

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 Yes

There is a trigger for PWD in GS-11 to SES (includes GS equivalents). The participation rate is 11.87%. While this is an increase from FY23 (11.12%), it is still below the 12% goal.

*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.

Grade Level Cluster(GS or Alternate Pay Planb)	Total	Reportable Disability		Targeted Disability	
	#	#	%	#	%
Numerical Goal	--	12%		2%	
Grades GS-11 to SES	28924	3470	12.00	725	2.51
Grades GS-1 to GS-10	7344	1244	16.94	253	3.44

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

The DOC actively recruits and hires persons with disabilities (PWD) and targeted disabilities (PWTD) through various programs and resources. These include an internal resume database for non-competitive hiring, alternative recruitment platforms like VetSuccess.gov, USAJOBS searches for Schedule A candidates, the OPM Bender list, participation in college and university job fairs, and partnerships with the Workforce Recruitment Program for students and recent graduates. We also collaborate with the Veterans Vocational and Rehabilitation Program and Disabled Veterans Service Organizations to recruit eligible disabled veterans. Furthermore, the DOC disseminates information about disability employment programs, job opportunities, the federal hiring process, and accommodation contacts via DOC Bureau webpages and social media platforms like LinkedIn and Facebook. The

goals are also communicated during DOC's "Self-identification Campaign" in April and October each year.

Section II: Model Disability Program

Pursuant to 29 C.F.R. § 1614.203(d)(1), agencies must ensure sufficient staff, training and resources to recruit and hire persons with disabilities and persons with targeted disabilities, administer the reasonable accommodation program and special emphasis program, and oversee any other disability hiring and advancement program the agency has in place.

A. PLAN TO PROVIDE SUFFICIENT & COMPETENT STAFFING FOR THE DISABILITY PROGRAM

1. Has the agency designated sufficient qualified personnel to implement its disability program during the reporting period? If "no", describe the agency's plan to improve the staffing for the upcoming year.

Answer Yes

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

Disability Program Task	# of FTE Staff By Employment Status			Responsible Official (Name, Title, Office Email)
	Full Time	Part Time	Collateral Duty	
Processing applications from PWD and PWTD	5	0	36	Roseal Fowlkes Veterans Employment & Selective Placement Program Manager rfowlkes@doc.gov
Section 508 Compliance	8	0	2	Jennifer Jessup DOC Section 508 Compliance Coordinator jjessup@doc.gov
Architectural Barriers Act Compliance	5	0	0	Joyce Long Chief, Space Management Division jlong@doc.gov
Special Emphasis Program for PWD and PWTD	6	0	36	Monique Dismuke DOC Disability Program Manager mdismuke@doc.gov
Processing reasonable accommodation requests from applicants and employees	20	0	0	Monique Dismuke DOC Disability Program Manager & RA Program Manager mdismuke@doc.gov
Answering questions from the public about hiring authorities that take disability into account	33	0	35	Roseal Fowlkes Veterans Employment & Selective Placement Program Manager rfowlkes@doc.gov

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

Answer Yes

The Disability Program staff received training via webinar, in-person, or online through classes offered by various entities including National Employment Law Institute (NELI), USDA Graduate School, ASKEARN Training Center, Disability Management Employer Coalition, Job Accommodation Network (JAN), US Access Board, ADA Network, EEOC, and others. Staff also attend training conferences hosted by EEOC (EXCEL), Federal Dispute Resolution (FDR), and the Federal Employment Law Training Group. Additionally, Bureau disability program staff attended various internal ad hoc training and training coordinated by the Department's Office of Civil Rights.

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.2.b.5. Does the agency process all initial accommodation requests, excluding ongoing interpretative services, within the time frame set forth in its reasonable accommodation procedures? [see MD-715, II(C)] If "no", please provide the percentage of timely-processed requests, excluding ongoing interpretative services, in the comments column.		
Objective	To improve the timely processing of requests for reasonable accommodations.		
Target Date	Sep 30, 2023		
Completion Date			
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>	<u>Planned Activity</u>
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	
	2024	In FY24, the DOC experienced a significant increase in the number of RA requests due in part to the Return to Office mandate. This led to longer than normal RA processing times across the DOC from May 2024 – September 2024. To manage the increase DOC Bureaus, including OS, hired additional RA Coordinators. This surge in RA activity continued into FY25, thus the added planned activity.	

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.

Census has a link on OPM's website for persons with disabilities to access. It provides a government-wide listing of all Selective Placement Coordinators, including Census. The bureau also partners with the Workforce Recruitment Program through the Department of Labor which allows managers to access a database, review resumes and work with Census Human Resources Division to coordinate selection. Census collaborates and leverages old and new partnerships with other Selective Placement Program Coordinators; DoD Transition Assistance Program Offices; meets regularly with Veterans organizations and tap into the DoD SkillBridge Program. The DoD SkillBridge program provides transitioning veterans the opportunity to participate in the Bureau's training programs while transitioning out of their military careers. Our program has experienced a remarkable 275 percent

