

**RCW 41.04.012 Competitive examination preference points.** (1) In all competitive examinations, unless otherwise provided in this section, to determine the qualifications of applicants for public offices, positions, or employment, either the state, and all of its political subdivisions and all municipal corporations, or private companies or agencies contracted with by the state to give the competitive examinations may, at the discretion of the agency head within the hiring organization, add a maximum of 15 percent to the passing mark, grade, or rating only, based upon a possible rating of 100 as a perfect percentage in accordance with any of the following qualifications:

(a) Ten percent to a candidate who has obtained full professional proficiency or who is completely fluent as a native speaker in two or more languages other than English;

(b) Five percent to a candidate who has obtained full professional proficiency or who is completely fluent as a native speaker in one language other than English;

(c) Five percent to a candidate with two or more years of professional experience or volunteer experience in the peace corps, AmeriCorps, domestic violence counseling, mental or behavioral health care, homelessness programs, or other social services professions; and

(d) Five percent to a candidate who has obtained an associate of arts or science degree or higher degree.

(2) Preference points under this section may not be aggregated to exceed more than 15 percent of the applicant's examination score.

(3) The percentage shall be added to the passing mark, grade, or rating of competitive examinations until the candidate's first appointment. No preference points under this subsection may be used in promotional examinations.

(4) For purposes of this section, "full professional fluency" means the ability to have advanced discussions on a wide range of topics about personal life, current events, and technical topics, including but not limited to law enforcement, emergency services, and public safety-related protocols. Candidates with this level of fluency should demonstrate an extensive vocabulary and be able to carry on a conversation with ease, making only minor mistakes.

(5) For purposes of this section, "native speaker" means a person who was either raised speaking the language or has been speaking it for such a duration that the person is completely fluent. [2024 c 330 s 1.]