

MD-715 – Part J

Special Program Plan for the Recruitment, Hiring, Advancement, and Retention of Persons with Disabilities

Please do not alter the numbering of the questions.

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 plan will improve the recruitment, hiring, advancement, and retention of applicants and employees with disabilities. All agencies, regardless of size, must complete this Part of the MD-715 report.

Section I: Efforts to Reach Regulatory Goals

EEOC regulations (29 C.F.R. § 1614.203(d)(7)) require agencies to establish specific numerical goals for increasing the participation of persons with reportable and 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) Yes 0 No X
 - b. Cluster GS-11 to SES (PWD) Yes 0 No X

Table B4-1Per. In CRCL-provided tables, is tabulated below the B4-1Per table. If using local data, you will need to manually tabulate to collapse pay grades.

Cluster GS-1 to GS-10 (PWD) = 38.39%

Cluster GS-11 to SES (PWD) = 33.55%

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) Yes 0 No X
 - b. Cluster GS-11 to SES (PWTD) Yes 0 No X

Table B4-1Per. In CRCL-provided tables, is tabulated below the B4-1Per table. If using local data, you will need to manually tabulate to collapse pay grades.

Cluster GS-1 to GS-10 (PWTD) = 3.87%

Cluster GS-11 to SES (PWTD) = 3.15%

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

This information was provided in outreach meetings to Executive Officers, Human Resources (HR) staff and hiring managers, as well as FEMA's HR Liaison Group and FEMA Federal Employee Resource Groups (FERGs). Through various presentations and discussions made by the Office of Equal Rights Director (OER), Disability Program Manager, and Selective Placement Coordinator, the agency has made clear its commitment to meeting the numerical goals set forth under Section 501; 12% and 2% for PWD and PWTD, respectively.

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.

Yes 0 No X

To support FEMA's Disability Program, the agency hired two Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Specialists, but two EEO Specialists left the agency in FY2023. To supplement the program, FEMA's OER added eight contractors within four vendors and two reasonable accommodation (RA) Specialist positions in the OER Cadre to process RA requests at the disaster level and are hiring four EEO Specialists and two OER Cadre personnel to enhance processing of RA requests. OER also leveraged its Cadre to assist with the processing of 1501 reasonable accommodation requests in FY 2023.

Despite robust support for our disability program, staffing has been challenged to keep pace with the volume of RA requests in the past two years.

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

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Disability Program Task	# of FTE Staff by Employment Status			Responsible Official (Name, Title, Office, Email)
	Full Time	Part Time	Collateral Duty	
Processing applications from PWD and PWTD	1	0	1	Christopher Pugh, Selective Placement Program Coordinator, Office of Chief Human Capital Officer Chris.pugh@fema.dhs.gov
Answering questions from the public about hiring authorities that take disability into account	1	0	3	Christopher Pugh, Selective Placement Program Coordinator, Office of Chief Human Capital Officer Chris.pugh@fema.dhs.gov
Processing reasonable accommodation requests from applicants and employees	5	0	0	Kevin Perkins Disability Unit Director Kevin.perkins@fema.dhs.gov
Section 508 Compliance	1	0	0	Janice Fenlason IT Specialist Janice.fenlason@fema.dhs.gov
Architectural Barriers Act Compliance	1	0	0	Alejandro Ortiz Alejandro.ortiz@fema.dhs.gov
Special Emphasis Program for PWD and PWTD	1	0	0	Kevin Perkins Disability Unit Director Kevin.perkins@fema.dhs.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.

Yes X No 0

The agency has provided the disability program staff with the following training:

- Annual training for managers and staff on the reasonable accommodation procedures and personal assistance services (PAS) procedures.
- FEMA EEO Compliance Training for Managers, Supervisors, and Employees.
- The FEMA Section 508 Team participates in federal trainings and workshops to support new initiatives, changes to legislation, and sharing of best practices. This includes events sponsored by the US Access Board on the revised Section 508 standards, GSA trainings specific to implementing the revised standards, technical training and new tools designed to assist in meeting the revised standards, as well as DHS trainings on their website compliance scanning tool.

- The FEMA Disability FERG continued discussions on current FEMA disability policies and procedures. Through this committee, OER and Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO/HR) leaders stayed connected and aware of concerns of the FEMA disability community.
- Federal Exchange on Employment and Disability (FEED) meetings.

B. PLAN TO ENSURE SUFFICIENT FUNDING FOR THE DISABILITY PROGRAM

1. 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.

