

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 No

The percentage of PWD in the GS-1 to GS-10 cluster was 4.1% in FY 2023, which falls below the goal of 12%. The percentage of PWD in the GS-11 to SES cluster was 14.88 % in FY 2023, which is above the goal of 12%.

*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 Yes

b. Cluster GS-11 to SES (PWTD)

Answer No

The percentage of PWTD in the GS-1 to GS-10 cluster was 1 % in FY 2023, which falls below the goal of 2%. The percentage of PWTD in the GS-11 to SES cluster was 3.7 % in FY 2023, which is above the goal of 2%.

Grade Level Cluster(GS or Alternate Pay Planb)	Total	Reportable Disability		Targeted Disability	
	#	#	%	#	%
Numerical Goal	--	12%		2%	
Grades GS-11 to SES	44204	4850	10.97	1170	2.65
Grades GS-1 to GS-10	37608	3483	9.26	917	2.44

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

The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR) will take steps to communicate numerical goals to the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Staff Offices advising them to communicate the goals to their hiring managers and/or recruiters.

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

- 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 No

OASCR designated key Special Emphasis Program Manager (SEPM) positions in FY 2023. In addition, SEPMS served on a collateral duty in FY 2023. OHRM hired a full-time Disability Employment Program Manager; onboarding will occur in FY 2024.

- 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 PWTD	1	0	0	Anita Adkins Director, OHRM Anita.r.adkins@usda.gov
Section 508 Compliance	1	0	0	Angela Williams USDA Section 508 Program Manager Angela.Williams@usda.gov
Architectural Barriers Act Compliance	1	0	0	Duane Williams Director, Office of Operations Duane.Williams@usda.gov
Special Emphasis Program for PWD and PWTD	1	0	0	Winona Lake Scott Acting Executive Director, CCRO Winona.scott@usda.gov
Answering questions from the public about hiring authorities that take disability into account	1	0	0	Anita Adkins Director, OHRM Anita.r.adkins@usda.gov
Processing reasonable accommodation requests from applicants and employees	1	0	1	Anita Adkins Director, OHRM Anita.r.adkins@usda.gov

- 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

OHRM hired an additional GS-13 RAC to assist the Reasonable Accommodation (RA) Designee. Additionally, funds were allocated for a contractor to assist RA Designee and collateral duties have been assigned to OASCR for DEPM. OHRM hired a full-time Disability Employment Program Manager; onboarding will occur in FY2024.

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 No

OHRM hired a full-time Disability Employment Program Manager; onboarding will occur in FY2024. DEPM will review the resources to fully implement the Program and develop a plan of actions.

Section III: Program Deficiencies In The Disability Program

Brief Description of Program Deficiency	C.2.b.5. Does the agency process all initial accommodation requests, excluding ongoing interpretative services, within the time frame set forth in its reasonable accommodation procedures? [see MD-715, II(C)] If “no”, please provide the percentage of timely-processed requests, excluding ongoing interpretative services, in the comments column.		
Objective	Process accommodation requests within the timeframe set forth in RA procedures		
Target Date	Sep 30, 2023		
Completion Date	Jan 31, 2023		
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u> <u>Completion Date</u> <u>Planned Activity</u>		
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u> <u>Accomplishment</u>		
Objective	Ensure enough RA Designee staff members to address the volume of RA requests.		
Target Date	Sep 30, 2019		
Completion Date			
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u> <u>Completion Date</u> <u>Planned Activity</u>		
	Jul 1, 2019		Hire a GS-13 RA Designee.
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	
	2021	OHRM processed 85% of RA requests timely, an increase from 72% in FY 2020. This increase was achieved despite staffing shortages in the reasonable accommodations section and the significant increase in COVID-19 related accommodation requests. OHRM anticipates continuing to increase the timely processing percentage of RA requests each year, provided it is able to maintain at least three Reasonable Accommodation Specialists on staff.	
	2020	OHRM processed 72% of RA requests timely, an increase from 25% in FY 2019. OHRM advertised for an additional GS-13 RA Coordinator to assist the RA Designee. OHRM anticipates filling the position in the 2nd quarter of FY 2021. Additionally, funds were allocated for a contractor to assist the RA Designee and they anticipate the contractor to start in the 2nd quarter of FY 2021.	
	2022	OHRM timely processed 90% non-Covid related and 60% Covid related RA requests. The agency was under extenuation circumstances because of the volume and complexity of requests. As such, delays in processing occurred despite best efforts to promptly process these requests.	
	2023	OHRM processed over 90% of RA requests in a timely manner. Of the few that went beyond the prescribed timeframe, they were either a day or two past the timeframe or involved matters beyond the control of the RAC, e.g., extended time required to search for positions as a reassignment of last resort, and extended leave at the end of the year.	
Objective	Increase the RA request processing time.		
Target Date	Sep 30, 2019		
Completion Date	Sep 30, 2021		
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u> <u>Completion Date</u> <u>Planned Activity</u>		
	Jul 1, 2019		Hire a GS-13 RA Designee.
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u> <u>Accomplishment</u>		

