

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 Yes |
| b. Cluster GS-11 to SES (PWD) | Answer Yes |

The participation rate for PWD in grade cluster 1-10 is 7.96%., The participation rate for PWD in grade cluster 11-SES, is 9.92%.

*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 Yes |
| b. Cluster GS-11 to SES (PWTD) | Answer No |

The participation rate for PWTD in grade cluster 1-10 is 1.83%.

Grade Level Cluster(GS or Alternate Pay Planb)	Total	Reportable Disability		Targeted Disability	
	#	#	%	#	%
Numarical Goal	--	12%		2%	
Grades GS-1 to GS-10	1430	113	7.90	26	1.82
Grades GS-11 to SES	1341	133	9.92	41	3.06

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

AMS conducts internal compliance reviews of specific agency programs as a means of evaluating the agency's effectiveness in fulfilling its civil rights obligations. AMS' Civil Rights Program provides quarterly statistical tables relating to hires, promotions, separations, and workforce representation of PWD and PWTD to the Administrator and to each of its agency programs' Deputy Administrators with the numerical goals listed.

Section II: Model Disability Program

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

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

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

Answer Yes

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

Disability Program Task	# of FTE Staff By Employment Status			Responsible Official (Name, Title, Office Email)
	Full Time	Part Time	Collateral Duty	
Section 508 Compliance	0	0	1	Heather Pearl Section 508 Manager ask508@usda.gov
Processing applications from PWD and PWTD	1	0	0	Amber Kiel, HR Specialist, APHIS, MRPBS Recruitment & Placement
Architectural Barriers Act Compliance	1	0	0	Fidel.Delgado@dm.usda.gc
Answering questions from the public about hiring authorities that take disability into account	1	0	0	Amber.m.kiel@aphis.usda.
Special Emphasis Program for PWD and PWTD	1	0	1	Linda Alston EEO Specialist linda.m.alston@usda.gov
Processing reasonable accommodation requests from applicants and employees	1	0	0	Carmen.Humphrey@ams.u

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

Answer Yes

The Disability Program Manager has received virtual Disability Program Manager training at USDA given by Office of Federal Operations of the U.S. EEOC. This training was conducted in September 2022.

B. PLAN TO ENSURE SUFFICIENT FUNDING FOR THE DISABILITY PROGRAM

Has the agency provided sufficient funding and other resources to successfully implement the disability program during the reporting period? If “no”, describe the agency’s plan to ensure all aspects of the disability program have sufficient funding and other resources.

Answer Yes

Section III: Program Deficiencies In The Disability Program

Brief Description of Program Deficiency	D.1.c. Does the agency conduct exit interviews or surveys that include questions on how the agency could improve the recruitment, hiring, inclusion, retention and advancement of individuals with disabilities? [see 29 CFR §1614.203(d)(1)(iii)(C)]		
Objective	Work with HR to establish a way to include disability in its exit surveys.		
Target Date	Sep 30, 2023		
Completion Date	Sep 30, 2022		
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>	<u>Planned Activity</u>
	Sep 30, 2023	September 30, 2022	Meet with Human Resources to determine if Disability information, along with race, grade and other demographic information, can be returned to the exit surveys.
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	
	2022	Exit interviews are being done, but data for disability statistics has never been collected. In 2021, APHIS, HRD changed the format for the exit interview form and no longer collects any demographic data, since many employees skipped the questions relating to demographics. Per an email from APHIS, HRD (10/21/2021). "There is no plan to collect disability data". Employees may leave comments if they are exiting because of EEO type issues.	

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 PWTDD

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.

AMS uses the Veterans Resource Groups, Schedule A hiring authority, Workforce Recruitment Program and job fairs specifically for disabled veterans and PWD. AMS is continuing its effort to renew its MOU with Gallaudet to facilitate recruitment efforts among PWTDD. AMS is waiting for Gallaudet to review and/or comment on the MOU.

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 PWTDD for positions in the permanent workforce

Schedule A applicants forward their resumes to the agency’s selective placement program manager and to the APHIS Human Resources manager for review. The SPPM maintains a file of the resumes and refers the Schedule A applicants for consideration, when an appropriate AMS vacancy becomes available.

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.