growth, reflecting a strong rise in participation and interest. USPTO has a separate webpage designed to provide information to job applicants with disabilities: <https://www.uspto.gov/jobs/hiring-people-disabilities>. The USPTO has also formed relationships with the various disability offices at the universities and colleges from which it regularly recruits students. NOAA uses outreach to vocational rehabilitation centers, veteran organizations and the resume mining feature from USAJOBS to search for applicants with disabilities. Hiring officials are encouraged to use the Workforce Recruitment Program database to identify candidates to fill vacant positions. In addition, the agency holds an annual Hiring Event for Veterans and PWDs. Managers are encouraged to review applications from PWD before posting positions on USAJOBS. NIST provides detailed information on special hiring authorities on the Careers at NIST webpage (<https://www.nist.gov/careers/special-hiringauthorities-disabled-and-veterans>). NIST advertises all vacancies on USAJOBS. NIST utilizes a variety of methods to recruit and employ veterans and individuals with disabilities: Direct-Hire, Delegated Examining, Agency Based, Merit Promotion, and Non-Competitive procedures. NIST also utilizes special appointment authorities such as the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act (VEOA), the Veterans Recruitment Appointment (VRA) Authority, and other appointment authorities (e.g. disabled veterans with 30% or greater disability) as appropriate. NIST's Selective Placement Coordinator maintained a catalogue of applicants eligible for noncompetitive hiring authorities such as the Veterans Recruitment Authority, 30% or more disabled Veteran hiring authority and the Schedule A hiring authority for individuals with disabilities. The catalogue is accessible by members of the HR Operations Team so the resumes can be shared with hiring officials as positions become available. Several Bureaus are using the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) on a regular basis to identify PWD to recruit for vacant DOC positions. Other programs and resources used to recruit and hire PWD include: VetSuccess.gov; use of USAJOBS to search for eligible Schedule A applicants; use of OPM's Bender list of applicants with disabilities; participation in local colleges and university virtual job recruitment fairs; the Workforce Recruitment Program for access to post-secondary students and recent graduates with disabilities; participation in the VA's Non-Paid Work Experience Program; coordination with the Veterans Vocational and Rehabilitation Program and Disabled Veterans Service Organizations to recruit eligible disabled veterans; and development of DOC's Bureau webpages to disseminate information on job vacancies and application process. DOC continuously provides job applicants information about DOC's disability employment programs, various employment opportunities, the government hiring process and points of contact for reasonable accommodations. This information is provided on DOC Bureau webpages, LinkedIn, Facebook, and other social media sites.

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 Department actively promotes the use of Schedule A to Hiring Officials to fill vacant positions and directs hiring managers to consult with their Bureau Selective Placement Program Coordinators (SPPCs) for guidance on hiring PWD/TD. SPPCs engage with vocational rehabilitation centers and disabled veterans' organizations, inviting job applicants to submit resumes directly to a dedicated Bureau email address, which also makes them searchable on USAJOBS. SPPCs develop tailored recruitment strategies to meet specific hiring needs, promote agency vacancies to Schedule A-eligible candidates, and represent DOC at disability-focused hiring events. Individuals using Schedule A are encouraged to send their resumes directly to the SPPC for inclusion in the Bureau's database. When a hiring official has a vacancy, the SPPC requests the Position Description or vacancy announcement to identify and provide qualified applicants' resumes. This enables the hiring official to proceed with interviews and selection. Applicants seeking information or technical assistance with Schedule A can contact their Bureau SPPCs or the central DOC Schedule A email address: ScheduleA@doc.gov.

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.

To streamline the hiring process for applicants using special hiring authorities like Schedule A, DOC's HR Specialist and SPPCs, work to confirm eligibility and provide applications to Hiring Managers interested in filling their vacant positions. This process is regularly reviewed and analyzed to identify opportunities for improvement. • Applications received via USAJOBS are assessed by an assigned HR Specialist; qualified applicants are referred to the hiring official for the related vacancy with an explanation of the Selective Placement Program and the process for selection. • Bureau SPPCs reviews applications received directly or from hiring officials to ensure the applicant is qualified for the position and their Schedule A documentation meets OPM standards. Eligible resumes are then stored in bureaus respective databases. • For Schedule A applicants applying directly to a non-competitive vacancy, the HR Specialist assesses their qualifications and appointment eligibility before forwarding their resume to the hiring manager. • When a vacancy is identified, the Bureau SPPC searches the application database for suitable candidates and provides their resumes to the hiring official, along with information on the Selective Placement Program and the selection steps.

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

Answer Yes

The Department requires all supervisors and hiring officials to complete annual online training courses mandated by OPM: “A Roadmap to Success: Hiring, Retaining, and Including People with Disabilities,” “Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA),” and “Veterans Employment Training.” These courses are hosted in the Department’s Learning Management System, known as the Commerce Learning Center (CLC).// Additionally, as specified in Title 5 CFR 412.202, newly appointed senior executives, supervisors, and managers must complete a supervisor training program within their first year. This program includes guidance on recruiting and hiring individuals with disabilities (PWD) and targeted disabilities (TD)./ Some Bureaus conduct additional training. USPTO provides computer-based training annually. NOAA offers in-person or online webinar training to Hiring Managers on the use of the Schedule A(u) hiring authority. NIST Disability Program Manager presented “Recruitment for People with Disabilities.

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.

DOC actively works with organizations targeting persons with disabilities (PWD/TD), including "Hiring Our Heroes," Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and RecruitMilitary. DOC staff participate in campus events for students with disabilities, cultivate partnerships with local colleges and universities for paid/unpaid internships, collaborate with affinity groups on recruitment, and partner with local and state Vocational Rehabilitation services (e.g., Maryland and Virginia) to advise on federal applications. Bureau Selective Placement Program Coordinators are also listed on OPM's directory for direct applicant contact. NIST Disability Program Manager and SPPC contact information is displayed on the NIST external website. NIST’s Strategic Recruitment Program Manager serves as the lead on maintaining contacts with employment organizations. NIST external site includes upcoming recruitment events as well as hiring information for persons with disabilities. Census continues working through established partnerships with the following groups: Department of Defense (DOD) and Veteran’s Administration-Operation Warfighter (OWF) Internship Program. Department of Labor (DOL)-Workforce Recruitment and Apprenticeship Programs. The Disability Program Manager participated in several recruiting and networking opportunities: OPM Level Up to Public Service event a collaboration between OPM and the Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Workforce Recruitment Program. As well, the DMP and interpreter attended the American Community Survey Disability Constituents Meeting. Disability Program Manger collaborated with HRD’s Consulting Services (CS) for recruiting event at Gallaudet University. NOAA has a representative that connects with vocational rehabilitation centers near cities where NOAA has a large presence and offers assistance to PWD and PWTD including training on how to understand and apply for federal positions. USPTO has relationships with various disability offices at universities and colleges from which it regularly recruits students with disabilities and will continue to reach out to additional schools and external disability-related organizations to develop more partnerships. They have an established relationship with the local vocational rehabilitation office and plan to continue outreach to career services and disability program coordinators at targeted schools in the area to establish a baseline relationship and gauge interest in partnership with the agency.

