



**Tips and Tidbits**  
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**Question: What is the difference between a Veterans Recruitment Appointment (VRA) and an appointment under the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act of 1998 (VEOA)? Does one afford more entitlement than the other? Must candidates under consideration for either be selected over others?**

The VRA is a special authority that permits agencies to appoint eligible veterans to positions at any grade level through General Schedule (GS) 11 or equivalent without having to announce the job or rate and rank applicant resumes. The VRA candidate **must** meet the basic qualification requirements of the position to be filled, and after two years of satisfactory service, VRA appointees are converted to career or career-conditional appointments provided they satisfactorily complete all associated requirements.

Those eligible for a VRA appointment include:

Disabled veterans; **or**

Veterans who served on active duty in the Armed Forces during a war, or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized; **or**

Veterans who, while serving on active duty in the Armed Forces, participated in a United States military operation for which an Armed Forces Service Medal was awarded\*; **or**

Recently separated veterans (within the past 3 years).

In addition to meeting the criteria above, veterans must have been separated under honorable conditions (i.e., the individual must have received either an honorable or general discharge).

Veterans' preference applies in Veteran's Recruitment Appointments; however, *not all veterans who are eligible for VRAs are automatically eligible for Veterans' preference* [nor are all preference eligibles automatically entitled to a VRA\*\*]. Accordingly, if there is more than one VRA candidate under consideration for the same job and one (or more) is a preference eligible, Veterans' preference applies in making the appointment. For example, if one applicant is VRA eligible on the basis of receiving an Armed Forces Service Medal (this medal does not confer veterans' preference eligibility) and the second applicant is VRA eligible on the basis of being a disabled veteran (which does confer veterans' preference eligibility), both individuals are VRA eligible but only one of them is eligible for Veterans' preference.

The VRA authority also permits the selection of VRA candidates from referral lists. In these instances, VRA candidates are referred according to preference category and the "rule of 3" applies. In the case of **internal referral lists** (i.e. merit promotion), **IF** a VRA candidate is selected, selection must be made from the highest three eligibles on the referral; however, there is no requirement to select a VRA eligible. On the other hand, **IF** selection is made from **an external referral list**, there is a requirement to select one of the highest three VRA eligibles.

The Veterans' Employment Opportunities Act (VEOA) of 1998 as amended by Section 511 of the Veterans' Millennium Health Care Act (Pub. Law 106-117) of November 30, 1999, provides that Agencies allow preference eligibles or eligible veterans to apply for positions announced under merit promotion procedures when the Agency\*\*\* is recruiting from outside its own workforce.

Veterans' preference is **not** a factor in these appointments, and if selected, a VEOA candidate is automatically placed on a career or career conditional appointment [unlike VRA selectees who must successfully serve 2 years prior to being converted to a career/career-conditional appointment]. All employees appointed under the VEOA are subject to a probationary period and to the requirements of their agency's merit promotion plan.

To be eligible for a VEOA appointment, an applicant must be a preference eligible OR veteran separated from the armed forces after 3\*\*\*\* or more years of continuous active service\*\*\*\* \* performed under honorable conditions.

With either group of appointment eligibles, the VRA or VEOA, at its discretion, Management may select or not select from these groups of candidates. It is only when selection *is* made from among VRA candidates that preference is a factor and selection **must** occur as per Veterans preference rules. Both appointments provide a potential springboard through which veterans may be selected for Federal employment.

Please contact your servicing HR Specialist with your questions.

\*Veterans claiming eligibility on the basis of service in a campaign or expedition for which a medal was awarded must be in receipt of the campaign badge or medal.

\*\*Not all 5-point preference eligible veterans may be entitled to a VRA appointment. For example, a veteran who served during the Vietnam era (i.e., for more than 180 consecutive days, after January 31, 1955, and before October 15, 1976) but did not receive a service-connected disability or an Armed Forces Service medal or campaign or expeditionary medal would be entitled to 5 pt. veterans' preference. This veteran, however, would not be eligible for a VRA appointment under the above criteria.

\*\*\*"Agency," in this context, means the parent agency, i.e., Treasury, not the Internal Revenue Service and the Department of Defense, not Department of the Army.

\*\*\*\*Veterans who were released shortly before completing a 3-year tour are considered to be eligible.

\*\*\*\*\*"Active service" defined in title 37, United States Code, means active duty in the uniformed services and includes full-time training duty, annual training duty, full-time National Guard duty, and attendance, while in the active service, at a school designated as a service school by law or by the Secretary of the military department concerned).

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