

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 7.61% which is below the benchmark. The grade level cluster for GS-11 to SES is at 7.32% 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

PWTD GS-01 - GS-10 is 2.27% which is above the 2% benchmark. PWTD GS-11 - GS-SES is 2.31% which is above the 2% benchmark.

Grade Level Cluster(GS or Alternate Pay Planb)	Total	Reportable Disability		Targeted Disability	
	#	#	%	#	%
Numarical Goal	--	12%		2%	
Grades GS-1 to GS-10	16296	1245	7.64	368	2.26
Grades GS-11 to SES	11475	840	7.32	265	2.31

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

All managers and supervisors are required to take annual training that includes content regarding the agency's goals for PWD and PWTD hiring and recruitment.

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	
Special Emphasis Program for PWD and PWTB	1	6	0	Jessica J. Torres Disability Employment Program Manager jessica.torres@usda.gov
Architectural Barriers Act Compliance	1	0	0	Matthew Arn Chief Landscape Architect matthew.arn@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	Dennis Lapowich Management Analyst dennis.lapowich@usda.gov
Processing applications from PWD and PWTB	132	0	0	Erica Nieto Acting Director erica.nieto@usda.gov
Answering questions from the public about hiring authorities that take disability into account	132	0	0	Erica Nieto Acting Director erica.nieto@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

Training planned for FY 2022: • DEAM Kick-off, 10/05/21, Observance Month Programming. • Schedule A Hiring Authority, 10/26/21, Observance Month Production. • Target Center- Reasonable Accommodations, 10/12/21, Observance Month National New Employee Orientation, 11/15/21, ERG overview/ room management. ASL interpreter requests.

B. PLAN TO ENSURE SUFFICIENT FUNDING FOR THE DISABILITY PROGRAM

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

Answer Yes

Section III: Program Deficiencies In The Disability Program

Brief Description of Program Deficiency	C.4.e.1. Implement the Affirmative Action Plan for Individuals with Disabilities? [see 29 CFR §1614.203(d); MD-715, II(C)]		
Objective	H-1 Team meets monthly to plan and produce a solid Affirmative Action Plan		
Target Date	Mar 30, 2022		
Completion Date			
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>	<u>Planned Activity</u>
	Mar 31, 2022		DPM schedules a stakeholder meeting to discuss the FY 2020 Affirmative Action Plan deficiencies
	Sep 30, 2022		Stakeholders establish a quarterly plan to provide all Part J data points, including the Schedule A conversion data.
	Sep 30, 2022		Stakeholders report AAP progress and deficiency removal action plans annually during the State of Agency Report FY 2022
	Sep 30, 2022		Stakeholders develop improvement plans to remove the AAP deficiency
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	
	2021	Met briefly with team of subject matter experts from Civil Rights, DE&I, HRM, and WEPO (H-1 Team) for organizational and initial goal planning purposes in late September 2021.	

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	Work in partnership with HRM to update exit survey questions for Persons with Disabilities, and to ask for information to improve recruitment, hiring, inclusion, retention, and advancement.		
Target Date	Sep 30, 2022		
Completion Date			
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>	<u>Planned Activity</u>
	Feb 17, 2022		Collaborate with HRM Assistant Director, Field Service Operations to discuss updating exit survey items to include items requesting more information specifically from PWDs.
	Mar 2, 2022		Create new PWD exit survey questions
	Apr 2, 2022		Meet with HRM to discuss new PWD Exit Survey items
	Jun 1, 2022		Add new PWD survey items to the all-employee Exit survey
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	
	2021	Met with collaborative staff to discuss action developing an action plan to address deficiency	

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.

