

Affirmative Action Plan for the Recruitment, Hiring, Advancement, and Retention of Persons with Disabilities

To capture agencies' affirmative action plan for persons with disabilities (PWD) and persons with targeted disabilities (PWTD), EEOC regulations (29 C.F.R. § 1614.203(e)) and MD-715 require agencies to describe how their affirmative action plan will improve the recruitment, hiring, advancement, and retention of applicants and employees with disabilities.

Section I: Efforts to Reach Regulatory Goals

EEOC regulations (29 CFR §1614.203(d)(7)) require agencies to establish specific numerical goals for increasing the participation of persons with disabilities and persons with targeted disabilities in the federal government

1. Using the goal of 12% as the benchmark, does your agency have a trigger involving PWD by grade level cluster in the permanent workforce? If "yes", describe the trigger(s) in the text box.

a. Cluster GS-1 to GS-10 (PWD)

Answer Yes

b. Cluster GS-11 to SES (PWD)

Answer Yes

Grade clusters for FY2020 contained the following: • GS 1 – 10: 8.79% • GS 11 – SES-level: 8.38%
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*For GS employees, please use two clusters: GS-1 to GS-10 and GS-11 to SES, as set forth in 29 C.F.R. § 1614.203(d)(7). For all other pay plans, please use the approximate grade clusters that are above or below GS-11 Step 1 in the Washington, DC metropolitan region.

2. Using the goal of 2% as the benchmark, does your agency have a trigger involving PWTD by grade level cluster in the permanent workforce? If "yes", describe the trigger(s) in the text box.

a. Cluster GS-1 to GS-10 (PWTD)

Answer No

b. Cluster GS-11 to SES (PWTD)

Answer No

Grade clusters for FY2020 contained the following: • GS 1 –10: 2.26% • GS 11 – SES level: 2.49%

Grade Level Cluster(GS or Alternate Pay Planb)	Total	Reportable Disability		Targeted Disability	
	#	#	%	#	%
Numerical Goal	--	12%		2%	
Grades GS-1 to GS-10	5792	509	8.79	131	2.26
Grades GS-11 to SES	8822	739	8.38	220	2.49

3. Describe how the agency has communicated the numerical goals to the hiring managers and/or recruiters.

The agency communicates its goals to hiring officials through: • Regular updates to Leadership during monthly/quarterly meetings • Quarterly status reviews of NFC workforce data • Newly established FPAC Data Analytics Team provides timely and on-demand workforce and business analytics using the Tableau System
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Section II: Model Disability Program

Pursuant to 29 C.F.R. § 1614.203(d)(1), agencies must ensure sufficient staff, training and resources to recruit and hire persons with disabilities and persons with targeted disabilities, administer the reasonable accommodation program and special emphasis program, and oversee any other disability hiring and advancement program the agency has in place.

A. PLAN TO PROVIDE SUFFICIENT & COMPETENT STAFFING FOR THE DISABILITY PROGRAM

1. Has the agency designated sufficient qualified personnel to implement its disability program during the reporting period? If “no”, describe the agency’s plan to improve the staffing for the upcoming year.

Answer Yes

N/A

2. Identify all staff responsible for implementing the agency's disability employment program by the office, staff employment status, and responsible official.

Disability Program Task	# of FTE Staff By Employment Status			Responsible Official (Name, Title, Office Email)
	Full Time	Part Time	Collateral Duty	
Processing applications from PWD and PWTB	45	0	0	Danny Sadler Branch Chief danny.sadler@usda.gov
Section 508 Compliance	5	0	0	Dave Warner Director david.warner@usda.gov
Answering questions from the public about hiring authorities that take disability into account	7	0	0	Candace Sanders Section Chief candace.sanders@usda.gov
Architectural Barriers Act Compliance	7	0	0	Brian Garner Branch Chief brian.garner@usda.gov
Special Emphasis Program for PWD and PWTB	2	0	1	Roger Slater Section Chief roger.slater@usda.gov
Processing reasonable accommodation requests from applicants and employees	5	0	0	monique.salahuddin@usda.gov

3. Has the agency provided disability program staff with sufficient training to carry out their responsibilities during the reporting period? If “yes”, describe the training that disability program staff have received. If “no”, describe the training planned for the upcoming year.

Answer No

Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions normal venues for training and conference attendance were either curtailed, canceled, and postponed for most of FY2020 and unfortunately for the foreseeable future. The Agency, however, has and will continue to provide training and education through; webinars, on-demand supervisory training, and a regular blog available on the Agency's internal webpage.

B. PLAN TO ENSURE SUFFICIENT FUNDING FOR THE DISABILITY PROGRAM

Has the agency provided sufficient funding and other resources to successfully implement the disability program during the reporting period? If “no”, describe the agency’s plan to ensure all aspects of the disability program have sufficient funding and other resources.

