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

a. 0.00% b. 4.55%, 7.36%, and 2.22%

*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   Yes

a. 0.00% b. 0.00%

Grade Level Cluster(GS or Alternate Pay Planb)	Total	Reportable Disability		Targeted Disability	
	#	#	%	#	%
Numarical Goal	--	12%		2%	
Grades GS-1 to GS-10					
Grades GS-11 to SES					

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

ERS holds managers and supervisors accountable for hiring and retaining a diverse workforce through the REE Recruitment Agreement, Appendix A, which requires that ERS hiring managers utilize the MD-715 in recruiting. Hiring managers review MD-715 identified barriers during the vacancy announcement process to enhance opportunities for recruitment and hire.

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.

<div align="right">Answer   Yes</div>

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 PWTD	40	0	0	Brandon Nicknadavich Supervisor HR Specialist
Answering questions from the public about hiring authorities that take disability into account	40	0	0	Mary Weber REE Disability Program Manager
Processing reasonable accommodation requests from applicants and employees	1	0	0	Tracey Troutman Acting EEO Director
Section 508 Compliance	0	0	0	Angela Pompey Chief, Information Security Officer
Architectural Barriers Act Compliance	0	0	0	
Special Emphasis Program for PWD and PWTD	0	0	0	Tracey Troutman Acting EEO Director

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.

<div align="right">Answer   Yes</div>

The REE Reasonable Accommodation Program Manager attends classroom-style training on an "annual" basis provided by the National Employment Law Institute. She also fully complies with all Agency-wide civil rights and diversity training mandates. Additionally, she stays abreast of any new or updated program regulations, program developments and best practices by doing independent research and/or by participating in Departmental meetings, webinars, conference calls, etc. The disability program staff has received Special Emphasis Program Manager (SEPM) Training, Barrier Analysis Training, MD-715 Training.

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.

<div align="right">Answer   Yes</div>

This information is not available.

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)]

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.

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 collaborates with the USDA REE Mission Area Disability Program Manager to seek Schedule A eligible candidates from REE in-house pre-screened database of qualified PWD/PWTD. The Agency collaborates with the USDA REE Mission Area Disability Program Manager to educate staff on special hiring authorities for PWD and PWTD and for resume and disability certification from people with disabilities and Schedule A candidates. Utilize OPM's Shared List of People with Disabilities pre-screened database of qualified individuals with disabilities. The agency utilizes the Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students with Disabilities (WRP), REE Special Emphasis Program for PWD and PWTD, and Schedule A 213.2102(u) appointing authority.

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

The Agency has used the Schedule A 213.2102(u) appointing authority to hire PWD and PWTD. The agency has experienced success utilizing the Schedule A 213.2102(u) appointing authority to recruit individuals with disabilities using various programs.

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.

Individuals apply for REE vacancies via USAJobs. Qualified individuals are referred to selecting officials on a non-competitive eligibles certificate.

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

Training is available in AgLearn. The Disability Program Manager also provided a comprehensive presentation of programs for hiring people with disabilities and developed and distributed communication on the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP).The Disability Program Manager developed and distributed a procedural statement regarding the process for managing unsolicited resumes received from veterans and people with disabilities. Currently, there are approximately 200 resumes available in the portal.

The Disability Program Manager also developed documents regarding hiring both veterans and people with disabilities. The documents: Helpful Links for Hiring Managers, Q&A's for Hiring Managers and Tips for Hiring Managers are valuable information available for hiring managers to reference when considering hiring veterans and people with disabilities.

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 agency utilizes Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students with Disabilities (WRP) and sources recommended by the Disability Special Emphasis Program Manager. The Disability Program Manager developed a procedural statement and established a database/portal with unsolicited resumes received from veterans and people with disabilities who are eligible for non-competitive hiring. Currently over 100 resumes are in the portal.

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

a.Not Qualified or Qualified not Referred b. Qualified, Referred, Interviewed not Selected

New Hires	Total	Reportable Disability		Targeted Disability	
		Permanent Workforce	Temporary Workforce	Permanent Workforce	Temporary Workforce
	(#)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
% of Total Applicants	0				
% of Qualified Applicants	0				
% of New Hires	0				

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

PWD not selected (0110) not referred (2210) PWTD not referred (2210)

New Hires to Mission-Critical Occupations	Total	Reportable Disability		Targetable Disability	
		Qualified Applicants	New Hires	Qualified Applicants	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   No

      b. Qualified Applicants for MCO (PWTD)   Answer   No

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

Triggers exist for PWD and PWTD

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.

The Disability Program Manager developed documents regarding hiring both veterans and people with disabilities. The documents: Helpful Links for Hiring Managers, Q&A's for Hiring Managers and Tips for Hiring Managers provide valuable information for hiring managers to reference when considering hiring veterans and people with disabilities.

B. CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITES

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

This information is unavailable at this time. Once the EEO Director position is filled plans for career development opportunities will be addressed in collaboration with leadership and HR.

