

Affirmative Action Plan for the Recruitment, Hiring, Advancement, and Retention of Persons with Disabilities

To capture agencies' affirmative action plan for persons with disabilities (PWD) and persons with targeted disabilities (PWTD), EEOC regulations (29 C.F.R. § 1614.203(e)) and MD-715 require agencies to describe how their affirmative action plan will improve the recruitment, hiring, advancement, and retention of applicants and employees with disabilities.

Section I: Efforts to Reach Regulatory Goals

EEOC regulations (29 CFR §1614.203(d)(7)) require agencies to establish specific numerical goals for increasing the participation of persons with disabilities and persons with targeted disabilities in the federal government

1. Using the goal of 12% as the benchmark, does your agency have a trigger involving PWD by grade level cluster in the permanent workforce? If "yes", describe the trigger(s) in the text box.

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------|
| a. Cluster GS-1 to GS-10 (PWD) | Answer No |
| b. Cluster GS-11 to SES (PWD) | Answer Yes |

The percentage of PWD in the GS-11 to SES cluster was 9.82% in FY 2023, which fell below the goal of 12%.

*For GS employees, please use two clusters: GS-1 to GS-10 and GS-11 to SES, as set forth in 29 C.F.R. § 1614.203(d)(7). For all other pay plans, please use the approximate grade clusters that are above or below GS-11 Step 1 in the Washington, DC metropolitan region.

2. Using the goal of 2% as the benchmark, does your agency have a trigger involving PWTD by grade level cluster in the permanent workforce? If "yes", describe the trigger(s) in the text box.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| a. Cluster GS-1 to GS-10 (PWTD) | Answer No |
| b. Cluster GS-11 to SES (PWTD) | Answer Yes |

The percentage of PWTD in the GS-11 to SES cluster was 1.73% in FY 2023, which fell below the goal of 2%.

Grade Level Cluster(GS or Alternate Pay Planb)	Total	Reportable Disability		Targeted Disability	
	#	#	%	#	%
Numarical Goal	--	12%		2%	
Grades GS-11 to SES	231722	22115	9.54	3887	1.68
Grades GS-1 to GS-10	183977	23689	12.88	4958	2.69

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

The numerical goals, information about the Disability Program and resources are available on the ORMDI website. Additionally, VA periodically issued written guidance through internal networks and briefed HR professionals on the use of various hiring authorities to attract and encourage hiring eligible candidates to include PWD.

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 No

VA plans to hire additional personnel to assist with the implementation of its disability program.

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

Disability Program Task	# of FTE Staff By Employment Status			Responsible Official (Name, Title, Office Email)
	Full Time	Part Time	Collateral Duty	
Special Emphasis Program for PWD and PWTB	19	0	343	Varies Throughout Department
Answering questions from the public about hiring authorities that take disability into account	19	0	378	Varies Throughout Department
Processing applications from PWD and PWTB	18	0	378	Varies Throughout Department
Section 508 Compliance	24	0	0	Pat Sheehan Director, VA Section 508 Office Pat.Sheehan@va.gov
Architectural Barriers Act Compliance	19	0	84	Mark S. Goeller Architect Mark.Goeller@va.gov
Processing reasonable accommodation requests from applicants and employees	162	0	0	Varies Throughout Department

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

In FY 2023, the National Disability Program Manager leveraged training as well as guidance materials from the DOL Office of Disability Employment Policy and Federal Exchange on Employment and Disability. Training topics covered recruiting people with disabilities, attracting job candidates with disabilities, advancing access and equity to celebrate contributions of workers with disabilities, and showcasing supportive inclusive employment policies, and practices that benefit employers and employees.

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 No

VA plans to hire additional personnel to assist with the implementation of its disability program. Additionally, the Section 508 Office plans to increase staffing and budget.