Resources: The new Selective Placement Program Coordinator is charged with: • Recruiting PWDs. • Serving as a point of contact for PWDs seeking Schedule A and other accepted hiring authority information. • Developing recruitment strategies to include identification. • Establishing contacts with external recruitment sources to identify and communicate with PWDs. • Advising management on disability recruitment, hiring, advancement and retention – with specific PWD identification steps. • Replying to PWD applicant inquiries. • Collaborating with the OCR Disability Employment Program Manager. • Identifying HRM specialist who determines Schedule A eligibility. • Providing potential Schedule A applicants and/or permanent Schedule A employees with information such as: 1. Contact information for all USDA Special Emphasis Program Managers. 2. Information about creating a USAJOBS account. 3. How to locate vacancy announcements, apply to open positions, and track the status of applications on USAJOBS. 4. Schedule A letter template, a 20-page informational handbook on Schedule A for applicants, and a “tips” sheet for finding and being hired for a federal job. 5. Provide more detailed information about applying for merit vacancies as a Schedule A candidate. 6. How to join Office of Personnel Management’s shared list of PWD. 7. Where to sign up for TAP-Ability – a talent acquisition portal for individuals with disabilities. 8. How to use the Forest Service Outreach Database to locate potential vacancies before they are formally advertised. 9. Initiating collaborative discussions with selecting officials to support Schedule A applicant selections. The Reasonable Accommodations Branch Chief is charged with ensuring the Agency: 1. Actively monitors the identification of PWDs applicants 2. Provides qualified applicants with information regarding their option to use Schedule A and other hiring authorities 3. Provides applicants with RA and PAS information The HRM Recruiter cadre are charged with: 1. Using multiple resources to locate PWD applicants such as: USAJOBS Resumes, Department of Labor’s Workforce Recruitment Program of Schedule A eligible college students and recent graduates, Job Corps Centers. 2. Developing lists of identified PWD applicants. 3. Providing PWD applicants with information about hiring events and open positions. 4. Attending hiring events to identify PWD applicants. The OCR Disability Program Manager is charged with: 1. Working with the HRM Selective Placement Program to develop and implement the annual recruitment plans which include steps to identify PWD applicants. 2. Working with HRM to develop and implement annual recruitment plans which include steps to identify PWD applicants. 3. Coordinating with the HRM Recruiter cadre to identify PWD candidates. Programs: Forest Service programs to identify PWD job applicants: 1. Selective Placement Program develops event specific recruitment plans which include steps to identify PWD applicants. Event examples: National Talent Acquisition. Network events and FS Strategic Entry Level Hiring Events. 2. HRM Applicant Eligibility Review Program provides PWD Schedule A job applicants with open job notices. 3. FS Manager Training Program identifies potential PWD manager position applicants

2. Pursuant to 29 C.F.R. §1614.203(a)(3), describe the agency’s use of hiring authorities that take disability into account (e.g., Schedule A) to recruit PWD and PWTD for positions in the permanent workforce

The HRM Recruiter cadre actively recruits qualified PWDs for specific permanent positions, utilizing the Schedule A hiring authority option, which benefits both PWDs and Veterans. One hundred sixty-nine (169) employees were hired in FY 2021.

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.

USA Job Applicants: Schedule A candidates must provide documentation of disability status and proven position qualifications within USAJobs to be eligible for Schedule A hiring status eligibility. Qualified Schedule A applicants are then placed on a separate certificate which is sent to the hiring manager for consideration. Selective Placement Program Coordinator Applicants: Schedule A candidates who apply directly to the agency Selective Placement Program Coordinator have their Schedule A disability and job qualifications reviewed and approved by a Special Program Placement Coordinator selected by a HRM Staffing specialist. Human Resources Specialists, trained on the different hiring authorities, recommend qualified applicants to hiring officials. Hiring and selection officials review the applications, and if approved, the HRM specialist oversees bringing the applicants onboard.

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

This year, Schedule A hiring authority and RA training were provided to all agency supervisors and managers annually. Periodically, informal roundtable discussions were offered featuring topics about recruiting PWD candidates, the advantages of hiring disabled workers, and hiring, recruiting, and retaining PWDs. Annual training: • Hiring and Recruiting Using Schedule A Authority. • Special Emphasis Program Manager Support Resources Review.

B. PLAN TO ESTABLISH CONTACTS WITH DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT ORGANIZATIONS

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

The Selective Placement Program Coordinator works in partnership with the Office of Civil Right Disability Program Manager, to maintain contact with internal and external organizations that assist PWD in securing and maintaining employment. The resources include: • USAJOBS • Department of Labor’s Workforce Recruitment Program for Schedule A eligible college students and recent graduates • Job Corps Centers • Point of Contact at local schools/colleges serving students with disabilities • Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation • Veteran Recruitment Agencies • Centers for Independent Living • Disability & Veterans Community Resources Directory • Recruit Ability • National Talent Acquisition Network • Society of American Foresters • Science Technology Engineering and Medicine Hiring Events • Wildlife Apprenticeship Program • Tap-ability applicant portal

C. PROGRESSION TOWARDS GOALS (RECRUITMENT AND HIRING)

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

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

A trigger among permanent workforce new hires: PWD are at 6.89% which is below the EEOC 12% goal.

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

Data not available.

