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

SSA is below the 12 percent goal for PWDs in the GS-11 to SES grade cluster. PWDs comprise 9.46% of our permanent workforce. Our representation of PWDs in the GS-01 to GS-10 grade cluster is 17.91%.

*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

Grade Level Cluster(GS or Alternate Pay Planb)	Total	Reportable Disability		Targeted Disability	
	#	#	%	#	%
Numarical Goal	--	12%		2%	
Grades GS-1 to GS-10	20245	3625	17.91	999	4.93
Grades GS-11 to SES	39090	3681	9.42	1092	2.79

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

During the "State of the Agency" briefing, the EEO Director provided information and opportunities to Executive staff members about the agency's goals. The agency also developed a barrier analysis action plan that identifies specific actions for addressing underrepresentation and it shared the plan with leadership for implementation.

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   Yes</div>

The agency has designated qualified personnel to implement the disability program. The agency has institutionalized its strategic plan for advancing efforts towards the disability program.

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

Disability Program Task	# of FTE Staff By Employment Status			Responsible Official (Name, Title, Office Email)
	Full Time	Part Time	Collateral Duty	
Section 508 Compliance	21	0	0	Pierce Crowell Section 508 Program Managers Pierce.Crowell@ssa.gov
Architectural Barriers Act Compliance	1	0	0	Matthew Foley Director, Division of Architectural and Engineering Services Matthew.Foley@ssa.gov
Processing applications from PWD and PWTD	0	0	15	Thomas Graham Supervisory Human Resources Specialist Thomas.Graham@ssa.gov
Answering questions from the public about hiring authorities that take disability into account	0	0	15	Renelda Broadus Human Resources Specialist Renelda.Broadus@ssa.gov
Processing reasonable accommodation requests from applicants and employees	31	0	120	Tamara Stenzel NRAC Tamara.Stenzel@ssa.gov
Special Emphasis Program for PWD and PWTD	2	0	0	Joanne Cabrera Special Emphasis Team Leader Joanne.Cabrera@ssa.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.

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

The Center for Accommodations and Disability Services (CADS) staff participated in virtual external reasonable accommodation (RA) trainings sponsored by the National Employment Law Institute on October 6-7, 2021 (Americans with Disabilities Act workshop), EEOC Excel virtual Conference on June 15-17, 2021 and webinar workshops from the Federal Employment Law Training Group workshops on various Reasonable Accommodations topics, such as the Public Sector EEO Employment Law Update on August 25-27, 2021. In addition, CADS also participated in various online training sessions on complete staff work and business writing among other topics provided by vendors such as Graduate School USA. CADS staff also received regular on-the-job training to enhance skills on agency-specific RA processing issues. CADS provides training to new Component/Regional Reasonable Accommodation Coordinators (RAC) on the reasonable accommodations program, as well as ongoing training to all RACs through training sessions on special topics and regular RAC calls throughout the year. Specifically, CADS offered its first-ever virtual training conference to over 100 RACs covering a variety of pertinent topics related to RAs and employees with

disabilities over four Adobe Connect and Microsoft Teams sessions held between July and August 2021. Each fiscal year, the agency holds regular training nationwide with Selective Placement Program Coordinators (SPPC). The SPPCs for headquarters and the regions serve as a vehicle for training and sharing of best practices on disability-related topics, such as recruitment, hiring, and retention of PWD. Training and information sharing amongst SPPCs are key to promoting agency-wide buy-in, awareness, and engagement in achieving its goal to become a model employer for PWD

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

In FY 2021, the agency provided approximately $14 million in centralized funds for items and services. These include assistive technology (and related training), adaptive devices, reader and personal assistants, interpreter services, and related services for employees who are deaf or hard of hearing. Additionally, the agency utilized funding authorized through the CARES Act as part of its COVID-19 response to ensure that the agency provided EWD with the necessary assistive technology, equipment, and other items (i.e., ergonomic chairs or furniture) at alternate duty stations (ADS) to enable performance of their essential functions through telework. Through the agency's recruitment and Selective Placement framework, it invests resources in targeted recruitment to build a candidate pool of highly skilled PWD and PWTD, by attending job fairs, virtual fairs, and special recruitment events.

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	Produce reliable data from RA database and devise a strategy to increase the timeliness of these requests.
Target Date	Sep 30, 2021
Completion Date	Dec 30, 2019

	Target Date	*Completion Date*	*Planned Activity*
Planned Activities	Jan 30, 2019		Begin producing monthly reports for RACs by region and component on all local RA requests to encourage greater adherence to consistent and accurate data entry and the timeliness standard of effectuating decisions within 45 calendar days excluding days awaiting medical information.
	Aug 30, 2020		Hold Training Conference for RACs on various RA issues including the RAPIDS 3.0 database; through face-to-face instructor-led training, various RA case scenarios to ensure a baseline level of knowledge on proper RA processing, including accurate and timely data entry.
	Sep 30, 2020		Continue holding monthly RAC calls and training, via phone, geared towards ensuring consistent and accurate data entry and devise a strategy to increase processing RA requests.

	Fiscal Year	*Accomplishment*
Accomplishments	2019	In FY 2018, the agency implemented an upgraded reasonable accommodation (RA) data system (May 9, 2018). Throughout FY 2019, CADS held recurring calls with all systems end-users who serve as RACs across the 10 SSA regions and headquarters components to review data entry practices and address user issues. Additionally, CADS provided just-in-time system administrative support through a dedicated mailbox to answer questions and correct inputs as needed. Additionally, the agency took steps to ensure that it makes decisions on 90 percent of all RA requests within the timeframe set forth in its reasonable accommodation (RA) policy. Specifically, SSA's RA policy requires the agency to make a decision within 45 calendar days of receiving a request, excluding days awaiting medical documentation, absent extenuating circumstances. FY 2019 was the first full year that SSA's RA data system had the capacity to account for the time spent waiting for medical documentation from the employee. As a result, CADS is taking steps to address both data reliability and timeliness issues. Specifically, CADS assigned a GS-14 analyst to coordinate efforts to improve data reliability and overall timelines. These efforts include: • Regularly reviewing regional and component level data to identify data entry errors and timeliness issues; • Conducting regular RAC calls and trainings, via phone and Skype, that are geared to ensuring consistent and accurate data entry, processing RA requests as expeditiously as possible, and producing reports for their respective components and regions; • Conducting an in-depth RAC training conference via Adobe Connect over the course of a few days at the end of the FY 2020; • Utilizing detailees from the Office of General Counsel on a rotating basis to conduct quality reviews of National Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator decisions to ensure those decisions are supported by the evidence in the record; and • Regularly reviewing and modifying internal business processes to improve RA processing times.