Section III: Program Deficiencies In The Disability Program

Brief Description of Program Deficiency	B.4.a.8. to effectively administer its special emphasis programs (such as, Federal Women’s Program, Hispanic Employment Program, and People with Disabilities Program Manager)? [5 USC § 7201; 38 USC § 4214; 5 CFR § 720.204; 5 CFR § 213.3102(t) and (u); 5 CFR § 315.709]		
Objective	Fill staffing for Departmental HEP.		
Target Date	Dec 31, 2020		
Completion Date			
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>	<u>Planned Activity</u>
	Jun 30, 2020		Obtain approval for additional full-time equivalents (FTE).
	Dec 31, 2020		Fill all remaining vacancies to ensure effective, efficient, and well-managed SEPs.
	Dec 31, 2020		Fill 2 Special Emphasis Program (SEP) vacancies that VA currently has.
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	
	2023	VA reallocated resources to assist with the disability program based on business needs.	
	2022	The Federal Women's Program Manager was designated on April 28, 2022.	
	2019	An individual who completed a rotational assignment in ORMDI through the U.S. OPM’s Presidential Management Fellows Program was later converted to a career appointment. Subsequently, the individual was assigned to the position of Program Specialist and serves as the Departmental American Indian and Alaska Native Program Manager and the Federal Women’s Program Manager.	

Brief Description of Program Deficiency	C.2.b.5. Does the agency process all initial accommodation requests, excluding ongoing interpretative services, within the time frame set forth in its reasonable accommodation procedures? [see MD-715, II(C)] If “no”, please provide the percentage of timely-processed requests, excluding ongoing interpretative services, in the comments column.		
Objective	Train RA Coordinators on how to process requests.		
Target Date	Sep 29, 2024		
Completion Date			
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>	<u>Planned Activity</u>
	May 31, 2019		Develop an enterprise-wide system to track reasonable accommodation requests.
	Jun 28, 2019		Test the system.
	Jul 31, 2019		Deploy the system.
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	
	2018	VA has gathered system requirements and established rules regarding mandatory usage of system.	
	2019	The RA Staff Office hired a management analyst to aid in the development of the system and monitor and track RA data once the system is developed.	
	2021	VA has completed development of the system and has trained all RACs on usage of the system.	
	2020	VA has contracted with Microsoft to develop an Administration wide system. Processing maps have been created and provided to the contractor and development of the system has already begun.	
	2022	VA completed development of the system and trained all RA Coordinators on usage of the system.	
	2023	RA Program initiated weekly office hours for RAMS training.	

Brief Description of Program Deficiency	E.4.a.5. The processing of requests for reasonable accommodation? [29 CFR §1614.203(d)(4)]		
Objective	Update and enhance RAMS so data can be accurately captured and stored.		
Target Date	Sep 29, 2024		
Completion Date			
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>	<u>Planned Activity</u>
	May 31, 2019		Develop an enterprise-wide system to track reasonable accommodation requests.
	Jun 28, 2019		Test the system.
	Jul 31, 2019		Deploy the system.
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	
	2018	VA has gathered system requirements and established rules regarding mandatory usage of system.	
	2020	VA has contracted with Microsoft to develop an Administration wide system. Processing maps have been created and provided to the contractor and development of the system has already begun.	
	2021	VA has completed development of the system and has trained all RACs on usage of the system.	
	2022	VA completed development of the system and trained all RA Coordinators on usage of the system.	
	2019	The RA Staff Office hired a management analyst to aid in the development of the system and monitor and track RA data once the system is developed.	
	2023	VA launched an Inaugural Workgroup comprised of RA practitioners to enhance the functionality of RAMS.	

Section IV: Plan to Recruit and Hire Individuals with Disabilities

Pursuant to 29 C.F.R. §1614.203(d)(1)(i) and (ii), agencies must establish a plan to increase the recruitment and hiring of individuals with disabilities. The questions below are designed to identify outcomes of the agency's recruitment program plan for PWD and PWTD

A. PLAN TO IDENTIFY JOB APPLICATIONS WITH DISABILITIES

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

The Veteran and Military Spouse Talent Engagement Program (VMSTEP) aims to support Veterans and military spouses in finding VA employment. To identify job applicants with disabilities and targeted disabilities, VMSTEP utilizes the following resources and programs: 1. PWTD Hiring Authorities: These authorities, such as the Schedule A and 30% or More Disabled Veteran Hiring Authorities, expedite the hiring of individuals with disabilities, including Veterans with disabilities. 2. Online Application Systems (USAJOBS): USAJOBS provides an option for applicants to self-identify as individuals with disabilities ensuring they receive appropriate consideration. This allows VMSTEP and other hiring managers to target the PWD and PWTD applicant pool using USAJOBS Agency Talent Portal. 3. Partnerships With Organizations That Support Individuals with Disabilities: VMSTEP collaborates with disability-centric organizations and programs such as VBA's Veterans Readiness and Employment (VR&E) Program, Hiring Our Heroes, Blue Star Families, Rally Point, and GI Jobs to source applicants with disabilities. These collaborations aim to introduce VA opportunities and help cultivate a VA employee readiness talent pool. 4. Veterans Resource Guide and Fact Sheets: VMSTEP provides human resource offices, hiring managers, Veterans, and military spouses with comprehensive guides and fact sheets on Veteran and military spouse hiring authorities, and other hiring flexibilities to enhance awareness and understanding of disabilities and targeted disabilities. 5. Networking and Outreach: VMSTEP participates in job fairs, outreach events, and networking opportunities targeting individuals with disabilities. Additionally, VA leverages the VR&E Program to identify job applicants with disabilities. VR&E also provides job-related training to assist disabled Veterans with building skills necessary to obtain employment.