If a Schedule A applicant applies to a vacancy announcement, an HR Staffing Specialist/Assistant review the PWD’s application to determine qualifications and eligibility. If the applicant is deemed qualified and eligible by means of Schedule A, the servicing HR

specialist provides guidance to the selection official on the Schedule A appointment process.

- 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

In prior years, AMS has hosted Disability awareness training which included information on hiring authorities. The Agency plans to host this same type of training in October 2022. This training will also include a presentation on the Workforce Recruitment Plan, which is a database for students and veterans with disabilities. Training on disability hiring, such as Schedule A, reasonable accommodations and other hiring authorities is presented as requested from the AMS programs.

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.

AMS is in the process of continuing its renewal of the MOU with Gallaudet University. The MOU is currently in the final review stages. We are currently waiting. Staff members from Gallaudet attended the senior staff meeting to give an overview of Gallaudet’s new school curriculum. During that time, several mangers expressed interest in hiring interns from Gallaudet University. AMS uses and attends meetings with Job Accommodation Network (JAN), Dept. of Labor, Office of Disability Employment and Policy, Federal Exchange on Employment and Disability (FEED), Employer Assistance Resource Network (EARN) to acquire information on inclusion, disability trainings and other resources to assist in employment and retention.

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 Yes

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

The permanent selection rate for PWD (9.60%) was disproportionately higher than the participation rate for PWD in the total workforce (7.77%), but below the 12.00% Federal benchmark.

New Hires	Total (#)	Reportable Disability		Targeted Disability	
		Permanent Workforce (%)	Temporary Workforce (%)	Permanent Workforce (%)	Temporary Workforce (%)
% of Total Applicants	2040	5.25	0.00	3.38	0.00
% of Qualified Applicants	1577	4.76	0.00	3.36	0.00
% of New Hires	573	1.57	5.41	1.40	0.35

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

a. New Hires for MCO (PWD) Answer Yes

b. New Hires for MCO (PWTD)

Answer No

The mission critical occupations with AMS are 0301-Miscellaneous Administration and Program; 1102 - Contracting; 1146-Agricultural Marketing Specialist; 1147-Agricultural Market Reporting; 1980- Agricultural Commodity Grading; and 1981-Agricultural Commodity Aid. The following references permanent mission critical positions: There were 95 qualified applicants for series 0301, 6 were PWD/PWTD, 5 PWD/PWTD were qualified, 1 was referred. There was one selection, who was not a PWD/PWTD. There were 699 qualified applicants for series 1146; 34 were PWD/PWTD, 19 were qualified, 4 were referred. Out of 17 total selections, one (5.88%) PWD/PWTD was selected. There were 88 qualified applicants for series 1147; 8 were PWD/PWTD, 5 were qualified, none were referred to the selecting official. There were 884 qualified applicants for series 1980; 41 were PWD/PWTD, 30 were qualified, 36 were referred. Out of 115 selections, 6 (5.22%) were PWD/PWTD. There were 149 qualified applicants for series 1981; 6 were PWD/PWTD, 5 were qualified; 5 were referred. Out of 21 selections, 2 9.52% PWD/PWTD were selected. Out of the total 75 qualified applicants, for mission critical occupations, who were PWD/PWTD, 46 (61.33%) were referred, 9 (12.00%) were selected. There were 6 selections 8.00% of PWTD in mission critical occupations.

New Hires to Mission-Critical Occupations	Total (#)	Reportable Disability	Targetable Disability
		New Hires (%)	New Hires (%)
Numerical Goal	--	12%	2%
0301 MISCELLANEOUS ADMINISTRATION AND PROGRAM	1	0.00	0.00
1102 CONTRACTING	3	0.00	0.00
1146 AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SPECIALIST	17	5.88	0.00
1147 AGRICULTURAL MARKET REPORTER	6	0.00	0.00
1980 AGRICULTURE COMMODITY GRADER	115	5.22	5.22
1981 AGRICULTURAL COMMODITY AID	21	9.52	9.52

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 Yes

b. Qualified Applicants for MCO (PWTD)

Answer Yes

There were 86 total qualified internal applicants for series 0301; 7 (8.14%) PWD/PWTD were qualified. The benchmark was 16.47% for PWD and 3.53% for PWTD. There were no hires for series 1102. There were 271 total qualified internal applicants for series 1146; 19 (7.01%) PWD/PWTD were qualified. The benchmark was 10.71% PWD and 4.85% PWTD. There were 43 total qualified internal applicants for series 1147; Out of four applications, 0 PWD/PWTD were qualified. The benchmark was 8.39% PWD and 2.80% PWTD. There were 205 total qualified internal applicants for series 1980; 7 (3.41%) PWD/PWTD were qualified. Benchmark for PWD, 6.63%; PWTD 1.43%.