New Hires to Mission-Critical Occupations	Total (#)	Reportable Disability	Targetable Disability
		New Hires (%)	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

Data not available.

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

Data not available.

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.

At the direction of EEOC November 16, 2021, the Forest Service will develop a plan to ensure PWD and PWTD have sufficient advancement opportunities. This plan includes: 1) considering disability status as a positive factor in hiring, promotion, or assignment decisions to the extent permitted by law; 2) Conducting Targeted outreach and recruitment efforts for PWD and PWTD; and 3) Offering training, internships, and mentoring programs to PWD so they can reach senior grade levels.

B. CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITES

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

The Agency has two leadership training programs: 1) The Senior Leader Program follows a competitive internal selection process, with final vetting by the Agency’s Executive Leadership Team; 2) The National New Leaders 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 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. Under the “Leaders Growing Leaders” strategy, learning coaching is offered to Forest Service employees. The coaching is designed to inspire leadership program participants/clients to maximize their personal and professional potential. The Training and Development branch offers mentoring opportunities. Applications are accepted (with

supervisor approval) in January of each year. Mentors serve as role models, providing direction and support to the employee.

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 (%)
Fellowship Programs	8	5	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mentoring Programs	428	428	7.24	7.24	3.50	3.50
Internship Programs						
Detail Programs						
Coaching Programs	32	26	6.25	6.25	0.00	0.00
Other Career Development Programs						
Training Programs	298	227	4.03	4.03	2.01	2.01

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 Yes
- b. Selections (PWD) Answer Yes

These triggers have been added to the Part J Barrier Analysis

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 Yes
- b. Selections (PWTD) Answer Yes

These triggers have been added to the Part J Barrier Analysis

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

PWDs received awards at a rate of 41.32% while Persons without Disabilities received awards at a rate of 67.22%. PWTDs received awards at a rate of 38.45% while Persons without Targeted Disabilities received awards at a rate of 65.25%.

Time-Off Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 hours: Awards Given	1858	9.17	6.18	7.62	9.84
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 Hours: Total Hours	14080	72.00	46.49	56.50	78.81
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 Hours: Average Hours	7.58	0.36	0.03	1.11	0.03
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 hours: Awards Given	1032	4.42	3.55	3.14	4.99
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 Hours: Total Hours	17143	72.50	59.00	51.42	81.76
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 Hours: Average Hours	16.61	0.75	0.07	2.45	0.00
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 hours: Awards Given	414	1.14	1.47	0.75	1.31
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 Hours: Total Hours	10055	27.63	35.83	17.94	31.89
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 Hours: Average Hours	24.29	1.11	0.10	3.59	0.02
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 hours: Awards Given	454	1.73	1.58	1.79	1.71
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 Hours: Total Hours	17264	64.11	60.13	65.02	63.71
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 Hours: Average Hours	38.03	1.69	0.16	5.42	0.05
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 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	6019	23.16	21.13	23.62	22.97
Cash Awards: \$501 - \$999: Total Amount	4461168	17233.06	15658.00	17684.01	17035.10
Cash Awards: \$501 - \$999: Average Amount	741.18	33.92	3.08	111.92	-0.32
Cash Awards: \$1000 - \$1999: Awards Given	9812	34.79	34.71	36.32	34.12
Cash Awards: \$1000 - \$1999: Total Amount	12669052	44625.40	44729.44	46947.38	43606.10
Cash Awards: \$1000 - \$1999: Average Amount	1291.18	58.49	5.36	193.20	-0.65
Cash Awards: \$2000 - \$2999: Awards Given	7384	13.68	26.58	12.71	14.11
Cash Awards: \$2000 - \$2999: Total Amount	17121641	31101.23	61754.42	28430.04	32273.82
Cash Awards: \$2000 - \$2999: Average Amount	2318.75	103.67	9.67	334.47	2.35
Cash Awards: \$3000 - \$3999: Awards Given	1490	2.51	5.65	2.69	2.43
Cash Awards: \$3000 - \$3999: Total Amount	4581872	7838.30	17358.00	8367.71	7605.91
Cash Awards: \$3000 - \$3999: Average Amount	3075.08	142.51	12.78	464.87	1.01

Cash Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Cash Awards: \$4000 - \$4999: Awards Given	173	0.91	0.62	0.60	1.05
Cash Awards: \$4000 - \$4999: Total Amount	700532	3693.57	2492.64	2391.63	4265.09
Cash Awards: \$4000 - \$4999: Average Amount	4049.32	184.68	16.84	597.91	3.28
Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Awards Given	69	0.18	0.26	0.15	0.20
Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Total Amount	439169	1516.14	1630.34	1598.36	1480.05
Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Average Amount	6364.77	379.04	25.88	1598.36	-156.22

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 Yes

PWTDs received awards at a rate of 0.60% while Persons without Targeted Disabilities received awards at a rate of 1.54%.