Answer Yes

N/A

Section III: Program Deficiencies In The Disability Program

Brief Description of Program Deficiency	C.2.a.6. Do the agency's training materials on its anti-harassment policy include examples of disability-based harassment? [see 29 CFR §1614.203(d)(2)]		
Objective	Review, update and/or revise Anti-Harassment Training materials.		
Target Date	Dec 31, 2021		
Completion Date			
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>	<u>Planned Activity</u>
	Dec 31, 2021		Ensure Employee Development Section and Civil Rights Training Section work together to update training materials
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	
	2021	OASCR has re-issued a basic Anti-Harassment Training course accessible thru AgLearn	

Brief Description of Program Deficiency	C.2.c.1. Does the agency post its procedures for processing requests for Personal Assistance Services on its public website? [see 29 CFR §1614.203(d)(5)(v)] If "yes", please provide the internet address in the comments column.		
Objective	Ensure Agency public and internal websites contain up to date and relevant information regarding procedures for requesting Personal Assistant Services (PAS) and FPAC's Affirmative Action Plan		
Target Date	Dec 31, 2021		
Completion Date			
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>	<u>Planned Activity</u>
	Dec 31, 2021	April 30, 2021	Work with Agency webmaster to review and update public and internal web page on a regular basis
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	
	2021	Public website updated to include annual reports and reissued CR policy statements	

Brief Description of Program Deficiency	D.4.a. Does the agency post its affirmative action plan on its public website? [see 29 CFR §1614.203(d)(4)] If yes, please provide the internet address in the comments.		
Objective	Ensure Agency public and internal websites contain up to date and relevant information regarding procedures for requesting Personal Assistant Services (PAS) and FPAC's Affirmative Action Plan.		
Target Date	Dec 31, 2021		
Completion Date	Apr 30, 2021		
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>	<u>Planned Activity</u>
	Dec 31, 2021	April 30, 2021	Work with Agency webmaster to review and update public and internal web page on a regular basis
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	
	2021	Public website updated to include annual reports and reissued CR policy statements	

Section IV: Plan to Recruit and Hire Individuals with Disabilities

Pursuant to 29 C.F.R. §1614.203(d)(1)(i) and (ii), agencies must establish a plan to increase the recruitment and hiring of individuals with disabilities. The questions below are designed to identify outcomes of the agency's recruitment program plan for PWD and PWTD

A. PLAN TO IDENTIFY JOB APPLICATIONS WITH DISABILITIES

1. Describe the programs and resources the agency uses to identify job applicants with disabilities, including individuals with targeted disabilities.

The agency generally uses the following resources to identify PWD/PWTD applicants: • Vocational Rehabilitation Services • Veterans Administration – VR&E Employment Coordinators • Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) • Nonpaid Work Experience Program • Recruitment and Outreach Events • Job and Career Fairs (for students) • Third-Party Cooperative Agreement

2. Pursuant to 29 C.F.R. §1614.203(a)(3), describe the agency's use of hiring authorities that take disability into account (e.g., Schedule A) to recruit PWD and PWTD for positions in the permanent workforce

Recruitment vehicles include: • Schedule A Hiring Authorities • Veterans Recruitment Appointment (VRA) • 30% or More Disabled Veterans

3. When individuals apply for a position under a hiring authority that takes disability into account (e.g., Schedule A), explain how the agency (1) determines if the individual is eligible for appointment under such authority; and, (2) forwards the individual's application to the relevant hiring officials with an explanation of how and when the individual may be appointed.

Program Managers establish relationships with specialists at vocational rehabilitation centers to develop a pool of qualified applicants for positions within the Agency. In many cases, qualified, eligible candidates are referred from vocational rehabilitation offices or other organizations and groups representing persons with disabilities. Hiring officials are provided resumes and transcripts, if applicable, of qualified individuals for hiring consideration. The managers and staff forward the application and disability qualifying documents to the staffing specialists to review to ensure that applicants meet the qualifications of the positions and the eligibility requirements of the special hiring authorities.

4. Has the agency provided training to all hiring managers on the use of hiring authorities that take disability into account (e.g., Schedule A)? If "yes", describe the type(s) of training and frequency. If "no", describe the agency's plan to provide this training.

Answer Yes

In order to bring the right skilled and diverse workforce, the Human Resources Division not only sets strategic hiring goals, but they also provided training and upgraded resources for hiring managers with a goal of increasing overall external hiring by 10 percent during FY2020. Training and resources for hiring managers included; webinars for hiring managers, an updated hiring manager tracking tool and a regular blog to communicate and keep managers informed of news, information and policy changes that affect them.

B. PLAN TO ESTABLISH CONTACTS WITH DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT ORGANIZATIONS

Describe the agency's efforts to establish and maintain contacts with organizations that assist PWD, including PWTD, in securing and maintaining employment.

The Disability Emphasis Program Managers and Veterans Emphasis Program Managers establish and strengthen partnerships with organizations and groups representing persons with disabilities. Program Managers promote outreach activities by working closely with State-level DEPMs, VEPs, and Selective Placement Coordinators.

C. PROGRESSION TOWARDS GOALS (RECRUITMENT AND HIRING)

1. Using the goals of 12% for PWD and 2% for PWTD as the benchmarks, do triggers exist for PWD and/or PWTD among the new hires in the permanent workforce? If “yes”, please describe the triggers below.

a. New Hires for Permanent Workforce (PWD) Answer Yes

b. New Hires for Permanent Workforce (PWTD) Answer Yes

Although there was a positive increase in the number of new PWD employees onboarded by FPAC during FY2020, the increase did not bring self-identified PWD employees to the EEOC numerical goal of 12.00 percent. FY2020 saw 100 (4.92%) new PWD hires. This indicates a trigger for this group. This condition is the same for self-identified TD new hires. FY2020 saw 19 (0.93%) which was an increase in the number of employees hired from the prior fiscal year. However, this falls short of the 2.00 percent numerical goal set by the EEOC. Respectively, this indicates a trigger for this group.