2. Pursuant to 29 C.F.R. §1614.203(a)(3), describe the agency's use of hiring authorities that take disability into account (e.g., Schedule A) to recruit PWD and PWTD for positions in the permanent workforce

VA has various programs and authorities in place to recruit individuals with disabilities, including disabled Veterans, into its permanent workforce such as Schedule A, 30% or more disabled Veterans, and VRA. Once VA HR offices verify an applicant's eligibility, VA hiring managers may use any of the above-mentioned authorities to hire eligible and qualified candidates with disabilities non-competitively. This streamlines hiring procedures to appoint applicants at a faster time-to-hire rate than usual. To further attract candidates with disabilities, all VA Job Opportunity Announcement templates in the USA Staffing System include a statement encouraging individuals with disabilities to apply. These programs and authorities show VA's commitment to including individuals with disabilities, especially disabled Veterans, in its permanent workforce. They help VA meet its obligations under Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act to provide equal employment opportunities to individuals with disabilities, including disabled Veterans.

3. When individuals apply for a position under a hiring authority that takes disability into account (e.g., Schedule A), explain how the agency (1) determines if the individual is eligible for appointment under such authority; and, (2) forwards the individual's application to the relevant hiring officials with an explanation of how and when the individual may be appointed.

The Selective Placement Program Coordinator (SPPC) receives the individual's resume and Schedule A letter and reviews it to ensure eligibility. Once confirmed, the SPPC forwards the resume to the hiring manager of an open, vacant position for consideration and advises the hiring manager of the benefits of using this non-competitive hiring authority. Regardless of the referral method, whether via SPPC, VMSTEP, or self-referral to hiring managers, HR offices must verify eligibility and qualifications prior to appointment as described below. 1. HR Specialists must review the resume of the PWD/PWTD to determine if he/she meets the specialized experience and qualification requirements for the position. 2. HR Specialists must review the documentation of the PWD/PWTD to determine if he/she meets the eligibility requirements. 3. If the PWD/PWTD meets both the above requirements, the HR Specialist refers to the PWD/PWTD on a Certificate of Eligibles for consideration by the hiring

manager. 4. If interested, the hiring manager may conduct an interview and select the candidate. 5. The hiring manager must return the Certificate of Eligibles with the selection of the PWD/PWTD. 6. HR Specialists must contact the PWD/PWTD and notify the candidate of the selection and extend a tentative job offer. 7. When the PWD/PWTD accepts the firm job offer after successfully completing pre-employment requirements, the HR office may then make an appointment.

- 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

VA provided training through Recruitment and Placement Policy Service Quarterly Customer Connect calls, monthly OCHCO HR professional calls, and HCSC WRP briefs. Additionally, job aids that provide a listing of the various hiring flexibilities are listed on the OCHCO website.

B. PLAN TO ESTABLISH CONTACTS WITH DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT ORGANIZATIONS

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

VA places the onus on each facility to ensure they are partnering with and marketing employment opportunities to external organizations such as state and local Disability Committees, Commissions, DOL, and organizations as well as the disability offices at local colleges and universities.

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

Among the new hires in the permanent workforce in FY 2023, triggers exist for PWD (10.16%).

New Hires	Total (#)	Reportable Disability		Targeted Disability	
		Permanent Workforce (%)	Temporary Workforce (%)	Permanent Workforce (%)	Temporary Workforce (%)
% of Total Applicants	577106	6.97	0.03	3.65	0.02
% of Qualified Applicants	418257	6.55	0.03	3.33	0.02
% of New Hires	39669	8.53	1.08	1.86	0.22

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

a. New Hires for MCO (PWD) Answer Yes

b. New Hires for MCO (PWTD) Answer Yes

As compared to the benchmark, triggers exist for PWD in Psychology, Medical Officer, and Custodial Worker. Triggers exist for PWTD in all MCOs except Human Resources.