Yes 0 No X

FEMA has been impacted by a spike in reasonable accommodation requests, from 464 in FY 2021, to 1,375 in FY 2022, to 1,500 in FY 2023. At the same time, two employees left the agency midway through FY 2023, and another in the 3rd quarter before returning to four in the 4th quarter, made it considerably challenging to manage the influx of requests. As of the end of FY 2023, DU has fully staffed its operations with four fulltime EEO Specialists. Additionally, in FY 2024, DU will hire four more DU personnel and two OER Cadre personnel to process RA requests and help improve the disability program.

FEMA’s challenge in this regard have only been to the administrative component of processing requests. Sufficient resources have been allocated to grant all the requests.

Section III: 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 APPLICANTS WITH DISABILITIES

Describe the programs and resources the agency uses to identify job applicants with disabilities, including individuals with targeted disabilities.

FEMA continues to utilize multiple strategies to recruit qualified applicants with disabilities and targeted disabilities via hiring authorities that take disability into account. In FY 2023, the strategies included:

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- The Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) – A recruitment and referral program that connects federal and private sector employers nationwide with highly motivated college students and recent graduates with disabilities who are eager to demonstrate their abilities in the workplace through summer or permanent jobs.
- The OPM USA Staffing Agency Talent Portal (ATP) – A database of Schedule A applicants that the Program Support Branch (PSB) uses to conduct candidate sourcing upon request.
- Non-competitive Applicant Pool – OCHCO/PSB/Talent, Recruitment, and Acquisition Division (TRAD) maintains a repository of non-competitive applicants who have applied to FEMA vacancies. These applicants will be prequalified for a select group of occupations, and PSB uses this tool as a resource for non-competitive candidate sourcing.
- Career Fairs – PSB participated in the Gallaudet University Career Fair, where recruiters shared information on FEMA job and internship opportunities, including the Pathways Program.
- Local Universities – PSB developed an email distribution list for a variety of local universities with a focus on providing outreach to university Disability Office contacts.
- Creating a PWD resume bank and eligibility documents to share with hiring managers for consideration when filling vacant Permanent Full-Time (PFT) positions.
- Collaborated with DHS Strategic Talent Recruitment, Inclusive Diversity, Engagement during Equal Opportunity Publications Career Expo for People with Disabilities in July 2023. Recruiters interacted with over 200 individuals.
- Coordinating and participating in a total of 87 recruitment and outreach events, many of which were conducted virtually. More than 9,000 contacts were made through 41 events that provided opportunities for persons with disabilities, including veterans with disabilities. In FY2023, 16.14% (606) of new hires (3,754) were PWD. Of those, 2.3% (85) were PWTD.
- Promoting non-competitive hiring as a practice during Quarterly HR Liaison meetings and during pre-consultation meetings with hiring managers to discuss staffing plans and other HR-specific needs.
- Using the USAJOBS ATP to identify and review resumes of Schedule A and other candidates who could be hired non-competitively. Individuals applying to vacancies through Schedule A are placed on a non-competitive certificate list that is shared with hiring managers.

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- Continuing to recommend to unsolicited Schedule A applicants that they upload their resume and documentation to USA Jobs to increase exposure to DHS agency-wide employment. We are continuing to recommend that the applicants use the OPM Resume Builder to ensure their resume is in a federal format. Furthermore, we encourage applicants to make their resumes searchable, so other agencies can review their resume and increase the opportunity of getting a job.

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.

FEMA uses several hiring authorities that take disability into account to recruit PWD and PWTD for positions in the permanent workforce, including the Schedule A hiring authority for individuals with intellectual disabilities, severe physical disabilities, or psychiatric disabilities, as set forth at 5 CFR 213.3102(u); the Veterans' Recruitment Appointment authority, as set forth at 5 CFR part 307; and the 30% or More Disabled Veteran authority, as set forth at 5 CFR 316.302(b)(4), 316.402(b)(4). In addition, the agency uses the special hiring authority to hire students under the WRP, Persons with Disabilities Internship Program, and the federal Non-Paid Work Experience Program for disabled veterans. Hiring flexibilities are discussed during the pre-consultation phase of all hiring actions.