New Hires	Total (#)	Reportable Disability		Targeted Disability	
		Permanent Workforce (%)	Temporary Workforce (%)	Permanent Workforce (%)	Temporary Workforce (%)
% of Total Applicants	10607	6.71	0.00	4.13	0.00
% of Qualified Applicants	8092	6.36	0.00	4.00	0.00
% of New Hires	1003	1.69	0.00	1.30	0.00

2. Using the qualified applicant pool as the benchmark, do triggers exist for PWD and/or PWTD among the new hires for any of the mission- critical occupations (MCO)? If “yes”, please describe the triggers below. Select “n/a” if the applicant data is not available for your agency, and describe your plan to provide the data in the text box.

a. New Hires for MCO (PWD) Answer Yes

b. New Hires for MCO (PWTD) Answer Yes

FY2020 applicant flow reveals non-selection (0.00 percent) for newly hired major occupations in most areas except for 0457/0485 Soil Conservationist series. Both series were below the qualified applicant pool benchmark.

New Hires to Mission-Critical Occupations	Total (#)	Reportable Disability		Targetable Disability	
		Qualified Applicants (%)	New Hires (%)	Qualified Applicants (%)	New Hires (%)
Numerical Goal	--	12%		2%	
0110ECONOMIST	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0193ARCHEOLOGY	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0201HR SPECIALIST	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0301MISC ADMINISTRATION AND PROGRAM	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0303MISC CLERK AND ASSISTANT	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0318SECRETARY	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

New Hires to Mission-Critical Occupations	Total (#)	Reportable Disability		Targetable Disability	
		Qualified Applicants (%)	New Hires (%)	Qualified Applicants (%)	New Hires (%)
Numerical Goal	--	12%		2%	
0343MANAGEMENT AND PROGRAM ANALYSIS	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0344MANAGEMENT AND PROGRAM CLERICAL ASSISTANCE	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0401GENERAL BIOLOGICAL SCIENCE	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0454RANGELAND MANAGEMENT	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0457SOIL CONSERVATION	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0458SOIL CONSERVATION TECHNICIAN	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0470SOIL SCIENCE	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0471AGRONOMY	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0510ACCOUNTING	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0560BUDGET ANALYSIS	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0802ENGINEERING TECHNICIAN	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0810CIVIL ENGINEERING	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0890AGRICULTURE ENGINEER	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0899ENGINEERING AND ARCHITECTURE STUDENT TRAINEE	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1035PUBLIC AFFAIRS	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1101GENERAL BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1102CONTRACTING	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1145AGRICULTURE PROGRAM SPECIALIST	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1165LOAN SPECIALIST	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1170REALTY	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

New Hires to Mission-Critical Occupations	Total (#)	Reportable Disability		Targetable Disability	
		Qualified Applicants (%)	New Hires (%)	Qualified Applicants (%)	New Hires (%)
Numerical Goal	--	12%		2%	
1371CARTOGRAPHIC TECHNICIAN	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1801GENERAL INSPECTION, INVESTIGATION AND COMPLIANCE	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2210INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

3. Using the relevant applicant pool as the benchmark, do triggers exist for PWD and/or PWTD among the qualified internal applicants for any of the mission-critical occupations (MCO)? If “yes”, please describe the triggers below. Select “n/a” if the applicant data is not available for your agency, and describe your plan to provide the data in the text box.

a. Qualified Applicants for MCO (PWD) Answer Yes

b. Qualified Applicants for MCO (PWTD) Answer Yes

FY2020 applicant flow reveals non-selection (0.00 percent) for internal promotions of major occupations in most areas except for 0401 Biological series, 0802 Engineering tech series, and 1102 General industry.

4. Using the qualified applicant pool as the benchmark, do triggers exist for PWD and/or PWTD among employees promoted to any of the mission- critical occupations (MCO)? If “yes”, please describe the triggers below. Select “n/a” if the applicant data is not available for your agency, and describe your plan to provide the data in the text box.

a. Promotions for MCO (PWD) Answer Yes

b. Promotions for MCO (PWTD) Answer Yes

FY2020 applicant flow reveals non-selection (0.00 percent) for internal promotions of major occupations in most areas except for 0401 Biological series, 0802 Engineering tech series, and 1102 General industry.

Section V: Plan to Ensure Advancement Opportunities for Employees with Disabilities

Pursuant to 29 C.F.R. §1614.203(d)(1)(iii), agencies are required to provide sufficient advancement opportunities for employees with disabilities. Such activities might include specialized training and mentoring programs, career development opportunities, awards programs, promotions, and similar programs that address advancement. In this section, agencies should identify, and provide data on programs designed to ensure advancement opportunities for employees with disabilities.

A. ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM PLAN

Describe the agency’s plan to ensure PWD, including PWTD, have sufficient opportunities for advancement.

