

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 (PWT), 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 (includes employees in alternate pay plans with equivalent salaries). PWDs comprise 11.41% of the agency's workforce in this grade cluster.

*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 PWT 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 (PWT)

Answer No

b. Cluster GS-11 to SES (PWT)

Answer No

Grade Level Cluster(GS or Alternate Pay Planb)	Total	Reportable Disability		Targeted Disability	
	#	#	%	#	%
Numerical Goal	--	12%		2%	
Grades GS-11 to SES	36736	4242	11.55	1140	3.10
Grades GS-1 to GS-10	19482	3509	18.01	871	4.47

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 Deputy Commissioner for OCRC provided Executive staff members agency-wide workforce data statistics, including goals (benchmarks) for each statistic. Following the briefing, individual data reports were sent to each component.

Section II: Model Disability Program

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

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

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

Answer Yes

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

- 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 reasonable accommodation requests from applicants and employees	27	0	120	Rachel Urdan National Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator Rachel.Urdan@ssa.gov
Architectural Barriers Act Compliance	9	0	0	Michael Mandella Director, Division of Space Management Michael.C.Mandella@ssa.gov
Answering questions from the public about hiring authorities that take disability into account	0	0	42	Howard Allen Human Resources Specialist Howard.Allen@ssa.gov
Section 508 Compliance	21	0	0	Pierce Crowell Section 508 Program Manager Pierce.Crowell@ssa.gov
Processing applications from PWD and PWTD	0	0	69	Stephanie A. White Supervisory Human Resources Specialist Stephanie.a.white@ssa.gov
Special Emphasis Program for PWD and PWTD	1	0	0	David V. Smith (FY 2024) Management Analyst David.V.Smith@ssa.gov

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

Answer Yes

The Division of Reasonable Accommodations (DRA) staff participated in virtual trainings that provided employees with information on Political Savvy, and the benefits of SSA Mentoring including career development and individual development plans. In addition, DRA also participated in various online training sessions on data analysis and visualization with Microsoft Excel, time management, and other topics provided by vendors such as Graduate School USA. Staff also received regular on-the-job training to enhance skills on agency-specific RA processing issues and Assistive Technology. DRA provided 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.

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 2024, the agency provided approximately \$4 million in centralized funds for items and services. These include assistive technology (and related training), adaptive devices, and related services for employees who are deaf or hard of hearing.

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.
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Objective	Produce reliable data from RA database.		
Target Date	Sep 30, 2026		
Completion Date			
Planned Activities	<i>Target Date</i>	<i>Completion Date</i>	<i>Planned Activity</i>
	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.
	Mar 30, 2019	March 30, 2019	Train CADS analysts and Reasonable Accommodation Coordinators (RACs) on updated RA processing system.
	Jun 30, 2019		Conduct a review of 3 months of processing time data and notify relevant RAC, and where there are deficiencies; provide training, as necessary.
	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.
Accomplishments	<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Accomplishment</i>	
	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.	

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>
2021	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	Sep 30, 2023		
Completion Date			
Planned Activities	<i>Target Date</i>	<i>Completion Date</i>	<i>Planned Activity</i>
Accomplishments	<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Accomplishment</i>	
	2024	<p>Throughout FY 2024, the Division of Reasonable Accommodations (DRA) held recurring calls with all systems end-users who serve as Reasonable Accommodation Coordinators (RACs) across regions and headquarters components to review data entry practices and address user issues. DRA also hosted four quarterly meetings with the EWD Inter-Component Workgroup to ensure that the acquisition, integration, and maintenance of the AT necessary for EWDs to perform the duties of their positions and in-house software developed, is acquired via another government agency. In FY 2024, DRA coordinated efforts to improve data reliability and overall timeliness. These efforts included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly reviewed regional and component-level data to identify data entry errors and timeliness issues and produced monthly aged case reports; 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; and • Regularly reviewed and modified internal business processes to improve RA processing times. To improve the review time, appointed additional NRAC staff. 	
	2021	<p>Throughout FY 2022, 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. In FY 2022, CADS coordinated efforts to improve data reliability and overall timeliness. These efforts included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 individual training, upon request, on producing reports for components and regions; • Regularly reviewed and modified internal business processes to improve RA processing times. 	

