

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

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

Section I: Efforts to Reach Regulatory Goals

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

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

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------|-----|
| a. Cluster GS-1 to GS-10 (PWD) | Answer | Yes |
| b. Cluster GS-11 to SES (PWD) | Answer | Yes |

Our overall total of employees who have identified as PWD is 13%. PWD participation in the GS-1 to GS-10 cluster are at 5% and below the 12% benchmark. PWD participation in the GS-11 to SES cluster are at 8% and below the 12% benchmark. Note: HR will continue our efforts to increase permanent hires of PWD/PWTDs in FY 2020 by developing a new strategic plan for the Disabilities Employment Program for all grades.

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

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

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------|-----|
| a. Cluster GS-1 to GS-10 (PWTD) | Answer | Yes |
| b. Cluster GS-11 to SES (PWTD) | Answer | Yes |

Our overall total of employees who have identified as PWTD is 3%. PWTD participation in the GS-1 to GS-10 cluster are at 1.1% and below the 2% benchmark. PWTD participation in the GS-11 to SES cluster are at 1.9% and slightly below the 2% benchmark. Note: New hires for persons with targeted disabilities increased from 0 to 1.75%. HR will continue our efforts to increase permanent hires of PWD/PWTDs in FY 2020 by developing a new strategic plan for the Disabilities Employment Program for all grades.

Grade Level Cluster(GS or Alternate Pay Planb)	Total		Reportable Disability		Targeted Disability	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Numerical Goal	--	12%				2%
Grades GS-1 to GS-10						
Grades GS-11 to SES						

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

During the pre-recruitment consultation phase of a recruitment, the HR Specialist and the hiring manager discusses hiring

flexibilities to include the use of Schedule A. The numerical goals are also communicated to hiring managers in the pre-recruitment hiring consultation for a noncompetitive hire.

Section II: Model Disability Program

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

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

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

Answer Yes

Note: RD now has a Disability Program Manager and a Reasonable Accommodation Program Manager (we did not have these positions in FY19)

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	
Processing applications from PWD and PWTD	45	0	0	Cheri Gaudinier Employee Services Cheri.Gaudinier@usda.gov
Section 508 Compliance	3	0	0	Mia Jordan Chief Information Officer
Answering questions from the public about hiring authorities that take disability into account	35	0	0	Erika Crawford Chief, Policy & Programs Erika.Crawford@usda.gov
Architectural Barriers Act Compliance	0	0	0	Sharese C. Paylor, Ed.D. Civil Rights Director
Special Emphasis Program for PWD and PWTD	0	0	0	Sharese C. Paylor, Ed.D. Civil Rights Director
Processing reasonable accommodation requests from applicants and employees	1	0	0	David Root Employee & Labor Relations

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

Answer Yes

The Disability Program Staff complies with all agency-wide civil rights and diversity training mandates. Staff members stay updated on regulations and program changes through research and/or participation in Departmental meetings, training webinars, conference calls, or special emphasis programs. In FY 2019, staff attended training that included the National Federation for the Blind Conference, the Assistive Technology Conference and the Workforce Recruitment Program Virtual Training Conference. A

new training program plan will be released in FY 2020 that provides guidance or refresher training on, but not limited to, the regulations, laws and policies that govern federal disability employment including 5 CFR 213.3102(u), Schedule A Hiring Authority, reasonable accommodations, disability etiquette, assistive technologies and the hiring official’s roles and responsibilities for hiring qualified PWDs/PWTDS.

B. PLAN TO ENSURE SUFFICIENT FUNDING FOR THE DISABILITY PROGRAM

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

Answer Yes

The Human Resources Office funds recruitment efforts related to our Disabilities program. Funding allocations received within HR are distributed to this program allowing for participation at recruitment and hiring events for filling vacant positions under authorities such as: Schedule A, 30% disabled Veterans, and others for non-competitive hiring. Funding from year to year is fluid as this depends upon Rural Development’s HR budget allocations. Reasonable accommodations are funded by the specific office in which the request originates, thus ensuring the approved request are fulfilled.

