

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 Human Resources Division (HRD) provides high quality, mission-driven, and customer-focused human resources services to support the FPAC mission area. HRD services include: strategic planning, employee relations, policy, recruitment, and employee development. The following branches within the Human Resources Division ensures that we meet and/or exceed the aforementioned goals regarding recruitment, hiring, advancement, and retention of all applicants to include employees with disabilities: • Human Capital Strategic Planning and Initiatives Branch (HCSPiB) o Recruiting, Retention, Internship Programs and Data Analytics • Talent Acquisition Branch (TAB) o Recruiting, Hiring • Leadership and Employee Development Branch (LEDB) o Advancement HCSPiB Response: Human Capital Strategic Planning and Initiatives Branch (HCSPiB) utilizes the Hiring Excellence Milestone and Metrics report (formally known as the Cultural Transformation Initiative and is aligned to the Civilian Labor Force metrics (CLF)) and quarterly workforce profiles as triggers to improve the recruitment and retention of persons with disabilities and persons with targeted disabilities. The established goal aligns with the general population for each assigned basis to include gender, race, and disability. HCSPiB examines the Agency's quarterly activities against the CLF metrics to ensure we meet and/or exceed or course correct to meet the established goal by the fiscal year end. HCSPiB manages the agency's Reasonable Accommodation Program. The core objectives of the program is to minimize the attrition and maximize the retention rate of both persons with disabilities and persons with targeted disabilities within the agency. The Cultural Transformation metrics and the Agency's quarterly workforce profiles did not track persons with disabilities and persons with targeted disabilities by grade but overall percentages of each group during FY17 and previous years. The FY18 report and beyond will establish metrics to capture gender, race and grade levels GS1 - GS 15. The agency does not classify and/or recruit for GS-10 grade levels. The recruitment and retention goals and activities for Senior Executive Service grade levels are executed at the Department level. TAB Response: The staff acquisition system, eRecruit and the SF-256 are the triggers utilized by the Talent Acquisition Branch to improve the recruitment and hiring of persons with disabilities and persons with targeted disabilities. The established goals and the objectives executed to meet those goals are managed by the Human Capital Strategic Planning and Initiatives Branch (HCSPiB). During the new employee orientation, the Talent Acquisition Branch allows each new employee to voluntarily disclose their disability status within the SF-256 form. If the new employee records a targeted disability, the information collected is processed and recorded within the Agency's National Finance Center database The staff acquisition system, eRecruit, allows applicants to provide information related to qualifying conditions. Hiring managers are able to submit requests and to specify within the applicant pool area of consideration the inclusion of eligibility under hiring authorities specific to individuals with disabilities. Hiring managers are regularly advised of the benefits of non-competitive appointment available through these authorities. At the time of initial appointment, employees are provided the opportunity to submit their disability information.

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

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

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

Answer No

b. Cluster GS-11 to SES (PWTD)

Answer No

N/A

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.

Through publication of the MD-715 Report on Agency's website

Section II: Model Disability Program

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

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

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

Answer Yes

EEO Specialists and SEPM Managers review barrier analysis reports and provide quarterly statistics to management on hiring goals and recruitment resources.

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	1	0	0	Marvin Jones RA Manager marvin.jones@usda.gov
Answering questions from the public about hiring authorities that take disability into account	1	0	0	Marvin Jones RA Manager marvin.jones@usda.gov
Processing reasonable accommodation requests from applicants and employees	2	0	0	Marvin Jones RA Manager marvin.jones@usda.gov
Section 508 Compliance	1	0	0	Count Branham Branch Chief Count.Branham@usda.gov
Architectural Barriers Act Compliance	1	0	0	Count Branham Branch Chief Count.Branham@usda.gov

Disability Program Task	# of FTE Staff By Employment Status			Responsible Official (Name, Title, Office Email)
	Full Time	Part Time	Collateral Duty	
Special Emphasis Program for PWD and PWTB	1	0	0	Deborah Allen SEP Manager deborah.allen@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 Yes