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

a. Promotions for MCO (PWD)

Answer Yes

b. Promotions for MCO (PWTD)

Answer Yes

There were 86 total qualified internal applicants for series 0301; 7 (8.14%) PWD/PWTD were qualified. The benchmark was

16.47% for PWD and 3.53% for PWTD. There were no hires for series 1102. There were 271 total qualified internal applicants for series 1146; 19 (7.01%) PWD/PWTD were qualified. The benchmark was 10.71% PWD and 4.85% PWTD. There were 43 total qualified internal applicants for series 1147; Out of four applications, 0 PWD/PWTD were qualified. The benchmark was 8.39% PWD and 2.80% PWTD. There were 205 total qualified internal applicants for series 1980; 7 (3.41%) PWD/PWTD were qualified. Benchmark for PWD, 6.63%; PWTD 1.43%.

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.

The AMS mentoring program is an informal and voluntary program. During FY 2022, there were 89 mentor/mentee participants in the program. To participate in the AMS Mentoring program, the protégé submits an application, which asks questions to aid in the selection of a mentor that will be paired with the protégé for a specific period of time. The protégé and mentor decide together when and how often to meet and the issues or subjects they will work on or discuss. The mentor and protégé each sign the AMS Mentoring Agreement based on the agreed commitment. The mentoring program helps employees develop leadership skills as well as help employees to learn, grow, and improve their skills. Out of the 89 participants in the FY 2022 mentoring program, PWD represented 20.22% (18) and PWTD 2.25% (2).

B. CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITES

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

AMS established the Leadership Essentials & Advancement Program (LEAP). LEAP targets GS-4 thru GS-9 grade levels. LEAP is the foundation for every employee to build strong individual leadership skills for meeting the agency missions and goals. The program focuses on the competencies at the all-employee level and prepares participants with essential knowledge, skills, and abilities to meet the agency’s succession planning needs and to achieve excellence, regardless of position. Employees are required to submit Individual Development Plans, which allow for training, details, and leadership opportunities. AMS managers review, discuss, and assist employees with their IDPs before approvals. The American University – Key Executive Mid-Level Leadership Development Program and the Federal Executive Institute (FEI) –Leadership for a Democratic Society, targets employees at the GS-15 level and Senior Executive Service level. AMS employees use the MRPBS-APHIS Center for Training & Organization Development site. The purpose of this site is to provide information about the wide variety of non-technical training and leadership development opportunities available to APHIS, AMS and FAS personnel. The Agency’s Program Liaison, assist employees with finding the training and organizational development resources they need. The site includes classroom training events; webinars and virtual training events; mandatory training; developmental programs and activities (agency specific & visible to applicable agency); and training and development resources.

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 (%)
Fellowship Programs	7	7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Mentoring Programs	89	89	20.22	20.22	2.25	2.25
Coaching Programs	0	0	0	0	0	0

Career Development Opportunities	Total Participants		PWD		PWTD	
	Applicants (#)	Selectees (#)	Applicants (%)	Selectees (%)	Applicants (%)	Selectees (%)
Training Programs	0	0	0	0	0	0
Detail Programs	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Career Development Programs	Unknow	21	Unknow	19.05	Unknow	0
Internship Programs	57	57	3.51	3.51	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 Yes
- b. Selections (PWD) Answer No

Currently there is no disability information available for applicants for Career Development Programs.

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

- a. Applicants (PWTD) Answer Yes
- b. Selections (PWTD) Answer No

Currently there is no disability information available for applicants for Career Development Programs..

