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

The percentage of PWD in the GS-11 to SES cluster was 10.03% in FY 2018, which falls below the goal of 12%.

*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   Yes

The percentage of PWTD in the GS-11 to SES cluster was 1.37% in FY 2018, which falls below the goal of 2%.

Grade Level Cluster(GS or Alternate Pay Planb)	Total	Reportable Disability		Targeted Disability	
	#	#	%	#	%
Numarical Goal	--	12%		2%	
Grades GS-1 to GS-10	156929	25855	16.48	4718	3.01
Grades GS-11 to SES	181143	17343	9.57	2358	1.30

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

The numerical goals and additional information about the Disability Program and resources are available on the Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI) Web page.

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.

<div align="right">Answer   No</div>

VA currently has one staff member to oversee all aspects of the Disability Program with the exception of oversight of the Reasonable Accommodation Program and section 508 compliance. VA is in the process of adding additional staff and requesting detailees to assist in supporting the needs associated with the Disability Program to meet workforce and policy demands.

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	0	0	400	Vacant
Answering questions from the public about hiring authorities that take disability into account	1	0	400	Vacant
Processing reasonable accommodation requests from applicants and employees	1	0	400	Andreé M. Sutton Chief of Reasonable Accommodation Andree.Sutton@va.gov
Section 508 Compliance	25	0	0	Pat Sheehan Director, VA Section 508 Office Pat.Sheehan@va.gov
Architectural Barriers Act Compliance	0	0	10	Vacant
Special Emphasis Program for PWD and PWTD	0	0	300	Vacant

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.

<div align="right">Answer   Yes</div>

In FY 2018, the National Disability Program Manager received two trainings from the National Employment Law Institute (NELI) regarding national disability law. Additionally, the Chief of Reasonable Accommodation also attended training by NELI focused on disability law in the area of reasonable accommodations. The National Disability Program Manager also attended four Federal Exchange on Employment and Disability meetings where training and updates were provided and participated in two online sessions offered by Employer Assistance and Resource Network.

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.

<div align="right">Answer   No</div>

Currently, there are no plans to ensure sufficient funding for the disability program.

Section III: Program Deficiencies In The Disability Program

Brief Description of Program Deficiency	B.4.a.10. to effectively manage its reasonable accommodation program? [see 29 CFR §1614.203(d)(4)(ii)]		
Objective	Hire additional staff to support the reasonable accommodation program.		
Target Date	Dec 31, 2020		
Completion Date			
Planned Activities	_Target Date_	_Completion Date_	_Planned Activity_
	Dec 31, 2020		Hire additional staff to support all aspects of the reasonable accommodation program.
Accomplishments	_Fiscal Year_	_Accomplishment_	

Brief Description of Program Deficiency	B.4.a.8. to effectively administer its special emphasis programs (such as, Federal Women's Program, Hispanic Employment Program, and People with Disabilities Program Manager)? [5 USC § 7201; 38 USC § 4214; 5 CFR § 720.204; 5 CFR § 213.3102(t) and (u); 5 CFR § 315.709]		
Objective	Increase staffing for Departmental Special Emphasis Programs.		
Target Date	Dec 31, 2020		
Completion Date			
Planned Activities	_Target Date_	_Completion Date_	_Planned Activity_
	Jun 30, 2020		Obtain approval for additional full-time equivalents (FTE).
	Dec 31, 2020		Fill 2 Special Emphasis Program (SEP) vacancies that VA currently has.
	Dec 31, 2020		Fill all remaining vacancies to ensure effective, efficient, and well-managed SEPs.
Accomplishments	_Fiscal Year_	_Accomplishment_	

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	Deploy a standardized system to track reasonable accommodation requests across the VA.		
Target Date	Jul 31, 2019		
Completion Date			
Planned Activities	_Target Date_	_Completion Date_	_Planned Activity_
	May 31, 2019		Develop an enterprise-wide system to track reasonable accommodation requests.
	Jun 28, 2019		Test the system.
	Jul 31, 2019		Deploy the system.
Accomplishments	_Fiscal Year_	_Accomplishment_	
	2018	VA has gathered system requirements and established rules regarding mandatory usage of system.	