New Hires to Mission-Critical Occupations	Total (#)	Reportable Disability	Targetable Disability
		New Hires (%)	New Hires (%)
Numerical Goal	--	12%	2%
0080 SECURITY ADMINISTRATION	40	12.50	0.00
0180 PSYCHOLOGIST	576	8.16	0.87
0185 SOCIAL WORK	3701	8.35	2.08
0201 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	1787	18.24	2.69
0602 MEDICAL OFFICER	3315	2.96	0.51
0610 NURSING	14055	5.41	0.75
0901 GENERAL LEGAL AND KINDRED ADMINISTRATION	1567	15.76	4.02
0996 VETERANS CLAIMS EXAMINING	4730	15.92	3.70
1102 CONTRACTING	451	9.98	3.33
2210 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT	516	10.66	2.33
3566 CUSTODIAL WORKER	3806	18.60	5.44
4754 CEMETERY CARETAKING	193	14.51	6.22

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 No

As compared to the benchmark, triggers exist for PWD in all MCOs except Custodial Worker and Cemetery Caretaking. There are no triggers for PWTD.

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

As compared to the benchmark, triggers exist for PWD in Medical Officer, Custodial Worker, and Cemetery Caretaking. Triggers exist for PWTD in all the MCOs.

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.

VA markets career advancement, education, leadership development programs, and local mentoring program opportunities to all employees, including PWD and PWTD. All VA employees have access to TMS and LinkedIn Learning, providing access to electronic training and development. NCA provides training to all employees through the National Training Center. A training calendar is published on the NCA intranet with training opportunities for employees. VBA continues to use hiring flexibilities for PWD/PWTD to expand and improve advancement opportunities for current employees. This permits eligible employees, who initially accepted employment in available lower graded positions, to advance to positions commensurate with their skills and abilities as the positions become available, without being restricted by time-in-grade. In VHA, Veterans and employees with disabilities are afforded the opportunity to consult directly with local SPPCs and HR Specialists for one-on-one resume reviews and assistance with determining career paths and opportunities based on their specific qualifications.

B. CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITES

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

VA has numerous formal career and leadership development programs available for all employees. NCA utilizes the intranet to announce leadership development programs and detail opportunities to its employees. Additionally, NCA encourages employees to participate in various training opportunities to assist with career development. Furthermore, employees also have access to training in TMS and LinkedIn Learning. All VBA employees are offered the opportunity to participate in career development and leadership programs. Leadership programs are vigorously promoted to improve internal advancement opportunities for employees, including Veterans and disabled Veterans. Available hiring flexibilities are used to expand and improve advancement opportunities for current employees who are disabled Veterans. This permits eligible employees, who initially accept employment in available lower graded positions, to advance to positions commensurate with their skills and abilities as the positions become available, without being restricted by time-in-grade. VHA offers the following career development programs to employees and candidates for employment: Technical Career Field program; Graduate Health Administration Training Program; Virtual Aspiring Leadership Program; Healthcare Leadership Development Program; SES Development Program; Veteran Integrated Service Network Leadership Effectiveness Accountability & Development Program (LEAD), and facility LEAD programs.

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 (%)
Training Programs						
Mentoring Programs						
Detail Programs						
Internship Programs		124		6		0
Fellowship Programs	894	26				
Coaching Programs	580	580				
Other Career Development Programs						

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

a. Applicants (PWD)

Answer N/A

b. Selections (PWD)

Answer N/A

Although improvements have been made regarding collecting applicant data for some enterprise-wide career development opportunities, VA is still working on collecting this data enterprise wide. With the data VA has, it is hard to determine if triggers exist for applicants and/or selectees.

4. Do triggers exist for PWTB 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 (PWTB)

Answer N/A

b. Selections (PWTB)

Answer N/A

Although improvements have been made regarding collecting applicant data for some enterprise-wide career development opportunities, VA is still working on collecting this data enterprise-wide. With the data VA has, it is hard to determine if triggers exist for applicants and/or selectees.

