

## 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 grade level cluster for GS-01 to GS-10 is at 7.65% which is below the benchmark. The grade level cluster for GS-11 to SES is at 7.15% which is below the benchmark.

\*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 |

Grade Level Cluster(GS or Alternate Pay Planb)	Total		Reportable Disability		Targeted Disability	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Numerical 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.

The numerical goals are displayed on the Workforce Management Dashboards and the Cultural Transformation Accountability Report and discussed during the Workforce Planning Sessions on the USDA Cultural Transformation Metrics.

### 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

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	132	0	0	Erica Nieto Assistant Director erica.nieto@usda.gov
Answering questions from the public about hiring authorities that take disability into account	132	0	0	Erica Nieto Assistant Director erica.nieto@usda.gov
Processing reasonable accommodation requests from applicants and employees	6	0	0	Sherry L. Neal Branch Chief, Reasonable Accommodations Sherry.Neal@usda.gov
Section 508 Compliance	1	0	0	stacey.a.martinez@usda.gov
Architectural Barriers Act Compliance	1	0	0	Matthew Arn Chief Landscape Architect matthew.arnn@usda.gov
Special Emphasis Program for PWD and PWTD	1	6	0	jerry.mcgaughran@usda.gov

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 Yes

The national Disability Employment Program Manager and collateral duty SEPMs participate in quarterly meetings and training sponsored by the USDA OASCR. Personnel also participate in the Federal Exchange and Disability (FEED) meetings where participants learn about policies/guidelines, standard operating procedures, tools and partnerships. Some of the activities included with the FEED meetings can suffice as in-service training for practitioners.

**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

<b>Brief Description of Program Deficiency</b>	A.2.b.3. Reasonable accommodation procedures? [see 29 CFR § 1614.203(d)(3)(i)] If so, please provide the internet address in the comments column.
--	---

<b>Objective</b>	Ensure written materials featuring the variety of EEO programs and administrative and judicial remedial procedures are “prominently posted” in all personnel and EEO offices throughout the workplace to inform employees and applicants.		
<b>Target Date</b>	Oct 31, 2019		
<b>Completion Date</b>			
<b>Planned Activities</b>	<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>	<u>Planned Activity</u>
	Feb 15, 2019		Provide a response to the US EEOC June 27 2018 Technical Assistance Letter, regarding corrective actions.
	Mar 30, 2019		Create and post on FS WWW Reasonable Accommodation Procedures: approved by the EEOC
	Mar 30, 2019		Insure approved RA Procedures contain a subsection featuring information to attain Personal Assistance Services (PAS).
	May 30, 2019		Establish numerical goals for PWD adopting the 12% goal for grade ranges GS-1 to GS-10 and GS-11 to SES.
	Sep 30, 2019		Submit compliant RA Procedures to EEOC for review prior to posts on Agency public website.
	Sep 30, 2019		Submit compliant PAS procedures to EEOC for review and approval.
<b>Accomplishments</b>			