Fiscal Year	Accomplishment
2021	Throughout FY 2021, the Center for Accommodations and Disability Services (CADS) held recurring calls with all systems end-users who serve as Reasonable Accommodation Coordinators (RACs) across the 10 SSA regions and headquarters components to review data entry practices and address user issues. CADS also successfully completed its first-ever virtual RAC training conference to address a variety of RA topics with over 100 RACs, ensuring consistency in knowledge application on proper RA processing. Additionally, CADS provided just-in-time system administrative support through a dedicated mailbox to answer questions and correct inputs as needed. In FY 2021, CADS posted a competitive vacancy and selected a GS-13 full-time analyst to coordinate efforts to improve data reliability and overall timeliness. These efforts included: • Regularly reviewed regional and component-level data to identify data entry errors and timeliness issues and produced monthly aged case reports; CADS used the reports to follow up with the appropriate RACs to take actions on aged cases. • Conducted regular RAC calls and trainings, via phone, Skype, and Microsoft Teams to encourage consistent and accurate data entry and timely processing of RA requests; • Conducted small group training on producing reports for components and regions in August 2021; • Regularly reviewed and modified internal business processes to improve RA processing times.

Objective	Evaluate the process to examine why RAs are not being timely processed.		
Target Date	Jun 30, 2022		
Completion Date			
	Target Date	**_Completion Date_**	**_Planned Activity_**
	Jan 30, 2019	February 1, 2021	Begin producing monthly reports for RACs by region and component on all requests to encourage greater adherence to consistent and accurate data entry and the timeliness standard of effectuating decisions within 45 calendar days excluding days awaiting medical information
Planned Activities	Aug 30, 2020	August 11, 2021	Hold virtual training conference for RACs on various RA topics to share knowledge on addressing timeliness issues and ensure a baseline level of knowledge on proper RA processing, including accurate and timely data entry. ***Recorded training for new RAC training and just-in-time refresher training for existing RACs)
	Jun 30, 2021	January 6, 2021	Analyze RA data to determine the potential reasons for the compliance percentages and develop and implement a strategy to address those issues
	Sep 30, 2021		Continue holding bimonthly RAC calls and training, via phone, geared towards ensuring consistent and accurate data entry and devise a strategy to increase processing RA requests
	Fiscal Year	**_Accomplishment_**	
Accomplishments	2021	In FY 2021, CADS posted a competitive vacancy and selected a GS-13 full-time analyst to coordinate efforts to improve data reliability and overall timeliness. These efforts included: • Regularly reviewed regional and component-level data to identify data entry errors and timeliness issues and produced monthly aged case reports; CADS used the reports to follow up with the appropriate RACs to take actions on aged cases. • Conducted regular RAC calls and trainings, via phone, Skype, and Microsoft Teams to encourage consistent and accurate data entry and timely processing of RA requests; • Conducted small group training on producing reports for components and regions in August 2021; • Regularly reviewed and modified internal business processes to improve RA processing times.	
	2020	Throughout FY 2021, the Center for Accommodations and Disability Services (CADS) held recurring calls with all systems end-users who serve as Reasonable Accommodation Coordinators (RACs) across the 10 SSA regions and headquarters components to review data entry practices and address user issues. CADS also successfully completed its first-ever virtual RAC training conference to address a variety of RA topics with over 100 RACs, ensuring consistency in knowledge application on proper RA processing. Additionally, CADS provided just-in-time system administrative support through a dedicated mailbox to answer questions and correct inputs as needed.	

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.

In its effort to attract and hire a diverse workforce, the agency uses a variety of resources to identify job applicants with disabilities, including, but not limited to: • A Selective Placement Program to assist PWDs to obtain employment consistent with their level of skills and abilities without having to compete for positions; • A designated SPPC in each region and major component to lead and

maintain the agency's recruitment efforts for PWD and to promote the use of the Schedule A hiring authority, 5 CFR 213.3102(u); • Vacancy announcements on USAJOBS targeting PWDs, which are posted by the headquarters servicing personnel office (SPO) and many regional SPOs. Each vacancy directed the PWD to identify specific job occupations of interest. The vacancy allowed each PWD to upload documents certifying their disability status for verification, a résumé, and transcripts (if applicable). Selecting officials had the option of requesting names of qualified PWD candidates for a particular skill set to fill a vacancy under the Schedule A appointment authority; • Selective placement email boxes, maintained by the SPPCs, where both internal and external customers can contact the agency looking for employment under the Schedule A hiring authority. These email addresses, as well as additional contact information for the SPPCs, are available on the Office of Personnel Management's Selective Placement website; • Non-paid internship programs to recruit and refer PWD and disabled veterans for full-time or part-time work over a 4-month to 12-month period, without cost to the agency. Managers can evaluate the PWD or disabled veteran for potential employment as the intern strengthens specific skill sets and knowledge of agency procedures and protocols; • Participate in internship, mentorship, and hiring programs for students and recent graduates with disabilities; • Use of the Department of Veterans Affairs' Non-Paid Work Experience (NPWE) and the Department of Defense's Operation Warfighter (OWF) programs to assist veterans with service-connected disabilities and wounded warriors, still on active duty, to prepare for, find, and keep suitable jobs; and • Use of a Careers website, where individuals seeking employment can get information on career paths and hiring programs as well as use of a Careers website for PWD that provides information on the Selective Placement Program, the Schedule A hiring authority, and reasonable accommodation.