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>
2022	<p>On September 6, 2022, CADS released RAPIDS system enhancements to transition the paper Reasonable Accommodation (RA) Recommended Denial (Tab B) form to an electronic format. This release has been a collaboration between the National Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator (NRAC), Operations, and Centralized Funds Teams, CADS, Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator (RAC) Stakeholders, and the RAPIDS developers in the Office of Information Technology for Human Resources (OITHR). The major goal of this release is to streamline the recommended denial submission process by creating a centralized electronic location for supervisors, Local Delegated Officials (LDO), and Reasonable Accommodation Coordinators (RACs) to initiate, edit, and view the electronic Tab B form in real-time. The following enhancements automated steps within RAPIDS that were previously completed by the RAC when a case is ready to be promoted for review as a recommended denial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email to NRAC mailbox when recommended denial is submitted, • Update of the Case and Local Analyst Status to “Pending NRAC Review,” • Upload of Tab B, and • Notification to supervisor/LDOs/RAC/CADS Analyst when an NRAC Analyst is assigned. <p>The new submission process reduces data entry time for the LDO, Supervisor, and RAC, and reduces the number of steps that RACs have to take to submit the recommended denial in RAPIDS by replacing the currently used Microsoft Word version of the Tab B. In addition, some of the data fields are auto filled, reducing manual input needed from the user. Additionally, the automation informs necessary parties of what actions have taken place and improves case status tracking data reliability.</p>
2023	<p>Throughout FY 2023, the Center for Accommodations and Disability Services (CADS) continued to hold 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. In FY 2023, CADS continued to coordinate efforts to improve data reliability and overall timeliness. These efforts included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 individual training, upon request, on producing reports for components and regions. • Redesigned business processes for initial recommended denials of RA to resolve the inventory of telework reentry requests, by daily reporting of workload inventories, conducting biweekly meetings with individual regional RACs and a virtual RAC training conference. <p>As a result, the agency resolved 98% of the inventory of pending telework reentry requests in fiscal year 2023.</p>

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 Selective Placement Program Coordinator (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 directs the PWD to identify specific job occupations of interest. The vacancy allowed each PWD to upload documents to certify their disability, in addition to a résumé, and transcripts (if applicable). A Selecting official may request the resume of a qualified PWD candidate 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 during the internship. • Participation 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, to prepare for, find, and keep suitable jobs. • Use of SSA's Careers website and USAJOBS where individuals seeking employment can access information on career paths and hiring programs. • Use of a Careers website for PWD that provides information on the Selective Placement Program, the Schedule A hiring authority, and reasonable accommodation. • Use of the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP), where it connects managers with college students, graduate students, and recent graduates with disabilities who are seeking federal internships or permanent jobs.

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. • Maintains selective placement email boxes where both internal and external customers can contact the agency seeking employment under the Schedule A hiring authority via the SPPCs. • Facilitates a quarterly cadre call with the SPPCs and the national recruitment team, 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. • Partners with educational institutions, including community colleges, universities, and other institutions of learning or training, that offer programs for individuals with disabilities. • Engages with social service agencies who work with PWD and provide applicant referrals to the federal agencies.

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.

Schedule A eligibility is determined based on 5 CFR 213.3102(u) coupled with the documents received from a licensed medical professional (e.g., a physician or other medical professional certified by a state, the District of Columbia, or a U.S. territory to practice medicine); a licensed vocational rehabilitation specialist (i.e., state or private); or any Federal agency, state agency, or agency of the District of Columbia or a U.S. territory that issues or provides disability benefits. The applicant is referred to the hiring manager using the USA Staffing "Referred List" process or the applicant's resume is emailed directly to the hiring manager for review.

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 a mandatory annual

training. 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 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. In addition, managers and HR Staff must complete an annual mandatory Reasonable Accommodation and Schedule A Training.

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 PWTs, 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, 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. 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. For FY 2024, SSA held a series of Open Houses about Social Security's mission, and the impact the agency's employees have on the lives of others. In these sessions, we encouraged students with disabilities to apply for careers at SSA.

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.

New Hires	Total	Reportable Disability		Targeted Disability	
		Permanent Workforce	Temporary Workforce	Permanent Workforce	Temporary Workforce
	(#)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
% of Total Applicants	10268	5.43	5.43	3.07	3.07
% of Qualified Applicants	4686	5.72	5.72	3.61	3.61
% of New Hires	1332	7.13	1.05	1.80	0.08

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.

New Hires to Mission-Critical Occupations	Total (#)	Reportable Disability	Targetable Disability
		New Hires (%)	New Hires (%)
Numerical Goal	--	12%	2%
0105 SOCIAL INSURANCE SPECIALIST	319	6.27	1.57
0343 MANAGEMENT PROGRAM ANALYST	5	40.00	20.00
0962 CONTACT REPRESENTATIVE	856	8.06	2.10
2210 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SPECIALIST	27	14.81	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.

4. Using the qualified applicant pool as the benchmark, do triggers exist for PWD and/or PWTM 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.

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 • 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 13.6 percent, SSA has one of the highest levels of representation of PWD in Federal Government. Further, our agency is one of the few Federal agencies to meet the Federal Government's goal of a two 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. We have 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. We offer virtual details and provide local points of contact to ensure the success of PWD/PWTD participation in these developmental activities. We also provide face-to-face and virtual mentoring to foster relationships that enhance personal and professional growth and development. Evaluation and Analysis We take a multifaceted approach to evaluating and analyzing the success of our methods to ensure PWD has sufficient opportunities for advancement. This approach includes Barrier Analysis and various surveys. SSA analyzes EEO data to find and address potential barriers that may affect the PWD population. 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, the Office of Human Resources provides integrated evaluation processes that assess progress toward the agency's human capital goals and moves the agency forward in our goal of achieving and maintaining "Model EEO Agency" status.

B. CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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

Our 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-24-month developmental program designed to prepare high-performing GS-15 level employees for future appointment into the SES. • NLDP: A 12-month competency-based training program for employees from diverse backgrounds who are interested in broadening their knowledge and developing the skills that are the foundation of effective leadership. The NLDP is vital in strengthening the agency's succession planning and developmental efforts by enhancing the competencies needed to continue excellence in leadership roles. The NLDP includes three tracks tailored to different levels of professional 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 Our Office of Human Resources (OHR) provides employees continuous learning opportunities to acquire new skills and knowledge needed to enhance performance. We also offer Virtual Career Enrichment Workshops (VCEW), the SSA Mentoring Program (SMP), Executive Training, and External Development Programs (EDP). • VCEW: A two-hour training workshop for employees at all grade levels. Presented to employees via remote access. These workshops provide training on SSA's core and leadership competencies to employees who are in or aspire to be in a leadership position. The workshops are live vendor-facilitated trainings which are presented via Adobe Connect or MS Teams Live platforms. • SMP: The SMP program is designed to foster relationships that enhance personal and professional growth and development. Through the mentoring relationship process, mentors can 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. • Executive Training: Training events are open to SES and GS-15 managers. Events take place online or at the Baltimore Headquarters campus. Where appropriate, OHR ensures training is available to regional participants via VOD. There is no selection process for Executive Training. • EDP: Provides 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 (%)
Other Career Development Programs	1048	1033	9.8	9.8	2.8	2.9
Fellowship Programs	42	17	2.4	5.8	2.4	5.8
Detail Programs	0	0	0	0	0	0
Training Programs	2514	1472	9.5	9.4	3.1	2.9
Internship Programs	0	0	0	0	0	0

Career Development Opportunities	Total Participants		PWD		PWT	
	Applicants (#)	Selectees (#)	Applicants (%)	Selectees (%)	Applicants (%)	Selectees (%)
Mentoring Programs	7528	6451	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Coaching Programs	89	89	4.2	4.2	0.0	0.0

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 PWT 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 (PWT)

Answer No

b. Selections (PWT)

Answer No

C. AWARDS

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

Answer Yes

Our review of the distribution of cash awards by disability status indicates that slight inequities exist. The agency distributed nearly 45,000 cash awards agency-wide. Using the inclusion rate, the data reveals that the ratio of PWDs and PWTs that receive cash awards is lower than the ratio for PWODs: • The ratio of cash awards distributed to the total permanent workforce = 77.7 percent o Ratio of PWODs who received a cash award = 78.1 percent (benchmark) o Ratio of PWDs who received a cash award = 75.0 percent o Ratio of PWTs who received a cash award = 75.3 percent Cash Awards Permanent Workforce PWOD PWD PWT Workforce (#) 57,754 49,872 7,882 2,053 Awards Distributed (#) 44,859 38,944 5,915 1,545 Inclusion Rate (%) 77.7% 78.1% 75.0% 75.3% Average Dollar Amount \$593.37 \$602.98 \$530.13 \$521.65 In addition, the average dollar amounts received by PWDs and PWTs is significantly lower than PWODs. However, we note that the disparities in average dollar amounts received by the groups is likely due to decreasing participation rates for individuals with disabilities in higher grade levels

Time-Off Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 hours: Awards Given	22044.00	12.5794	87.4206	3.1891	96.8109
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 Hours: Total Hours	114063.00	12.1187	87.8813	3.0983	96.9017
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 Hours: Average Hours	5.17	4.9849	5.2016	5.0270	5.1792
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 hours: Awards Given	540.00	9.6296	90.3704	3.5185	96.4815

Time-Off Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 Hours: Total Hours	8093.00	9.7862	90.2138	3.7316	96.2684
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 Hours: Average Hours	14.99	15.2308	14.9611	15.8947	14.9539
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 hours: Awards Given	28.00	17.8571	82.1429	7.1429	92.8571
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 Hours: Total Hours	698.00	17.7650	82.2350	6.5903	93.4097
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 Hours: Average Hours	24.93	24.8000	24.9565	23.0000	25.0769
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 hours: Awards Given	17.00	11.7647	88.2353	5.8824	94.1176
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 Hours: Total Hours	593.00	10.9612	89.0388	5.3963	94.6037
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 Hours: Average Hours	34.88	32.5000	35.2000	32.0000	35.0625
Time-Off Awards 41 or more Hours: Awards Given	0.00	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Time-Off Awards 41 or more Hours: Total Hours	0.00	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Time-Off Awards 41 or more Hours: Average Hours	0.00	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

