



# **Fiscal Year 2019 Management Directive 715 Annual Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program**

*Report created by:  
USDA/FPAC  
Civil Rights / EEO Division  
1400 Independence Ave. SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250  
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***USDA NRCS is an Equal Opportunity Provider, Employer, and Lender.***

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**MD-715**

**Parts A Through D**

**Part A - Department or Agency Identifying Information**

Agency	Second Level Component	Address	City	State	Zip Code (xxxxx)	Agency Code (xxxx)	FIPS Code (xxxx)
USDA	NRCS	1400 Independence Avenue, SW	Washington	D.C.	20250	AG16	11001

**Part B - Total Employment**

Total Employment	Permanent Workforce	Temporary Workforce	Total Workforce
Number of Employees	9,077	53	9,130

**Part C.1 - Head of Agency and Head of Agency Designee**

Agency Leadership	Name	Title
Head of Agency	Sonny Purdue	Secretary of Agriculture
Agency Designee	Matthew Lohr	Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service

**Part C.2 - Agency Official(s) Responsible for Oversight of EEO Program(s)**

Agency Leadership	Name	Title
Principal EEO Director/Official	Emily Su	Director, Office of Civil Rights
Chief Human Resources Officer	Melissa Drummond	Director, Office of Human Resources
Diversity and Inclusion Officer	Dr. Sherry Dixon	Branch Chief, Workforce Management and Strategy

EEO Program Staff	Name	Title	Occupational Series (xxxx)	Pay Plan and Grade (xx-xx)	Phone Number (xxx-xxx-xxxx)	Email Address
Principal EEO Director/Official	Emily Su	Director	0260	SES	202-401-1919	Emily.Su@usda.gov

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Special Placement Program Coordinator (Individuals with Disabilities)	Michelle Jordan	NDEPM NDEPM	0201	GS/13	202-401-0019	Michelle.Jordan@usda.gov
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Anti-Harassment Program Manager	Emily Su / Noreen Joice	Director, CREEOD, FPAC-BC / Chief, Employee/Labor Relations Section	0260 0201	SES GS-14	202-401-1919 816-823-3144	Emily.Su@usda.gov Noreen.Joice@usda.gov
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## Part D.1 – List of Subordinate Components Covered in this Report

Please identify the subordinate components within the agency (e.g., bureaus, regions, etc.).

☒ If the agency does not have any subordinate components, please check the box.

Subordinate Component	City	State	Country (Optional)	Agency Code (xxxx)	FIPS Codes (xxxxx)
Not Applicable					

## Part D.2 – Mandatory and Optional Documents for this Report

In the table below, the agency must submit these documents with its MD-715 report.

Did the agency submit the following mandatory documents?	Please respond Yes or No	Comments
Organizational Chart	Yes	
EEO Policy Statement	Yes	
Strategic Plan	Yes	
Anti-Harassment Policy and Procedures	Yes	
Reasonable Accommodation Procedures	Yes	
Personal Assistance Services Procedures	Yes	
Alternative Dispute Resolution Procedures	Yes	

In the table below, the agency may decide whether to submit these documents with its MD-715 report.

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<b>Did the agency submit the following optional documents?</b>	<b>Please respond Yes or No</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP) Report	No	
Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP) Report	No	
Operational Plan for Increasing Employment of Individuals with Disabilities under Executive Order 13548	No	
Diversity and Inclusion Plan under Executive Order 13583	No	
Diversity Policy Statement	No	
Human Capital Strategic Plan	No	
EEO Strategic Plan	No	
Results from most recent Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey or Annual Employee Survey	Yes	

**Reasonable Accommodation Procedures:**

NRCS submitted to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) its revised Reasonable Accommodation policy and procedures, including Personal Assistance Services (PAS) procedures pursuant to 29 C.F.R. 1614.203(d) (5) (v) on February 20, 2018. The package was reviewed by the EEOC and returned to NRCS on July 23, 2018 with a recommendation that NRCS revise its reasonable accommodation procedures to include specific EEOC feedback. The revised document was accepted by the EEOC on November 11, 2018.

## Part E – Executive Summary

### **Part E.1 - Executive Summary: Mission**

**Mission:** *‘Helping People Help the Land’ – The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) improves the health of our Nation’s natural resources while sustaining and enhancing the productivity of American agriculture. We achieve this by providing voluntary assistance through strong partnerships with private landowners, managers, and communities to conserve, protect, restore, and enhance the lands and waters upon which people and the environment depend.*

The Agency’s mission is to improve the health of our Nation’s natural resources while sustaining and enhancing the productivity of American agriculture. NRCS provides voluntary assistance through strong partnerships with private landowners, managers and communities to protect, restore and enhance the lands and waters upon which people and the environment depend.

NRCS employed a total of 9,130 employees (9,077 permanent; 53 temporary) throughout its headquarters in Washington, D.C., and four (4) Regional Offices which include the fifty (50) States, the Virgin Islands and the Pacific Basin during FY2019. The Agency’s mission is to improve the health of our Nation’s natural resources while sustaining and enhancing the productivity of American agriculture. NRCS provides voluntary assistance through strong partnerships with private landowners, managers and communities to protect, restore, and enhance the lands and waters upon which people and the environment depend.

The Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) Mission Area leadership in coordination with the Secretary has been working to establish the Business Center (BC), which will be responsible for three Mission Agencies’ (the Farm Service Agency (FSA), the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the Risk Management Agency (RMA)), mission and administrative functions which include: *civil rights and equal opportunity activities*, human resources, financial management, budgeting, information technology, acquisitions/procurement, customer experience, internal controls, risk management, strategic and annual planning. Locating the BC within the Immediate Office of the Under Secretary ensures that systems, policies, procedures, and practices are developed that provide a consistent enterprise-wide view that encompasses FSA, NRCS, and RMA and the services they require from those functions to effectively and efficiently deliver programs to FPAC internal and external customers.

NRCS has new opportunities to improve its own mission delivery as well as collaborate with the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and the Risk Management Agency (RMA) in the newly re-organized Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) mission-area. One of FPAC’s main objectives is to deliver the best customer service in government, as the USDA places greater emphasis on the experience of customers.

### **A Customer and Producer-Centric Future**

To begin identifying challenges and opportunities to improve the customer experience at NRCS, the National Leadership team held a strategy session in Nashville, Tennessee in January 2018. Agency leaders met to continue the momentum and plan a more producer-centric future for NRCS’ long-term vision, mission, programs, and systems. The current mission and vision statements were developed in the mid- 2000s and our world has changed considerably since then. A work group has been formed to develop Mission and Vision statements that will help us to see clearly and move strategically into the next decade. The actual and proposed outcomes and products include:

- New Mission and Vision statements.
- New Strategic and Business plans
- A Customer-centric long-term mission
- A Producer-centric future for NRCS programs

## **Part E.2 - Essential Element A - F**

### **Essential Element A - Demonstrated Commitment from Agency Leadership**

The Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) Business Center's (BC) Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity Division (CREEOD) is organizationally aligned to the Chief Operating Officer (COO) and Secretary, Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC). The BC CREEOD provides mission-wide support for full service civil rights and EEO delivery; develops and updates Civil Rights and EEO related policies and procedures for federal and county employees; performs internal and external civil rights and EEO reviews to ensure quality, compliant, and streamlined practices; collaborates and works with the appropriate organizations to assist in resolution of customer requests.

The BC Office of the COO and Secretary CCC provide staffing and resources to operate the CREEOD in an effective manner. In addition to the subject matter personnel allocation for Civil Rights (CR) and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) programs, the COO maintains adequate staff and resources to conduct and implement CR/EEO policy initiatives which includes FTEs to stand up and reinforce the Disability Emphasis Program, the Anti-Harassment Program, as well as the Reasonable Accommodation/Personal Assistance Services Program which processes all reasonable accommodation requests. All organizational units have allocated resources for such requests.

CREEOD's Compliance and Training Branch serves as the focal point for all Civil Rights and related training both mandatory and external. The Training Section delivers and facilitates mandatory Civil Rights and EEO training to the mission area Agencies including, but not limited to, Employee Engagement Training and Soft Skills Training through in-person, hardcopy, web-based, and technology-based delivery methods. In addition to mandatory trainings, the section is responsible for conducting targeted trainings in response to surveys, consultations and requests through assessment, development, and implementation activities. The targeted training sessions are geared specifically to CR / EEO and related subject matter topics. In addition, the Employee Development Section (EDS) offers Civil Rights in Program Compliance, a 1-week course to enable FPAC / NRCS personnel to integrate civil rights compliance responsibilities with Farm Bill program delivery.

Civil Rights and EEO policies are prominently posted in all personnel offices, employee bulletin boards, and on the main USDA Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights' (OASCR) internet/intranet websites in accordance with the Agriculture Secretary's OneUSDA policy. All policies and procedures related to anti-discrimination laws, Civil Rights (CR), the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaints process, Reasonable Accommodations (RA) procedures, and Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) process have been posted or disseminated via the public and internal website.

BC / CREEOD in collaboration with FPAC / NRCS leadership ensures that policies and procedures regarding Civil Rights Compliance Reviews (CRCRs) are adhered to by all federally conducted and assisted programs and employment activities. The Mission-area conducted three (3) Civil Rights Compliance Reviews (CRCR) at Virginia, North Carolina, and Alabama State; including Field Offices during FY2019.

BC / CREEOD and the BC / Office of Human Resources (OHR) continue to collaborate on the reinforcement of Human Capital and CR/EEO policy, process and procedures. This collaboration aligns with the Anti-Harassment statement and guidance and OneUSDA policy issued and signed by the Agriculture Secretary on May 28, 2018.

BC / CREEOD makes available consultation and guidance for the FPAC / NRCS National Civil Rights Advisory Committee (NCRACC) to address strategies to increase participation of women, minorities, and persons with disabilities (PWD). The CRD Director takes part as an advisor to the group.

NRCS's Office of the Chief solicits nominations to grant annual National NRCS Civil Rights and Chief's Workforce Diversity Awards. Each year, nominations are solicited from the NRCS workforce to recognize those employees who have gone above and beyond their duty in civil rights regarding Farm Bill programs and program delivery.



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**Essential Element B: Integration of EEO into the Agency's Strategic Mission**

FPAC / NRCS managers, supervisors, and employees' FY 2019 Performance Plan, Progress Review and Appraisal worksheets were revised in accordance with NB-360-18-36 and 37 Processing Performance Appraisals. All performance plans for both supervisors and non-supervisors contain elements and standards to measure CR/EEO performance. Performance standards for new employees are set up within 15 days of beginning their tour of duty [See DR 4040-430-Employee Performance Management].

The BC National Special Emphasis Programs help ensure that agencies take affirmative steps to provide equal opportunity for underrepresented groups in the workforce. These programs are governed by federal laws, regulations, and other legal authorities and help achieve the federal government's diversity, inclusion, and equal employment goals. The BC National Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs) provide national program leadership and guidance for activities related to: 1) outreach, 2) diversity and inclusion, 3) equal employment and retention strategies, and 4) internal and external partnerships. They also provide operational guidance and support to state collateral SEPMs.

Specific to FPAC / NRCS is the National Civil Rights Advisory Committee to the [NRCS] Chief (NCRACC). The committee is designed to provide management officials with guidance and advice related to compliance in nondiscrimination and equal opportunity leadership applicable to program delivery and activities receiving federal financial assistance. The committee also provides advice on Agency recruitment, retention, diversity and inclusion initiatives and activities.

The BC ensures access availability to agency employees, former employees, and applicants for Federal employment concerning the rights and remedies applicable to them under the employment discrimination and whistleblower protection laws. (e.g., *No FEAR Act*). Through the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR), USDA posts individual agency summary statistical EEO complaint data under Title III, "Equal Employment Opportunity Complaint Data Disclosure," of the No FEAR Act. The No FEAR Act requires Federal agencies to post cumulative year-to-date summary statistical EEO complaint data on a quarterly basis during each Fiscal Year (FY). No FEAR Act Refresher training is required of all USDA personnel and partners during FY 2020.

Each USDA mission area lead by the OASCR, sent representatives to take part in several workshops and activities to jointly identify common areas of concern at the Agency and Department level. The participating agencies and Department discussed an integrated analysis of workforce demographic data tables from an EEO perspective. At the conclusion of the workshop the cohort groups established priority areas to partner and address during FY 2019 – FY 2020. The USDA civil rights community will collaborate in addressing these priorities under the Secretary's "OneUSDA" leadership initiatives during FY 2020 and beyond:

- Retention
- Partnerships
- Harassment

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**Essential Element C: Management and Program Accountability**

During FY 2019 BC's CR/EEO Compliance and Training Branch conducted three (3) Civil Rights Compliance Reviews at the Virginia, North Carolina, and Alabama State Offices for the three mission agencies; FSA, NRCS, and RMA to ensure that policy and procedures are being followed for all USDA federally conducted and assisted programs and activities; evaluate employment and program delivery processes, policies, and functions; determine CR and EEO compliance; and to provide direction and technical assistance to the legacy agencies managers and supervisors. The BC's CR/EEO Compliance and Training / Compliance Branch successfully completed all 3 reviews before September 30, 2019.

FPAC / NRCS submitted its renewed comprehensive Anti-Harassment policy to the USDA Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR) and the U.S. EEOC and are awaiting validation and acceptance in order to begin implementation of the retooled Anti-Harassment Program. Currently, the revisions and revised policy are in the clearance process which is expected to conclude by the end of FY2020 first quarter. The refreshed policy validates leadership's commitment to provide a work environment that is free from unlawful discrimination, and to reinforce the obligations of managers and supervisors to prevent discrimination and promptly cease any form of harassment or retaliation in the workplace.

FPAC / NRCS submitted its revised Reasonable Accommodation policy and procedures, including Personal Assistant Services (PAS) procedures pursuant to 29 C.F.R. 1614.203(d) (5) (v) to the U.S. EEOC on February 20, 2018. The U.S. EEOC *accepted* the plan, policy and procedure on November 19, 2018. The BC's Office of Human Resources issued its Reasonable Accommodation Policy Manual on May 9, 2019 [see FPAC-PM 4300]. Once USDA issues its revised Reasonable Accommodation and Personal Assistance Services "OneUSDA" policy, it will supersede the NRCS and FPAC policies.

USDA provides statistical data on its OASCR public website of all mission areas and agencies relating to EEO complaints during FY 2015 – FY 2019 demonstrating compliance with the No FEAR Act and 29 C.F.R. Part 1614.703, the EEOC's codified regulation. 5-year data trends are readily available on demand for the general public as well as employees, partners, and providers.

With the transition to the new FPAC Business Center the BC's Office of Civil Rights / Compliance and Training Branch / Training Section created a comprehensive training plan to encompass all mandated and collateral CR/EEO training with a revised internal communication plan to reach all eligible employees and to positively target and increase completion rates among all affected personnel.

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**Essential Element D: Proactive Prevention of Unlawful Discrimination**

The BC CREEOD continues to report workforce demographic changes regarding retention, separation, and hiring trends on a quarterly basis to the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR).

The OASCR continued its renewed efforts to provide a venue for each mission area to address and incorporate Civil Rights, Diversity and Inclusion priorities into the mandated annual Civil Rights reports including the MD 715 report for FY 2019. The OASCR hosted several events during FY 2019 for USDA mission areas to collaborate and educate on topics which included, Civil Rights Impact Analysis and Barrier Analysis. The focus for the training and educational events was to understand and conduct statistical analysis for disparate treatment and adverse impact using data aggregated from workforce and manpower tables.

The FPAC Workforce Engagement (WE) Team stood up an official group of FPAC employees responsible for leading the legacy agencies in workforce engagement (WE) matters. The group is committed to listening, transparency, and engagement; promoting an open and honest dialogue. The new group encourages participation in and posting results of the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) to gauge and assist in creating strategies to improve the diversity and inclusion intelligence of the organization.

As a result of the 2018 FEVS, the BC Leadership Team renewed its commitment in a memo to all FPAC employees dated July 2018 to improve employee engagement in three main areas:

- Communication and Transparency
- Culture and Core Values
- Team and individual recognition for exceptional service and accomplishments

## Part E.3 – Responsiveness and Legal Compliance

### Essential Element E: Efficiency

This element requires the agency to have an efficient and fair dispute resolution process and effective systems for evaluating the impact and effectiveness of its EEO programs. In FY 2019, the FBC CR EEO Division continued its collaboration with OASCR to ensure that individual complaints are fairly and thoroughly investigated, and that the final action is taken in a timely manner. [See 29 C.F.R. Part 1614.102(c) (5)]

Use of ADR – The table below depicts the percentage of pre-complaints cases offered, accepted, and resolved through ADR in the informal stage of the complaint process in FY 2019.

The ADR offer rate at the informal stage of the EEO complaint process was 100 percent, which is higher than the Federal government average of 86 percent.

**Table 1: Complaint Rate and ADR Usage in the Pre-complaint Stage  
(FY2019 Form 462 Report)**

Fiscal Years	NRCS Work Force	# of Pre-complaints	Complaint Rate	ADR Offer Rate	ADR Election Rate	ADR Resolution Rate
2015	10,395	48	0.5%	98%	70%	41%
2016	10,585	28	0.2%	100%	71%	45%
2017	10,323	44	0.43%	100%	66%	47%
2018	10,010	49	0.48%	92%	60%	47%
2019	9,130	49	0.53%	100%	62%	46%

Title VII Profile of EEO Investigations – The table below depicts the average processing time for the agency’s EEO investigations in FY 2019:

**Table 2: Average Processing Time for NRCS EEO Investigations  
(Part IX, Form 462 Report)**

Processing Categories	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
No. of Formal Filed	32	20	26	27	26
No. of Investigations Completed	26	24	24	12	33
No. of timely Investigations	21	19	23	11	30
Percent of Timely Investigations	81%	79%	96%	92%	90%
Average Processing Days for All Investigations (including amended cases)	139	183	142	131	129
Average Cost per Investigation (Direct Cost Reported)	\$3,406	\$3,331	\$3,423	\$3,441	\$3,856

Final Agency Decision (FAD) – EEOC regulations require agencies to issue merit FAD within 60 days of receiving notification that a complainant has requested an immediate decision from the agency, or within 60 days of the end of the 30-day period for the complainant to request a hearing or an immediate final decision, where the complainant has not requested either a hearing or a FAD.

