

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 No

b. Cluster GS-11 to SES (PWD)

Answer No

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 No

b. Cluster GS-11 to SES (PWTD)

Answer No

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					
Grades GS-1 to GS-10					

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

Human Resources Division's (HRD) Talent acquisition Branch (TAB) Business Partners discuss targeted recruitment, including to PWD/PWTD, as part of the Strategic Recruitment Discussion directly with Agency hiring managers. Through these efforts, determinations are made about appropriate recruitment venues and the sourcing of non-competitive applicants through appointment authorities which allow Agencies to hire highly qualified PWD/PWTD who may be trained and converted to permanent positions at the end of their trial period. When posting opportunities through merit promotion beyond FNS/USDA, each opportunity announcement solicits applications from PWD/PWTD.

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

- 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

- 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	Elisha Owens IT Project Manager elisha.owens@usda.gov
Processing applications from PWD and PWTD	12	0	0	Kimberly Parent Supervisory HR Specialist kimberly.parent@usda.gov
Answering questions from the public about hiring authorities that take disability into account	12	0	0	Kimberly Parent Supervisory HR Specialist kimberly.parent@usda.gov
Special Emphasis Program for PWD and PWTD	0	0	5	Alexei Schnakenburg Reg CR Officer - WRO alexei.schnakenburg@usda.gov
Architectural Barriers Act Compliance	1	0	0	Jose Avila Director jose.avila@usda.gov
Processing reasonable accommodation requests from applicants and employees	0	0	5	Michelle Sandoval Branch Chief, Talent Management Division michelle.sandoval2@usda.gov

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

Answer Yes

During FY 2024, the agency provided disability program staff with sufficient training to carry out their responsibilities. Here are some of the trainings they attended: -2/8/2024: Training for Talent Management Branch new team members - RA Procedures at FNS -2/21/2024: RA Process and Disability Discrimination presented by CRD and OGC -5/2/2024: TMB team tour of Target Center - education on available equipment to support employee needs -6/28/2024: Deaf and Hard of Hearing Training for all Reasonable Accommodations Coordinators (RAC) -9/23/2024: TMB Team training from USDA RAC -9/25/2024: RAC Community of Practice meeting with all USDA and subagency RACs

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	Civil Rights Division and Human Resources Division will collaborate to implement the agency’s Affirmative Action Plan for individuals with Disabilities.		
Target Date	Sep 24, 2024		
Completion Date			
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>	<u>Planned Activity</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.
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	
	2024	The FY 2023 Affirmative Action Plan for People with Disabilities (AAP) was distributed to the MD-715 Working Group on April 17, 2024. Collaboration. The AAP Implementation Planning Committee was organized to foster collaboration with CRD and HRD on the 2023 implementation of the AAP for Individuals with Disabilities, a deficiency identified in the 2023 MD-715 Report. During the first AAP Planning Committee meeting on February 29, 2024, the committee created a list of activities to begin collaborating on the AAP, one of which was to breakdown into sub-groups based on different topics. - On March 21, 2024, the group decided to create two sub-groups, the Metrics Group and the Self-Identification Group. - The Metrics Group: Their main goal is to create quantitative and qualitative benchmarks and define words like “effective”, “sufficient”, “efficient” in accordance with the regulations that govern the Affirmative Action Plan for People with Disabilities. This group is not fully staffed. - The Self-Identification Group: Their main goal is to focus on strategies to improve or increase employees self-identifying via EPP or SF-256. As a part of their activities, the Self-Identification Group drafted an email notification that will come from senior leadership that will inform FNS employees of the importance of Self-Identification and the new standard being implemented by OMB highlighting the new information. The next meeting of the FNS Implementation of AAP Group is scheduled for January 21, 2025, and at this meeting this email notification will be discussed.	

