

Affirmative Action Plan for the Recruitment, Hiring, Advancement, and Retention of Persons with Disabilities

USDA Food and Nutrition Service - FY 2025

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: 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 Total	Reportable Disability Percentage (Numerical Goal 12 Percent)	Targeted Disability Total	Targeted Disability Percentage (Numerical Goal 2 Percent)
Grades GS-11 to SES	1148	222	19.34	43	3.75
Grades GS-1 to GS-10	32	12	37.50	4	12.50

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

As part of the agency's Strategic Recruitment discussions, HR staff engaged directly with hiring managers to address targeted recruitment of applicants, including those with disabilities (PWD) and those with targeted disabilities (PWTD). These conversations guide decisions on the most effective recruitment venues and the use of non competitive appointment authorities, enabling the agency to bring on highly qualified PWD/PWTD who can be trained and later converted to permanent positions following successful completion of their trial period. In addition, when vacancy announcements are posted through merit promotion outside of FNS/USDA, each posting explicitly invites applications from individuals with disabilities, including PWTD.

While staffing activity is currently limited, the agency remains committed to continuing these strategic recruitment discussions at such time staffing activity resumes.

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

The agency has designated sufficient qualified personnel to implement its disability program during the reporting period. While hiring has been paused since January, we have ensured that existing staff with expertise in disability programs to include reasonable accommodation remain actively engaged.

Key efforts include:

- Cross-functional collaboration: Personnel from EEO and HR continue to work together to provide consistent support to employees with disabilities.
- Training and knowledge retention: Staff have maintained up-to-date knowledge through ongoing professional development and internal training, allowing us to sustain program quality despite limited new hiring.
- Continuity of Service: By leveraging existing personnel and redistributing responsibilities where necessary, the agency has ensured uninterrupted delivery of disability-related services and accommodations.

Although the hiring freeze has limited staffing activity, the agency has strategically utilized its current workforce to maintain a strong disability program. We remain committed to supporting employees with disabilities and will continue to prioritize this program as staffing levels evolve.

- Identify all staff responsible for implementing the agency's disability employment program by the office, staff employment status, and responsible official.

Disability Program Task	Total Full Time	Total Part Time	Total Collateral Duty	Responsible Official (Name, Title, Office Email)
Section 508 Compliance	1	0	0	Elisha Owens IT Project Manager elisha.owens@usda.gov
Answering questions from the public about hiring authorities that take disability into account	7	0	0	Nikki Moreland Branch Chief Nikki.Moreland@usda.gov
Special Emphasis Program for PWD and PWTD	0	0	0	
Processing applications from PWD and PWTD	7	0	0	Nikki Moreland Branch Chief Nikki.Moreland@usda.gov
Architectural Barriers Act Compliance	1	0	0	Shawn Lewis Facilities Branch Chief Shawn.Lewis@usda.gov
Processing reasonable accommodation requests from applicants and employees	3	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

As of second quarter, FY 2025, all training budgets were discontinued.

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

As of second quarter, FY 2025, all training budgets were discontinued.

Section III: Program Deficiencies In The Disability Program

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Description of Program Deficiency	Implement the Affirmative Action Plan for Individuals with Disabilities? [see 29 CFR §1614.203(d); MD-715, II(C)]
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Planned Activities (Planned Activity)	Once barriers are identified, create action plan to address barriers. If barriers are unable to be removed, present identified barriers to Seniors leaders.
Planned Activities (Planned Activity)	Ensure Human Resources Division and Civil Rights Division have been provided the most recent Affirmative Action for Individuals with Disabilities.
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Responsible Official Name	Kenneth Hockenberry
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Responsible Official Name	Kenneth Hockenberry
Responsible Official Name	Kenneth Hockenberry

Responsible Official Title	Chief Human Capitol Officer
Responsible Official Title	Chief Human Capitol Officer
Responsible Official Title	Civil Rights Director
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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.

Although the agency has had limited staffing activity since January 2025, we have continued to ensure that our staffing processes remain supportive of individuals with disabilities and veterans. During this reporting period, our Staffing team has taken steps to maintain readiness for future hiring activity:

- Schedule A hiring authority: When hiring resumes, the agency remains fully prepared to utilize Schedule A to appoint individuals with disabilities, including those with targeted disabilities, into federal service.
- Veterans' resume file ("VET file"): We have established and maintained a centralized file of resumes from veterans and compensable veterans. This resource allows us to identify qualified candidates quickly and, in some cases, consider them before a position is formally announced.
- Commitment to Opportunities: Even without a dedicated recruitment program, our staffing practices continue to prioritize opportunities for individuals with disabilities and veterans.