C. PROGRESSION TOWARDS GOALS (RECRUITMENT AND HIRING)

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

a. New Hires for Permanent Workforce (PWD) Answer No

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

No triggers.

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	1960	16.22	0.00	2.70	0.00

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

a. New Hires for MCO (PWD) Answer Yes

b. New Hires for MCO (PWTD) Answer Yes

DOC has 10 MCOs (0301, 0343, 0482, 0905, 1101, 1224, 1301, 1340, 1530, and 2210) of which 4 showed triggers in the new hire data for PWD/PWTD on Table B6 as follows: 0482 FISHERY BIOLOGY: 10.26% PWD 0905 GENERAL ATTORNEY: 7.21% PWD 0% PWTD 1101 GENERAL BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY: 9.68% PWD 1.61% PWTD 1301 GEN PHYS SCI: 6.49% PWD 0% PWTD However, partial applicant flow data was available when this report was completed; therefore, further analysis could not be done.

New Hires to Mission-Critical Occupations	Total (#)	Reportable Disability	Targetable Disability
		New Hires (%)	New Hires (%)
Numerical Goal	--	12%	2%
0301 MISC ADMINISTRATION & PROGRAM	149	28.86	4.70
0343 MANAGEMENT & PROGRAM ANALYSIS	199	26.63	3.02
0482 FISHERY BIOLOGY	39	10.26	2.56
0905 GENERAL ATTORNEY	111	7.21	0.00
1101 GENERAL BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY	62	9.68	1.61
1224 PATENT EXAMINER	922	14.43	2.39
1301 GEN PHYSICAL SCIENTISTS	77	6.49	0.00
1340 METEOROLOGY	72	15.28	4.17
1530 STATISTICIAN	107	14.95	2.80
2210 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT	222	17.57	4.50

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

a. Qualified Applicants for MCO (PWD) Answer N/A

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

Applicant flow data for internal applicants was not available.

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

a. Promotions for MCO (PWD)

Answer N/A

b. Promotions for MCO (PWTD)

Answer N/A

Applicant flow data was not available.

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

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

A. ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM PLAN

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

DOC ensures job opportunities are posted on USAJOBS providing awareness to PWD/TD of employment opportunities with the Department. The Department's Reasonable Accommodation Policy and POC for requesting an accommodation is also posted with each announcement. PWD/TD are made aware of various leadership/professional development programs. The competitive opportunities are announced via USAJOBS, and many other internal programs are opened to all employees and announced via internal broadcast messages. PWD/TD have an equal opportunity to compete for all opportunities including managerial, executive, and other career enhancing programs and initiatives. PWD/TD have access to the Department's web-based training program, Commerce Learning Center (CLC), which contains over 2,500 training courses to assist employees with managing their careers. Other programs were provided to help employees gain management and leadership skills to accomplish their career objectives. For example, workshops on developing Individual Development Plans and Leadership Competencies were offered. All employees were encouraged to participate in DOC-wide developmental opportunities, as well as Federal Government-wide professional and career development programs. Additionally, Bureaus initiated and engaged Disability Working Groups helped to advertise and promote career development programs. DOC continues to promote internal advancement opportunities for PWD/TD through Bureau-specific leadership development programs.

B. CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITES

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

Currently, there is one Department-wide Career Development Program for the Senior Executive Service (SES) Development Program. In addition, Bureaus have instituted various career development opportunities. Some of the notable mentions are: NIST: Offered three leadership programs targeting employees at various stages in their managerial careers: Foundations of Leadership Program (FLP), New Leader Program (NLP), and Project Management and Leadership Program (PMLP). Mentoring and coaching sessions are available to participants of these programs. Additionally, the Office of Human Resources Management "Leadership for All" (L4A) program makes content from popular leadership development programs available to the entire staff. NIST also has a Mentoring Program for all NIST federal employees. This program provides an opportunity for NIST staff to find their niche in the organization, build strategic relationships, and gain a broader perspective of NIST. NOAA: Offered two leadership development programs: Leadership Competencies Development Program (LCDP) and NOAA Leadership Seminar (NLS). Census: In FY24, we launched the Census Technical and Administrative Development Program (CTAD), which was an 8-month program that was designed to upskill administrative professionals by closing skills gaps, through a comprehensive training and development framework. The goal was to provide participants with valuable skills to become more marketable in their current and future roles here at the bureau. We also launched an Aspiring Leaders Program, which is geared toward GS-12 non-supervisory staff and focused on highlighting the competencies and behaviors needed to be a successful supervisor. USPTO: Has two major career development opportunities. The first provides career development detail assignments for employees. The second is an enterprise-wide mentoring program. The mentoring program is open to everyone interested, subject to space constraints in the program. In addition to these two major enterprise efforts, the Enterprise Training Division, and various employee groups host ad hoc training and information sessions. These programs are widely publicized and available to all employees.

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 (%)
Detail Programs						
Internship Programs						
Coaching Programs						
Training Programs						
Mentoring Programs						
Other Career Development Programs	400	50	N/A	N/A	0	0
Fellowship Programs						

3. Do triggers exist for PWD among the applicants and/or selectees for any of the career development programs? (The appropriate benchmarks are the relevant applicant pool for the applicants and the applicant pool for selectees.) If “yes”, describe the trigger(s) in the text box. Select “n/a” if the applicant data is not available for your agency, and describe your plan to provide the data in the text box.

a. Applicants (PWD)

Answer No

b. Selections (PWD)

Answer No

In FY24, the OS Office of Learning and Development launched the inaugural Secretary’s Leadership Seminar at the Harvard Business School for employees in grades GS-13 through 15 and equivalent. There were over 400 applications received, and Bureaus selected their top 6 candidates using an internal process, and the final 50 employees were selected from a panel of DOC executives to participate in the 9-month hybrid program. A partial analysis of the data was only available for PWTD in the applicant pool. There are CDPs at the Bureau level. Applicant data for these programs is tracked at the local level. Please see the Bureau’s MD 715 Part J for details.