Cash Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Cash Awards \$500 and Under: Awards Given	27225.00	14.3655	85.6345	3.7723	96.2277
Cash Awards \$500 and Under: Total Amount	25508470.00	11.7757	88.2243	3.1584	96.8416
Cash Awards \$500 and Under: Average Amount	936.95	768.0396	965.2855	784.4820	942.9272
Cash Awards: \$501 - \$999: Awards Given	29460.00	11.6633	88.3367	3.2417	96.7583
Cash Awards: \$501 - \$999: Total Amount	36478539.00	10.6396	89.3604	3.0441	96.9559
Cash Awards: \$501 - \$999: Average Amount	1238.24	1129.5614	1252.5886	1162.7780	1240.7678
Cash Awards: \$1000 - \$1999: Awards Given	10597.00	9.2856	90.7144	2.4158	97.5842
Cash Awards: \$1000 - \$1999: Total Amount	17592275.00	8.5574	91.4426	2.2170	97.7830
Cash Awards: \$1000 - \$1999: Average Amount	1660.12	1529.9136	1673.4464	1523.5078	1663.5003
Cash Awards: \$2000 - \$2999: Awards Given	152.00	3.2895	96.7105	0.6579	99.3421
Cash Awards: \$2000 - \$2999: Total Amount	459715.00	3.0671	96.9329	0.4351	99.5649
Cash Awards: \$2000 - \$2999: Average Amount	3024.44	2820.0000	3031.3946	2000.0000	3031.2252
Cash Awards: \$3000 - \$3999: Awards Given	99.00	3.0303	96.9697	1.0101	98.9899
Cash Awards: \$3000 - \$3999: Total Amount	387501.00	3.6181	96.3819	1.0452	98.9548
Cash Awards: \$3000 - \$3999: Average Amount	3914.15	4673.3333	3890.4271	4050.0000	3912.7653
Cash Awards: \$4000 - \$4999: Awards Given	41.00	4.8780	95.1220	4.8780	95.1220

Cash Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Cash Awards: \$4000 - \$4999: Total Amount	205949.00	4.4589	95.5411	4.4589	95.5411
Cash Awards: \$4000 - \$4999: Average Amount	5023.15	4591.5000	5045.2821	4591.5000	5045.2821
Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Awards Given	8.00	0.0000	100.0000	0.0000	100.0000
Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Total Amount	48650.00	0.0000	100.0000	0.0000	100.0000
Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Average Amount	6081.25	0.0000	6081.2500	0.0000	6081.2500

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

Answer Yes

Using the inclusion rate, our review of the quality step increase (QSI) awards indicates PWDs and PWTMs receive QSI awards at lower ratios than PWODs. • The ratio of QSI awards distributed to the total permanent workforce = 2.2 percent o Ratio of PWODs who received a QSI award = 2.3 percent (benchmark) o Ratio of PWDs who received a QSI award = 1.5 percent, o Ratio of PWTMs who received a QSI award = 1.0 percent QSI Awards Permanent Workforce PWOD PWD PWTM Workforce (#) 57,754 49,872 7,882 2,053 Awards Distributed (#) 1,261 1,144 117 20 Inclusion Rate (%) 2.2% 2.3% 1.5% 1.0%

Other Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Total Performance Based Pay Increases Awarded	170.00	8.2353	91.7647	2.3529	97.6471

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

a. Other Types of Recognition (PWD)

Answer No

b. Other Types of Recognition (PWTM)

Answer No

D. PROMOTIONS

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

a. SES

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD)

Answer No

ii. Internal Selections (PWD)

Answer No

b. Grade GS-15

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD)

Answer No

ii. Internal Selections (PWD)

Answer No

See PWD and PWTD trigger description below for the “yes” response in this section.

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	Yes

For this analysis, we used employee participation rates at the prior grade level instead of the Qualified Internal Applicant rates from the applicant flow data (AFD) due to the exceptionally low rate of self-identification of disability status. The AFD we retrieved from OPM's database contained nearly 28,000 applications for internal competitive promotions. Less than 36 percent of those applicants responded to the disability status question. As a result, meaningful data analysis is adversely impacted because the number of promotion selections made at each of the senior grade levels was more than the number of Qualified Internal Applicants in the AFD, rendering the analysis unreliable. PWDs and PWTs were selected at lower-than-expected rates at the GS-13 level, when comparing participation rates of PWD/PWTs at the prior grade level in the permanent workforce. Promotions to GS-13 • PWD GS-12 Workforce Participation Rate (Relevant Applicant Pool) = 8.6% • PWD GS-13 Promotion Selection Rate = 6.1% o PWT GS-12 Workforce Participation Rate (Relevant Applicant Pool) = 2.5% o PWT GS-13 Promotion Selection Rate = 1.2% The agency promoted 966 employees during FY 2024. PWDs received 6.1 percent (59) of the promotions, while 1.2 percent (12) of those employees identify as PWTs. The benchmark is the relevant applicant pool of employees in the prior grade level. PWDs comprise 8.6 percent of the GS-12 workforce, while 2.5 percent identify as PWDs.

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		
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i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWT)	Answer	No
ii. Internal Selections (PWT)	Answer	No
b. Managers		
i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWT)	Answer	No
ii. Internal Selections (PWT)	Answer	No
c. Supervisors		
i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWT)	Answer	No
ii. Internal Selections (PWT)	Answer	No

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

8. Using the qualified applicant pool as the benchmark, does your agency have a trigger involving PWT 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 (PWT)	Answer	No
b. New Hires for Managers (PWT)	Answer	No
c. New Hires for Supervisors (PWT)	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 482 Schedule A hires from FY 2022, the agency converted 329 of these employees into permanent competitive positions in FY 2024. Of the FY 2022 Schedule A hires, 128 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 with PWDs separating from the agency, both voluntarily and involuntarily. For voluntary separations, PWDs' inclusion rate (8.9%) exceeds the inclusion rate for PWODs (6.5%). For involuntary separations, PWDs' inclusion rate (1.3%) exceeds the inclusion rate for PWODs (0.7%).