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Accomplishment</i>
2019	<p>The FS adopted the PWD 12% numerical goal. Compliant RA procedures were submitted to EEOC for approval. Forest Service RA procedures were posted on the Agency public website which will change once the USDA finalized their policy and the FS adopts it. • USDA FS RA procedures were posted on the Agency public website which will change once the USDA finalized their policy and the USDA FS adopts it. Reasonable Accommodation Procedures Link: • Designated an Acting Branch Chief for RA. Reasonable Accommodation Specialists were previously supervised by Service Center CR Directors in separate field units. • Procedures that are being taken to address both internal and external website are being addressed to have the most up-to-date information regarding the RA Process, forms, RA Specialist contact information. Both websites will also address PAS, to include definitions, how to request PAS, request forms, processing timelines, and frequently asked questions. The recently drafted revised policy and procedures for RA will have a section that will address procedures for providing PAS for PWTD. • NESC: Provides to all three units serviced written information on EEO programs, and administrative and judicial remedial procedures. This information is made available on at least an annual basis and readily provides information upon request. Additionally, whenever training is conducted such as our EEO Complaints Process (May 15) for Managers and EEO Complaints Process for Employees (June 5), written materials are made available to employees. • ISC: During the 4th quarter, we identified the need to hold several EEO Trainings in FY20 and are working with our Counselors and Office of General Council (OGC) to schedule some trainings in the Region. The RA Specialist conducted two training sessions at the Regional Office: one for supervisors and the other for all employees. • ISC: The RA policy and SOPs are in the process of being updated in the 4th quarter and are scheduled to be rolled out beginning in FY 20 to all Regions. • PNWSC: August 12, 2019 – The Republic Ranger District held a RA Training session in which there were a total of 19 attendees. The 8-hour training session featured an Attorney trainer from OGC. Participants included all supervisors and leaders from the district, and representatives from HR, CR, ER, LR and RA participated. • RMSC: During the third quarter of FY 2019, four RA requests were submitted in the Rocky Mountain Service Center - three cases in Region 2, and one case in the Rocky Mountain Research Station. Three cases (75%) were processed within 30 days. One case was processed within 38 days. • During the 4th quarter Sherry Neal, Acting RA Branch Chief / R4 CR Director hosted weekly meetings and trainings on the new SOPs for the RA rewrites. She was training the specialists on the new procedures. Monthly Cross talks were held throughout the 4th quarter, where CR, ER, HR and Labor Relations met with the Deputy Regional Forests to update them on new or updated issues throughout the region. CR reported out on several EEO Cases that have been ongoing throughout the fiscal year. • Sherry Neal, Acting Branch Chief of RA provided weekly trainings to the RA Specialists in Quarter 4 as the SOPs have been updated and will take effect beginning of 1st quarter of FY20. The weekly trainings included soliciting input from the RA Specialists for the RA SOP, that included processing timelines.</p>

<b>Brief Description of Program Deficiency</b>	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.		
<b>Objective</b>	Ensure 90% of RAs are processed within 30 business days minimum.		
<b>Target Date</b>	Sep 30, 2018		
<b>Completion Date</b>			
<b>Planned Activities</b>	<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>	<u>Planned Activity</u>
	Sep 30, 2018		Provide quarterly RA reports of national data and trend analysis to Agency leadership and field CR Directors in the field.
	Jun 30, 2019	September 30, 2020	Report RA negative and positive processing time impacts and update RA processing practitioners
	Sep 30, 2019		Monitor all RA requests to report progress towards 90% RAs processing within 30 business days
	Sep 30, 2020		Ensure all employees who work on, oversee or supervise the RA process are trained, and skilled regarding RA and PAS administration requirements.
<b>Accomplishments</b>	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	
	2019	<p>• The MD-715 Report score for FY19 period (10/1/2018 to 9/30/2019), is 79.55% or 80%, or &lt;-10.45% below the required 90% of RA requests to be processed within the 30-day timeframe • Training concerning Labor and Employee Relations Information System was provided to all RA specialists • RA process training, lecture, documentation, and interactive processes dates § May 30; June 9; June 17; July 30; August 15; August 20; Sep 3 • Meetings were held with HRM staff regarding the Accommodation of Last Resort SOP process § June 5-7; June 26-28 (face-to-face) § July 23 briefing conducted by Mark Green, Acting National Director, HRM • Northeastern Service Center (NESC): NESC offered two trainings in FY 2019. The first training, entitled The Reasonable Accommodations Process was conducted by RA Specialist, Juliet Charity-Moore on March 27, 2019, via Adobe Connect. There were approximately 80+ connections. Please note: some connections had multiple employees in attendance. • NESC planned an additional training in the fourth quarter. Using Rehabilitation Services and the Reasonable Accommodations Process to Increase Recruitment and Retention was offered on September 19, NESC SEPMs, the OCR RA Unit and the Consortium of State Administrators for Vocational Rehabilitation (CASVR). The training illustrated how managers and employees could use the services of CASVR with the RA process to assist employee recruitment as well as how VR along with RA can boost employee retention among the current workforce who experience a disability. The training also highlighted the 10-year historic partnership between the NESC and CSAVR and how the return on the investment made for the Service Center has been multifold. The benefits of the partnership include customized services, resources and consultations for needs such interpretative services, employment law, training, workplace assessments, outreach, recruitment and retention services. This training has approximately 100+ connections. Note: some connections had multiple employees in attendance. • The Pacific Southwest Region CRCS conducted four Functional Assistance Trips (FATs) in FY 2019: 1) Regional Office Engineering Staff (June 3-7, 2019); 2) Mendocino National Forest in northern California (July 29-August 1, 2019); 3) Regional Office Information Management (August 13, 2019); and 4) Sequoia National Forest (September 16-19 2019). Information packets were provided to all the employees and contained the RA Process. The packet also included EEO laws and policies that prohibit discrimination, prevent sexual harassment; a listing of contacts of the R5-CR staff and R5 Forest CR Officers; and resources and processes that are available to employees such as the CMP Program and the EEO Complaint Process.</p>	