The agency has provided the disability program staff with sufficient training to carry out their responsibilities during the reporting period. The following training were provided: • Staffing Training • American Sign Language • Flash Mentoring Monthly activities • Galludet Internship Fair • Personal Assistance Services • Monthly Disability Employment Training Meetings • Active Shooter Preparedness Training (Deaf) • Section 501 Training • 501 Affirmative Action Plans • Disability within the Senior Executive Service • Overcoming the Challenges of Vision Loss

B. PLAN TO ENSURE SUFFICIENT FUNDING FOR THE DISABILITY PROGRAM

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

Answer Yes

Section III: Program Deficiencies In The Disability Program

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.
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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 PWTB

A. PLAN TO IDENTIFY JOB APPLICATIONS WITH DISABILITIES

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

The Talent Acquisition Branch (TAB) in the Human Resources Division is responsible for position classification, merit and delegated examining staffing, pay setting, and other employment services for the Farm Service Agency (FSA). The TAB provides policies, products and services that support business efforts to identify, recruit, hire and advance a workforce with the competencies necessary to achieve current and future organizational performance goals. Technology and re-engineering are leveraged to improve delivery of products and services. The staff acquisition system, eRecruit and the SF-256 are the resources utilized by the Talent Acquisition Branch to identify job applicants with disabilities, including individuals with targeted disabilities. During the new employee orientation, the Talent Acquisition Branch allows each new employee to voluntarily disclose their disability status within the SF-256 form. If the new employee records a targeted disability, the information collected is processed and recorded within the Agency’s National Finance Center database. The staff acquisition system, eRecruit, allows applicants to provide information related to qualifying conditions. Hiring managers are able to submit requests and to specify within the applicant pool area of consideration

the inclusion of eligibility under hiring authorities specific to individuals with disabilities. Hiring managers are regularly advised of the benefits of non-competitive appointment available through these authorities. At the time of initial appointment, employees are provided the opportunity to submit their disability information. FSA vacancies are distributed to over 600 potential applicants every two weeks. Recipients are given instructions on how to apply, tips to navigate USAJobs and encouraged to contact us with any additional questions.

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

Hiring managers are able to submit requests and to specify within the applicant pool area of consideration the inclusion of eligibility under hiring authorities specific to individuals with disabilities. Hiring managers are regularly advised of the benefits of non-competitive appointment available through these authorities. At the time of initial appointment, employees are provided the opportunity to submit their disability information. As part of the workforce planning process conversations with program managers in reference to current and upcoming recruitment needs is also conducted. In context to those consultations we assist program managers in the identification of positions and skills that can be used to strategize the timing and use of appointment authorities specific to PWD and PWTD. As an integral part of the succession planning process and consultations, program officials are given as table of available appointment authorities and hold discussions in reference to the utilization of alternative appointment authorities that are available for their use in finding PWD and PWTD applicants who have the commensurate mission critical skills necessary to successfully accomplish program priority workload. These discussions the appointment authorities associated with PWD and PWTD and includes the authority, purpose, type of appointment, eligible candidates, and the processes for use in finding qualified applicants FSA executes aspects of its recruitment strategy which includes providing a network of professional support, providing appropriate agency contact information to disabled veterans, amending marketing materials which describes important aspects of the disability and veteran programs, and used local and nationwide hiring events to reach a wide range of potential candidates. These efforts helped ensure that the veteran community and individuals with disabilities receive equal treatment in all aspects of employment and career opportunities. Through strategies listed below, FSA is able to recruit and retain a well-qualified and diverse workforce fully committed to improving the lives of disabled applicants. • Promote veteran third party programs (Operation Warfighter, Non-Paid Work Experience Program, Department of Army Intern Program) — FSA and RMA utilizes three third-party programs to help Veterans acclimate into civilian careers. • Created veteran specific brochures — the brochures provide information on 5 hiring authorities specifically for disabled veterans and information on the FSA and RMA Veteran Employment Program via links within the document • Provide FSA vacancy announcements to veteran transition coordinators and veteran employment coordinators • Provide guidance, webinars, Aglearn trainings, literature to hiring managers and executive leadership regarding veteran and schedule A hiring authorities.

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.