Section III: Program Deficiencies In The Disability Program

Brief Description of Program Deficiency	A.2.a.2. Reasonable accommodation procedures? [see 29 CFR § 1614.203(d)(3)]		
Objective	Rural Development will communicate the Agency's reasonable accommodation procedures to all employees.		
Target Date	Dec 1, 2019		
Completion Date	Nov 25, 2019		
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>	<u>Planned Activity</u>
	Dec 1, 2019		Rural Development will disseminate the reasonable accommodation procedures to all Agency employees and will post the reasonable accommodation procedure on its public website.
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	
	2020	Objective Completed: 11/25/2019 The Agency posted RD’s Reasonable Accommodation and Personal Assistance Services SOP for non-bargaining unit employees on the RD website on October 2, 2019. Reasonable accommodation SOP uploaded to HR’s SharePoint site, Employee/Labor Relations, for all employee access on October 8, 2019. Sent Newsbox message on November 25, 2019 to workforce introducing Reasonable Accommodation SOP applicable to non-bargaining unit employees only. After labor relations obligations are completed, the SOP will be disseminated to bargaining unit employees too.	

Brief Description of Program Deficiency	C.2.a.6. Do the agency's training materials on its anti-harassment policy include examples of disability-based harassment? [see 29 CFR §1614.203(d)(2)]		
Objective	The agency's training materials on the anti-harassment policy will include examples of disability-based harassment.		
Target Date	Jun 30, 2020		
Completion Date	Feb 3, 2020		
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>	<u>Planned Activity</u>
	Jun 30, 2020		Rural Development will establish a training module for the anti-harassment policy, to include examples of disability-based harassment.
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	
	2020	Objective Completed: 2/3/2020. Mandatory EEO curriculum, to include the topic of disability-based harassment, was assigned to all RD supervisors, managers and management officials for completion no later than 6/30/2020.	

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	Rural Development will ensure its reasonable accommodation policy and procedures specifically identify the processing timeframes to respond to all requests. However, for FY 2019, RD had a timeliness rate of 89% for all requests processed during the year.		
Target Date	Sep 30, 2019		
Completion Date	Oct 1, 2019		
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>	<u>Planned Activity</u>
	Sep 30, 2019		Rural Development will ensure its reasonable accommodation policy and procedures specifically identify the processing timeframes to respond to all requests.
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	
	2020	Objective Completed: 10/1/2019. Rural Development's Reasonable Accommodation Process and Procedures identify the processing timeframes to respond to requests. Reasonable Accommodations (RA) requests are now processed/tracked by the Employee Relations (ER) team, RD-wide. Previously, responsibilities were split between State Human Resources practitioners, and National Office (St. Louis, MO and Washington, DC) ER Specialists. A Reasonable Accommodations program manager was hired in October 2019, to perform exclusively RA responsibilities, which will expedite processing of RA cases. ER staff developed and disseminated a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Agency-wide, containing processing timelines and responsibilities for Agency management, employees, and applicants. ER staff is presenting mandatory RA training for supervisors/managers.	

Brief Description of Program Deficiency	C.3.b.6. Provide disability accommodations when such accommodations do not cause an undue hardship? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(a)(8)]		
Objective	Rural Development will require rating officials to evaluate the performance of managers and supervisors based on their efforts to provide disability accommodations when such accommodations do not cause an undue hardship.		
Target Date	Nov 1, 2019		
Completion Date	Nov 1, 2019		
Planned Activities	<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>	<u>Planned Activity</u>
	Nov 1, 2019	November 1, 2019	All RD manager and supervisors performance elements will be updated to include rating standards for their efforts to provide disability accommodations when those accommodations do not cause an undue hardship.
Accomplishments	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	
	2019	All RD manager and supervisor responses to requests for disability accommodations are monitored and evaluated by the RD HR and CR offices.	

Section IV: Plan to Recruit and Hire Individuals with Disabilities

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

A. PLAN TO IDENTIFY JOB APPLICATIONS WITH DISABILITIES

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

In FY 2019, Rural Development attended 27 events designed to introduce the USDA workforce to PWDs/PWTDDs students and veterans. These events included the Scott Air Force Base Transition Assistance Programs, Career and Networking Events, CSUN Assistive Technology Conference, National Federation for the Blind Conference, and Student Job Fairs. Rural Development’s participation in the events provided opportunity for introducing the agency and raising awareness about potential job opportunities for qualified candidates. Approximately thirteen hundred seventy-seven participants attended the event. In FY 2019, Rural Development attended the CSUN Assistive Technology Conference. Contingent on funding availability Rural Development will attend the following events in FY 2020 targeting PWD/PWTDDs to market career opportunities: National Federation for the Blind, American Sign Language Expo and Little People of America. In addition, RD HR plans to utilize the Workforce Recruitment Program to connect with more professionals and students with disabilities.