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

To use hiring authorities that take disability into account and to recruit PWD and PWTD for permanent workforce positions, the agency: • Assists components, with hiring authority in finding potential candidates eligible to be hired under the Schedule A hiring authority, emphasizing the untapped talent pool. This eliminates the need to post a position, thus saving time and resources. • Maintains, via the SPPCs, selective placement email boxes where both internal and external customers can contact the agency seeking employment under the Schedule A hiring authority. • Facilitates a quarterly cadre call with the SPPCs and the national recruitment team, in each region and major component, to promote the use of the Schedule A hiring authority. • Participates in workshops at organizations that provide services to PWD and veterans with disabilities. Provides information on the Federal hiring process, noncompetitive hiring authorities, applying for jobs at the agency, and job skills to assist PWD and disabled veterans in their search for Federal employment. • Participates in career fairs targeting PWD and veterans with disabilities. These fairs connect PWD and disabled veterans with agency recruiters to increase their awareness of diverse career opportunities with the agency. The fairs provide recruiters with access to a large pool of candidates who have a variety of skills to consider for current and future vacancies. The fairs provide an opportunity to enhance the agency's established relationships with organizations that serve the PWD and veteran populations. The fairs also provide an additional avenue to publicize USAJOBS vacancies specifically geared to PWD. • Partners with educational institutions, including community colleges, universities, and other institutions of learning or training, that offer programs for individuals with specific disabilities, such as persons having a hearing, visual, and intellectual disability. • Engages with social service agencies, including labor organizations, organizations of and for PWD, and other such entities that may provide referrals (i.e., private recruiting sources, including professional organizations, consulting services, and organizations with expertise in disability).

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 determine if an individual is eligible for appointment under Schedule A, the individual must provide proof of disability to the SPPC, which: • Must be from a licensed medical professional; a licensed vocational rehabilitation specialist (State or private); or a Federal or State agency or an agency of the District of Columbia or a U.S. territory that issues or provides disability benefits; • Must be on official letterhead and include a signature; and • Must meet basic qualifications of the job. The SPPCs work with components that have hiring authority to identify potential candidates using a USAJOBS vacancy geared towards PWD, or the Workforce Recruitment Program. SSA searches for candidates based on skill sets needed by the components, as well as geographic location. Staffing specialists review résumés to determine if the potential applicants meet the educational and experience requirements of the job. Staffing specialists send résumé pools to the hiring managers for possible interviews. The staff provides component briefings on an annual basis on workforce profiles. OCREO also meets with components as needed (when hiring allocations are available) to provide information on Schedule A and veterans hiring authorities and résumé pools to assist them in hiring.

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

As part of the agency's Employer of Choice for Employees with Disabilities initiative, the agency created training material. The training covers the Schedule A hiring authority, Selective Placement Program, Do's and Don'ts of interviewing PWD, partnerships and outreach, and resources for locating qualified candidates with disabilities. The training is mandatory and viewed annually. The agency also provides mandatory annual training to managers and HR Staff on the agency's Veterans Employment Initiative, which includes information about veterans' hiring authorities, such authority for hiring individuals who are 30 percent or more disabled. The agency created a series of trainings, via video on demand, for staff to view annually. Topics include "To Post or Not to Post," How to Identify Available Hiring Authorities," and "Targeted Recruitment." The series of trainings help in the agency's effort to recruit and hire PWD.

B. PLAN TO ESTABLISH CONTACTS WITH DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT ORGANIZATIONS

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

The agency establishes and maintains contact with disability organizations involved in the placement of applicants with disabilities to provide information about the agency and job opportunities and to facilitate the placement of applicants with disabilities in our organization. The agency established partnerships, through outreach efforts, with organizations that service PWD, which facilitate publicizing agency jobs and employment programs. These organizations are a pipeline of untapped talent, providing the agency with potential job applicants as well as interns for the agency's non-paid internship programs. Career/Job Fairs The agency actively participates in career fairs targeting PWD and veterans with disabilities. These fairs connect PWD and disabled veterans with SPPC recruiters and human resources staff to increase awareness of diverse career opportunities with the agency. The fairs provide an opportunity to enhance our established relationships with organizations that serve the PWD and veteran populations, which are an additional avenue to publicize jobs to qualified candidates. Due to COVID-19, SSA has participated in numerous virtual fairs, where individuals may "visit" SSA's recruitment booth to begin a chat with representatives from SSA's Recruitment Cadre nationwide

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

New Hires	Total	Reportable Disability		Targeted Disability	
		Permanent Workforce	Temporary Workforce	Permanent Workforce	Temporary Workforce
	(#)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
% of Total Applicants	21813	2.72	0.00	1.74	0.00
% of Qualified Applicants	9725	2.60	0.00	1.63	0.00
% of New Hires	2251	17.33	1.47	3.11	0.31

2. Using the qualified applicant pool as the benchmark, do triggers exist for PWD and/or PWTD among the new hires for any of the mission- critical occupations (MCO)? If "yes", please describe the triggers below. Select "n/a" if the applicant data

is not available for your agency, and describe your plan to provide the data in the text box.

        a. New Hires for MCO (PWD)   Answer   No

        b. New Hires for MCO (PWTD)   Answer   No

New Hires to Mission-Critical Occupations	Total (#)	Reportable Disability New Hires (%)	Targetable Disability New Hires (%)
Numerical Goal	--	12%	2%
0105 SOCIAL INSURANCE SPECIALIST	691	23.15	3.33
0343 MANAGEMENT PROGRAM ANALYST	6	0.00	0.00
0962 CONTACT REPRESENTATIVE	1332	16.89	3.53
2210 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SPECIALIST	98	5.10	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   No

        b. Qualified Applicants for MCO (PWTD)   Answer   No

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

        a. Promotions for MCO (PWD)   Answer   No

        b. Promotions for MCO (PWTD)   Answer   No

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

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

A. ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM PLAN

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

SSA's approach includes the following: • Management and Employee Training; • Support of Persons with Disabilities; and • Evaluation and Analysis. Management and Employee Training The agency developed and provided management and employee training in areas that promote PWD opportunities for advancement, such as the annual Employer Awareness Training. Annually, the agency provides mandatory training to managers and human resources staff to equip them with the knowledge and resources they