4. Do triggers exist for PWTD among the applicants and/or selectees for any of the career development programs? (The appropriate benchmarks are the relevant applicant pool for the applicants and the applicant pool for selectees.) If “yes”, describe the trigger(s) in the text box. Select “n/a” if the applicant data is not available for your agency, and describe your plan to provide the data in the text box.

a. Applicants (PWTD)

Answer Yes

b. Selections (PWTD)

Answer Yes

In FY24, the OS Office of Learning and Development launched the inaugural Secretary’s Leadership Seminar at the Harvard Business School for employees in grades GS-13 through 15 and equivalent. There were over 400 applications received, and Bureaus selected their top 6 candidates using an internal process, and the final 50 employees were selected from a panel of DOC executives to participate in the 9-month hybrid program. A partial analysis of the data revealed there were no persons with targeted disabilities in the applicant pool./ There are CDPs at the Bureau level. Applicant data for these programs is tracked at the local level. Please see the Bureau’s MD 715 Part J for details.

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

Triggers were identified for the following (Table B9): PWD: Time Off Hours 21 – 30; Cash Awards – all categories (from \$500 and under to \$5000 or more). PWTB: Time Off Hours 31 – 40; Cash Awards 501 – 1999; Cash Awards 501 – 999; Cash Awards 1000 – 1999; Cash Awards 4000 – 4999; and Cash Awards 5000 or More.

Time-Off Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 hours: Awards Given	1925.00	13.0390	86.9610	2.9091	97.0909
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 Hours: Total Hours	13375.00	13.2411	86.7589	2.9009	97.0991
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 Hours: Average Hours	6.95	7.0558	6.9319	6.9286	6.9486
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 hours: Awards Given	758.00	14.3799	85.6201	3.4301	96.5699
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 Hours: Total Hours	11923.00	14.4846	85.5154	3.5394	96.4606
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 Hours: Average Hours	15.73	15.8440	15.7103	16.2308	15.7117
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 hours: Awards Given	249.00	10.0402	89.9598	2.4096	97.5904
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 Hours: Total Hours	6060.00	10.1980	89.8020	2.3762	97.6238
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 Hours: Average Hours	24.34	24.7200	24.2946	24.0000	24.3457
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 hours: Awards Given	294.00	12.2449	87.7551	1.3605	98.6395
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 Hours: Total Hours	11150.00	12.2691	87.7309	1.3632	98.6368
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 Hours: Average Hours	37.93	38.0000	37.9147	38.0000	37.9241
Time-Off Awards 41 or more Hours: Awards Given	100.00	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	100.0000
Time-Off Awards 41 or more Hours: Total Hours	0.00	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Time-Off Awards 41 or more Hours: Average Hours	0.00	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

Cash Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Cash Awards \$500 and Under: Awards Given	7973.00	11.4888	88.5112	2.3203	97.6797
Cash Awards \$500 and Under: Total Amount	2568650.00	11.0501	88.9499	2.2580	97.7420
Cash Awards \$500 and Under: Average Amount	322.17	309.8668	323.7652	313.5081	322.3743
Cash Awards: \$501 - \$999: Awards Given	10960.00	9.4343	90.5657	1.7701	98.2299
Cash Awards: \$501 - \$999: Total Amount	8492301.00	9.2576	90.7424	1.7221	98.2779
Cash Awards: \$501 - \$999: Average Amount	774.84	760.3298	776.3571	753.8402	775.2235
Cash Awards: \$1000 - \$1999: Awards Given	29343.00	7.4634	92.5366	1.8403	98.1597
Cash Awards: \$1000 - \$1999: Total Amount	39137091.00	7.4318	92.5682	1.8550	98.1450
Cash Awards: \$1000 - \$1999: Average Amount	1333.78	1328.1183	1334.2361	1344.4222	1333.5799

Cash Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Cash Awards: \$2000 - \$2999: Awards Given	6482.00	10.4752	89.5248	2.0056	97.9944
Cash Awards: \$2000 - \$2999: Total Amount	15486927.00	10.3795	89.6205	1.9768	98.0232
Cash Awards: \$2000 - \$2999: Average Amount	2389.22	2367.4021	2391.7734	2354.9769	2389.9213
Cash Awards: \$3000 - \$3999: Awards Given	6292.00	9.0432	90.9568	2.1933	97.8067
Cash Awards: \$3000 - \$3999: Total Amount	21395691.00	9.0794	90.9206	2.2195	97.7805
Cash Awards: \$3000 - \$3999: Average Amount	3400.46	3414.0615	3399.1071	3441.1377	3399.5473
Cash Awards: \$4000 - \$4999: Awards Given	4740.00	7.6582	92.3418	1.6034	98.3966
Cash Awards: \$4000 - \$4999: Total Amount	21164440.00	7.5584	92.4416	1.5919	98.4081
Cash Awards: \$4000 - \$4999: Average Amount	4465.07	4406.8623	4469.8992	4433.1711	4465.5916
Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Awards Given	9610.00	6.6597	93.3403	1.7274	98.2726
Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Total Amount	69625850.00	6.5768	93.4232	1.7250	98.2750
Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Average Amount	7245.15	7154.9625	7251.5802	7235.2169	7245.3202

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

a. Pay Increases (PWD)

Answer No

b. Pay Increases (PWTD)

Answer No

Other Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Total Performance Based Pay Increases Awarded	0.00	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

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 No

b. Other Types of Recognition (PWTD)

Answer No

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	Yes
b. Grade GS-15		
i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD)	Answer	N/A
ii. Internal Selections (PWD)	Answer	Yes
c. Grade GS-14		
i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD)	Answer	N/A
ii. Internal Selections (PWD)	Answer	Yes
d. Grade GS-13		
i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD)	Answer	N/A
ii. Internal Selections (PWD)	Answer	No

Analysis of applicant flow data is incomplete. In FY23, DOC implemented USA Staffing into its practices for obtaining Applicant Flow data. Although the transition to USA Staffing is complete, at the time of this report, only partial Applicant Flow Data was available. Data for qualified internal applicants was not available; therefore, a full analysis could not be conducted. In FY25, DOC anticipates USA Staffing to obtain complete Applicant Flow Data. This deficiency is addressed in Part H-6.