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 is committed to recruiting and employing disabled veterans to enhance the performance capacity of the Agency's workforce by applying their competencies to support accomplishment of our mission. FNS hires disabled veterans to fulfill staffing needs while ensuring that our workforce reflects our nation. In FY 2024, FNS increased its candidate sourcing activities by 30% targeting disabled veterans and military spouses. Approaches implemented this year were: 1. Direct Outreach and Partnerships with veterans Organizations: Engaging with organizations such as the Veterans Employment center, Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and American Job Centers which helps agencies connect directly with disabled veterans. 2. Targeted Job Fairs and Hiring Events: In partnership with the Department, FNS participate in 3 hiring events/info-sessions targeting Veterans with disabilities (Hire our Heroes). 3. Educational Training: Provided mandatory training on the Veterans Appointing Authorities for all Hiring Officials and Human Resources Specialists to increase awareness of veteran hiring regulations and employment consideration of qualified disabled veterans for Agency careers. 4. Expanded usage of social media platforms; including Diversity jobs (under the Biden-Harris Administration), Glassdoor, and others; to market and promote career opportunities with Veterans. • Vacancy Announcements: FNS will continue to include detailed information on hiring authorities for recruitment and selection of Veterans with Disabilities and how to request reasonable accommodations. • Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP): The Selective Placement Coordinator will continue to assist hiring managers on identifying potential candidates using the (WRP) database. • FNS will participate in the Pathways Program to provide internship opportunities for college students with disabilities, including Veterans with Disabilities.

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 will continue to use recruiting strategies that are both inclusive and specifically tailor to PWD and PWTD. Some of our approaches are: 1. Partner with Disability Organizations and Advocacy Groups: These groups provide direct access to PWD and can help promote job openings tailored to their skills and experiences. 2. Attend Job fairs and Career Events for PWD: FNS will continue to join forces with OHRM to provide virtual sessions, in-person, and webinars. 3. Created targeted online job listings: FNS posted openings on veteran-specific job boards and shared all vacancies with various organizations. 4. Continue to provide reasonable accommodations for applicants. 5. OPM Agency Talent Portal (ATP): FNS will continue to encourage applicants to make their resume searchable in the ATP.

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.

Upon reviewing each application, if applicant is claiming to be Schedule A eligible, the staffer will review the documentation provided which may include, a letter from the VA stating the disability percentage, a letter from a medical doctor, or documentation from the Vocational Rehabilitation Center. Once the documentation is reviewed and supports eligibility, application will be determined eligible and will move to the next step which is to determine if the applicant meets the position's qualifications requirement. If the aforementioned steps are both yes, the application will be deemed both eligible and qualified and depending on the type of announcement, the application will be added to a certificate which consequently will be shared with the selecting official for that position.

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

HRD continues to provide semi-annual training to all supervisors and managers in all hiring authorities to include Schedule A, VRA, VEOA and more. In addition, training by requests is also provided.

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.

Under the Biden-Harris Administration, establishing and maintaining contacts with disability organizations to support employment efforts requires a strategic, inclusive, and sustained approach. Among FNS efforts are: 1. Initial Outreach and Relationship Building - Research and Identify Organizations: Start by identifying local, regional, and national disability organizations, advocacy groups, and nonprofits that focus on employment for individuals with disabilities. - Tailored Communication: Reach out with a clear explanation of your goals, demonstrating an understanding of the organization's mission and how collaboration could benefit both parties. - Participate in Events: Attend workshops, conferences, and events organized by disability organizations to network and build authentic relationships. 2. Collaboration on Employment Initiatives - Create Inclusive Job Opportunities: Work with organizations to design roles, internships, and training programs that align with the abilities and interests of individuals with disabilities. - Partner on Recruitment Efforts: Collaborate on outreach strategies, job fairs, or open houses to connect with potential candidates. - Seek Guidance on Accessibility: Use their expertise to make your workplace and recruitment processes accessible, including accommodations and assistive technology. 3. Establishing Formal Partnerships - Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs): Develop agreements to formalize partnerships, outlining roles, responsibilities, and shared goals. - Long-Term Projects: Partner on grant applications, workforce development programs, or educational campaigns that promote disability inclusion (under the Biden-Harris Administration). 4. Ongoing Communication and Feedback - Regular Check-Ins: Maintain consistent communication to review progress, discuss challenges, and adjust strategies as needed. - Feedback Loops: Actively seek input from the organizations on improving employment practices for people with disabilities.

C. PROGRESSION TOWARDS GOALS (RECRUITMENT AND HIRING)

- 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

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				

- 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

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 Yes

b. Qualified Applicants for MCO (PWTD) Answer Yes

No PWD applicants deemed qualified for internal competitive promotions for 0101 – Social Science, 0630 – Dietitian and Nutritionist and 1109 – Grants Management. For internal competitive promotions, 0510 – Accounting, 0630 – Dietitian and Nutritionist, and 1109 – Grants Management, had disproportionately fewer disabled applicants assessed as qualified than those without an identified disability. Targeted disabilities: disparities noted in percentage of PWTD deemed qualified compared to PWD for 0301- Miscellaneous Administration and Program and 2210 – Information Technology Management. Targeted represented 51.5% and 55.5% of the PWD applicants but only 25% and 0%, respectively, of PWD deemed qualified.