Objective	Add additional personnel/resources to support RA processing.	
Target Date	Jan 1, 2024	
Completion Date		
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u> <u>Completion Date</u> <u>Planned Activity</u>	
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>
	2023	FS - Updated public facing Civil Rights website to include appropriate verbiage and directives for obtaining Reasonable Accommodations and Personal Assistance Services

Brief Description of Program Deficiency	C.4.e.1. Implement the Affirmative Action Plan for Individuals with Disabilities? [see 29 CFR §1614.203(d); MD-715, II(C)]		
Objective	FNS Strengthen communication with OHRM and OASCR to support their roles in implementing, evaluating and reporting on initiatives impacting protected classes.		
Target Date	Sep 30, 2019		
Completion Date	Sep 30, 2021		
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>	<u>Planned Activity</u>
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	
	2021	OASCR Employment Program Manager in FY 2021 OASCR collaborated with OHRM for a roundtable discussion with the Secretary of Agriculture and the Department's Disability Employment Special Emphasis Program Manager along with leaders and representatives from the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Employees at USDA Employee Resource Group (ERG). This roundtable discussion was with the Secretary and specifically with USDA employees with disabilities to discuss topics and issues unique to their experiences. In addition, the Departmental Disability Employment program manager hosts Department-wide monthly meetings with the mission areas. In these meetings, the focus is to identify barriers and training needs to ensure agencies are hiring and retaining individuals with disabilities. Provide consistency and accountability among offices throughout the agency regarding reasonable accommodation and accessibility. Bring agency-wide awareness and increase visibility to disability-related issues, resources and information.	
Objective	FS Demonstrate effective overall recruitment, hiring, advancement, and retention of Persons with Disabilities and Persons with Targeted Disabilities within the Affirmative Action Plan		
Target Date	Sep 30, 2022		
Completion Date			
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>	<u>Planned Activity</u>
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	
Objective	FS Equally share the responsibility for the lacking Affirmative Action Plan supporting FS PWDs among: Civil Rights, DE&I, HRM, WEPO (H1-Team).		
Target Date	Mar 29, 22		
Completion Date	Feb 20, 2022		
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>	<u>Planned Activity</u>
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	
	2023	FS - Affirmative action plans for FY18 – FY22 were posted on the FS internet: https://usdagcc.sharepoint.com/sites/fs-oc-cr/SitePages/Affirmative-Action-Plans.aspx	
Objective	FS H-1 Team meets monthly to plan and produce a solid Affirmative Action Plan		
Target Date	Mar 29, 22		
Completion Date			
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>	<u>Planned Activity</u>
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	

