Meeting of the Federal Exchange on Employment and Disability (FEED)

February 9, 2022
AGENDA

Introduction (1:00-1:05 p.m.)
  Akinyemi Banjo, Policy Advisor, Employer and Workplace Policy, ODEP, Department of Labor

Welcoming Remarks (1:05-1:10 p.m.)
  Taryn Williams, Assistant Secretary, ODEP, Department of Labor

Overview of Governmentwide Strategic Plan (1:10-1:40 p.m.)
  Dexter Brooks, EEOC
  Natalie Veeney, OPM

Building Your Agency’s Accessibility Roadmap (1:40-2:10 p.m.)
  Andrew Nielson, GSA
  Justin Grimes, OMB
  Natalie Veeney, OPM

Survey: Identifying Agency Priority Areas (2:10-2:30 p.m.)
  Sarah von Schrader, Associate Director of Research, Yang Tan Institute on Employment and Disability, Research Lead, EARN

Resources for Developing Implementation Strategies (2:30-2:55 p.m.)
  Bobby Silverstein, Principal, Powers Pyles Sutter and Verville, PC, EARN Consultant

Closing Remarks (2:55-3:00 p.m.)
  Lou Orslene, Director, Employer and Workplace Policy, ODEP, Department of Labor
The DEIA Initiative was established by Executive Order 14035, provides leadership, technical assistance, and guidance to agencies as they work to achieve the directives in the Executive Order and advance DEIA policies and practices.


Federal Government-wide DEIA Mission Statement: Across the Federal Government, agencies will work collaboratively to drive innovation and organizational outcomes, draw from the full diversity of the nation, and position the Federal Government to serve as a model employer that values and promotes equity for all Americans.
This Government-wide Strategic Plan to Advance DEIA in the Federal Workforce (or Governmentwide DEIA Plan) offers a roadmap for implementing the Executive Order and lays out key steps agencies can take to strengthen DEIA in their workforce policies, practices, and culture.

The Government-wide DEIA Plan:

- Provides vision and mission statements
- Established five operating principles to advance and sustain DEIA within agencies
- Further outlines the DEIA priorities expressed in the EO
- Details strategies for advancing DEIA
- Provides and examples maturity model to support growth
- Outlines steps to create a comprehensive framework to address workplace harassment
- Explains next steps for advancing DEIA
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<th>Underserved Communities</th>
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<tr>
<td>People of color</td>
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<td>Individuals in rural communities</td>
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<td>First generation professionals, college students and immigrants</td>
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<td>Formerly incarcerated individuals</td>
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<td>People with disabilities</td>
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<td>LGBTQ+ individuals</td>
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<td>Individuals with limited English proficiency</td>
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<td>Older adults</td>
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<td>Persons adversely impacted by persistent poverty, discrimination, or inequality</td>
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<td>Women</td>
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<td>Individuals facing religious discrimination</td>
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<td>Veterans and military spouses</td>
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<td>Parents, caregivers, individuals facing pregnancy discrimination</td>
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Government-wide DEIA Priorities

- Safe Workplaces
- Chief Diversity Officer
- Data Collection
- Promoting Paid Partnerships
- Partnerships and Recruitment
- Professional Development and Advancement
- DEIA Training and Learning

- Advancing Equity for Employees with Disabilities
- Advancing Equity for LGBTQI+ Employees
- Pay Equity
- Expanding Federal Employment Opportunities for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals
Operating Principles for DEIA

- Use data and evidence-based decision-making
- Focus on continuous improvement
- Adopt a collaborative whole-of-agency mandate with partnership engagement
- Prioritize accountability and sustainability
- Understand the perspectives of the workforce and other customers
Building Your Agency’s Accessibility Roadmap

Federal Exchange on Employment & Disability
Office of Government-wide Policy
DEIA Roadmap for Agency Action: Accessibility
The federal government must consistently design, construct, develop, and maintain facilities, technology, programs, and services so that all people, including people with disabilities, can fully and independently use them.
Collaboration to Update Guidance on IT Accessibility