need to participate in the recruitment and hiring of PWD successfully. The training covers the Schedule A hiring authority, Selective Placement Program, Do's and Don'ts of Interviewing PWD, partnerships and outreach, and resources for locating qualified candidates with disabilities. Support of Persons with Disabilities At nearly 11 percent, SSA has one of the highest levels of representation of PWD in Federal Government. Further, the agency is one of the few Federal agencies to meet the Federal Government's goal of a 2-percent representation rate of employees with targeted disabilities. The agency has made significant agency-wide changes related to providing reasonable accommodation (RA), training and career development, and improved access to electronic information to enhance the potential for PWD/PWTD. The agency implemented a centralized RA program to facilitate the accuracy, consistency, and timeliness of RA decisions to help ensure that PWD/PWTD have the tools necessary to perform the duties of their position. The agency offers virtual details and provides local points of contact to ensure the success of PWD/PWTD participation in these developmental activities. The agency provides face-to-face and virtual mentoring to foster relationships that enhance personal and professional growth and development. Evaluation and Analysis The agency takes a multifaceted approach to evaluate and analyze the success of its methods for ensuring PWD have sufficient opportunities for advancement. This approach includes Barrier Analysis, Human Capital Framework Assessments (HCFA), and various surveys. OCREO analyzes EEO data to find and address potential barriers that may affect the PWD population. OPE conducts HCFA of agency Servicing Personnel Offices to ensure compliance with Merit System Principles, Prohibited Personnel Practices, and EEO laws. The Office of Strategy, Learning, and Workforce Development (OSLWD) provides leadership, oversight, and consultation within the Office of Human Resources and across the agency to effectively plan, implement, and evaluate human capital management activities. Through the dissemination of New Hire Surveys, facilitation of the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey, and management of the agency's Exit Interview and Exit Survey processes, OSLWD provides integrated evaluation processes that assess progress toward the agency's human capital goals, and moves the agency forward in its goals of achieving and maintaining "Model EEO Agency" status.

B. CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITES

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

The agency's leadership training includes national and component-level programs, participation in government-wide programs, and ongoing developmental activities. The national formal leadership development programs are the Senior Executive Service (SES) Candidate Development Program (CDP) and the National Leadership Development Program (NLDP): • SES CDP: A 12-to-18-month developmental program designed to prepare high-performing GS-15 level employees for future appointment into the SES. • NLDP: A modernized approach to leadership development at SSA that replaces previous programs and provides leadership development opportunities to employees in grades GS-08 through GS-15. The NLDP includes three tracks to leadership development: o NLDP Track 1: Senior Level Development for GS-15 o NLDP Track 2: Mid-Level Development for GS-12 to GS-14 o NLDP Track 3: Aspiring Level Development for GS-8 to GS-11 The Office of Strategy, Learning, and Workforce Development (OSLWD) empowers agency employees by providing continuous learning opportunities to acquire new skills and knowledge needed to enhance performance. OSLWD also offers Career Enrichment Workshops (CEW), Virtual Career Enrichment Workshops (VCEW), the SSA Mentoring Program (SMP), Executive Training, and External Development Programs (EDP). • CEW: A one-day workshop for employees at the GS-14 and below grade levels. Offered at the Baltimore Headquarters location. These workshops provide personal and career enrichment and growth techniques through training in agency core and leadership competencies and address information on career planning and goal setting. Deputy Commissioner-level components nominate interested employees. Attendance is open to selected employees who receive supervisory approval. Note: In-person CEWs are temporarily suspended due to COVID. • VCEW: A two-hour training workshop for employees at the GS-14 and below grade levels. Offered to employees via remote access., These workshops provide personal enrichment and growth through training in SSA's core and leadership competencies to SSA employees who are in or aspire to be in a leadership position. The workshops are live "vendor facilitated" trainings which are aired via interactive training with Adobe Connect or MS Teams access. Regional participants use local training facilities to participate in real-time presentations. OSLWD also provides additional training segments, via Video on Demand (VOD), that highlight important career enhancement strategies. Along with a virtual audience, the VCEW includes a small live studio audience. Note: The live studio audience is temporarily suspended due to COVID. Attendance is open to employees agency-wide who are required to obtain advanced supervisory approval to participate. • SMP: The SMP program is designed to foster relationships that enhance personal and professional growth and development. Through the mentoring relationship process, mentors have the opportunity to coach, guide, and share experiences, knowledge, and skills, which help to develop talent and a pipeline of well-qualified candidates. Mentors and mentees are encouraged to share knowledge and leverage skills to cultivate career growth. Employees who express an interest undergo a random selection process to participate. There are two tracks for the SMP: • Traditional Mentoring Program: Matches mentors and mentees for a 9-month relationship; and • Flash Events: Provides mentoring experiences during a one-time event in a group setting. Sessions are typically hosted virtually and in-person. Note: The in-person sessions have been temporarily suspended due to COVID. • Executive Training: Training events open to SES and GS-15 managers. Events take place online or at the Baltimore Headquarters campus. Where appropriate, the Office of Human Resources

ensures training is available to regional participants via VOD. There is no selection process for Executive Training. • EDP: EDPs provide an opportunity for SSA employees to expand their leadership skills, broaden their organizational experience, and foster networking by working across government departments and agencies within a learning environment. Through developmental assignments or training, employees gain experience with other Federal agencies in subject matter, policies, practices, and legislation and return mission-focused and better prepared to support the goals of SSA's Agency Strategic Plan. The programs' duration ranges from 7 to 12 months.