Objective	FS Part H-1 Team annually present status update with the Annual State of the Agency Report		
Target Date	Apr 30, 2022		
Completion Date			
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u> <u>Completion Date</u> <u>Planned Activity</u>		
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u> <u>Accomplishment</u>		
Objective	FNS will improve the working relationship between its CR and HR offices.		
Target Date	Sep 30, 2020		
Completion Date	Sep 30, 2021		
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u> <u>Completion Date</u> <u>Planned Activity</u>		
	Sep 30, 2019		FNS CRD and HR Director to meet and discuss best practices and plan of actions.
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u> <u>Accomplishment</u>		
	2021	FNS- As part of the Agency's talent acquisition efforts all merit promotion job opportunity announcements identify and provide access to employment opportunity through 11 non-competitive eligibilities which continues to define an effective strategy to increase recruitment of individuals with disabilities	
	2020	FNS Coordinated and conducted a Barrier Analysis training facilitated by the OASCR. CRD and HRSD began to meet monthly to discuss strategies to implement the AAP.	
Objective	FS -Develop a Part J Data Submission Action Plan and submit quarterly data for each Part J data element including who, what, when, where, why, and how. Note: AAP is auto generated from Part J data input		
Target Date	Apr 30, 2022		
Completion Date			
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u> <u>Completion Date</u> <u>Planned Activity</u>		
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u> <u>Accomplishment</u>		

Brief Description of Program Deficiency	D.1.c. Does the agency conduct exit interviews or surveys that include questions on how the agency could improve the recruitment, hiring, inclusion, retention and advancement of individuals with disabilities? [see 29 CFR §1614.203(d)(1)(iii)(C)]		
Objective	AMS. Work HR to establish a way to include disability in exit surveys		
Target Date	Sep 30, 2023		
Completion Date			
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u> <u>Completion Date</u> <u>Planned Activity</u>		
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	
	2023	AMS - According to an email from Marketing & Regulatory Program, Human Resources Division, dated November 2, 2023. There was a decision made to remove these questions when the survey was updated 2 years ago. It was decided that race and disability data can be retrieved from other separation reports. Also, there was a tendency for departing employees to skip these fields when completing the previous survey, skewing the data. In the current (new) survey, departing employees have plenty of opportunities to address race, ethnicity, disability, age, and like data in their comments, if the felt/feel discriminated against, they can say so and specify the reason(s).	
Objective	FS Work in partnership with HRM to update exit survey questions for Persons with Disabilities, asking for information to improve recruitment, hiring, inclusion, retention, and advancement		
Target Date	Sep 30, 2022		
Completion Date			
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u> <u>Completion Date</u> <u>Planned Activity</u>		
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	
	2023	FS - HRM is working with a contractor to update Exit Survey data increasing information and to offer the survey through a universal link to improve survey participation	
Objective	OHRM Develop standardized exit surveys.		
Target Date	Sep 30, 2020		
Completion Date			
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>	<u>Planned Activity</u>
	Sep 30, 2020		OASCR will partner with OHRM, the Office of Customer Experience and the Office of the Chief Information Officer and dialogue on leveraging technology to conduct standardized exit surveys for the Department.
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	
	2020	OHRM conducted several exploratory sessions with Gartner to learn about exit survey best practices, request usable research, draft possible questions, and evaluate Gartner's own exit survey platform. This work was suspended due to other priorities.	
Objective	FPAC - Work with HRD to revise the current exit interview form.		
Target Date	Dec 20, 2024		
Completion Date			
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u> <u>Completion Date</u> <u>Planned Activity</u>		
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	

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.

USDA continued working with Operation War Fighter to identify and recruit qualified PWD and PWTD. In addition, we have WRP (Workforce Recruiter Program) and JAN (Job Accommodation Network)

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

USDA uses the Schedule A hiring authority to recruit and appoint PWD and PWTD.

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.

HR specialist (1) reviews applications and supporting documentation to determine eligibility and (2) prepares and issues a certificate of qualified applicants eligible for a Schedule A appointment and forwards to the hiring official for review and possible selection.

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 No

There will be a planned conversation between OHRM and OASCR to identify how the training will be implemented..

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.

OASCR will work with the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement (OPPE) to establish and maintain relationships with organizations that assist with identifying and recruiting PWD and PWTD. Currently, OPPE collaborates with Operation War Fighter. DEPM has monthly meetings with subcabinet agency DEPM's OHRM has hired full time DEPM for FY 2024.

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 No

A trigger exists for PWD (10.33%) and no trigger for PWTD (2.0%).