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

a. Promotions for MCO (PWD) Answer No

b. Promotions for MCO (PWTD) Answer No

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.

To provide internal advancement opportunities during FY 2024, FNS offered programs to facilitate promoting and developing of all employees including Veterans with Disabilities and Veterans with Disabilities of 30% or more. Employees are encouraged to work with their supervisors to develop Individual Development Plans along with training opportunities. FNS learning continuum covers grades GS-5 through GS-15 and is administered through Federal Executive Institute, Management Excellence Program, Leadership Institute, and Career Development Program.

B. CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITES

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

Leadership Institute, Managerial Excellence Program, Executive Candidate Development Readiness Program are career development programs that are competitively open to all FNS employees. The participation is reflected in the “other Career Development Programs” row in the table.

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

Career Development Opportunities	Total Participants		PWD		PWTD	
	Applicants (#)	Selectees (#)	Applicants (%)	Selectees (%)	Applicants (%)	Selectees (%)
Internship Programs	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
Detail Programs	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Coaching Programs	26	26	11%	11%	N/A	N/A
Training Programs	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Career Development Programs	198	92	12%	6%	N/A	N/A

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

For “Coaching Programs” and “Other Career Development Programs” the percentage ratio for applicants to selectees demonstrate a level of participation below the population in our program opportunities.

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

Targeted data not available.

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

Time Off Awards: Lower than expected participation rate– Time-Off Awards: 11-20 Hours (251 awarded) of 22.75% (13.55% (34)

awarded compared to 17.54% population (~44)) for PWD. For PWTD, delta of 35.23% (2.39% (6) awarded vs. 3.69% population (~9)). Both exceed their respective target rates. Lower than expected participation rate – Time-Off Awards: 21-30 Hours (69 awarded) of 21.41% (2.90% (2) awarded compared to 3.69% population (~3)) for PWTD. Rate exceeds target. Lower than expected participation rate – Time-Off Awards: 31-40 Hours (52 awarded) of 12.31% (15.38% (8) awarded compared to 17.54% population (~9)) for PWD. Rate exceeds target. Cash Awards: Lower than expected participation rate – Cash Awards: \$500 and Under (140 awarded) of 22.49% (2.86% (4) awarded compared to 3.69% population (~5)) for PWTD. Rate exceeds target. Lower than expected participation rate – Cash Awards: \$2,000 - \$2,999 (388 awarded) of 13.28% (15.21% (59) awarded compared to 17.54% population (~68)) for PWD. For PWTD, delta of 23.04% (2.84% (11) awarded vs. 3.69% population (~14)). Both exceed their respective target rates. Lower than expected participation rate – Cash Awards: \$3,000 - \$3,999 (145 awarded) of 37.12% (11.03% (16) awarded compared to 17.54% population (~25)) for PWD. For PWTD, delta of 43.90% (2.07% (3) awarded vs. 3.69% population (~5)). Fails to meet target rate for PWD. Lower than expected participation rate – Cash Awards: \$4,000 - \$4,999 for PWTD (31 awarded) of 100% (0% (0) awarded compared to 3.69% of population (~1)). Fails to meet target rate for PWTD.

Time-Off Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 hours: Awards Given	463	24.04	27.30	29.41	22.68
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 Hours: Total Hours	3641	190.21	216.19	229.41	180.30
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 Hours: Average Hours	7.86	2.35	0.69	11.47	0.04
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 hours: Awards Given	251	10.09	14.52	8.82	10.41
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 Hours: Total Hours	4152	170.62	236.83	132.35	180.30
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 Hours: Average Hours	16.54	5.02	1.43	22.06	0.71
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 hours: Awards Given	69	5.34	3.41	2.94	5.95
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 Hours: Total Hours	1713	131.75	84.78	70.59	147.21
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 Hours: Average Hours	24.83	7.32	2.17	35.29	0.25
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 hours: Awards Given	52	2.37	3.41	2.94	2.23
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 Hours: Total Hours	1944	92.58	126.68	117.65	86.25
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 Hours: Average Hours	37.38	11.57	3.25	58.82	-0.37
Time-Off Awards 41 or more Hours: Awards Given	100	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	433	27.30	24.58	39.71	24.16
Cash Awards: \$501 - \$999: Total Amount	320184	20022.55	18210.59	29113.24	17724.54
Cash Awards: \$501 - \$999: Average Amount	739.45	217.64	64.81	1078.26	0.08
Cash Awards: \$1000 - \$1999: Awards Given	1719	91.99	98.43	89.71	92.57
Cash Awards: \$1000 - \$1999: Total Amount	2038563	109941.25	116484.86	107241.18	110623.79

