

## 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

No triggers were identified.

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

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

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

Answer Yes

b. Cluster GS-11 to SES (PWTD)

Answer Yes

No triggers were identified.

| Grade Level Cluster(GS or Alternate Pay Planb) | Total | Reportable Disability |       | Targeted Disability |       |
|------------------------------------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|
|                                                | #     | #                     | %     | #                   | %     |
| Numerical Goal                                 | --    | 12%                   |       | 2%                  |       |
| Grades GS-11 to SES                            | 1681  | 297                   | 17.67 | 66                  | 3.93  |
| Grades GS-1 to GS-10                           | 49    | 11                    | 22.45 | 6                   | 12.24 |

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

FNS manages an internal workforce demographics dashboard and a recruitment actions tracker, which is updated each Pay Period, and uploaded to an internal SharePoint site for all FNS management officials with responsibility for the hiring process. Senior leadership is briefed on recruitment efforts, status of vacancies, and other pertinent recruitment information on a quarterly basis. Human Resources Division (HRD) holds regular interactions and communicates hiring requirements to managers, hiring managers who are responsible for working with HRD to develop appropriate recruitment strategies to reach targeted populations.

### 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 |                                                             |
| Section 508 Compliance                                                                         | 1                                   | 0         | 0               | Carlos Worthy<br>Director<br>carlos.worthy@usda.gov         |
| Special Emphasis Program for PWD and PWTB                                                      | 3                                   | 0         | 0               | Roberto Contreras<br>Director<br>roberto.contreras@usda.gov |
| Processing applications from PWD and PWTB                                                      | 15                                  | 0         | 0               | Carlos Worthy<br>Director<br>carlos.worthy@usda.gov         |
| Answering questions from the public about hiring authorities that take disability into account | 15                                  | 0         | 0               | Carlos Worthy<br>Director<br>carlos.worthy@usda.gov         |
| Architectural Barriers Act Compliance                                                          | 1                                   | 0         | 0               | Jose Avila<br>Director<br>jose.avila@usda.gov               |
| Processing reasonable accommodation requests from applicants and employees                     | 1                                   | 0         | 2               | Carlos Worthy<br>Director<br>carlos.worthy@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

Staff working in these programs attend classroom and webinar training, as well as attend conferences related to recruitment, hiring and reasonable accommodation. Staff utilize information and knowledge gained from these experiences to further educate the FNS workforce.

## 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> | C.4.e.1. Implement the Affirmative Action Plan for Individuals with Disabilities? [see 29 CFR §1614.203(d); MD-715, II(C)]                               |                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Objective</b>                               | Civil Rights Division and Human Resources Division will collaborate to implement the agency's Affirmative Action Plan for individuals with Disabilities. |                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Target Date</b>                             | Sep 24, 2024                                                                                                                                             |                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Completion Date</b>                         |                                                                                                                                                          |                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Planned Activities</b>                      | <u><b>Target Date</b></u>                                                                                                                                | <u><b>Completion Date</b></u> | <u><b>Planned Activity</b></u>                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                                                | Dec 1, 2023                                                                                                                                              |                               | Ensure Human Resources Division and Civil Rights Division have been provided the most recent Affirmative Action for Individuals with Disabilities.                                                                                         |
|                                                | Jan 9, 2024                                                                                                                                              |                               | Establish recurring date and time for Civil Rights Division and Human Resources Division to meet and discuss completion or modification dates for EEO Plan Objectives listed in Affirmative Action Plan for Individuals with Disabilities. |
|                                                | Apr 10, 2024                                                                                                                                             |                               | If modification dates are required, identify barrier(s) impeding progression of planned activity to complete objective.                                                                                                                    |
|                                                | Jun 27, 2024                                                                                                                                             |                               | Once barriers are identified, create action plan to address barriers. If barriers are unable to be removed, present identified barriers to Seniors leaders.                                                                                |
|                                                | Sep 24, 2024                                                                                                                                             |                               | Once objective is complete, Civil Rights Division and Human Resources Division implement Affirmative Action Plan for Individuals with Disabilities.                                                                                        |
| <b>Accomplishments</b>                         | <u><b>Fiscal Year</b></u>                                                                                                                                | <u><b>Accomplishment</b></u>  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |

## 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.

FNS Diversity and Inclusion staff worked with Department of Labor on highlighting a recruiting tool called "Workforce Recruitment Program" or WRP. The Department of Labor were guest speakers at the Disability Employee Awareness Month event. Developed a Hiring Authorities resource guide that details various competitive, non-competitive, and other special hiring authorities. HR and the hiring manager conducted a strategic recruitment conversation which provides an opportunity for HR to educate managers on special hiring authorities, including those for PWD.