Vacancy announcements open to applicants eligible under non-competitive hiring authorities include “how to apply” and “required documentation” language, consistent with department-wide policy. Candidates who meet hiring authority eligibility and minimum qualifications requirements are referred non-competitively to the hiring manager for consideration. Hiring managers also have the option to request referral lists for eligible candidates directly from agency program managers. When recruiting outside of the agency (Government Wide), the announcements contains language targeting persons with disabilities. The Staffing Specialist rates and ranks (qualification analysis) those persons eligible within the non-competitive certs and forwards the non-competitive certs to the Hiring Managers for review. The staff acquisition system, eRecruit, allows applicants to provide information related to qualifying conditions. Hiring managers are able to submit requests and to specify within the applicant pool area of consideration the inclusion of eligibility under hiring authorities specific to individuals with disabilities. Hiring managers are regularly advised of the benefits of non-competitive appointment available through these authorities. At the time of initial appointment, employees are provided the opportunity to submit their disability information.

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

The Hiring Managers were provided a two-day training regarding the overall recruitment process from initiating the recruitment request, the advantages of the available hiring authorities to include persons with disabilities and targeted disabilities, and how each candidate is processed within our EMPOWHR system. This training is also provided within the agency’s Aglearn system and mandated for all new supervisors. FSA Managers and Supervisors completed the following training during this reporting period: A Roadmap to Success: Hiring, Retaining and including people with disabilities, Avoiding Discrimination and Bias: Training and Tips for Managers, Reasonable Accommodation for the Federal Workplace, Civil Rights Accommodation Training and Reasonable Accommodation.

B. PLAN TO ESTABLISH CONTACTS WITH DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT ORGANIZATIONS

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

The Disability Employment Program within the Farm Service Agency has developed an action plan with quarterly outreach activities to establish and maintain contacts with organizations that assist PWD, including PWTD, in securing and maintaining employment. The Disability Employment Program has established partnerships with both the DC Disability Office and the Maryland Veterans Disability Employment Center to maximize our quarterly recruiting efforts as well as ensure that the Farm Service Agency is the agency of choice for the prescribed targeted group. The following are a listing of scheduled partnerships and career activities to ensure we meet and/or exceed our FY18 recruiting goals. • Harry Brooks (Cordia Arthur) Prince George’s County o 1801 McCormick Drive, Suite 120, Largo, MD 20774 o Outreach event: March, May, July • All Faith Consortium, National Headquarters o 2000 14th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009 o Outreach event: May, July • DC Office of Disability Rights o 441 4th Street, NW, Suite 729 North o Outreach event: February, March, May

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 No
- b. New Hires for Permanent Workforce (PWTD) Answer No

The Human Resources Division (HRD) provides high quality, mission-driven, and customer-focused human resources services to support the FPAC mission area. HRD services include: strategic planning, employee relations, policy, recruitment, and employee development. The following branches within the Human Resources Division ensures that we meet and/or exceed the aforementioned goals regarding recruitment and hiring of all applicants to include employees with disabilities: • Human Capital Strategic Planning and Initiatives Branch (HCSPIB) o Recruiting, Internship Programs and Data Analytics Human Capital Strategic Planning and Initiatives Branch (HCSPIB) utilizes the Hiring Excellence Milestone and Metrics report (formally known as the Cultural Transformation Initiative and is aligned to the Civilian Labor Force metrics (CLF)) and quarterly workforce profiles as triggers to improve the recruitment and retention of persons with disabilities and persons with targeted disabilities. The established goal aligns with the general population for each assigned basis to include gender, race, and disability. HCSPIB examines the Agency’s quarterly activities against the CLF metrics to ensure we meet and/or exceed or course correct to meet the established goal by the fiscal year end.

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

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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

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previous years. The FY18 report and beyond will establish metrics to capture gender, race and grade levels GS1 – GS-15. The agency does not classify and/or recruit for GS-10 grade levels. The recruitment and retention goals and activities for Senior Executive Service grade levels are executed at the Department level.

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 No
- b. Promotions for MCO (PWTD) Answer No

FSA does not have reporting tools in place to review internal applicants for MCO positions separate from new hires.

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.

No triggers currently exist.

B. CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITES

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

Triggers do not exist for career development programs. All FSA employees are encouraged to participate in every opportunity and there are no disability selection criteria associated with our programs.