OASCR routinely provided management services in processing the formal complaints filed against FPAC / NRCS at the headquarters level, including the drafting and issuance of agency-wide FADs. In FY 2019, OASCR issued 13 merit FADs with an average processing time of 42 days. Of the 13 merit FADs issued, 7 (54 percent) were timely issued within 60 days. The Federal Government-wide average is 48.6 percent. With respect to this

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requirement, FBC CREEOD and NRCS worked collaboratively with OASCR to achieve process improvement for cost efficiency and timeliness in the issuance of merit FADs.

**Table 3: Department (OASCR) Average Processing Time to Issue Merit FADs**  
*(Part VI D, Form 462 Report)*

<b>Fiscal Years</b>	<b># of Merit FADs Issued</b>	<b>Average Days</b>	<b># of Merit FADs Timely Issued</b>	<b>% of Merit FADs Timely Issued</b>
<b>2015</b>	5	105	2	40%
<b>2016</b>	10	58	7	70%
<b>2017</b>	14	85	8	57%
<b>2018</b>	3	52	3	100%
<b>2019</b>	13	42	7	54%

CR EEO Division continued working with OASCR to achieve performance metrics and process improvement by revising the Standard Operating Procedures and providing internal training regarding the process. Jointly, all legacy agencies continued to utilize the OASCR enterprise system (known as iComplaints) for complaint tracking and monitoring that identifies and tracks the status of the EEO complaint process stages. The system allows the staff to: 1) Identify/analyze the location, status, and length of time elapsed at each stage of the agency's complaints resolution process, 2) Identify the issues and the bases of the complaints, 3) Identify the involved management officials, and 4) Identify other information necessary to analyze complaint activity aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the agency's EEO program.

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## Part E.3 - Executive Summary: Workforce Analyses

NRCS continues to promote targeted recruitment initiatives to assess workforce demographics changes, succession planning, retention and separation rates, and monitor hiring trends. Provided is a summary review and analysis of the agency's FY 2019 current workforce profile based on fiscal year workforce data tables generated by the National Finance Center (NFC) as of September 30, 2019. A complete set of tables are attached in the appendix of this document.

**Of Note:** Applicant Flow Data - as of March 2019 (FY19Q3) USDA sunset the license and contract with e-Recruit Systems. Applicant Flow data captured by the e-Recruit system is no longer available.

### NRCS Workforce Composition

The current workforce consists of 9,130 employees: 9,077 permanent and 53 temporary employees. The number of permanent employees decreased by 784 from 9,861 in FY 2018 to 9,077 in FY 2019.

Participation rates for the NRCS male workforce are showing an overall increase with a ratio change of 1.16 percent (-381). White males reveal an increase of 1.69 percent (-263).

The permanent minority workforce had a significant decrease of 2.10 percent from 20.21 percent in FY 2018 to 18.11 percent in FY 2019. They remained below the NCLF average of 27.64 percent. The participation rate of women decreased slightly by 0.01 percent from 36.79 percent in FY 2018 to 36.78 percent in FY 2019 and, continue to remain below the National Civil Labor Force (NCLF) of 48.14 percent.

The participation rate of Persons with Targeted Disabilities (PWTD) in the permanent workforce decreased by 0.45 percent from 3.36 percent in FY 2018, to 2.91 percent in FY 2019, which meets and exceeds the EEOC federal benchmark of 2.00 percent. The participation rate of Persons with a Disability (PWD) continues to be below the 12.00 percent EEOC goal at 9.31 percent.

Participation rates of White females, Black or African American males, Black or African American females, Hispanic or Latino males, Hispanic or Latino females, Asian males, Asian females, and Persons with Disabilities remain lower than those reflected by the NCLF and EEOC newly established benchmark.

**Table 4: Comparisons of FY 2019 vs. FY 2018 Permanent Workforce Participation Rates by Race, Gender, National Origin and Disability**

Race/Ethnicity	NCLF	FY19 Total	FY19 %	FY18 Total	FY18 %	Ratio Change
All	%	9,077	%	9,861	%	0.00%
Male	51.86%	5,738	63.21%	6,119	62.05%	1.16%
Female	48.14%	3,339	36.78%	3,742	36.79%	-1.16%
HM	5.17%	335	3.69%	348	3.51%	0.18%
HF	4.79%	183	2.02%	199	2.01%	0.01%
WM	38.33%	4,715	51.94%	4,978	50.25%	1.69%
WF	34.03%	2,718	29.94%	2,926	29.54%	0.40%
BM	5.49%	365	4.02%	451	4.55%	-0.53%
BF	6.53%	247	2.72%	417	4.21%	-1.49%
AM	1.97%	68	0.75%	82	0.83%	-0.08%
AF	1.93%	49	0.54%	59	0.60%	-0.06%
NH/OPIM	0.07%	19	0.21%	21	0.21%	0.00%
NH/OPIF	0.07%	14	0.15%	17	0.17%	-0.02%
AI/ANM	0.55%	185	2.04%	205	2.07%	-0.03%
AI/ANF	0.53%	94	1.04%	106	1.07%	-0.03%
2MRM	0.26%	51	0.56%	55	0.56%	0.00%
2MRF	0.28%	34	0.37%	42	0.42%	-0.05%
PWD [03-99]*	12.00%	845	9.31%	1,006	10.16%	-0.85%
PWTD *	2.00%	264	2.91%	333	3.36%	-0.45%

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EEOC disability benchmarks established January 2017  
Data Source: NFC Reporting MD 715 Data Tables A1/B1

New Hires by Permanent Appointment

In FY 2019, NRCS on-boarded 528 new hires for permanent appointments, a decrease of 38 new hires from 566 in FY 2018. Of the new hires in FY 2019, White males at 43.75 percent (231) increased by 3.93 percent compared to 39.93 percent (226) in FY 2018 and White females' 38.26 percent (202) significantly increased by 3.63 percent compared to 34.63 (196), but it should be noted that White female hires reflected above the NCLF. Black or African American males were 3.98 percent (21) in FY 2019, a loss of 1.85 percent, from the 5.83 percent (33) in FY 2018 and Black or African American females at 3.22 percent (17) in FY 2019, significantly decreased from 8.66 percent (40) or 5.44 percent in FY 2018. While Black or African American males were below their corresponding NCLF in FY 2019, Black or African American females were above their respective NCLF. Hispanic or Latino males at 3.22 percent (17) in FY 2019 decreased by 1.73 percent from 4.95 percent (28) in FY 2018, while Hispanic or Latino females at 1.89 percent (10) in FY 2019 increased by 0.83 percent from 1.06 (6) in FY 2018. In FY 2019, Asian male new hires at 0.95 percent (5) decreased by 0.11 percent from the FY 2018 at 1.06 percent (6) while Asian females at 1.70 percent (9) increased by 0.29 from 1.41 (8) new hires in FY 2018.

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander males at 0.00 percent (0) in FY 2019, a decrease of 0.18 percent compared to 0.18 (1) in FY 2018 and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander females at 0.00 percent (0), also a decrease of 0.18 percent, compared to 0.18 percent (1) in FY 2018. American Indian or Alaska Native male new hire data reflected 1.14 percent (6), an increase of 0.43 from 0.71 percent (4) in FY 2018, while American Indian or Alaska Native females at 1.33 percent (7) compared to 0.71 percent (4) in FY 2018, an increase of 0.62 percent. Two or More Races males at 0.38 percent (2) in FY 2019, an increase of 0.03 percent compared to the 0.35 percent (2) in FY 2018 and Two or More Races females at 0.19 percent (1) compared to 0.35 percent (2), a decrease of 0.16 percent in FY 2018.

The participation rates of new hires of Person with Disabilities and Persons with Targeted Disabilities in FY 2019 were at 7.20 percent (38) and 0.57 percent (3), respectively, compared to 9.72 percent (55) and 1.77 percent (10) in FY 2018. Both groups were below their corresponding NCLF.

Participation rates of new hires Hispanic or Latino males, Hispanic or Latino females, Black or African American males, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander males, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander females, American Indian or Alaska Native males, Two or More Races males and Two or More Races females Persons with Disabilities and Persons with Targeted Disabilities remained lower than their corresponding NCLF in FY 2019.

Table 5: Comparison of FY 2019 vs. FY 2018 New Hires Participation Rates  
by Race, Ethnicity, Gender, National Origin and Disability

Race/Ethnicity	NRCS Perm %	FY19 Total	FY19 %	FY18 Total	FY18 %	Ratio Change
All	%	528	%	566	%	%
Male	63.21%	282	53.41%	300	53.00%	0.41%
Female	36.78%	246	46.59%	266	47.00%	-0.41%
HM	3.69%	17	3.22%	28	4.95%	-1.73%
HF	2.02%	10	1.89%	6	1.06%	0.83%
WM	51.94%	231	43.75%	226	39.93%	3.82%
WF	29.94%	202	38.26%	196	34.63%	3.63%
BM	4.02%	21	3.98%	33	5.83%	-1.85%
BF	2.72%	17	3.22%	49	8.66%	-5.44%
AM	0.75%	5	0.95%	6	1.06%	-0.11%
AF	0.54%	9	1.70%	8	1.41%	0.29%
NH/OPIM	0.21%	0	0.00%	1	0.18%	-0.18%
NH/OPIF	0.15%	0	0.00%	1	0.18%	-0.18%
AI/ANM	2.04%	6	1.14%	4	0.71%	0.43%
AI/ANF	1.04%	7	1.33%	4	0.71%	0.62%
2MRM	0.56%	2	0.38%	2	0.35%	0.03%



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Race/Ethnicity	NRCS Perm %	FY19 Total	FY19 %	FY18 Total	FY18 %	Ratio Change
2MRF	0.37%	1	0.19%	2	0.35%	-0.16%
PWD [03-99]*	9.31%	38	7.20%	55	9.72%	-2.52%
TD	2.91%	3	0.57%	10	1.77%	-1.20%

Data Source: NFC Reporting MD 715 Data Tables A8/B8

### Separations

In FY 2019, there were 730 employees who separated from NRCS (703 voluntarily and 27 involuntarily). The largest group to separate was White males at 50.50 percent (355). The next largest group was White females at 31.44 percent (221), followed by Black or African American males at a rate of 5.12 percent (36). There were 86 employees with disabilities who separated (79 voluntarily and 7 involuntarily) at a rate of 11.78 percent. Thirty-three (33) employees with targeted disabilities separated (31 voluntarily and 2 involuntarily) at a rate of 4.52 percent.

**Table 6: Total Separations for FY 2019 vs. FY 2018 by Race, Ethnicity, National Origin, Gender, and Disability**

Race/Ethnicity	NCLF	NRCS Perm %	FY19 Total	FY19 %	FY18 Total	FY18 %	Ratio Change
All	%	%	730	%	897	%	
Male	51.86%	63.21%	441	60.41%	552	61.54%	-1.13%
Female	48.14%	36.78%	289	39.59%	345	38.46%	1.13%
HM	5.17%	3.69%	22	3.01%	25	2.79%	0.22%
HF	4.79%	2.02%	12	1.64%	18	2.01%	-0.37%
WM	38.33%	51.94%	365	50.00%	452	50.39%	-0.39%
WF	34.03%	29.94%	232	31.78%	274	30.55%	1.23%
BM	5.49%	4.02%	37	5.07%	45	5.02%	0.05%
BF	6.53%	2.72%	24	3.29%	38	4.24%	-0.95%
AM	1.97%	0.75%	5	0.68%	7	0.78%	-0.10%
AF	1.93%	0.54%	5	0.68%	2	0.22%	0.46%
NH/OPIM	0.07%	0.21%	0	0.00%	2	0.22%	-0.22%
NH/OPIF	0.07%	0.15%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%
AI/ANM	0.55%	2.04%	12	1.64%	20	2.23%	-0.59%
AI/ANF	0.53%	1.04%	14	1.92%	12	1.34%	0.58%
2MRM	0.26%	0.56%	0	0.00%	1	0.11%	-0.11%
2MRF	0.28%	0.37%	2	0.27%	1	0.11%	0.16%
PWD [03-99]*	12.00%	9.31%	86	11.78%	118	13.15%	-1.37%

Data Source: NFC Reporting MD 715 Data Tables A14/B14

### Veteran Participation in the Workforce

At the conclusion of FY 2019, there were a total of 636 Veteran employees. Of the 636 Veterans, 80.50 percent (512) were males and 19.50 percent (124) were females. The participation rate of Veterans represented 7.01 percent of the entire NRCS permanent workforce, which remained well below the Agency's goal of 25 percent.

In FY 2019, White males comprised 64.62 percent (411), and White females comprised 13.99 percent (89) of the Veteran workforce, a significant increase from 59.51 (457) percent in FY 2018 for White males and a slight decrease from 14.19 (109) for White females. Black or African American males comprised 5.66 percent (36), a decrease from 7.68 percent (59) and Black or African American females represented 3.14 percent (20) of the Veteran workforce, a significant decrease from 6.12 percent (47) in FY 2018. Hispanic or Latino males comprised 5.97 percent (38), an increase of 0.89 percent from 5.08 percent (39) and Hispanic or Latino females comprised of 1.26 percent (8) of the Veteran workforce; this is a decrease from 1.43 percent (11) in FY 2018. Asian males made up 0.63 percent (4), while Asian females comprised only 0.16 percent (1) of the Veteran workforce, compared to 1.43 percent (11) and 0.26 percent (2) respectively in FY 2018. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander males comprised 0.31 percent (2), a decrease from 0.52 percent (4) in FY 2018, while Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander females comprised 0.16 percent (1) of the Veteran workforce, a decrease of 0.12 percent (1) of the Veteran workforce of 0.26 percent (2) in FY 2018. American Indian or Alaska Native males represented 2.52 percent (16), and American Indian or Alaska Native females comprised 0.63 percent (4) of the Veteran workforce,



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compared to 2.21 percent (17) and 0.52 percent (4), respectively, in FY 2018. For Two or More Races males, this group increased to 0.79 percent (5) in FY 2019, from 0.65 percent (5) in FY 2018, while Two or More Races females increased to 0.16 percent (1) from 0.13 percent (1).

Disabled Veterans comprised 1.82 percent (165) of the NRCS permanent workforce (9,077), a decrease of .30 percent (44) from 2.12 percent (209) in FY 2018 (9,861).

A summary of the population from FY 2018 to the end of FY 2019 is provided in the table below.

**Table 7: Veteran's Participation Rates from FY 2019 vs. FY 2018 by Race, Ethnicity, National Origin, Gender, and Disability**

Race/Ethnicity	NRCS Perm %	FY19 Total	FY19 %	FY18 Total	FY18 %	Ratio Change
All	%	636	%	768	%	
Male	63.21%	512	80.50%	592	77.08%	3.42%
Female	36.78%	124	19.50%	176	22.92%	-3.42%
HM	3.69%	38	5.97%	39	5.08%	0.89%
HF	2.02%	8	1.26%	11	1.43%	-0.17%
WM	51.94%	411	64.62%	457	59.51%	5.11%
WF	29.94%	89	13.99%	109	14.19%	-0.20%
BM	4.02%	36	5.66%	59	7.68%	-2.02%
BF	2.72%	20	3.14%	47	6.12%	-2.98%
AM	0.75%	4	0.63%	11	1.43%	-0.80%
AF	0.54%	1	0.16%	2	0.26%	-0.10%
NH/OPIM	0.21%	2	0.31%	4	0.52%	-0.21%
NH/OPIF	0.15%	1	0.16%	2	0.26%	-0.10%
AI/ANM	2.04%	16	2.52%	17	2.21%	0.31%
AI/ANF	1.04%	4	0.63%	4	0.52%	0.11%
2MRM	0.56%	5	0.79%	5	0.65%	0.14%
2MRF	0.37%	1	0.16%	1	0.13%	0.03%
PWD [03-99]*	9.31%	165	25.94%	209	27.21%	-1.27%
PWTD *	2.91%	48	7.55%	13	1.69%	5.86%

Data source: NFC Reporting Center Minority Profile Tables

The percentages shown in red indicate that the rate is lower than the Agency's permanent workforce participation rate.

#### Participation Rates for Major Occupations

NRCS major occupations make up the top one-third of all NRCS permanent workforce population. NRCS major occupations include the following series: 0457 - Soil Conservation, 0458 - Soil Conservation Technician, 0470 - Soil Science, 0401 - General Biological and 0810 - Civil Engineering. Below is a summary of participation rates for major occupations for the permanent workforce by Race, National Origin Grade, Ethnicity, Disability and Targeted Disability during FY 2019.

*Non representation [0.00 percent]* exists over a four-year period in the GS 0458 - Soil Conservation Technician (Asian and Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander females); GS 0470 - Soil Science (Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander and Two or More Races male and female); 0401 – General Biological Science (Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander females and Two or More Race males); 0499 – Biological Science Student Trainee (Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander male and female); 0810 - Civil Engineering (Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander male and female).