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 No
- b. Awards, Bonuses, & Incentives (PWTD) Answer Yes

In FY 2022, AMS issued 2,225 cash awards averaging \$1,149. The distribution rate for PWD (7.73%) which is proportionate to the participation rate for PWD (7.77%) in the total AMS workforce. The distribution rate for PWTD (2.11%) which is proportionate to the participation rate for PWTD (1.92%) in the total AMS workforce. The average cash award for PWD was \$1,169 and for PWTD \$1,177. The Agency issued 128 time-off awards in FY 2022. The distribution rate for PWD (12.50%) was disproportionately higher compared to the participation rates for PWD (7.77%) in the AMS permanent workforce. The distribution rate for PWTD 1.56% was disproportionately lower compared to the participation rates for PWTD (1.92%) in the AMS permanent workforce. The average time-off award for PWD was 16 hours and for PWTD 14 hours.

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	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
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: \$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	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
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 No
- b. Pay Increases (PWTD) Answer Yes

There were 14 Quality Step Increases (QSIs) in AMS during FY 2022. PWD received 7.14% of the QSIs, proportionate to their participation rate for PWD (7.77%) in the total workforce. The inclusion rate is 0.41%, this is a trigger. There were no QSIs for PWTD. This is a trigger. The inclusion rate was 0.0%. PWTD did not received Performance Based Pay increases.

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 Yes
 - ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Answer Yes
- c. Grade GS-14
 - i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Answer Yes

- ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Answer Yes
- d. Grade GS-13
 - i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Answer Yes
 - ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Answer Yes

• For GS-15, out of the 124 Qualified Internal Applicants, 8 (6.45%) were PWD; 8 PWD were referred. There were 11 selections. None was a PWD (0.00%) PWD selection. The relevant applicant pool rate is 8.06%. • For GS-14, out of the 144 Qualified Internal Applicants, 8 (5.56%) were PWD; 8 PWD were referred. There were 20 selections, 1 (5.00%) was PWD selection. The relevant applicant pool rate is 12.73%. • For GS-13, out of the 432 Qualified Internal Applicants, 40 (9.26%) were PWD; 40 PWD were referred. Out of 40 selections, 3 (7.50%) were PWD. The relevant applicant pool rate is 10.09%.

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

• For GS-15, out of the 124 Qualified Internal Applicants, 7 (5.65%) were PWTD; 7 PWTD were referred. There were 11 selections: none were a PWTD, 0.0%. The relevant applicant pool rate is 1.61%. • For GS-14, out of the 144 Qualified Internal Applicants, 5 (3.47%) were PWTD; 5 PWTD were referred. There were 20 selections, none were a PWTD selection. The relevant applicant pool rate is 4.24%. • For GS-13, out of the 432 Qualified Internal Applicants, 2 (0.46%) were PWTD; 2 PWTD were referred. Out of 40 selections, none were a PWTD. The relevant applicant pool rate is 16.42%.

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

- a. New Hires to SES (PWD) Answer No
- b. New Hires to GS-15 (PWD) Answer Yes

- c. New Hires to GS-14 (PWD) Answer Yes
- d. New Hires to GS-13 (PWD) Answer Yes

• For GS-15, there was one senior grade levels applicants, the applicant was not referred. There was one selection. The selection was not a PWD. The relevant applicant pool was 8.06%. • For GS-14, there were 2 senior grade levels applicants and 1 was referred. There were 5 selections, none were a PWD. The relevant applicant pool was 12.73% • For GS-13, there were 25 senior grade levels applicants and 8 were referred. There were 24 selections, none were a PWD. The relevant applicant pool was 10.09%.

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

- a. New Hires to SES (PWTD) Answer Yes
- b. New Hires to GS-15 (PWTD) Answer Yes
- c. New Hires to GS-14 (PWTD) Answer Yes
- d. New Hires to GS-13 (PWTD) Answer Yes

• For GS-15, there were no senior grade levels applicants. There was one selection. The selection was not a PWTD. The relevant applicant pool was 1.61%. • For GS-14, there were no senior grade levels applicants. There were 5 selections, none were a PWTD. The relevant applicant pool was 4.24% For GS-13, there were no senior grade levels applicants. There were 24 selections, none were a PWTD. The relevant applicant pool was 6.42%.