Separations	Total #	Reportable Disabilities %	Without Reportable Disabilities %
Permanent Workforce: Reduction in Force	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Removal	453	1.29	0.69
Permanent Workforce: Resignation	1514	3.64	2.42
Permanent Workforce: Retirement	1482	3.37	2.40
Permanent Workforce: Other Separations	956	1.88	1.59
Permanent Workforce: Total Separations	4405	10.19	7.10

3. Using the inclusion rate as the benchmark, did the percentage of PWTs 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 PWD and PWTD separations from the agency, both voluntary and involuntary. Nearly 4,400 employees separated in FY 2024, with 3,934 leaving voluntarily and 459 were involuntarily separated. Using the inclusion rate, PWDs and PWTDS voluntarily separate from the agency at higher rates than PWODs. With 3,934 voluntary separations during FY 2024, 6.8 percent of the total permanent workforce voluntarily left the agency. • Ratio of PWODs separated = 6.5 percent (benchmark) • Ratio of PWDs separated = 8.9 percent • Ratio of PWTDS separated = 8.9 percent Using the inclusion rate, PWDs and PWTDS involuntarily separated from the agency at higher rates than PWODs. With 459 involuntary separations during FY 2024, 0.8 percent of the total permanent workforce were removed from service. • Ratio of PWODs removed = 0.7 percent (benchmark) • Ratio of PWDs removed = 1.3 percent • Ratio of PWTDS removed = 0.9 percent

Separations	Total #	Targeted Disabilities %	Without Targeted Disabilities %
Permanent Workforce: Reduction in Force	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Removal	453	0.92	0.77
Permanent Workforce: Resignation	1514	3.24	2.56
Permanent Workforce: Retirement	1482	4.39	2.46
Permanent Workforce: Other Separations	956	1.16	1.65
Permanent Workforce: Total Separations	4405	9.71	7.44

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.

We reviewed the 2024 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) Disability Status Comparison Report to compare perceptions between “individuals with a disability” and “individuals without a disability.” Survey results indicate a lower level of satisfaction regarding workforce experience for those with disabilities. The percentage point gap between those with disabilities and those without are larger than many other demographic groups, including race and ethnicity. On question 1, “I am given a real opportunity to improve my skills in my organization,” positive response rates were as follows: Government-wide: 72.2% Social Security Administration: 58.5% • Individuals with a disability = 50.5%, • Individual without a disability = 61.3%. On question 5, “my

workload is reasonable,” positive response rates were as follows: Government-wide: 63.3% Social Security Administration: 44.0% • Individuals with a disability = 36.8%, • Individual without a disability = 46.4%. On question 6, “my talents are used well in the workplace,” positive response rates were as follows: Government-wide: 65.5% Social Security Administration: 54.6% • Individuals with a disability = 45.7%, • Individual without a disability = 57.6%. On question 8, “I can disclose a suspected violation of any law, rule, or regulation without fear of reprisal,” positive response rates were as follows: Government-wide: 71.9% Social Security Administration: 67.3% • Individuals with a disability = 60.5%, • Individual without a disability = 69.9%. On question 10, “I receive the training I need to do my job well,” positive response rates were as follows: Government-wide: 66.7% Social Security Administration: 56.5% • Individuals with a disability = 49.0%, • Individual without a disability = 59.1%. On question 12, “I have a clear idea of how well I am doing my job,” positive response rates were as follows: Government-wide: 77.0% Social Security Administration: 72.9% • Individuals with a disability = 66.0%, • Individual without a disability = 75.2%. On question 46, “I recommend my organization as a good place to work,” positive response rates were as follows: Government-wide: 69.2% Social Security Administration: 53.6% • Individuals with a disability = 47.7%, • Individual without a disability = 55.8%. On question 49, “my supervisor supports my need to balance work and other life issues,” positive response rates were as follows: Government-wide: 85.1% Social Security Administration: 78.7% • Individuals with a disability = 72.6%, • Individual without a disability = 80.7%. On question 70, “considering everything, how satisfied are you with your job,” positive response rates were as follows: Government-wide: 69.5% Social Security Administration: 57.0% • Individuals with a disability = 49.4%, • Individual without a disability = 59.6%.

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/> We are committed to making our electronic and information technologies accessible to PWDs by meeting or exceeding the requirements of Section 508. Our 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 our procurement processes regarding how we: • Conduct research • Create solicitations • Evaluate and validate contractor Section 508 compliance claims • Decide to make purchase awards to contractors SSA also includes Section 508 standards and requirements in our development, implementation, and maintenance processes in which we: • Uses standards based on universal design principles • Include PWDs in usability testing • Develop technology using accessible coding best practices • Perform Section 508 compliance testing using automated tools, code reviews, and manual user testing with assistive technologies We develop and provide technical guidance, tools, and resources to assist with Section 508 compliance throughout the agency; provide training on Section 508 standards and how to develop and buy accessible technology; and conduct 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://origin-www.gsa.gov/resources/resources-for-americans-with-disabilities>