• Revisiting Strategic Plan for Improving Management of Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act
  o Collaborative effort between GSA, Access Board, OMB, and CIO Council (CIOC) Accessibility Community of Practice (ACOP)
  o Focus groups and strategic planning sessions conducted in late 2020 and into 2021
  o Preliminary recommendations incorporated in development of Government-wide DEIA Strategic Plan
• Revised guidance on Section 508 still to come
Accessibility Roadmap Examples

• Providing **training and guidance** on processes to make physical and virtual environments, including common and individual environments, **equitable spaces**;
• **Training users** and operators of virtual environments on **conducting accessible meetings**, **creating accessible documents**, and addressing potential physical and attitudinal barriers to equitable comprehension, participation, collaboration, and opportunity;
• **Regularly assess information technology, and facilities**, against benchmarks and industry standards to remove potential barriers and support equitable access;
• **Ensure all technology**, whether developed in-house or externally, is compliant with **Section 508** of the Rehabilitation Act prior to deployment;
• **Assessing the average time for resolution of accommodation requests** for individuals with disabilities and religious accommodations requests and implementing practices to improve efficiencies;
• Evaluating the need to establish a **centralized fund to improve accessibility and provide accommodations**.
Resources to Build Your Agency Accessibility Roadmap
Know Your Starting Point

- Digital Dashboard ([digitaldashboard.gov](http://digitaldashboard.gov))
  - Accessibility Module ([digitaldashboard.gov/gov-wide-accessibility](http://digitaldashboard.gov/gov-wide-accessibility))
- Semi-annual IT Accessibility (Section 508) Program Maturity Reporting (as part of Integrated Data Call)
  - Each agency provides self-reported data
  - GSA combines self-reported data with Digital Dashboard and other internal data to provide analysis summary and recommendations
  - Emailed directly to each agency’s CIO and Section 508 Program Manager
  - Executive version emailed to OMB & ACOP
Resources for agency leaders and key roles

- Executive Guide to Federal IT Accessibility
- Quick Guide to IT Accessibility for Program Managers
- Technology Accessibility Playbook
- Buying and Selling Accessible Products and Services
- Designing and Developing Accessible Products
- Creating Accessible Digital Products (e.g., electronic documents and presentations)
- Creating and Hosting Accessible Meetings

Visit and Share: https://www.section508.gov/manage/deia-guidance/
The Technology Accessibility Playbook:

- Provides a framework for the integration of strategic, business, and technology management to ensure is accessible for people with disabilities
- Contains twelve key “plays” drawn from successful practices in the government and private sector to help agencies iteratively mature their approaches to Technology Accessibility

Visit and Bookmark: https://www.section508.gov/tools/playbooks/technology-accessibility-playbook-intro/

Gallaudet University, the first school for the advanced education of the deaf and hard of hearing, is Home of the Huddle™.
Technology Accessibility Plays

- Play 1: Establish a Section 508 Program Manager to lead compliance efforts
- Play 2: Assess your Section 508 program maturity
- **Play 3: Develop a Section 508 Accessibility Roadmap**
- Play 4: Establish a Section 508 Policy
- Play 5: Develop a Section 508 Program Team
- Play 6: Collaborate with the federal accessibility community
- Play 7: Integrate accessibility needs into requirements and design processes
- Play 8: Integrate accessibility needs into market research and acquisition processes
- Play 9: Integrate accessibility needs into development processes
- Play 10: Conduct Section 508 testing
- Play 11: Track and resolve accessibility issues
- Play 12: Educate the workforce
Accessibility Maturity Measures (Agency self-assessments)

- Ad Hoc: No formal policies, processes, or procedures defined.
- Planned: Policies, processes, and procedures defined and communicated.
- Resourced: Resources committed and/or staff trained to implement policies, processes, and procedures.
- Measured: Validation is performed; results are measured and tracked.

