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

> The percentage of PWD in the GS-1 to GS-10 cluster was 4.12% in FY 2023, which falls below the goal of 12%. The percentage of PWD in the GS-11 to SES cluster was 5.4 % in FY 2023, which falls below the goal of 12%.

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

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

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

    b. Cluster GS-11 to SES (PWTD)   Answer   Yes

> The percentage of PWTD in the GS-1 to GS-10 cluster was 1.13% in FY 2022, which falls below the goal of 2%. The percentage of PWTD in the GS-11 to SES cluster was 1.28% in FY 2023, which falls below the goal of 2%.

Grade Level Cluster(GS or Alternate Pay Planb)	Total	Reportable Disability		Targeted Disability	
	#	#	%	#	%
Numarical Goal	--	12%		2%	
Grades GS-11 to SES	97	12	12.37	1	1.03
Grades GS-1 to GS-10	6	3	50.00	0	0.00

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

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

Section II: Model Disability Program

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

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

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   No

OASCR designated key Special Emphasis Program Manager (SEPM) positions in FY 2023. In addition, SEPMS served on a collateral duty in FY 2023. OHRM hired a full-time Disability Employment Program Manager; onboarding will occur in Q1 of FY 2024.

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	

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

Answer   No

OHRM hired an additional GS-13 RAC to assist the Reasonable Accommodation (RA) Designee. Additionally, funds were allocated for a contractor to assist RA Designee and collateral duties have been assigned to OASCR for DEPM. OHRM hired a full-time Disability Employment Program Manager; onboarding will occur in Q1 of FY2024.

B. PLAN TO ENSURE SUFFICIENT FUNDING FOR THE DISABILITY PROGRAM

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

Answer   No

Headquarters is reviewing its resources to fully implement the Program and develop a plan of action. SEPM served on a collateral duty in FY 2023. OHRM hired a full-time Disability Employment Program Manager onboarding will occur in Q1 of FY 2024.

Section III: Program Deficiencies In The Disability Program

Brief Description of Program Deficiency	C.2.a.6. Do the agency's training materials on its anti-harassment policy include examples of disability-based harassment? [see 29 CFR §1614.203(d)(2)]
Objective	Revise the training material to ensure it's compliant with EEOC regulations and guidance.
Target Date	Sep 30, 2020
Completion Date	Jan 31, 2024
Planned Activities	*Target Date* *Completion Date* *Planned Activity*
Accomplishments	*Fiscal Year* *Accomplishment* 2021 AH Program Work Group Project Lead met with EEOC 1/21/2021 to discuss the draft AH Policy Statement and the AH Program DR to ensure they meet EEOC's guidance. Both documents were updated as discussed. Once the DR is approved, the AH Program will be implemented. Training is pending approval of the AH Policy and AH Program DR. (previous) AgLearn AH Policy training will be modified to include examples of disability-based harassment. In addition, Agency training materials on its anti-harassment policy and procedures will contain examples of disability-based harassment upon approval of the Departmental Regulation on the AH Program. 2022 Prepared a Departmental Regulation on AHP which contains examples of disability-based harassment. 2023 Departmental Regulation 4200-003 Anti-Harassment Program was issued on April 18, 2023. Departmental Manual 4200-003 Anti-Harassment Procedure Manual dated November 6, 2023. Advertised Anti-Harassment Coordinator Position November 2, 2023.

Brief Description of Program Deficiency	C.2.b.5. Does the agency process all initial accommodation requests, excluding ongoing interpretative services, within the time frame set forth in its reasonable accommodation procedures? [see MD-715, II(C)] If "no", please provide the percentage of timely-processed requests, excluding ongoing interpretative services, in the comments column.
Objective	Process accommodation requests within the timeframe set forth in RA procedures.
Target Date	Sep 30, 2023
Completion Date	
Planned Activities	*Target Date* *Completion Date* *Planned Activity*