FEMA includes language in vacancy announcements encouraging individuals with disabilities to apply for jobs using the Schedule A excepted service hiring authority. Personnel strategies and practices also include rules related to hiring veterans with disabilities. FEMA has developed comprehensive policies governing Schedule A for people with disabilities and promotes the use of Schedule A via Strategic Recruitment Consultation meetings with Program Office representatives. OCHCO also gives presentations to Human Resources Liaisons and other administrative staff to managers, as staff leverages those groups.

In FY 2023, FEMA hired 53 employees under Schedule A, compared with only 27 in FY 2022.

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.

FEMA currently utilizes the USAJOBS ATP to identify and review resumes of Schedule A and other candidates who could be hired non-competitively. To determine eligibility for appointment, HR Specialists conduct thorough reviews of applicant resumes and supporting materials, which include but are not limited to a Schedule A letter, transcripts, and Department of Veterans Affairs documents. Hiring managers

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are provided a list of eligible candidates during the pre-consultation phase of hiring actions with an explanation of how the process works and when the individual may be appointed.

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.

Yes X No 0 N/A 0

Formal and informal training on the use of the hiring authorities that take disability into account was provided to managers and supervisors during the year as part of the FEMA annual mandatory training requirements. All managers and hiring officials are individually provided guidance and training from the Selective Placement Program Coordinator on the use of special hiring authorities to hire qualified individuals under Schedule A and through WRP programs to meet the 12% and 2% goals set by EEOC. The training included laws, regulations, policies, and executive mandates that ensure people with disability are inclusive to the FEMA workplace.

B. PLAN TO ESTABLISH CONTACTS WITH DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT ORGANIZATIONS

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

In 2023, OCHCO established new relationships with disability organizations such as: Bender Virtual Career Fair, Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), and the Division of Rehabilitative Services in Alexandria, VA.

The agency continues partnerships with the WRP, Gallaudet University, Virginia, DC Vocational Rehab Offices, and the EOP STEM Diversity Career Expo.

C. PROGRESSION TOWARDS GOALS (RECRUITMENT AND HIRING)

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) | Yes 0 | No X |
| b. New Hires for Permanent Workforce (PWTD) | Yes 0 | No X |

Table B1.

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New Hires for Permanent Workforce (PWD) = 16.14% New Hires for Permanent Workforce (PWTD) = 2.26%
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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.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|------|
| a. New Hires for MCO (PWD) | Yes 0 | No X |
| b. New Hires for MCO (PWTD) | Yes 0 | No X |

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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.

- | | | |
|--|-------|------|
| a. Qualified Applicants for MCO (PWD) | Yes 0 | No X |
| b. Qualified Applicants for MCO (PWTD) | Yes 0 | No X |

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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.

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-------|------|
| a. Promotions for MCO (PWD) | Yes 0 | No X |
| b. Promotions for MCO (PWTD) | Yes 0 | No X |

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Section IV: 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

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

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FEMA provides training opportunities and encourages all employees, including veterans and disabled veterans, to take advantage of career development opportunities. In addition, FEMA participates in internal career development programs, including the FEMA Emerging Leaders Program and the Future Leader Program, which combines in-person, independent and online activities for a yearlong program so that employees may receive intensive developmental assignments to prepare and qualify them for the targeted series and grade. The training included laws, regulations, policies, and executive mandates that ensure people with disabilities are inclusive to the FEMA workplace. These career development programs include a mandatory mentoring component. Other career developmental opportunities include the use of employee rotation/detail (temporary assignments) to other offices or components. Additionally, FEMA has a mentoring program open to all employees, including PWD and PWTD, which facilitates junior-to-senior and peer-to-peer mentoring relationships.

B. CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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

OCHCO continued to increase awareness of all development programs. The Learning, Engagement and Diversity (LEAD) Division offers high-impact developmental programs and services to employees nation-wide to strengthen the agency's ability to support our citizens and first responders. The goal is to develop diverse leaders to be inclusive, at all levels from emerging leaders and high performing individuals to executive level personnel. LEAD provides a variety of supervisory and leadership development opportunities within a tiered progression framework and single competency-based learning programs/courses. In FY23, LEAD offered the following programs:

- FEMA Future Leaders Program: A leadership development program that focuses on collaborative leadership, being a good team player, and learning to lead a project or a team. The program exposes participants to the rewards and challenges of being a FEMA leader while providing foundational knowledge of leadership competencies.
- FEMA Fellows Program: A leadership development program that provides a developmental opportunity to understand the challenges of leading change at an organizational level. This program gives participants the ability to develop proficiency in senior-level competencies through a series of learning and practical exercises.
- Leadership for a Democratic Society Training: A leadership development training for senior federal positions that guides senior leadership to understand the diverse goals of the government and the citizens it serves. This training is anchored in current leadership theory, OPM's Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs), and leadership competencies.
- Duke Leadership Program: A leadership development program taught at Duke University that draws on research in organizational behavior, sociology, psychology, and political science to support individual development as a leader. Aligned to OPM ECQs, participants go through a leadership 360-degree assessment, explore the different ways to lead, and identify individual challenges and opportunities. Throughout the program, participants work one-on-one with an executive coach to interpret feedback and develop a customized plan to achieve their goals.
- Executive Core Qualification Workshop: A leadership development workshop that steers participants through a series of topics, including: 1) discussing the process for becoming an SES; 2) analyzing SES announcements (including Technical Qualifications); 3) defining the components of each ECQ and its sub-competencies; 4) describing the SES application process and OPM requirements for SES packages and 5) preparing an all-inclusive 5-page SES resume for SES package submission.
- Supervisory Essentials: A mandatory supervisor/manager development course for all new FEMA supervisors that provides supervisors instruction in areas of managing resources, program oversight, motivating people to maximize performance, building and maintaining high-performing teams, leading change management, fostering a team culture that values and benefits from diversity,

inclusion, innovation and collaboration and representing and championing the organization's values and mission to front-line employees.

- The Effective Federal Leader Course: A supervisor/manager development course that teaches participants how to lead virtual teams, techniques to increase resiliency, a comprehensive understanding of their strengths and development opportunities as a leader, and skills for solving complex challenges.
- Management Development Program: A supervisor/manager development program that is mandatory for all the agency's 2nd line supervisors that provides education in the agency's strategic human capital practices, distributing resources, prioritizing projects and programs, ensuring work being performed at lower organizational levels is coordinated and in line with organization strategic direction.
- FEMA Mentoring Program: A career development program that accelerates the personal and professional development of mentees and mentors alike. This program matches mentees to mentors and walks mentors through a series of activities and actions that drive professionalism, core values and career growth.
- Effective Communications and Human Relations: A career development course that helps participants master human relations skills that enable them to thrive in any setting. Participants learn to become good communicators and problem-solvers, adept at managing stress and handling change. Participants also learn to strengthen interpersonal relationships and develop a commanding attitude, instilling confidence, and enthusiasm in the workplace.
- Fostering Accountability, Adaptability, and Resilience Program: A career development program that teaches participants to demonstrate accountability, adaptability, and resilience, even in times of change and uncertainty, through a methodical approach that allows participants to practice self-awareness and proactivity.
- Dominance, Influence, Steadiness and Conscientiousness Assessment (DISC): a career development course where participants build stronger, more effective working relationships through the DISC behavior assessment. The DISC model provides a common language that is used to better understand participants and those they interact with—and then use this knowledge to reduce conflict, improve working relationships and increase performance.
- FEMA Values, Habits, and Trust: A career development course where participants use the world-renowned Stephen Covey “7 Habits of Highly Successful People and Speed of Trust” models to understand how FEMA Values are incorporated in our daily professional lives. Participants experience a proven process of personal and interpersonal growth that has an immediate and lasting impact to them and the agency.
- DHS SES Capstone Program: An executive leadership program for executives in their first year of promotion to an SES. It is a cohort learning experience featuring interactive workshops by thought leaders, experiential learning, and a 360-degree assessment. This program presents learning against a backdrop of DHS operational site visits, senior leader discussion, and development activities that address strategic DHS challenges.

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- Leadership at the Peak Program: An executive leadership program that teaches participants to maximize personal leadership power and accelerate organizational commitment, alignment, and results.
- Leading Strategically in the Federal Government Course: An executive development course that helps executives focus on and improve their strategic leadership skills to achieve the agency's mission.

Please note that the table below includes both full-time Title V and full-time Stafford Act employees. Reservists and local hires are not included.

In the table below, please provide the data for career development opportunities that require competition and/or supervisory recommendation/approval to participate. [Collection begins with the FY 2018 MD-715 report, which is due on February 28, 2019.]