New Hires	Total (#)	Reportable Disability		Targeted Disability	
		Permanent Workforce (%)	Temporary Workforce (%)	Permanent Workforce (%)	Temporary Workforce (%)
% of Total Applicants					
% of Qualified Applicants					
% of New Hires					

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 N/A

b. New Hires for MCO (PWTD) Answer N/A

OASCR will work with OHRM to ensure the relevant data will be accurate and available in FY 2024 to assess the workforce.

New Hires to Mission-Critical Occupations	Total (#)	Reportable Disability	Targetable Disability
		New Hires (%)	New Hires (%)
Numerical Goal	--	12%	2%

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 N/A

b. Qualified Applicants for MCO (PWTD) Answer N/A

OASCR will work with OHRM to ensure the relevant data will be accurate and available in FY 2024 to assess the workforce.

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 N/A

b. Promotions for MCO (PWTD) Answer N/A

OASCR will work with OHRM to ensure the relevant data will be accurate and available in FY 2024 to assess the workforce.

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.

USDA is reviewing its resources to fully implement the Program and develop a plan of action. DEPM hosts monthly meeting to review triggers and barriers in place from subcabinet agencies

B. CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITES

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

OHRM manages the Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program (SES CDP). The SES CDP is designed to provide leadership development training for high potential employees with interest in moving into the executive ranks. The SES CDP is a one-year program. The Program is open to Federal employees with career or career-type appointments with at least one year of experience or equivalent to the GS-14 level.

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						
Fellowship Programs						
Mentoring Programs						
Coaching Programs						
Training Programs						
Detail Programs						
Other Career Development Programs	24	24	8	8	4	4

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 N/A

b. Selections (PWD)

Answer N/A

OASCR will work with OHRM to assess the SES CDP applicant participation.

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 N/A

b. Selections (PWTD)

Answer N/A

OASCR will work with OHRM to assess the SES CDP applicant participation.

C. AWARDS

- 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 Yes

The following triggers were identified: Time-Off Awards 1-10 hours indicate the inclusion rate (IR) for PWTD is 7.25%. The trigger for PWTD is 2.98%, which is 4.27 percentage points lower than the benchmark inclusion rate. Time-Off Awards 11-20 hours indicate the inclusion rate for PWTD is 3.29%. The trigger for PWTD is 2.45%, which is 0.84 percentage points lower than the benchmark. Cash Awards \$500 and under: the IR for PWD is 21.42%. The trigger for PWD is 10.94%, 10.48 percentage points lower than the benchmark inclusion rate. Cash Awards \$500 and under: the IR for PWTD is 22.35%. The trigger for PWTD is 2.80%, approximately 19.55 percentage points lower than the benchmark inclusion rate. Cash Awards with a range of \$501 - \$999: the IR for PWD is 21.74%. The trigger is 10.58% for PWD, 11.16 percentage points lower than the benchmark inclusion rate. Cash Awards \$501 - \$999: the IR for PWTD is 21.64%. The trigger is 2.58%, 19.06 percentage points lower than the benchmark inclusion rate. Cash Awards \$1000 - \$1999: the IR for PWD is 33.54%. The trigger is 10.40%, 23.14 percentage points lower than the benchmark inclusion rate. Cash Awards \$1000 - \$1999: the IR for PWTD is 32.97%. The trigger is 2.50%, 30.47 percentage points lower than the benchmark inclusion rate. Cash Awards \$2,000 - \$2,999: the IR for PWD is 7.36%. The trigger is 8.45%, 1.07 percentage points higher than the benchmark inclusion rate. Cash Awards \$2,000 - \$2,999: the IR for PWTD is 7.8%. The trigger is 2.19%, 5.61 percentage points lower than the benchmark inclusion rate. Cash Awards \$5000 or More: the IR for PWD is 0.47%. The trigger is 6.04%, 5.57 percentage points higher than the benchmark inclusion rate. Cash Awards \$5000 or More: the IR for PWTD is 0.37%. The trigger is 1.17%, 0.8 percentage point higher than the benchmark.