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

Under the Agency’s Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program, RD utilizes the Veteran Recruitment Act, Veteran Employment Opportunity Act, Schedule A, to recruit veterans with disabilities and other individuals with disabilities.

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.

Candidates must self-identify as having a disability. RD requires medical documentation of the disability as required by OPM and the hiring authority. Applicants eligible for non-competitive authorities that have a disability are considered when being referred to the selecting official on noncompetitive certificates under such authorities when qualified.

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

During the recruitment consultation with hiring managers, their servicing Human Resources Specialist provides multiple hiring options, to include the option of using Schedule A as a hiring authority. In FY 2019, HR provided hiring managers with the “Manager Advantage” training resource which provides guidance for using the Schedule A Hiring Authority in addition to other federal authoritative topical guidance.

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.

When hiring Rural Development provides links in job announcements containing information for PWD/PWTD applicants and contact information allowing applicants to reach out to the agency for assistance during the hiring process. Included are information and instruction about the agency EEO and Reasonable Accommodations policies. Rural Development has an extensive outreach program to reach disabled veterans disability affinity groups to advertise employment opportunities at the Department of Agriculture, also. In FY 2019 Rural Development attended several events designed to bring individuals, students and veterans with disabilities into the USDA workforce. These events included the Southwestern Illinois College Job Fair, the Scott Air Force Base Transition Assistance Program, National Federation for the Blind Annual Conference, CSUN Assistive Technology Conference and Hiring or Heroes Career Program. Through these efforts we contacted more than 6377 participants for raising awareness about opportunities in USDA Rural Development for qualified applicants. The newly assigned, permanent Disability Employment Program manager has identified an FY 2020 recruitment strategy for sustaining relationships with organizations such as the Gallaudet University in Washington D.C. and the Department of Labor’s Vocational Rehabilitation. Of the 291 new hires, 22 were Supervisory/Management/Team Lead (1 PTWD, 2 PWD, 19 None/Not ID’d) 267 were not in supervisory positions (3 PWTD, 25 PWD, 239 None/Not ID’d) HR will continue our efforts to increase permanent hires of PWD/PWTDs in FY 2020 by developing a new strategic plan for the Disabilities Employment Program.

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 Yes

For FY 2019 we had 291 new hires (259 none/non-identified, 27 PWD and 5 PWTD), 9.27% PWD and 1.72% PWTD. New hires for persons with targeted disabilities increased from 0 to 1.72%. Of the 291 new hires, 32 were higher grades (GS-13 – SES) included; 2 SES (1 PWTD, 1 None), 12 GS-15’s (1 PWTD, 11 None), 4 GS-14’s (4 None), 14 GS-13’s (2 PWD, 12 None). Of the 291 new hires, 22 were Supervisory/Management/Team Lead (1 PTWD, 2 PWD, 19 None/Not ID’d). 267 were not in supervisory positions (3 PWTD, 25 PWD, 239 None/Not ID’d). HR will continue our efforts to increase permanent hires of PWD/PWTDs in FY 2020 by developing a new strategic plan for the Disabilities Employment Program.

New Hires	Total (#)	Reportable Disability		Targeted Disability	
		Permanent Workforce (%)	Temporary Workforce (%)	Permanent Workforce (%)	Temporary Workforce (%)
% of Total Applicants	0				
% of Qualified Applicants	0				

% of New Hires	0				
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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 N/A
- b. New Hires for MCO (PWTD) Answer N/A