It is agency policy to recruit qualified, diverse individuals to: 1) Ensure bringing the best-qualified candidates to the attention of management; 2) Give employees an opportunity to receive fair, equitable, and appropriate consideration for higher-level jobs; 3) Provide an incentive for employees to improve their performance and develop their knowledge, skills, and abilities; and 4) Provide

career advancement opportunities for all employees, including PWD and TD.

B. CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

1. Please describe the career development opportunities that the agency provides to its employees.

The SLDP, a 10-month program under the direction of the FPAC Human Resources Division, Employee Development Section, focuses on deepening knowledge and practicing skills and will include: 1) web-based training; 2) classroom and/or synchronous virtual learning environment; 3) mentoring; 4) participating on learning teams; 5) action learning coaching; 6) a targeted stretch assignment, and 7) a substantive group project focused on an agency priority, challenge, or opportunity.

2. In the table below, please provide the data for career development opportunities that require competition and/or supervisory recommendation/ approval to participate.

Career Development Opportunities	Total Participants		PWD		PWTD	
	Applicants (#)	Selectees (#)	Applicants (%)	Selectees (%)	Applicants (%)	Selectees (%)
Internship Programs	759	164	5.53%	0.00%	1.58%	0.00%
Coaching Programs						
Other Career Development Programs		21		4.76%		0.00%
Fellowship Programs						
Training Programs						
Mentoring Programs						
Detail Programs						

3. Do triggers exist for PWD among the applicants and/or selectees for any of the career development programs? (The appropriate benchmarks are the relevant applicant pool for the applicants and the applicant pool for selectees.) If “yes”, describe the trigger(s) in the text box. Select “n/a” if the applicant data is not available for your agency, and describe your plan to provide the data in the text box.

a. Applicants (PWD)

Answer Yes

b. Selections (PWD)

Answer Yes

There were no selections for GS0499 Interns for self-identified PWD and TD during FY2020. There was 1 (4.76%) self-identified PWD employee selection for the Senior Leadership Program.

4. Do triggers exist for PWTD among the applicants and/or selectees for any of the career development programs? (The appropriate benchmarks are the relevant applicant pool for the applicants and the applicant pool for selectees.) If “yes”, describe the trigger(s) in the text box. Select “n/a” if the applicant data is not available for your agency, and describe your plan to provide the data in the text box.

a. Applicants (PWTD)

Answer Yes

b. Selections (PWTD)

Answer Yes

There were no selections for GS0499 Interns for self-identified PWD and TD during FY2020. There were no PWTD selections for the Senior Leadership Program.

C. AWARDS

1. Using the inclusion rate as the benchmark, does your agency have a trigger involving PWD and/or PWTD for any level of the time-off awards, bonuses, or other incentives? If “yes”, please describe the trigger(s) in the text box.

a. Awards, Bonuses, & Incentives (PWD)

Answer Yes

b. Awards, Bonuses, & Incentives (PWTD)

Answer No

A suitable benchmark for inclusion for the combined number of Time-off and Cash awards given is 94.64 percent. The current PWD award rate is 89.11 percent which may indicate a trigger. The PWTD award rate is at 95.73 percent which is above the benchmark and does not indicate a trigger.

Time-Off Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 hours: Awards Given	809	5.21	5.58	5.70	5.02
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 Hours: Total Hours	5361	33.01	37.06	37.04	31.44
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 Hours: Average Hours	6.63	0.51	0.05	1.85	-0.02
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 hours: Awards Given	15	1.20	0.00	4.27	0.00
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 Hours: Total Hours	280	22.44	0.00	79.77	0.00
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 Hours: Average Hours	18.67	1.50	0.00	5.32	0.00
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 hours: Awards Given	1707	9.13	12.15	3.99	11.15
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 Hours: Total Hours	39071	196.63	277.67	177.78	204.01
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 Hours: Average Hours	22.89	1.73	0.18	12.70	-2.57
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 hours: Awards Given	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 Hours: Total Hours	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 Hours: Average Hours	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 41 or more Hours: Awards Given	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 41 or more Hours: Total Hours	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 41 or more Hours: Average Hours	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Cash Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Cash Awards: \$501 - \$999: Awards Given	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: \$501 - \$999: Total Amount	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: \$501 - \$999: Average Amount	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: \$1000 - \$1999: Awards Given	9935	64.34	69.48	72.65	61.09
Cash Awards: \$1000 - \$1999: Total Amount	14123224	91843.27	98481.17	105851.85	86361.65
Cash Awards: \$1000 - \$1999: Average Amount	1421.56	114.38	11.04	415.11	-3.30

Cash Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Cash Awards: \$2000 - \$2999: Awards Given	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: \$2000 - \$2999: Total Amount	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: \$2000 - \$2999: Average Amount	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: \$3000 - \$3999: Awards Given	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: \$3000 - \$3999: Total Amount	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: \$3000 - \$3999: Average Amount	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: \$4000 - \$4999: Awards Given	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: \$4000 - \$4999: Total Amount	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: \$4000 - \$4999: Average Amount	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Awards Given	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Total Amount	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Average Amount	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

2. Using the inclusion rate as the benchmark, does your agency have a trigger involving PWD and/or PWTD for quality step increases or performance- based pay increases? If “yes”, please describe the trigger(s) in the text box.

a. Pay Increases (PWD)

Answer No

b. Pay Increases (PWTD)

Answer No

A suitable inclusion benchmark for QSI awarded is 1.67 percent. Both PWD (1.77%) and PWTD (1.72%) were awarded above the benchmark in this category.