Brief Description of Program Deficiency	C.2.c.1. Does the agency post its procedures for processing requests for Personal Assistance Services on its public website? [see 29 CFR §1614.203(d)(5)(v)] If "yes", please provide the internet address in the comments column.		
Objective	Post PAS procedures on VA's public website.		
Target Date	Sep 30, 2019		
Completion Date			
Planned Activities	*Target Date*	*Completion Date*	*Planned Activity*
	Jun 28, 2019		Direct Assistant Secretary for Human Resources and Administration/ Operations, Security, and Preparedness to sign off on the personal assistance services procedures.
	Sep 30, 2019		Post procedures on VA's public website.
Accomplishments	*Fiscal Year*	*Accomplishment*	

Brief Description of Program Deficiency	C.3.b.6. Provide disability accommodations when such accommodations do not cause an undue hardship? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(a)(8)]		
Objective	Require all rating officials to evaluate all managers and supervisors on the EEO element.		
Target Date	Sep 30, 2020		
Completion Date			
Planned Activities	*Target Date*	*Completion Date*	*Planned Activity*
	Oct 1, 2019		Update HR guidance for rating officials to evaluate managers and supervisors on their performance under the EEO element.
	Dec 31, 2019		Provide training for rating officials on what to look for when rating managers and supervisors on the EEO element.
	Sep 30, 2020		Evaluate all managers and supervisors on the EEO element.
Accomplishments	*Fiscal Year*	*Accomplishment*	

Brief Description of Program Deficiency	D.1.c. Does the agency conduct exit interviews or surveys that include questions on how the agency could improve the recruitment, hiring, inclusion, retention and advancement of individuals with disabilities? [see 29 CFR §1614.203(d)(1)(iii)(C)]
Objective	Create and implement an entrance survey that includes questions aimed at figuring out ways we can improve the recruitment and hiring efforts of individuals with disabilities.
Target Date	Nov 1, 2019
Completion Date	

Planned Activities	*Target Date*	*Completion Date*	*Planned Activity*
	Aug 1, 2019		Edit/Update the current VA entrance survey.
	Oct 31, 2019		Obtain senior leaders, OGC, and Unions approval of the entrance survey.
	Nov 1, 2019		Market the new entrance survey.
	Nov 1, 2019		Place the new entrance survey in production.

Accomplishments	*Fiscal Year*	*Accomplishment*
	2018	The initial draft of the project charter for the VA Entrance and Exit Survey Content Revision Project was created.

Objective	Create and implement a stay survey that includes questions aimed at figuring out ways we can improve inclusion, retention, and advancement efforts of individuals with disabilities.
Target Date	Mar 2, 2020
Completion Date	

Planned Activities	*Target Date*	*Completion Date*	*Planned Activity*
	Nov 29, 2019		Develop a VA stay survey.
	Feb 3, 2020		Obtain senior leaders, OGC, and Unions approval of the stay survey.
	Mar 2, 2020		Publish the stay survey for enterprise-wide usage.
	Mar 2, 2020		Market the new stay survey.

Accomplishments	*Fiscal Year*	*Accomplishment*

Objective	Create and implement an exit survey that includes questions aimed at figuring out ways we can improve inclusion, retention, and advancement efforts of individuals with disabilities.
Target Date	Jul 1, 2019
Completion Date	

Planned Activities	*Target Date*	*Completion Date*	*Planned Activity*
	Mar 1, 2019		Edit/Update the current VA exit survey.
	May 24, 2019		Obtain senior leaders, OGC, and the Unions approval of the exit survey.
	Jul 1, 2019		Place the new exit survey in production.
	Jul 1, 2019		Market the new exit survey.

Accomplishments	*Fiscal Year*	*Accomplishment*
	2018	The initial draft of the project charter for the VA Entrance and Exit Survey Content Revision Project was created.