Time-Off Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 hours: Awards Given	6273	8.27	7.28	8.47	8.21
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 Hours: Total Hours	52297	68.82	60.87	68.49	68.93
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 Hours: Average Hours	8	0.09	0.01	0.37	0.00
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 hours: Awards Given	3662	5.06	4.29	4.35	5.30
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 Hours: Total Hours	69833	94.81	81.95	80.90	99.45
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 Hours: Average Hours	19	0.21	0.03	0.84	0.00
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 hours: Awards Given	798	1.27	0.92	0.80	1.42
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 Hours: Total Hours	20988	33.72	24.23	21.07	37.95

Time-Off Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 Hours: Average Hours	26	0.30	0.04	1.22	0.00
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 hours: Awards Given	693	1.18	0.79	0.98	1.25
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 Hours: Total Hours	27695	47.60	31.58	38.06	50.78
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 Hours: Average Hours	39	0.47	0.06	1.78	0.03
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	27086	32.56	32.03	30.85	33.13
Cash Awards: \$501 - \$999: Total Amount	20068037	24112.15	23731.55	22917.13	24511.24
Cash Awards: \$501 - \$999: Average Amount	740	8.67	1.11	34.74	-0.03
Cash Awards: \$1000 - \$1999: Awards Given	41737	49.55	49.67	47.33	50.30
Cash Awards: \$1000 - \$1999: Total Amount	52673070	61123.91	62526.21	58198.36	62100.92
Cash Awards: \$1000 - \$1999: Average Amount	1262	14.45	1.89	57.54	0.06
Cash Awards: \$2000 - \$2999: Awards Given	11302	11.53	13.87	11.70	11.48
Cash Awards: \$2000 - \$2999: Total Amount	24773909	25038.05	30421.40	25249.53	24967.42
Cash Awards: \$2000 - \$2999: Average Amount	2191	25.43	3.30	100.98	0.20
Cash Awards: \$3000 - \$3999: Awards Given	2570	2.58	3.24	2.62	2.56
Cash Awards: \$3000 - \$3999: Total Amount	8396423	8352.47	10603.43	8506.13	8301.16
Cash Awards: \$3000 - \$3999: Average Amount	3267	37.96	4.92	151.87	-0.08
Cash Awards: \$4000 - \$4999: Awards Given	951	1.05	1.15	0.66	1.19
Cash Awards: \$4000 - \$4999: Total Amount	3945852	4310.28	4760.69	2734.08	4836.66
Cash Awards: \$4000 - \$4999: Average Amount	4149	47.89	6.23	195.27	-1.33
Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Awards Given	1292	1.02	1.50	0.94	1.05
Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Total Amount	12893889	10037.00	15837.49	9856.04	10097.44
Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Average Amount	9979	115.37	15.87	492.79	-10.68

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

Other Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
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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 N/A

ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Answer N/A

c. Grade GS-14

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

ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Answer N/A

d. Grade GS-13

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

ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Answer N/A

OASCR will work with OHRM to ensure the relevant data will be accurate and available in FY 2024 to assess the workforce.

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 N/A

ii. Internal Selections (PWTD) Answer N/A

c. Grade GS-14

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

ii. Internal Selections (PWTD) Answer N/A

d. Grade GS-13

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

ii. Internal Selections (PWTD) Answer N/A

OASCR will work with OHRM to ensure the relevant data will be accurate and available in FY 2024 to assess the workforce.

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 N/A

c. New Hires to GS-14 (PWD) Answer N/A

d. New Hires to GS-13 (PWD) Answer N/A

OASCR will work with OHRM to ensure the relevant data will be accurate and available in FY 2024 to assess the workforce.

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 N/A

c. New Hires to GS-14 (PWTD) Answer N/A

d. New Hires to GS-13 (PWTD)

Answer N/A

OASCR will work with OHRM to ensure the relevant data will be accurate and available in FY 2024 to assess the workforce.

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 N/A

ii. Internal Selections (PWD)

Answer N/A

b. Managers

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD)

Answer N/A

ii. Internal Selections (PWD)

Answer N/A

c. Supervisors

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD)

Answer N/A

ii. Internal Selections (PWD)

Answer N/A

OASCR will work with OHRM to ensure the relevant data will be accurate and available in FY 2024 to assess the workforce.