This information is unknown. In FY 2019, Rural Development began recruitment and outreach efforts targeting PWD and PWTDs in mission critical occupations (MCOs). In addition, the agency was under a hiring freeze and impacted by Federal Government furlough during the first and second quarters of FY 2019. In FY 2020, Rural Development will implement a strategic outreach plan to broaden the awareness of agency career opportunities in effort to increase the representation of PWD/PWTD new hires in MCOs. Note: Due to the system migration from E-Recruit to USA Staffing in FY 2019, all applicant flow data was not accessible. Therefore, the information that follows only provides the number of MCO new hires for FY 2019: MCO 0201 (Human Resources Management) two (2) new hires of which there is one (1) PWD representing 0.003% of new hires with reportable disabilities and 0% with targetable disabilities; MCO 0301 (Miscellaneous Administration and Program) seventeen (17) new hires of which there is one (1) PWD and one (1) PWTD representing 0.003% of new hires with reportable disabilities and 0.003% with targetable disabilities; MCO 0343 (Management and Program Analysis) thirteen (13) new hires of which there is one (1) PWTD representing 0% of new hires with reportable disabilities and 0.003% with targetable disabilities; MCO 0501 (Financial Administration and Program) two (2) new hires of which there are no PWD or PWTD representing 0% of new hires with reportable and/or targetable disabilities; MCO 0510 (Accounting) one (1) new hire of which there is no PWD or PWTD representing 0% of new hires with reportable and/or targetable disabilities; MCO 0560 (Budget Analysis) two (2) new hires of which there are no PWD or PWTD representing 0% of new hires with reportable and/or targetable disabilities; MCO 1101 (General Business and Industry) one-hundred eleven (111) new hires of which there are eleven (11) PWD representing 0.03% of new hires with reportable disabilities and 0% with targetable disabilities; MCO 1165 (Loan Specialist) forty-one (41) new hires of which there are eight (8) PWD and one (1) PWTD representing 0.02% of new hires with reportable disabilities and 0.003% with targetable disabilities; and MCO 2210 (Information Technology Management) eleven (11) new hires of which there is one (1) PWD and one (1) PWTD representing 0.003% of new hires with reportable disabilities and 0.003% with targetable disabilities. Rural Development can’t effectively measure new hire PWD and PWTD without access to single source applicant data. Working with administrator rights and permission in USA Staffing to access applicant data for FY 2020. We do not have the applicant pool information. Therefore, we do not have a benchmark and cannot effectively answer this question. We will work to capture that data in FY20.

New Hires to Mission-Critical Occupations	Total (#)	Reportable Disability		Targetable Disability	
		Qualified Applicants (%)	New Hires (%)	Qualified Applicants (%)	New Hires (%)
Numerical Goal	--	12%		2%	

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 N/A
- b. Qualified Applicants for MCO (PWTD) Answer N/A

N/A

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 N/A

b. Promotions for MCO (PWTD)

Answer N/A

This information is unknown. RD has identified our MCOs and uses the EEOC base of 12% and 2% as triggers for the 9 identified mission critical occupations. In FY 2020 RD will continue to utilization of detail opportunity notices, reassignment opportunity notices, developmental assignments and career ladder position development where internal PWD/PWTD employees have opportunity to apply, supporting upward mobility. RD will establish a process to raise awareness of the Agency’s commitment to employee PWD/PWTD’s.

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.

RD advertised numerous career opportunities at the entry level with career ladders where employees would receive training and be developed on the job to grow into the knowledge required for the full performance level. The agency also utilized the VRA which supported training agreement programs to allow for advancement to higher levels upon completion of provided training. Individual Development Plans were used and supported by management to identify training needs and to determine the resources to meet those needs. RD offers career development opportunities during the job announcement process in which new applicants or current employees can apply for jobs allowing for PWD and PWTD an opportunity for career advancement. RD also fully encourages all employees to actively take advantage of the numerous training opportunities offered through the Department’s AgLearn continuing education platform. PWD and PWTD employees can use the 508 Compliant system to secure the training on or offsite as a tool and guide that offers easy step by step instructions to help prepare employee for developing resumes and interview techniques for securing positions with career development opportunities. The following training through USDA’s web-based AgLearn was encouraged among employees with disabilities: Perfectly Able: How to Attract and Hire Talented People with Disabilities • Americans With Disabilities Act Video • Hidden Talent: How Leading Companies Hire, Retain, and Benefit from People with Disabilities.

B. CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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

RD has no career development programs as defined in the instructions to MD-715. While RD does not have career development programs that, upon completion, necessarily “qualify a participant for a promotion,” all RD employees are required to complete an Individual Development Plan (IDP). The IDP identifies specific training and other developmental opportunities for the employee based on where they are in their career and skills needed to successfully perform the duties of their position. Employees and Supervisors are also afforded the opportunity for upskilling through use of procured learning platforms such as the LinkedIn Learning Video Course Library, the Manager Advantage Portal Toolkit for supervisors, the Lead Now Leadership Program and the Rosetta Stone Language Series all of which are access through the AgLearn learning management system. When available, RD advertised career opportunities at the entry level with career ladders where employees would receive training and be developed on the job to grow into the knowledge required for the full performance level. The agency also utilized the VRA which supported training agreement programs to allow for advancement to higher levels upon completion of provided training. In FY 2020 Rural Development will continue utilization of detail opportunity notices, reassignment opportunity notices, developmental assignments and career ladder position development where PWD/PWTD employees have the opportunity to apply, supporting their upward mobility. Reports and tracking are being put in place to add clarity to reporting requirements. RD is planning to start their own mentoring program in FY20.