Brief Description of Program Deficiency	E.4.a.5. The processing of requests for reasonable accommodation? [29 CFR §1614.203(d)(4)]		
Objective	Deploy a standardized system to track reasonable accommodation requests across the VA.		
Target Date	Jul 31, 2019		
Completion Date			
Planned Activities	*Target Date*	*Completion Date*	*Planned Activity*
	May 31, 2019		Develop an enterprise-wide system to track reasonable accommodation requests.
	Jun 28, 2019		Test the system.
	Jul 31, 2019		Deploy the system.
Accomplishments	*Fiscal Year*	*Accomplishment*	
	2018	VA has gathered system requirements and established rules regarding mandatory usage of system.	

Brief Description of Program Deficiency	E.4.b. Does the agency have a system in place to re-survey the workforce on a regular basis? [MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]		
Objective	Implement a mechanism to resurvey the workforce on a regular basis.		
Target Date	Mar 31, 2021		
Completion Date			
Planned Activities	*Target Date*	*Completion Date*	*Planned Activity*
	Oct 1, 2020		Develop an electronic self-reporting tool for employees to verify and change their race, ethnicity, gender, and disability status that functions within HR Smart.
	Mar 31, 2021		Implement the self-reporting tool.
Accomplishments	*Fiscal Year*	*Accomplishment*	

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.

VA works regularly with Veterans, to include disabled Veterans, through the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Program and through the Veterans Employment Service Office (VESO), to assist Veterans with seeking employment. VR&E also assists Disabled Veterans with job-related training that may assist them with building skills to assist with employment. VESO works with 9 assigned coordinators who work with Veterans with disabilities, to include those with targeted disabilities, to support them with seeking employment, and provide services such as assistance with resume writing and resume review. Additionally, there is a National Selective Placement Program (SPP) Manager, Administration-level SPP Managers, and SPP Coordinators (SPPC) at every VA facility who assist PWD and PWTD with employment opportunities using the Schedule A hiring authority.

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

SPP Managers and Coordinators have increased the awareness of the Schedule A hiring authority through marketing and also devised standard training for VA SPPCs, which is still in beta testing.

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.

The SPPC receives the individual's resume and schedule A letter and reviews it to ensure eligibility. Once confirmed, the SPPC forwards the resume to the hiring manager of an open, vacant position for consideration and advises the hiring manager of the benefits of using this non-competitive hiring authority.

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.

<div align="right">Answer   No</div>

VA is currently beta testing an SPPC course that will be modified for managers. In the interim, there is a HR University course hiring managers are encouraged to take.

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.

VA places the onus on each facility to ensure they are partnering with and marketing employment opportunities to external organizations such as state and local Disability Committees, Commissions, Department of Labor, and organizations as well as the disability offices at local colleges and universities. At the Department-level, VA is pursuing establishing memoranda of understanding with local universities that have a high student population of PWD and PWTD. Through the draft policy document on section 504, VA is also establishing a stakeholders group, which will include several disability and disabled Veterans affinity group leadership.

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   Yes

The percentage of PWTD in the GS-11 to SES cluster was 1.30% in FY 2018, which falls below the goal of 2%.

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

% of New Hires	0				

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

         a. New Hires for MCO (PWD)   Answer   Yes

         b. New Hires for MCO (PWTD)   Answer   Yes

In comparison to the benchmarks, triggers exist for PWD among new hires for the following MCOs: Human Resources Management, Equal Employment Opportunity, Program Management, Management and Program Analysis, Financial Administration and Program, Auditing, Medical Officer, Nurse, Practical Nurse, Medical Technologist, Diagnostic Radiologic Technologist, General Attorney, Veterans Claims Examining, Claims Assistance and Examining, General Business and Industry, Loan Specialist, Appraising, and Information Technology Management. In comparison to the benchmarks, triggers exist for PWTD among new hires for the following MCOs: Police, Human Resources Management, Equal Employment Opportunity, Program Management, Management and Program Analysis, Financial Administration and Program, Auditing, Medical Officer, Nurse, Practical Nurse, Nursing Assistant, Medical Technologist, Diagnostic Radiologic Technologist, General Attorney, Claims Assistance and Examining, General Business and Industry, Loan Specialist, Appraising, and Information Technology Management.