6. Does your agency have a trigger involving PWTD 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 N/A

ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)

Answer N/A

b. Managers

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD)

Answer N/A

ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)

Answer N/A

c. Supervisors

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD)

Answer N/A

ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)

Answer N/A

OASCR will work with OHRM to ensure the relevant data will be accurate and available in FY 2023 to assess the workforce.

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 N/A
- b. New Hires for Managers (PWD) Answer N/A
- c. New Hires for Supervisors (PWD) Answer N/A

OASCR will work with OHRM to ensure the relevant data will be accurate and available in FY 2024 to assess the workforce.

8. Using the qualified applicant pool as the benchmark, does your agency have a trigger involving PWTD 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 N/A
- b. New Hires for Managers (PWTD) Answer N/A
- c. New Hires for Supervisors (PWTD) Answer N/A

OASCR will work with OHRM to ensure the relevant data will be accurate and available in FY 2024 to assess the workforce.

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 No

Some employees may not have been converted due to decreased funding for full-time equivalent (FTE) positions.

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 No
- b. Involuntary Separations (PWD) Answer No

OASCR will continue to work with OHRM to ensure the relevant data will be accurate and available in FY 2024 to assess the workforce.

Separations	Total #	Reportable Disabilities %	Without Reportable Disabilities %
Permanent Workforce: Reduction in Force	0	0.00	0.00

Separations	Total #	Reportable Disabilities %	Without Reportable Disabilities %
Permanent Workforce: Removal	1419	1.24	1.55
Permanent Workforce: Resignation	2471	2.37	2.67
Permanent Workforce: Retirement	2523	3.88	2.57
Permanent Workforce: Other Separations	1955	2.64	2.03
Permanent Workforce: Total Separations	8335	10.09	8.79

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

a. Voluntary Separations (PWTB)

Answer No

b. Involuntary Separations (PWTB)

Answer No

OASCR will continue to work with OHRM to ensure the relevant data will be accurate and available in FY 2024 to assess the workforce.

Separations	Total #	Targeted Disabilities %	Without Targeted Disabilities %
Permanent Workforce: Reduction in Force	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Removal	1419	1.05	1.53
Permanent Workforce: Resignation	2471	2.28	2.65
Permanent Workforce: Retirement	2523	4.95	2.64
Permanent Workforce: Other Separations	1955	2.10	2.09
Permanent Workforce: Total Separations	8335	10.33	8.88

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

USDA and OHRM continue to review best practices on conducting exit interviews. OASCR will continue to work with OHRM to ensure the relevant data will be available in FY 2024 to assess the workforce relative to the exit interviews.

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.

1. 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.

<https://www.usda.gov/accessibility-statement> <https://www.ascr.usda.gov/> <https://www.usda.gov/non-discrimination-statement>

2. 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.

USDA HQ does not have a website explaining employees' and applicants' rights under the Architectural Barriers Act. However, the following public websites describe how to file a complaint: <https://www.ascr.usda.gov/> and <https://www.usda.gov/non-discrimination-statement>

www.usda.gov/non-discrimination-statement

- 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.

OASCR will designate the required SEPMs in FY 2022. OASCR designated collateral duty SEPM for FY2024

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.)

OHRM processed over 90 percent of RA requests in a timely manner. Of the few that went beyond the prescribed timeframe, they were either a day or two past the timeframe or involved matters beyond the control of the RAC, e.g., extended time required to search for positions as a reassignment of last resort, and extended leave at the end of the year.

- 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.

DR 4300-008, RA and PAS for Employees and Applicants with Disabilities dated October 27, 2020, was distributed via a mass e-mail October 30, 2020, to all USDA employees. The RA and PAS training was featured on AgLearn for FY2022 for all employees. The e-mail featured a message from the DASCRC and the following 3 topics were highlighted: 1. USDA's new RA website and toolkit; 2. Mission Area RA Coordinators listing; and 3. Upcoming RA Training Webinar for employees and managers.

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.