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 (%)
Internship Programs	21			14		0.04
Coaching Programs	8	6				
Other Career Development Programs	N/A					
Fellowship Programs	7		not id		not id	
Training Programs	N/A					
Mentoring Programs	68	60	inform	inform		
Detail Programs	9	4				

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

- a. Applicants (PWD) Answer No
- b. Selections (PWD) Answer No

Note: In FY 2020, Rural Development will benchmark best practices of other agencies with PWD career development programs in an effort to create such opportunities within this agency. In FY 2020, Rural Development will develop a method to capture the disability status of applicant/selectees participating in career development opportunities. This will allow us to more readily identify if triggers exist.

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

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

Note: In FY 2020, Rural Development will benchmark best practices of other agencies with PWD career development programs in an effort to create such opportunities within this agency. In FY 2020, Rural Development will develop a method to capture the disability status of applicant/selectees participating in career development opportunities. This will allow us to more readily identify if triggers exist.

C. AWARDS

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

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

Time-off awards for 1-9 hours total three-hundred twenty-two (322) with 13.35% having reportable disability, 82.92% without reportable disability, 3.42% with targeted disability, and 9.93% without targeted disability. Time-off awards for 9 hours plus total five-hundred eighty-nine (589) with 12.90% having reportable disability, 83.02% without reportable disability, 3.42% with targeted disability, and 10.35% without targeted disability. Cash awards for \$100-\$500 total six-hundred seventy-four (674) with 12.46%

having reportable disability, 84.57% without reportable disability, 2.52% with targeted disability, and 9.94% without targeted disability. Cash awards for \$500 plus total two-thousand five-hundred fifty-five (2555) with 12.60% having reportable disability, 84.97% without reportable disability, 2.94% with targeted disability, and 9.66% without targeted disability.

Time-Off Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Cash Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %

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

- a. Pay Increases (PWD) Answer No
- b. Pay Increases (PWTD) Answer No

Quality Step Increases total ninety-nine (99) with 14.14% having reportable disability, 82.83% without reportable disability, 3.03% with targeted disability, and 11.11% without targeted disability.

Other Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Performance Based Pay Increase	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 No
- b. Other Types of Recognition (PWTD) Answer No

D. PROMOTIONS

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

- a. SES
 - i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Answer N/A
 - ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Answer N/A
- 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

Overall 718 promotions (619 perm/99 temp) GS-15=6 perm/12 temp, GS-14=25 perm/38 temp, GS-13=95 perm/29 temp, the rest are GS-12 and below PWD: 51 (45 perm/6 temp) GS-15=0, GS-14=6, GS-13=11, the rest are GS-12 and below Triggers exist among PWD for internal selections among the GS-13, GS-14 and GS-15 grade levels. Selection rates were below the 12% benchmark. In FY 20, Rural Development will continue utilization of detail opportunity notices, reassignment opportunity notices, developmental assignments and career ladder position development where PWD/PWTD employees have the opportunity to apply, supporting their upward mobility.

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 N/A
- ii. Internal Selections (PWTD) Answer N/A

b. Grade GS-15

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

c. Grade GS-14

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

d. Grade GS-13

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

Overall 718 promotions (619 perm/99 temp) GS-15=6 perm/12 temp, GS-14=25 perm/38 temp, GS-13=95 perm/29 temp, the rest are GS-12 and below PWTD: 12 (11 perm/1 temp) GS-15=0, GS-14=1, GS-13=1, the rest are GS-12 and below Triggers exist among PWTD for internal selections among the GS-13, GS-14 and GS-15 grade levels. Selection rates were below the 12% benchmark. In FY 20, Rural Development will continue utilization of detail opportunity notices, reassignment opportunity notices, developmental assignments and career ladder position development where PWD/PWTD employees have the opportunity to apply, supporting their upward mobility.