New Hires to Mission-Critical Occupations	Total (#)	Reportable Disability		Targetable Disability	
		Qualified Applicants (%)	New Hires (%)	Qualified Applicants (%)	New Hires (%)
Numerical Goal	--	12%		2%	
0083POLICE	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0101SOCIAL SCIENCE	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0201HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0260EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0301MISCELLANEOUS ADMINISTRATION AND PROGRAM	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0340PROGRAM MANAGEMENT	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0343MANAGEMENT AND PROGRAM ANALYSIS	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0501FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION AND PROGRAM	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0511AUDITING	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0602MEDICAL OFFICER	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0610NURSE	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0620PRACTICAL NURSE	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0621NURSING ASSISTANT	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

New Hires to Mission-Critical Occupations	Total (#)	Reportable Disability		Targetable Disability	
		Qualified Applicants (%)	New Hires (%)	Qualified Applicants (%)	New Hires (%)
Numerical Goal	--	12%		2%	
0644MEDICAL TECHNOLOGIST	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0647DIAGNOSTIC RADIOLOGIC TECHNOLOGIST	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0660PHARMACIST	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0675MEDICAL RECORDS TECHNICIAN	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0905GENERAL ATTORNEY	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0986LEGAL ASSISTANCE	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0996VETERANS CLAIMS EXAMINING	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0998CLAIMS ASSISTANCE AND EXAMINING	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1101GENERAL BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1165LOAN SPECIALIST	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1171APPRAISING	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1630CEMETERY ADMINISTRATION	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
1811CRIMINAL INVESTIGATING	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2210INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
4754CEMETERY CARETAKING	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

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

OPM's USA Staffing applicant flow system currently does not provide the necessary information.

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

In comparison to the benchmarks, triggers exist for PWD among employees promoted to the following MCOs: Police, Social Science, Human Resource Management, Miscellaneous Administration and Program, Program Management, Management and Program Analysis, Financial Administration and Program, Medical Officer, Nurse, Practical Nurse, Nursing Assistant, Medical Technologist, Diagnostic Radiologic Technologist, Pharmacist, Medical Records Technician, Legal Assistance, Veterans Claims Examining, Claims Assistance and Examining, General Business and Industry, Loan Specialist, Appraising, Cemetery Administration, Criminal Investigating, Information Technology Management, and Cemetery Caretaking. In comparison to the benchmarks, triggers exist for PWTD among employees promoted to the following MCOs: Police, Social Science, Human Resource Management, Equal Employment Opportunity, Miscellaneous Administration and Program, Program Management, Management and Program Analysis, Financial Administration and Program, Auditing, Medical Officer, Nurse, Practical Nurse, Nursing Assistant, Pharmacist, Medical Records Technician, Legal Assistance, Veterans Claims Examining, Claims Assistance and Examining, General Business and Industry, Loan Specialist, Appraising, Cemetery Administration, Criminal Investigating, Information Technology Management, and Cemetery Caretaking.

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.

Through the re-establishment of the Diversity and Inclusion in VA Disability Committee, plans are underway to change the dialogue regarding the benefits of employing and promoting PWD and PWTD. In addition, an internal policy document is being created to ensure managers and supervisors understand how they can better utilize available tools to encourage participation in opportunities for career development and promotion. VA designated learning officers at most VA facilities to assist VA staff in identifying career development and training resources and opportunities. Program announcements for advancement opportunities or development will contain language, to include PWD and PWTD.

B. CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITES

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

VA has numerous formal career and leadership development programs available for all employees. In addition, the VA Acquisition Academy offers training opportunities that lead to certifications in Federal Acquisition processes that employees can use to seek further career advancement.

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

Career Development Opportunities	Total Participants		PWD		PWTD	
	Applicants (#)	Selectees (#)	Applicants (%)	Selectees (%)	Applicants (%)	Selectees (%)
Internship Programs	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Fellowship Programs	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Career Development Opportunities	Total Participants		PWD		PWTD	
	Applicants (#)	Selectees (#)	Applicants (%)	Selectees (%)	Applicants (%)	Selectees (%)
Mentoring Programs	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Coaching Programs	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Training Programs	N/A	275	N/A	13.45%	N/A	2.18%
Detail Programs	N/A	52	N/A	25.00%	N/A	0.00%
Other Career Development Programs	N/A	189	N/A	10.58%	N/A	1.58%

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

OPM's USA Staffing applicant flow system currently does not provide the necessary information.

