

40A:14-123.1a Police departments; priority of eligibility for initial appointment; preference, certain.

2. a. In any municipality of this State, before any person shall be appointed as a member of the police department and force, the appointing authority may classify all the duly qualified applicants for the position or positions to be filled in the following classes:

I. Residents of the municipality.

II. Other residents of the county in which the municipality is situate.

III. Other residents of the State.

IV. All other qualified applicants.

Within each such classification duly qualified applicants who are veterans shall be accorded all such veterans' preferences as are provided by law. Persons discharged from the service within 6 months prior to making application to such municipality who fulfill the requirements of N.J.S.40A:14-123.1, and who, thereby, are entitled to appointment notwithstanding their failure to meet the New Jersey residency requirement at the time of their initial application, shall be placed in Class III.

Preference in appointment second to that accorded to veterans pursuant to current law but superseding that accorded non-veterans shall be accorded all duly qualified applicants whose natural or adoptive parent was killed in the lawful discharge of official duties while serving as a law enforcement officer in any law enforcement agency in the State at any time prior to the closing date for the filing of an application, provided that required documentation is submitted with the application by the closing date. This paragraph shall not, however, be applicable if the municipality has entered into a consent decree with the United States Department of Justice concerning the hiring practices of the municipality.

When a veteran and a non-veteran whose parent was killed in the lawful discharge of official duties while serving as a law enforcement officer in any law enforcement agency in the State are duly qualified applicants for a position, first preference shall be given to the veteran.

As used in this section, "law enforcement officer" means any person who is employed as a permanent full-time member of an enforcement agency, who is statutorily empowered to act for the detection, investigation, arrest and conviction of persons violating the criminal laws of this State and statutorily required to successfully complete a training course approved, or certified as being substantially equivalent to such an approved course, by the Police Training Commission pursuant to P.L.1961, c.56 (C.52:17B-66 et seq.); and "law enforcement agency" means a department, division, bureau, commission, board or other authority of the State or of any political subdivision thereof which has by statute or ordinance the responsibility of detecting and enforcing the general criminal laws of this State.

b. In any municipality which classifies qualified applicants pursuant to subsection a. of this section, the appointing authority shall first appoint all those in Class I and then those in each succeeding class in the order above listed, and shall appoint a person or persons in any such class only to a vacancy or vacancies remaining after all qualified applicants in the preceding class or classes have been appointed or have declined an offer of appointment.

c. In any such municipality operating under the provisions of Title 11A of the New Jersey Statutes, the classes of qualified applicants defined in subsection a. of this section shall be considered as separate and successive lists of eligibles, and the Civil Service Commission shall, when requested to certify eligibles for positions specified in this section, make such certifications from said classes separately and successively, and shall certify no persons from any such class until all persons in the preceding class or classes have been appointed or have declined offers of appointment.

d. This section shall apply only to initial appointments and not to promotional appointments of persons already members of the police department.

e. In making temporary appointments the appointing authority may utilize the classifications set forth in subsection a. of this section, and shall classify accordingly all duly qualified applicants for the positions to be temporarily filled.

L.1976, c.132, s.2; amended 2005, c.290, s.2; 2008, c.29, s.98.