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 N/A
- b. New Hires to GS-15 (PWD) Answer N/A

- c. New Hires to GS-14 (PWD) Answer N/A
- d. New Hires to GS-13 (PWD) Answer N/A

Currently, RD does not collect applicant flow data for new hires where the number of qualified applicants is identified. In FY20 we will continue to work with OPM and gaining access to applicant data in USA Staffing. In FY19, we used a combination of eRecruit and USA Staffing. Of the 291 new hires, 32 were higher grades (GS-13 – SES) included; 2 SES (1 PWTD, 1 None), 12 GS-15’s (1 PWTD, 11 None), 4 GS-14’s (4 None), 14 GS-13’s (2 PWD, 12 None).

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 N/A
- b. New Hires to GS-15 (PWTD) Answer N/A
- c. New Hires to GS-14 (PWTD) Answer N/A
- d. New Hires to GS-13 (PWTD) Answer N/A

Currently, RD does not collect applicant flow data for new hires where the number of qualified applicants is identified. Only the total number of applications received, and the total number of hires are recorded/collected. In FY20 we will continue to work with OPM and gaining access to applicant data in USA Staffing.

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 N/A
 - ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Answer N/A
- b. Managers
 - i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Answer N/A
 - ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Answer N/A
- c. Supervisors
 - i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Answer N/A
 - ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Answer N/A

Further analysis is required to determine if a trigger existed. We try to meet the EEOC baseline of 12% and 2%. In FY20, we will work with OPM on accessing applicant data in USA Staffing or hired utilizing other recruitment flexibilities. Also in FY20, hiring a data analytics person to capture this type of data.

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 N/A
 - ii. Internal Selections (PWTD) Answer N/A
- b. Managers
 - i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD) Answer N/A
 - ii. Internal Selections (PWTD) Answer N/A
- c. Supervisors
 - i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD) Answer N/A
 - ii. Internal Selections (PWTD) Answer N/A

Further analysis is required to determine if a trigger existed. We try to meet the EEOC baseline of 12% and 2%. In FY20, we will work with OPM on accessing applicant data in USA Staffing or hired utilizing other recruitment flexibilities. Also, in FY20, hiring a data analytics person to capture this type of data.

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 N/A
 - b. New Hires for Managers (PWD) Answer N/A
 - c. New Hires for Supervisors (PWD) Answer N/A

Of the 291 new hires, 22 were supervisory/managerial/team lead (1 PWTD, 2 PWD, 19 none/not ID'd) Currently, RD does not collect applicant flow data for new hires where the number of qualified applicants is identified. Only the total number of applications received, and the total number of hires are recorded/collected. We try to meet the EEOC baseline of 12% and 2%. In FY20, we will work with OPM on accessing applicant data in USA Staffing or hired utilizing other recruitment flexibilities. Also, in FY20, hiring a data analytics person to capture this type of data.

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 N/A
 - b. New Hires for Managers (PWTD) Answer N/A
 - c. New Hires for Supervisors (PWTD) Answer N/A

Of the 291 new hires, 22 were supervisory/managerial/team lead (1 PWTD, 2 PWD, 19 none/not ID'd) Currently, RD does not collect applicant flow data for new hires where the number of qualified applicants is identified. Only the total number of applications received, and the total number of hires are recorded/collected. We try to meet the EEOC baseline of 12% and 2%. In FY20, we will work with OPM on accessing applicant data in USA Staffing or hired utilizing other recruitment flexibilities. Also, in FY20, hiring a data analytics person to capture this type of data.

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 N/A

No employees had conversion dates that occurred during the reporting cycle. Rural Development can monitor the process of converting Schedule A and VRA employees and can provide a quarterly report to RD’s decision-makers. The agency has also established a nationwide, electronic, and anonymous Exit Survey for departing employees. The survey data can be monitored to evaluate for barriers and triggers that may need to be addressed.

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 No

b. Involuntary Separations (PWD) Answer No

The permanent workforce totaled four-thousand two-hundred sixty-two (4262) employees with 13.33% having reportable disability and 83.53% without reportable disability. Separations total four-hundred thirty (430) with 16.05% having reportable disability and 80.00% without reportable disability. Among the total separations, four-hundred twenty-seven (427) were voluntary with 15.93% having reportable disability and 80.09% without reportable disability; and three (3) were involuntary with 33.33% having reportable disability and 66.67% without reportable disability.