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	No
b. Grade GS-15		
i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD)	Answer	N/A
ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)	Answer	Yes
c. Grade GS-14		
i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD)	Answer	N/A
ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)	Answer	No
d. Grade GS-13		
i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD)	Answer	N/A
ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)	Answer	No

Analysis of applicant flow data is incomplete. In FY23, DOC implemented USA Staffing into its practices for obtaining Applicant Flow data. Although the transition to USA Staffing is complete, at the time of this report, only partial Applicant Flow Data was available. Data for qualified internal applicants was not available; therefore, a full analysis could not be conducted. In FY25, DOC

anticipates USA Staffing to obtain complete Applicant Flow Data. This deficiency is addressed in Part H-6.

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	No
b. New Hires to GS-15 (PWD)	Answer	Yes
c. New Hires to GS-14 (PWD)	Answer	No
d. New Hires to GS-13 (PWD)	Answer	No

Analysis of applicant flow data is incomplete. In FY23, DOC implemented USA Staffing into its practices for obtaining Applicant Flow data. Although the transition to USA Staffing is complete, at the time of this report, only partial Applicant Flow Data was available. Data for the qualified applicant pool was not available; therefore, a full analysis could not be conducted. In FY25, DOC anticipates USA Staffing to obtain complete Applicant Flow Data. This deficiency is addressed in Part H-6.

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	Yes
b. New Hires to GS-15 (PWTD)	Answer	Yes
c. New Hires to GS-14 (PWTD)	Answer	Yes
d. New Hires to GS-13 (PWTD)	Answer	No

Analysis of applicant flow data is incomplete. In FY23, DOC implemented USA Staffing into its practices for obtaining Applicant Flow data. Although the transition to USA Staffing is complete, at the time of this report, only partial Applicant Flow Data was available. Data for the qualified applicant pool was not available; therefore, a full analysis could not be conducted. In FY25, DOC anticipates USA Staffing to obtain complete Applicant Flow Data. This deficiency is addressed in Part H-6.

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	Yes
b. Managers		
i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD)	Answer	N/A
ii. Internal Selections (PWD)	Answer	Yes
c. Supervisors		

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

Analysis of applicant flow data is incomplete. In FY23, DOC implemented USA Staffing into its practices for obtaining Applicant Flow data. Although the transition to USA Staffing is complete, at the time of this report, only partial Applicant Flow Data was available. Data for qualified internal applicants was not available; therefore, a full analysis could not be conducted. In FY25, DOC anticipates USA Staffing to obtain complete Applicant Flow Data. This deficiency is addressed in Part H-6.

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 | Yes |

b. Managers

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

c. Supervisors

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

Analysis of applicant flow data is incomplete. In FY23, DOC implemented USA Staffing into its practices for obtaining Applicant Flow data. Although the transition to USA Staffing is complete, at the time of this report, only partial Applicant Flow Data was available. Data for qualified internal applicants was not available; therefore, a full analysis could not be conducted. In FY25, DOC anticipates USA Staffing to obtain complete Applicant Flow Data. This deficiency is addressed in Part H-6.

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 | No |
| b. New Hires for Managers (PWD) | Answer | No |
| c. New Hires for Supervisors (PWD) | Answer | No |

Analysis of applicant flow data is incomplete. In FY23, DOC implemented USA Staffing into its practices for obtaining Applicant Flow data. Although the transition to USA Staffing is complete, at the time of this report, only partial Applicant Flow Data was available. Data for qualified applicants was not available; therefore, a full analysis could not be conducted. In FY25, DOC anticipates USA Staffing to obtain complete Applicant Flow Data. This deficiency is addressed in Part H-6.

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 | Yes |
|------------------------------------|--------|-----|

b. New Hires for Managers (PWTD)

Answer No

c. New Hires for Supervisors (PWTD)

Answer No

Analysis of applicant flow data is incomplete. In FY23, DOC implemented USA Staffing into its practices for obtaining Applicant Flow data. Although the transition to USA Staffing is complete, at the time of this report, only partial Applicant Flow Data was available. Data for qualified applicants was not available; therefore, a full analysis could not be conducted. In FY25, DOC anticipates USA Staffing to obtain complete Applicant Flow Data. This deficiency is addressed in Part H-6.

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

All eligible Schedule A employees with disabilities were converted after two years.

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

a. Voluntary Separations (PWD)

Answer Yes

b. Involuntary Separations (PWD)

Answer Yes

a. Using the inclusion rate, the percentage of voluntary separations for PWD was 5.33%, PWOD 4.66%. b. Using the inclusion rate, the percentage of involuntary separations for PWD was 3.44%, PWOD 2%.

Separations	Total #	Reportable Disabilities %	Without Reportable Disabilities %
Permanent Workforce: Reduction in Force	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Removal	245	0.87	0.45
Permanent Workforce: Resignation	783	1.92	1.57
Permanent Workforce: Retirement	1139	2.03	2.40
Permanent Workforce: Other Separations	586	1.80	1.12
Permanent Workforce: Total Separations	2753	6.62	5.53

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

a. Voluntary Separations (PWTD)

Answer Yes

b. Involuntary Separations (PWTD)

Answer Yes

a. Using the inclusion rate, the percentage of voluntary separations for PWTD was 5.16%, PWOD 4.66%. b. Using the inclusion rate, the percentage of involuntary separations for PWTD was 4.15%, PWOD 2%.