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

FNS utilizes multiple pathways to recruit for PWD and PWTD, including Schedule A and 30 Percent or More Disabled Veterans. These allow the Agency to fill critical vacancies with quality candidates, in a timely manner. HRD provides

resources and education to hiring managers on the benefits of utilizing these flexibilities to hire diverse candidates to include PWD and PWTD.

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

In order to be eligible for employment through noncompetitive appointment for PWD, job seekers must provide documentation of their disability. Such documentation is used to verify that the individual being hired is indeed a person with a disability. This documentation must be attached with the applicant's resume. Documentation of eligibility for employment under Schedule A can be obtained from a licensed medical professional (e.g., a physician or other medical professional certified to practice medicine by a state, the District of Columbia, or a U.S. territory; a licensed vocational rehabilitation specialist; or any Federal, State or agency of the District of Columbia or a U.S. territory that issues or provides disability benefits). Once the applicant is found eligible, the HR staffing team will share the application with the hiring manager who submitted a vacancy for posting. Below is a snapshot of the steps taken when reviewing and placing the applicant: Hiring Manager partners with HR to complete the hiring package. A complete hiring package must include: 1) Recruit 52 Form 2) Schedule A candidate's application and 3) PD and cover sheet for each grade. HR will determine the candidate's qualifications, and if the candidate qualifies for the position, proceed with the hiring action.

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

Answer Yes

The Agency has provided several sessions in FY 2022 for hiring managers about the recruitment and hiring process, including competitive and non-competitive hiring authorities. This was also provided twice in FY 2022 to new FNS supervisors as part of their training requirements. Additionally, an FNS Hiring Authorities resource guide was developed.

## B. PLAN TO ESTABLISH CONTACTS WITH DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT ORGANIZATIONS

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

The Agency has established a partnership with various networks to assist in identifying and hiring PWD and PWTD over the past several years, however, the effectiveness of these relationships was limited within the shared service relationship FNS previously operated under. Now that FNS retained its delegated hiring authority and built an internal staffing and recruiting team, the Agency plans to do more focused and targeted outreach to organizations and networks for PWD and PWTD.

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

1. Using the goals of 12% for PWD and 2% for PWTD as the benchmarks, do triggers exist for PWD and/or PWTD among the new hires in the permanent workforce? If "yes", please describe the triggers below.
  - a. New Hires for Permanent Workforce (PWD) Answer No
  - b. New Hires for Permanent Workforce (PWTD) Answer No

The permanent hiring rate for employees with disabilities (30.95%) in FY23 was above the Federal goal of 12%. The permanent hiring rate for employees with targeted disabilities (2.98%) was above the Federal goal of 2%.

| New Hires                 | Total<br>(#) | 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 No

b. New Hires for MCO (PWTD) Answer No

No triggers exist for PWD and/or PWTD among new hires for New Hires (Table B6). The hiring rate for employees with disabilities (33.09%) was above the Federal goal of 12%. The hiring rate for employees with targeted disabilities (2.94%) was above the Federal goal of 2%.

| New Hires to Mission-Critical Occupations | Total<br>(#) | 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 Yes

b. Qualified Applicants for MCO (PWTD) Answer Yes

A trigger exists among the qualified PWD internal applicants (8.42%) as it relates to the relevant applicant pool for PWD (18.53%). A trigger exists among the qualified PTWD internal applicants (3.16%) as it relates to the relevant applicant pool for PTWD (4.28%).

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

a. Promotions for MCO (PWD) Answer Yes

b. Promotions for MCO (PWTD) Answer Yes

A trigger exists for PWD (16.20%) among employees promoted in MCOs using the qualified applicant pool (18.53%). A trigger exists for PTWD (3.35%) among employees promoted in MCOs using the qualified applicant pool (4.28%).

## 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.

All employees, regardless of disability status may participate in the Employee Development Program/National Training Program, which is designed to satisfy the occupationally specific, task-oriented training required of an employee to be successful in their job and be competitive for advancement to the higher grades.