Seperations	Total #	Reportable Disabilities %	Without Reportable Disabilities %
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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 No

b. Involuntary Separations (PWTD) Answer No

The permanent workforce totaled four-thousand two-hundred sixty-two (4262) employees with 3.28% having reportable targeted disability and 10.02% without reportable targeted disability. Separations total four-hundred thirty (430) with 4.88% having reportable targeted disability and 11.17% without reportable targeted disability. Among the total separations, four-hundred twenty-seven (427) were voluntary with 4.92% having reportable targeted disability and 11.01% without reportable targeted disability; and three (3) were involuntary with 0.0% having reportable targeted disability and 33.33% without reportable targeted disability.

Seperations	Total #	Targeted Disabilities %	Without Targeted Disabilities %
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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.

Not applicable

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.rd.usda.gov/related-links/accessibility-statement>

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.rd.usda.gov/> (Architectural Barriers Act) is located in the footer of RD’s public website.

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.

Public Access Assistive Technology is available to USDA agencies and offices to ensure that members of the public, customers, and USDA employees with disabilities have access to direct onsite services from USDA.

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.)

Eighty-nine percent of reasonable accommodations were processed timely. Eleven out of eighty-nine cases were untimely. Some were delayed due to the government furlough and pending medical documentation.

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.

Request for Reasonable Accommodation (RA) are generally processed in a timely manner. Eighty-nine percent of all accommodation request were processed timely; eleven out of eighty-nine cases were untimely due to the government furlough and/or pending medical documentation. Other effective program practices included creating and presenting six (6) interactive supervisory and managerial training conferences (face-to-face and online) on RA; the selection of a delegated RA/Personal Assistance and Services (PAS) Program Manager was announced and publicized agency-wide; to ensure compliance with the Rehabilitation Act, Agency management directed a review of RA requests agency-wide; reviewed trends to determine processing timeframes, bottlenecks, and resolution; maintained open lines of communication with Civil Rights Program Managers to resolve issues negatively impacting the RA Program before they became complaints; Collaboratively and proactively developed strategic resolutions, including regularly briefing senior leadership regarding negative trends, developing program training content, securing training funding, and providing joint training; and disseminated Section 508 compliant RA/PAS Standard Operating Procedures agency-wide in multiple easily accessible locations (Human Resources and Civil Rights SharePoint sites, and News boxes).

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.

During FY 2019, there were no PAS request. Other effective program practices included creating and presenting six (6) interactive supervisory and managerial training conferences (face-to-face and online) on RA; the selection of a delegated RA/Personal Assistance and Services (PAS) Program Manager was announced and publicized agency-wide; to ensure compliance with the Rehabilitation Act, Agency management directed a review of RA requests agency-wide; reviewed trends to determine processing timeframes, bottlenecks, and resolution; maintained open lines of communication with Civil Rights Program Managers to resolve issues negatively impacting the RA Program before they became complaints; Collaboratively and proactively developed strategic resolutions, including regularly briefing senior leadership regarding negative trends, developing program training content, securing training funding, and providing joint training; and disseminated Section 508 compliant RA/PAS Standard Operating Procedures agency-wide in multiple easily accessible locations (Human Resources and Civil Rights SharePoint sites, and News boxes).

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 No

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

Not applicable

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.

Not applicable

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

<p>STATEMENT OF CONDITION THAT WAS A TRIGGER FOR A POTENTIAL BARRIER:</p> <p>Provide a brief narrative describing the condition at issue.</p> <p>How was the condition recognized as a potential barrier?</p>	<p>Using the relevant applicant pool, the PWDs among employees promoted to any MCO are below the 12% benchmark and the PWTDs among employees promoted to any MCO are below the 2% benchmark.</p>
<p>STATEMENT OF BARRIER GROUPS:</p>	<p><i>Barrier Group</i></p> <p>People with Disabilities</p> <p>People with Targeted Disabilities</p>

<p>STATEMENT OF CONDITION THAT WAS A TRIGGER FOR A POTENTIAL BARRIER:</p> <p>Provide a brief narrative describing the condition at issue.</p> <p>How was the condition recognized as a potential barrier?</p>	<p>PWD new hires among the permanent workforce mission are below the 12% benchmark and PWTDs new hires among the permanent workforce are below the 2% benchmark.</p>
<p>STATEMENT OF BARRIER GROUPS:</p>	<p><i>Barrier Group</i></p> <p>People with Disabilities</p> <p>People with Targeted Disabilities</p>