C. AWARDS

1. Using the inclusion rate as the benchmark, does your agency have a trigger involving PWD and/or PWTB for any level of the time-off awards, bonuses, or other incentives? If “yes”, please describe the trigger(s) in the text box.

a. Awards, Bonuses, & Incentives (PWD)

Answer Yes

b. Awards, Bonuses, & Incentives (PWTB)

Answer Yes

VA identified triggers involving the percentage of PWD who received time off awards (41 or more hours), cash awards (\$501-\$999, \$1000-\$1999, \$2000-\$2999, \$3000-\$3999, \$4000-\$4999, and \$5000 or more). Also, VA identified triggers involving the percentage of PWTB who received time off awards (31-40 hours and 41 or more hours) and cash awards (\$501-\$999, \$1000-\$1999, \$2000-\$2999, \$3000-\$3999, \$4000-\$4999, and \$5000 or more).

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

Time-Off Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
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: \$4000 - \$4999: Average Amount	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Awards Given	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Total Amount	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Average Amount	0	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

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

a. Pay Increases (PWD) Answer Yes

b. Pay Increases (PWTD) Answer Yes

VA identified triggers involving the percentage of PWD and PWTD who 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 Yes
- b. Grade GS-15
 - i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Answer No
 - ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Answer Yes
- c. Grade GS-14
 - i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Answer No
 - ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Answer Yes
- d. Grade GS-13
 - i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Answer No
 - ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Answer Yes

The percentage of PWD among the internal selections for SES (7.50%), GS-15 (7.90%), GS-14 (9.38%), and GS-13 (11.03%) fell below the benchmark of the qualified applicant pool.

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	Yes
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	No
ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)	Answer	Yes

The percentage of PWTD among the internal selections for SES (0.00%), GS-15 (1.15%), GS-14 (1.53%), and GS-13 (1.75%) fell below the benchmark of the qualified applicant pool.

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

The percentage of PWD among the new hires at the GS-15 (3.29%), GS-14 (10.94%), and GS-13 (7.38%) fell below the benchmark of the qualified applicant pool.

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

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

The percentage of PWTD among the new hires at the GS-15 (0.58%), GS-14 (1.56%), and GS-13 (1.48%) fell below the benchmark of the qualified applicant pool.

5.

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

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

In comparison to the qualified applicant pool, triggers exist for PWD among the selectees for promotions to executive (7.75%), manager (12.20%), and supervisor (14.34%) positions.

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 Yes
- 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

In comparison to the qualified applicant pool, triggers exist for PWTD among the selectees for promotions to executive (0.92%), manager (2.25%), and supervisor (2.79%) positions.

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 No
- c. New Hires for Supervisors (PWD) Answer Yes

In comparison to the qualified applicant pool, triggers exist for PWD among the new hires to executive (6.73%) and supervisor (11.96%) positions.

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

In comparison to the qualified applicant pool, triggers exist for PWTD among the new hires to executive (2.14%), manager (3.52%), and supervisor (1.96%) positions.

Section VI: Plan to Improve Retention of Persons with Disabilities

To be model employer for persons with disabilities, agencies must have policies and programs in place to retain employees with disabilities. In this section, agencies should: (1) analyze workforce separation data to identify barriers retaining employees with disabilities; (2) describe efforts to ensure accessibility of technology and facilities; and (3) provide information on the reasonable accommodation program and workplace assistance services.

A. VOLUNTARY AND INVOLUNTARY SEPARATIONS

1. In this reporting period, did the agency convert all eligible Schedule A employees with a disability into the competitive service after two years of satisfactory service (5 C.F.R. § 213.3102(u)(6)(i))? If “no”, please explain why the agency did not convert all eligible Schedule A employees.

Answer No

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

2. Using the inclusion rate as the benchmark, did the percentage of PWD among voluntary and involuntary separations exceed that of persons without disabilities? If “yes”, describe the trigger below.

- a. Voluntary Separations (PWD) Answer Yes
- b. Involuntary Separations (PWD) Answer Yes

Triggers exist for PWD (9.74%) who voluntarily separated from VA, as compared to the rate of persons without disabilities (7.35%) and for PWD (1.18%) who involuntarily separated from VA, as compared to the rate of persons without disabilities (0.60%).

Separations	Total #	Reportable Disabilities %	Without Reportable Disabilities %
Permanent Workforce: Reduction in Force	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Removal	3341	1.14	0.66
Permanent Workforce: Resignation	20221	4.74	4.28
Permanent Workforce: Retirement	10842	3.44	2.18
Permanent Workforce: Other Separations	4180	1.24	0.85

Seperations	Total #	Reportable Disabilities %	Without Reportable Disabilities %
Permanent Workforce: Total Separations	38584	10.56	7.97

3. Using the inclusion rate as the benchmark, did the percentage of PWTD among voluntary and involuntary separations exceed that of persons without targeted disabilities? If “yes”, describe the trigger below.