Maturity Domains

- Acquisition
- Agency technology life cycles
- Testing and Validation
- Complaint Management
- Training
Basic Checklist

• Define your Section 508 Program challenges and opportunities
• Develop an iterative plan to address priorities and gaps in policy, processes, tools and resources
• Assess the organization’s readiness to adopt planned changes and develop an approach to build adoption for the plan
• Estimate and prioritize budget requirements. Budget for key expenses, including Section 508 Program Team staff, as well as compliance testing and tracking tools
• Identify target milestones
• Communicate your plan to key stakeholders to get approval and support
Play 12: Educate the workforce

Ensure staff understand their responsibilities under Section 508, particularly for official communication. Target key audience groups to ensure they have the required knowledge.

- Content creators create accessible digital content through use of style sheets, ALT tags, captions, descriptive link language, etc.
- Procurement professionals document accessibility needs when purchasing technology (hardware, software, systems, etc.)
- Developers adopt universal design to create software & websites that are accessible to all
- QA/Testers adhere to the interagency Trusted Tester Program (ITTP)

Develop customized training to address the specific skill gaps at your agency. Communicate regularly with agency components to share guidance, tools, and training opportunities.

- Accessibility Training - Online Training Resources
Next Steps on Guidance
Results from FEED Poll:

Strategies for increasing accessibility and reducing barriers to employment for people with disabilities
Purpose: Identify the strategies that will have the greatest impact toward increasing accessibility and reducing barriers to employment for people with disabilities

FEED members were asked to:
• Review a list of 16 strategies – List compiled by ODEP
• Choose top 3 strategies
• For top 3, describe how this strategy “will increase accessibility and reduce barriers to employment for people with disabilities in your agency”

Participation
• 127 respondents
• Data collected from Jan 19th to Jan 26th
### Strategy

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number who listed strategy in &quot;Top 3&quot;</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>44</td>
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<td>40</td>
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| 3. Establish a Chief Disability Officer and a Chief Accessibility Officer position at each agency to provide oversight for implementation and review of the DEIA strategic plan at the agency level. |
| 6. Establish a centralized government-wide Disability Center of Excellence to create and implement a framework for the provision of accommodations. |
| 5. Establish a disability working group within each agency to implement the agency DEIA Strategic Plan. |
| 14. Add questions regarding the effectiveness of workplace accommodations into the annual Employee Viewpoint Survey ... |
| 9. Develop a model agency Standard Operating Procedure for hiring people with disabilities using Schedules A and D... |
| 7. Centralize contracting for services such as sign language interpreters and relay services. |
### Poll Results (2)

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<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Number who listed strategy in &quot;Top 3&quot;</th>
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<tr>
<td>4. Ensure that the Chief Disability Officer and Chief Accessibility Officer lead efforts to integrate agency DEIA strategic planning goals ...</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Develop a government-wide accommodation and accessibility framework and measures for assessing agency success in implementing EO 14035</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Introduce and encourage the adoption of universal design or &quot;access for all&quot; principles.</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Create mechanisms to ensure implementation and compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act and make recommendations for addressing deficiencies.</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Develop a separate job series with its own competencies and qualifications for disability roles needed to ensure disability inclusion.</td>
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## Poll Results (3)

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<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Number who listed strategy in &quot;Top 3&quot;</th>
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<tr>
<td>11. Revise and re-issue SF-256 “Self-Identification of Disability,” in order to correct issues with the interpretation of the “01” Code ...</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Appoint a full-time person detailed to the White House to serve as the point person for the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) strategic plan.</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Develop a marketing campaign for Schedule A and D and other hiring authorities (PMF, WRP, etc.) to impact knowledge of Chief Human Capital Officers.</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>16. Revive OPM’s online training for Selective Placement Program Coordinators at HRU.gov.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Re-issue the OPM Report on the Employment of Individuals with Disabilities in the Federal Executive Branch and include additional disability-related measures such as conversion rate of Schedule A and D hires, and those from other hiring authorities.</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
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Why Top 3 strategies were selected

Key themes and sample quotes
3. Establish a Chief Disability Officer and a Chief Accessibility Officer...