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**Table 8: Participation Rates for Major Occupations (Perm) by Race, Gender, National Origin and Disability**

	Hispanic		White		Black		Asian		Natl Hw/Pac Isldr		Am Ind/Natl Alask		2 or More Races		Dis [02- 99]	Targ Dis
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	All	All
<b>0457 - SOIL CONSERVATION</b>																
2019	4.09	2.40	52.25	29.46	4.70	2.48	0.53	0.48	0.20	0.25	2.00	0.93	0.15	0.08	8.06	2.55
2018	3.87	2.44	52.68	29.05	4.78	2.34	0.43	0.43	0.20	0.28	2.19	1.06	0.15	0.13	8.22	2.74
2017	3.72	2.36	53.02	28.81	4.95	2.27	0.52	0.39	0.20	0.25	2.22	1.01	0.15	0.15	8.45	2.78
2016	3.77	2.09	54.08	27.99	5.08	2.21	0.53	0.32	0.19	0.22	2.19	1.07	0.15	0.12	8.46	0.70
OCLF	1.40	0.50	79.50	13.20	1.80	0.20	0.00	0.00	1.30	0.30	0.30	0.20	0.40	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>0458 - SOIL CONSERVATION TECHNICIAN</b>																
2019	2.48	1.04	66.67	22.05	2.69	0.62	0.10	0.00	0.52	0.00	3.00	0.62	0.21	0.00	9.11	3.62
2018	2.54	0.98	66.28	22.48	2.54	0.68	0.20	0.00	0.49	0.00	3.13	0.49	0.20	0.00	9.87	4.40
2017	2.33	1.21	67.75	20.69	2.80	0.65	0.09	0.00	0.47	0.00	3.26	0.65	0.09	0.00	10.34	4.47
2016	2.14	0.89	67.68	21.10	2.85	0.71	0.09	0.00	0.45	0.09	3.29	0.62	0.09	0.00	0.00	3.26
OCLF	2.80	4.80	35.80	34.00	3.70	4.50	0.20	0.00	0.70	0.40	4.80	6.40	0.50	0.50	0.00	0.00
<b>0470 - SOIL SCIENCE</b>																
2019	5.59	2.20	61.08	23.35	2.79	1.00	1.20	0.60	0.00	0.00	2.00	0.20	0.00	0.00	7.19	3.39
2018	5.54	2.29	64.05	19.89	3.63	0.96	0.96	0.38	0.00	0.00	2.10	0.19	0.00	0.00	8.99	3.82
2017	5.30	1.94	65.02	19.08	3.71	1.24	0.88	0.35	0.00	0.00	2.12	0.35	0.00	0.00	9.19	4.06
2016	4.42	1.70	66.84	18.71	4.08	0.85	0.85	0.17	0.00	0.00	1.87	0.51	0.00	0.00	9.14	0.85
OCLF	2.70	1.10	65.90	21.70	1.90	1.50	0.00	0.00	0.20	0.00	2.30	1.40	0.30	0.20	0.00	0.00
<b>0401 - GENERAL BIOLOGICAL SCIENCE</b>																
2019	5.68	1.52	51.14	27.84	5.49	1.52	0.57	0.76	0.00	0.00	2.46	2.65	0.00	0.38	9.66	2.84
2018	5.68	1.52	50.57	27.84	6.06	2.08	0.57	0.76	0.00	0.00	2.46	2.46	0.00	0.00	9.85	3.41
2017	5.32	1.47	51.74	26.61	6.06	1.83	0.55	0.73	0.18	0.00	3.12	2.39	0.00	0.00	9.91	3.67
2016	5.30	1.89	53.03	25.00	5.30	1.89	0.38	0.95	0.38	0.00	2.84	2.84	0.00	0.19	10.65	0.75
OCLF	1.90	2.10	47.30	35.00	1.20	1.80	0.00	0.00	0.40	0.20	4.10	4.30	0.40	0.30	0.00	0.00
<b>0499 - BIOLOGICAL SCIENCE STUDENT TRAINEE</b>																
2019	3.63	2.64	35.31	37.29	7.26	9.24	0.33	1.65	0.00	0.00	0.66	0.99	0.33	0.66	6.27	1.32
2018	3.89	2.85	36.53	38.34	7.25	8.03	0.26	0.78	0.00	0.00	0.52	0.78	0.26	0.52	6.48	2.33
2017	4.00	3.73	36.53	36.80	8.27	8.53	0.53	0.27	0.00	0.00	0.80	0.27	0.27	0.00	5.33	2.13
2016	7.35	6.07	34.19	33.55	8.63	6.71	0.64	0.64	0.00	0.00	1.28	0.64	0.32	0.00	4.12	0.00
OCLF	1.90	2.10	47.30	35.00	1.20	1.80	0.00	0.00	0.40	0.20	4.10	4.30	0.40	0.30	0.00	0.00
<b>0810 - CIVIL ENGINEERING</b>																
2019	7.20	2.31	63.75	16.45	2.83	0.77	3.08	0.51	0.00	0.00	1.80	0.77	0.26	0.26	6.94	1.54
2018	6.57	2.27	63.38	16.16	3.28	0.76	3.03	0.25	0.00	0.00	2.78	1.01	0.25	0.25	6.82	1.77
2017	6.07	2.67	63.83	15.05	2.91	0.73	2.91	0.49	0.00	0.00	3.40	1.46	0.24	0.24	7.04	2.18
2016	5.80	3.13	65.63	14.29	3.13	0.67	2.90	0.22	0.00	0.00	3.13	0.67	0.22	0.22	7.21	0.23
OCLF	3.70	0.60	74.10	7.50	2.90	0.60	0.00	0.00	0.30	0.10	7.40	1.10	0.80	0.10	0.00	0.00

Data Source: NFC Reporting Center MD 715 WF Tables A6/B6

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**Summary of Employee Awards and Recognition**

a. Time Off Awards

During FY2019, there was a combined total of 143 Time-Off Awards Given to all groups. The largest group to receive Time-Off awards were White male employees at 48 percent (or 69 awards given), followed by White female employees at 40 percent (or 58 awards given). The average amount of hours was 13.5. PWD employees were at 21.35 percent (or 16 awards given) with an average amount of hours at 14.

The next largest group was Black Males at 3 percent (or 5 awards given) with an average of 16 hours. The following groups tied at 1.40 percent (or 2 awards given) with an average award at about 28 hours: Hispanic, Asian American and American Indian/ Alaskan Native Males.

b. Cash Awards

During FY 2019 there were approx. 7,256 employees or 80 percent of the total NRCS permanent workforce (9,077) who received cash awards starting from \$100. The average range amount was between \$219 to \$1,297.

The largest group to receive cash awards between \$100 and \$500 were White male employees at 49.33 percent followed by White female employees at 31.03 percent both groups averaged about \$398 per award.

For awards of \$500 or more there were White male employees at 49.28 percent with an average amount of \$1,037, followed by White female employees at 31.92 percent with an average amount of \$1,023.

In the category for cash awards the top 5 groups between \$100 and \$500 were Black male employees at 4.12 percent, Black female and Hispanic male employees at 3.54 percent, and Hispanic females were at 2.97 percent. The average amount of the award for all groups listed was \$401. PWD employees were at 10.25 percent with an average amount of \$395.

For cash awards over \$500 the top 5 groups include: Hispanic male employees at 4.04 percent, Black females at 3.67 percent, Black males at 3.54 percent, Hispanic females at 2.25 percent, and American Indian/ Alaskan Native Males at 1.93 percent. The average amount of the award for all groups was \$1,133. PWD employees were at 9.15 percent with an average award amount of \$1,050.

c. QSI Awards

During FY2019 277 or about 3 percent of the permanent NRCS workforce received a Quality Step Increase (QSI) award. The average benefit for all employees was \$2,177. The largest group to receive QSI were White males at 40.07 percent with an average benefit of \$2,125. The second largest group were White females at 35.46 percent with an average benefit of \$2,342. Hispanic and Black males tied for second largest group at 5.05 percent with an average benefit of \$1,984. PWD employees received 9.39 percent of QSI awards with an average benefit of \$1,868.

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## **Part E.4 Executive Summary: Accomplishments**

### **Annual Civil Rights, EEO and Diversity Training**

The Employee Development Center (EDC) is the focal point for training for NRCS employees, managers, and supervisors. The EDC maintains a full staff of instructional systems specialists, an audio-visual specialist, a public affairs specialist, and training technicians. It offers numerous courses, throughout its programs and curriculum, including which include web-based/on-demand Civil Rights/Equal Opportunity modules. In addition to the EDC allocated staff, there are several NRCS employees from all disciplines who serve as members of the NRCS Instructor Cadre.

The CREEOD / Compliance and Training Branch collaborates and partners with the EDC for all Civil Rights, EEO, Diversity and Inclusion related training both mandatory, collateral and external. The Training Section delivers and facilitates mandatory Title VI, VII and Soft-skills training to the mission area Agencies using all available training delivery methods from traditional classroom to technology-based.

**Table 9: FY2019 Civil Rights and EEO Training and Development Schedule**

Course Name	Delivery Method	Location	Total Number of Participants
Civil Rights in Program Compliance (NRCS-NEDC-00002)	Events, Web-based, Traditional	Various	133
USDA - The No FEAR Act (508 Compliant)	Web-based	AgLearn	224
Hiring Flexibilities for Hiring Managers Overview (Supervisory or Hiring Personnel)	Web-Based	AgLearn	7
Title's VI (Program) VII (EEO Complaint Process)	Classroom	Jackson, MS	67
		Wausau, WI	55
		Little Rock, AR	244
		Great Falls, MT	110
Overview of Civil Rights and EEO Division Title VI	Classroom	Detroit, MI	130
		NHQ	20
MD 715 Overview (SEPM Training)	Video Webinar Teleconference (VTC)	Annapolis and Beltsville, MD	24
The Bully at Work	Webinar	AgLearn/Adobe Connect	233
Working with You is Tough	Webinar	AgLearn/Ready Talk	509
Civility and Respect in the Workplace	Webinar	AgLearn/Ready Talk	407
Conflict Transformation, Diversity and Inclusion Unconscious Bias (NRCS and FSA Supervisors & Managers)	Jackson, MS	Classroom	67
	Great Falls, MT		110

Data Source: AgLearn Reporting

NRCS is fully committed to maintaining a work environment free of discrimination and ensuring a complaint Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program that practices the principles of EEO for all employees and applicants. In practicing the core values of respect, fairness and increasing diversity, NRCS recognizes the benefits of diversity and inclusion. Thus, it is essential that the rich experiences, backgrounds, and skills of its diverse workforce are

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fully embraced to meet the diverse needs of our employees and customers to achieve the Agency's mission of *"Helping People Help the Land."*

NRCS recognizes the need to create and maintain a highly skilled workforce in which individual differences are recognized and valued. The Agency's employees are empowered to perform their job duties so that they can reach their potential while making contributions toward its mission and strategic plan. NRCS' civil rights program encompasses all equal employment opportunity and program delivery-related matters. The National Civil Rights Advisory Committee to the Chief (NCRACC) is designed to provide management officials with guidance and advice related to compliance in nondiscrimination and equal opportunity leadership applicable to program delivery and activities receiving federal financial assistance; as well as recruitment, retention, diversity and inclusion activities.

NRCS demonstrated a decrease in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). The Agency response was 62.0 percent in FY 2019, which was 6.6 percent lower than the 71.1 percent response rate in FY 2018. The NRCS New Inclusion Quotient (New IQ) Index score for FY 2019 was 61 percent, which is a one (1) percent decrease from the FY 2018 score of 62.

The agency's Human Capital Plan seeks to develop a leadership cadre that represents the diverse communities and customers we serve. The assessments of current and future needs are being accomplished through a series of leadership competency models that are accessible to all employees.

NRCS State Offices have contracts with vendors for American Sign Language Interpreter services with Deaf Access Solutions, Inc., for sign language interpreter services to for deaf and hard of hearing employees and support NHQ sponsored activities nation-wide.

#### **FY 2019 Student Workforce Profile**

Some of the trends and best practices for FY 2019 include working with colleges and universities to encourage students in underrepresented groups to consider federal service as a career of choice and participate in the USDA Pathways Programs, as part of the Agency's overall recruitment plan. NRCS continues to use the Pathways Programs as seeds for acquiring new federal talent and to supplement its competitive hiring.

The USDA Pathways Programs consists of the Student Internship Program, Recent Graduates Program and Presidential Management Fellows (PMFs). Through the USDA Pathways Programs, NRCS offered different pathway opportunities for students and recent graduates to work in the agricultural, environmental science and other fields. In FY 2019, NRCS offered internships to students which serve as a pipeline to journeyman level positions. At the conclusion of FY 2019, the demographic breakdown of the 436 Pathways Programs Student Interns, Recent Graduates and PMFs on the NRCS rolls included: 33 participants which were Hispanic or Latino or 7.57 percent; 320 White or 73.39 percent; 61 Black or African American or 13.99 percent; seven (7) which were Asian or 1.61 percent; one (1) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander or 0.23 percent; four (4) American Indian or Alaska Native or 0.92 percent; and ten (10) participants that are Two or More Races or 2.29 percent.

**Table 10: FY 2019 Pathways Programs by Race and National Origin**

Race/National Origin	Total NRCS Interns	Hispanic or Latino	White	Black or African American	Asian	NHPI	AIAN	Two or More Races
Interns	392	28	285	60	7	1	2	9
	%	7.14%	72.70%	15.31%	1.79%	0.26%	0.51%	2.30%
Recent Graduates	36	4	28	1	0	0	2	1
	%	11.11%	77.78%	2.78%	0.00%	0.00%	5.56%	2.78%
PMFs	8	1	7	0	0	0	0	0
	%	12.50%	87.50%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>
	%	<b>7.57%</b>	<b>73.39%</b>	<b>13.99%</b>	<b>1.61%</b>	<b>0.23%</b>	<b>0.92%</b>	<b>2.29%</b>

Data Source: EMPOWHR System as of 10/01/19

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**Diversity Programs and Initiatives**

NRCS has supported the enhancement of the effectiveness and sustainability of a nationally supported diversity recruitment and inclusion program by establishing various diversity recruitment frameworks and resource investment. In FY 2019, NRCS has committed resources to support numerous diversity events and/or programs. Notably collaborative efforts included:

**USDA / 1890 National Scholars Program - \$427,000**

In 2019, the agency participated in the USDA 1890 National Scholars Program, a partnership between USDA and the 1890 Land-Grant Universities. This program is intended to increase the number of students enrolling in agriculture, food, natural resource sciences, and other related programs in pursuit of a bachelor's degree at any of the nation's 1890 Land Grant Universities, all of which are Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU).

In 2019, NRCS obligated approximately \$421,000 of the total contribution for scholarships and career training for students enrolled in this program, referred to as "Scholars". Applicants include inbound freshmen and rising college sophomores and juniors. Students must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 and are required to work during the summers as conservation interns. Currently, there are 54 Scholars in the Agency, of which 25 were selected in FY 2019. Four (4) were converted to permanent positions in FY 2019.

**Hispanic Recruitment Initiative – Natural Resource Career Development Program – \$500,000**

In FY 2019, NRCS entered into a partnership agreement with six (6) separate Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) as part of the broader Hispanic Recruitment Initiative managed by the National Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager (NHEPM). NRCS provided \$500,000 towards supporting the four (4) partnerships.

The cooperative agreement created the Natural Resource Career Development Program (NRCDP), which focuses on providing educational and developmental activities to Hispanic students and establishing a third-party internship program in support of NRCS's diversity recruitment mission. Additionally, the NRCDP, through its partnerships, will help address Hispanic underrepresentation in the NRCS workforce by increasing the number of Hispanic college students that qualify and compete for the Pathways Internship and Recent Graduate programs and eventually, convert these students into entry-level permanent positions with the agency. In FY 2019, NRCS partnered with the following HSI: University of Arizona – Yuma; University of California – Davis; New Mexico State University; Texas A&M University - Kingsville; University of Texas – Rio Grande Valley; and California State University - Fresno. A total of 38 students participated in the program with NRCS, including summer 2019 internships.

**Hispanic Recruitment Initiative – Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) – \$180,000**

In 2019, NRCS entered into an interagency agreement with the USDA's Office of Advocacy and Outreach (OAO) office in support of the annual HACU Internship program. This is a collaboration with the USDA's Office of Partnership and Public Engagement (OPPE); formerly, the Office of Advocacy and Outreach and HACU to increase the number of Hispanic college students qualifying and competing for USDA Pathways program. The purpose of the agreement was to identify and recruit students to provide them the opportunity to work for NRCS thereby gaining practical natural resources management experience and learn about NRCS. Additionally, the effort will encourage and guide students towards pursuing a college degree in agriculture, natural resources or related fields and to seek NRCS as their employer of choice. A total of 10 interns were placed at NRCS national headquarters during FY 2019.

Due to delays in the internal review and approval process, the interagency agreement was not signed in time so NRCS did not participate in the HACU summer session. A total of two interns were placed and worked with NRCS for the HACU Fall session. The remaining balance of funds will either carry over into FY20 as part of an amendment process or be de-obligated.

**Tribal Recruitment Initiative**

Assist FPAC agencies to achieve recruitment goals, promote employment opportunities for American Indian college students to employ, develop and retain a highly skilled and diverse workforce. Additionally, this initiative will sponsor and support the annual AIAN Heritage Poster competition.



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Out and Equal Workplace Advocates - \$10,000

NRCS' sponsorship of the Out and Equal Workplace Advocates supports agency diversity initiatives for the recruitment, retention, and inclusion of Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) employees and customers. The Workplace Summit took place October 1-4, 2018, in Seattle, Washington.

The annual Out & Equal Executive Forum convenes LGBT and Ally senior executive and business leaders from multi-national corporations and federal agencies for two days of professional development and in-depth exploration of the global landscape of LGBT workplace equality. NRCS participated in the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Out & Equal Executive Forum which took place April 16-18, 2019, in San Francisco, California.

As a result of sponsorship and attendance at the Workplace Summit and Executive Forum, NRCS reached over 6,000 members of the LGBTQ professional workforce through an outreach and recruitment booth. Participation in the events provided NRCS an opportunity to brand itself as a welcoming workplace and employer of choice for the LGBTQ community. NRCS representatives participated in the first cohort for Government sector diversity and inclusion leaders to work to develop best practices for implementation of policy and programs to promote LGBTQ equality and equity in the workplace with a focus on intersectionality, and generational differences among the LGBTQ community.

Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF) Annual Leadership Institute - \$50,000

Recruitment agreement to increase the diversity of the NRCS workforce through recruitment of students from minority serving institutions, in support of the NRCS priority goal to employ, develop and retain a highly skilled and diverse workforce.

*The Thurgood Marshall College Fund* helps students acquire a high-quality college education. TMCF member-schools remain a vital source of higher education for all students and more than 80 percent of all students enrolled in HBCU attend TMCF member-schools. The 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Leadership Institute (Conference) and Recruitment Fair was held October 29, 2018, in Washington, D.C., where over 400 top students, carefully selected from the 47 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), were in attendance.

The TMCF Annual Leadership Institute is a recruitment and networking opportunity for employers to meet and hire some of the best and brightest students from the HBCU community. The program develops students' leadership skills, while providing access to a talented and diverse student population. The institute helps students make connections fruitful and successful careers with its recruitment fair which allows employers to interact face-to-face with approximately 350 diverse and highly qualified students from a variety of majors including; science, technology, engineering, math (or STEM), business, and finance.

Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) - \$15,000

The agreement will further develop the partnership between NRCS, ARS and SACNAS. The partnership provided financial support for the 2019 SACNAS Annual Conference with the intent of encouraging aspiring Chicano/Hispanic and Native American students. SACNAS National Diversity in STEM Conference is a 3-day conference which serves to equip, empower, and energize participants for their academic and professional paths in STEM. Over the course of the three days, college-level through professional attendees are immersed in cutting-edge scientific research and professional development sessions, motivational keynote speakers, a Graduate School & Career Expo Hall, multicultural celebrations, and an inclusive and welcoming community of peers, mentors, and role models.

Howard College Deaf Third-Party Internship - \$20,000

Developed a partnership between NRCS and Howard College to improve and bolster NRCS diversity recruitment efforts for a more diverse workforce with a specific focus on persons with (targeted) disabilities.

Future Farmers of America (FFA) - \$20,000

This agreement provides the opportunity for USDA NRCS to provide financial and technical support that helps further environmental and natural resource education and outreach. Through the FFA, NRCS can build a relationship with future aspiring agricultural discipline majors.

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NRCS supported partnership with FFA through the Environmental/Natural Resources Career Development Events (CDEs), the National FFA Collegiate Expo Conference, and the National FFA Career Show programs October 23 - 27, 2018, in Indianapolis, Indiana. The Agency funds were used to help sponsor the annual FFA convention, which attracts over 64,000 high school students and provides an excellent opportunity for NRCS to provide both outreach and career information.

American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) - \$39,000

NRCS supported the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) National Conference held October 4 – 6, 2018, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The largest career fair in Indian Country, over 2,000 graduate students, undergraduates, and high school junior and senior students, teachers, workforce professionals, corporate and government partners, attend this one-of-a-kind event each year.

Conference on Asian Pacific American Leadership (CAPAL) - \$15,000

A partnership effort to increase opportunities for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander youth leaders to gain exposure to career opportunities in public service and foster increased inclusion in the partner agency. A targeted outreach approach will focus on Asian American / Pacific Islander students to help address underrepresentation in the NRCS. This targeted approach will provide internship opportunity/opportunities to CAPAL interns.

Veterans Diversity Recruitment Initiative - \$15,000

An initiative specifically designed to reach veterans in order to increase their knowledge of NRCS jobs and increase the veteran's applicant supply pool.

University of Maryland, Eastern Shore – Student Diversity Program Sponsorship - \$10,000

NRCS supported the annual Student Diversity Program (SDP) which is part of Office of the Chief Economist's (OCE) effort to expose college students to contemporary agribusiness, future trends, scientific research, and agricultural policy in today's real-world environment. The program is now in its 11th year with an average of 100 qualifying applicants competing for 30 slots.

Hmong American Partnership - \$100,000

The Hmong American Partnership (HAP) is a non-profit organization focused on empowering the refugee and immigrant community by moving clients of poverty and towards social and financial prosperity. Founded in 1990, it serves a growing Hmong community in Minnesota. NRCS committed \$100,000 in FY 2018-2019 to provide the Asian American/Pacific Islander population, who have the potential, a program curriculum to foster leadership development and other avenues as a professional employee in the federal government. The main objective of the effort is to promote a positive and continuing Asian American/Pacific Islander employment program that provides equal employment opportunity for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in NRCS sponsored programs and activities. The agreement was amended in FY 2019 to continue to carry out the remaining activities identified in the document.

NRCS Earth Team Student Volunteer Program

The NRCS Earth Team Student Volunteer Program offers many exciting opportunities for students seeking to work in the conservation field. Middle and High schoolers can fulfill their school's community service requirements, earn academic credit, serve as unpaid internship, get resume building work experience or help the environment. In FY 2019, NRCS reported 224 student volunteers logged a total of 10,974.15 hours. One hundred sixty-two (162) NRCS service centers utilized student volunteers.



## **Part E.5 - Executive Summary: Planned Activities**

### **Promoting Targeted Recruitment Efforts**

The USDA / FPAC mission agencies (*FSA, NRCS, RMA*) oversee initiatives to target diverse groups and qualified candidates, including persons with targeted disabilities, pursuant to its current hiring and recruitment strategies. FPAC fosters and builds relationships with new and current partners throughout the country to increase the exposure of the agency, to market the career opportunities, and increase the diversity within the workforce.

A diverse, highly skilled workforce is vital to the agency's mission, because it is the rich diversity of the NRCS workforce that is the fabric of the agency's past, present, and future success. Most important, a diverse workforce directly impacts the successful delivery of the technical assistance and services that NRCS provides. Continuing to recruit a talented and diverse federal workforce is both a goal of leadership and a value to our priority of a customer centric approach to service delivery. As interest for participation in outreach events continues to grow, a strategic approach is essential. In FY 2020, the FPAC-Business Center's Human Resources Division Workforce Planning and Recruitment (WFPR) Section will be focusing the agency's diversity, outreach and recruitment events from a FPAC-wide approach.

In order to plan and conduct these activities in an effective and efficient manner, Mission area and agency leaders, including the NRCS leadership, were asked to participate in the "Diversity Outreach and Recruitment Interest Survey". The inaugural Diversity Outreach Recruitment Interest Survey generated the greatest interest in 22 diverse events for FY 2020. Priority will be given to those events with the greatest potential to increase the agency's diversity by participating. The results of the Diversity Outreach Recruitment Interest Survey will be used in establishing the FY 2020 diversity outreach and recruitment events agenda.

The outreach and recruitment activities fall in line with the Secretary's vision creating practical career paths for veterans, students, persons with (targeted) disabilities and skilled job seekers into the USDA workforce and compliment the Department's OneUSDA team approach to doing business with America.

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**Table 10: Outreach and Recruitment Events Planned in FY 2020**

<b>Event</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>FPAC Region</b>	<b>Date of Event</b>
Tennessee State University Career Fair	Nashville, Tennessee	Mid-South	October 2019
HACU Annual Conference	Chicago, Illinois	Great Lakes	October 2019
AISES National Conference	Milwaukee, Wisconsin	Great Lakes	October 2019
Oregon State University Job Fair	Corvallis, Oregon	Northwest	October 2019
Future Farmers of America Convention	Indianapolis, Indiana	Great Lakes	October - November 2019
Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics/Native Americans in Sciences (SACNAS)	Honolulu, Hawaii	Southwest	October - November 2019
American Society of Agronomy, the Crop Science Society of America and the Soil Science Society of America Conference/Job Fair	San Antonio, Texas	Southern Plains	November 2019
NOPBNRCSE Outreach and Ag Expo	Atlanta, Georgia	Southeast	December 2019
Intertribal Ag Council Annual Conference	Las Vegas, Nevada	Southwest	December 2019
Washington State University Career Expo	Pullman, Washington	Northwest	February 2020
Tribal Colleges & Universities Recruitment Event-USDA Level (3 TCUs)	New Mexico & Arizona	Southwest & Southern Plains	February 2020
New Mexico State Career Fair	Las Cruces, New Mexico	Southern Plains	February 2020
Prairie View A&M University Career Fair	Prairie View, Texas	Southern Plains	February 2020
University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez	Mayaguez, Puerto Rico	Southeast	February 2020
Langston University Career Fair	Langston, Oklahoma	Southern Plains	March 2020
University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff	Pine Bluff, AR	Mid-South	Early March 2020
MANRRS Annual Career Fair and Training Conference	Minneapolis, Minnesota	Northern Cornbelt	April 2020
University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Career Fair	Edinburg, Texas	Southern Plains	Early April 2020
Montana State University Career Fair	Bozeman, Montana	Northwest	Spring 2020
Montana Tech Career Fair	Butte, Montana	Northwest	Spring 2020
University of Rhode Island Career Fair	Kingston, Rhode Island	Northeast	Spring 2020
Latinos in Ag Conference and Career Fair	Dallas, Texas	Southern Plains	August 2020

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**Diversity Programs and Initiatives**

The NRCS has supported the enhancement of the effectiveness and sustainability of a nationally supported diversity recruitment and inclusion programs by establishing various diversity recruitment frameworks and diversity investment. In FY 2020, NRCS will commit resources to support numerous diversity events and/or programs. Notably collaborative efforts include:

**Colleges and Universities**

- USDA / 1890 National Scholars Program
- University of Maryland Eastern Shore Student Diversity Program Sponsorship
- Florida A&M University
- Tennessee State University
- North Carolina A&T State University
- Howard College Deaf Third-Party Internship

**Targeted Diversity Recruitment Organizations and Initiatives**

- Hispanic Recruitment Initiative – Natural Resource Career Development Program
- Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities (HACU) Annual Conference
- Out and Equal Workplace Summit (Workplace Advocates)
- Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC)
- Hmong American Partnership
- Veterans Recruitment Initiative
- Women's Recruitment Initiative
- LGBTQ Recruitment Initiative
- Tribal Recruitment Initiative
- Disability Recruitment Initiative
- Defense Media Activity - (Veterans diversity recruitment initiative)
- Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP)

**Agricultural, Technical and Science-based Organizations**

- Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF) Annual Leadership Institute
- Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS)
- Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS)
- Cultivating Change Foundation
- NACD Youth Education Day and Conservation Career Workshop
- Future Farmers of America (FFA)
- Conference on Asian Pacific American Leadership (CAPAL)
- Latinos in Agriculture
- International Leadership Foundation (ILF) Civic Fellowship
- Earth Team Student Volunteer Program
- American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES)

**Veterans Employment Program (VEP)**

One of the most significant barriers for hiring veterans is the inability for veterans to qualify for mission-critical positions within the Biological Sciences series'. This includes our Soil Conservationist, Rangeland Management Specialist and Soil Scientist positions; all of which require a soil conservation or related agricultural degree with specific coursework in the natural resource or agricultural field. Veterans are less likely to possess these types of degrees since our military have very few, if any, positions where these types of degrees would be useful while serving.

The VEP supports OPM initiatives by continuing the training of the collateral duty (20%) for VEP Managers and:

- Supporting commemoration of Veteran's Day observances;

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- Facilitating workshops and hosting exhibit booths at various veteran's employment groups;
- Participating in outreach activities;
- Developing strategies for improving the representation and retention of Veterans in the workforce;
- Surveying VEPs to identify challenges and barriers to the recruitment, hiring, career development and retention of veteran applicants and employees and obtaining information from VEPs to assist them in carrying out program responsibilities once vetted and approved by our leadership and labor unions;
- Meeting with veteran employees to assess their views regarding equal opportunity for veterans within NRCS and communicating those views to management and the FPAC HRD Workforce Planning and Recruitment Section staff; and
- Further engagement with veterans through listening sessions and surveys.

In FY 2020, FPAC plans to use various programs and resources to seek out and attract veteran and disabled veteran candidates through the veteran-specific job candidate programs and other resources. These included, but were not limited to the following:

- Veterans Recruitment Authority (VRA)
- 30 Percent or more disabled
- Veteran Employment Opportunities Act (VEOA)
- Schedule A Hiring Authority
- USDA's Veterans and Persons with Disabilities Repository
- Department of Defense Hiring Our Hero's job Fairs
- The Department of Veteran Affairs (VA), Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment (VR&E), Non-Paid Work Experience (NPWE)
- Operation War Fighter
- Feds Hire Vets
- Army Wounded Warrior Program
- Soldier for Life
- Marine for Life

**Disability Employment Program (DEP)**

In FY 2020, FPAC plans to:

- Establish targeted recruitment efforts to increase the participation of persons with disabilities.
- Ensure the internal MD-715 affirmative employment workgroup discusses ongoing recruitment and hiring initiatives and identify potential barriers that may affect employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.
- Develop a plan, which uses different programs and resources to identify and hire job applicants with disabilities, including those with targeted disabilities.
- Continue to train hiring managers and personnel on the use of special hiring authorities.
- Continue to establish and maintain contacts with organizations that assist persons with disabilities in securing employment.
- Establish plan to improve career advancement opportunities for persons with disabilities.
- Analyze workforce separation data to identify barriers retaining employees with disabilities.

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**FEDERAL AGENCY ANNUAL EEO PROGRAM STATUS REPORT**  
*(Agency – USDA, FPAC, Natural Resources Conservation Service)*

**CERTIFICATION of ESTABLISHMENT of CONTINUING  
EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS**

I, Emily Su, 0260 - SES am the  
(Insert name above) (Insert official  
title/series/grade above)

Principal EEO Director/Official for USDA-Farm Production and Conservation (BC, FSA, NRCS and RMA)  
(Insert Agency/Component Name above)

The agency has conducted an annual self-assessment of section 717 and section 501 programs against the essential elements as prescribed by EEO MD-715. If an essential element was not fully compliant with the standards of EEO MD-715, a further evaluation was conducted, and as appropriate, EEO Plans for Attaining the Essential Elements of a Model EEO Program are included with this Federal Agency Annual EEO Program Status Report.

The agency has also analyzed its work force profiles and conducted barrier analyses aimed at detecting whether any management or personnel policy, procedure or practice is operating to disadvantage any group based on race, national origin, gender or disability. EEO Plans to Eliminate Identified Barriers, as appropriate, are included with this Federal Agency Annual EEO Program Status Report.

I certify that proper documentation of this assessment is in place and is being maintained for EEOC review upon request.

Signature of Principal EEO Director/Official  
Certifies that this Federal Agency Annual EEO Program Status Report is in compliance with  
EEO MD-715.

Date

Signature of Agency Head or Agency Head Designee

Date

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**MD-715 - PART G**  
**Agency Self-Assessment Checklist**

The Part G Self-Assessment Checklist is a series of questions designed to provide federal agencies with an effective means for conducting the annual self-assessment required in Part F of MD-715. This self-assessment permits EEO Directors to recognize, and to highlight for their senior staff, deficiencies in their EEO program that the agency must address to comply with MD-715's requirements. Nothing in Part G prevents agencies from establishing additional practices that exceed the requirements set forth in this checklist.

All agencies will be required to submit Part G to EEOC. Although agencies need not submit documentation to support their Part G responses, they must maintain such documentation on file and make it available to EEOC upon request.

The Part G checklist is organized to track the MD-715 essential elements. As a result, a single substantive matter may appear in several different sections, but in different contexts. For example, questions about establishing an anti-harassment policy fall within Element C (Management and Program Accountability), while questions about providing training under the anti-harassment policy are found in Element A (Demonstrated Commitment from Agency Leadership).



For each MD-715 essential element, the Part G checklist provides a series of "compliance indicators." Each compliance indicator, in turn, contains a series of "yes/no" questions, called "measures." To the right of the measures, there are two columns, one for the agency to answer the measure with "Yes", "No", or "NA;" and the second column for the agency to provide "comments", if necessary. Agencies should briefly explain any "N/A" answer in the comments. For example, many of the sub-component agencies are not responsible for issuing final agency decisions (FADs) in the EEO complaint process, so it may answer questions about FAD timeliness with "NA" and explain in the comments column that the parent agency drafts all FADs.

A "No" response to any measure in Part G is a program deficiency. For each such "No" response, an agency will be required in Part H to identify a plan for correcting the identified deficiency. If one or more sub-components answer "No" to a particular question, the agency-wide/parent agency's report should also include that "No" response.



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## MD-715 - PART G

### Agency Self-Assessment Checklist



<b>Essential Element A: DEMONSTRATED COMMITMENT FROM AGENCY LEADERSHIP</b>				
<b>This element requires the agency head to communicate a commitment to equal employment opportunity and a discrimination-free workplace.</b>				
 Compliance Indicator  Measures		Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments	Current Part G Questions
<b>A.1.a</b>	<b>A.1 – The agency issues an effective, up-to-date EEO policy statement.</b>	Yes	May 28, 2018	A.1.a.2
<b>A.1.b</b>	Does the agency annually issue a signed and dated EEO policy statement on agency letterhead that clearly communicates the agency's commitment to EEO for all employees and applicants? If "yes", please provide the annual issuance date in the comment's column. [see MD-715, II(A)]	Yes	<a href="https://www.ascr.usda.gov/civil-rights-statements">https://www.ascr.usda.gov/civil-rights-statements</a>	New
<b>A.2.a</b>	<b>A.2 – The agency has communicated EEO policies and procedures to all employees.</b>			
<b>A.2.a.1</b>	Does the agency disseminate the following policies and procedures to all employees?			
<b>A.2.a.2</b>	Anti-harassment policy? [see MD 715, II(A)]	Yes		New
<b>A.2.a.2</b>	Reasonable accommodation procedures? [see 29 C.F.R § 1614.203(d)(3)]	Yes		New
<b>A.2.b</b>	Does the agency prominently post the following information throughout the workplace and on its public website?			