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						
Training Programs						
Fellowship Programs	1	1	0	0	0	0
Mentoring Programs	1522	1501	12.2	12.3	2.7	2.8
Coaching Programs						
Other Career Development Programs	763	165	10.2	11.5	2.4	5.5

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

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   No

        b. Selections (PWTD)   Answer   No

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 exist for PWDs and PWTDs in the distribution of cash awards. Using the inclusion rate, PWDs and PWTDs received cash

awards at lower ratios than PWODs: • Ratio of cash awards distributed to the total workforce = 115.26% (employees can receive more than one cash award) • Ratio of PWODs who received a cash award = 117. 84% ü Ratio of PWDs who received a cash award = 96.86% ü Ratio of PWTDs who received a cash award = 100.67% • Triggers exist for the awards distributed in the dollar amounts of $501 through $2, 999. For awards in the amount of $500 and under, there is no trigger as PWDs and PWTDs received awards at slightly higher ratios compared to PWODs

Time-Off Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 hours: Awards Given	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 Hours: Total Hours	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 Hours: Average Hours	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 hours: Awards Given	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 Hours: Total Hours	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 Hours: Average Hours	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 hours: Awards Given	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 Hours: Total Hours	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 Hours: Average Hours	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 hours: Awards Given	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 Hours: Total Hours	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 Hours: Average Hours	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 41 or more Hours: Awards Given	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 41 or more Hours: Total Hours	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Time-Off Awards 41 or more Hours: Average Hours	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Cash Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Cash Awards: $501 - $999: Awards Given	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: $501 - $999: Total Amount	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: $501 - $999: Average Amount	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: $1000 - $1999: Awards Given	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: $1000 - $1999: Total Amount	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: $1000 - $1999: Average Amount	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: $2000 - $2999: Awards Given	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: $2000 - $2999: Total Amount	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Cash Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Cash Awards: $2000 - $2999: Average Amount	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: $3000 - $3999: Awards Given	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: $3000 - $3999: Total Amount	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: $3000 - $3999: Average Amount	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: $4000 - $4999: Awards Given	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: $4000 - $4999: Total Amount	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: $4000 - $4999: Average Amount	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: $5000 or more: Awards Given	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: $5000 or more: Total Amount	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: $5000 or more: Average Amount	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

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

      a. Pay Increases (PWD)   Answer   Yes

      b. Pay Increases (PWTD)   Answer   Yes

Triggers exist for PWDs and PWTDs in the distribution of quality step increases (QSIs). Using the inclusion rate, PWDs and PWTDs received QSI awards at lower ratios than PWODs: • Ratio of QSIs distributed to the total workforce = 2.34% • Ratio of PWODs who received a QSI = 2.44% ü Ratio of PWDs who received a QSI = 1.56% ü Ratio of PWTDs who received a QSI = 1.91%

Other Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Total Performance Based Pay Increases Awarded	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   No

ii. Internal Selections (PWD)   Answer   No

b. Grade GS-15

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD)   Answer   No

ii. Internal Selections (PWD)   Answer   No

c. Grade GS-14

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD)   Answer   No

ii. Internal Selections (PWD)   Answer   No

d. Grade GS-13

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD)   Answer   No

ii. Internal Selections (PWD)   Answer   No

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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   No

ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)   Answer   No

b. Grade GS-15

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD)   Answer   No

ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)   Answer   No

c. Grade GS-14

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD)   Answer   No

ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)   Answer   No

d. Grade GS-13

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD)   Answer   No

ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)   Answer   No

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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   No

c. New Hires to GS-14 (PWD)   Answer   No

d. New Hires to GS-13 (PWD)   Answer   No

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   No

    b. New Hires to GS-15 (PWTD)   Answer   No

    c. New Hires to GS-14 (PWTD)   Answer   No

    d. New Hires to GS-13 (PWTD)   Answer   No

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

    a. Executives

        i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD)   Answer   No

        ii. Internal Selections (PWD)   Answer   No

    b. Managers

        i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD)   Answer   No

        ii. Internal Selections (PWD)   Answer   No

    c. Supervisors

        i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD)   Answer   No

        ii. Internal Selections (PWD)   Answer   No

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   No

        ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)   Answer   No

    b. Managers

       i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD)   Answer   No

       ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)   Answer   No

  c. Supervisors

       i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD)   Answer   No

       ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)   Answer   No

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

       a. New Hires for Executives (PWD)   Answer   No

       b. New Hires for Managers (PWD)   Answer   No

       c. New Hires for Supervisors (PWD)   Answer   No

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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   No

       b. New Hires for Managers (PWTD)   Answer   No

       c. New Hires for Supervisors (PWTD)   Answer   No

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

> Of the 281 Schedule A hires from FY 2019, the agency converted 189 of these employees into permanent competitive positions in FY 2021. Of the FY 2019 Schedule A hires, 92 left the agency or received a new appointment prior to their 2-year conversion date..

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

Triggers exist for PWDs separating from the agency for voluntary and involuntary separations. Using the inclusion rate, PWDs separate at higher ratios than PWODs: • Ratio of total workforce who voluntarily separated = 6.97% • Ratio of PWODs who voluntarily separated = 6.76% ü Ratio of PWDs who voluntarily separated = 8.45% • Ratio of total workforce who involuntarily separated = 0.64% • Ratio of PWODs who involuntarily separated = 0.57% • Ratio of PWDs who involuntarily separated = 1.09%

Seperations	Total #	Reportable Disabilities %	Without Reportable Disabilities %
Permanent Workforce: Reduction in Force	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Removal	378	1.08	0.57
Permanent Workforce: Resignation	1604	3.38	2.57
Permanent Workforce: Retirement	1898	3.65	3.10
Permanent Workforce: Other Separations	645	1.34	1.04
Permanent Workforce: Total Separations	4525	9.45	7.27

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

Triggers exist for PWTDs separating from the agency for voluntary and involuntary separations. Using the inclusion rate, PWTDs separate at higher ratios than PWODs: • Ratio of total workforce who voluntarily separated = 6.97% • Ratio of PWODs who voluntarily separated = 6.76% ü Ratio of PWTDs who voluntarily separated = 8.34% • Ratio of total workforce who involuntarily separated = 0.64% • Ratio of PWODs who involuntarily separated = 0.57 ü Ratio of PWTDs who involuntarily separated = 1.19%

Seperations	Total #	Targeted Disabilities %	Without Targeted Disabilities %
Permanent Workforce: Reduction in Force	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Removal	378	1.18	0.61
Permanent Security Workforce: Resignation	1604	2.46	2.68
Permanent Workforce: Retirement	1898	4.40	3.12
Permanent Workforce: Other Separations	645	1.42	1.06
Permanent Workforce: Total Separations	4525	9.46	7.47

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.