These measures demonstrate the agency's ongoing commitment to supporting talent pipelines and ensuring that, once hiring activities resume, we can act swiftly to bring qualified Schedule A eligibles and veterans into the workforce.

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

The agency continues to recognize and utilize hiring authorities that specifically support individuals with disabilities (PWD), including those with targeted disabilities (PWTD), as a pathway into the permanent workforce. The Schedule A hiring authority remains a cornerstone of our approach, providing a streamlined, non competitive process to appoint qualified candidates with disabilities.

Through Schedule A, the agency has historically recruited and appointed PWD/PWTD into excepted service positions, with the opportunity for conversion into competitive service following two years of satisfactory performance. While external hiring has been paused under the current administration's hiring freeze, the agency has maintained readiness to act once hiring resumes. This includes:

- Retention of Schedule A procedures: HR staff remain trained and prepared to process Schedule A appointments efficiently when hiring authority is restored.
- Integration with staffing practices: The agency has embedded Schedule A considerations into its staffing framework, ensuring managers are aware of this pathway and prepared to use it.
- Commitment to conversion: Employees hired under Schedule A continue to be supported through training, accommodations, and career development, positioning them for conversion into permanent roles when eligible.

Although recruitment activities are temporarily suspended, the agency remains committed to leveraging Schedule A and other disability focused hiring authorities to expand opportunities for PWD and PWTD. Once the freeze is lifted, these authorities will be actively applied to strengthen our permanent workforce and advance our inclusion goals.

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.

When an applicant indicates Schedule A eligibility, HR staff carefully examine the supporting documentation submitted. This may include a letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs confirming disability rating, a physician's statement, or records from a Vocational Rehabilitation Center. If the documentation verifies eligibility, the application proceeds to the next stage, where staff assess whether the applicant meets the qualifications required for the position.

If both eligibility and qualifications are confirmed, the applicant is considered eligible and qualified. Depending on the nature of the announcement, the application is then placed on a certificate of eligible candidates, which is subsequently provided to the selecting official for consideration.

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

Resources regarding these authorities are available to all Supervisors and Managers via our internal MS Teams channel. Training is provided at the time of recruitment in a one-on-one setting with the hiring manager.

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's Recruitment Program serves as the primary vehicle for establishing and maintaining contacts with external organizations, including those that support PWD in securing and sustaining employment. This program facilitates outreach partnerships and helps us connect qualified candidates with career opportunities.

While staffing activity has been limited in 2025, the agency continues to uphold its commitment to establishing and maintaining contacts with organizations that assist PWD, including PWTD, in seeking and securing employment. For example:

- Ongoing collaboration with disability-focused employee resource groups and internal advisory committees.
- Exploring alternative outreach channels that do not require new hiring activity, such as informational sessions and resource-sharing with partner organizations.

The Agency remains committed to engage with external partners at such time that hiring activities resume.

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", describe the trigger(s) below.

a. New Hires for Permanent Workforce (PWD)

Answer: No

b. New Hires for Permanent Workforce (PWTD)

Answer: No

New Hires	Total (Number)	Reportable Disability Permanent Workforce (Percentage)	Reportable Disability Temporary Workforce (Percentage)	Targeted Disability Permanent Workforce (Percentage)	Targeted Disability Temporary Workforce (Percentage)
% of Total Applicants	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
% of Qualified Applicants	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
% of New Hires	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

- 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 (Number)	Reportable Disability New Hires (Percentage)	Targetable Disability New Hires (Percentage)
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. 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

0301 – There are no PWD or PWTD in GS-10, GS-8, and GS-6 levels

0340 – There are no PWD or PWTD in GS-14 levels

0343 – There are no PWD or PWTD in GS-15 level; There are no PWTD in GS-12, GS-11, and GS-9

0630 – There are no PWD or PWTD in GS-15 level; There are no PWTD in GS-GS-14, and GS-12 levels

1109 – There are no PWD or PWTD in GS 15 level; There are no PWTD in GS-14, GS-13, GS-11 levels

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

0301 – There are no PWD or PWTD in GS-10, GS-8, and GS-6 levels

0340 – There are no PWD or PWTD in GS-14 levels

0343 – There are no PWD or PWTD in GS-15 level; There are no PWTD in GS-12, GS-11, and GS-9

0630 – There are no PWD or PWTD in GS-15 level; There are no PWTD in GS-GS-14, and GS-12 levels

1109 – There are no PWD or PWTD in GS 15 level; There are no PWTD in GS-14, GS-13, GS-11 levels

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.