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<b>A.2.b.1</b>	The business contact information for its EEO Counselors, EEO Officers, Special Emphasis Program Managers, and EEO Director? [see 29 C.F.R § 1614.102(b)(7)]	Yes	<a href="https://usdafpacbc.service-now.com/fpac?id=cr_intake&amp;sys_id=e49b6a62db45e7008ebefd721f961962">https://usdafpacbc.service-now.com/fpac?id=cr_intake&amp;sys_id=e49b6a62db45e7008ebefd721f961962</a>  <b>SEPMs:</b> <a href="https://myfpac.usda.gov/business-center/human-resources-division/workforce-programs-branch/special-emphasis-program/index.html">https://myfpac.usda.gov/business-center/human-resources-division/workforce-programs-branch/special-emphasis-program/index.html</a>	New
<b>A.2.b.2</b>	Written materials concerning the EEO program, laws, policy statements, and the operation of the EEO complaint process? [see 29 C.F.R § 1614.102(b)(5)]	Yes		A.2.c
<b>A.2.b.3</b>	Reasonable accommodation procedures? [see 29 C.F.R. § 1614.203(d)(3)(i)] If so, please provide the internet address in the comment's column.	Yes	<a href="https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_Notice/m4300_01.pdf">https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_Notice/m4300_01.pdf</a>	A.3.c
<b>A.2.c</b>	<b>Does the agency inform its employees about the following topics?</b>			
<b>A.2.c.1</b>	EEO complaint process? [see 29 CFR §§ 1614.102(a)(12) and 1614.102(b)(5)] If "yes", please provide how often.	Yes	Documents and policies are continuously available (24/7) online at the Agency's public website.	A.2.a
<b>A.2.c.2</b>	ADR process? [see MD-110, Ch. 3(II)(C)] If "yes", please provide how often.	Yes		New
<b>A.2.c.3</b>	Reasonable accommodation program? [see 29 CFR § 1614.203(d)(7)(ii)(C)] If "yes", please provide how often.	Yes		New
<b>A.2.c.4</b>	Anti-harassment program? [see EEOC Enforcement Guidance on Vicarious Employer Liability for Unlawful Harassment by Supervisors (1999), § V.C.1] If "yes", please provide how often.	Yes		New
<b>A.2.c.5</b>	Behaviors that are inappropriate in the workplace and could result in disciplinary action? [5 CFR § 2635.101(b)] If "yes", please provide how often.	Yes		A.3.b
 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>A.3 – The agency assesses and ensures EEO principles are part of its culture.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>  <b>New Compliance Indicator</b>	
<b>A.3.a</b>	Does the agency provide recognition to employees, supervisors, managers, and units demonstrating superior accomplishment in equal	Yes	<b>Ex. Of Awards</b>	New







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	employment opportunity? [see 29 CFR § 1614.102(a) (9)] If “yes”, provide one or two examples in the comments section.		Individual - NRCS Chief's National Civil Rights Award Recipient  Group - Chief's Awards for Workforce Diversity	
<b>A.3.b</b>	Does the agency utilize the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey or other climate assessment tools to monitor the perception of EEO principles within the workforce? [see 5 CFR Part 250]	Yes		New
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Essential Element B: INTEGRATION OF EEO INTO THE AGENCY'S STRATEGIC MISSION</b>  <b>This element requires that the agency's EEO programs are structured to maintain a workplace that is free from discrimination and support the agency's strategic mission.</b></p>				
 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>B.1 - The reporting structure for the EEO program provides the principal EEO official with appropriate authority and resources to effectively carry out a successful EEO program.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>	
<b>B.1.a</b>	Is the agency head the immediate supervisor of the person (“EEO Director”) who has day-to-day control over the EEO office? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(b)(4)]	Yes		B.1.a
<b>B.1.a.1</b>	If the EEO Director does not report to the agency head, does the EEO Director report to the same agency head designee as the mission-related programmatic offices? If “yes,” please provide the title of the agency head designee in the comments.	NA		New
<b>B.1.a.2</b>	Does the agency's organizational chart clearly define the reporting structure for the EEO office? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(b)(4)]	Yes		B.1.d
<b>B.1.b</b>	Does the EEO Director have a regular and effective means of advising the agency head and other senior management officials of the effectiveness, efficiency and legal compliance of the agency's EEO program? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(c)(1); MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]	Yes		B.2.a
<b>B.1.c</b>	During this reporting period, did the EEO Director present to the head of the agency, and other senior management officials, the "State of the agency" briefing covering the six essential elements of the model EEO program and the status of the barrier analysis process? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I)] If “yes”, please provide the date of the briefing in the comments column.	Yes	10/31/2018	B.2.b

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<b>B.1.d</b>	Does the EEO Director regularly participate in senior-level staff meetings concerning personnel, budget, technology, and other workforce issues? [see MD-715, II(B)]	Yes		New
 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>B.2 – The EEO Director controls all aspects of the EEO program.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments New Compliance Indicator</b>	
<b>B.2.a</b>	Is the EEO Director responsible for the implementation of a continuing affirmative employment program to promote EEO and to identify and eliminate discriminatory policies, procedures, and practices? [see MD-110, Ch. 1(III)(A); 29 CFR §1614.102(c)]	Yes		B.3.a
<b>B.2.b</b>	Is the EEO Director responsible for overseeing the completion of EEO counseling [see 29 CFR §1614.102(c)(4)]	Yes		New
<b>B.2.c</b>	Is the EEO Director responsible for overseeing the fair and thorough investigation of EEO complaints? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(c)(5)] [This question may not be applicable for certain subordinate level components.]	NA	In 2013 USDA centralized all formalized all EEO case processing functions. OASCR will prepare and process all conflict of interest cases, prepare and process employment investigation complaints, and final agency decisions, arising from allegations of discrimination.	New
<b>B.2.d</b>	Is the EEO Director responsible for overseeing the timely issuance of final agency decisions? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(c)(5)] [This question may not be applicable for certain subordinate level components.]	NA		New
<b>B.2.e</b>	Is the EEO Director responsible for ensuring compliance with EEOC orders? [see 29 CFR §§ 1614.102(e); 1614.502]	Yes		F.3.b
<b>B.2.f</b>	Is the EEO Director responsible for periodically evaluating the entire EEO program and providing recommendations for improvement to the agency head? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(c)(2)]	Yes		New
<b>B.2.g</b>	If the agency has subordinate level components, does the EEO Director provide effective guidance and coordination for the components? [see 29 CFR §§ 1614.102(c)(2) and (c)(3)]	NA		New



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 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>B.3 - The EEO Director and other EEO professional staff are involved in, and consulted on, management/personnel actions.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>	
<b>B.3.a</b>	Do EEO program officials participate in agency meetings regarding workforce changes that might impact EEO issues, including strategic planning, recruitment strategies, vacancy projections, succession planning, and selections for training/career development opportunities? [see MD-715, II(B)]	Yes		B.2.c & B.2.d
<b>B.3.b</b>	Does the agency's current strategic plan reference EEO / diversity and inclusion principles? [see MD-715, II(B)] If "yes", please identify the EEO principles in the strategic plan in the comments' column.	Yes	"Creating a climate of inclusion and foster diversity so private lands conservation will thrive". <a href="https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/about/acc/strategy/">https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/about/acc/strategy/</a>	New
 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>B.4 - The agency has sufficient budget and staffing to support the success of its EEO program.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>	
<b>B.4.a</b>	Pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.102(a)(1), has the agency allocated sufficient funding and qualified staffing to successfully implement the EEO program, for the following areas:			
<b>B.4.a.1</b>	to conduct a self-assessment of the agency for possible program deficiencies? [see MD-715, II(D)]	Yes		B.3.b
<b>B.4.a.2</b>	to enable the agency to conduct a thorough barrier analysis of its workforce? [see MD-715, II(B)]	Yes		B.4.a
<b>B.4.a.3</b>	to timely, thoroughly, and fairly process EEO complaints, including EEO counseling, investigations, final agency decisions, and legal sufficiency reviews? [see 29 CFR § 1614.102(c)(5) & 1614.105(b) – (f); MD-110, Ch. 1(IV)(D) & 5(IV); MD-715, II(E)]	Yes	In 2013 USDA centralized all formalized all EEO case processing functions. OASCR will prepare and process all conflict of interest cases, prepare and process employment investigation	E.5.b





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			complaints, and final agency decisions, arising from allegations of discrimination. <i>NRCS provides, prepares and processes EEO counseling only.</i>	
<b>B.4.a.4</b>	to provide all supervisors and employees with training on the EEO program, including but not limited to retaliation, harassment, religious accommodations, disability accommodations, the EEO complaint process, and ADR? [see MD-715, II(B) and III(C)] If not, please identify the type(s) of training with insufficient funding in the comment's column.	Yes		B.4.f & B.4.g
<b>B.4.a.5</b>	to conduct thorough, accurate, and effective field audits of the EEO programs in components and the field offices, if applicable? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(c)(2)]	Yes		E.1.c
<b>B.4.a.6</b>	to publish and distribute EEO materials (e.g. harassment policies, EEO posters, reasonable accommodations procedures)? [see MD-715, II(B)]	Yes		B.4.c
<b>B.4.a.7</b>	to maintain accurate data collection and tracking systems for the following types of data: complaint tracking, workforce demographics, and applicant flow data? [see MD-715, II(E)]. If not, please identify the systems with insufficient funding in the comments section.	Yes		New
<b>B.4.a.8</b>	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]	Yes		B.3.c, B.3.c.1, B.3.c.2, & B.3.c.3
<b>B.4.a.9</b>	to effectively manage its anti-harassment program? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I); EEOC Enforcement Guidance on Vicarious Employer Liability for Unlawful Harassment by Supervisors (1999), § V.C.1]	Yes		New
<b>B.4.a.10</b>	to effectively manage its reasonable accommodation program? [see 29 CFR § 1614.203(d)(4)(ii)]	Yes		B.4.d
<b>B.4.a.11</b>	to ensure timely and complete compliance with EEOC orders? [see MD-715, II(E)]	Yes		New
<b>B.4.b</b>	Does the EEO office have a budget that is separate from other offices within the agency? [see 29 CFR § 1614.102(a)(1)]	Yes		New
<b>B.4.c</b>	Are the duties and responsibilities of EEO officials clearly defined? [see MD-110, Ch. 1(III)(A), 2(III), & 6(III)]	Yes		B.1.b
<b>B.4.d</b>	Does the agency ensure that all new counselors and investigators, including contractors and collateral duty employees, receive the required 32 hours of training, pursuant to Ch. 2(II)(A) of MD-110?	Yes		E.2.d



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<b>B.4.e</b>	Does the agency ensure that all experienced counselors and investigators, including contractors and collateral duty employees, receive the required 8 hours of annual refresher training, pursuant to Ch. 2(II)(C) of MD-110?	Yes		E.2.e
 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>B.5 – The agency recruits, hires, develops, and retains supervisors and managers who have effective managerial, communications, and interpersonal skills.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>  <b>New Indicator</b>	
<b>B.5.a</b>	Pursuant to 29 CFR § 1614.102(a)(5), have all managers and supervisors received training on their responsibilities under the following areas under the agency EEO program:			
<b>B.5.a.1</b>	EEO Complaint Process? [see MD-715(II)(B)]	Yes	.	New
<b>B.5.a.2</b>	Reasonable Accommodation Procedures? [see 29 C.F.R. § 1614.102(d)(3)]	Yes		A.3.d
<b>B.5.a.3</b>	Anti-Harassment Policy? [see MD-715(II)(B)]	No	NRCS submitted its renewed comprehensive Anti-Harassment policy to the USDA Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR) and the U.S. EEOC and are awaiting validation and acceptance in order to begin implementation of the retooled Anti-Harassment Program	New
<b>B.5.a.4</b>	Supervisory, managerial, communication, and interpersonal skills in order to supervise most effectively in a workplace with diverse employees and avoid disputes arising from ineffective communications? [see MD-715, II(B)]	Yes		New
<b>B.5.a.5</b>	ADR, with emphasis on the federal government's interest in encouraging mutual resolution of disputes and the benefits associated with utilizing ADR? [see MD-715(II)(E)]	Yes		E.4.b



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 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>B.6 – The agency involves managers in the implementation of its EEO program.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>  <b>New Indicator</b>	
<b>B.6.a</b>	Are senior managers involved in the implementation of Special Emphasis Programs? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]	Yes		New
<b>B.6.b</b>	Do senior managers participate in the barrier analysis process? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]	Yes		D.1.a
<b>B.6.c</b>	When barriers are identified, do senior managers assist in developing agency EEO action plans (Part I, Part J, or the Executive Summary)? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]	Yes		D.1.b
<b>B.6.d</b>	Do senior managers successfully implement EEO Action Plans and incorporate the EEO Action Plan Objectives into agency strategic plans? [29 CFR § 1614.102(a)(5)]	Yes		D.1.c
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Essential Element C: MANAGEMENT AND PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY</b>  <b>This element requires the agency head to hold all managers, supervisors, and EEO officials responsible for the effective implementation of the agency's EEO Program and Plan.</b></p>				
 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>C.1 – The agency conducts regular internal audits of its component and field offices.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>	
<b>C.1.a</b>	Does the agency regularly assess its component and field offices for possible EEO program deficiencies? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(c)(2)] If "yes", please provide the schedule for conducting audits in the comments section.	Yes	The FY2019 schedule was modified to 3 reviews in Quarter 4 FY2019 due to reorganization of the FBC	New
<b>C.1.b</b>	Does the agency regularly assess its component and field offices on their efforts to remove barriers from the workplace? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(c)(2)] If "yes", please provide the schedule for conducting audits in the comments section.	Yes	Please see comment above.	New
<b>C.1.c</b>	Do the component and field offices make reasonable efforts to comply with the recommendations of the field audit? [see MD-715, II(C)]	Yes		New

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 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>C.2 – The agency has established procedures to prevent all forms of EEO discrimination.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments  New Indicator</b>	
<b>C.2.a</b>	Has the agency established comprehensive anti-harassment policy and procedures that comply with EEOC's enforcement guidance? [see MD-715, II(C); Enforcement Guidance on Vicarious Employer Liability for Unlawful Harassment by Supervisors (Enforcement Guidance), EEOC No. 915.002, § V.C.1 (June 18, 1999)]	NA	NRCS aligns with the Anti-Harassment statement and guidance and OneUSDA policy issued and signed by the Agriculture Secretary on May 28, 2018	New
<b>C.2.a.1</b>	Does the anti-harassment policy require corrective action to prevent or eliminate conduct before it rises to the level of unlawful harassment? [see EEOC Enforcement Guidance on Vicarious Employer Liability for Unlawful Harassment by Supervisors (1999), § V.C.1]	Yes		New
<b>C.2.a.2</b>	Has the agency established a firewall between the Anti-Harassment Coordinator and the EEO Director? [see EEOC Report, Model EEO Program Must Have an Effective Anti-Harassment Program (2006)]	Yes		New
<b>C.2.a.3</b>	Does the agency have a separate procedure (outside the EEO complaint process) to address harassment allegations? [see Enforcement Guidance on Vicarious Employer Liability for Unlawful Harassment by Supervisors (Enforcement Guidance), EEOC No. 915.002, § V.C.1 (June 18, 1999)]	Yes		New
<b>C.2.a.4</b>	Does the agency ensure that the EEO office informs the anti-harassment program of all EEO counseling activity alleging harassment? [see Enforcement Guidance, V.C.]	Yes		New
<b>C.2.a.5</b>	Does the agency conduct a prompt inquiry (beginning within 10 days of notification) of all harassment allegations, including those initially raised in the EEO complaint process? [see <u>Complainant v. Dep't of Veterans Affairs</u> , EEOC Appeal No. 0120123232 (May 21, 2015); <u>Complainant v. Dep't of Defense (Defense Commissary Agency)</u> , EEOC Appeal No. 0120130331 (May 29, 2015)] If "no", please provide the percentage of timely-processed inquiries in the comment's column.	Yes		New
<b>C.2.a.6</b>	Do the agency's training materials on its anti-harassment policy include examples of disability-based harassment? [see 29 CFR 1614.203(d)(2)]	Yes		New
<b>C.2.b</b>	Has the agency established disability reasonable accommodation procedures that comply with EEOC's regulations and guidance? [see 29 CFR 1614.203(d)(3)]	Yes		New

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<b>C.2.b.1</b>	Is there a designated agency official or other mechanism in place to coordinate or assist with processing requests for disability accommodations throughout the agency? [see 29 CFR 1614.203(d)(3)(D)]	Yes		E.1.d
<b>C.2.b.2</b>	Has the agency established a firewall between the Reasonable Accommodation Program Manager and the EEO Director? [see MD-110, Ch. 1(IV)(A)]	Yes		New
<b>C.2.b.3</b>	Does the agency ensure that job applicants can request and receive reasonable accommodations during the application and placement processes? [see 29 CFR 1614.203(d)(1)(ii)(B)]	Yes		New
<b>C.2.b.4</b>	Do the reasonable accommodation procedures clearly state that the agency should process the request within a maximum amount of time (e.g., 20 business days), as established by the agency in its affirmative action plan? [see 29 CFR 1614.203(d)(3)(i)(M)]	Yes		New
<b>C.2.b.5</b>	Does the agency process all accommodation requests 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 in the comment's column.	Yes		E.1.e
<b>C.2.c</b>	Has the agency established procedures for processing requests for personal assistance services that comply with EEOC's regulations, enforcement guidance, and other applicable executive orders, guidance, and standards? [see 29 CFR 1614.203(d)(6)]	Yes		New
<b>C.2.c.1</b>	Does the agency post its procedures for processing requests for Personal Assistance Services on its public website? [see 29 CFR § 1614.203(d)(5)(v)] If "yes", please provide the internet address in the comment's column.	Yes	<a href="#">FPAC-PM-4300-01 RA Manual Procedures</a>	New
 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>C.3 - The agency evaluates managers and supervisors on their efforts to ensure equal employment opportunity.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>  <b>New Indicator</b>	
<b>C.3.a</b>	Pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.102(a)(5), do all managers and supervisors have an element in their performance appraisal that evaluates their commitment to agency EEO policies and principles and their participation in the EEO program?	Yes		New
<b>C.3.b</b>	Does the agency require rating officials to evaluate the performance of managers and supervisors based on the following activities:			







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<b>C.3.b.1</b>	Resolve EEO problems/disagreements/conflicts, including the participation in ADR proceedings? [see MD-110, Ch. 3.I]	Yes		A.3.a.1
<b>C.3.b.2</b>	Ensure full cooperation of employees under his/her supervision with EEO officials, such as counselors and investigators? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(b)(6)]	Yes		A.3.a.4
<b>C.3.b.3</b>	Ensure a workplace that is free from all forms of discrimination, including harassment and retaliation? [see MD-715, II(C)]	Yes		A.3.a.5
<b>C.3.b.4</b>	Ensure that subordinate supervisors have effective managerial, communication, and interpersonal skills to supervise in a workplace with diverse employees? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]	Yes		A.3.a.6
<b>C.3.b.5</b>	Provide religious accommodations when such accommodations do not cause an undue hardship? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(a)(7)]	Yes		A.3.a.7
<b>C.3.b.6</b>	Provide disability accommodations when such accommodations do not cause an undue hardship? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(a)(8)]	Yes		A.3.a.8
<b>C.3.b.7</b>	Support the EEO program in identifying and removing barriers to equal opportunity. [see MD-715, II(C)]	Yes		New
<b>C.3.b.8</b>	Support the anti-harassment program in investigating and correcting harassing conduct. [see Enforcement Guidance, V.C.2]	Yes		A.3.a.2
<b>C.3.b.9</b>	Comply with settlement agreements and orders issued by the agency, EEOC, and EEO-related cases from the Merit Systems Protection Board, labor arbitrators, and the Federal Labor Relations Authority? [see MD-715, II(C)]	Yes		New
<b>C.3.c</b>	Does the EEO Director recommend to the agency head improvements or corrections, including remedial or disciplinary actions, for managers and supervisors who have failed in their EEO responsibilities? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(c)(2)]	Yes		New
<b>C.3.d</b>	When the EEO Director recommends remedial or disciplinary actions, are the recommendations regularly implemented by the agency? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(c)(2)]	Yes		New
 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>C.4 – The agency ensures effective coordination between its EEO programs and Human Resources (HR) program.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>	
<b>C.4.a</b>	Do the HR Director and the EEO Director meet regularly to assess whether personnel programs, policies, and procedures conform to	Yes		New