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	666	46	0	0	0	0
Fellowship Programs	28	15	0	0	0	0
Mentoring Programs	0	0	0	0	0	0
Coaching Programs	0	0	0	0	0	0
Training Programs	0	0	0	0	0	0
Detail Programs	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Career Development 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 No
- b. Selections (PWD) Answer No

Triggers do not exist for career development programs. All FSA employees are encouraged to participate in every opportunity and there are no disability selection criteria associated with our programs.

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 No
- b. Selections (PWTD) Answer No

Triggers do not exist for career development programs. All FSA employees are encouraged to participate in every opportunity and there are no disability selection criteria associated with our programs.

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 Yes

Based on Table B13, FSA federal were below the inclusion rate for both PWD and PWTD.

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 Yes
- b. Pay Increases (PWTD) Answer Yes

Based on Table B13, FSA federal were below the inclusion rate for both PWD and PWTD.

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 No
- b. Other Types of Recognition (PWTD) Answer No

The Agency does not track this data for other employee recognition programs.

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 No
 - ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Answer Yes

As related to FSA Federal - the rate of qualified applicants was above the applicant rate for each grade level. However, no internal selections of PWD employees were made for promotion to grades 13, 14 or 15. For SES positions, FSA does not handle the hiring of SES positions. This would be accomplished at the departmental level.

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 Yes

As related to FSA Federal - the rate of qualified applicants was above the applicant rate for each grade level. However, no internal selections of PWD employees were made for promotion to grades 13, 14 or 15. For SES positions, FSA does not handle the hiring of SES positions. This would be accomplished at the departmental level.

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 Yes
 - b. New Hires to GS-15 (PWD) Answer Yes
 - c. New Hires to GS-14 (PWD) Answer Yes
 - d. New Hires to GS-13 (PWD) Answer Yes

FSA does not have the reporting infrastructure to track applicants for new hires to senior level positions.

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 Yes
 - b. New Hires to GS-15 (PWTD) Answer Yes
 - c. New Hires to GS-14 (PWTD) Answer Yes
 - d. New Hires to GS-13 (PWTD) Answer Yes

FSA does not have the reporting infrastructure to track applicants for new hires to senior level positions.

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

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

FSA does not have the reporting infrastructure to track applicants for supervisory positions separate from our tracking for all positions.

6. Does your agency have a trigger involving PWTB 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 (PWTB) Answer Yes
 - ii. Internal Selections (PWTB) Answer Yes
- b. Managers
 - i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTB) Answer Yes
 - ii. Internal Selections (PWTB) Answer Yes
- c. Supervisors
 - i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTB) Answer Yes
 - ii. Internal Selections (PWTB) Answer Yes

FSA does not have the reporting infrastructure to track applicants for supervisory positions separate from our tracking for all positions.

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

- a. New Hires for Executives (PWD) Answer Yes
- b. New Hires for Managers (PWD) Answer Yes
- c. New Hires for Supervisors (PWD) Answer Yes

FSA does not have the reporting infrastructure to track applicants for supervisory positions separate from our tracking for all positions.

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 Yes
- b. New Hires for Managers (PWTD) Answer Yes
- c. New Hires for Supervisors (PWTD) Answer Yes

FSA does not have the reporting infrastructure to track applicants for supervisory positions separate from our tracking for all positions.