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

        a. Applicants (PWTD)   Answer   N/A

        b. Selections (PWTD)   Answer   N/A

OPM's USA Staffing applicant flow system currently does not provide the necessary information.

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

In FY 2018, VA identified a trigger involving the percentage of PWD and PWTD who received a cash award of $501 or more.

Time-Off Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Time-Off Awards: 1-9 hours : Total Time-Off Awards Given	15586	15.12	81.73	2.60	12.52
Time-Off Awards: 9+ hours : Total Time-Off Awards Given	3214	14.87	82.39	2.55	12.32

Cash Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Cash Awards: $100 - $500: Total Cash Awards Given	99177	16.59	83.41	2.86	13.73

Cash Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Cash Awards: $501+: Total Cash Awards Given	135341	12.39	87.61	1.99	10.39

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

      a. Pay Increases (PWD)   Answer   No

      b. Pay Increases (PWTD)   Answer   Yes

In FY 2018, VA identified a trigger involving the percentage of PWTD who received a quality step increase.

Other Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Quality Step Increases (QSI): Total QSIs Awarded	983	13.84	86.16	2.03	11.80
Performance Based Pay Increase	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

3. If the agency has other types of employee recognition programs, are PWD and/or PWTD recognized disproportionately less than employees without disabilities? (The appropriate benchmark is the inclusion rate.) If "yes", describe the employee recognition program and relevant data in the text box.

      a. Other Types of Recognition (PWD)   Answer   N/A

      b. Other Types of Recognition (PWTD)   Answer   N/A

D. PROMOTIONS

1. Does your agency have a trigger involving PWD among the qualified internal applicants and/or selectees for promotions to the senior grade levels? (The appropriate benchmarks are the relevant applicant pool for qualified internal applicants and the qualified applicant pool for selectees.) For non-GS pay plans, please use the approximate senior grade levels. If "yes", describe the trigger(s) in the text box. Select "n/a" if the applicant data is not available for your agency, and describe your plan to provide the data in the text box.

      a. SES

            i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD)   Answer   N/A

            ii. Internal Selections (PWD)   Answer   N/A

      b. Grade GS-15

            i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD)   Answer   N/A

            ii. Internal Selections (PWD)   Answer   N/A

      c. Grade GS-14

            i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD)   Answer   N/A

            ii. Internal Selections (PWD)   Answer   N/A

      d. Grade GS-13

            i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD)   Answer   N/A

ii. Internal Selections (PWD)   Answer   N/A

OPM's USA-Staffing applicant flow system currently does not provide the necessary information.

2. Does your agency have a trigger involving PWTD among the qualified internal applicants and/or selectees for promotions to the senior grade levels? (The appropriate benchmarks are the relevant applicant pool for qualified internal applicants and the qualified applicant pool for selectees.) For non-GS pay plans, please use the approximate senior grade levels. If "yes", describe the trigger(s) in the text box. Select "n/a" if the applicant data is not available for your agency, and describe your plan to provide the data in the text box.

    a. SES

        i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD)   Answer   N/A

        ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)   Answer   N/A

    b. Grade GS-15

        i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD)   Answer   N/A

        ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)   Answer   N/A

    c. Grade GS-14

        i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD)   Answer   N/A

        ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)   Answer   N/A

    d. Grade GS-13

        i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD)   Answer   N/A

        ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)   Answer   N/A

OPM's USA-Staffing applicant flow system currently does not provide the necessary information.

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

    a. New Hires to SES (PWD)   Answer   N/A

    b. New Hires to GS-15 (PWD)   Answer   N/A

    c. New Hires to GS-14 (PWD)   Answer   N/A

    d. New Hires to GS-13 (PWD)   Answer   N/A

OPM's USA-Staffing applicant flow system currently does not provide the necessary information.

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

OPM's USA-Staffing applicant flow system currently does not provide the necessary information.

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

OPM's USA-Staffing applicant flow system currently does not provide the necessary information.