As of the first quarter FY 2025, to provide internal advancement opportunities during FY 2025, FNS offered programs to facilitate promoting and developing of all employees including Veterans with Disabilities and Veterans with Disabilities of 30 Percent or more. Employees were 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 was administered through Federal Executive Institute, Management Excellence Program, Leadership Institute, and Career Development Program. After the first quarter, all training budgets and programs were discontinued.

B. CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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

FNS utilizes Aglearn for its online, self-paced learning management system. In FY 2025 within AgLearn there was a multitude of options for employees to participate in career development, including both Percipio and Linked-In-Learning (USDA contract ended February 12, 2025) for supporting employee development. Additionally, there were several other forums in which employees could participate including career coaching and participating in team-based training opportunities.

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 Applicants (Percentage)	Total Participants Selectees (Percentage)	PWD Applicants (Percentage)	PWD Selectees (Percentage)	PWTD Applicants (Percentage)	PWTD Selectees (Percentage)
Mentoring Programs	2	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Coaching Programs	6	6	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Training Programs	89	25	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Other Career Development Programs	130	130	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
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
Detail Programs	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	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: N/A

b. Selections (PWD)

Answer: N/A

Demographics are not captured for PWD who may participate in career development programs.

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 (PWTB)

Answer: N/A

b. Selections (PWTB)

Answer: N/A

Demographics are not captured for PWTB who may participate in career development programs.

C. AWARDS

- Using the inclusion rate as the benchmark, does your agency have a trigger involving PWD and/or PWTB 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 (PWTB)

Answer: Yes

Time Off Awards (Goal 12 Percent for PWD and 2 Percent for PWTB) /(Award Participation Rate)

11-20H: PWTB have a less than expected participation rate (2 Percent/0.00 Percent)

21-30H: PWD have a less than expected participation rate (12 Percent/2.20 Percent)

PWTB have a less than expected participation rate (2 Percent/0.00 Percent)

31-40H: PWD and PWTB have less than expected participation rate (12 Percent/0.00 Percent and 2 Percent/0.00 Percent)

41+H: PWD and PWTB have less than expected participation rate (12 Percent/0.00 Percent and 2 Percent/0.00 Percent)

Cash Awards (Goal 12 Percent for PWD and 2 Percent for PWTB) /(Award Participation Rate):

Under \$500: PWD and PWTB have less than expected participation rate (12 Percent/1.10 Percent and 2 Percent/0.00 Percent)

\$500- Percent999: PWTB have less than expected participation rate (2 Percent/0.00 Percent)

\$1000-\$1999: PWD and PWTB participation rate was proportionate to individuals in the permanent workforce

\$2000-\$2999: PWD and PWTB have less than expected participation rate (12 Percent/4.40 Percent and 2 Percent/0.00 Percent)

\$3000-\$3999: PWD have less than expected participate rate (12 Percent/3.30 Percent)

\$4000-\$4999: PWD and PWTB have less than expected participate rate (12 Percent/1.10 Percent and 2 Percent/0.00 Percent)

\$5000+: No one in the agency received \$5000 or more.

Quality Step Increase: PWD and PWTB have less than expected participation rate (12 Percent/2.20 Percent and 2 Percent/0.00 Percent)