Section VI: Plan to Improve Retention of Persons with Disabilities

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

A. VOLUNTARY AND INVOLUNTARY SEPARATIONS

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

Answer Yes

HCSPIB manages the agency’s Schedule A Program. The core objectives of the program is to advise managers and increase hiring and retention of employees with disabilities. The Schedule A Program utilizes this special authority (Schedule A) to hire persons with disabilities without requiring them to compete for the job. The impacted (two year time frame) period for expected conversions within FY18 are October 1, 2016 - September 30, 2018. There were three Schedule A Hires within that time frame, and the results were as follows: HCSPIB Response: HCSPIB manages the agency’s Schedule A Program. The core objectives of the program is to advise managers and increase hiring and retention of employees with disabilities. The Schedule A Program utilizes this special authority (Schedule A) to hire persons with disabilities without requiring them to compete for the job. The impacted (two year time frame) period for expected conversions within FY18 are October 1, 2016 - September 30, 2018. There were three Schedule A Hires within that time frame, and the results were as follows: DATE APPOINTED NATURE OF ACTION CODE DATE CONVERTED NATURE OF ACTION CODE COMMENTS 11/1/2015 570 8/23/2017 501 N/A 1/24/2016 170 SEE COMMENTS 352 The employee was selected for another appointment with another Federal Agency on 11/4/2016, approximately a year prior to the two year eligibility for conversion. 11/15/2015 170 SEE COMMENTS 317 The employee resigned on 9/30/2017, two months prior to the two year eligibility.

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

N/A

Separations	Total #	Reportable Disabilities %	Without Reportable Disabilities %
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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

N/A

Seperations	Total #	Targeted Disabilities %	Without Targeted Disabilities %
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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.

FSA does not track exit interview results by disability status nor does FSA have any mechanism to tracking this type of data.

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.fsa.usda.gov/> <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/help/accessibility-statement> <http://www.section508.gov> askfsa@usda.gov How to file a complaint askfsa@usda.gov http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html

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.

<http://www.ocio.usda.gov/policy-directives-records-forms/section-508/processing-complaints>)

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.

The FSA Section 508 Program was officially chartered by the CIO and HCAD in March 2014. The program is intended to create a diverse environment where individuals of all abilities can work, interact, and develop into leaders; fully integrate accessibility considerations into the processed used in developing, procuring, maintaining, and using EIT; and to build workforce skills that support an environment where Section 508 accessibility requirements are understood, communicated, implemented, and enforced. The FSA has also issued multiple standards, mandates, and directives regrading accessibility and compliance with Section 508: IRM 324, the FSA SDLC, the FSA Style Guide, and a continuously updated online internal website that facilitates distribution and communication. The agency actively tests software deliverables as they are being developed and as part of user acceptance testing, and a remediation process for any issues that cannot be remediated before delivery; and all FSA workstations have software on them to facilitate producing accessible documents, with training that began in 2018. The FSA also implements the USDA AAR process, which documents the agency’s efforts to ensure the compliance of acquisitions that are subject to Section 508. The FSA Section 508 Program Team guides the agency in incorporating all relevant standards,, researches and utilizes industry practices when they are helpful, and partners with other agencies to assist in meeting Section 508 goals and objectives. They also research and provide tools to support staff in executing these processes.

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.)

The average time frame for processing initial requests for reasonable accommodations is approximately six weeks. The customer is allowed three weeks to obtain the sufficient medical documentation to support their claim, and an additional two weeks regarding the interactive process with both the Requestor and the Decision Makers to draft and finalize an Accommodation Plan.

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 effectiveness of the policies and procedures of the existing reasonable accommodation program are evident regarding the timeliness in processing and the percentage of approvals FY18: 158 accommodation requests received, at an average timeline of six weeks per request, with an 81% approval rate.

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.

For many individuals with disabilities, personal assistance services (PAS) help ease employment. Some people use PAS to carry out activities of daily living. Depending on the individual, such activities might include getting up and ready for work, bathing, dressing, cooking, cleaning, or running errands. FSA offers PAS in the workplace. Examples of workplace PAS vary but may involve activities such as retrieving materials out of reach or providing travel assistance for an employee with a mobility impairment; helping an employee with a cognitive disability in decision-making; reading printed materials to an employee who is visually impaired; or ensuring a sign language interpreter is present during meetings for an employee who is deaf. Whether at home or work, PAS can be essential to employment success. In light of this, FSA works to expand and raise awareness of employment-related PAS options. Meeting the needs of people on and off the job raises important policy issues for Federal and state governments, service providers, and employers, as well as people with disabilities themselves. FSA recognizes PAS is a critical issue — not only for those seeking employment, but also for those already employed. Improving PAS access and options helps not only reduce economic barriers for people with disabilities, but also increase awareness of the importance of direct care workers. FSA has implemented training for managers to ensure total awareness coupled with timely processing/providing approved services.

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.

N/A

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 N/A

- 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).

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