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 Yes
 - ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Answer Yes
- b. Managers
 - i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Answer No
 - ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Answer No
- c. Supervisors
 - i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Answer Yes
 - ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Answer Yes

• For Executives, there were 115 Qualified Internal Applicants, 8 (6.96%) were PWD; 8 PWD were referred. There were 9 selections: none were a PWD, 0.0%. The relevant applicant pool rate was 9.46%. • For Supervisors, there were 247 Qualified Internal Applicants, 14 (5.67%) were PWD; 14 PWD were referred. There were 49 selections: 1 (2.04%) was a PWD. The relevant applicant pool rate was 6.25%.

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 Yes

c. Supervisors

- i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD) Answer No
- ii. Internal Selections (PWTD) Answer Yes

• For managers, there were 34 Qualified Internal Applicants, 6 (17.65%) were PWTD; 6 PWTD were referred. There were 5 selections: none was a PWTD, 0.0%. The relevant applicant pool rate was 5.11%. • For supervisors, there were 247 Qualified Internal Applicants, 10 (4.05%) were PWTD; 10 PWTD were referred. There were 49 selections: none was a PWTD, 0.0%. The relevant applicant pool rate was 2.40%.

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 Yes
- b. New Hires for Managers (PWD) Answer Yes
- c. New Hires for Supervisors (PWD) Answer Yes

For Executive, there were 48 Qualified External Applicants, 2 were PWD. 1 PWD was Referred.. There were no selections made for Executives. For managers, there were 29 Qualified External Applicants, 2 PWD were Referred. Out of the 18 selections, none were PWD. For supervisors, there were 80 Qualified External Applicants, 2 were PWD and 1 was referred. No selections were made for supervisors.

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 Yes

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

The Voluntary Separation rate for PWD (8.46%) was slightly higher than the participation rate of 7.77% for PWD in the workforce. The Involuntary Separation (Removals) rate for PWD (15.38%) was higher than the participation rate of 7.77% for PWD in the workforce.

Seperations	Total #	Reportable Disabilities %	Without Reportable Disabilities %
Permanent Workforce: Reduction in Force	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Removal	13	0.57	0.27
Permanent Workforce: Resignation	108	1.44	2.49
Permanent Workforce: Retirement	94	2.87	2.03
Permanent Workforce: Other Separations	45	1.44	0.97
Permanent Workforce: Total Separations	260	6.32	5.76

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 No

The Voluntary Separation rate for PWTD (3.08%) was higher than the participation rate of 2.42% for PWTD in the workforce.

Seperations	Total #	Targeted Disabilities %	Without Targeted Disabilities %
Permanent Workforce: Reduction in Force	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Removal	13	0.00	0.30
Permanent Workforce: Resignation	108	1.16	2.44
Permanent Workforce: Retirement	94	4.65	2.05
Permanent Workforce: Other Separations	45	3.49	0.96
Permanent Workforce: Total Separations	260	9.30	5.74

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.

Voluntary Retirement at 22.73% of the 260 permanent separations in AMS. Out of the 8 separations for PWT, 50.00% were due to Voluntary Retirement, 37.50% were "Other" types of separations, 12.50% were Resignations. Human Resources does not collect disability information during exit interviews. No data is available as to why 22.73% of PWD resigned from the agency. PWT represented 3.08% of the 260 permanent separations in AMS. Out of the 8 Separations for PWT, 50.00% were due to Voluntary Retirement, 37.50% were "Other" types of separations, 12.50% were Resignations. Human Resources does not collect disability information during exit interviews. No data is available as to why 12.50% of PWT resigned from the agency.

B. ACCESSIBILITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND FACILITIES

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

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

<https://www.usda.gov/accessibility-statement> <https://www.ascr.usda.gov/> <https://www.usda.gov/non-discrimination-statement> There is also information on how to contact AMS if the visitor is experiencing issue accessing information or would like to send comments. In addition, at the bottom of each of the AMS webpages is a “Nondiscrimination” link that leads the visitor to information on how to file a complaint.

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.

Should the public contact the agency the AMS Affirmative Employment Division would forward all visitors and employees to the United States Access Board (USAB) website: <https://www.access-board.gov/aba-enforcement> The USAB is a federal agency that promotes equality for people with disabilities through leadership in accessible design and the development of accessibility guidelines and standards for the built environment, transportation, communication, medical diagnostic equipment, and information technology.