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 several ongoing programs to ensure our technology is accessible to employees with disabilities (EWD). • DRA provides individual training on the use of JAWS, ZoomText, Kurzweil 3000, and Dragon Naturally Speaking and other assistive technology to new and existing users. In FY 2024, we provided 141 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 DRA staff developed instructions for EWD assistive technology (AT) users to ensure usability of AT with the agency's systems. • The EWD Training Cadre facilitates the delivery of ad hoc application (automation) training for JAWS, ZoomText, 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 125 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 2024 timeliness measures by type of request: Type of Request Number of Decisions Number of Timely Decisions Percentage Meeting Timeliness Benchmark Average Processing Time (Calendar Days) Recommended Denials1 1,002 507 50.5% 72 Requests for Reconsideration2 232 14 6% 138 Central Funds1 890 513 57.6% 62 Local2 3,789 1,358 35.8% 162 Mixed3 570 138 24.2% 192 Total 6,483 2,530 39% 125 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. 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 DRA for the NRAC review and decision. 3Mixed includes one or more central funds item/service and one or more local accommodation request. Ongoing review of the agency's FY 2024 processing time data continues to indicate that users do not always enter relevant data elements consistently. DRA determined that continuous review and training are necessary and have undertaken it to ensure reporting reliability. However, we recognize that there are other reasons for the processing times mentioned above. To identify these areas, we continue to analyze RA data by various subsets of the agency. We continue to identify and implement strategies to address identified issues.

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.

We took several steps in FY 2024 to ensure the effectiveness of its reasonable accommodation program. Specifically, DRA, in collaboration with other offices across the agency, took the following steps: • Continued to provide virtual and onsite interpreter and Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) services agency-wide. • Continued to provide virtual AT for Dragon Naturally Speaking, JAWS, ZoomText, and Kurzweil 3000. • Reviewed and updated comprehensive guidance for Reasonable Accommodation Coordinators (RAC) and managers on supporting EWDs. • 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 DRA staff attended external RA training. • Provided regular updates to the Deputy Commissioner for Mission Support and other agency leaders on reasonable accommodation issues. • Provided training and held regular calls for regional and component RACs and training for multiple components/offices, including management teams. • Implemented weekly, monthly, and quarterly reporting of RA processing, enabling DRA to review and improve its RA program continuously. • 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 RAC to update requests and resolve outstanding issues.

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.

DRA continues to improve the efficiency of the Personal Attendant Services (PAS) program, which included a recompete of the PAS contract. DRA continues to 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. DRA continues to provide regular PAS for two SSA employees. Due to the agency's telework posture, no new PAS providers were onboarded. However, DRA continues to maintain its national contract in anticipation of more widespread recalls to the office.

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.

The agency took the following actions for findings of discrimination alleging harassment based on disability status in FY 2024: • Compensatory Damages • Attorney's Fees and Costs • Training • Posting Order

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.

The agency took the following actions for findings of discrimination involving the failure to provide a reasonable accommodation in FY 2024: • Backpay/Frontpay • Compensatory Damages • Leave Restored • Training • Lump Sum • Attorney's Fees and Costs • Posting Order • Post EEOC Notice to Employees of Violation • Post Cummings Act Notice • Accommodation • Consider Discipline for Managers

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 PWT?

Answer Yes

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

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 11.4 percent of our permanent workforce in those higher grade levels.				
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	Some of our PWD workforce may face attitudinal barriers (i.e., actions or beliefs that inhibit equitable progress often a result of stereotypes or false assumptions) if their disability is known by their peers, supervisors, or managers. Many of our PWDs that use assistive technology devices have challenges with proper functioning of their installed hardware or software. They face challenges with reasonable accommodations, lack supervisor support, and their training needs are often not met.			
Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan					
Date Initiated	Target Date	Sufficient Funding / Staffing?	Date Modified	Date Completed	Objective Description
10/01/2022	09/30/2024	Yes	09/30/2026		Increase workforce participation rates of PWDs in the higher grades of GS-11 to SES.
Responsible Official(s)					
Title	Name			Standards Address The Plan?	
Deputy Commissioner, Human Resources	Florence Felix-Lawson			Yes	
Executive Officer, Mission Support	Jen Stephens			No	
Deputy Commissioner, Human Resources	Thomas Holland			Yes	
Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Mission Support	Sean Brune			Yes	
Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective					
Target Date	Planned Activities			Sufficient Staffing & Funding?	Modified Date
09/30/2023	Improve data entry and timeliness of reasonable accommodations requests.			Yes	09/30/2024

Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective				
Target Date	Planned Activities	Sufficient Staffing & Funding?	Modified Date	Completion Date
09/30/2025	The EWD Inter-Component Workgroup will ensure that all acquisition, integration, and maintenance of assistive technology (AT) is fully accessible and works effectively with our AT software.	Yes		
09/30/2024	Collaborate with the Office of Human Resources during New Employee Orientation to provide new employees with instructions on updating their disability status in Employee Express, as applicable.	Yes	09/30/2026	
Report of Accomplishments				
Fiscal Year	Accomplishment			
2024	<p>The agency's PWD representation in higher grade levels is increasing incrementally each year from FY 2018 through FY 2024. PWD representation in the higher-grade cluster since 2018 (with the percentage point increases) follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FY 2018 – 8.14 percent • FY 2019 – 8.61 percent (0.47 percentage point increase) • FY 2020 – 9.00 percent (0.39 percentage point increase) • FY 2021 – 9.46 percent (0.46 percentage point increase) • FY 2022 – 10.09 percent (0.63 percentage point increase) • FY 2023 – 10.79 percent (0.70 percentage point increase) • FY 2024 – 11.41 percent (0.62 percentage point increase) <p>We anticipate meeting the EEOC's 12 percent goal by the end of FY 2025, based on increases in recent fiscal years.</p>			
2022	<p>The agency's PWD representation in higher grade levels is increasing incrementally each year from FY 2018 through FY 2022. PWD representation in the higher-grade cluster since 2018 (with the percentage point increases) follows:</p> <p>Ø FY 2018 – 8.14 percent Ø FY 2019 – 8.61 percent (0.47 percentage point increase) Ø FY 2020 – 9.00 percent (0.39 percentage point increase) Ø FY 2021 – 9.46 percent (0.46 percentage point increase) Ø FY 2022 – 10.09 percent (0.63 percentage point increase).</p> <p>During stakeholder meetings, some representatives shared their belief that our PWD figures are higher than what we have on record. We speculate that many employees do not want to disclose their disability status out of fear of discrimination, being treated differently, or being thought of as "less than" their peers. Many feel it is their own private information, so they approach disclosure on a "need to know" basis. This is a common concern for individuals with a disability. There are a number of studies, reports, and articles on the subject, including:</p> <p>Disclosing a Disability to Employer Should I or Shouldn't I, Tips for Supporting Employees Disclosing a Disability</p>			

Report of Accomplishments	
Fiscal Year	Accomplishment
2023	<p>The agency's PWD representation in higher grade levels is increasing incrementally each year from FY 2018 through FY 2023. PWD representation in the higher-grade cluster since 2018 (with the percentage point increases) follows:</p> <p>Ø FY 2018 – 8.14 percent Ø FY 2019 – 8.61 percent (0.47 percentage point increase) Ø FY 2020 – 9.00 percent (0.39 percentage point increase) Ø FY 2021 – 9.46 percent (0.46 percentage point increase) Ø FY 2022 – 10.09 percent (0.63 percentage point increase) Ø FY 2023 – 10.79 percent (0.70 percentage point increase).</p> <p>We also developed and released the July 2023 Management Minutes VOD that OCRC and OSLWD developed to increase managers' awareness of working with EWDs, especially neurodiverse employees.</p>

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 PWTs receive cash awards and 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. These challenges result in reduced efficiency and lower productivity for some of our disabled workforce, thus affecting their performance evaluation ratings. This, in turn, results in 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
10/01/2022	09/30/2023	Yes	09/30/2026		Promote the equitable distribution of monetary awards for all employees to receive their share of cash awards.
Responsible Official(s)					
Title		Name			Standards Address The Plan?
Executive Officer, Mission Support		Jen Stephens			No
Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Human Resources		Sean Brune			No
Deputy Commissioner, Human Resources		Florence Felix-Lawson			Yes
Deputy Commissioner, Mission Support		Thomas Holland			Yes

Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective				
Target Date	Planned Activities	Sufficient Staffing & Funding?	Modified Date	Completion Date
09/30/2024	DRA will explore additional capabilities for the Reasonable Accommodation Process Information and Data System (RAPIDS).	Yes	09/30/2025	
09/30/2024	OMS will conduct data analyses to determine within the agency's components and regions where awards are not equitably distributed.	Yes	09/30/2026	
09/30/2024	Collaborate with the National Advisory Council for Employees with Disabilities (NACED) on all activities related to PWDs and PWTs	Yes	09/30/2025	
09/30/2024	The EWD Inter-Component Workgroup will ensure that all acquisition, integration, and maintenance of assistive technology (AT) is fully accessible and works effectively with our AT software.	Yes	09/30/2026	
09/30/2024	Improve data entry and timeliness of reasonable accommodations requests.	Yes	09/30/2025	
Report of Accomplishments				
Fiscal Year	Accomplishment			
2024	Last fiscal year, we observed a marked increase in the percentage of employees who decline to self-identify their disability status, opting to select code '01' – I do not wish to identify my disability or serious condition on Standard Form 256. The percentage increased more than two percentage points, from 9.2 percent in FY 2022 to 11.3 percent in FY 2023. In FY 2018, the percentage of employees who declined to self-identify was only 6.4 percent. The figure remained at 11.3 percent in FY 2024, the same as in FY 2023.			
2021	Collaboration efforts with DRA 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.			
2022	Collaboration efforts by the EWD Inter-Component Workgroup and OCIO are working to address assistive technology concerns and streamline accessible technology for PWDs			
2023	Continued collaboration efforts by the EWD Inter-Component Workgroup and OCIO are helping to meet the needs of the disability community to ensure our employees with disabilities have equal access to technology to perform their duties effectively. OCREO held a three-day virtual Reasonable Accommodation Coordinator (RAC) Disability Awareness Summit with a focus on various reasonable accommodation topics, such as the Role of the RAC, an understanding of disability law, delegations of authority, etc. The event provided training to over 90 participants, ensuring a baseline level of knowledge on proper processing of requests for accommodation.			