Our analysis of exit survey data indicates that PWDs and PWTDs have challenges with receiving training and supervisory support. Satisfaction with training was lower for PWDs and PWTDs compared to PWODs. Similarly, PWD and PWTD exit survey respondents selected "my supervisor" to the question "what did you not like about your job" at a higher ratio than PWODs. We met with representatives from the employee resource group, National Advisory Council for Employees with Disabilities (NACED), to discuss our barrier analysis and to hear its concerns. The group expressed concerns regarding issues with reasonable accommodations and the need for technical assistance. Employees are experiencing assistive device and software challenges, including proper functioning of existing technologies when workstation configuration changes are made, new software is added, or software releases occur.

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 internet address for the agency's notice to employees and applicants explaining rights under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act follows: https://www.ssa.gov/accessibility/508_overview.html The agency is committed to making its electronic and information technologies accessible to PWDs by meeting or exceeding the requirements of Section 508. The agency's comprehensive approach to Section 508 compliance ensures persons with disabilities have access comparable to those without disabilities. SSA includes Section 508 standards and requirements in its procurement processes regarding how it: • Conducts research; • Creates solicitations; • Evaluates and validates contractor Section 508 compliance claims; and • Decides to make purchase awards to contractors. SSA also includes Section 508 standards and requirements in its development, implementation, and maintenance processes in which it: • Uses standards based on universal design principles; • Includes PWDs in usability testing; • Develops technology using accessible coding best practices; and • Performs Section 508 compliance testing using automated tools, code reviews, and manual user testing with assistive technologies. SSA also develops and provides technical guidance, tools, and resources to assist with Section 508 compliance throughout the agency; provides training to employees on Section 508 standards, and how to develop and buy accessible technology; and conducts communications and awareness initiatives throughout the agency. Employees seeking to report a problem with the accessibility of a website, application, electronic document, hardware, or teleworking system can report the problem to the Employees with Disabilities (EWD) Help Desk at (877) 477-3345 or TTY/TDD (410) 597-0013.

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

The agency's public website does not contain information on the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) of 1968. The agency is not one of the designated Federal agencies authorized by Congress to issue accessibility standards under the ABA. The agency adheres to the standards issued by the General Services Administration (GSA). More information on GSA facility accessibility, including information on ABA, is at GSA's public website: https://www.gsa.gov/real-estate/design-construction/accessible-facility-design.

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.

SSA has a number of ongoing programs to ensure that its technology is accessible to employees with disabilities (EWD): • CADS provides individual training on the use of JAWS, MAGic, and Dragon Naturally Speaking and other assistive technology to new and existing users. In FY 2021, the agency provided 156 individual virtual training sessions (through a secure virtual private network), which ranged from 2 to 15 days depending on the type of software and EWDs' experience using it; • The CADS staff developed instructions for EWD assistive technology (AT) users to ensure usability of AT with the agency's systems; and • The EWD Training Cadre facilitates the delivery of ad hoc application (automation) training for JAWS, MAGic, Dragon, and other assistive technology users. Cadre members focus on the use of applications with the AT. The EWD Cadre delivers individual (one-on-one) and group (classroom) training. The EWD Inter-Component Workgroup ensures that the acquisition, integration, and maintenance of the AT necessary for EWDs to perform the duties of their positions, and that the software developed "in-house," acquired via another government agency, or procured commercially, is fully accessible and works effectively with agency EWD AT.

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.)

Agency-wide, the average processing time of initial request was 93 days during the reporting year. This number excludes the number of days waiting for medical documentation, if required. The table below represents the agency's FY 2021 timeliness measures by type of request: Type of Request Number of Decisions Issued Number of Decisions Issued in 45 Days or Less

Percentage Meeting 45-day Benchmark Recommended Denials1 281 8 2.8% Requests for Reconsideration2 85 1 1.2% Central Funds1 548 391 71.4% Local2 1,183 585 49.5% Mixed3 306 103 33.7% Definitions: 1Central Funds include those requests for items and services paid for through centralized funding, such as assistive technology, devices, equipment over $100; and ongoing disability services such as assistive technology training, sign language interpreting and related services to employees who have hearing or visual disabilities, and personal and reader assistants. CADS staff receives and processes these requests. 2Local includes requests for job and schedule modification, leave, reassignment, telework as a reasonable accommodation, and other types of accommodations not mentioned above. The requesting employee's component initially reviews and has authority to grant these requests. All proposed denials must be forwarded to CADS for National Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator review and decision. 3Mixed includes one or more centr

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.

The agency took a number of steps in FY 2021 to ensure the effectiveness of its reasonable accommodation program. Specifically, CADS, in collaboration with other offices across the agency, took the following steps: • Sustained the response to the COVID-19 pandemic's effect on agency operations by providing EWDs with the support needed to perform their jobs effectively in a virtual environment, including: o Continuing to provide virtual interpreter and Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services agency-wide; o Continuing to provide virtual AT for Dragon Naturally Speaking, JAWS, MAGic, and Kurzweil 3000; o Ensuring the facilitation of delivery, installation, and setup of assistive technology, equipment and adaptive devices through an established business process created in FY 2020; o Reviewing and updating comprehensive guidance for Reasonable Accommodation Coordinators (RAC) and managers on supporting EWDs during COVID-19 as the pandemic continued; • Provided ongoing mandatory RA training to newly appointed managers through a standardized management curriculum, as well as annual training for existing managers through SSA's Video on Demand streaming video direct to laptop workstations; • Conducted internal staff training throughout the year on a number of RA issues, and CADS staff attended external RA training; • Provided regular updates to the Deputy Commissioner for Human Resources and other agency leaders on reasonable accommodation issues; • Provided training and held regular calls for regional and component RA coordinators (RAC) and training for multiple components/ offices, including management teams and employee advisory councils; • Implemented weekly, monthly, and quarterly reporting of RA processing, enabling CADS to review and improve its RA program continuously; and • Implemented the creation and distribution of targeted reports to address aged RA requests for each Region and Deputy Commissioner-level component, holding more regular follow-up meetings with the specific Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator to update requests and resolve outstanding issues; • Designed and led the first-ever virtual RAC training conference to address a variety of RA topics with over 100 RACs, ensuring consistency in knowledge application on proper RA processing. The training was recorded and available for on-demand use.