Cash Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Cash Awards: \$1000 - \$1999: Average Amount	1185.9	354.65	103.54	1758.06	-0.12
Cash Awards: \$2000 - \$2999: Awards Given	388	17.51	23.71	16.18	17.84
Cash Awards: \$2000 - \$2999: Total Amount	871416	38293.77	53779.09	35845.59	38912.64
Cash Awards: \$2000 - \$2999: Average Amount	2245.92	649.05	198.45	3258.69	-10.64
Cash Awards: \$3000 - \$3999: Awards Given	145	4.75	9.36	4.41	4.83
Cash Awards: \$3000 - \$3999: Total Amount	459245	15133.53	29523.18	14705.88	15241.64
Cash Awards: \$3000 - \$3999: Average Amount	3167.21	945.85	275.92	4901.96	-54.21
Cash Awards: \$4000 - \$4999: Awards Given	31	1.78	1.84	0.00	2.23
Cash Awards: \$4000 - \$4999: Total Amount	128420	7513.35	7592.30	0.00	9412.64
Cash Awards: \$4000 - \$4999: Average Amount	4142.58	1252.23	361.54	0.00	1568.77
Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Awards Given	3	0.00	0.17	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Total Amount	15050	0.00	879.27	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Average Amount	5016.67	0.00	439.63	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 No

Lower than expected participation rate – Quality Step Increases (27 awarded) of 36.66% (11.11% (3) awarded compared to 17.54% population (~5)) for PWD. Fails to meet target rate for PWD. Lower than expected participation rate – Performance Based Pay Incentive (19 awarded) of 70.01% (5.26% (1) awarded compared to 17.54% population (~3)) for PWD. Fails to meet target rate for PWD.

Other Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Total Performance Based Pay Increases Awarded	19	0.30	1.40	1.47	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 N/A

ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Answer N/A

d. Grade GS-13

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Answer No

ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Answer No

While representing 18.92% of the agency, PWD represented 14.02% of promotions – a delta of 25.98%. Rate meets the target. For GS -13 internal competitive promotions, delta of 23.25%, only 7 out of 52 referred applicants were PWD. Fails to meet target rate for PWD. For 1109 – Grants Management, 0630 – Dietitian and Nutritionist, 0101 – Social Science, none of the persons with disabilities, targeted or otherwise, were qualified.

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

While representing 3.82% of the agency, PWTD represented 2.65% of promotions – a delta of 30.63%. Rate meets the target. For 2210 – Informational Technology Management, out of five applicants with a targeted disability, none were qualified. For 1109 – Grants Management, 0630 – Dietitian and Nutritionist, 0101 – Social Science, none of the persons with disabilities, targeted or otherwise, were qualified.

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 | No |

For PWD, 18.92% of Critical Occupations were PWD. New hires were above target with actuals at 38.46%, a delta of 103.28%. Rate far exceeds target.

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 | No |

For PWTD, 3.82% of Critical Occupations were PWTD. New hires were below target with actuals at 3.08%, a delta of –19.37%. Rate meets the target.

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 | No |
|--|--------|----|

ii. Internal Selections (PWD)

Answer Yes

c. Supervisors

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD)

Answer N/A

ii. Internal Selections (PWD)

Answer N/A

No PWDs were selected out of the 6 individuals that were qualified.

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 (PWTB)

Answer No

ii. Internal Selections (PWTB)

Answer Yes

c. Supervisors

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTB)

Answer N/A

ii. Internal Selections (PWTB)

Answer N/A

No PWTBs were selected out of the 2 individuals that were qualified.
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7. Using the qualified applicant pool as the benchmark, does your agency have a trigger involving PWD among the selectees for new hires to supervisory positions? If “yes”, describe the trigger(s) in the text box. Select “n/a” if the applicant data is not available for your agency, and describe your plan to provide the data in the text box.

a. New Hires for Executives (PWD)

Answer N/A

b. New Hires for Managers (PWD)

Answer N/A

c. New Hires for Supervisors (PWD)

Answer N/A

There were no new hire positions.