- a. Voluntary Separations (PWTD) Answer Yes
- b. Involuntary Separations (PWTD) Answer Yes

Triggers exist for PWTD (10.82%) who voluntarily separated from VA, as compared to the rate of persons without targeted disabilities (7.78%), and for PWTD (1.67%) who involuntarily separated from VA, as compared to the rate of persons without targeted disabilities (0.72%).

Seperations	Total #	Targeted Disabilities %	Without Targeted Disabilities %
Permanent Workforce: Reduction in Force	0	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Removal	3341	1.60	0.69
Permanent Workforce: Resignation	20221	5.91	4.30
Permanent Workforce: Retirement	10842	3.24	2.30
Permanent Workforce: Other Separations	4180	1.24	0.89
Permanent Workforce: Total Separations	38584	11.98	8.18

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.

The top three most important reasons PWD and PWTD voluntarily left VA was due to personal health issues, job stress/pressure, and lack of trust/confidence in senior leaders.

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.va.gov/accessibility-at-va/>

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.va.gov/ORMDI/DiversityInclusion/IWD.asp> directs employees and applicants to <https://www.access-board.gov/enforcement/>. The U.S. Access Board site instructs employees/applicants on how to file an Architectural Barriers Act Complaint.

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.

Construction and Facilities Management (CFM) is procuring a contract for I*DEA with the goal of improving accessibility at VA

facilities. Additionally, CFM plans to survey a total of 10 VA facilities beginning in early 2024. Furthermore, CFM will continue participating in the Making Advances in Mammography and Medical Options for Veterans Act meetings to help improve accessibility for spinal cord injuries and disorders and patients with disabilities for breast imaging.

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.)

The average time frame to process initial requests for RA during FY 2023 was 14 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.

The collection and analysis of RA requests via RAMS is flawed due to various functionality errors. Therefore, the data collected is not accurate.

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 practices to implement the PAS requirement were not effective because the RAMS database does not have the capability to capture PAS data.

Section VII: EEO Complaint and Findings Data

A. EEO COMPLAINT DATA INVOLVING HARASSMENT

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

Answer Yes

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

Answer Yes

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

In FY 2023, there were 10 cases where there was a finding of discrimination involving a PWD filing a harassment claim based on disability. In each case, the remedial and corrective actions ordered included: • Training for all individuals involved. • Consideration

of disciplinary action for involved management officials. • Make-whole relief for the complainant (to include compensatory damages). • Restoration of leave. • Posting a notice of the violation. • Payment of attorney fees (if represented).

B. EEO COMPLAINT DATA INVOLVING REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

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

Answer Yes

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

Answer Yes

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

In FY 2023, there were 35 cases where there was a finding of discrimination involving a failure to provide an RA. In each case, the remedial and corrective actions ordered included: • Training for all individuals involved. • Interactive Process for RA. • Consideration of disciplinary action for involved management officials. • Make-whole relief for the complainant (to include compensatory damages). • Restoration of leave. • Posting a notice of the violation. • Payment of attorney fees (if represented).