## 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.

Key Programs, Resources, Strategies: • The FY20 FS Recruitment Plans - participation with National Talent Acquisition Network and other coordinated national recruitment events focusing on outreach/ recruitment of PWD/PWTD candidates. • Customized Recruitment Plans for specific event are developed, including assignment of members of the national cadre to attend each event. • Recruiter cadre are trained/informed regarding updated guidance, use of Schedule A Authority, and shared key PWD/PWTD recruitment network sources. • FY 20 FS Recruitment Plans will utilize recruitment sources including: Resume Mining USAJOBS, Department of Labor’s Workforce Recruitment Program of Schedule A eligible college students and recent graduates, Job Corps Centers, POCs at local schools/colleges serving students with disabilities, American Job Centers, Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehab, National Employment Team (NET), Veteran Recruitment Agencies, Centers for Independent Living, Disability & Veterans Community Resources Directory, Employment Networks, and Recruit Ability. • The FS negotiated the Union Agreement which supports flexibility of Selecting Officials to fill vacancies noncompetitively via Schedule A at any grade level.

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

• HR conducts applicant eligibility reviews for competitive and non-competitive hiring authorities based on the area of consideration in a JOA and refers eligible applicants to the selecting officials. • Agency Union Agreement supports flexibility of Selecting Officials to fill vacancies noncompetitively via Schedule A at any grade level. • Agency Employment Outreach Database provides eligible external and internal Schedule A candidates the opportunity to respond directly to selecting officials posting Outreach Notices before officials have opted to post their vacancies on USAJobs and thus a chance of convincing officials, in advance, to consider or even select them noncompetitively, rather than proceeding to post their vacancy on USAJobs.

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.

• Agency Union Agreement supports flexibility of Selecting Officials to fill vacancies noncompetitively via Schedule A at any grade level. • Agency Employment Outreach Database provides eligible external and internal Schedule A candidates the opportunity to respond directly to Selecting Officials posting Outreach Notices before Officials have opted to post their vacancies on USAJobs and thus a chance of convincing Officials, in advance, to consider or even select them noncompetitively, rather than proceeding to post their vacancy on USAJobs.

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

All new Supervisors complete core training that includes updated modules on recruiting using Schedule A Authority, RA, and resources available through SEPs.

### 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.

• Agency Union Agreement supports flexibility of Selecting Officials to fill vacancies noncompetitively via Schedule A at any grade level. • Agency Employment Outreach Database provides eligible external and internal Schedule A candidates the opportunity to respond directly to Selecting Officials posting Outreach Notices before Officials have opted to post their vacancies on USAJobs and thus a chance of convincing Officials, in advance, to consider or even select them noncompetitively, rather than proceeding to post their vacancy on USAJobs. • The FY 20 FS Recruitment Plans - participation with NTAN and other coordinated national recruitment events focusing on outreach/ recruitment of PWD/PWTD candidates. • Customized Recruitment Plans for specific event are developed, including assignment of members of the national cadre to attend each event. • Recruiter cadre are trained/informed regarding updated guidance, use of Schedule A Authority, and shared key PWD/PWTD recruitment network sources. • FY 20 FS Recruitment Plans will utilize recruitment sources including: Resume Mining USAJOBS, Department of Labor’s WRP of Schedule A eligible college students and recent graduates, Job Corps Centers; and POCs at local schools/colleges serving students with disabilities, AJCs, Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation, NET, Veteran Recruitment Agencies, Centers for Independent Living, Disability & Veterans Community Resources Directory, ENs, and Recruit Ability. • Agency negotiated Union Agreement supports flexibility of Selecting Officials to fill vacancies noncompetitively via Schedule A at any grade level.