### B. CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITES

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

FNS provides employees in grades GS-5 through GS-15 with leadership development training, professional skills development, and rotational/detail opportunities on an ongoing basis. SES personnel development is managed by the USDA Office of Executive Services. We utilize a Leadership Continuum methodology to incorporate targeted competencies into each of the development programs, with increasing competency levels as employee's progress through the various programs. FNS does not ask applicants to any of the following programs to disclose if they have a disability. The following describes the leadership continuum programs available to employees. Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program (SESCDP) is hosted by USDA, which solicits applicants from the Agencies. This program is for high performing GS-14's and GS-15's and is designed to further develop SES candidates' competencies in each of the Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs). Graduates of SESCDPs who are certified by OPM's Qualifications Review Board (QRB) may receive an initial career SES appointment without further competition. QRB-certified graduates typically start their SESCDP with experiences normally obtained at the GS-15 level, or equivalent. Federal Executive Institute (FEI) programs are designed to help executives perform effectively as the top leaders of the American civil service. As leaders with responsibility for running the agencies that defend, protect, regulate, and support our nation and its citizens, and for working effectively with each Presidential Administration and its political appointees, Federal executives are unique among managers. Performance is not measured by "bottom line" numbers or market indicators. Stewardship of the public trust requires a clear understanding of the basic values that support the democratic process and literacy in the fundamental documents that express those belief systems. Managerial Excellence Program (MEP), is a unique learning experience for professional and personal growth, serves to develop FNS leadership by providing high-quality training to current managers who want to lead the organization in meeting its future challenges. Leadership Institute (LI) is comprised of three components: training, developmental assignments, and leading teams. The first component is classroom-based training. The second component is developmental assignments which are self-directed. Each participant will identify activities, including, but not limited to, a 30-day rotation, individual change initiative, and a capstone project. The final component is leading teams, where the participants will work on an individual change initiative and a capstone project. Presidential Management Council Inter-Agency Rotation (PM CIR) enables emerging Federal leaders to expand their leadership competencies, broaden their organizational experiences, and foster networks they can leverage in the future.

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 (%) |
| Other Career Development Programs | 86                 | 61            | 0              | 0             | 0              | 0             |

| Career Development Opportunities | Total Participants |               | PWD            |               | PWTD           |               |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
|                                  | Applicants (#)     | Selectees (#) | Applicants (%) | Selectees (%) | Applicants (%) | Selectees (%) |
| Internship Programs              | N/A                | N/A           | NA             | N/A           | N/A            | N/A           |
| Fellowship Programs              | N/A                | N/A           | N/A            | N/A           | N/A            | N/A           |
| Mentoring Programs               | N/A                | N/A           | N/A            | N/A           | N/A            | N/A           |
| Coaching Programs                | N/A                | N/A           | N/A            | N/A           | N/A            | N/A           |
| Detail Programs                  | N/A                | N/A           | N/A            | N/A           | N/A            | N/A           |
| Training Programs                | 55                 | 32            | 0              | 0             | 4.34%          | 4.34%         |

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

N/A

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

N/A

## 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

Inclusion rate for PWD is 15.48%. Time Off Awards 1-10 hours 9.70% 11-20 hours 5.05% 21-30 hours 2.04% 31-40 hours 0.39% 41 or more hours 0% Cash Awards \$501-\$999 10.97% \$2000-\$2999 9.90% \$3000-\$3999 1.65% \$4000-\$4999 0.87% \$5000-\$5999 0.00% Other Awards QSI 0.48% Performance Based Pay Increase 0.10% Inclusion rate for PWTD is 3.58% Time Off Awards 11-20 hours 2.10% 21-30 hours 0.84% 31-40 hours 0.84% 41 or more hours 0% Cash Awards \$3000-\$3999 1.26% \$4000-\$4999 0.84% \$5000-\$5999 0.00% Other Awards QSI 0.84% Performance Based Pay Increase 0.42%

| Time-Off Awards                            | Total (#) | Reportable Disability % | Without Reportable Disability % | Targeted Disability % | Without Targeted Disability % |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 hours: Awards Given | 678       | 32.47                   | 40.41                           | 36.11                 | 31.36                         |