Ensure focus on disability in implementation of DEIA
• These positions would ensure there is a strong focus on people with disabilities who often get overlooked in DEI efforts.
• Agencies (including components) are organized differently, and some don't have a Disability Program Manager. It is unclear who has overall responsibility or who to contact with regard to disability matters...

People in these roles need disability knowledge and ability to focus on disability issues
• EEO and/or Diversity Officer … are not generally specialists in disability employment, hiring authorities, accessibility challenges, retention, negative attitudes/beliefs about persons with disabilities and more well-rounded in civil rights, EEO practices, reporting, and other areas...[T]his community … deserves to have people leading this effort that understand the challenges they face..
• Agencies should [be] advised that these roles are important and the focus be on this at all times. Positions should have direct access or be a direct report to the agency head
6. Establish a centralized government-wide Disability Center of Excellence ...

**Faster processing of requests**
- Allows for streamlined contracting efforts, faster processing that is not limited by reasonable accommodation coordinator turnover or restricted budget or resources by agency.
- Many supervisors are **reinventing the wheel** every time they receive a request for RA, and thus taking a long time to process the request.

**Ensure consistency and understanding of framework for accommodation**
- We should have a place for Disability Program Managers to share their resources and awareness on different types of accommodations, which accommodations work or not, and have a clear guidance on the framework.
- This would add consistency across the government and most of all provides a resource that everyone can utilize. Supervisors and employees alike would benefit in knowing and understanding the framework for accommodations.
- Help spread best-practices and creative solutions across the government. It would also reduce the instances of supervisors directly requesting excessive medical documents.
5. Establish a disability working group within each agency to implement the agency DEIA Strategic Plan.

**Ensure consistency, accountability, and awareness across the agency**
- Working groups are better able to establish and monitor the DEIA Strategic Plan. WG's key focus is ensuring the plan is successful and agency employees are better equipped to address best practices for their agency and what is needed.
- Our agency is currently not meeting goals for disability hiring. This workgroup would identify barriers, and training needs to ensure we are hiring and retaining individuals with disabilities.
- To provide consistency and accountability among offices throughout the agency regarding reasonable accommodation and accessibility
- It will bring awareness agency wide and the program will be visible.

**Working group composition**
- Engaging employees from across the agency to participate in a working group builds inclusion and the expectation that it is everyone's responsibility.
- We need to include people with disabilities to get their perspectives and ideas on how to be a model employer to people with disabilities, ensure equal access and maximize inclusivity.
Questions?
Implementing EO 14035: Resources for Developing Disability-Inclusive DEIA Strategies

Presentation by Bobby Silverstein, EARN Team Member before the Federal Exchange on Employment & Disability (FEED)

February 9, 2022
OVERVIEW

DELIBERATIVE DRAFT

FEDERAL AGENCY EMPLOYMENT STRATEGIES: A FRAMEWORK FOR DISABILITY DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY (DEIA) (2022 EDITION)

- Lead the Way
- Build the Pipeline
- Hire the Best
- Ensure Productivity
- Ensure Virtual and Physical Accessibility
- Grow Success
Federal DEIA Framework includes a summary of key policies and examples of promising and emerging practices set out in:

- Executive Order 14035
- Government-wide DEIA Strategic Plan Implementing EO 14035
- Regulations implementing Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act
- Management Directive (MD)-715
- Agencies’ affirmative action and other strategic plans applicable to people with disabilities
LEAD THE WAY

- Leadership and commitment
- External and internal communication
- Designation of responsible individuals
- Anti-harassment policy
BUILD THE PIPELINE

• OUTREACH

• RECRUITMENT
HIRE THE BEST

• Personnel processes
• Advancement
• Retention
ENSURE PRODUCTIVITY

• Reasonable Accommodation

• Personal Assistance Services
ENSURE VIRTUAL AND PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY

• Information and Communication Technology
• Facilities
• Goals

• Workforce analysis

• Continuous assessment and improvement

• Accountability (recordkeeping and reporting)