8. Using the qualified applicant pool as the benchmark, does your agency have a trigger involving PWTB 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 (PWTB)

Answer N/A

b. New Hires for Managers (PWTB)

Answer N/A

c. New Hires for Supervisors (PWTB)

Answer N/A

There were no 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

PWD: Other Separations – 45% PWD (18) out of 40 PWD: Total Separations – 28.42% PWD (27) out of 95

Separations	Total #	Reportable Disabilities %	Without Reportable Disabilities %
Permanent Workforce: Reduction in Force	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Removal	3	0.00	0.21
Permanent Workforce: Resignation	19	0.87	1.10
Permanent Workforce: Retirement	33	1.75	1.85
Permanent Workforce: Other Separations	40	5.25	1.51
Permanent Workforce: Total Separations	95	7.87	4.67

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

PWTD: Retirement – 6.06% PWTD (2) out of 33 PWTD: Other Separations – 20% PWTD (8) out of 40 PWTD: Total Separations – 10.53% PWTD (10) out of 95

Separations	Total #	Targeted Disabilities %	Without Targeted Disabilities %
Permanent Workforce: Reduction in Force	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Removal	3	0.00	0.17
Permanent Workforce: Resignation	19	0.00	1.10
Permanent Workforce: Retirement	33	2.90	1.79

Seperations	Total #	Targeted Disabilities %	Without Targeted Disabilities %
Permanent Workforce: Other Separations	40	11.59	1.85
Permanent Workforce: Total Separations	95	14.49	4.91

- 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.

From the limited data available, the majority of PWTD who voluntarily separated (10) transferred to another Agency. Listed reasons provided such as job duties/responsibilities, workload and a more attractive job offer elsewhere were cited as factors contributing to their decision to leave the Agency.

B. ACCESSIBILITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND FACILITIES

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

- 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.

Web Accessibility Statement | Food and Nutrition Service (usda.gov) <https://www.fns.usda.gov/web-accessibility-statement>

- 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> Notice of Rights - Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 | Food and Nutrition Service (usda.gov) (includes Architectural Barriers Act information) "To file a complaint against another agency, contact that agency's Section 508 Coordinator. Contact information for Section 508 Coordinators may be found at <https://section508.gov/tools/coordinator-listing>. Notice of Rights Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (42 USC § 4151-57) The Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) requires access to facilities that are designed, built, altered, or leased with Federal funds. The Access Board is the federal agency responsible for enforcing the ABA. The Access Board's accessibility standards are available on their website at <https://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/buildings-and-sites/about-the-aba-standards>. Information about filing an ABA complaint may be found at <https://www.access-board.gov/enforcement/>."

- 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.

FNS is implementing its agency-approved space optimization plan for Fiscal years 2024 –2027. The plan details a strategic and operational approach to analyze all spaces within its lease portfolio to ensure that it is compliant with all applicable Federal statutes and Department regulations. The outcome of the plan will enable FNS to achieve safety enhancements and utilization efficiencies for all members of its current and future workforce.

C. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION PROGRAM

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

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

Average time frame for processing was 19 days. For those employees where an RA was granted in FY24: • Age – 45 were over age 40 (79%), 12 were under age 40 (21%) • Race – 25 White (44%), 24 Black or African American (42%), 7 Asian (12%), 5 Hispanic or Latino (9%), 3 Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (5%), 2 American Indian or Alaska Native (4%), • Sex – 44 Female (77%), 13 male (23%) • Disability – For all of the RAs closed in FY24, the LERIS report shows that the employee's self-identified "Disability Code" in NFC was 00

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 requests for accommodation are responded to in a timely manner in accordance with Departmental Regulation. When there are delays in processing, related to additional requests for medical information or related to supervisor or employee availability, when practicable an interim accommodation is implemented on a temporary basis while the appropriate documentation is obtained to finalize the RA decision. Managers and supervisors receive training on Reasonable Accommodations, and they are provided with subject matter expert support during the RA decision making 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.

Requests for PAS are timely processed, and services are provided in a timely manner. RA training for managers and supervisors includes information on PAS. No PAS requests were received this reporting period.

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 Yes

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

Corrective measures are still pending. Elijah E. Cummings Federal Employee Antidiscrimination Act of 2020 Report | USDA

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.

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 N/A

3. Identify each trigger and plan to remove the barrier(s), including the identified barrier(s), objective(s), responsible official(s), planned activities, and, where applicable, accomplishments
4. Please explain the factor(s) that prevented the agency from timely completing any of the planned activities.

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