DR 4300-008, RA and PAS for Employees and Applicants with Disabilities dated October 27, 2020, was distributed via a mass e-mail October 30, 2020, to all USDA employees. The RA and PAS training was featured on AgLearn for FY2022 for all employees. The e-mail featured a message from the DASCRC and the following 3 topics were highlighted: 1. USDA's new RA website and toolkit; 2. Mission Area RA Coordinators listing; and 3. Upcoming RA Training Webinar for employees and managers.

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.

During FY 2023, the Agency issued one finding of discrimination regarding an allegation of harassment. Corrective action ordered in the finding of discrimination included an award of compensatory damages and attorney's fees (if applicable), posting a notice of finding of discrimination, and a referral to OHRM. Additionally, make whole relief is ordered which is determined based on the facts of the complaint. Make whole relief in harassment complaints may include training, coaching, restoration of leave, detail assignments, reinstatement to a position, etc.

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.

During FY 2023, the USDA issued one finding of discrimination regarding to an allegation of failure to provide a reasonable accommodation. Corrective action ordered in the finding of discrimination included an award of compensatory damages and attorney's fees (if applicable), posting a notice of finding of discrimination, and a referral to OHRM. Additionally, make whole relief is ordered which is determined based on the facts of the complaint. Make whole relief in failure to accommodate complaints may include training, coaching, restoration of leave, detail assignments, reinstatement to a position, etc.

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 No

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

Answer No

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?	USDA does not meet the 12% or 2% goal for PWD/PWTD in the permanent workforce for either grade clusters; Decrease in the workforce and hiring rates of PWD and PWTD; and High separation rates of PWD and PWTD.				
STATEMENT OF BARRIER GROUPS:	Barrier Group People with Disabilities People with Targeted Disabilities				
Barrier Analysis Process Completed?:	N				
Barrier(s) Identified?:	N				
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		
Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan					
Date Initiated	Target Date	Sufficient Funding / Staffing?	Date Modified	Date Completed	Objective Description
09/30/2019	09/30/2020	Yes	09/30/2023		Complete the barrier analysis process to determine the root cause of triggers.
Responsible Official(s)					
Title		Name		Standards Address The Plan?	
DASCR		Monica Armster Rainge		No	
Acting Director, OHRM		Anita Adkins		No	
Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective					
Target Date	Planned Activities		Sufficient Staffing & Funding?	Modified Date	Completion Date
09/30/2019	Establish a committee with the goal of implementing an approach to managing Special Emphasis Programs.		Yes	09/30/2021	09/30/2021
12/16/2019	Forward the revised Reasonable Accommodation Procedures to EEOC.		Yes	12/26/2021	09/30/2021
09/30/2020	Designate a DEPM within OASCR		No	09/30/2022	09/30/2021

Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective				
Target Date	Planned Activities	Sufficient Staffing & Funding?	Modified Date	Completion Date
09/30/2020	Provide Reasonable Accommodation training to managers	No	09/30/2022	09/30/2021
09/30/2020	Provide training on the special hiring authorities to managers	No	09/30/2022	
06/30/2020	Once approved, disseminate the new Reasonable Accommodation Policy	Yes	06/30/2022	09/30/2021
Report of Accomplishments				
Fiscal Year	Accomplishment			
2020	Reasonable accommodation timeliness increased from 25 percent in FY 2019 to 72 percent in FY 2020. OHRM advertised for an additional GS-13 RAC to assist the RA Designee. OHRM anticipates filling the position in the second quarter of FY 2021. Additionally, funds were allocated for a contractor to assist the RA Designee and OHRM anticipates onboarding the contractor in the second quarter of FY 2021.			
2021	OHRM processed 85% of RA requests timely, an increase from 72% in FY 2020. This increase was achieved despite staffing shortages in the reasonable accommodations section and the significant increase in COVID-19 related accommodation requests. OHRM anticipates continuing to increase the timely processing percentage of RA requests each year, provided it is able to maintain at least three Reasonable Accommodation Specialists on staff.			

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

The absence of a full-time DEPM impeded USDA's ability to successfully implement planned activities.

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

N/A

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.

N/A