| Time-Off Awards                                 | Total (#) | Reportable Disability % | Without Reportable Disability % | Targeted Disability % | Without Targeted Disability % |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 Hours: Total Hours       | 5218      | 248.05                  | 310.53                          | 294.44                | 233.90                        |
| Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 Hours: Average Hours     | 7.7       | 2.48                    | 0.66                            | 11.32                 | -0.22                         |
| Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 hours: Awards Given     | 292       | 16.88                   | 16.87                           | 6.94                  | 19.92                         |
| Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 Hours: Total Hours      | 4668      | 270.78                  | 271.06                          | 116.67                | 317.80                        |
| Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 Hours: Average Hours    | 15.99     | 5.21                    | 1.38                            | 23.33                 | -0.32                         |
| Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 hours: Awards Given     | 105       | 6.82                    | 5.65                            | 2.78                  | 8.05                          |
| Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 Hours: Total Hours      | 2580      | 170.78                  | 137.84                          | 75.00                 | 200.00                        |
| Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 Hours: Average Hours    | 24.57     | 8.13                    | 2.09                            | 37.50                 | -0.83                         |
| Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 hours: Awards Given     | 50        | 4.22                    | 2.40                            | 2.78                  | 4.66                          |
| Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 Hours: Total Hours      | 1960      | 161.04                  | 95.21                           | 111.11                | 176.27                        |
| Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 Hours: Average Hours    | 39.2      | 12.39                   | 3.40                            | 55.56                 | -0.78                         |
| 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     | 606       | 36.69                   | 36.73                           | 38.89                 | 36.02                         |
| Cash Awards: \$501 - \$999: Total Amount     | 464821    | 27588.64                | 28426.63                        | 29956.94              | 26866.10                      |
| Cash Awards: \$501 - \$999: Average Amount   | 767.03    | 244.15                  | 66.26                           | 1069.89               | -7.78                         |
| Cash Awards: \$1000 - \$1999: Awards Given   | 2805      | 137.66                  | 172.35                          | 133.33                | 138.98                        |
| Cash Awards: \$1000 - \$1999: Total Amount   | 3422544   | 165290.26               | 211610.96                       | 165925.00             | 165096.61                     |
| Cash Awards: \$1000 - \$1999: Average Amount | 1220.16   | 389.83                  | 105.12                          | 1728.39               | -18.54                        |
| Cash Awards: \$2000 - \$2999: Awards Given   | 785       | 33.12                   | 51.37                           | 30.56                 | 33.90                         |
| Cash Awards: \$2000 - \$2999: Total Amount   | 1791045   | 74353.90                | 117477.31                       | 68945.83              | 76003.81                      |
| Cash Awards: \$2000 - \$2999: Average Amount | 2281.59   | 728.96                  | 195.80                          | 3133.90               | -4.75                         |
| Cash Awards: \$3000 - \$3999: Awards Given   | 127       | 5.52                    | 8.65                            | 4.17                  | 5.93                          |
| Cash Awards: \$3000 - \$3999: Total Amount   | 401828    | 17136.36                | 27384.25                        | 13027.78              | 18389.83                      |
| Cash Awards: \$3000 - \$3999: Average Amount | 3164      | 1008.02                 | 271.13                          | 4342.60               | -9.31                         |

| Cash Awards                                  | Total (#) | Reportable Disability % | Without Reportable Disability % | Targeted Disability % | Without Targeted Disability % |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Cash Awards: \$4000 - \$4999: Awards Given   | 86        | 2.92                    | 6.08                            | 2.78                  | 2.97                          |
| Cash Awards: \$4000 - \$4999: Total Amount   | 344725    | 11688.31                | 24377.14                        | 11111.11              | 11864.41                      |
| Cash Awards: \$4000 - \$4999: Average Amount | 4008.43   | 1298.70                 | 343.34                          | 5555.56               | 0.00                          |
| Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Awards Given    | 2         | 0.00                    | 0.17                            | 0.00                  | 0.00                          |
| Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Total Amount    | 10000     | 0.00                    | 856.16                          | 0.00                  | 0.00                          |
| Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Average Amount  | 5000      | 0.00                    | 428.08                          | 0.00                  | 0.00                          |

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

a. Pay Increases (PWD)

Answer Yes

b. Pay Increases (PWTD)

Answer Yes

Inclusion rate for PWD is 15.48%. QSI for PWD is 0.48%. Performance Based Pay Increase for PWD is 0.10%.  
Inclusion rate for PWTD is 3.58%. QSI for PWTD is 0.84%. Performance Based Pay Increase for PWTD is 0.42%.

| Other Awards                                  | Total (#) | Reportable Disability % | Without Reportable Disability % | Targeted Disability % | Without Targeted Disability % |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Total Performance Based Pay Increases Awarded | 15        | 0.32                    | 1.11                            | 1.39                  | 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

The agency does not have other types of employee recognition programs that collect disability status.

