



Pinellas County Unified Personnel System Veterans' Preference Procedure

Purpose and Scope

To outline the procedure used for administering Florida's Veterans' Preference at every step in the appointment, promotion, and retention of Eligible Individuals.

References

The Pinellas County Veterans' Preference Procedure abides by [Florida State Statute Chapter 295](#) and [Florida Administrative Code Chapter 55A-7](#).

Positions and Recruitments Covered

- All Unified Personnel System (UPS) positions designated as regular full-time or part-time with benefits, whether exempt or classified.
- **Exceptions:** Positions filled by officers elected by popular vote or persons appointed to fill vacancies in such offices; the personal secretary of each such officer; members of boards and commissions; heads of departments; positions that require licensure as a physician, osteopathic physician, or chiropractic physician; or positions that require membership in the Florida Bar.

Persons Covered (Eligible Individuals)

- Only those veterans and family members eligible under Florida State Statute Chapter 295. Such persons will be referred to as Eligible Individuals throughout this procedure.
- Veterans must have been honorably discharged as indicated on their DD214 to be eligible for preference.
- This is a summary only. For complete information, refer to Florida State Statute Chapter 295.
 1. A **disabled veteran** who has served on active duty in any branch of the U.S. Armed Forces, has received an honorable discharge, and has established the present existence of a service-connected disability that is compensable under public laws administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs; or who is receiving compensation, disability retirement benefits, or pension by reason of public laws administered by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and U.S. Department of Defense.
 2. The **spouse** of a person who has a total disability, permanent in nature, resulting from a service-connected disability and who, because of this disability, cannot qualify for employment, and the spouse of a person missing in action, captured in line of duty by a hostile force, or forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power.
 3. A **wartime veteran** as defined in [s. 1.01\(14\)](#), who has served at least one day during a wartime period. Active duty for training may not be allowed for eligibility under this paragraph.
 4. The **unremarried widow or widower** of a veteran who died of a service-connected disability.
 5. The **mother, father, legal guardian, or unremarried widow or widower** of a member of the U.S. Armed Forces who died in the line of duty under combat-related conditions, as verified by the U.S. Department of Defense.
 6. A **veteran** as defined in [s. 1.01\(14\)](#). Active duty for training may not be allowed for eligibility under this paragraph.
 7. A **current member of any reserve component** of the U.S. Armed Forces or the Florida National Guard.

Preference Summary

Pinellas County gives preference in employment, promotions after deployment, and retention to individuals who qualify for Veterans' Preference as follows:

Employment

- Eligible Individuals applying for employment with Pinellas County are eligible for Veterans' Preference.
- Eligible Individuals currently employed by Pinellas County are eligible for Veterans' Preference when being considered for a vacant Pinellas County position, defined as one that is open for recruitment and available to all applicants (not positions limited to internal candidates).

Return from Deployment

- Eligible Individuals currently employed by Pinellas County who are deployed for service in the Armed Forces are eligible for reinstatement or reemployment to the same or equivalent position and a one-time preference for promotion.

Retention

- Eligible Individuals currently employed by Pinellas County are eligible for Veterans' Preference when being considered for layoff.

Process

1. Initial Screening of Applications

- Hiring managers will receive a list from Human Resources of all individuals who have self-reported that they meet the minimum qualifications as identified on the job posting. The list will designate Eligible Individuals who are eligible for Veterans' Preference if they meet the minimum qualifications for the job.
- It is up to the hiring manager to determine if an Eligible Individual meets the minimum qualifications for the job.
- Eligible Individuals who meet the minimum qualifications must receive Veterans' Preference. At every step in the hiring process, the hiring department must grant each Eligible Individual a preference.
- Eligible Individuals who do not meet minimum qualifications will be excluded from further consideration, if a higher level of management (as determined by the hiring department) upholds the hiring manager's determination.

2. Interviews

- There may be several levels of interviews.
- All Eligible Individuals who meet the minimum qualifications must receive an interview at each step of the interview process.

3. Further Evaluation of Candidate

- If there are steps beyond screening and interviews (e.g. written assessments, demonstrated skills tests, physical agility assessment and behavioral assessments), contact Human Resources for assistance in how to apply a preference to those steps.

4. Selection:

- The best qualified candidate may be selected without regard to preference.
 - If there is more than one equally qualified applicant and one is an Eligible Individual, that Eligible Individual must be selected (i.e., in the event of a tie, the Eligible Individual is selected).
 - If there is more than one equally qualified Eligible Individual, the following selection hierarchy must be applied:
 - a. First preference to those Eligible Individuals in categories 1 and 2 (see page 1).
 - b. Second preference to those Eligible Individuals in categories 3 to 7 (see page 1).

5. Documentation

- The hiring department must be able to demonstrate what preference was given to each Eligible Individual at each step of the selection process and may be required to demonstrate why an Eligible Individual was not selected.
- Interview questions, notes, and score sheets are good examples of appropriate documentation to support the Veterans' Preference requirement. Documents must be retained for four years by the hiring department according to Florida's public records law.

6. Compliance

- If there are Eligible Individuals on the list, the hiring department shall notify Human Resources of the preliminary selection by sending a memo/email to hr@pinellascounty.org, providing the name of the selected candidate and details about actions taken to provide a preference to qualified Eligible Individuals during each step of the selection process.
- Upon receipt of the email, Human Resources will review the document to ensure compliance with Veterans' Preference laws and County recruitment procedures. Human Resources will advise the hiring department whether additional steps are recommended.

7. Reinstatement or Reemployment and/or First Promotional Preference Rights of County Employees

- When an eligible employee leaves employment for active duty (voluntary or involuntary active duty) in the Armed Forces and is honorably discharged, and seeks reinstatement, the eligible employee's Appointing Authority will reinstate the employee consistent with applicable law upon provision of any necessary documentation.
- Employees reinstated under this provision will be awarded preference in promotion until their first promotion after reinstatement.

For more information, contact Pinellas County Human Resources
(727) 464-3367

Email: hr@pinellascounty.org