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.

In FY 2021, AMS committed to making its website and information accessible to everyone. The AMS website contains HTML documents, plain text files, PDFs that require a PDF reader (available for free on most computers and digital devices), Microsoft Word files and other file types like PowerPoint or Excel spreadsheets. The USDA TARGET Center converts USDA information and documents into alternative formats, including Braille, large print, video description, diskette, and audiotape.

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.)

Average period is usually 30 days business days. AMS (and APHIS) employee COVID vaccine exemption requests (medical RA requests) were held by APHIS while awaiting Departmental guidance and instructions. These requests will be processed upon completion of Departmental/MRP instructions/directive – December 2021/January 2022. Excluding the approximately 25 AMS vaccine exemption (medical) requests, all other RA requests this FY were completed within the required timeframes.

- 2.

Describe the effectiveness of the policies, procedures, or practices to implement the agency’s reasonable accommodation program. Some examples of an effective program include timely processing requests, timely providing approved accommodations, conducting training for managers and supervisors, and monitoring accommodation requests for trends.

In responding to reasonable accommodation requests, AMS follows USDA Departmental Regulation 4300-008 Reasonable Accommodation and PAS Procedures. This ensures that AMS employees and applicants with disabilities are provided with equal employment opportunities. This document is posted on the AMS public webpage at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov>. MRP continues to clear MRP 4300.2 Reasonable Accommodations and HR Desk Guide program procedures through OASCR. These documents are intended to compliment, not replace the Departmental DR.

D. PERSONAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES ALLOWING EMPLOYEES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WORKPLACE

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

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

The MRP PAS procedures are found in the USDA Departmental Regulation 4300-008, Reasonable Accommodation and Personal Assistance Services (October 2020). There have been no PAS requests from AMS employees in FY 2021.

Section VII: EEO Complaint and Findings Data

A. EEO COMPLAINT DATA INVOLVING HARASSMENT

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

Answer No
2. During the last fiscal year, did any complaints alleging harassment based on disability status result in a finding of discrimination or a settlement agreement?

Answer No
3. If the agency had one or more findings of discrimination alleging harassment based on disability status during the last fiscal year, please describe the corrective measures taken by the agency.

AMS had no findings of discrimination in FY 2020.

B. EEO COMPLAINT DATA INVOLVING REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

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

Answer No
2. During the last fiscal year, did any complaints alleging failure to provide reasonable accommodation result in a finding of discrimination or a settlement agreement?

Answer No
- 3.

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

AMS had no findings of discrimination in FY 2021.

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?	The permanent workforce participation rate for PWD in AMS for FY 2022 is 8.88%, below the 12% Federal High Goal.					
STATEMENT OF BARRIER GROUPS:	<i>Barrier Group</i> People with Disabilities					
Barrier Analysis Process Completed?:	N					
Barrier(s) Identified?:	N					
STATEMENT OF IDENTIFIED BARRIER: Provide a succinct statement of the agency policy, procedure or practice that has been determined to be the barrier of the undesired condition.	Barrier Name		Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice			
Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan						
Date Initiated	Target Date	Sufficient Funding / Staffing?	Date Modified	Date Completed	Objective Description	
10/01/2020	09/30/2022	Yes			Increase the participation rate of PWD to reach the 12% EEOC Federal Goal.	
Responsible Official(s)						
Title		Name		Standards Address The Plan?		
AMS Civil Rights, AMS Hiring Manager		N/A		Yes		
Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective						
Target Date	Planned Activities			Sufficient Staffing & Funding?	Modified Date	Completion Date
09/30/2023	Meet with the Veteran Resource Group and Veteran Program Manager to determine if there is a reason Veterans do not or cannot claim disability status.			Yes		
12/31/2020	Contact APHIS Civil Rights to ask if AMS employees can attend the quarterly brown bag Self-Identification presentations.			Yes	09/30/2023	

Report of Accomplishments	
Fiscal Year	Accomplishment
2022	These are new goals. No accomplishments for FY 2022 at this time

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

This is a new goal. No accomplishments for FY 2022 at this time.

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

This is a new goal. No accomplishments for FY 2022 at this time.

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

The MOU with Gallaudet University will be completed in FY 2023.