Time-Off Awards	Total (Number)	Reportable Disability (Percentage)	Without Reportable Disability (Percentage)	Targeted Disability (Percentage)	Without Targeted Disability (Percentage)
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 hours: Awards Given	222.00	20.72	79.28	1.80	98.20
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 Hours: Total Hours	1546.00	21.47	78.53	1.42	98.58
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 Hours: Average Hours	6.96	7.22	6.90	5.50	6.99
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 hours: Awards Given	47.00	17.02	82.98	0.00	100.00
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 Hours: Total Hours	730.00	16.44	83.56	0.00	100.00
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 Hours: Average Hours	15.53	15.00	15.64	0.00	15.53
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 hours: Awards Given	13.00	15.38	84.62	0.00	100.00
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 Hours: Total Hours	327.00	15.90	84.10	0.00	100.00
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 Hours: Average Hours	25.15	26.00	25.00	0.00	25.15
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 hours: Awards Given	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 Hours: Total Hours	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 Hours: Average Hours	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 41 or more Hours: Awards Given	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 41 or more Hours: Total Hours	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 41 or more Hours: Average Hours	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Cash Awards	Total (Number)	Reportable Disability (Percentage)	Without Reportable Disability (Percentage)	Targeted Disability (Percentage)	Without Targeted Disability (Percentage)
Cash Awards \$500 and Under: Awards Given	18.00	5.56	94.44	0.00	100.00
Cash Awards \$500 and Under: Total Amount	7100.00	6.00	94.00	0.00	100.00
Cash Awards \$500 and Under: Average Amount	394.44	426.00	392.59	0.00	394.44
Cash Awards: \$501 - \$999: Awards Given	51.00	21.57	78.43	0.00	100.00
Cash Awards: \$501 - \$999: Total Amount	39952.00	21.76	78.24	0.00	100.00
Cash Awards: \$501 - \$999: Average Amount	783.37	790.36	781.45	0.00	783.37
Cash Awards: \$1000 - \$1999: Awards Given	69.00	20.29	79.71	1.45	98.55
Cash Awards: \$1000 - \$1999: Total Amount	78445.00	19.52	80.48	1.36	98.64
Cash Awards: \$1000 - \$1999: Average Amount	1136.88	1093.93	1147.82	1066.00	1137.93
Cash Awards: \$2000 - \$2999: Awards Given	22.00	18.18	81.82	0.00	100.00
Cash Awards: \$2000 - \$2999: Total Amount	50000.00	18.00	82.00	0.00	100.00
Cash Awards: \$2000 - \$2999: Average Amount	2272.73	2250.00	2277.78	0.00	2272.73
Cash Awards: \$3000 - \$3999: Awards Given	7.00	14.29	85.71	0.00	100.00
Cash Awards: \$3000 - \$3999: Total Amount	21000.00	14.29	85.71	0.00	100.00
Cash Awards: \$3000 - \$3999: Average Amount	3000.00	3000.00	3000.00	0.00	3000.00
Cash Awards: \$4000 - \$4999: Awards Given	1.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Cash Awards: \$4000 - \$4999: Total Amount	4000.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Cash Awards: \$4000 - \$4999: Average Amount	4000.00	4000.00	0.00	0.00	4000.00
Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Awards Given	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Total Amount	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Average Amount	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

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

a. Awards, Bonuses, & Incentives (PWTB)

Answer: Yes

b. Pay Increases (PWTB)

Answer: Yes

PWD and PWTD have a less than expected participation rate in the quality step increase categories.

Other Awards	Total (Number)	Reportable Disability (Percentage)	Without Reportable Disability (Percentage)	Targeted Disability (Percentage)	Without Targeted Disability (Percentage)
Total Performance Based Pay Increases Awarded	15.00	6.67	93.33	6.67	93.33

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 participate in other types of employee recognition programs.

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 (PWTD) Answer: N/A
ii. Internal Selections (PWTD) Answer: N/A
b. Grade GS-15
i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD) Answer: No
ii. Internal Selections (PWTD) Answer: Yes
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

SES - There were no Internal applicants or Internal Selections.

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

Grade 15 – Although there were PWTD's, none were 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: No |

FNS was under a hiring freeze effective January 20, 2025.

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 |

FNS was under a hiring freeze effective January 20, 2025.

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

a. Executives

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

b. Managers

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

c. Supervisors

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

There are no Executive promotions for PWDs.

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

a. Executives

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

b. Managers

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

c. Supervisors

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

There are no Executive promotions for PWTDS.

There were no Manager qualified applicants or Internal selections for promotions.

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 |

FNS was under a hiring freeze effective January 20, 2025.

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 |

FNS was under a hiring freeze effective January 20, 2025.

Section VI: Plan to Improve Retention of Persons with Disabilities

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

A. VOLUNTARY AND INVOLUNTARY SEPARATIONS

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

Answer: No

The agency continues to support employees with disabilities and remains committed to fair treatment under Schedule A hiring authorities. However, during this reporting period, federal workforce policies were revised under the new Administration, which impacted conversion practices. Historically, the agency converted all eligible Schedule A employees with disabilities into the competitive service after two years of satisfactory service. With the transition to the new Administration, OPM issued updated guidance that altered conversion procedures. Specifically, agencies were directed to reassess excepted service appointments, and in some cases, conversion was delayed or replaced by reclassification under new categories such as Schedule Policy/Career. As a result, not all eligible Schedule A employees were converted during this reporting period. The agency remains committed to compliance with federal regulations and to supporting employees with disabilities through retention, reasonable accommodation, and career development opportunities, even as broader workforce policies evolve.