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.

• In FY 2020, CADS improved the efficiency of and expanded the use of the Personal Attendant Services (PAS) program, which included executing a Statement of Work modification in the PAS contract to include an in-person consultation between the Personal Attendant care provider and the employee within 5 days of beginning services. Our PAS program consultations include a detailed review of care needed and the proposed service schedule, while also providing a forum for the employee to address any concerns to the provider. This process helps CADS to improve its customer service to EWDs and to make certain the agency meets all personal care needs prior to the start of PAS services. CADS continues to work closely with the vendor to ensure that both a primary and a back-up PAS provider are assigned to each EWD in need of PAS to maintain continuity of service should a primary provider be unavailable. CADS also developed and implemented a new business process and guidance for local Reasonable Accommodation Coordinators (RAC). CADs can secure PAS services from local care provider companies, such as Visiting Angels, when PAS

services from the national contractor are unavailable, thereby eliminating potential lapses in service coverage. CADS approved 10 new requests for PAS and on-boarded 9 PAS providers through the national contract in FY 2020, which enhances SSA's ability to recruit and retain individuals with disabilities. In FY 2021, due to the ongoing pandemic and the agency's maximum telework posture, no new PAS providers were onboarded. However, CADS continues to maintain its national contract and extended an option year in September 2021 in anticipation of more widespread recalls to the office that were expected to begin as early as January 2022.

Section VII: EEO Complaint and Findings Data

A. EEO COMPLAINT DATA INVOLVING HARASSMENT

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

   Answer   No

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

   Answer   Yes

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

The following actions were taken by the agency for findings of discrimination alleging harassment based on disability status in FY 2021: • Compensatory Damages • Post Order • Training

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.

The following actions were taken by the agency for findings of discrimination involving the failure to provide a reasonable accommodation in FY 2021: • Agency Improvements/Personnel Practices • Training • Conducted No FEAR Analysis • Compensatory Damages • Post Order • Reasonable Accommodation • Leave Restored

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

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?	SSA is below the 12 percent goal for PWDs in the GS-11 to SES grade cluster. PWDs comprise 9.46 percent of our permanent workforce.

STATEMENT OF BARRIER GROUPS:	*Barrier Group*
	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**	**Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice**
	PWD Representation in Senior Grades	The agency's hiring focus is primarily on front-line positions to serve the public, which are lower grades primarily located in field offices in ten regions. Thus, opportunities to increase representation at higher-grade levels are limited. In addition, employee reluctance to self-identify as having a disability on Form SF-256 results in underreporting of the representation of EWDs in the agency's workforce. This is evident by the large percentage of applicants on USAJOBS who choose to "Not Identify" their disability status (76.5 percent) compared to those who choose to not identify their race/ethnicity (30.6 percent).

Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan					
Date Initiated	**Target Date**	**Sufficient Funding / Staffing?**	**Date Modified**	**Date Completed**	**Objective Description**
10/01/2020	09/30/2020	No		09/30/2020	Increase workforce participation rates of PWDs in the higher grades of GS-11 to SES. Implement activities identified in the FY 2022 Agency Barrier Analysis Action Plan and the Agency Equity Action Plan to mitigate this barrier.

Responsible Official(s)		
Title	**Name**	**Standards Address The Plan?**
Deputy Director, Center for Cultural Diversity and Inclusion	Sandra Carroll	No
EEO Director	Claudia Postell	Yes
Deputy EEO Director	Tanya Lawrence	No
Director, Center for Cultural Diversity and Inclusion	Wanda M. Jones	No
Special Emphasis Program Managers Team Leader	Joanne Cabrera	No

Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective				
Target Date	**Planned Activities**	**Sufficient Staffing & Funding?**	**Modified Date**	**Completion Date**
09/30/2022	Broadening mentorship opportunities from higher-graded individuals to interested individuals to increase awareness of promotion opportunities and/or increased preparation for leadership program participation.	No		
09/30/2022	Improving consideration of diverse candidates in internal competitive promotions in Senior Grade Levels including grades GS-13 through GS-15 and SES.	No		
09/30/2022	Further evaluate the agency-wide performance program to ensure manager accountability for promoting a diverse and inclusive workforce in accordance with Federal mandates.	No		06/30/2022
12/31/2021	Perform a barrier analysis of agency data sources on the trigger, perform a trends analysis, and determine in which components or offices the trigger exists.	No		12/31/2021
09/30/2022	Engage stakeholders to investigate the trigger, determine if a barrier exists, and identify root causes, as applicable.	No		01/31/2022
12/31/2021	Update Annual Personnel Reminders encouraging employees to update their disability status, as applicable.	No		10/31/2021
09/30/2021	Encourage Deputy Commissioner components to brief their employees on the ease of updating disability status in employee express.	No	09/30/2022	
09/30/2021	Collaborate with the Office of Personnel (OPE) during new employee orientation to provide new employees with instructions on updating their disability status in Employee Express, as applicable.	Yes	09/30/2022	
Report of Accomplishments				
Fiscal Year	**Accomplishment**			
2020	This FY 2019 trigger is resolved in FY 2020. OCREO's FY 2020 analysis revealed this trigger is not a barrier. There are no policies, practices, or procedures that the agency identified as causing this trigger.			
2021	We continue to make progress in addressing this trigger, with our PWD representation rate trending upwards each year in the GS-11 through SES cluster. This year's 9.46 percent representation is nearly half a percentage point increase from the 9.00 percent representation in FY 2020. The year prior, FY 2019, the PWD representation was 8.61 percent.			

Source of the Trigger:	Workforce Data (if so identify the table)
Specific Workforce Data Table:	Workforce Data Table - B13
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?	PWDs and PWTDs receive cash awards at lower ratios than PWODs in the dollar amount categories of "$501 to $999," "1,000 to $1,999" and "$2,000 to $2,999." Both groups also received quality step increase (QSI) awards at lower ratios than PWODs.