Other Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Total Performance Based Pay Increases Awarded	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

3. If the agency has other types of employee recognition programs, are PWD and/or PWTD recognized disproportionately less than employees without disabilities? (The appropriate benchmark is the inclusion rate.) If “yes”, describe the employee recognition program and relevant data in the text box.

a. Other Types of Recognition (PWD)

Answer N/A

b. Other Types of Recognition (PWTD)

Answer N/A

D. PROMOTIONS

1. Does your agency have a trigger involving PWD among the qualified internal applicants and/or selectees for promotions to the senior grade levels? (The appropriate benchmarks are the relevant applicant pool for qualified internal applicants and the qualified applicant pool for selectees.) For non-GS pay plans, please use the approximate senior grade levels. If “yes”,

describe the trigger(s) in the text box. Select “n/a” if the applicant data is not available for your agency, and describe your plan to provide the data in the text box.

a. SES

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Answer N/A

ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Answer N/A

b. Grade GS-15

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Answer Yes

ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Answer Yes

c. Grade GS-14

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Answer Yes

ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Answer Yes

d. Grade GS-13

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Answer Yes

ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Answer Yes

The NFC Reporting Center workforce data tables do not contain details for internal or external applicants on the SES Level. All categories were below the designated benchmark which may indicate a trigger.

2. Does your agency have a trigger involving PWTD among the qualified internal applicants and/or selectees for promotions to the senior grade levels? (The appropriate benchmarks are the relevant applicant pool for qualified internal applicants and the qualified applicant pool for selectees.) For non-GS pay plans, please use the approximate senior grade levels. If “yes”, describe the trigger(s) in the text box. Select “n/a” if the applicant data is not available for your agency, and describe your plan to provide the data in the text box.

a. SES

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD) Answer N/A

ii. Internal Selections (PWTD) Answer N/A

b. Grade GS-15

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD) Answer Yes

ii. Internal Selections (PWTD) Answer Yes

c. Grade GS-14

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD) Answer Yes

ii. Internal Selections (PWTD) Answer Yes

d. Grade GS-13

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD) Answer Yes

ii. Internal Selections (PWTD) Answer Yes

The NFC Reporting Center workforce data tables do not contain details for internal or external applicants on the SES Level. All categories were below the designated benchmark which may indicate a trigger.

3. Using the qualified applicant pool as the benchmark, does your agency have a trigger involving PWD among the new hires to the senior grade levels? For non-GS pay plans, please use the approximate senior grade levels. If “yes”, describe the trigger(s) in the text box. Select “n/a” if the applicant data is not available for your agency, and describe your plan to provide the data in the text box.

a. New Hires to SES (PWD)	Answer	N/A
b. New Hires to GS-15 (PWD)	Answer	Yes
c. New Hires to GS-14 (PWD)	Answer	Yes
d. New Hires to GS-13 (PWD)	Answer	Yes

The NFC Reporting Center workforce data tables do not contain details for internal or external applicants on the SES Level. All categories were below the designated benchmark which may indicate a trigger.

4. Using the qualified applicant pool as the benchmark, does your agency have a trigger involving PWTD among the new hires to the senior grade levels? For non-GS pay plans, please use the approximate senior grade levels. If “yes”, describe the trigger(s) in the text box. Select “n/a” if the applicant data is not available for your agency, and describe your plan to provide the data in the text box.

a. New Hires to SES (PWTD)	Answer	N/A
b. New Hires to GS-15 (PWTD)	Answer	Yes
c. New Hires to GS-14 (PWTD)	Answer	Yes
d. New Hires to GS-13 (PWTD)	Answer	Yes

The NFC Reporting Center workforce data tables do not contain details for internal or external applicants on the SES Level. All categories were below the designated benchmark which may indicate a trigger.

5. Does your agency have a trigger involving PWD among the qualified internal applicants and/or selectees for promotions to supervisory positions? (The appropriate benchmarks are the relevant applicant pool for qualified internal applicants and the qualified applicant pool for selectees.) If “yes”, describe the trigger(s) in the text box. Select “n/a” if the applicant data is not available for your agency, and describe your plan to provide the data in the text box.

a. Executives		
i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD)	Answer	Yes
ii. Internal Selections (PWD)	Answer	Yes
b. Managers		
i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD)	Answer	Yes
ii. Internal Selections (PWD)	Answer	Yes
c. Supervisors		
i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD)	Answer	Yes

ii. Internal Selections (PWD)

Answer Yes

Although there were qualified applicants who were referred for internal promotional supervisory and management positions, the rate of PWD selectees was still below the appropriate benchmark.

6. Does your agency have a trigger involving PWD among the qualified internal applicants and/or selectees for promotions to supervisory positions? (The appropriate benchmarks are the relevant applicant pool for qualified internal applicants and the qualified applicant pool for selectees.) If “yes”, describe the trigger(s) in the text box. Select “n/a” if the applicant data is not available for your agency, and describe your plan to provide the data in the text box.

a. Executives

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD)

Answer Yes

ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)

Answer Yes

b. Managers

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD)

Answer Yes

ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)

Answer Yes

c. Supervisors

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD)

Answer Yes

ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)

Answer Yes

Although there were qualified applicants who were referred for internal promotional supervisory and management positions, the rate of PWD selectees was still below the appropriate benchmark.