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

OPM's USA-Staffing applicant flow system currently does not provide the necessary information.

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

OPM's USA-Staffing applicant flow system currently does not provide the necessary information.

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

OPM's USA-Staffing applicant flow system currently does not provide the necessary information.

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

VA was unable to verify if all eligible Schedule A employees with a disability were converted into the competitive service after two years of satisfactory service.

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

Using the inclusion rate, triggers exist for PWD (10.91%) who voluntarily separated from VA, as compared to the rate of persons without disabilities (8.08%). Additionally, triggers exist for PWD (1.92%) who involuntarily separated from VA, as compared to the rate of persons without disabilities (0.88%).

Separations	Total #	Reportable Disabilities %	Without Reportable Disabilities %
Permenant Workforce	370213	13.96	86.04

Separations	Total #	Reportable Disabilities %	Without Reportable Disabilities %
Total Separations	35188	18.85	81.15
Voluntary Separations	31379	17.97	82.03
Involuntary Separations	3809	26.10	73.90

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

Using the inclusion rate, triggers exist for PWTD (11.83%) who voluntarily separated from VA, as compared to the rate of persons without targeted disabilities (8.39%). Additionally, triggers exist for PWTD (3.08%) who involuntarily separated from VA, as compared to the rate of persons without targeted disabilities (0.98%).

Separations	Total #	Targeted Disabilities %	Without Targeted Disabilities %
Permenant Workforce	370213	2.53	97.47
Total Separations	35188	3.96	96.04
Voluntary Separations	31379	3.52	96.48
Involuntary Separations	3809	7.56	92.44

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.

VA's current exit survey tool does not collect data on disability status.

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 VA Secretary's EEO, Diversity and Inclusion, No FEAR, and Whistleblower Rights and Protection Policy Statement, most recently signed on August 27, 2018, contains employee and applicant rights under all Sections of the Rehabilitation Act, to include section 508 and can be found at https://www.diversity.va.gov/policy/statement.aspx. Additional information can be found at the VA Section 508 Office Website at https://www.section508.va.gov/index.asp.

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.

Currently, VA does not have a link explaining employees' and applicants' rights under the Architectural Barriers Act. However, we are working to correct this.

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.

VA's final updated internal RA policy is currently moving through the approval process. VA's current RA policy is still active meeting the requirement of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. VA is working to expand oversight of section 504 and implement policy to ensure access by the public to VA activities, services, and benefits. Also, the Diversity and Inclusion at VA Council Disability Committee is working to create internal policy for selective placement, to include Schedule A. In addition, the Section 508 Office has increased to more than twice its size since FY 2017 to ensure electronic accessibility of internal systems and electronic documents.

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.)

VA is unable to determine the average time frame for processing initial requests for reasonable accommodations. VA is currently in the development phase of a RA tracking system to monitor timeliness of requests. This system should be operational in July 2019.

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 FY 2018, VA established The Reasonable Accommodation Services Office as a focal point regarding agency oversight of RA processing procedures, training, and compliance. VA also established a support system with the creation of National Reasonable Accommodation Coordinators (RAC) at each of the respective Administrations. Their role is to provide support to facility RA coordinators under their purview. VA is also in the process of developing a RA tracking system to monitor the timeframes and conduct oversight and review. VA has developed a tiered system to provide structured support to its field personnel. In addition, the VA created a community of practice within its Pulse page to provide timely resources and training to agency managers/supervisors, employees, and stakeholders.

D. PERSONAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES ALLOWING EMPLOYEES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WORKPLACE
Pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.203(d)(5), federal agencies, as an aspect of affirmative action, are required to provide personal assistance services (PAS) to employees who need them because of a targeted disability, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship on the agency.

Describe the effectiveness of the policies, procedures, or practices to implement the PAS requirement. Some examples of an effective program include timely processing requests for PAS, timely providing approved services, conducting training for managers and supervisors, and monitoring PAS requests for trends.

The RAC is also responsible for processing PAS requests. Training and support regarding the processing of PAS requests has been provided via live training in collaboration with EEOC and the Chief of RA Services. In addition, PAS training resources can be found on the VA Pulse page https://www.vapulse.net/docs/DOC-157895. The new VA Handbook 5975.1 (currently being approved) is now a guide for both RA and PAS processing procedures.