**C. PROGRESSION TOWARDS GOALS (RECRUITMENT AND HIRING)**

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

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

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

A trigger among permanent workforce New Hires is PWD are presently at 8.91% which is below EEOC’s 12% goal. However, this number has increased from 7.38% in FY 2018.

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 N/A

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

MD-715 Table B9 does not provide complete applicant flow rates for MCO job series. The only information available is the number and percentage of selections. In the meantime, other means are being developed to monitor this information.

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

MD-715 Table B9 does not provide complete applicant flow rates for MCO job series. The only information available is the number and percentage of selections. In the meantime, other means are being developed to monitor this information.

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

MD-715 Table B9 does not provide complete applicant flow rates for MCO job series. The only information available is the number and percentage of selections. In the meantime, Other means are being developed to monitor this information.

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

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

### A. ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM PLAN

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

The Agency has two Leadership Training Programs: 1) The Senior Leader Program (SLP) follows a competitive internal selection process, with final vetting by the Agency’s Executive Leadership Team; 2) The National New Leader Program. Any permanent employee with one full year of Agency service at the time of application submission can apply at the GS 7-11 level. Individuals are nominated for this program based on their desire and interest to develop their leadership potential and their high self-motivation to complete all requirements and participate fully in all components of the program. The unit will collect applications and establish its review process for prioritizing nominations. Once the applicant has completed their portion of the application package, the applicant will forward the package to their supervisor. The supervisor will then complete the supervisor assessment and endorsement and include with the application package. Employees with disabilities 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.

### B. CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITES

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

Methods are being developed to monitor and report this information, which is readily available to line officers and management officials through official request to the WO HRM DMAT. USDA is responsible for all aspects of SES program administration, selections and placements.

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 (%)
Training Programs		80		0.00		2.50
Other Career Development Programs		429		1.17		3.50
Internship Programs						
Fellowship Programs						
Mentoring Programs						
Coaching Programs						
Detail 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

Methods are being developed to monitor and report this information, which is readily available to line officers and management officials through official request to the WO HRM DMAT.

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

Means are being developed to monitor and report this information, which is readily available to line officers and management officials through official request to the WO HRM DMAT.

**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 No
- b. Awards, Bonuses, & Incentives (PWTD) Answer Yes

The PWTD inclusion rate was 76.10% compared to PWOTD rate which is 69.66%

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

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

a. Pay Increases (PWD) Answer No

b. Pay Increases (PWTD) Answer No

Other Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Performance Based Pay Increase	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

3. If the agency has other types of employee recognition programs, are PWD and/or PWTD recognized disproportionately less than employees without disabilities? (The appropriate benchmark is the inclusion rate.) If “yes”, describe the employee recognition program and relevant data in the text box.

a. Other Types of Recognition (PWD) Answer N/A

b. Other Types of Recognition (PWTD) Answer N/A

Routinely, the Chief, Regional Foresters and Station Directors National Leadership Council reward employees through Honor Awards. Likewise, local line officers, managers, supervisors issue performance awards, and staff recommend “Spot Awards” (cash) or time-off awards. However, there is no existing structured report to document these trends. Therefore, the FS in the meantime is developing reports to track and monitor this information because the current tables do not.

**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

a. Internal Selections for Promotions SES b. Internal Selections for Promotions PWD 6/4.29% c. Internal Selections for Promotions PWD 16/6.11% d. Internal Selections for Promotions PWD 47/7.30%

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

The USDA is responsible all aspects of SES selections and placements. USDA, not the FS, hires SES employees. However, FS monitors conversions from career appointments to SES and career appointments for both PWTD and PWD. The FS is developing reports to track and monitor this information because the present tables do not.

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

The USDA is responsible all aspects of SES selections and placements. USDA, not the FS, hires SES employees. However, FS monitors conversions from career appointments to SES and career appointments for both PWTD and PWD. USA Staffing does not

provide information on Qualified Internal Applicants.

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

The USDA is responsible all aspects of SES selections and placements. USDA, not the FS, hires SES employees. However, FS monitors conversions from career appointments to SES and career appointments for both PWTD and PWD. USA Staffing does not provide information on Qualified Internal Applicants.

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

The USDA is responsible all aspects of SES selections and placements. USDA, not the FS, hires SES employees. However, FS monitors conversions from career appointments to SES and career appointments for both PWTD and PWD. USA Staffing does not provide information on Qualified Internal Applicants.