	Fiscal Year	*Accomplishment*
Accomplishments	2021	OHRM processed 85% of RA requests timely, an increase from 72% in FY 2020. This increase was achieved despite staffing shortages in the reasonable accommodations section and the significant increase in COVID-19 related accommodation requests. OHRM anticipates continuing to increase the timely processing percentage of RA requests each year, provided it is able to maintain at least three Reasonable Accommodation Specialists on staff.
	2020	OHRM processed 72% of RA requests timely, an increase from 25% in FY 2019. OHRM advertised for an additional GS-13 RA Coordinator to assist the RA Designee. OHRM anticipates filling the position in the 2nd quarter of FY 2021. Additionally, funds were allocated for a contractor to assist the RA Designee and they anticipate the contractor to start in the 2nd quarter of FY 2021.
	2022	OHRM timely processed 90% non-Covid related and 60% Covid related RA requests. The agency was under extenuation circumstances because of the volume and complexity of requests. As such, delays in processing occurred despite best efforts to promptly process these requests.

Objective	Increase the percentage of RA requests that are processed timely.
Target Date	Sep 30, 2019
Completion Date	Sep 30, 2021
Planned Activities	*Target Date* *Completion Date* *Planned Activity*

	Fiscal Year	*Accomplishment*
Accomplishments	2019	The draft DR on RAP and PAS was vetted through OHRM and the CRDs and submitted into USDA's clearance in the 4th quarter of FY 2019.

Objective	Ensure enough RA Designee staff members to address the volume of RA requests.		
Target Date	Sep 30, 2019		
Completion Date			
Planned Activities	*Target Date*	*Completion Date*	*Planned Activity*
Accomplishments	*Fiscal Year*	*Accomplishment*	
	2020	OHRM processed 72% of RA requests timely, an increase from 25% in FY 2019. OHRM advertised for an additional GS-13 RA Coordinator to assist the RA Designee. OHRM anticipates filling the position in the 2nd quarter of FY 2021. Additionally, funds were allocated for a contractor to assist the RA Designee and they anticipate the contractor to start in the 2nd quarter of FY 2021.	
	2021	OHRM processed 85% of RA requests timely, an increase from 72% in FY 2020. This increase was achieved despite staffing shortages in the reasonable accommodations section and the significant increase in COVID-19 related accommodation requests. OHRM anticipates continuing to increase the timely processing percentage of RA requests each year, provided it is able to maintain at least three Reasonable Accommodation Specialists on staff.	
	2022	OHRM timely processed 90% non-Covid related and 60% Covid related RA requests. The agency was under extenuation circumstances because of the volume and complexity of requests. As such, delays in processing occurred despite best efforts to promptly process these requests.	
	2023	OHRM processed over 90% of RA requests in a timely manner. Of the few that went beyond the prescribed timeframe, they were either a day or two past the timeframe or involved matters beyond the control of the RAC, e.g., extended time required to search for positions as a reassignment of last resort, and extended leave at the end of the year.	

Brief Description of Program Deficiency	D.1.c. Does the agency conduct exit interviews or surveys that include questions on how the agency could improve the recruitment, hiring, inclusion, retention and advancement of individuals with disabilities? [see 29 CFR §1614.203(d)(1)(iii)(C)]		
Objective	Develop standardized exit surveys.		
Target Date	Sep 30, 2020		
Completion Date			
Planned Activities	*Target Date*	*Completion Date*	*Planned Activity*
	Sep 30, 2020		OASCR will partner with OHRM, the Office Customer Experience and the OCIO and dialogue on leveraging technology to conduct standardized exit surveys for the Department.
	Sep 30, 2021		OASCR will partner with OHRM, the Office of Customer Experience and the OCIO and dialogue on leveraging technology to conduct standardized exit surveys for the Department.
Accomplishments	*Fiscal Year*	*Accomplishment*	
	2020	OHRM conducted several exploratory sessions with Gartner to learn about exit survey best practices, request usable research, draft possible questions, and evaluate Gartner's own exit survey platform. This work was suspended due to other priorities.	
	2022	OASCR has initiated working with OCIO-DAITO to build and implement technology to support its MD-715 data collection.	
	2023	OHRM established an interagency working group to design and launch a USDA-wide exit survey and dashboard to collect candid feedback from departing employees and get more insight into their experiences while at USDA. The survey includes questions on how the agency could improve the recruitment, hiring, inclusion, retention, and advancement of individuals with disabilities. This exit survey is expected to launch in the first quarter of FY 2024.	

