my disability rating but my agency refuses to change my Veterans' Preference for RIF. What should I do?*

As a Federal employee with a specific question as it relates to your personal circumstance, please contact your agency human resources office for additional information. Your agency is in the best position to answer your specific questions.

Question: *May an agency credit time spent on active duty military service towards the probationary period?*

No. Federal regulations only allows for prior Federal service in the same agency and in the same line of work.

Question: I am a veteran. If I was convicted of a felony, am I disqualified from suitability for Federal employment?

Answer: A felony conviction does not automatically make one unsuitable for Federal employment. When making a suitability determination, an agency will evaluate the individual's character traits and decide whether their employment or continued employment would or would not protect the integrity or promote the efficiency of the service.

Suitability determinations are made on a case by case basis for covered positions that are subject to investigation. Covered positions are those in the competitive Federal service, those in the excepted service that noncompetitively convert to the competitive service, or career appointments to positions in the Senior Executive Service.

Question: I applied for numerous jobs since leaving the military. Rarely do I get an acknowledgement of my applications and when I do, sometimes I get referred, sometimes I may even get an interview, but I have yet to secure a Federal position, and I do not understand why not? I thought veterans have priority in getting a job.

Answer: For many veterans, Federal Civil Service is a natural transition, and therefore highly competitive. You are competing against other highly skilled, highly educated, and highly qualified individuals, including veterans.

Veterans' Preference does not require an agency to use any particular appointment process. Agencies have broad authority under law to hire from any appropriate source of eligibles including special appointing authorities. An agency may consider candidates already in the civil service from an agency-developed merit promotion list, or it may reassign a current employee, transfer an employee from another agency, or reinstate a former Federal employee. In addition, agencies are required to give priority to displaced employees before using civil service examinations and similar hiring methods.