Seperations	Total #	Targeted Disabilities %	Without Targeted Disabilities %
Permanent Workforce: Reduction in Force	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Removal	245	0.93	0.49
Permanent Workforce: Resignation	783	1.94	1.61
Permanent Workforce: Retirement	1139	2.41	2.35
Permanent Workforce: Other Separations	586	1.86	1.19
Permanent Workforce: Total Separations	2753	7.15	5.64

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 third barrier analysis project was to benchmark a 2019 Employee Retention Survey (ERS), by launching a second ERS in FY24. This Department wide project was again conducted by Census' Center for Behavioral Science Methods (CBSM) and included focus groups, conducted in the Fall/Winter of 2023 which served to inform the questionnaire, launching in September 2024. The 2024 ERS was based on the preliminary findings from the 2019 survey. The initial analysis will be shared by the end of CY24, and the project is expected to conclude before the end of FY25. The overall goal of the initiative is to learn about the experiences of employees of the Department of Commerce, specifically factors that influence their decisions to leave the Department as well as what causes them to stay with Commerce and then use the information to help determine how Commerce can improve the overall work environment, address employee turnover, and identify recruitment, retention, and advancement of individuals with disabilities.

B. ACCESSIBILITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND FACILITIES

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

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

<https://www.commerce.gov/cr/complaints/section-508-architectural-barriers-act-aba-notice-rights>

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

<https://www.commerce.gov/cr/complaints/section-508-architectural-barriers-act-aba-notice-rights>

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

1) To enhance Digital/IT accessibility and Section 508 compliance, in FY24 the Department developed a plan and schedule for completing a baseline assessment for Section 508 compliance with respect to websites and procurement. The baseline assessment will utilize standards established by the Federal CIO Council Accessibility Community of Practice (ACOP). A standard template will be developed for Bureaus to use in reporting baseline measures and progress against those measures. 2) In FY23, the DOC Accessibility Committee was launched. The committee is comprised of Bureau staff responsible for physical and digital/Information Technology accessibility within Commerce. It is chaired by OCR, OCIO, and OFEQ. Participants include Bureau's Section 508 Coordinators, Reasonable Accommodation Coordinators, Facilities Managers, OCIO staff, and Acquisitions. In FY24, the Committee held quarterly meetings. The committee members discussed various accessibility issues and challenges the Bureaus have experienced regarding digital accessibility, including the length of time it takes to get approval for use of newly acquired or upgraded assistive technology software and SharePoint accessibility. Addressing these issues will be incorporated into key actions

planned under Goal 4 for FY2025-26. To ensure DOC facilities are physically accessible, the Committee drafted an Accessibility and Assessment Checklist and Standard Operating Procedures. Once finalized, the Accessibility Assessment Checklist will be used by Bureau Facility Accessibility Coordinators to conduct an annual accessibility assessment of DOC facilities. This will ensure DOC facilities are adhering to applicable accessibility laws (i.e. the Architectural Barriers Act), maintain uniformity in practice, and streamline procedures for reporting and addressing physical accessibility issues. 3) In FY24, the Office of Human Resources Management's (OHRM) Office of Learning and Development (OL&D) conducted a two-month Section 508 standards and compliance awareness training series titled "508 After 8." Targeted at HR and IT professionals, the series aimed to enhance the proficiency of the Department's digital content developers and training professionals in achieving Section 508 compliance. In total, 60 participants gained critical skills in utilizing assistive technologies, accessibility tools, and collaborative facilitation techniques to support various disability groups effectively./

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.)

In FY24, DOC's Reasonable Accommodation Coordinators (RAC) received approximately 2,047 RA requests (slight decrease from FY23 2,126); 58% were completed within established timelines.

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.

In August 2023, the internal review and clearance for the revised DOC RA Procedures (DAO 215-10) was completed. The DAO was signed and posted on the Office of Civil Rights webpage. In FY24, a 508 compliant version of the DAO will be posted on the Office of Privacy and Open Government (OPOG) website (the official repository for the Department's administrative orders). The OPOG website is under renovation at this time. DOC Bureaus continued to offer reasonable accommodation training to employees, managers, and supervisors. New employees receive information about reasonable accommodation during new employee orientation. Some Bureaus require new supervisors to attend training that includes reasonable accommodation. USPTO lead regular bi-monthly meetings with Agency deciding officials, representatives from the Office of General Law; representatives from the Workforce Management Division, and various staff members to discuss and review pending RA cases, analyze trends, and develop consistent and effective approaches to processing, deciding, and implementing RA requests. In FY24, the Department experienced another surge in RA requests due to the Return to Office Mandate. DOC processed over 2,047 RA requests (not including ASL requests). Timeliness was impacted by the significant increase in the number of RA requests submitted within a relatively short period of time (June - August 2024). This led to longer than normal RA processing times across the Department. To manage the increase, some Bureaus hired additional RA staff. The majority of the increase is due to RA requests for some form of teleworking or remote work. DOC Bureaus continued to offer reasonable accommodation training to employees, managers, and supervisors. During the new employees' orientation, bureaus RA staff provided information about reasonable accommodation. Some Bureaus also require new supervisors to attend training that includes reasonable accommodation. Additionally, RA training was provided to the DOC workforce in October 2024 in recognition of National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

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.

There were no requests for PAS.

Section VII: EEO Complaint and Findings Data

A. EEO COMPLAINT DATA INVOLVING HARASSMENT

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

Answer No

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

Answer No

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

During FY24, there were no findings of discrimination related to disability-based harassment. However, the Department did settle cases involving disability-based harassment allegations.