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.

HQ continued working with Operation War Fighter to identify and recruit qualified PWD and PWTD. In addition, the Workforce Recruiter Program (WRP) and Job Accommodation Network (JAN) are available resources for assistance.

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

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

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

HR specialists (1) review applications and supporting documentation to determine eligibility, and (2) prepare and issue a certificate of qualified applicants eligible for a Schedule A appointment and forwards the certificate to the hiring official for review and possible selection.

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

Answer   No

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

B. PLAN TO ESTABLISH CONTACTS WITH DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT ORGANIZATIONS

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

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

C. PROGRESSION TOWARDS GOALS (RECRUITMENT AND HIRING)

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

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

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

New Hires for Permanent Workforce PWD is 9.92% which falls below the benchmark.

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

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

      a. New Hires for MCO (PWD)   Answer   N/A

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

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

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

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

      a. Qualified Applicants for MCO (PWD)   Answer   N/A

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

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

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

      a. Promotions for MCO (PWD)   Answer   N/A

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

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

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

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

A. ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM PLAN

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

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

B. CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITES

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

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

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

Career Development Opportunities	Total Participants		PWD		PWTD	
	Applicants (#)	Selectees (#)	Applicants (%)	Selectees (%)	Applicants (%)	Selectees (%)
Internship Programs						
Detail Programs						
Fellowship Programs						
Mentoring Programs						
Coaching Programs						
Other Career Development Programs	24	24	8	8	4	4
Training Programs						

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

      a. Applicants (PWD)   Answer   N/A

      b. Selections (PWD)   Answer   N/A

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

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

      a. Applicants (PWTD)   Answer   N/A

b. Selections (PWTD)   Answer   N/A

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

C. AWARDS

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

The following triggers were identified for awards received: - Time-Off Awards 1 – 10 Hours: The Inclusion Rate for PWTD was 7.26%. The trigger for PWTD was 2.55%, which results in 4.71 percentage points lower than the benchmark inclusion rate. There is a trigger in this category. - Time-Off Awards 11 – 20 Hours: The IR for PWTD was 3.29%. The trigger for PWTD was 2.45%, which is 0.84 percentage points lower than the benchmark inclusion rate. There is a trigger. - Cash Awards $500 and under: the IR for PWTD was 22.35%. The trigger is 2.80% which is 19.55 percentage points lower than the benchmark inclusion rate. There is a trigger. - Cash Awards $501-$999: the inclusion rate for PWD is 21.75%. The trigger for PWD is 10.58%, which is 11.17 percentage points lower than the benchmark; therefore, there is a trigger. The IR for PWTD was 21.64%. The trigger for PWTD was 2.58%, which is 19.06 percentage points lower than the benchmark; therefore, there is a trigger. - Cash Awards $1000-$1999: the IR for PWD was 33.54%. The trigger for PWD was 10.40%, which is 23.14 percentage points lower than the benchmark; therefore, there is a trigger. The IR for PWTD was 32.97%. The trigger for PWTD was 2.50%, which is 30.47 percentage points lower than the benchmark; therefore, there is a trigger. - Cash Awards - $2000-$2999: The IR for PWTD was 7.80%. The trigger for PWTD was 2.19%, which is 5.61 percentage points lower than the benchmark; therefore, there is a trigger.