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	EEOC laws, instructions, and management directives? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(a)(2)]			
<b>C.4.b</b>	Has the agency established timetables/schedules to review at regular intervals its merit promotion program, employee recognition awards program, employee development/training programs, and management/personnel policies, procedures, and practices for systemic barriers that may be impeding full participation in the program by all EEO groups? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]	Yes		C.2.a, C.2.b, & C.2.c
<b>C.4.c</b>	Does the EEO office have timely access to accurate and complete data (e.g., demographic data for workforce, applicants, training programs, etc.) required to prepare the MD-715 workforce data tables? [see 29 CFR §1614.601(a)]	Yes		New
<b>C.4.d</b>	Does the HR office timely provide the EEO office with access to other data (e.g., exit interview data, climate assessment surveys, and grievance data), upon request? [see MD-715, II(C)]	Yes		New
<b>C.4.e</b>	Pursuant to Section II(C) of MD-715, does the EEO office collaborate with the HR office to:			
<b>C.4.e.1</b>	Implement the Affirmative Action Plan for Individuals with Disabilities? [see 29 CFR §1614.203(d); MD-715, II(C)]	Yes		New
<b>C.4.e.2</b>	Develop and/or conduct outreach and recruiting initiatives? [see MD-715, II(C)]	Yes		New
<b>C.4.e.3</b>	Develop and/or provide training for managers and employees? [see MD-715, II(C)]	Yes		New
<b>C.4.e.4</b>	Identify and remove barriers to equal opportunity in the workplace? [see MD-715, II(C)]	Yes		New
<b>C.4.e.5</b>	Assist in preparing the MD-715 report? [see MD-715, II(C)]	Yes		New
 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>C.5 – Following a finding of discrimination, the agency explores whether it should take a disciplinary action.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>	
<b>C.5.a</b>	Does the agency have a disciplinary policy and/or table of penalties that covers discriminatory conduct? [see 29 CFR § 1614.102(a)(6); see also <u>Douglas v. Veterans Administration</u> , 5 MSPR 280 (1981)]	Yes		C.3.a.
<b>C.5.b</b>	When appropriate, does the agency discipline or sanction managers and employees for discriminatory conduct? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(a)(6)] If	Yes	NRCS had zero (0) findings of	C.3.c




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	"yes", please state the number of disciplined/sanctioned individuals during this reporting period in the comments.		discrimination during FY19	
<b>C.5.c</b>	If the agency has a finding of discrimination (or settles cases in which a finding was likely), does the agency inform managers and supervisors about the discriminatory conduct? [see MD-715, II(C)]	Yes		New
 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>C.6 – The EEO office advises managers/supervisors on EEO matters.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>	
<b>C.6.a</b>	Does the EEO office provide management/supervisory officials with regular EEO updates on at least an annual basis, including EEO complaints, workforce demographics and data summaries, legal updates, barrier analysis plans, and special emphasis updates? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I] If "yes", please identify the frequency of the EEO updates in the comments column.	Yes	Bi-monthly Leadership meetings	C.1.a
<b>C.6.b</b>	Are EEO officials readily available to answer managers' and supervisors' questions or concerns? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]	Yes		New
<b>Essential Element D: PROACTIVE PREVENTION</b>				
<b>This element requires that the agency head make early efforts to prevent discrimination and to identify and eliminate barriers to equal employment opportunity.</b>				
 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>D.1 – The agency conducts a reasonable assessment to monitor progress towards achieving equal employment opportunity throughout the year.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>	
<b>D.1.a</b>	Does the agency have a process for identifying triggers in the workplace? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]	Yes		New
<b>D.1.b</b>	Does the agency regularly use the following sources of information for trigger identification: workforce data; complaint/grievance data; exit surveys; employee climate surveys; focus groups; affinity groups; union; program evaluations; special emphasis programs; reasonable accommodation program; anti-harassment program; and/or external special interest groups? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]	Yes		New
<b>D.1.c</b>	Does the agency conduct exit interviews or surveys that include questions on how the agency could improve the recruitment, hiring,	Yes		New


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	inclusion, retention and advancement of individuals with disabilities? [see 29 CFR 1614.203(d)(1)(iii)(C)]			
 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>D.2 – The agency identifies areas where barriers may exclude EEO groups (reasonable basis to act.)</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments New Indicator</b>	
<b>D.2.a</b>	Does the agency have a process for analyzing the identified triggers to find possible barriers? [see MD-715, (II)(B)]	Yes		New
<b>D.2.b</b>	Does the agency regularly examine the impact of management/personnel policies, procedures, and practices by race, national origin, sex, and disability? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(a)(3)]	Yes		B.2.c.2
<b>D.2.c</b>	Does the agency consider whether any group of employees or applicants might be negatively impacted prior to making human resource decisions, such as re-organizations and realignments? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(a)(3)]	Yes		B.2.c.1
<b>D.2.d</b>	Does the agency regularly review the following sources of information to find barriers: complaint/grievance data, exit surveys, employee climate surveys, focus groups, affinity groups, union, program evaluations, anti-harassment program, special emphasis programs, reasonable accommodation program; anti-harassment program; and/or external special interest groups? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I] If “yes”, please identify the data sources in the comment column.	Yes	Workforce Data Complaints Data Exit Surveys SEPM Program Employee Climate Survey (FEVS)	New
 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>D.3 – The agency establishes appropriate action plans to remove identified barriers.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments New Indicator</b>	
<b>D.3.a.</b>	Does the agency effectively tailor action plans to address the identified barriers, in particular policies, procedures, or practices? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(a)(3)]	Yes		New





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<b>D.3.b</b>	If the agency identified one or more barriers during the reporting period, did the agency implement a plan in Part I, including meeting the target dates for the planned activities? [see MD-715, II(D)]	Yes		New
<b>D.3.c</b>	Does the agency periodically review the effectiveness of the plans? [see MD-715, II(D)]	Yes		New
 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>D.4 – The agency has an affirmative action plan for people with disabilities, including those with targeted disabilities.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b> <b>New Indicator</b>	
<b>D.4.a</b>	Does the agency post its affirmative action plan on its public website? [see 29 CFR 1614.203(d)(4)] Please provide the internet address in the comments.	No	FPAC doesn't have a public website. (Intranet only) <a href="https://myfpac.usda.gov/business-center/civil-rights-and-equal-opportunity-division/index.html">https://myfpac.usda.gov/business-center/civil-rights-and-equal-opportunity-division/index.html</a>	New
<b>D.4.b</b>	Does the agency take specific steps to ensure qualified people with disabilities are aware of and encouraged to apply for job vacancies? [see 29 CFR 1614.203(d)(1)(i)]	Yes		New
<b>D.4.c</b>	Does the agency ensure that disability-related questions from members of the public are answered promptly and correctly? [see 29 CFR 1614.203(d)(1)(ii)(A)]	Yes		New
<b>D.4.d</b>	Has the agency taken specific steps that are reasonably designed to increase the number of persons with disabilities or targeted disabilities employed at the agency until it meets the goals? [see 29 CFR 1614.203(d)(7)(ii)]	Yes		New
<b>Essential Element E: EFFICIENCY</b>				
<b>This element requires the agency head to ensure that there are effective systems for evaluating the impact and effectiveness of the agency's EEO programs and an efficient and fair dispute resolution process.</b>				
		<b>Measure Met?</b>	<b>Comments</b>	



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<b>Compliance Indicator</b>	<b>E.1 - The agency maintains an efficient, fair, and impartial complaint resolution process.</b>	<b>(Yes/No/NA)</b>		
 <b>Measures</b>				
<b>E.1.a</b>	Does the agency timely provide EEO counseling, pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.105?	Yes		E.3.a.1
<b>E.1.b</b>	Does the agency provide written notification of rights and responsibilities in the EEO process during the initial counseling session, pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.105(b)(1)?	Yes		E.3.a.2
<b>E.1.c</b>	Does the agency issue acknowledgment letters immediately upon receipt of a formal complaint, pursuant to MD-110, Ch. 5(I)?	NA	In 2013 USDA centralized all formalized all EEO case processing functions. Process is centralized and handled by USDA, parent agency.	New
<b>E.1.d</b>	Does the agency issue acceptance letters/dismissal decisions within a reasonable time (e.g., 60 days) after receipt of the written EEO Counselor report, pursuant to MD-110, Ch. 5(I)? If so, please provide the average processing time in the comments.	NA		New
<b>E.1.e</b>	Does the agency ensure all employees fully cooperate with EEO counselors and EEO personnel in the EEO process, including granting routine access to personnel records related to an investigation, pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.102(b)(6)?	NA		New
<b>E.1.f</b>	Does the agency timely complete investigations, pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.108?	NA		E.3.a.3
<b>E.1.g</b>	If the agency does not timely complete investigations, does the agency notify complainants of the date by which the investigation will be completed and of their right to request a hearing or file a lawsuit, pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.108(g)?	NA		New
<b>E.1.h</b>	When the complainant does not request a hearing, does the agency timely issue the final agency decision, pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.110(b)?	NA		E.3.a.4
<b>E.1.i</b>	Does the agency timely issue final actions follow receipt of the hearing file and the administrative judge's decision, pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.110(a)?	NA		E.3.a.7
<b>E.1.j</b>	If the agency uses contractors to implement any stage of the EEO complaint process, does the agency hold them accountable for poor work product and/or delays? [See MD-110, Ch. 5(V)(A)] If "yes", please describe how in the comment's column.	NA		E.2.c
<b>E.1.k</b>	If the agency uses employees to implement any stage of the EEO complaint process, does the agency hold them accountable for poor	NA		New

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	work product and/or delays during performance review? [See MD-110, Ch. 5(V)(A)]			
<b>E.1.I</b>	Does the agency submit complaint files and other documents in the proper format to EEOC through the Federal Sector EEO Portal (FedSEP)? [See 29 CFR § 1614.403(g)]	NA		New
 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>E.2 – The agency has a neutral EEO process.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments Revised Indicator</b>	
<b>E.2.a</b>	Has the agency established a clear separation between its EEO complaint program and its defensive function? [see MD-110, Ch. 1(IV)(D)]	Yes		New
<b>E.2.b</b>	When seeking legal sufficiency reviews, does the EEO office have access to sufficient legal resources separate from the agency representative? [see MD-110, Ch. 1(IV)(D)] If “yes”, please identify the source/location of the attorney who conducts the legal sufficiency review in the comment’s column.	Yes	OGC provides legal sufficiency reviews.	E.6.a
<b>E.2.c</b>	If the EEO office relies on the agency’s defensive function to conduct the legal sufficiency review, is there a firewall between the reviewing attorney and the agency representative? [see MD-110, Ch. 1(IV)(D)]	Yes		New
<b>E.2.d</b>	Does the agency ensure that its agency representative does not intrude upon EEO counseling, investigations, and final agency decisions? [see MD-110, Ch. 1(IV)(D)]	Yes		E.6.b
<b>E.2.e</b>	If applicable, are processing time frames incorporated for the legal counsel’s sufficiency review for timely processing of complaints? [see EEOC Report, <i>Attaining a Model Agency Program: Efficiency</i> (Dec. 1, 2004)]	Yes		E.6.c
 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>E.3 - The agency has established and encouraged the widespread use of a fair alternative dispute resolution (ADR) program.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>	
<b>E.3.a</b>	Has the agency established an ADR program for use during both the pre-complaint and formal complaint stages of the EEO process? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(b)(2)]	Yes		E.4.a

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<b>E.3.b</b>	Does the agency require managers and supervisors to participate in ADR once it has been offered? [see MD-715, II(A)(1)]	Yes		E.4.c
<b>E.3.c</b>	Does the agency encourage all employees to use ADR, where ADR is appropriate? [see MD-110, Ch. 3(IV)(C)]	Yes		D.2.a
<b>E.3.d</b>	Does the agency ensure a management official with settlement authority is accessible during the dispute resolution process? [see MD-110, Ch. 3(III)(A)(9)]	Yes		New
<b>E.3.e</b>	Does the agency prohibit the responsible management official named in the dispute from having settlement authority? [see MD-110, Ch. 3(I)]	Yes		E.4.d
<b>E.3.f</b>	Does the agency annually evaluate the effectiveness of its ADR program? [see MD-110, Ch. 3(II)(D)]	Yes		New
 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>E.4 – The agency has effective and accurate data collection systems in place to evaluate its EEO program.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>	
<b>E.4.a</b>	Does the agency have systems in place to accurately collect, monitor, and analyze the following data?			
<b>E.4.a.1</b>	Complaint activity, including the issues and bases of the complaints, the aggrieved individuals/complainants, and the involved management official? [see MD-715, II(E)]	Yes		E.5.a
<b>E.4.a.2</b>	The race, national origin, sex, and disability status of agency employees? [see 29 CFR §1614.601(a)]	Yes		E.5.c
<b>E.4.a.3</b>	Recruitment activities? [see MD-715, II(E)]	Yes		E.5.f
<b>E.4.a.4</b>	External and internal applicant flow data concerning the applicants' race, national origin, sex, and disability status? [see MD-715, II(E)]	Yes		New
<b>E.4.a.5</b>	The processing of requests for reasonable accommodation? [29 CFR § 1614.203(d)(4)]	Yes		New
<b>E.4.a.6</b>	The processing of complaints for the anti-harassment program? [see EEOC Enforcement Guidance on Vicarious Employer Liability for Unlawful Harassment by Supervisors (1999), § V.C.2]	Yes		New
<b>E.4.b</b>	Does the agency have a system in place to re-survey the workforce on a regular basis? [MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]	Yes		New



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 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>E.5 – The agency identifies and disseminates significant trends and best practices in its EEO program.</b>	<b>Measure Met?</b> <b>(Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>	
<b>E.5.a</b>	Does the agency monitor trends in its EEO program to determine whether the agency is meeting its obligations under the statutes EEOC enforces? [see MD-715, II(E)] If “yes”, provide an example in the comments.	Yes	NRCS provides quarterly updates to the Department (OASCR)	E.5.e
<b>E.5.b</b>	Does the agency review other agencies’ best practices and adopt them, where appropriate, to improve the effectiveness of its EEO program? [see MD-715, II(E)] If “yes”, provide an example in the comments.	Yes	USDA’s MD 715 quarterly Work Group	E.5.g
<b>E.5.c</b>	Does the agency compare its performance in the EEO process to other federal agencies of similar size? [see MD-715, II(E)]	Yes		E.3.a
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Essential Element F: RESPONSIVENESS AND LEGAL COMPLIANCE</b>  <b>This element requires federal agencies to comply with EEO statutes and EEOC regulations, policy guidance, and other written instructions.</b></p>				
 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>F.1 – The agency has processes in place to ensure timely and full compliance with EEOC Orders and settlement agreements.</b>	<b>Measure Met?</b> <b>(Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>	
<b>F.1.a</b>	Does the agency have a system of management controls to ensure that its officials timely comply with EEOC orders/directives and final agency actions? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(e); MD-715, II(F)]	NA	In 2013 USDA centralized all formalized all EEO case processing functions. Process is centralized and handled by USDA, parent agency	F.1.a
<b>F.1.b</b>	Does the agency have a system of management controls to ensure the timely, accurate, and complete compliance with resolutions/settlement agreements? [see MD-715, II(F)]	NA		E.3.a.6
<b>F.1.c</b>	Are there procedures in place to ensure the timely and predictable processing of ordered monetary relief? [see MD-715, II(F)]	NA		F.2.a.1
<b>F.1.d</b>	Are procedures in place to process other forms of ordered relief promptly? [see MD-715, II(F)]	NA		F.2.a.2
<b>F.1.e</b>	When EEOC issues an order requiring compliance by the agency, does the agency hold its compliance officer(s) accountable for poor work product and/or delays during performance review? [see MD-110, Ch. 9(IX)(H)]	NA		F.3.a.

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 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>F.2 – The agency complies with the law, including EEOC regulations, management directives, orders, and other written instructions.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>  <b>Indicator moved from E-III Revised</b>	
<b>F.2.a</b>	Does the agency timely respond and fully comply with EEOC orders? [see 29 CFR §1614.502; MD-715, II(E)]	NA	In 2013 USDA centralized all formalized all EEO case processing functions. Process is centralized and handled by USDA, parent agency	C.3.d
<b>F.2.a.1</b>	When a complainant requests a hearing, does the agency timely forward the investigative file to the appropriate EEOC hearing office? [see 29 CFR §1614.108(g)]	NA		E.3.a.5
<b>F.2.a.2</b>	When there is a finding of discrimination that is not the subject of an appeal by the agency, does the agency ensure timely compliance with the orders of relief? [see 29 CFR §1614.501]	NA		E.3.a.7
<b>F.2.a.3</b>	When a complainant files an appeal, does the agency timely forward the investigative file to EEOC's Office of Federal Operations? [see 29 CFR §1614.403(e)]	NA		New
<b>F.2.a.4</b>	Pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.502, does the agency promptly provide EEOC with the required documentation for completing compliance?	NA		F.3.d (1 to 9)
 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>F.3 - The agency reports to EEOC its program efforts and accomplishments.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>	
<b>F.3.a</b>	Does the agency timely submit to EEOC an accurate and complete No FEAR Act report? [Public Law 107-174 (May 15, 2002), §203(a)]	Yes		New
<b>F.3.b</b>	Does the agency timely post on its public webpage its quarterly No FEAR Act data? [see 29 CFR §1614.703(d)]	NA	Reports are posted on the USDA Public website. <a href="https://www.usda.gov/nofear/agencies">https://www.usda.gov/nofear/agencies</a>	New

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**MD-715 – Part H**  
**Agency EEO Plan to Attain the Essential Elements of a Model EEO Program**

**Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency**

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
The agency conducts a reasonable assessment to monitor progress towards achieving equal employment opportunity throughout the year.	NRCS has identified a need to resurvey its employees to request a current assessment of employees' disability status through self-identification of due to expansion of the definition of disability over the years and the establishment of new targeted disability categories -- the likelihood that employees' disability status needs updated is great. The SF-256, Self-Identification of Disability form, the data collection tool used within the federal government was last updated October 2016.

**Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan**

Date Initiated (mm/dd/yyyy)	Objective	Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Date Completed (mm/dd/yyyy)
10/01/2018	Update the current assessment of PWD and PWT.D.	12/30/2020		

**Responsible Official(s)**

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
Chief Human Resources Officer	Melissa Drummond	Yes

**Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective**

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Funding & Staffing? (Yes or No)	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
09/30/2019	Develop a communication plan regarding resurveying the current workforce.	Yes		6/30/2019
12/31/2020	Resurvey agency employee population.	Yes		

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**Report of Accomplishments**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Accomplishments</b>
6/06/2019	Communication plan established.
6/30/2019	Draft notice to all FPAC (FSA, RMA, NRCS and Business Center) employees -completed.

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**MD-715 – Part I**  
**Agency EEO Plan to Eliminate Identified Barrier**

Please describe the status of each plan that the agency implemented to identify possible barriers in policies, procedures, or practices for employees and applicants by race, ethnicity, and gender.

√ If the agency did not conduct barrier analysis during the reporting period, please check the box.

**Statement of Condition That Was a Trigger for a Potential Barrier:**

Source of the Trigger	Specific Workforce Data Table	Narrative Description of Trigger
Participation of Hispanics remains below the National CLF	A1, 3, 8, 11, 14	On January 18, 2017, EEOC and OPM issued a joint memorandum to analyze the federal workforce for potential barriers involving the employment and advancement of Hispanics from grades GS-12 to the Senior Executive Service. <i>See attached analysis report.</i>

**EEO Group(s) Affected by Trigger**

EEO Group
Hispanic or Latino Males
Hispanic or Latino Females

**Barrier Analysis Process**

Sources of Data	Source Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
Workforce Data Tables	Yes	Current participation rates, hiring, and separation data.
Complaint Data (Trends)	Yes	Form 462
Grievance Data (Trends)	No	
Findings from Decisions (e.g., EEO, Grievance, MSPB, Anti-Harassment Processes)	No	
Climate Assessment Survey (e.g., FEVS)	Yes	Results from 2019 FEVS Survey.
Exit Interview Data	No	

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Sources of Data	Source Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
Focus Groups	No	
Interviews	No	
Reports (e.g., Congress, EEOC, MSPB, GAO, OPM)	No	
Other (Please Describe)	Yes	Monthly/quarterly HEPM meetings, Facilitated listening sessions

### Status of Barrier Analysis Process

Barrier Analysis Process Completed? (Yes or No)	Barrier(s) Identified? (Yes or No)
Yes	Yes

### Statement of Identified Barrier(s)

Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice
<b>Limited Resources and Sources for Recruiting:</b> Outreach activities at the State and field level are very limited. Time and resources needed to ensure effective outreach to the Hispanic community. Branding and marketing of targeted outreach activities and programs not specific toward Hispanic students.
<b>Lack of Competitive and Career-Ladder Opportunities:</b> Lack of Mid-to-Senior level detail assignments and other leadership opportunities

### Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan

Objective	Date Initiated	Target Date	Sufficient Funding & Staffing? (Yes or No)	Modified Date	Date Completed
Create a Plan of Work to supplement the National Hispanic Recruitment Initiative	02/01/2018	09/30/2018	Yes		12/31/2019
Dedicate resources to USDA's HSI grant projects	02/01/2018	09/30/2018	Yes		12/31/2019
Develop cooperative agreements for specific Hispanic partnering initiatives	02/01/2018	09/30/2018	Yes		12/31/2019

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### Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
National HEP Manager	Rick Tafoya	Yes

### Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
12/31/2020	Develop a branding campaign to market NRCS	9/30/2019	
12/31/2020	Partner with HSI/Hispanic serving Agricultural Institutions (HSAI) to provide USDA Pathways and USAJOBS training to minority students	9/30/2019	
12/31/2020	Provide training locations to Hispanic/minority students through a memorandum of understanding or the NRCS Earth Team Student Volunteer Program	9/30/2019	
12/31/2020	Improve tools for Hispanic employee leadership development	9/30/2019	

### Report of Accomplishments

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
<b>FY 2019</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed a FY 2019 Plan of Work building off the National Hispanic Recruitment Initiative, which was supported by Hispanic Agency leaders.</li> <li>• Implemented and dedicated resources to the collaborative USDA's HSI grant projects with the multiple HSI grant recipients throughout the country and Puerto Rico.</li> <li>• Developed cooperative agreements for specific Hispanic partnering initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) for \$180,000 to support five (10) internships. This is a collaboration with the USDA's Office of Partnership and Public Engagement (OPPE); formerly, the Office of Advocacy and Outreach and HACU to increase the number of Hispanic college students qualifying and competing for USDA Pathways program. The interns will have an opportunity to work with NRCS to gain practical natural resources management experience and learn about NRCS. Due to delays in the internal review and approval process, the interagency agreement was not signed in time so NRCS did not participate in the HACU summer session. A total of two interns were</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
	<p>placed and worked with NRCS for the HACU Fall session. The remaining balance of funds will either carry over into FY20 as part of an amendment process. If the HACU is no longer supported at the Department level, the remaining balance of funds will be de-obligated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hispanic Recruitment Initiative totaling \$500,000 was allocated in FY19, which help fund and expand the number of partnering HSI to seven nationwide.</li> <li>○ A component of the Hispanic Recruitment Initiative includes the Natural Resources Career Development Program (NRCDP), a third-party internship program. The NRCDP is in its fourth year and is starting to yield positive results, in part, due to direct work experience interns gain with the agency. This internship program is providing Hispanic students the opportunity to gain hands on, practical work experience, making them very competitive for NRCS Pathways positions. In FY19, NRCS hosted 38 NRCDP summer interns throughout the country.</li> <li>○ Notable results of the program include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In the 2018/19 school year-- 12 NRCDP interns applied and successfully obtained a USDA Pathways position (10 with NRCS and 2 with other USDA agencies). Of the 10 NRCS Pathways interns, 4 have since converted to permanent positions with NRCS.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><u>FY2016 - To Date</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 6 NRCS Pathways students graduated college-- all 6 converted to permanent positions with the agency.</li> <li>▪ 14 students are current pathways interns.</li> <li>▪ 4 out of five NRCDP Student Liaisons obtained an NRCS Pathways position</li> <li>▪ 2 additional students were selected for Pathways positions with other USDA agencies</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ During the 2018/2019 school year, four (4) NRCDP students are working as NRCS Liaisons between the university and the National HEPM, at each of the partner HSI. The student liaisons duties include targeted outreach and recruitment efforts, informational workshops, peer mentoring and regional high school outreach.</li> </ul>



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**Statement of Condition That Was a Trigger for a Potential Barrier:**

Source of the Trigger	Specific Workforce Data Table	Narrative Description of Trigger
Low Entry and High Exit of Asian American Permanent Employees	A1, 8, 14	High Separation Rates of Permanent Asian American Male and Female Employees. Statistical data on separation rates were reviewed and analyzed. The trend analysis of entry and exit rates reveal Asian employees are leaving NRCS faster than the agency is hiring. The high separation rate also erodes efforts to create a workforce reflective of the Nation.

**EEO Group(s) Affected by Trigger**

EEO Group
Asian Males
Asian Females

**Barrier Analysis Process**

Sources of Data	Source Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
Workforce Data Tables	Yes	Hiring and separation data / Trend analysis was conducted over a five-year period.
Complaint Data (Trends)	Yes	Form 462
Grievance Data (Trends)	No	
Findings from Decisions (e.g., EEO, Grievance, MSPB, Anti-Harassment Processes)	No	
Climate Assessment Survey (e.g., FEVS)	Yes	2019 FEVS Survey
Exit Interview Data	No	
Focus Groups	No	
Interviews	No	

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Sources of Data	Source Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
Reports (e.g., Congress, EEOC, MSPB, GAO, OPM)	No	
Other (Please Describe)	No	

### Status of Barrier Analysis Process

Barrier Analysis Process Completed? (Yes or No)	Barrier(s) Identified? (Yes or No)
Yes	Yes

### Statement of Identified Barrier(s)

Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice
<b>Hiring and Separations Practices:</b> Asian male and female employees exhibit low entry rates in Major Critical Occupations. The non-retirement separation rate is high and disproportionately affects the Asian workforce.

### Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan

Objective	Date Initiated (mm/dd/yyyy)	Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Sufficient Funding & Staffing? (Yes or No)	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Date Completed (mm/dd/yyyy)
Identify trends in non-retirement separations and identify ways to improve through employee surveys	02/01/2018	09/30/2022	Yes		

### Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
Chief Human Resources Officer	Melissa Drummond	Yes

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**Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective**

<b>Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b>	<b>Planned Activities</b>	<b>Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b>	<b>Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b>
12/31/2020	Analyze Applicant Flow data (Annually)		11/30/2019
09/30/2020	Encourage Asian employees to participate in training program employees to develop core competencies to be more competitive when applying for higher graded positions.		
12/31/2020	Use Employee Viewpoint survey to identify changes needed to improve employee satisfaction within two months of results and publication.		

**Report of Accomplishments**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Accomplishments</b>
FY 2019	Report preparers and analysts attended "Barrier Analysis" Trainings provided by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights in order to standardize format used to analyze workforce data.
FY2019	Prepared Disparate Treatment and Adverse impact analysis using FY2019 workforce separation/hiring data to gauge and update this barrier.

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**Statement of Condition That Was a Trigger for a Potential Barrier:**

Source of the Trigger	Specific Workforce Data Table	Narrative Description of Trigger
Major Critical Occupations (MCO) representation of minority women	A1, 6, 11	Minority females are not well represented in MCO that track toward upward mobility.

**EEO Group(s) Affected by Trigger**

EEO Group
Hispanic or Latino Females
Black or African American Females
Asian Females
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Females
American Indian or Alaska Native Females
Two or More Races Females

**Barrier Analysis Process**

Sources of Data	Source Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
Workforce Data Tables	Yes	Workforce profiles, New Hire, internal promotion (GS11-15)
Complaint Data (Trends)	Yes	Form 462
Grievance Data (Trends)	No	
Findings from Decisions (e.g., EEO, Grievance, MSPB, Anti-Harassment Processes)	No	
Climate Assessment Survey (e.g., FEVS)	Yes	2019 FEVS Survey

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<b>Sources of Data</b>	<b>Source Reviewed? (Yes or No)</b>	<b>Identify Information Collected</b>
Exit Interview Data	No	
Focus Groups	No	
Interviews	No	
Reports (e.g., Congress, EEOC, MSPB, GAO, OPM)	No	
Other (Please Describe)	Yes	Monthly/quarterly FWP Meetings

### Status of Barrier Analysis Process

<b>Barrier Analysis Process Completed? (Yes or No)</b>	<b>Barrier(s) Identified? (Yes or No)</b>
Yes	Yes

### Statement of Identified Barrier(s)

<b>Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice</b>
<p><b>Selection Criteria, Succession Planning and Retention Policy:</b> NRCS' major occupations that track for professional category leadership are the Soil Conservation Series – 0457, Soil Science Series – 0470 and Civil Engineering – 0810. Data shows that Hispanic, Black, and Asian females are not selected in the MCO positions for engineering and soil science despite meeting qualification standards and time in grade.</p>
<p>Policy and practices to review: NRCS selection criteria NRCS succession planning strategies NRCS on-boarding and retention policies</p>

### Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Date Initiated (mm/dd/yyyy)</b>	<b>Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b>	<b>Sufficient Funding &amp; Staffing? (Yes or No)</b>	<b>Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b>	<b>Date Completed (mm/dd/yyyy)</b>
Increase the representation of Hispanic, Black, and Asian females in MCO positions, specifically, engineering and soil science positions.	02/01/2018	09/30/2020	Yes		

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**Responsible Official(s)**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)</b>
Chief, Workforce Planning and Recruitment Section, BC	Dr. Sherry Dixon	Yes

**Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective**

<b>Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b>	<b>Planned Activities</b>	<b>Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b>	<b>Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b>
12/31/2020	Use Employee Viewpoint survey to identify changes needed to improve employee satisfaction within two (2) months of results and publication.		
12/31/2019	Analyze Applicant Flow Data (annually).		11/30/2019
12/31/2020	Encourage Hispanic, Black, and Asian females to participate in training program employees to develop the core competencies to be more competitive when applying for higher graded positions.		

**Report of Accomplishments**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Accomplishments</b>
FY 2019	Report preparers and analysts attended "Barrier Analysis" Trainings provided by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights in order to standardize format used to analyze workforce data.
FY2019	Prepared Disparate Treatment and Adverse impact analysis using FY2019 workforce separation/hiring data to gauge and update this barrier.

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

## Section I: Efforts to Reach Regulatory Goals

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

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

a. Cluster GS-1 to GS-10 (PWD)	Yes X	No 0
b. Cluster GS-11 to SES (PWD)	Yes X	No 0

During FY2019 NRCS has a permanent workforce of 9,075 permanent employees. 9.31 percent (845) employees in the permanent workforce voluntarily identified as having a disability which is below the EEOC benchmark of 12.00 percent.

Grade clusters for FY2019 contained the following:

GS 1 – 10: 10.12 percent (403)

GS 11 – SES-level: 8.68 percent (442)

Both grade clusters indicate a trigger as both are below the 12% benchmark goals of the EEOC and both have a slight decrease from last year's participation rates for PWD.

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

a. Cluster GS-1 to GS-10 (PWTD)	Yes 0	No X
b. Cluster GS-11 to SES (PWTD)	Yes 0	No X

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During FY2019, 2.91 percent (264) permanent NRCS employees identified as having a Targeted Disability (TD) which is above the EEOC goal of 2.00 percent.

NRCS targeted disabilities population in grade clusters revealed:

GS 1 –10: 3.04 percent (121)

GS 11 – SES level: 2.81 percent (143)

Both clusters are above the participation benchmark for targeted disabilities of 2.00 percent.

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

The agency communicates its goals to hiring officials through:

- Regular updates to Leadership during monthly/quarterly meetings
- Quarterly status reviews of NFC workforce data
- Newly established FPAC Data Analytics Team provides timely and on-demand workforce and business analytics using the Tableau System

## 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.

Yes X                  No 0

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	1			Michelle Jordan National Disability Emphasis Program Manager Diversity and Recruitment Branch Michelle.Jordan@usda.gov



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Disability Program Task	# of FTE Staff by Employment Status			Responsible Official (Name, Title, Office, Email)
	Full Time	Part Time	Collateral Duty	
Answering questions from the public about hiring authorities that take disability into account	1			Michelle Jordan National Disability Emphasis Program Manager Diversity and Recruitment Branch Michelle.Jordan@usda.gov
Special Emphasis Program for PWD and PWTD	1			Michelle Jordan National Disability Emphasis Program Manager Diversity and Recruitment Branch Michelle.Jordan@usda.gov
Processing reasonable accommodation requests from applicants and employees	2			Colette Ross and Marvin Jones Reasonable Accommodations Program Managers Benefits Services Branch Colette.Ross@usda.gov Marvin.Jones@usda.gov
Section 508 Compliance	1			Darren Ash Chief Information Officer Office of the Chief Information Officer darren.ash@wdc.usda.gov
Architectural Barriers Act Compliance	1			George Wood Real Property Leasing Officer george.wood@wdc.usda.gov

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.

Yes X                      No 0

- Special Emphasis Program training
- Disability Program training

## **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.

Yes X                      No 0

## Section III: Plan to Recruit and Hire Individuals with Disabilities

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

### **A. PLAN TO IDENTIFY JOB APPLICANTS WITH DISABILITIES**

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

The agency generally uses the following resources to identify PWD/PWTD students and applicants:

- Special Hiring Authorities
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- Veterans Administration – VR&E Employment Coordinators
- Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Nonpaid Work Experience Program
- Recruitment and Outreach Events
- Job and Career Fairs
- Third Party Cooperative Agreement

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.

Recruitment vehicles used by the agency include:

- Schedule A Hiring Authorities
- Veterans Recruitment Appointment (VRA)
- 30% or More 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 Affinity Program Managers have established relationships with specialists at vocational rehabilitation centers to develop a pool of qualified applicants for positions within the Agency. In many cases, qualified eligible candidates are referred from vocational rehabilitation offices or other organizations and groups representing persons with disabilities. Hiring officials are provided resumes and transcripts, if applicable, of qualified individuals for hiring consideration. The Affinity Program Managers forward the application and disability qualifying documents to the staffing specialists to review to ensure that applicants meet the qualifications of the positions and the eligibility requirements of the special hiring authorities.

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.

Yes X

No 0

N/A 0

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The Agency provided: "Hiring Flexibilities for Hiring Managers Overview" (Supervisory or Hiring Personnel) as a Webinar during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of FY 2019. The course was recorded and uploaded to the learning management system (AgLearn) and is available on-demand for hiring manager personnel.

## **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.

The Disability Emphasis Program Managers and Veterans Emphasis Program Managers establish and strengthen relationships with organizations and groups representing persons with disabilities.

## **C. PROGRESSION TOWARDS GOALS (RECRUITMENT AND HIRING)**

1. Using the goals of 12 percent for PWD and 2 percent for PWTD as the benchmarks, do triggers exist for PWD and/or PWTD among the new hires in the permanent workforce? If "yes", please describe the triggers below.

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

It's clear from the 2019 statistics (chart below) that Separations (Table B14) were much higher than Hires (Table B8) in both categories. This indicates a "Low Entry High Exit" trigger for this category. (Note: **Red** font indicates below the benchmark.)

<b>PWD Workforce Category</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>EEOC Federal Goal</b>	12.00%
<b>% PWD Hires</b>	9.33%
<b>% PWD Separations</b>	16.34%

<b>TD Workforce Category</b>	<b>2019</b>
<b>EEOC Federal Goal</b>	2.00%
<b>% TD Hires</b>	1.04%
<b>% TD Separations</b>	6.34%

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.

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

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Table B7 and B9: The Applicants and Hires Data for FY2019 wasn't released until after the report was certified by the NRCS Chief

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.

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

Table B7 and B9: The Applicants and Hires Data for FY2019 wasn't released until after the report was certified by the NRCS Chief

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.