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

The USDA is responsible all aspects of SES selections and placements. USDA, not the FS, hires SES employees. However, FS monitors conversions from career appointments to SES and career appointments for both PWTD and PWD. USA Staffing does not provide information on Qualified Internal Applicants.

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

The USDA is responsible all aspects of SES selections and placements. USDA, not the FS, hires SES employees. However, FS monitors conversions from career appointments to SES and career appointments for both PWTD and PWD. USA Staffing does not provide information on Qualified Internal Applicants.

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

The USDA is responsible all aspects of SES selections and placements. USDA, not the FS, hires SES employees. However, FS monitors conversions from career appointments to SES and career appointments for both PWTD and PWD. USA Staffing does not provide information on Qualified Internal Applicants.

## 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

The FS is developing reports to track and monitor this information. Agency leaders may noncompetitively convert employees to the competitive service who have completed two or more years of satisfactory service on a non-temporary Schedule A appointment. FS encourages leaders/managers/supervisors to convert Schedule A employees. The conversion must be at the same grade level and a separate action processed for a career ladder promotion, if applicable. However, there is no requirement to convert the employee whom may remain under a Schedule A appointment.

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 Yes

b. Involuntary Separations (PWD) Answer Yes

Voluntary Separations: The inclusion rate for PWD is 9.71% compared to 7.99% for PWOD Involuntary Separation: The inclusion rate for PWD is 10.32% compared to 7.39% for PWOD

Separations	Total #	Reportable Disabilities %	Without Reportable Disabilities %
-------------	---------	---------------------------	-----------------------------------

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

a. Voluntary Separations (PWTD) Answer Yes

b. Involuntary Separations (PWTD) Answer Yes

Voluntary Separations: PWTD Inclusion: 8.21% compared to 8.12% for PWOTD Involuntary Separation: PWTD Inclusion: 0.44% compared to 0.32% for PWOTD

Separations	Total #	Targeted Disabilities %	Without Targeted Disabilities %
-------------	---------	-------------------------	---------------------------------

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

Currently the EI Survey does not collect PWD or PWTD information. The Agency does however monitor separations by Nature of Action code. Based on this information, the most frequently occurring separations by Nature of Action codes are: Retirement-Voluntary; Resignation; and Termination-Appointment In (another federal agency).

**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.

The FS public website at <https://www.fs.fed.us> contains a link to the USDA Accessibility Statement addressing rights under Section 508: plus a link to the Nondiscrimination Statement instructions on how to file a complaint. FS FY 2018 Facility Accessibility Survey Results is available in Appendices C17.



- 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.

The USDA FS public website at <https://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/accessibility/> contains a section titled Accessibility Laws, Regulations, Policies and Guidelines. This section contains additional links to rights under ABA, ABAAS, Section 504, 508, and ADA Title V Section 508c: plus, a link to the nondiscrimination statement/instructions on how to file a complaint.

- 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 FS continues administration of USDA Regulations 7 CFR Parts 15a through 15e, 7CFR Part 15.4 (a)(1), and USDA FS Manuals 1300, 6100, and 6600, and USDA FS Handbooks 1709.11; 2709.11; and 7309.11 to ensure Agency plans and practices implemented and monitored FY18-FY19 improve accessibility of Agency program information, facilities, and/or technology. Example 1: Updates to the USDA FS policy to ensure effective telecommunication system is in place and in use for applicants and beneficiaries. Example 2: Issuance of accessible and effective communications resources to guarantee electronic and information technology compliance in accordance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Example 3: the USDA FS-Wide Facility Accessibility Survey and Program Results indicate the Agency' Recreation Site Maintenance and Capital Improvement Funding Program continues to focus on rehabilitation and/or replacement of facilities which are outdated and not in compliance with current accessibility guidelines. FY18-FY19 projects represent the improvements which are being made to administrative facilities, and recreation sites across the Agency to ensure that opportunities are available to PWDs. FY 2018 Facility Accessibility Survey Results are available in Appendix C17.

### C. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION PROGRAM

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

- Please provide the average time frame for processing initial requests for reasonable accommodations during the reporting period. (Please do not include previously approved requests with repetitive accommodations, such as interpreting services.)