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

Voluntary separations for PWD were proportionate to those of persons without disabilities. Involuntary separations were for PWD were proportionate to those of persons without disabilities.

Separations	Total (Number)	Reportable Disabilities (Percentage)	Without Reportable Disabilities (Percentage)
Permanent Workforce: Reduction in Force	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Removal	14	2.51	0.79
Permanent Workforce: Resignation	316	39.75	21.77
Permanent Workforce: Retirement	271	17.99	22.46
Permanent Workforce: Other Separations	20	0.84	1.77
Permanent Workforce: Total Separations	621	61.09	46.80

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(s) in the text box.

a. Voluntary Separations (PWTD)

Answer: Yes

b. Involuntary Separations (PWTD)

Answer: Yes

Voluntary separations for PWTD were higher compared to those of persons without disabilities. Involuntary separations were higher for PWTD than those of persons without disabilities.

Separations	Total (Number)	Targeted Disabilities (Percentage)	Without Targeted Disabilities (Percentage)
Permanent Workforce: Reduction in Force	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Removal	14	4.00	1.00
Permanent Workforce: Resignation	316	18.00	25.50
Permanent Workforce: Retirement	271	24.00	21.51
Permanent Workforce: Other Separations	20	0.00	1.66
Permanent Workforce: Total Separations	621	46.00	49.67

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

The data from PWD represented approximately 22 Percent of the overall exit survey responses in FY25. 64 Percent of respondents indicated they left due to a variety of recent federal employment changes, such as return-to-office, deferred resignation and uncertainty with workforce restructuring. 28 Percent of respondents indicated they either retired, transferred to another Federal Agency or accepted a position in the private sector. The remaining 8 Percent did not provide substantial detail as to why they decided to leave.

B. ACCESSIBILITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND FACILITIES

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

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

The agency continues to support and remains committed to employees with disabilities by providing individuals with access to electronic and information technology. FNS continues to update employees about Section 508 and ensures that the policy is enforced daily if employees need assistance. Employees that are experiencing barriers with accessing information can file a complaint with the US agency contact Dru Gordon, Chief of Staff at gordon@access-board.gov or by phone 202-272-0022.

Website: <https://www.access-board.gov/about/policy/accessibility.html>

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

The agency continues to support and remains committed to employees by ensuring facility safety that's applicable by law and within agency regulations. FNS continues to monitor and maintain the facility so that employees have the proper accessibility to building elements. If employees experience any barriers within the facility, employees can file a complaint online via the website or email enforce@access-board.gov or by fax a complaint to 202-272-0081 or mailing the U.S. Access Board, 1331 F Street, NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20004.

Website: [https://www.access-board.gov/about/law/aba.html#:~:text=The Percent20ABA Percent20stands Percent20as Percent20the, August Percent2012 Percent2...](https://www.access-board.gov/about/law/aba.html#:~:text=The%20ABA%20stands%20as%20the,August%2012%20Percent2...)

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.

FNS continues to implement its agency-approved space optimization plan for Fiscal years 2025 –2028. The plan details a strategic and operational approach to analyze all spaces within it 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.

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.)

20 days

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.

Through coordination between FNS, OGC and OASCR, the Agency has collaborated to improve the overall effectiveness and procedures for the Agency's RA program. The Agency provided training to all supervisors and managers. The Agency is working on FAQs and a supplemental SOP. HRD and CRD hold regular collaboration meetings in support of these efforts.

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.

1. 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.

PAS was effective in that mission requirements were met on more than one occasion where Agency employees were able to provide assistance in meeting travel requirements at no additional cost for an employee requiring PAS to travel.

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.

During FY25, 52.63 Percent of Formal complaints at FNS included claims of Harassment with Disability as Basis (10 formal complaints out of a total of 19). This is higher than the government average (25.37 Percent as provided by EEOC on FY2025). We plan to notify leadership regarding the higher percentage of complaints filed. The complaints will be processed in accordance with the EEO process.

There were no findings in FY25 and one settlement agreement.

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.

During FY25, FNS 36.84 Percent of formal complaints filed at FNCS included claims of failure to provide Reasonable Accommodation filed by a PWD (7 formal complaints out of a total of 19). This is lower than the government average (47.30 Percent as provided by EEOC on FY2025).

There were no findings in FY 2025 and one settlement agreement.

Section VIII: Identification and Removal of Barriers

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

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

Answer: No

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

Answer: 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. Provide a succinct statement of the agency policy, procedure or practice that has been determined to be the barrier of the undesired condition.

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