## 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 | Yes |
| ii. Internal Selections (PWD)          | Answer | Yes |
| d. Grade GS-13                         |        |     |
| i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) | Answer | No  |
| ii. Internal Selections (PWD)          | Answer | No  |

For Grade GS-14, no PWD or PWTD candidates were selected, although there were qualified internal PWD and PWTD candidates.

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 | No  |
| ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)          | Answer | Yes |

d. Grade GS-13

- |                                         |        |    |
|-----------------------------------------|--------|----|
| i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD) | Answer | No |
| ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)          | Answer | No |

For Grade GS-14, PWTD candidates were not selected, although there were qualified internal PWTD candidates. For Grade GS-13, one PWTD was selected.

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

- |                             |        |     |
|-----------------------------|--------|-----|
| a. New Hires to SES (PWD)   | Answer | 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 | Yes |

|                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| No PWD or PWTD were new hires in the GS-13 grade level, although there were qualified external 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 |

|                                   |
|-----------------------------------|
| There were no new hire vacancies. |
|-----------------------------------|

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

a. Executives

- |                                        |        |     |
|----------------------------------------|--------|-----|
| i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) | Answer | No  |
| ii. Internal Selections (PWD)          | Answer | Yes |

b. Managers

- |                                        |        |    |
|----------------------------------------|--------|----|
| i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) | Answer | No |
| ii. Internal Selections (PWD)          | Answer | No |

c. Supervisors

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

|                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| There were qualified PWD internal applicants for the Executive position. None were hired. |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

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 | Yes |
| ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)          | Answer | Yes |

## b. Managers

- |                                         |        |     |
|-----------------------------------------|--------|-----|
| i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD) | Answer | No  |
| ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)          | Answer | Yes |

## c. Supervisors

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

There were no qualified PWTD internal applicants for the Executive position. There were qualified PWTD internal applicants for the Manager position. None were hired. There were no supervisory positions.

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

- |                                    |        |     |
|------------------------------------|--------|-----|
| a. New Hires for Executives (PWD)  | Answer | N/A |
| b. New Hires for Managers (PWD)    | Answer | N/A |
| c. New Hires for Supervisors (PWD) | Answer | N/A |

No supervisory new hire positions.

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

- |                                     |        |     |
|-------------------------------------|--------|-----|
| a. New Hires for Executives (PWTD)  | Answer | N/A |
| b. New Hires for Managers (PWTD)    | Answer | N/A |
| c. New Hires for Supervisors (PWTD) | Answer | N/A |

No supervisory new hire positions.

## Section VI: Plan to Improve Retention of Persons with Disabilities

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

### A. VOLUNTARY AND INVOLUNTARY SEPARATIONS

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

Answer Yes

Eligible Schedule A employees with disabilities were converted.

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

a. Voluntary Separations (PWD)

Answer No

b. Involuntary Separations (PWD)

Answer No

The inclusion rate of voluntary separations in the FNS workforce for FY 2020 for individuals with disabilities (6.25%) was higher than the inclusion rate of persons with no disabilities (4.99%). The inclusion rate of involuntary separations in the FNS workforce for FY 2020 for individuals with disabilities (5.11%) was higher than the inclusion rate of persons with no disabilities (3.38%).

| Seperations                             | Total # | Reportable Disabilities % | Without Reportable Disabilities % |
|-----------------------------------------|---------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Permanent Workforce: Reduction in Force | 0       | 0.00                      | 0.00                              |
| Permanent Workforce: Removal            | 17      | 1.28                      | 0.91                              |
| Permanent Workforce: Resignation        | 21      | 1.60                      | 1.12                              |
| Permanent Workforce: Retirement         | 46      | 3.19                      | 2.51                              |
| Permanent Workforce: Other Separations  | 39      | 2.56                      | 2.16                              |
| Permanent Workforce: Total Separations  | 123     | 8.63                      | 6.70                              |