7. Using the qualified applicant pool as the benchmark, does your agency have a trigger involving PWD among the selectees for new hires to supervisory positions? If “yes”, describe the trigger(s) in the text box. Select “n/a” if the applicant data is not available for your agency, and describe your plan to provide the data in the text box.

a. New Hires for Executives (PWD)

Answer Yes

b. New Hires for Managers (PWD)

Answer Yes

c. New Hires for Supervisors (PWD)

Answer Yes

Although there were qualified applicants who were referred for internal promotional supervisory and management positions, the rate of PWD selectees was still below the appropriate benchmark.

8. Using the qualified applicant pool as the benchmark, does your agency have a trigger involving PWD among the selectees for new hires to supervisory positions? If “yes”, describe the trigger(s) in the text box. Select “n/a” if the applicant data is not available for your agency, and describe your plan to provide the data in the text box.

a. New Hires for Executives (PWTD)

Answer Yes

b. New Hires for Managers (PWTD)

Answer Yes

c. New Hires for Supervisors (PWTD)

Answer Yes

Although there were qualified applicants who were referred for internal promotional supervisory and management positions, the rate of PWD selectees was still below the appropriate benchmark.

Section VI: Plan to Improve Retention of Persons with Disabilities

To be model employer for persons with disabilities, agencies must have policies and programs in place to retain employees with disabilities. In this section, agencies should: (1) analyze workforce separation data to identify barriers retaining employees with disabilities; (2) describe efforts to ensure accessibility of technology and facilities; and (3) provide information on the reasonable accommodation program and workplace assistance services.

A. VOLUNTARY AND INVOLUNTARY SEPARATIONS

1. In this reporting period, did the agency convert all eligible Schedule A employees with a disability into the competitive service after two years of satisfactory service (5 C.F.R. § 213.3102(u)(6)(i))? If “no”, please explain why the agency did not convert all eligible Schedule A employees.

Answer Yes

Persons W/O Disabilities inclusion benchmark: 6.99% FPAC PWD separation rate: 12.19% PWD are separating at a higher rate than the inclusion benchmark which designates a trigger.

2. Using the inclusion rate as the benchmark, did the percentage of PWD among voluntary and involuntary separations exceed that of persons without disabilities? If “yes”, describe the trigger below.

a. Voluntary Separations (PWD)

Answer Yes

b. Involuntary Separations (PWD)

Answer Yes

Persons W/O Disabilities inclusion benchmark: 6.99% FPAC PWTD separation rate: 13.40% PWTD are separating at a higher rate than the inclusion benchmark which designates a trigger.

Separations	Total #	Reportable Disabilities %	Without Reportable Disabilities %
Permanent Workforce: Reduction in Force	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Removal	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Resignation	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Retirement	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Other Separations	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Total Separations	0	0.00	0.00

3. Using the inclusion rate as the benchmark, did the percentage of PWTD among voluntary and involuntary separations exceed that of persons without targeted disabilities? If “yes”, describe the trigger below.

a. Voluntary Separations (PWTD)

Answer Yes

b. Involuntary Separations (PWTD)

Answer Yes

Persons W/O Disabilities inclusion benchmark: 6.99% FPAC PWTD separation rate: 13.40% PWTD are separating at a higher rate than the inclusion benchmark which designates a trigger.

Separations	Total #	Targeted Disabilities %	Without Targeted Disabilities %
Permanent Workforce: Reduction in Force	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Removal	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Resignation	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Retirement	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Other Separations	0	0.00	0.00

Seperations	Total #	Targeted Disabilities %	Without Targeted Disabilities %
Permanent Workforce: Total Separations	0	0.00	0.00

- If a trigger exists involving the separation rate of PWD and/or PWTD, please explain why they left the agency using exit interview results and other data sources.

Results of exit interviews are still being reviewed to determine actions in the Human Capital Operation Plan.

B. ACCESSIBILITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND FACILITIES

Pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.203(d)(4), federal agencies are required to inform applicants and employees of their rights under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 794(b), concerning the accessibility of agency technology, and the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. § 4151-4157), concerning the accessibility of agency facilities. In addition, agencies are required to inform individuals where to file complaints if other agencies are responsible for a violation.

- Please provide the internet address on the agency's public website for its notice explaining employees' and applicants' rights under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, including a description of how to file a complaint.

The form SF 256 is also included and required for the onboarding of applicants. It addresses Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 794(b). <https://www.ocio.usda.gov/section-508>

- Please provide the internet address on the agency's public website for its notice explaining employees' and applicants' rights under the Architectural Barriers Act, including a description of how to file a complaint.

The employees' and applicants' rights under the Architectural Barriers Act can be found on the websites and through a general look-up under the USDA website for the subject Act and filing. The ASCR Civil Rights portal is most direct. <https://www.ascr.usda.gov/> <https://www.ascr.usda.gov/usda-civil-rights-agencies-and-offices>

- Describe any programs, policies, or practices that the agency has undertaken, or plans on undertaking over the next fiscal year, designed to improve accessibility of agency facilities and/or technology.