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   Yes

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

VA paid compensatory damages and attorney fees. EEO training, letters of alternative discipline, and written counseling were given. Also, VA has removed disciplinary records from personnel files.

B. EEO COMPLAINT DATA INVOLVING REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

1. During the last fiscal year, did a higher percentage of PWD file a formal EEO complaint alleging failure to provide a reasonable
accommodation, as compared to the government-wide average?

Answer   Yes

2. During the last fiscal year, did any complaints alleging failure to provide reasonable accommodation result in a finding of discrimination or a settlement agreement?

Answer   Yes

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

VA paid compensatory damages and attorney fees, reinstated complainants to their positions, delivered EEO training, provided RA, and restored leave. VA has also suspended, admonished, and counseled (verbally) responsible management officials. The agency has removed disciplinary records from personnel files.

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   Yes

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

Answer   Yes

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

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 less than expected participation rate of people with targeted disabilities in the GS-11 to SES (1.37%) grade level cluster, as compared to the goal of 2%.
STATEMENT OF BARRIER GROUPS:	*Barrier Group* People with Targeted Disabilities
BARRIER ANALYSIS: Provide a description of the steps taken and data analyzed to determine cause of the condition.	
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.	The specific policy, procedure, or practice causing the less than expected participation rates for people with targeted disabilities is currently not known. Further analysis is needed.

Objective	Resurvey the workforce regarding their disability status.
	Date Objective Initiated — Oct 1, 2018
	Target Date For Completion Of Objective — Jan 31, 2020
	Complete a barrier analysis to identify the specific policy, procedure, or practice that could be causing the trigger.
	Date Objective Initiated — Oct 1, 2018
	Target Date For Completion Of Objective — Sep 30, 2021
Responsible Officials	Karen M. Basnight Director of Outreach and Retention Joseph Thele Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Systems and Analytics Ryan Pugh Management and Program Analyst

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Staffing & Funding (Yes or No)	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
09/30/2019	Reconnect the electronic self-report of SF-256 to HR Smart.	Yes		
01/31/2020	Advertise electronic self-reporting link to employees.	Yes		
11/02/2020	Establish a barrier analysis working group.	Yes		
06/30/2021	Conduct a thorough investigation of relevant policies, procedures, and practices to determine the cause of the less than expected participation rates.	No		
09/30/2021	Devise a plan to eliminate the identified barrier.	Yes		
Fiscal Year	**Accomplishments**			

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 less than expected participation rate of people with disabilities in the GS-11 to SES (10.03%) grade level cluster, as compared to the goal of 12%.
STATEMENT OF BARRIER GROUPS:	*Barrier Group*
	People with Disabilities

BARRIER ANALYSIS: Provide a description of the steps taken and data analyzed to determine cause of the condition.	
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.	The specific policy, procedure, or practice causing the less than expected participation rates for people with disabilities is currently not known. Further analysis is needed.

Objective	Resurvey the workforce regarding their disability status.	
	Date Objective Initiated	Oct 1, 2018
	Target Date For Completion Of Objective	Jan 31, 2020
	Complete a barrier analysis to identify the specific policy, procedure, or practice that could be causing the trigger.	
	Date Objective Initiated	Oct 1, 2018
	Target Date For Completion Of Objective	Sep 30, 2021
Responsible Officials	Karen M. Basnight Director of Outreach and Retention	
	Joseph Thele Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources Systems and Analytics	
	Ryan Pugh Management and Program Analyst	

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Staffing & Funding (Yes or No)	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
09/30/2019	Reconnect the electronic self-report of SF-256 to HR Smart.	Yes		
01/31/2020	Advertise electronic self-reporting link to employees.	Yes		
11/02/2020	Establish a barrier analysis working group.	Yes		
06/30/2021	Conduct a thorough investigation of relevant policies, procedures, and practices to determine the cause of the less than expected participation rates.	No		
09/30/2021	Devise a plan to eliminate the identified barrier.	Yes		
Fiscal Year	Accomplishments			

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

N/A

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