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	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fellowship Programs	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mentoring Programs	0	0	0	0	0	0
Training Programs	0	0	0	0	0	0

Career Development Opportunities	Total Participants		PWD		PWTD	
	Applicants (#)	Selectees (#)	Applicants (%)	Selectees (%)	Applicants (%)	Selectees (%)
Detail Programs	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Career Development Programs	0	0	0	0	0	0
Coaching Programs	0	0	0	0	0	0

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

New EEO Director will work with leadership and HR to develop and implement appropriate career development plans

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

a. see 3 b. see 3

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

PWD Time Off 1-10 hours and Cash $501 -$999 PWTD Time Off 1 – 10 hours and Cash $501- $999

Time-Off Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Cash Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %

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

Other Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Performance Based Pay Increase	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   No

          ii. Internal Selections (PWD)   Answer   No

      b. Grade GS-15

          i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD)   Answer   No

          ii. Internal Selections (PWD)   Answer   Yes

      c. Grade GS-14

          i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD)   Answer   No

          ii. Internal Selections (PWD)   Answer   Yes

      d. Grade GS-13

          i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD)   Answer   Yes

          ii. Internal Selections (PWD)   Answer   No

b(i) and (ii) not interviewed c(ii) not selected d(i.) none applied

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   No

          ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)   Answer   No

  b. Grade GS-15

    i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD)   Answer No

    ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)   Answer Yes

  c. Grade GS-14

    i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD)   Answer No

    ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)   Answer Yes

  d. Grade GS-13

    i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD)   Answer No

    ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)   Answer No

---

b(ii)not interviewed c(ii) not selected

---

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 No

    b. New Hires to GS-15 (PWD)   Answer Yes

    c. New Hires to GS-14 (PWD)   Answer No

    d. New Hires to GS-13 (PWD)   Answer No

---

c. Not selected

---

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 No

    b. New Hires to GS-15 (PWTD)   Answer Yes

    c. New Hires to GS-14 (PWTD)   Answer No

    d. New Hires to GS-13 (PWTD)   Answer No

---

b. not selected

---

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   No

ii. Internal Selections (PWD)   Answer   No

b. Managers

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD)   Answer   No

ii. Internal Selections (PWD)   Answer   No

c. Supervisors

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD)   Answer   No

ii. Internal Selections (PWD)   Answer   No

---

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   No

ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)   Answer   No

b. Managers

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD)   Answer   No

ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)   Answer   No

c. Supervisors

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD)   Answer   No

ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)   Answer   No

---

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   No

b. New Hires for Managers (PWD)   Answer   No

c. New Hires for Supervisors (PWD)   Answer   No

---

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   No

b. New Hires for Managers (PWTD)   Answer   No

c. New Hires for Supervisors (PWTD)   Answer   No

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   N/A

None were on the rolls at the time

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

Seperations	Total #	Reportable Disabilities %	Without Reportable Disabilities %

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   No

    b.Involuntary Separations (PWTD)   Answer   No

Seperations	Total #	Targeted Disabilities %	Without Targeted Disabilities %

4. 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.

The agency is unable to determine at this time. The EEO Director will work with HR on determining exit survey results.

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.

ERS currently defers to the Departmental Section 508 Regulation. At this time there is no formal Section 508 complaint process within ERS. The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR) is designated to handle Section 508 complaints but is currently reviewing and mediating complaints based on Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. https://www.ocio.usda.gov/policy-directives-records-forms/section-508

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.

ERS currently defers to the Departmental Section 508 Regulation. At this time, there is no formal Section 508 complaint process within ERS. The Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR) is designated to handle Section 508 complaints but is currently reviewing and mediating complaints based on Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. https://www.ocio.usda.gov/policy-directives-records-forms/section-508

3. 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.

ERS is housed in USDA-leased space. All programs, policies, practices, or plans designed to improve accessibility and/or technology to the agency's USDA-leased facilities are undertaken by USDA's Operations. ERS is unaware of any undertaking over the next fiscal year designed to improve accessibility 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.

1. 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.)

As cited in the Agency's Reasonable Accommodation (RA) Policy & Procedures, deciding officials have 5 days to acknowledge receipt of a RA request and 30 days to provide an accommodation. On average, reasonable accommodation requests are processed immediately. For equipment purchases, full implementation of an accommodation may vary depending upon the vendor and the type of equipment needed. Additionally, most deciding officials provide interim accommodations or offer an alternative accommodation when the preferred accommodation is an undue hardship. As a result, the Agency has few or no denials.

2. 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.

The following efforts are ongoing by the REE Reasonable Accommodation Program Manager to ensure program efficiency and effectiveness: (1)Participates in Agency-wide meetings, trainings, and webinars as the subject- matter expert to promote RA program awareness. (2) Developed visual aids to simplify the RA administrative process for persons with disabilities and their deciding officials which includes step-by-step procedures for timely processing of requests. (3) Modified policies, hard copy materials, and web site information to ensure persons with disabilities understand their rights and responsibilities. (4) Strategizes with supervisors to develop alternative accommodation options that are equally effective when preferred accommodation imposes an undue hardship. This mitigates denials which reduce or eliminate EEO complaints. (5) Provides classroom-style training or webinars to educate the workforce— particularly supervisors who serve as RA deciding officials. (6) Issues a quarterly email blast (newsletter) with snippets of RA information. (7) Informs both persons with disabilities and their supervisors of proper record keeping of medical documentation to reduce or eliminate HIPPA and Privacy Act violations. (8) Partners with HR professionals when program overlaps occur to ensure a collaborative and consistent approach exists when conveying information to employees

and their supervisors.

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 REE RA Program Manager revised the Agency's RA Program Policy & Procedures which included a separate chapter to explain the policy and procedures for requesting Personal Assistance Services (PAS). The policy was issued to the REE workforce on January 4, 2018. To date, there have been no requests submitted for PAS, therefore a trend analysis is not relevant at this time. Information about PAS is shared with the workforce during training sessions/webinars that are provided by the REE RA Program Manager.

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   No

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   No

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.

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   No

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   No

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.

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

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

N/A

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

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.