The FY 2019 Average RA Request Processing Time Frame (10/1/2018 to 9/30/2019), is 79.55% or 80%, which is <-10.45% below the required 90% processed within the 30 business day timeframe.

- 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.

• RA procedures/policy posted, with addendum developed regarding provision of PAS. • The Agency continues to display its 508 Accessibility Information link on its front page (intranet/internet CR and USDA FS), with links included to pages on "Understanding Disabilities", Awareness, Education and Training, FAQs, Web, Procurement, and Legal.

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

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

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

The FS continues to enhance the quality of its customer service by continually educating employees, managers, and supervisors, through periodic training and resources posted on its Intranet website. Part H.2. advocates education and training of DEPM, supervisors, managers, and employees regarding building RA and PAS administration competencies.

## Section VII: EEO Complaint and Findings Data

### A. EEO COMPLAINT DATA INVOLVING HARASSMENT

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

Answer Yes

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

Answer Yes

3. If the agency had one or more findings of discrimination alleging harassment based on disability status during the last fiscal year, please describe the corrective measures taken by the agency.

There was one finding of discrimination issued during the EEOC Hearing process. As of September 30, 2019, corrective measures were being determined by the Agency based on an EEOC AJ Decision.

### B. EEO COMPLAINT DATA INVOLVING REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

1. During the last fiscal year, did a higher percentage of PWD file a formal EEO complaint alleging failure to provide a reasonable accommodation, as compared to the government-wide average?

Answer Yes

2. During the last fiscal year, did any complaints alleging failure to provide reasonable accommodation result in a finding of discrimination or a settlement agreement?

Answer Yes

3. If the agency had one or more findings of discrimination involving the failure to provide a reasonable accommodation during the last fiscal year, please describe the corrective measures taken by the agency.

There was one (1) finding of discrimination issued during the EEOC Hearing process. As of September 30, 2019, corrective measures were being determined by the Agency based on an EEOC AJ Decision.

## 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 Yes

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

<p><b>STATEMENT OF CONDITION THAT WAS A TRIGGER FOR A POTENTIAL BARRIER:</b></p> <p>Provide a brief narrative describing the condition at issue.</p> <p>How was the condition recognized as a potential barrier?</p>	<p>PWDs grade level representation in GS-01 to GS-10 is 7.65% and GS-11 to SES is 7.15% which is below EEOC's goal of 12% (Table B-4 FY19 Q4).</p>							
<p><b>STATEMENT OF BARRIER GROUPS:</b></p>	<p><i>Barrier Group</i></p> <p>People with Disabilities</p>							
<p><b>BARRIER ANALYSIS:</b></p> <p>Provide a description of the steps taken and data analyzed to determine cause of the condition.</p>								
<p><b>STATEMENT OF IDENTIFIED BARRIER:</b></p> <p>Provide a succinct statement of the agency policy, procedure or practice that has been determined to be the barrier of the undesired condition.</p>	<p>The specific cause of high separation rates of PWD and PWTD is unknown. Therefore, further examination of policies, procedures and practices impacting the hiring, retention, and separation processes is needed.</p>							
<p><b>Objective</b></p>	<p>Identify a policy procedure or practice impacting PWD GS-1 to GS-10 and GS-11 to SES experience below expected levels and develop an Action Plan to support their numbers.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="483 1037 649 1178"> <tr> <td><b>Date Objective Initiated</b></td> <td>Sep 30, 2018</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Target Date For Completion Of Objective</b></td> <td>Sep 30, 2020</td> </tr> </table>				<b>Date Objective Initiated</b>	Sep 30, 2018	<b>Target Date For Completion Of Objective</b>	Sep 30, 2020
<b>Date Objective Initiated</b>	Sep 30, 2018							
<b>Target Date For Completion Of Objective</b>	Sep 30, 2020							
<p><b>Responsible Officials</b></p>	<p>Mark D. Green National Director, Human Resources Management</p> <p>Theodore H. Gutman National Director, Civil Rights</p>							
<p><b>Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b></p>	<p><b>Planned Activities</b></p>	<p><b>Sufficient Staffing &amp; Funding (Yes or No)</b></p>	<p><b>Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b></p>	<p><b>Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b></p>				
<p>09/30/2018</p>	<p>Train SCS to conduct BA SC Training to supporting uncovering local PWD GS-11 to SES barriers</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>09/30/2020</p>					
<p>09/30/2020</p>	<p>Collect PWD GS-11 to SES applicant flow data</p>	<p>Yes</p>						
<p>09/30/2018</p>	<p>CR, HRM and WEPO will collaborate to edit data collections, and suggest additional data fields to add to increase data value</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>09/30/2020</p>					
<p>09/30/2020</p>	<p>Manager Barrier Analysis Training</p>	<p>Yes</p>						
<p>09/30/2020</p>	<p>Conduct PWD GS-11 to SES Focus Groups or surveys to find out what is causing low numbers</p>	<p>Yes</p>						
<p>09/30/2020</p>	<p>Conduct PWD GS-11 to SES Focus Groups or surveys to find out their opinion what is causing low numbers</p>	<p>Yes</p>						
<p><b>Fiscal Year</b></p>	<p><b>Accomplishments</b></p>							
<p>2019</p>	<p>Collected trigger data demonstrating PWD Grade related Barriers exist</p>							
<p>2019</p>	<p>Selected one PWD Group to focus FY 2020. Barrier Analysis efforts</p>							