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

a. Voluntary Separations (PWTD)

Answer No

b. Involuntary Separations (PWTD)

Answer No

| Seperations                             | Total # | Targeted Disabilities % | Without Targeted Disabilities % |
|-----------------------------------------|---------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Permanent Workforce: Reduction in Force | 0       | 0.00                    | 0.00                            |
| Permanent Workforce: Removal            | 17      | 1.35                    | 0.96                            |
| Permanent Workforce: Resignation        | 21      | 2.70                    | 1.14                            |
| Permanent Workforce: Retirement         | 46      | 4.05                    | 2.57                            |
| Permanent Workforce: Other Separations  | 39      | 0.00                    | 2.33                            |
| Permanent Workforce: Total Separations  | 123     | 8.11                    | 7.00                            |

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.

No trigger exists involving the separation rate of PWD or PWTD.

## B. ACCESSIBILITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND FACILITIES

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

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

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/web-accessibility-statement>

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

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cr/section-508-rights>

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 Civil Rights Division will be completing building accessibility reviews through the EEO Compliance Review process. The agency continues modernization of conference rooms for an enhanced customer experience that provides capabilities for all meetings to be hybrid. Also, the agency incorporates reminders of how to utilize Closed Caption capabilities during meetings and events.

## 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.)

Total completed FY23 RA cases 69 Average Days: 22.42. Mean: 6 Min: 0 Max: 203 Before FY23, Reasonable Accommodation (RA) cases were not tracked in the Labor and Employee Relations Information System (LERIS), therefore making it impossible to report average processing times accurately. During FY23, Reasonable Accommodations Coordinator (RAC) responsibilities were transitioned from a single RAC to the Talent Management Branch (TMB) Business Partners when the RAC was detailed and subsequently reassigned to the department. All TMB business partners received RA training to account for skill gaps in processing requests for accommodation. Additional responsibilities, including RA and Telework Coordinator responsibilities, were realigned to the TMB business partners. TMB currently has 5 FTEs responsible for handling RA cases. Many cases that exceeded 30 days were during the RA transition period and involve requests for equipment. All employees received RA training in New Employee Orientation, and RA training is provided to other staff areas as requested.

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.

All Talent Management Branch staff received Reasonable Accommodations (RA) training during FY23 as part of the transition of responsibilities. The Reasonable Accommodation Mailbox has been instituted as the primary point of contact for all RA requests, alleviating delays resulting from employees being out of the office or requests getting lost in individual mailboxes. All RA requests are acknowledged within 1 – 3 business days. Process improvements should result in substantially fewer days from start to finish in the RA process.

## 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.

FNS did not have any employee request the use of PAS therefore data was unavailable for evaluation of the effectiveness of the policies, procedures, and practices.

## Section VII: EEO Complaint and Findings Data

### A. EEO COMPLAINT DATA INVOLVING HARASSMENT

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

Answer Yes

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

Answer No

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

The agency has no findings of discrimination alleging harassment based on disability.

### 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.

The agency had one finding of discrimination involving the failure to provide a reasonable accommodation. The EEO Director makes recommendations for corrective action regarding EEO violations and according to DM 4300-001 corrective actions require concurrence of HR. While reaching out to Human Resources Division to provide information on corrective action status, required via Elijah E. Cummings Federal Employee Antidiscrimination Act of 2020 Report, Civil Rights Division was informed that after reviewing the case, Human Resources Division conducted a comprehensive analysis of the facts of the case and the outcome resulted in implementation of the corrective measures identified in the analysis by providing focused accommodation of last resort training to all human resources specialists engaged in the reasonable accommodation process.

## Section VIII: Identification and Removal of Barriers

*Element D of MD-715 requires agencies to conduct a barrier analysis when a trigger suggests that a policy, procedure, or practice may be impeding the employment opportunities of a protected EEO group.*

- 1.

Has the agency identified any barriers (policies, procedures, and/or practices) that affect employment opportunities for PWD and/or PWTD?

Answer No

2. Has the agency established a plan to correct the barrier(s) involving PWD and/or PWTD?

Answer No

3. Identify each trigger and plan to remove the barrier(s), including the identified barrier(s), objective(s), responsible official(s), planned activities, and, where applicable, accomplishments

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

No factors exist at present.

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

N/A

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

N/A