Career Development Opportunities	Total Participants		PWD		PWTD	
	Applicants (#)	Selectees (#)	Applicants (%)	Selectees (%)	Applicants (%)	Selectees (%)
Leadership Programs	505	466	13.47%	13.30%	2.57%	2.57%
Fellowship Programs (not offered at FEMA)	0	0	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mentoring Programs	156	90	15.38%	16.66%	3.2%	3.33%
Coaching Programs (Not offered at FEMA)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Training Programs	1031	1031	14.93%	14.93%	4.85%	4.85%
Detail Programs (No tracking mechanism for detail programs)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Career Development Programs	79	23	12.66%	4.35%	3.79%	4.35%

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.

a. Applicants (PWD) Yes 0 No X

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b. Other Types of Recognition (PWTD) Yes 0 No 0 N/A X

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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.

a. SES

 i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Yes 0 No X

 ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Yes 0 No X

b. Grade GS-15

 i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Yes 0 No X

 ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Yes 0 No X

c. Grade GS-14

 i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Yes 0 No X

 ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Yes 0 No X

d. Grade GS-13

 i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Yes 0 No X

 ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Yes 0 No X

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2. Does your agency have a trigger involving PWTD among the qualified *internal* applicants and/or selectees for promotions to the senior grade levels? (The appropriate benchmarks are the relevant applicant pool for qualified internal applicants and the qualified applicant pool for selectees.) For non-GS pay plans, please use the approximate senior grade levels. If “yes”, describe the trigger(s) in the text box.

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a. SES		
i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD)	Yes 0	No X
ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)	Yes 0	No X
b. Grade GS-15		
i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD)	Yes 0	No X
ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)	Yes 0	No X
c. Grade GS-14		
i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD)	Yes 0	No X
ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)	Yes 0	No X
d. Grade GS-13		
i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD)	Yes 0	No X
ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)	Yes 0	No X

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.

a. New Hires to SES (PWD)	Yes 0	No X
b. New Hires to GS-15(PWD)	Yes 0	No X
c. New Hires to GS-14 (PWD)	Yes 0	No X
d. New Hires to GS-13(PWD)	Yes 0	No X

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.

a. New Hires to SES (PWTD)	Yes 0	No X
b. New Hires to GS-15 (PWTD)	Yes 0	No X
c. New Hires to GS-14 (PWTD)	Yes 0	No X
d. New Hires to GS-13 (PWTD)	Yes 0	No X

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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.

a. Executives

- | | | |
|--|-------|------|
| i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) | Yes 0 | No X |
| ii. Internal Selections (PWD) | Yes 0 | No X |

b. Managers

- | | | |
|--|-------|------|
| i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) | Yes 0 | No X |
| ii. Internal Selections (PWD) | Yes 0 | No X |

c. Supervisors

- | | | |
|--|-------|------|
| i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) | Yes 0 | No X |
| ii. Internal Selections (PWD) | Yes 0 | No X |

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.

a. Executives

- | | | |
|---|-------|------|
| i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD) | Yes 0 | No X |
| ii. Internal Selections (PWTD) | Yes 0 | No X |

b. Managers

- | | | |
|---|-------|------|
| i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD) | Yes 0 | No X |
| ii. Internal Selections (PWTD) | Yes 0 | No X |

c. Supervisors

- | | | |
|---|-------|------|
| i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD) | Yes 0 | No X |
| ii. Internal Selections (PWTD) | Yes 0 | No X |

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7. Using the qualified applicant pool as the benchmark, does your agency have a trigger involving PWD among the selectees for new hires to supervisory positions? If “yes”, describe the trigger(s) in the text box.

a. New Hires for Executives (PWD)	Yes 0	No X
b. New Hires for Managers (PWD)	Yes 0	No X
c. New Hires for Supervisors (PWD)	Yes 0	No X

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.

a. New Hires for Executives (PWTD)	Yes 0	No X
b. New Hires for Managers (PWTD)	Yes 0	No X
c. New Hires for Supervisors (PWTD)	Yes 0	No X

Table B8. We note that the HR data systems do not track employee level categories as asked for by this question.

SECTION V: PLAN TO IMPROVE RETENTION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

To be a 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 personal 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.

Yes X	No 0	N/A 0
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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) | Yes 0 | No X |
| b. | Involuntary Separations (PWD) | Yes 0 | No X |

Table B1.

The percentage of PWD that voluntarily separated from the agency (4.6%) is slightly greater than that of persons without disabilities (4.2%). The percentage of PWD voluntarily and involuntarily leaving the agency is trending down since FY 2022.

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) | Yes 0 | No X |
| b. | Involuntary Separations (PWTD) | Yes 0 | No X |

Table B1.