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 Yes

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

There was a finding of discrimination in FY24 regarding disability-based denial of reasonable accommodation. With respect to the finding, OCR determined that the Agency failed to comply with its obligations under the Rehabilitation Act when it denied the Complainant reasonable accommodation in May 2022 and did not grant him the requested accommodation until October 2022. OCR granted compensatory damages, attorney's fees, training and consideration of discipline for the involved officials, and a posting.

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

Source of the Trigger:	Workforce Data (if so identify the table)				
Specific Workforce Data Table:	Workforce Data Table - B4				
STATEMENT OF CONDITION THAT WAS A TRIGGER FOR A POTENTIAL BARRIER: Provide a brief narrative describing the condition at issue. How was the condition recognized as a potential barrier?	The participation rate for PWD at GS 11 to SES is 11.89%, below the 12% target goal.				
STATEMENT OF BARRIER GROUPS:	<i>Barrier Group</i> People with Disabilities				
Barrier Analysis Process Completed?:	N				
Barrier(s) Identified?:	N				
STATEMENT OF IDENTIFIED BARRIER: Provide a succinct statement of the agency policy, procedure or practice that has been determined to be the barrier of the undesired condition.	Barrier Name Barrier identification in progress.		Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice Several barrier analysis initiatives are ongoing to identify barriers (if any)		
Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan					
Date Initiated	Target Date	Sufficient Funding / Staffing?	Date Modified	Date Completed	Objective Description
10/01/2019	09/30/2020	Yes	09/30/2025		Increase recruitment and retention of PWD in the permanent workforce in grades GS11 to SES to meet the Federal high benchmark goal of 12%
Responsible Official(s)					
Title		Name		Standards Address The Plan?	
Director, Office of Human Capital Strategy		Crystal Taylor		Yes	
Disability Program Manager		Monique Dismuke		Yes	
DOC Veterans Employment & Selective Placement Program Manager		Roseal Fowlkes		Yes	
Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective					
Target Date	Planned Activities			Sufficient Staffing & Funding?	Modified Date
09/30/2019	Analyze current DOC recruitment/hiring policy to identify areas for improvement for PWD/TD utilizing Schedule A.			Yes	09/30/2025

Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective				
Target Date	Planned Activities	Sufficient Staffing & Funding?	Modified Date	Completion Date
12/30/2022	Encourage managers to set aside positions for career advancement of PWD during succession planning. This planned action is closed. The Department does encourage use of Schedule A during recruitment discussions with hiring managers. However, the Department has only conducted limited succession planning and has not been able to identify positions that can be set aside specifically for the career advancement of PWD. All employees, including PWD, are provided with information about these career advancement programs and encouraged to participate.	Yes	12/20/2024	12/20/2024
09/30/2024	Conduct outreach efforts at college and universities with career placement offices, campus organizations and other networks that provide services to students with disabilities. Participate in special recruiting events, including virtual events, that specifically target persons with disabilities for senior grade level positions (GS 15 to SES).	Yes		09/30/2024
Report of Accomplishments				
Fiscal Year	Accomplishment			
2024	The participation rate for PWD in grades GS-11 and above within the DOC is 11.87%. This is an upward trend that has continued since FY20. While this is an increase from FY23 (11.12%), the goal is 12%. Therefore, DOC will continue to actively work with organizations targeting person with disabilities (PWD/TD), including "Hiring Our Heroes," Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and RecruitMilitary. DOC staff participate in campus events for students with disabilities, cultivate partnerships with local colleges and universities for paid/unpaid internships, and partner with local and state Vocational Rehabilitation services (e.g., Maryland and Virginia) to advise on federal applications. Bureau Selective Placement Program Coordinators are also listed on OPM's directory for direct applicant contact.			

Source of the Trigger:	Workforce Data (if so identify the table)				
Specific Workforce Data Table:	Workforce Data Table - B1				
STATEMENT OF CONDITION THAT WAS A TRIGGER FOR A POTENTIAL BARRIER: Provide a brief narrative describing the condition at issue. How was the condition recognized as a potential barrier?	There were no PWD or PWTB applicants or selectees for promotion/appointments to SES positions. There were no PWD selected for Promotion to GS-14 and GS-15 grade levels. There were no PWTB selected for Promotion to GS-13, GS-14, or GS-15 grade levels.				
STATEMENT OF BARRIER GROUPS:	<i>Barrier Group</i> People with Disabilities				
Barrier Analysis Process Completed?:	N				
Barrier(s) Identified?:	N				
STATEMENT OF IDENTIFIED BARRIER: Provide a succinct statement of the agency policy, procedure or practice that has been determined to be the barrier of the undesired condition.	Barrier Name Barrier Analysis in progress.		Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice Barrier Analysis in progress. AFD is incomplete and inaccurate.		
Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan					
Date Initiated	Target Date	Sufficient Funding / Staffing?	Date Modified	Date Completed	Objective Description
10/01/2019	09/30/2023	Yes	09/30/2025		Increase promotion opportunities for PWD in GS13-SES level positions; correct AFD issues to ensure accurate data is available for analysis.
Responsible Official(s)					
Title		Name		Standards Address The Plan?	
Disability Program Manager		Monique Dismuke		Yes	
Acting Director, Office of Civil Rights		Junish A. Arora		Yes	
Director, Human Capital Strategy, Office of Human Resource Management		Crystal Taylor		Yes	
Director, Policy and Evaluation Division		Stacy Carter		Yes	
Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective					
Target Date	Planned Activities			Sufficient Staffing & Funding?	Modified Date
09/30/2022	Work with Enterprise Services to ensure AFD is accurate and complete for future barrier analysis.			Yes	09/30/2025

Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective				
Target Date	Planned Activities	Sufficient Staffing & Funding?	Modified Date	Completion Date
09/30/2024	Initiate training, internship, and mentoring programs for PWD to reach the senior grade levels	Yes	09/30/2025	
09/30/2024	Increase collaboration and communication between HR Staffing, Bureau Disability Program Managers to ensure PWD are routinely notified about developmental opportunities including internships, coaching, details, and job assignments.	Yes	09/30/2025	
Report of Accomplishments				
Fiscal Year	Accomplishment			
2024	<p>In FY24, the OS Office of Learning and Development launched the inaugural Secretary's Leadership Seminar at the Harvard Business School for employees in grades GS-13 through 15 and equivalent. There were over 400 applications received, and Bureaus selected their top 6 candidates using an internal process, and the final 50 employees were selected from a panel of DOC executives to participate in the 9-month hybrid program. A partial analysis of the data revealed there were no persons with targeted disabilities in the applicant pool./</p> <p>In FY24, DOC implemented USA Staffing into its practices for obtaining Applicant Flow data. Although the transition to USA Staffing is complete, at the time of this report, only partial Applicant Flow Data was available. In FY25, DOC anticipates USA Staffing to obtain complete Applicant Flow Data. This will allow for further analysis of career development programs announced using USAJOBS. This deficiency is addressed in Part H-6. Additionally, OS hired a new Data Analyst who is collaborating with OHRM to ensure AFD is accurate and complete.</p> <p>DOC ensures job opportunities posted on USAJOBS provide awareness to PWD/TD about opportunities throughout the Department. DOC promotes internal advancement opportunities for PWD/TD through the Department's leadership development programs. The programs serve as a pipeline to provide managers with a pool of high-caliber employees from which to fill mission-critical occupations and additional positions. The Department's leadership programs provide employees with programs that identify and develop emerging leaders in engaging learning experiences. Additionally, these programs fully support the DOC's "Human Capital Strategic Plan, 2023-2026".</p>			

Source of the Trigger:	Workforce Data (if so identify the table)				
Specific Workforce Data Table:	Workforce Data Table - B1				
STATEMENT OF CONDITION THAT WAS A TRIGGER FOR A POTENTIAL BARRIER: Provide a brief narrative describing the condition at issue. How was the condition recognized as a potential barrier?	Separation rates for PWD and PWTD are disproportionately higher than persons without disabilities.				
STATEMENT OF BARRIER GROUPS:	<i>Barrier Group</i> People with Disabilities People with Targeted Disabilities				
Barrier Analysis Process Completed?:	N				
Barrier(s) Identified?:	N				
STATEMENT OF IDENTIFIED BARRIER: Provide a succinct statement of the agency policy, procedure or practice that has been determined to be the barrier of the undesired condition.	Barrier Name		Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice		
	Barrier Analysis In Progress		Identify and eliminate root causes for high separation rates; increase retention rates.		
Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan					
Date Initiated	Target Date	Sufficient Funding / Staffing?	Date Modified	Date Completed	Objective Description
09/01/2019	09/30/2020	Yes	09/30/2023		Identify and eliminate root causes for high separation rates; increase retention rates.
Responsible Official(s)					
Title		Name			Standards Address The Plan?
Acting Director, Office of Civil Rights		Junish A. Arora			Yes
Director, Human Capital Strategy, Office of Human Resource Management		Crystal Taylor			Yes
Director, Policy and Evaluation Division		Stacy Carter			Yes
Disability/RA Program Manager		Monique Dismuke			Yes

Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective				
Target Date	Planned Activities	Sufficient Staffing & Funding?	Modified Date	Completion Date
09/30/2023	OCR to collaborate with contractor to conduct focus groups and exit interviews to identify issues/potential barriers to accessibility that may be negatively impacting retention of PWD	Yes	09/30/2024	09/30/2024
09/30/2023	Ongoing analysis and review of results of employee retention survey, and other data to establish strategies to address retention issues.	Yes	09/30/2025	
Report of Accomplishments				
Fiscal Year	Accomplishment			
2024	In FY24, a barrier analysis project was launched to benchmark a 2019 Employee Retention Survey (ERS), by launching a second ERS in FY24. This Department wide project was again conducted by Census' Center for Behavioral Science Methods (CBSM) and included focus groups, conducted in the Fall/Winter of 2023 which served to inform the questionnaire, launching in September 2024. The 2024 ERS was based on the preliminary findings from the 2019 survey. The initial analysis will be shared by the end of CY24, and the project is expected to conclude before the end of FY25. The overall goal of the initiative is to learn about the experiences of employees of the DOC, specifically factors that influence their decisions to leave as well as what causes them to stay and then use the information to help determine how DOC can improve the overall work environment, address employee turnover, and identify recruitment, retention, and advancement strategies for retaining employees.			

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

The participation rate for PWD within DOC is 11.87%. This is an upward trend that has continued since FY20.

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

Improved accuracy and reporting of participation rates for PWD/TD in the DOC workforce.

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

The participation rate for PWD in DOC continues to increase each year and PWTDD exceeds the 2% benchmark. To reach the goal of 12% participation rate for PWD at the GS11 to SES level, DOC will continue to implement Part J planned strategies and execute DEIA strategic. Additionally, in FY25, the Office of the Secretary, Office of Human Resources, will conduct a series of virtual and in-person, non-competitive Career Fairs aimed at raising awareness of job opportunities within DOC, providing information and guidance to persons with disabilities on the use of Schedule A, and identifying qualified applicants for non-competitive hiring opportunities. This will include outreach and recruitment designed to increase recruitment of PWD at senior grade levels (In response to EEOC TAV letter). DOC will continue training for hiring officials on the use of the Schedule A hiring authority. SPPCs will continue to refer qualified candidates to Hiring Officials during the recruitment process. The Department has updated its "Recruiting, Hiring, and Retaining Persons with Disabilities Operation Plan". This Plan contains information and strategies to assist hiring managers, supervisors, and Human Resources (HR) Specialists in recruiting, hiring, and retaining persons with disabilities (PWD) and persons with targeted disabilities (PWTDD). DOC is looking to examine the feasibility of continuing with the Interagency Agreement with CBSM to finish the ERS II project in light of the new Administration's priorities and Executive Orders.