Currently, there are no plans to design any new programs, policies, or practices to improve the accessibility of Agency facilities and/or technology.

C. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION PROGRAM

Pursuant to 29 C.F.R. § 1614.203(d)(3), agencies must adopt, post on their public website, and make available to all job applicants and employees, reasonable accommodation procedures.

- Please provide the average time frame for processing initial requests for reasonable accommodations during the reporting period. (Please do not include previously approved requests with repetitive accommodations, such as interpreting services.)

Upon receiving the supporting medical documentation, the average time within FY20 to process initial requests for reasonable accommodations was 44 days. The customer is allowed 21 days to obtain all the sufficient medical documentation to support their claim and 30 days regarding the interactive process with both the Requestor and the Decision Makers to draft and finalize an Accommodation Plan.

- Describe the effectiveness of the policies, procedures, or practices to implement the agency's reasonable accommodation program. Some examples of an effective program include timely processing requests, timely providing approved accommodations, conducting training for managers and supervisors, and monitoring accommodation requests for trends.

FY2020 RA Program Effectiveness: • The number of requests received in FY20 was 352 requests. • The average processing timeframe for each request was 43.75 or 44 days. • The FY20 approval ratio was 95.2% FY2020 RA Training Conducted: • The number of trainings administered to Supervisors in FY20 was 3 RA Webinars (1 hr. each), and 3 COVID Webinars (1 hr. each). • The number of trainings administered to Employees in FY20 was 3 RA Webinars (1 hr. each), and 3 COVID Webinars (1 hr. each). • The number of trainings administered to the FSA North Carolina Program Offices in FY20 was 1 RA Webinar (1 hr. each).

D. PERSONAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES ALLOWING EMPLOYEES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WORKPLACE

Pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.203(d)(5), federal agencies, as an aspect of affirmative action, are required to provide personal assistance services (PAS) to employees who need them because of a targeted disability, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on the agency.

Describe the effectiveness of the policies, procedures, or practices to implement the PAS requirement. Some examples of an effective program include timely processing requests for PAS, timely providing approved services, conducting training for managers and supervisors, and monitoring PAS requests for trends.

The PAS requirement was initiated in January 2018, and currently there hasn't been a case involving this requirement. The Reasonable Accommodation Program presented seven Webinars throughout the mission area involving Reasonable Accommodations to include the PAS requirement. FY2020 RA Training Conducted: • The number of trainings administered to Supervisors in FY20 was 3 RA Webinars, introducing the PAS requirement (approximately 10 minutes of the 1-hour training). • The number of trainings administered to Employees in FY20 was 3 RA Webinars, introducing the PAS requirement (approximately 10 minutes of the 1-hour training).

Section VII: EEO Complaint and Findings Data

A. EEO COMPLAINT DATA INVOLVING HARASSMENT

1. During the last fiscal year, did a higher percentage of PWD file a formal EEO complaint alleging harassment, as compared to the governmentwide average?

Answer Yes

2. During the last fiscal year, did any complaints alleging harassment based on disability status result in a finding of discrimination or a settlement agreement?

Answer Yes

3. If the agency had one or more findings of discrimination alleging harassment based on disability status during the last fiscal year, please describe the corrective measures taken by the agency.

Government Average: 19.60% FPAC Rate: 23.80% (There were 15 PWD complaints alleging harassment out of 63 total complaints filed during FY2020). There were two findings of discrimination, but they did not allege PWD harassment.

B. EEO COMPLAINT DATA INVOLVING REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

1. During the last fiscal year, did a higher percentage of PWD file a formal EEO complaint alleging failure to provide a reasonable accommodation, as compared to the government-wide average?

Answer Yes

2. During the last fiscal year, did any complaints alleging failure to provide reasonable accommodation result in a finding of discrimination or a settlement agreement?

Answer Yes

3. If the agency had one or more findings of discrimination involving the failure to provide a reasonable accommodation during the last fiscal year, please describe the corrective measures taken by the agency.

Government Average: 13.53% FPAC Rate: 19.04% (There were 12 PWD reasonable accommodation complaints out of 63 total complaints filed during FY2020). There was one finding of discrimination alleging a denial of Reasonable accommodation. Corrective measures included: 1) Identified websites and applications become 508 compliant, 2) Training for the Section 508 Officer and 508 Coordinators, 3) Equitable Relief and Attorney's Fees.

Section VIII: Identification and Removal of Barriers

Element D of MD-715 requires agencies to conduct a barrier analysis when a trigger suggests that a policy, procedure, or practice may be impeding the employment opportunities of a protected EEO group.

1. Has the agency identified any barriers (policies, procedures, and/or practices) that affect employment opportunities for PWD and/or PWTD?