The percentage of PWTD that voluntarily separated from the agency (5.0%) is slightly greater than that of persons without disabilities (4.2%). The percentage of PWTD voluntarily and involuntarily leaving the agency is trending down since FY 2022.

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.

No trigger exists involving the separation rate of PWD and PWTD at FEMA.

B. ACCESSIBILITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND FACILITIES

Pursuant to 29 C.F.R. § 1614.203(d)(4), federal agencies are required to inform applicants and employees of their rights under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of

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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.fema.gov/about/offices/information-technology/section-508#overview>

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

<https://www.access-board.gov/aba/#about-the-aba-accessibility-standards>

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.

There are none described by FEMA's Accessibility Program Manager at this time.

C. REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION PROGRAM

Pursuant to 29 C.F.R. § 1614.203(d)(3), agencies must adopt, post on their public website, and make available to all job applicants and employees, reasonable accommodation procedures.

1. Please provide the average time frame for processing initial requests for reasonable accommodations during the reporting period. (Please do not include previously approved requests with repetitive accommodations, such as interpreting services.)

In FY 2023, the average processing time for RA requests increased to 68 days from 58 days in FY 2022. In January 2023, DHS approved an update to the agency's RA procedures that changed the required timeframe for processing RA requests from 30 days to 45 days.

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

In FY 2023, the reasonable accommodation program provided annual training to 821 managers and supervisors through the Supervisory Essentials course, multiple OER Road Shows, and ad-hoc trainings for organizational leaders.

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

Pursuant to 29 C.F.R. § 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.

1. 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.

Consistent with C.2.

Section VI: 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 government-wide average?
Yes 0 No X N/A 0
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?
Yes X No 0 N/A 0

- 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.

In FY2023, the agency entered a settlement agreement in a complaint where the complainant alleged harassment based upon disability, among other bases. The complainant's managers involved were provided training to educate them on the Reasonable Accommodation process.

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?
Yes 0 No X N/A 0
- 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?
Yes X No 0 N/A 0
- 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.

In FY2023, the agency had two findings where the complainant alleged failure to accommodate as a claim. The complainant's managers involved were provided training to educate them on the reasonable accommodation process.

Section VII: 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?
Yes X No 0
- 2. Has the agency established a plan to correct the barrier(s) involving PWD and/or PWTD?
Yes X No 0 N/A 0
- 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.

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Trigger 1	The agency has not allocated sufficient staffing to effectively manage its reasonable accommodation program [see 29 CFR § 1614.203(d)(4)(ii)]			
Barrier(s)	Potential barrier to PWD/PWTD due to reasonable accommodation requests not being processed within the appropriate timeframe.			
Objective(s)	See Part H plan for B.4.a.10 and C.2.b.5			
Responsible Official(s)		Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)		
Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Staffing & Funding (Yes or No)	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
9/30/2023	Hire three and detail at least five individuals to resolve a current backlog of RA requests	Yes		3/30/2023
	See Part H plan for B.4.a.10 and C.2.b.5 for planned activities			
Fiscal Year	Accomplishments			
2023	Updated reasonable accommodation procedures to change processing timeframe from 30 days to 45 days.			

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

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

In response to a sudden surge in workforce requests for remote work, OER implemented a strategy to address prolonged processing periods stemming from a 300% increase in reasonable accommodation applications during FY 2022. This successful initiative involved collaboration among FEMA's senior leadership, the FEMA Health Office, OCHCO, and Office Chief Counsel, along with engagement with numerous subject matter experts. Within a two-week window, a total of 243 requests were reviewed, processed, and concluded with final decisions. In FY 2023, 59% of

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reasonable accommodation requests were processed timely, an increase of 10% from FY 2022.

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 agency is actively recruiting to increase the number of RA Specialists by eight employees. As a result, the program will improve the timeliness rate of responses to requests. OER is also developing a plan to respond to the high number of reasonable accommodation requests after the return-to-work initiatives following the pandemic. Out of 1,500 requests for FY 2023, there are 299 that are pending processing. Finally, the agency aims to conduct quarterly Disability Mentoring Day sessions and develop a training schedule to conduct training and information sessions on reasonable accommodations and other disability related topics to educate employees. Raised awareness of the reasonable accommodation process for supervisors and employees will help in processing requests in a timely manner. The agency will continue to hold reasonable accommodation training through OER Back to Basics roadshows. The agency will also work towards obtaining all data to investigate further for triggers.