Time-Off Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 hours: Awards Given	5	0.00	6.49	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 Hours: Total Hours	64	0.00	83.12	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 Hours: Average Hours	12	0.00	15.58	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 hours: Awards Given	1	0.00	1.30	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 Hours: Total Hours	20	0.00	25.97	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 Hours: Average Hours	20	0.00	25.97	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 hours: Awards Given	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 Hours: Total Hours	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 Hours: Average Hours	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 hours: Awards Given	1	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 Hours: Total Hours	32	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 Hours: Average Hours	32	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 41 or more Hours: Awards Given	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 41 or more Hours: Total Hours	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Time-Off Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Time-Off Awards 41 or more Hours: Average Hours	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Cash Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Cash Awards: $501 - $999: Awards Given	4	0.00	2.60	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: $501 - $999: Total Amount	3000	0.00	1948.05	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: $501 - $999: Average Amount	750	0.00	974.03	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: $1000 - $1999: Awards Given	14	26.67	11.69	0.00	28.57
Cash Awards: $1000 - $1999: Total Amount	18650	34333.33	15584.42	0.00	36785.71
Cash Awards: $1000 - $1999: Average Amount	1332	8580.00	1731.17	0.00	9192.86
Cash Awards: $2000 - $2999: Awards Given	22	13.33	22.08	0.00	14.29
Cash Awards: $2000 - $2999: Total Amount	48700	30000.00	49350.65	0.00	32142.86
Cash Awards: $2000 - $2999: Average Amount	2213	15000.00	2902.60	0.00	16071.43
Cash Awards: $3000 - $3999: Awards Given	9	0.00	11.69	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: $3000 - $3999: Total Amount	27000	0.00	35064.94	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: $3000 - $3999: Average Amount	3000	0.00	3896.10	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: $4000 - $4999: Awards Given	15	6.67	18.18	0.00	7.14
Cash Awards: $4000 - $4999: Total Amount	60300	26666.67	73116.88	0.00	28571.43
Cash Awards: $4000 - $4999: Average Amount	4020	26666.67	5222.08	0.00	28571.43
Cash Awards: $5000 or more: Awards Given	14	0.00	16.88	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: $5000 or more: Total Amount	142928	0.00	164457.14	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: $5000 or more: Average Amount	10209	0.00	12649.35	0.00	0.00

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

       a. Pay Increases (PWD)   Answer   No

       b. Pay Increases (PWTD)   Answer   No

Other Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %

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

N/A

D. PROMOTIONS

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

    a. SES

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

    b. Grade GS-15

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

    c. Grade GS-14

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

    d. Grade GS-13

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

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

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

    a. SES

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

    b. Grade GS-15

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

    c. Grade GS-14

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

        ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)   Answer   N/A

    d. Grade GS-13

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

        ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)   Answer   N/A

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

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

    a. New Hires to SES (PWD)   Answer   N/A

    b. New Hires to GS-15 (PWD)   Answer   N/A

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

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

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

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

    a. New Hires to SES (PWTD)   Answer   N/A

    b. New Hires to GS-15 (PWTD)   Answer   N/A

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

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

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

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

    a. Executives

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

        ii. Internal Selections (PWD)   Answer   N/A

    b. Managers

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

       ii. Internal Selections (PWD)   Answer   N/A

    c. Supervisors

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

       ii. Internal Selections (PWD)   Answer   N/A

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

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

    a. Executives

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

       ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)   Answer   N/A

    b. Managers

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

       ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)   Answer   N/A

    c. Supervisors

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

       ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)   Answer   N/A

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

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

      a. New Hires for Executives (PWD)   Answer   N/A

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

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

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

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

      a. New Hires for Executives (PWTD)   Answer   N/A

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

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

Section VI: Plan to Improve Retention of Persons with Disabilities

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

A. VOLUNTARY AND INVOLUNTARY SEPARATIONS

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

   Answer   No

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

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

   a. Voluntary Separations (PWD)   Answer   No

   b. Involuntary Separations (PWD)   Answer   No

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

Seperations	Total #	Reportable Disabilities %	Without Reportable Disabilities %
Permanent Workforce: Reduction in Force	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Removal	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Resignation	4	4.00	2.24
Permanent Workforce: Retirement	1	0.00	0.75
Permanent Workforce: Other Separations	8	12.00	3.73
Permanent Workforce: Total Separations	13	16.00	6.72

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

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

Seperations	Total #	Targeted Disabilities %	Without Targeted Disabilities %
Permanent Workforce: Reduction in Force	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Removal	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Resignation	4	0.00	2.55
Permanent Workforce: Retirement	1	0.00	0.64
Permanent Workforce: Other Separations	8	0.00	5.10
Permanent Workforce: Total Separations	13	0.00	8.28

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.

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

B. ACCESSIBILITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND FACILITIES

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

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

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

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

OASCR can work with your website designer to add to the footer the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) link. The link takes the user to the ABA site for federal buildings access. The site explains how to file a complaint under ABA. Below is the url: Accessible facility design | GSA

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.