Other Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Total Performance Based Pay Increases Awarded	546	2.05	1.96	1.20	2.43

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

Data not available

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

The USDA is responsible for all aspects of SES selections and placements. USDA, not the FS, hires SES employees. However, FS monitors conversions from career appointments to SES career appointments including those for both PWTD and PWD. FS also monitors promotions to ‘ST-00’ and ‘SL-00’ which are SES equivalents. The FS is currently developing supplemental data reports to track and monitor this information to enable us to fully populate MD-715 Tables B6, B7, and B8.

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

Data not available

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

Data not available

4. Using the qualified applicant pool as the benchmark, does your agency have a trigger involving PWTB 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 (PWTB) Answer N/A
- b. New Hires to GS-15 (PWTB) Answer N/A
- c. New Hires to GS-14 (PWTB) Answer N/A
- d. New Hires to GS-13 (PWTB) Answer N/A

Data not available

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

Data not available

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

- a. Executives
 - i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTB) Answer N/A
 - ii. Internal Selections (PWTB) 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

Data not available

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

Data not available

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

Data not available

Section VI: Plan to Improve Retention of Persons with Disabilities

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

A. VOLUNTARY AND INVOLUNTARY SEPARATIONS

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

Answer N/A

An agency may appoint employees on a permanent, time-limited, or temporary basis. In FY 2018, the Forest Service appointed approximately 124 Schedule A hires. Of those 124 Schedule A hires, 73 were appointed to permanent positions (a non-temporary position). 21 employees separated prior to completing the mandatory 2-year trial period; there were 9 resignations, and 12 varied terminations. 6 permanent appointees used their Schedule A eligibility to promote to another position within the initial 2-year trail period; effectively extending their conversion eligibility dates by an additional 2 years. There were 51 time-limited and temporary

Schedule A appointments. Time-limited and temporary Schedule A appointments have an NTE date and are not eligible for conversion because the positions are temporary in nature. However, Schedule A time-limited and temporary appointees may be eligible for a different Schedule A appointment to a non-temporary position. After two years of successful performance, an employee in the Excepted Service under Schedule A, 5 CFR § 213.3102 (u), may be non-competitively converted to a career (3 years of non-temporary federal service) or career-conditional (1-3 years of non-temporary federal service) appointment upon the recommendation of his/her supervisor. While there is no requirement to convert, it is beneficial to the employee to be converted out of the Excepted Service and into a Competitive Service Appointment. This conversion affords the employee reinstatement rights and competitive status which enables employees to compete for opportunities advertised under the Merit procedures.

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 Yes

Involuntary Separation: The inclusion rate for PWD is 0.23% compared to 0.18% for PWOD

Separations	Total #	Reportable Disabilities %	Without Reportable Disabilities %
Permanent Workforce: Reduction in Force	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Removal	37	0.20	0.10
Permanent Workforce: Resignation	901	2.89	2.51
Permanent Workforce: Retirement	1108	4.21	3.03
Permanent Workforce: Other Separations	436	1.88	1.18
Permanent Workforce: Total Separations	2482	9.18	6.81

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 No

Voluntary Separations: PWTD Inclusion: 9.57% compared to 8.52% for PWOTD

Separations	Total #	Targeted Disabilities %	Without Targeted Disabilities %
Permanent Workforce: Reduction in Force	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Removal	37	0.13	0.10
Permanent Workforce: Resignation	901	2.37	2.54
Permanent Workforce: Retirement	1108	5.14	3.07
Permanent Workforce: Other Separations	436	2.11	1.21
Permanent Workforce: Total Separations	2482	9.75	6.92

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

The Forest Service is developing Exit Survey items specifically designed to extract information regarding the recruitment, hiring, inclusion, retention, and advancement of PWDs and PWTDs. (See H-2)

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 USDA Forest Service public website at <https://www.usda.gov/accessibility-statement> contains the USDA Accessibility Statement addressing rights under Section 508: and a link to the nondiscrimination statement instructions on how to file a complaint.

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.