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 PWTs 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			
	Unsatisfactory Training and Supervisor Support	The exit survey results indicate that PWDs and PWODs have lower levels of satisfaction with the training they receive and supervisor support than PWODs.			
Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan					
Date Initiated	Target Date	Sufficient Funding / Staffing?	Date Modified	Date Completed	Objective Description
10/01/2022	09/30/2023	Yes	09/30/2026		Implement activities identified in the Agency DEIA Strategic Plan to mitigate this barrier.
Responsible Official(s)					
Title		Name			Standards Address The Plan?
Executive Officer, Mission Support		Jen Stephens			No
Deputy Commissioner, Human Resources		Florence Felix-Lawson			Yes
Deputy Commissioner, Mission Support		Thomas Holland			Yes
Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Mission Support		Sean Brune			No
Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective					
Target Date	Planned Activities			Sufficient Staffing & Funding?	Modified Date
09/30/2024	Improve accessibility of assistive technology software (hardware and software).			Yes	09/30/2025

Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective				
Target Date	Planned Activities	Sufficient Staffing & Funding?	Modified Date	Completion Date
09/30/2024	OMS will conduct data analyses to determine within the agency's components and regions where separations of PWDs and PWTs are higher-than-expected.	Yes	09/30/2026	
09/30/2024	The EWD Inter-Component Workgroup will ensure that all acquisition, integration, and maintenance of assistive technology (AT) is fully accessible and works effectively with our AT software.	Yes	09/30/2026	
09/30/2024	Enhance data collection and analysis of reasonable accommodations requests.	Yes	09/30/2026	
Report of Accomplishments				
Fiscal Year	Accomplishment			
2024	Throughout FY 2024, the Division of Reasonable Accommodations (DRA) implemented several policy enhancements to improve the efficiency of the reasonable accommodation program, such as ensuring the reviewing official for reconsiderations is not the same official that drafted the initial recommended denial. DRA held recurring calls with systems end-users who serve as RACs to review data entry practices and address user issues. DRA hosted four quarterly meetings with the EWD Inter-Component Workgroup to ensure that the acquisition, integration, and maintenance of the assistive technology necessary for EWDs to perform the duties of their positions. DRA also delivered Just-in-Time Reasonable Accommodation Training to nearly 2,000 managers, providing overall knowledge of the process and manager's roles in the process.			
2021	Collaboration efforts with CADS and NACED revealed many challenges SSA was not aware of prior to this year.			
2023	Continued collaboration efforts by the EWD Inter-Component Workgroup and OCIO are helping to meet the needs of the disability community to ensure our employees with disabilities have equal access to technology to perform their duties effectively. DRA held a three-day virtual RAC Disability Awareness Summit with a focus on various reasonable accommodation topics, such as the Role of the RAC, an understanding of disability law, delegations of authority, etc. The event provided training to over 90 participants, ensuring a baseline level of knowledge on proper processing of requests for accommodation			
2022	Collaboration efforts by the EWD Inter-Component Workgroup and OCIO are working to address assistive technology concerns for PWDs and PWTs that have reasonable accommodations.			

Source of the Trigger:	Workforce Data (if so identify the table)								
Specific Workforce Data Table:	Workforce Data Table - B7								
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?	Promotion rates to the GS-13 grade level is lower than expected for PWDs and PWTs.								
STATEMENT OF BARRIER GROUPS:	<i>Barrier Group</i>								
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.	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Barrier Name</th> <th>Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>PWD Promotion to GS-13</td> <td>Unknown, this is a new trigger.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>					Barrier Name	Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice	PWD Promotion to GS-13	Unknown, this is a new trigger.
Barrier Name	Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice								
PWD Promotion to GS-13	Unknown, this is a new trigger.								
Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan									
Date Initiated	Target Date	Sufficient Funding / Staffing?	Date Modified	Date Completed	Objective Description				
09/30/2024	09/30/2026	Yes			Investigate to determine if a barrier exists.				
Responsible Official(s)									
Title		Name		Standards Address The Plan?					
Deputy Commissioner, Mission Support		Thomas Holland		Yes					
Assistant Deputy Commissioner, Mission Support		Sean Brune		No					
Deputy Commissioner, Human Resources		Florence Felix-Lawson		Yes					
Executive Officer, Mission Support		Jen Stephens		No					
Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective									
Target Date	Planned Activities			Sufficient Staffing & Funding?	Modified Date				
09/30/2026	OMS will conduct a barrier analysis to determine if the anomaly is due to barriers for PWDs and PWTs, and if so, what are potential root causes.			Yes					

Report of Accomplishments	
Fiscal Year	Accomplishment
2024	We determined that the use of applicant flow data (AFD) to identify triggers based on disability status is challenging due to applicants' reluctance to self-identify their disability status. The data, although much improved over recent years, is still a work in progress. We decided to pivot from using AFD as the benchmark for determining triggers with our promotion selections to instead use the workforce participation rates in the prior grade level. Using this as the benchmark, our promotion selection at GS-14 and GS-15 are no longer triggers in FY 2024, as they were identified last year.

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).

The agency's PWD representation increased 0.62 percentage points during FY 2024, to 11.41 percent from 10.79 percent. We forecast reaching the EEOC's goal of 12 percent at the end of FY 2025.

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 2025 to determine the effectiveness of the agency's plan.
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