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

Table B7 and B9: The Applicants and Hires Data for FY2019 wasn't released until after the report was certified by the NRCS Chief

## Section IV: Plan to Ensure Advancement Opportunities for Employees with Disabilities

Pursuant to 29 C.F.R §1614.203(d)(1)(iii), agencies are required to provide sufficient advancement opportunities for employees with disabilities. Such activities might include specialized training and mentoring programs, career development opportunities, awards programs, promotions, and similar programs that address advancement. In this section, agencies should identify, and provide data on programs designed to ensure advancement opportunities for employees with disabilities.

### **A. ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM PLAN**

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

It is agency policy to recruit qualified, diverse individuals to:

- 1) Ensure bringing the best qualified candidates to the attention of management;
- 2) Give employees an opportunity to receive fair, equitable, and appropriate consideration for higher level jobs;
- 3) Provide an incentive for employees to improve their performance and develop their knowledge, skills, and abilities; and
- 4) Provide career advancement opportunities for all employees, including PWD and PWTD.

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## **B. CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

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

The showcase career development opportunity that the Agency provides to its employees is the Strategic Leadership Development Program (SLDP). The SLDP is a 12-month program for aspiring strategic leaders. The program focuses on deepening knowledge and practicing skills. It includes: 1) classroom training (virtual or in-person); 2) participating on learning teams; 3) coaching and mentoring; 4) a targeted stretch assignment; and 5) a group project focused on an Agency priority, challenge, or opportunity. The program is designed to develop a pool of effective leaders who can move into positions with increasing strategic responsibilities within the Agency over the next five-years. Those interested in becoming state, regional, or national leaders may find this program of particular value.

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						
Fellowship Programs						
Mentoring Programs						
Coaching Programs						
Training Programs						
Detail Programs						
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.

a. Applicants (PWD)	Yes 0	No 0	NA X
b. Selections (PWD)	Yes 0	No 0	NA X

Currently, there is no system to collect and aggregate demographic data for FBC career development program applications.

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4. Do triggers exist for PWTD among the applicants and/or selectees for any of the career development programs identified? (The appropriate benchmarks are the relevant applicant pool for applicants and the applicant pool for selectees.) If "yes", describe the trigger(s) in the text box.

a. Applicants	(PWTD)	Yes 0	No 0	NA X
b. Selections	(PWTD)	Yes 0	No 0	NA X

Currently, there is no system to collect and aggregate demographic data for FBC career development program applications.

### **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)	Yes 0	No X
b. Awards, Bonuses, & Incentives (PWTD)	Yes X	No 0

The FY2019 suitable benchmark range to measure the inclusion for Total Time-off Awards (number of awards given) is between 7.69 - 7.89 percent.  
The current PWD participation rate is 11.19 percent which is well above the benchmark and does not indicate a trigger.  
The inclusion rate for PWTD lies at 5.59 percent and therefore indicates a trigger for this category.

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)	Yes 0	No X
b. Pay Increases (PWTD)	Yes 0	No X

The current inclusion rate benchmark for Quality Step Increase Awards is 9.70 percent for PWD and 3.35 percent for PWTD.  
PWD lies at 9.39 percent and PWTD lies at 3.25 percent for FY2019.  
There is no trigger for either category for QSI awards.

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

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**D. PROMOTIONS**

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

a. SES

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

b. Grade GS-15

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

c. Grade GS-14

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

d. Grade GS-13

I. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD)	Yes 0	No 0
II. Internal Selections (PWD)	Yes 0	No 0

NFC workforce data tables do not contain details for internal applicants by GS/SES Level.

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

a. SES

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

b. Grade GS-15

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

c. Grade GS-14

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

d. Grade GS-13

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

NFC workforce data tables do not contain details for internal applicants by GS/SES Level.

3. Using the qualified applicant pool as the benchmark, does your agency have a trigger involving PWD among the new hires to the senior grade levels? For non-GS pay plans, please use the approximate senior grade levels. If "yes", describe the trigger(s) in the text box.

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

NFC workforce data tables do not contain details for internal applicants by GS/SES Level.

4. Using the qualified applicant pool as the benchmark, does your agency have a trigger involving PWTD among the new hires to the senior grade levels? For non-GS pay plans, please use the approximate senior grade levels. If "yes", describe the trigger(s) in the text box.

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



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d. New Hires to GS-13 (PWTD)	Yes 0	No 0	NA X
------------------------------	-------	------	------

NFC workforce data tables do not contain details for internal applicants by GS/SES Level.

5. Does your agency have a trigger involving PWTD among the qualified *internal* applicants and/or selectees for promotions to supervisory positions? (The appropriate benchmarks are the relevant applicant pool for qualified internal applicants and the qualified applicant pool for selectees.) If “yes”, describe the trigger(s) in the text box.

a. Executives

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

b. Managers

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

c. Supervisors

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

NFC workforce data tables do not contain details for internal applicants by GS/SES Level.

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

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

NFC workforce data tables do not contain details for internal applicants by GS/SES Level.

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

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

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NFC workforce data tables do not contain details for internal applicants by GS/SES Level.

8. Using the qualified applicant pool as the benchmark, does your agency have a trigger involving PWTD among the selectees for new hires to supervisory positions? If "yes", describe the trigger(s) in the text box.
- |                                     |       |      |
|-------------------------------------|-------|------|
| a. New Hires for Executives (PWTD)  | Yes 0 | No 0 |
| b. New Hires for Managers (PWTD)    | Yes 0 | No 0 |
| c. New Hires for Supervisors (PWTD) | Yes 0 | No 0 |

NFC workforce data tables do not contain details for internal applicants by GS/SES Level.

## Section V: Plan to Improve Retention of Persons with Disabilities

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

### **A. VOLUNTARY AND INVOLUNTARY SEPARATIONS**

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

Yes 0      No 0      N/A X

Schedule A data was not available at the time of submission.

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

a. Voluntary Separations (PWD)	Yes 0	No X
b. Involuntary Separations (PWD)	Yes 0	No X

Both participation rates are within the inclusion range of 7.62% - 12.50%; thus, there is no indication of a trigger: Voluntary = 11.24% and Involuntary = 11.78%.

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

a. Voluntary Separations (PWTD)	Yes 0	No X
b. Involuntary Separations (PWTD)	Yes 0	No X

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Both participation rates are below the inclusion range of 7.62% - 12.50%; thus, there is no indication of a trigger.

- Voluntary = 4.41%
- Involuntary = 7.41%

4. If a trigger exists involving the separation rate of PWD and/or PWTB, please explain why they left the agency using exit interview results and other data sources.

Currently the exit interviews forms do not capture demographic data distribution by disability.

## **B. ACCESSIBILITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND FACILITIES**

Pursuant to 29 C.F.R. § 1614.203(d)(4), federal agencies are required to inform applicants and employees of their rights under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 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.ascr.usda.gov/>  
<https://www.usda.gov/accessibility-statement>  
<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/careers/join/>

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

The employees' and applicants' rights under the Architectural Barriers Act can be found in the websites and through a general look-up under the USDA website for the subject Act and filing. The ASCR Civil Rights portal is most direct.

<https://www.ascr.usda.gov/>  
<https://www.ascr.usda.gov/usda-civil-rights-agencies-and-offices>

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.

Currently, there are no plans to design any new programs, policies, or practices to improve accessibility of Agency facilities and/or technology.

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### **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 for processing initial requests for reasonable accommodations is approximately four weeks upon the receipt of the supporting medical documentation. The customer is allowed two weeks to obtain all the sufficient medical documentation to support their claim, and an additional two weeks regarding the interactive process with both the Requestor and the Decision Makers to draft and finalize an Accommodation Plan.

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.

Fiscal Year	# of Actual Requests	Approved	Denied	Pending	Withdrawn	Requested Reconsideration
FY19 (NRCS)	62	34	7	20	1	0
	%	54%	11%	32%	1%	0

The effectiveness of the policies and procedures of the existing reasonable accommodation program are evident regarding the timeliness in processing and the percentage of approvals  
FY19: 62 accommodation requests received, at an average timeframe of four weeks per request, with an 54% approval rate. *The Reasonable Accommodation Program presented four Webinars throughout the mission area involving Reasonable Accommodations and the actual process.*

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

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

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 PAS requirement was initiated in January 2018, and currently there hasn't been a case involving this requirement.

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## Section VI: EEO Complaint and Findings Data

### **A. EEO COMPLAINT DATA INVOLVING HARASSMENT**

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

Yes 0                      No X                      N/A 0

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

Yes 0                      No X                      N/A 0

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

The government-wide average for this measure 19.69%. The NRCS average for FY 2019 lies at 11.45%
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### **B. EEO COMPLAINT DATA INVOLVING REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION**

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

Yes 0                      No X                      N/A 0

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

Yes X                      No 0                      N/A 0

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

The government-wide average of this measure is 13.53%. The NRCS average for FY 2019 lies at 11.5%. All complaints were resolved by settlement agreement.
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## Section VII: Identification and Removal of Barriers

Element D of MD-715 requires agencies to conduct a barrier analysis when a trigger suggests that a policy, procedure, or practice may be impeding the employment opportunities of a protected EEO group.

1. Has the agency identified any barriers (policies, procedures, and/or practices) that affect employment opportunities for PWD and/or PWTD?

Yes X                      No 0

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

Yes X                      No 0

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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.

<b>Trigger 1</b>	Low Entry High Exit (LEHE) conditions may exist for hiring and separation of employees with targeted disabilities.	
<b>Barrier(s)</b>	<b>Hiring and Separations Practices:</b> Upon reviewing the 5-year trend data reveals "LEHE" conditions from FY 2014 through FY 2019 with regard to the hiring and separation rates for NRCS employees with disabilities and targeted disabilities.	
<b>Trigger 2</b>	"Blocked Pipeline" or "Glass Wall" conditions may exist in selecting PWD and PWTD for Executive/Senior level positions.	
<b>Barrier(s)</b>	<b>Selection Criteria, Succession Planning and Retention Policy</b> Some MCO series have low or no participation of employees with disabilities and employees with targeted disabilities.	
<b>Objective(s)</b>	Increase the participation rate of PWD and PWTD.	
<b>Responsible Official(s)</b>		<b>Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)</b>
Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer		Yes
<b>Barrier Analysis Process Completed? (Yes or No)</b>		<b>Barrier(s) Identified? (Yes or No)</b>
Yes		Yes
<b>Sources of Data</b>	<b>Sources Reviewed? (Yes or No)</b>	<b>Identify Information Collected</b>
Workforce Data Tables	Y	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Table B8: New Hires by Type of Appointment</li> <li>Table B14: Separations by Type of Separation</li> </ul>
Complaint Data (Trends)	Y	EEOC Form 462 Report
Grievance Data (Trends)	N	
Findings from Decisions (e.g., EEO, Grievance, MSPB, Anti-Harassment Processes)	N	
Climate Assessment Survey (e.g., FEVS)	N	
Exit Interview Data	N	
Focus Groups	N	
Interviews	N	
Reports (e.g., Congress, EEOC, MSPB, GAO, OPM)	N	
Other (Please Describe)	N	

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<b>Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b>	<b>Planned Activities</b>	<b>Sufficient Staffing &amp; Funding (Yes or No)</b>	<b>Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b>	<b>Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b>
12/31/2021	Develop a strategic plan for the recruitment, hiring and retention of individuals with disabilities.	<b>Yes</b>		
12/31/2021	Resurvey the workforce disability status through the employee self-identification process	<b>Yes</b>		
12/31/2021	Provide training to Hiring Managers regarding PWTD and PWD	<b>Yes</b>		

## Report of Accomplishments

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Accomplishments</b>
FY 2019	Report preparers and analysts attended "Barrier Analysis" Trainings provided by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights in order to standardize format used to analyze workforce data.

4. Please explain the factor(s) that prevented the agency from timely completing any of the planned activities.
  - Fully engaging Agency senior officials, hiring officials and DEPMs to explore strategies that can promote hiring of PWTD
5. For the planned activities that were completed, please describe the actual impact of those activities toward eliminating the barrier(s).
  - N/A -Target completions over a 2-year timeframe
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.
  - A diverse, highly skilled workforce is vital to the agency's mission, because it is the rich diversity of the FPAC / NRCS workforce that is the fabric of the agency's past, present, and future success. Most important, a diverse workforce directly impacts the successful delivery of the technical assistance and services that we provide. The FPAC mission area (FBC, FSA, NRCS and RMA) remains committed in developing a comprehensive barrier analysis to identify and evaluate barriers and means to eliminate them, real or perceived, in order to close the gap between the FPAC Mission-area's workforce representation and the National Civilian Labor Force

## **FY 2019 STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES RELATED TO EMPLOYMENT OF PWTD**

During FY2019 NRCS employed a permanent workforce of 9,077 permanent employees. 9.31 percent (855) employees in the permanent workforce voluntarily identified as having a disability which is below the EEOC benchmark of 12.00 percent and a slight decrease from last year's participation rates for PWD.

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The participation rate of PWTDD in the permanent workforce decreased from 3.31 percent (331) to 2.91 percent (291) which remained above the EEOC federal goal of 2.00 percent; however, continues to rank below the USDA community goal of 4.00 percent.

Within the PWTDD categories, the top 5 self-identified targeted disabilities included: 1.13 percent (128) hearing - deaf or serious difficulty hearing, 0.57 percent (52) vision - blind or serious difficulty seeing, 0.37 percent (34) partial or complete paralysis, 0.36 percent (33) significant psychiatric disorder and 0.15 percent (14) significant disfigurement.

The data shows 3.4 percent (18) Veteran new hires having self-identified disabilities and PWTDD for a participation rate of 0.56 percent (3) with no exceptions for federal transfers and by utilizing all other applicable veteran related authorities.

The participation rate of Senior/Mid/Other Managers and Executive Level occupational categories there were:

- Executive: 9.28 percent (9)
- Mid-Level: 7.22 percent (27)
- Entry-Level: 7.37 percent (14)
- Other Managers: 16.16 percent (53)

It is suspected that the participation rate data is not an accurate representation of the Agency's permanent workforce of PWD and PWTDD. A decade ago disability categories did not reflect newly identified information or categories at that time. FY2018 OPM and the EEOC determined that Executive branch agencies resurvey its employees to request a current assessment of employees' disability status through self-identification. This is due to expansion of the definition of disability over the years and the establishment of new targeted disability categories -- the likelihood that employees' disability status needs updated is self-evident. The SF-256, Self-Identification of Disability form, the data collection tool used within the federal government was last updated October 2016. FPAC plans to resurvey its workforce during the FY2019 – FY2020 time frame.

While self-identification is voluntary, self-identification of disability is essential for effective data collection and analysis of the agency's efforts. As the agency begins to develop a strategy to address the *"Affirmative Action for Individuals in Federal Employment"* final rule issued by EEOC requiring all federal agencies, beginning in 2018, to strive to compose 12.00 percent of the workforce with disabled individuals, including 2.00 percent PWTDD. An assessment of the current permanent workforce is a vital component for the agency to develop an effective strategy.

FPAC/FBC OHR in collaboration with NRCS continue to refine and expand its PWD Program:

- Fully engage Agency senior officials, hiring officials and DEPMs to explore strategies that can promote hiring of PWTDD;
- Work to participate in Individuals with Disabilities and Veterans Career Fairs;
- Improve the coordination between the DEPM and the Selective Placement Coordinator;
- Develop an Action/Hiring Plan for PWTDD;
- Ensure that training and workshops are provided to managers and supervisors on the use of special hiring authorities for qualified individuals, reasonable accommodations, ADR and prevention of harassment.
- Disseminate job announcement for targeted job series to the EEO community and other diverse constituent groups.
- Promote outreach activities by working closely with State DEPMs, VEPMs and Selective Placement Coordinators.
- Strengthen partnerships with the State DEPMs to address the effectiveness of recruitment, career development and retention initiatives for the PWTDD.



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## **PLANNED ACTIVITIES TOWARD COMPLETION OF OBJECTIVE**

### **1. Recruitment, Hiring and Retention**

- Develop and implement a strategic plan for the recruitment, hiring and retention of individuals with disabilities.
- Develop standardized language for all job announcements covering information and instructions to include applying under special hiring authorities, i.e. Schedule A; statement encouraging applicants with disabilities to apply; and information and instructions on how to request reasonable accommodations to include a point-of-contact.
- Monitor progress on hiring goals for major areas and occupations on a quarterly basis.
- Establish and enhance national contacts to expand disability program outreach and recruitment efforts.
- Ensure that tentative job offers include information about availability of reasonable accommodations.
- Expand education and awareness through continuous training and robust marketing efforts on recruiting and best practices for employing and retaining Persons with Disabilities (PWD) and Persons with Targeted Disabilities (PWTD).
- Develop and release a comprehensive Disability Employment Fact Sheet that provides managers and supervisors and hiring officials with information to increase the employment of persons with disabilities.
- Conduct in-depth analysis on separations for PWD and PWTD.
- Resurvey the workforce disability status through the employee self-identification process (SF-256, Self-Identification of Disability).

### **2. Training**

- Provide attitudinal training to address possible unconscious biases (e.g., myths and stereotypes about qualifications of PWD).
- Provide mandatory training to managers on hiring PWD and PWTD.
- Continue to provide training opportunities to Human Resources Specialists, hiring managers, Disability Emphasis Program Managers and Veterans Employment Program Managers on all aspects of disability employment including: recruiting, interviewing, using special hiring authorities, career development, providing reasonable accommodations, and utilizing the Department of Defense's Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP), which offers assistive technology devices, and services at no cost to the agency.

### **3. Career Development/Promotion**

- Explore sponsoring a career-counseling event for employees with disabilities, modeled on a new program instituted at FEMA for all employees.
- Identify and disseminate strategies and resources to increase participation of employees with disabilities in existing mentoring programs.
- Ensure equal access to all training and career development opportunities.
- Require all training and program announcements include statements that reasonable accommodations are available upon request.

## **REPORT OF FY 2019 REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS PROGRAM**

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<b>Number of Actual Requests</b>	<b>Approved</b>	<b>Denied</b>	<b>Pending</b>	<b>Withdrawn</b>	<b>Requested Reconsideration</b>
62	34	7	20	1	0
%	54%	11%	32%	1%	0