The Forest Service public website at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/about-agency/civil-rights/> contains a section titled Accessibility Laws, Regulations, Policies and Guidelines. This section contains additional links to rights under Architectural Barriers Act, Architectural Barrier Act, Section 504, 508, and American Disabilities Title V Section 508c: plus, a link to the nondiscrimination statement/ instructions on how to file a complaint.

3. Describe any programs, policies, or practices that the agency has undertaken, or plans on undertaking over the next fiscal year, designed to improve accessibility of agency facilities and/or technology.

The Forest Service’s Corporate Knowledge and Communication Training Channel links employees to 508 accessibility awareness training opportunities and resources including: recorded webinars, brochures, checklists, templates, and validation and testing process information. The USDA maintains a state-of-the-art organization Technology and Accessible Resources Give Employment Today (TARGET) Center that utilizes the power of technology providing impactful services related to improving accessibility and contributes to the complete employment experience of individuals with disabilities. The Agency’s Section 508 Program website is a one-stop shop portal for information, tools, and support about 508 accessibility and accessibility technologies. The site is divided into four concentrated areas: Learn Accessible, Buy Accessible, Create Accessible and Help Accessible, with contact information for the Section 508 Task Force and help with employee accessibility inquiries. The Forest Service utilizes the Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards Checklist for administrative facilities to ensure parking, interior routes, exterior routes, doors, ramps, bathrooms, lifts, and stairs are accessible to employees and visitors. Recreation buildings, sites, site components and constructed features are surveyed for accessibility and a transition plan developed for non-compliance.

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.)

Agency RA regulations stipulate that 90% of RA requests should be processed within 30 business days. In FY 2021, 95.45% of RA requests were processed within the timeframe.

2. Describe the effectiveness of the policies, procedures, or practices to implement the agency’s reasonable accommodation program. Some examples of an effective program include timely processing requests, timely providing approved accommodations, conducting training for managers and supervisors, and monitoring accommodation requests for trends.

• The Departmental Regulation, DR 4300-008 which includes the RA procedures was updated effective October 27, 2020, distributed to staff. • Employee and supervisor RA training was provided. • The RA processing rates exceeded the benchmark. • RA information inquiries this year were 555. • RA requests this year were 875. • Fourth quarter substantially increased activity from

President’s vaccine mandate. • New requests are now processed by HRM Employee Relations. • The Forest Service RA request completion rate was 95% within 30 days, compared to the USDA benchmark of 90%.

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 Departmental Regulation, DR 4300-008 which includes PAS procedures was updated effective October 27, 2020, distributed to staff. • Employee and supervisor PAS training was provided.

Section VII: EEO Complaint and Findings Data

A. EEO COMPLAINT DATA INVOLVING HARASSMENT

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

Answer No

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

Answer No

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

• There were 71 formal complaints filed (9.86%) based on disability alleging harassment, as compared to the government-wide average of 22.10%. • There were no findings of harassment issued. • Out of the seven formal complaints filed, four were closed due to Settlement Agreements and three remain open.

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 six of 71 formal complaints (8.45%) based on disability discrimination alleging failure to provide an RA, as compared

to the government-wide average of 14.33%. • There were no findings of discrimination issued alleging failure to provide an RA. • The Agency closed 1 formal complaint with a settlement agreement.

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

Source of the Trigger:	Workforce Data (if so identify the table)					
Specific Workforce Data Table:	Workforce Data Table - B4					
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?	PWDs grade level representation in GS-01 to GS-10 is 7.61% and GS-11 to SES is 7.32% which is below EEOC's goal of 12% (Table B-4).					
STATEMENT OF BARRIER GROUPS:	<i>Barrier Group</i> People with Disabilities					
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			
	Barrier has not yet been identified.		A statistical analysis was conducted for total workforce participation of MD-715 tables B1, B3-1, B4			
Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan						
Date Initiated	Target Date	Sufficient Funding / Staffing?	Date Modified	Date Completed	Objective Description	
09/30/2018	09/30/2020	Yes			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.	
Responsible Official(s)						
Title		Name		Standards Address The Plan?		
National Director, Civil Rights		Michael G. Watts		Yes		
Acting National Director, Human Resources Management		Erica Nieto		Yes		
Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective						
Target Date	Planned Activities			Sufficient Staffing & Funding?	Modified Date	Completion Date
09/30/2020	Conduct PWD GS-11 to SES Focus Groups or surveys to find out what is causing low numbers			Yes	09/30/2022	
09/30/2018	Collect PWD GS-11 to SES applicant flow data			Yes	09/30/2022	

Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective				
Target Date	Planned Activities	Sufficient Staffing & Funding?	Modified Date	Completion Date
09/30/2018	Manager Barrier Analysis Training	Yes	09/30/2022	
09/30/2021	Train service centers to conduct BA SC training to supporting uncovering local PWD GS-11 to SES barriers	Yes	09/30/2022	
09/30/2021	CR, HRM and WEPO will collaborate to edit data collections, and suggest additional data fields to add to increase data value.	Yes	09/30/2022	
Report of Accomplishments				
Fiscal Year	Accomplishment			
2019	Collected trigger data demonstrating PWD Grade related Barriers exist			
2019	Selected one PWD Group to focus FY 2020. Barrier Analysis efforts			
2021	Reorganized the Part J PWD BA project with revised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives • Subject focus • Responsible officials • PWD trigger data findings • Part J form completion • Action plan and procedures 			
2021	Developed FY 2022 Part J BA project milestones and summarized within the Part J Form VII.3.			
2021	Collected and presented the summarized FY 2021 PWD trigger data using the Part J VII 3. BA form			
2021	Developed FY 2022 Part J BA project milestones and summarized within the Part J Form VII.3.			

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?	PWTDS are separating at a rate (3.18%) exceeding their permanent workforce participation rate of 2.32%					
STATEMENT OF BARRIER GROUPS:	<i>Barrier Group</i> People with Disabilities					
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			
	Barrier has not yet been identified		Barrier impacting PWD and PWTD separation rates is currently unknown			
Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan						
Date Initiated	Target Date	Sufficient Funding / Staffing?	Date Modified	Date Completed	Objective Description	
09/30/2019	09/30/2021	Yes			Identify a policy, procedure or practice impacting PWTD separation rates	
Responsible Official(s)						
Title		Name		Standards Address The Plan?		
National Civil Rights Director		Michael G. Watts		Yes		
Acting National HRM Director		Erica Nieto		Yes		
Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective						
Target Date	Planned Activities			Sufficient Staffing & Funding?	Modified Date	Completion Date
09/30/2020	Amend Complaint data collection parameters to include more definitive demographics: PWD status, GS Level			Yes	09/30/2022	
07/30/2020	Review PWD GS-11 to SES complaints data to inform this barrier analysis			Yes	07/30/2022	
07/30/2020	Collect and review PWD GS-11 to SES exit surveys and comments about why they are leaving			Yes	07/30/2022	

Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective				
Target Date	Planned Activities	Sufficient Staffing & Funding?	Modified Date	Completion Date
07/30/2020	Develop and deploy a PWD GS-11 to SES Survey to learn why numbers are low	Yes	07/30/2022	
07/30/2020	Develop and conduct a PWD GS-11 to SES hiring manager Focus group experience or survey	Yes	08/30/2022	
08/30/2020	Review data and define the barrier	Yes	09/30/2022	
09/30/2020	Develop barrier action plan and communicate to USDA FS Zone CR Directors	Yes	09/30/2022	
09/30/2020	Present end of FY results	Yes	09/30/2022	
Report of Accomplishments				
Fiscal Year	Accomplishment			
2019	Collected trigger data demonstrating a PWD barrier exists over multiple years			
2019	Determined continuous PWD GS-11 to SES below expected numbers over multiple years indicating a barrier exists.			
2019	Selected PWD groups to focus barrier analysis upon: PWD GS-11 to SES			
2021	Collected and presented the summarized FY 2021 PWD trigger data using the Part J VII 3. BA form			
2021	Reorganized the Part J PWD BA project with revised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objectives • Subject focus • Responsible officials • PWD trigger data findings • Part J form completion • Action plan and procedures 			
2021	Developed FY 2022 Part J BA project milestones and summarized within the Part J Form VII.3.			

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

In FY 2021 FS revised the PWD BA project by developing new objectives and setting new goals. We cataloged and organized the collected PWD triggers. The FS developed a new plan to identify and define a PWD barrier and launch a barrier removal action plan in FY 2022 and revised a Part J form to enable the reporting of work and accomplishments.

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

The FS improved the Part J Barrier identification and removal process by: • Listing new responsible officials • Redefining the Barrier analysis subjects • Adding new action items • Updating all trigger data to present • Revising the Part J VII 3. BA form to condense all data

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.

The FS updated the trigger data points to support defining a PWD EEO barrier and implement a successful affirmative action plan. See Part H-1.