OASCR designated the required SEPMs in FY 2022. OHRM hired full time DEPM and is onboarding will occur in Q1 of FY2024.

C. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION PROGRAM

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

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.)

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

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.

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

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

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

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

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

Section VII: EEO Complaint and Findings Data

A. EEO COMPLAINT DATA INVOLVING HARASSMENT

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

                                                  Answer   Yes

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

                                                  Answer   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.

There were no findings of discrimination alleging harassment based on disability in FY 2023.

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.

There were no findings of discrimination involving failure to provide a reasonable accommodation during in FY 2023.

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

Source of the Trigger:	Workforce Data (if so identify the table)
Specific Workforce Data Table:	Workforce Data Table - B1
STATEMENT OF CONDITION THAT WAS A TRIGGER FOR A POTENTIAL BARRIER: Provide a brief narrative describing the condition at issue. How was the condition recognized as a potential barrier?	USDA HQ does not meet the 12% goal for PWD in the permanent workforce for the GS-1 to GS-10 grade cluster; and does not meet the 2% goal for PWTD in the GS-1 to GS-10 grade cluster.
STATEMENT OF BARRIER GROUPS:	*Barrier Group*
Barrier Analysis Process Completed?:	N
Barrier(s) Identified?:	N

STATEMENT OF IDENTIFIED BARRIER: Provide a succinct statement of the agency policy, procedure or practice that has been determined to be the barrier of the undesired condition.	**Barrier Name**	**Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice**

Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan

Date Initiated	Target Date	Sufficient Funding / Staffing?	Date Modified	Date Completed	Objective Description

Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Standards Address The Plan?
Director, OHRM	Anita R. Adkins	No
Acting ASCR	Penny Brown Reynolds, Ph.D., J.D.,	No

Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective

Target Date	Planned Activities	Sufficient Staffing & Funding?	Modified Date	Completion Date
09/30/2019	Establish a committee with the goal of implementing a OneUSDA approach to managing Special Emphasis Programs.	Yes	09/30/2021	09/30/2021
12/16/2019	Forward the revised Reasonable Accommodation Procedures to EEOC.	Yes	12/26/2021	09/30/2021
09/30/2020	Designate a DEPM within OASCR.	No	09/30/2022	09/30/2021
09/30/2020	Provide Reasonable Accommodation training to managers.	No	09/30/2022	09/30/2021

Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective				
Target Date	**Planned Activities**	**Sufficient Staffing & Funding?**	**Modified Date**	**Completion Date**
09/30/2020	Provide training on the special hiring authorities to managers.	No	09/30/2024	
06/30/2020	Once approved, disseminate the new Reasonable Accommodation Policy.	Yes	06/30/2022	09/30/2021
Report of Accomplishments				
Fiscal Year	**Accomplishment**			
2022	OHRM timely processed 90% non-Covid related and 60% Covid related RA requests. This increase was achieved despite staffing shortages in the reasonable accommodations section and the significant increase in COVID-19 related accommodation requests. OHRM anticipates continuing to increase the timely processing percentage of RA requests each year, provided it is able to maintain at least three Reasonable Accommodation Specialists on staff.			
2021	OHRM processed 85% of RA requests timely, an increase from 72% in FY 2020. This increase was achieved despite staffing shortages in the reasonable accommodations section and the significant increase in COVID-19 related accommodation requests. OHRM anticipates continuing to increase the timely processing percentage of RA requests each year, provided it is able to maintain at least three Reasonable Accommodation Specialists on staff.			
2020	Reasonable accommodation timeliness increased from 25 percent in FY 2019 to 72 percent in FY 2020. OHRM advertised for an additional GS-13 RAC to assist the RA Designee. OHRM anticipates filling the position in the second quarter of FY 2021. Additionally, funds were allocated for a contractor to assist the RA Designee and OHRM anticipates onboarding the contractor in the second quarter of FY 2021.			
2023	OHRM processed over 90% of RA requests in a timely manner. Of the few that went beyond the prescribed timeframe, they were either a day or two past the timeframe or involved matters beyond the control of the RAC, e.g., extended time required to search for positions as a reassignment of last resort, and extended leave at the end of the year.			

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

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

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

N/A

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

N/A