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:	Other				
Specific Workforce Data Table:	Workforce Data Table - B4				
STATEMENT OF CONDITION THAT WAS A TRIGGER FOR A POTENTIAL BARRIER: Provide a brief narrative describing the condition at issue. How was the condition recognized as a potential barrier?	The less than expected participation rate of PWD in the GS-11 to SES (9.82%) Grade level cluster, as compared to the goal of 12%. The less than expected participation rate of PWTD in the GS-11 to SES (1.73%) Grade level cluster, as compared to the goal of 2%.				
STATEMENT OF BARRIER GROUPS:	<i>Barrier Group</i> People with Disabilities People with Targeted Disabilities				
Barrier Analysis Process Completed?:	Y				
Barrier(s) Identified?:	Y				
STATEMENT OF IDENTIFIED BARRIER: Provide a succinct statement of the agency policy, procedure or practice that has been determined to be the barrier of the undesired condition.	Barrier Name		Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice		
	Recruitment and hiring of PWD/PWTD		Accessibility issues in hiring and recruitment.		
	Recruitment and hiring of PWD/PWTD		Lack of consistent recruitment efforts for PWD/PWTD.		
	Recruitment and hiring of PWD/PWTD		Hiring authorities underused or misused.		
	Recruitment and hiring of PWD/PWTD		Hiring process not inclusive for PWD/PWTD.		
	Recruitment and hiring of PWD/PWTD		Difficult job application process.		
	Disclosure and Data Issues		Inability to select more than one disability.		
	Disclosure and Data Issues		Confusion with codes on the SF-256.		
	Issues Experienced by PWD		Lack of forums and resource groups for PWD/PWTD.		
Recruitment and hiring of PWD/PWTD		Inadequate support groups, events, and education sessions for PWD/PWTD.			
Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan					
Date Initiated	Target Date	Sufficient Funding / Staffing?	Date Modified	Date Completed	Objective Description
09/30/2023	09/30/2025	Yes			Improve the workplace experiences, retention, and advancement of PWD and PWTD within VA.
09/30/2023	09/30/2025	Yes			Establish a more streamlined, efficient, and comprehensible system for providing RAs.
09/30/2023	09/30/2025	Yes			Enhance transparency and understanding regarding self-disclosure of disabilities.
09/30/2023	09/30/2025	Yes			Foster a workplace culture that is more inclusive and supportive for PWD/PWTD by implementing a centralized and robust disability program.

Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan						
Date Initiated	Target Date	Sufficient Funding / Staffing?	Date Modified	Date Completed	Objective Description	
09/30/2023	09/30/2025	Yes			Improve timeliness of Schedule A conversion and integrity of conversion data.	
09/30/2023	09/30/2025	Yes			Enhance the awareness and understanding of the RA process among both PWD/PWTD and their managers.	
09/30/2023	09/30/2025	Yes			Increase representation of PWD and PWTD throughout all stages of the hiring process resulting in a more inclusive, diverse, and equitable workplace environment.	
09/30/2023	09/30/2025	Yes			Integrate disability resources and practices across the operational framework through revamped policies, clear procedures, and comprehensive training.	
Responsible Official(s)						
Title		Name		Standards Address The Plan?		
Director, Workforce Analysis		Ryan Pugh		Yes		
Director, Office of Workplace Empowerment		Karen M. Basnight		No		
Acting Executive Director, Human Resources Information Services		Madhavi Nookala		No		
Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective						
Target Date	Planned Activities			Sufficient Staffing & Funding?	Modified Date	Completion Date
06/30/2021	Conduct a thorough investigation of relevant policies, procedures, and practices to determine the cause of the less than expected participation rates.			Yes	09/30/2023	09/30/2023
09/30/2021	Devise a plan to eliminate the identified barrier.			Yes	09/30/2023	09/30/2023
09/30/2024	Adopt and implement written policies and procedures to increase education and awareness of SF-256 and explain the benefits of and concerns with self-identification, including an explanation of how the data is used.			Yes		
09/30/2024	Launch enterprise-wide communication plans to periodically and consistently encourage employees to update their personal information.			Yes		
09/30/2024	Review the reasonable accommodation program and process to reduce silos and inconsistencies and ensure a faster and more efficient process.			Yes		
09/30/2024	Develop appropriate and effective reasonable accommodation resources to increase visibility and normalization for applicants, employees, and managers.			Yes		
09/30/2024	Include disability as part of all VA's diversity policies, directives, and activities. This includes using the words "disability" and "people with disabilities" in statements defining VA's diversity policies, programs, and training.			Yes		
09/30/2025	Designate an IPT to develop and implement a strategic, consistent, and proactive recruitment plan at the local and national level with leading practices and strategies for recruitment and hiring of PWD/PWTD.			Yes		

Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective				
Target Date	Planned Activities	Sufficient Staffing & Funding?	Modified Date	Completion Date
09/30/2025	Develop more inclusive training and resources for managers to create an awareness about hiring authorities, unconscious bias, cultural proficiency, and equal employment and publish on the Talent Management System.	Yes		
09/30/2025	Gather and disseminate hiring resources for PWD/PWTD and disabled Veterans (WRP, SkillBridge, Warriors to Workforce, VR&E apprenticeship, Warrior Training Advancement Course, etc.) on VA Careers website for easy access and utilization.	Yes		
09/30/2025	Establish recruitment goals and metrics to track progress in hiring PWD/PWTD (such as applicant flow, hiring, and retention).	Yes		
09/30/2025	Integrate disability recruitment and hiring processes into VA's general hiring and recruitment directives and instructions.	Yes		
09/30/2025	Promote and bring awareness to VA's commitment and support for PWD/PWTD via training and programs.	Yes		
09/30/2025	Promote VA's commitment and support for PWD/PWTD (see Issues Experienced by PWD/PWTD for additional detail on the recommendation).	Yes		
09/30/2025	Set up a system to automatically prompt supervisors at two years of service for Schedule A and 30% or more disabled Veteran conversion.	No		
09/30/2025	Ensure the Schedule A conversion is properly coded and dated in the HR record to capture accurate conversion rates and timeliness of conversion.	Yes		
09/30/2025	Provide documentation to Schedule A hires in their offer letter and at new employee orientation on the details and nature of their appointment so that they can self-advocate.	Yes		
09/30/2025	Improve or replace the RAMS in terms of the ease of use, quality, and performance.	Yes		
09/30/2025	Optimize the support to PWD/PWTD through a centralized/ and robust/disability program.	No		
09/30/2025	Establish mechanisms for leadership accountability by including language on disability inclusivity in SES performance plans and supporting accurate disability-focused progress reports and executive briefings on the MD-715 annual report.	Yes		
09/30/2025	Develop standardized mandatory training (including training materials for educating key internal and external stakeholders regarding non-competitive hiring authorities like Schedule A) and train all hiring managers, SPPCs, SEPM on the use of the hiring authorities that take disability into account.	Yes		
09/30/2025	Update and modify VA Handbook 5975.1 to eliminate responsibilities to non-VA staff to include applicants. Create processes and guidance for handling applicants' RA requests.	Yes		

Report of Accomplishments	
Fiscal Year	Accomplishment
2022	VA partnered with an FFRDC to conduct a barrier analysis on the less than favorable representation of PWD and PWTD in higher graded positions.
2023	VA conducted a barrier analysis on the less than favorable representation of PWD and PWTD in higher grade positions. Additionally, VA created action plan to address and eliminate the identified barriers.
2021	<p>In January 2021, VA sent out a job aid on title 5 Non-competitive hiring authorities and other appointment flexibilities. This job aid provided information to HR specialists and hiring managers about various hiring flexibilities and served as a key tool in the recruitment strategy for efficiently hiring diverse and qualified candidates into Federal government job opportunities.</p> <p>In January 2021, VA established an enterprise-wide Barrier Analysis Workgroup.</p>

Source of the Trigger:		Anecdotal				
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 results of the PWD/PWTD barrier analysis revealed that the RA process is slow and challenging to navigate, RA is not well understood by managers and employees, and RAMS is inefficient and insufficient.				
STATEMENT OF BARRIER GROUPS:		<i>Barrier Group</i> People with Disabilities People with Targeted Disabilities				
Barrier Analysis Process Completed?:		N				
Barrier(s) Identified?:		N				
STATEMENT OF IDENTIFIED BARRIER: Provide a succinct statement of the agency policy, procedure or practice that has been determined to be the barrier of the undesired condition.		Barrier Name		Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice		
		Unidentified		Further analysis is needed to determine barrier(s) causing the identified triggers.		
Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan						
Date Initiated	Target Date	Sufficient Funding / Staffing?	Date Modified	Date Completed	Objective Description	
09/30/2023	09/30/2024	Yes			Complete a barrier analysis to identify the specific policy, procedure or practice that could be causing this trigger.	
Responsible Official(s)						
Title		Name		Standards Address The Plan?		
Director, Office of Workplace Empowerment		Karen M. Basnight		Yes		
Chief of Reasonable Accommodation Services		Heather Ulesoo		Yes		
Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective						
Target Date	Planned Activities			Sufficient Staffing & Funding?	Modified Date	Completion Date
07/18/2024	Conduct a thorough investigation of relevant data, policies, procedures, and practices to identify barrier(s).			Yes		
09/25/2024	Create an action plan to eliminate identified barrier(s).			Yes		

Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective				
Target Date	Planned Activities	Sufficient Staffing & Funding?	Modified Date	Completion Date
09/30/2024	Track implementation of recommendations subsequent MD-715 reports.	Yes		
Report of Accomplishments				
Fiscal Year	Accomplishment			
2023	VA partnered with an FFRDC to conduct a barrier analysis on the RA program.			

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

NA

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

The completed activities did not eliminate barriers, but it helped to identify barriers and create an action plan.

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.

VA will begin implementing the planned activities.