<p><b>STATEMENT OF CONDITION THAT WAS A TRIGGER FOR A POTENTIAL BARRIER:</b></p> <p>Provide a brief narrative describing the condition at issue.</p> <p>How was the condition recognized as a potential barrier?</p>		<p>The PWDs grade level representation in GS-01 to GS-10 is 7.65%, and in GS-11 to SES, 7.15%: both below the 12% standard (Table B-4 FY19 Q4).</p>		
<p><b>STATEMENT OF BARRIER GROUPS:</b></p>		<p><i>Barrier Group</i></p> <p>People with Disabilities</p>		
<p><b>BARRIER ANALYSIS:</b></p> <p>Provide a description of the steps taken and data analyzed to determine cause of the condition.</p>				
<p><b>STATEMENT OF IDENTIFIED BARRIER:</b></p> <p>Provide a succinct statement of the agency policy, procedure or practice that has been determined to be the barrier of the undesired condition.</p>		<p>The specific cause of the less than expected participation rate for PWDs is unknown. Further examination of the policies, procedures, and practices impacting the hiring, retention, and separation processes is needed.</p>		
<p><b>Objective</b></p>		<p>Identify a policy, procedure or practice impacting PWD GS-1 to GS-10 and GS-11 to SES experience below expected levels and develop an Action Plan to support their numbers.</p> <p><b>Date Objective Initiated</b>   Sep 30, 2019</p> <p><b>Target Date For Completion Of Objective</b>   Sep 30, 2020</p>		
<p><b>Responsible Officials</b></p>		<p>Theodore H. Gutman National Director, Civil Rights</p> <p>Mark D. Green National Director, Human Resources Management</p>		
Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Staffing & Funding (Yes or No)	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
09/30/2020	Manager Barrier Analysis Training	Yes		
09/30/2020	Conduct PWD GS-11 to SES Hiring Manager Focus Groups or surveys to learn low number source	Yes		
09/30/2018	Train SCs to conduct BA SC Training to supporting uncovering local PWD GS-11 to SES barriers	Yes	09/30/2020	
09/30/2020	Collect PWD GS-11 to SES applicant flow data	Yes		
09/30/2020	Conduct PWD GS-11 to SES Focus Groups or surveys to find out their opinion what is causing low numbers	Yes		
09/30/2018	CR, HRM and WEPO will collaborate to edit data collections, and suggest additional data fields to add to increase data value	Yes	09/30/2020	
Fiscal Year	Accomplishments			
2019	Collected Trigger data demonstrating PWD Grade related barriers exist Selected one PWD Group to focus on during FY 2020. Barrier Analysis efforts			
2019	Selected one PWD group to focus on in FY 2020. Continue initiating barrier analysis efforts.			

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

N/A. Planned activities are currently underway and proceeding as scheduled. It is the Agency's goal to monitor progress toward correcting identified trigger by or before end of FY 2020.

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

As of end of FY 2019, planned activities were still in progress. Collected trigger data among a group of PWDs, supporting uncovering EEO barrier and implementing a successful action plan.

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.

As planned activities were still in progress as described above, it is the Agency's goal to continue to monitor progress toward correcting identified trigger by or before end of FY 2020.