STATEMENT OF BARRIER GROUPS:	*Barrier Group*
	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**
	Use of assistive technology devices effectively	Employees who use assistive technology often struggle with technical issues that they are not able to work through, especially in field offices where resources for technical support is limited. Regional stakeholders recognized that these technical challenges result in reduced efficiency and lower productivity of some of the disabled workforce, thus affecting performance evaluation ratings, resulting in their generally receiving fewer awards or lower award amounts.

Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan					
Date Initiated	**Target Date**	**Sufficient Funding / Staffing?**	**Date Modified**	**Date Completed**	**Objective Description**
10/01/2020	09/30/2021	Yes		09/30/2021	Implement activities identified in the FY 2022 Agency Barrier Analysis Action Plan and the Agency DEIA Strategic Plan to mitigate this barrier.

Responsible Official(s)		
Title	**Name**	**Standards Address The Plan?**
Deputy Director, Center for Cultural Diversity and Inclusion	Sandra Carroll	Yes
EEO Director	Claudia Postell	Yes
Deputy EEO Director	Tanya Lawrence	No
Director, Center for Cultural Diversity and Inclusion	Wanda M. Jones	No
Special Emphasis Program Managers Team Leader	Joanne Cabrera	No

Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective				
Target Date	**Planned Activities**	**Sufficient Staffing & Funding?**	**Modified Date**	**Completion Date**
12/31/2021	Perform a barrier analysis of agency data sources on the trigger, perform a trends analysis, and determine in which components or offices the trigger exists.	No		12/31/2021
09/30/2022	Engage stakeholders to investigate the trigger, determine if a barrier exists, and identify root causes, as applicable.	No		01/31/2022
09/30/2021	Conduct an analysis on the performance based actions taken for PWDs, PWTD, and PWOD	No	09/30/2022	
09/30/2021	Collaborate with the National Advisory Council for Employees with Disabilities (NACED) on all activities related to PWDs (e.g., FY 2020 findings, strategies, etc.).	No		09/24/2021
Report of Accomplishments				
Fiscal Year	**Accomplishment**			
2020	Performed a barrier analysis of agency data sources on the trigger, and determined a barrier does exist.			
2021	Collaboration efforts with CADS and NACED revealed many challenges that were not revealed prior to this year. SSA learned through discussions with these stakeholders that further collaboration is needed with the Office of Systems, which is responsible for the agency's desktop and laptop configurations for all employees, inclusive of users of assistive technology software.			

Source of the Trigger:	Workforce Data (if so identify the table)
Specific Workforce Data Table:	Workforce Data Table - B14
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?	PWDs and PWTDs separate from the agency at higher ratios than PWODs, both voluntarily and involuntarily.

STATEMENT OF BARRIER GROUPS:	*Barrier Group*
	People with Disabilities
	People with Targeted Disabilities

Barrier Analysis Process Completed?:	Y
Barrier(s) Identified?:	Y

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**
	Functioning of assistive devices	SSA's disabled workforce has expressed challenges with supervisory support and receiving the necessary training to perform their job functions effectively. Furthermore, issues with reasonable accommodation requests and the lack of technical assistance led to frustration for employees. This is a contributing factor for voluntary separations.

Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan					
Date Initiated	**Target Date**	**Sufficient Funding / Staffing?**	**Date Modified**	**Date Completed**	**Objective Description**
10/01/2020	09/30/2021	Yes			Implement activities identified in the FY 2020 Agency Barrier Analysis Action Plan and the Agency DEIA Strategic Plan to mitigate this barrier

Responsible Official(s)		
Title	**Name**	**Standards Address The Plan?**
Deputy Director, Center for Cultural Diversity and Inclusion	Sandra Carroll	Yes
EEO Director	Claudia Postell	Yes
Deputy EEO Director	Tanya Lawrence	No
Director, Center for Cultural Diversity and Inclusion	Wanda M. Jones	No
Special Emphasis Program Managers Team Leader	Joanne Cabrera	No

Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective				
Target Date	**Planned Activities**	**Sufficient Staffing & Funding?**	**Modified Date**	**Completion Date**
09/30/2022	Address expressed concerns regarding proper functioning of assistive devices and software, laptop speed issues, and insufficient training, leading to frustration for employees. The agency is evaluating these concerns	No		
09/30/2022	Engage stakeholders to investigate the trigger, determine if a barrier exists, and identify root causes, as applicable.	No		01/31/2022
09/30/2021	Collaborate with the National Advisory Council for Employees with Disabilities (NACED) on all activities related to PWDs (e.g., FY 2020 findings, strategies, etc.).	Yes		09/24/2021
12/31/2021	Evaluate the data based on actual losses as well as employee responses related to their "intent to leave" through the annual Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) and Exit Surveys,	No		12/31/2021
09/30/2022	Advise Deputy Commissioner representatives of the disparity in separations.	No		

Report of Accomplishments	
Fiscal Year	**Accomplishment**
2020	Performed a barrier analysis of agency data sources on the trigger, and determined a barrier does exist.
2021	Collaboration efforts with CADS and NACED revealed many challenges SSA was not aware of prior to this year.

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

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

The agency's PWD representation marginally increased during FY 2021. Using the Annual Personnel Reminders to market the ease of updating employee disability status is an aid toward increasing data concerning EWD representation. Stakeholder engagement identified some potential root causes of the underrepresentation. Collaboration with CADS and NACED identified assistive devices and software, laptop speed issues, and insufficient training as issues with PWDs and PWTDs. Collaboration between agency executives and NACED identified the need for additional staff to test software accessibility or individuals to work with the Office of Systems when plans are constructed to rollout new applications or software agency-wide. This collaboration would ensure that the agency addresses technical issues affecting PWD and PWTDs prior to implementation. Performing a barrier analysis enabled the agency to pinpoint underrepresented areas and conduct targeted corrective actions. Stakeholder interaction identified individualized needs for software accessibility in segments of SSA.

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.

SSA will continue to monitor the PWD representation rates for the GS-11 to SES cluster throughout FY 2022 to determine the effectiveness of the agency's plan. Collaboration with NACED and other agency partners identified the need for increasing staffing levels and budgeting resources to eradicate the issue. Leadership requested additional resources to resolve this shortcoming.