Answer Yes

2. Has the agency established a plan to correct the barrier(s) involving PWD and/or PWTD?

Answer Yes

3. Identify each trigger and plan to remove the barrier(s), including the identified barrier(s), objective(s), responsible official(s), planned activities, and, where applicable, accomplishments

Source of the Trigger:	Workforce Data (if so identify the table)				
Specific Workforce Data Table:	Workforce Data Table - B1				
STATEMENT OF CONDITION THAT WAS A TRIGGER FOR A POTENTIAL BARRIER: Provide a brief narrative describing the condition at issue. How was the condition recognized as a potential barrier?	Low Entry High Exit (LEHE) conditions may exist for hiring and separation of PWD/TD employees				
STATEMENT OF BARRIER GROUPS:	Barrier Group People with Disabilities People with Targeted Disabilities				
Barrier Analysis Process Completed?:	Y				
Barrier(s) Identified?:	Y				
STATEMENT OF IDENTIFIED BARRIER: Provide a succinct statement of the agency policy, procedure or practice that has been determined to be the barrier of the undesired condition.	Barrier Name		Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice		
	Hirings and Separations		Review of hiring and separations data tables show PWD/TD employees are leaving the agency faster than hiring and onboarding data.		
	Selection Criteria, Succession Planning and Retention Policy		"Blocked Pipeline" or "Glass Wall" conditions may exist in selecting PWD and PWTD for Executive/Senior level positions.		
Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan					
Date Initiated	Target Date	Sufficient Funding / Staffing?	Date Modified	Date Completed	Objective Description
10/01/2020	12/31/2022	Yes			Increase the participation rate of PWD and PWTD
Responsible Official(s)					
Title		Name		Standards Address The Plan?	
Chief Human Capital Officer		Melissa Drummond		Yes	
Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective					
Target Date	Planned Activities			Sufficient Staffing & Funding?	Modified Date
12/31/2021	Develop a strategic plan for the recruitment, hiring, and retention of individuals with disabilities.			Yes	
12/31/2021	Resurvey the workforce disability status through the employee self-identification process			Yes	07/31/2021

Report of Accomplishments	
Fiscal Year	Accomplishment
2020	§ Review exit survey results to determine the causes for PTWD separation rates; § Improve the coordination between the Disability Emphasis Program Managers (DEPMs), Veterans Employment Program Manager and the Selective Placement Coordinator; § Develop a FPAC Action/Hiring Plan for PWTd; § Ensure that training and workshops are provided to managers and supervisors on the use of special hiring authorities for qualified individuals, reasonable accommodations, alternative dispute resolution, and prevention of harassment.

4. Please explain the factor(s) that prevented the agency from timely completing any of the planned activities.

It is suspected that the FPAC mission area data is not an accurate representation of all agencies' permanent workforce of PWTd. FPAC has identified a need to resurvey its employees to request a current assessment of employees' disability status through self-identification due to expansion of the definition of disability over the years and the establishment of new targeted disability categories. The likelihood that employees' disability status needs updating is great. The SF-256, Self-Identification of Disability form, the data collection tool used within the federal government, was last updated October 2016. FPAC will resurvey its employees during FY 2021.

5. For the planned activities that were completed, please describe the actual impact of those activities toward eliminating the barrier(s).

Target completions over a 2-year timeframe

6. If the planned activities did not correct the trigger(s) and/or barrier(s), please describe how the agency intends to improve the plan for the next fiscal year.

FY 2021 FPAC goals related to employment of PWTd include: § Establish targeted recruitment efforts to increase the participation of persons with disabilities. § Ensure the internal MD-715 affirmative employment workgroup discusses ongoing recruitment and hiring initiatives and identifies potential barriers that may affect employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. § Publish a Human Capital and Recruitment Plan, which uses different programs and resources to identify and hire job applicants with disabilities, including those with targeted disabilities. § Develop a plan to train all managers on the reasonable accommodation program and the use of hiring authorities. § Continue to establish and maintain contacts with organizations that assist persons with disabilities in securing employment. § Establish a plan to improve career advancement opportunities for persons with disabilities. § Investigate the triggers for persons with disabilities in awards and promotions. § Analyze workforce separation data to identify barriers retaining employees with disabilities. FY 2021 Planned objectives and activities towards completion of the goals: 1. Recruitment, Hiring and Retention § Develop and implement a strategic plan for the recruitment, hiring, and retention of individuals with disabilities. § Monitor progress on hiring goals for major areas and occupations on a quarterly basis. § Establish and enhance national contacts to expand disability program outreach and recruitment efforts. § Expand education and awareness through continuous training and robust marketing efforts on recruiting and best practices for employing and retaining Persons with Disabilities (PWD) and Persons with Targeted Disabilities (PWTd). § Develop and release a comprehensive Disability Employment Fact Sheet that provides managers and supervisors and hiring officials with information to increase the employment of persons with disabilities. § Conduct in-depth analysis on separations for PWD and PWTd. § Resurvey the workforce disability status through the employee self-identification process (SF-256, Self-Identification of Disability). 2. Training § Provide training to address unconscious biases, as appropriate (e.g., myths and stereotypes about qualifications of PWD). § Provide mandatory training to managers on hiring PWD and PWTd. § Continue to provide training opportunities to Human Resources Specialists, hiring managers, Disability Emphasis Program Managers and Veterans Emphasis Program Managers (VEPMs) on all aspects of disability employment including: recruiting, interviewing, using special hiring authorities, career development, providing reasonable accommodations, and utilizing the Department of Defense's Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP), which offers assistive technology devices, and services at no cost to FPAC.