<p>STATEMENT OF CONDITION THAT WAS A TRIGGER FOR A POTENTIAL BARRIER:</p> <p>Provide a brief narrative describing the condition at issue.</p> <p>How was the condition recognized as a potential barrier?</p>	<p>Unable to determine if triggers exist for PWD/PWTDs in any of the career development program due to lack of data.</p>
<p>STATEMENT OF BARRIER GROUPS:</p>	<p><i>Barrier Group</i></p> <p>People with Disabilities</p> <p>People with Targeted Disabilities</p>

<p>STATEMENT OF CONDITION THAT WAS A TRIGGER FOR A POTENTIAL BARRIER:</p> <p>Provide a brief narrative describing the condition at issue.</p> <p>How was the condition recognized as a potential barrier?</p>	<p>Triggers exist among PWD for internal selections among the GS-13 and GS-15 grade levels. Selection rates were below the 12% benchmark. Triggers exist among PWTD for internal selections for the GS-13 and GS-14 grade levels. Selection rates were below the 2% benchmark.</p>
<p>STATEMENT OF BARRIER GROUPS:</p>	<p><i>Barrier Group</i></p> <p>People with Disabilities</p> <p>People with Targeted Disabilities</p>

<p>STATEMENT OF CONDITION THAT WAS A TRIGGER FOR A POTENTIAL BARRIER:</p> <p>Provide a brief narrative describing the condition at issue.</p> <p>How was the condition recognized as a potential barrier?</p>	<p>PWD new hires for mission critical occupations are below the 12% benchmark and PWTDs new hires for mission critical occupations are below the 2% benchmark.</p>
<p>STATEMENT OF BARRIER GROUPS:</p>	<p><i>Barrier Group</i></p> <p>People with Disabilities</p> <p>People with Targeted Disabilities</p>

<p>BARRIER ANALYSIS:</p> <p>Provide a description of the steps taken and data analyzed to determine cause of the condition.</p>	
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<p>STATEMENT OF IDENTIFIED BARRIER:</p> <p>Provide a succinct statement of the agency policy, procedure or practice that has been determined to be the barrier of the undesired condition.</p>	<p>Using the relevant applicant pool, the PWDs for qualified internal applicants are below the 12% benchmark and the PWTDs for qualified internal applicants are below the 2% benchmark.</p>
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Objective

Responsible Officials

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Staffing & Funding (Yes or No)	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
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Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
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<p>STATEMENT OF CONDITION THAT WAS A TRIGGER FOR A POTENTIAL BARRIER:</p> <p>Provide a brief narrative describing the condition at issue.</p> <p>How was the condition recognized as a potential barrier?</p>	<p>Analysis revealed that the following has contributed to the underrepresentation of persons with targeted disabilities: 1. RD was under a hiring freeze and impacted by the Federal Government furlough during the 1st and 2nd quarters of FY 19. 2. For three-quarters of FY19, RD did not have a designated staff member to serve as the Disability Program Manager for focus on the recruitment and hiring of PWDs/PWTDs. 3. Recruitment efforts were not tracked and analyzed throughout RD.</p>
<p>STATEMENT OF BARRIER GROUPS:</p>	<p><i>Barrier Group</i></p> <p>People with Disabilities</p> <p>People with Targeted Disabilities</p>

<p>STATEMENT OF CONDITION THAT WAS A TRIGGER FOR A POTENTIAL BARRIER:</p> <p>Provide a brief narrative describing the condition at issue.</p> <p>How was the condition recognized as a potential barrier?</p>	<p>PWD new hires among the permanent workforce mission are below the 12% benchmark and PWTDs new hires among the permanent workforce are below the 2% benchmark.</p>
<p>STATEMENT OF BARRIER GROUPS:</p>	<p><i>Barrier Group</i></p> <p>People with Disabilities</p> <p>People with Targeted Disabilities</p>

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

Rural Development was under a hiring freeze and impacted by Federal Government furlough during the 1st and 2nd quarters of FY 2019. We also change our recruiting database and processes from eRecruit to USA Staffing in April 2019 and worked multiple agency-wide reorganizations.

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

Rural Development activities for providing training and conducting outreach aided the agency in raising awareness about the importance of hiring individuals with disabilities, the availability of special hiring authorities and other resources for providing employee opportunities for PWDs.

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.

Rural Development has a permanent Disability Employment Program Manager and will focus efforts for executing a strategic plan that encompasses training, career development, outreach, recruitment and retention for PWDs.