



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FY2024 – Farm Production and Conservation – AGFP

# **Federal Agency Annual EEO Program Status Report**

EEOC FORM 715-01

U.S. Equal Employment  
Opportunity Commission

**Civil Rights Equal Employment Opportunity Division**  
**FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION**  
FSA | NRCS | RMA | Business Center

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To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender

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# Parts A - D

## Agency Information

## Part A - Department or Agency Identifying Information

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

## Part B - Total Employment

Total Employment	Permanent Workforce	Temporary Workforce	Total Workforce
Number of Employees	17,111	357	17,468

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

Agency Leadership	Name	Title
Head of Agency	Robert Bonnie	Under Secretary, USDA, Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC)
Head of Agency Designee	Gloria Montaño Greene	Deputy Under Secretary, USDA, Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC)

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

Agency Leadership	Name	Title
Principal EEO Official	Willisa Donald	Director, Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity Division
Chief Human Capital Officer	Terri Meighan	Director, Human Resources Division

EEO Program Staff	Name	Title	Occupation Series	Pay Plan and Grade	Phone Number	Email Address
Principal EEO Director/Official	Willisa Donald	Director, Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity Division	0260	SES	202-880-2289 (Mobile)	Willisa.Donald@usda.gov
Affirmative Employment Program Manager	Michelle Hart	Chief, Equal Employment Complaints Processing & Resolution Branch	0260	GS-15	202-572-5817	Michelle.Hart@usda.gov
Complaint Processing Program Manager	Michelle Hart	Chief, Equal Employment Complaints Processing & Resolution	0260	GS-15	202-572-5817	Michelle.Hart@usda.gov
Special Placement Program Coordinator (Acting SPPC)	Shannon Logan	Human Resources Specialist	0201	GS-13	202-401-0165	Shannon.Logan@usda.gov
Women's and Veteran's Program Manager (SEPM)	April Wilson	EEO Specialist	0260	GS-13	417-683-4816	April.Wilson@usda.gov
Hispanic and Black Emphasis Program Manager (SEPM)	Travis Watkins	EEO Specialist	0260	GS-14	717-237-2147	Travis.Watkins@usda.gov
Asian American / Pacific Islander and American Indian/ Alaskan Native (SEPM)	Andy Cao Pham	Management and Program Analyst	0343	GS-13	301-504-0105	Andy.Pham@usda.gov
National Disability (SEPM)/National LGBTQ+ (SEPM)	Joshua D. Allen	EEO Specialist	0260	GS-13	802-522-0047	Joshua.Allen@usda.gov
Reasonable Accommodation Program Manager	Count Branham	Section Chief, Work/Life	0201	GS-14	202-401-0351	Count.Branham@usda.gov
Anti-Harassment Program Manager	Melinda Richards	Employee & Labor Relations/ PASS	0201	GS-14	301-504-0302	Melinda.Richards@usda.gov
ADR Program Manager	Michelle Hart	Chief, Equal Employment Complaints Processing & Resolution Branch	0260	GS-15	202-572-5817	Michelle.Hart@usda.gov
Compliance Manager	Carl Butler	Chief, Compliance and Training Branch	0260	GS-15	202-401-7197	Carl.Butler@usda.gov
MD-715 Preparer	Camille Kimbrough	Management and Program Analyst	0343	GS-13	301-504-0076	Camille.Kimbrough@usda.gov

## 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)
Farm Service Agency	Washington	DC	USA	AGFA	11001
Natural Resources Conservation Service	Washington	DC	USA	AG16	11001
Risk Management Agency	Washington	DC	USA	AG08	11001
FPAC Business Center	Washington	DC	USA	AG99	11001

## 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 optional documents?	Please respond Yes or No	Comments
Organizational Chart	Yes	
EEO Policy Statement	Yes	
Strategic Plan	Yes	USDA Agencies submit USDA's Departmental Strategic Plan.
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.

Did the agency submit the following optional documents?	Please respond Yes or No	Comments
Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP) Report	Yes	
Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP) Report	Yes	
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	No	



# Parts E

## Executive Summary: Mission



## Part E.1

### Executive Summary: Mission

#### Mission Area: Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC)

The Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC), a mission area under the administration of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, delivers commodity, conservation, credit, crop insurance, disaster, and other farm bill programs which support and strengthen the economic productivity of U.S. agriculture. FPAC agencies implement programs to help mitigate risks for farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners. These programs include crop insurance, conservation programs, farm safety net programs, lending, and disaster programs.

FPAC's mission is to provide economic opportunity through innovation, helping rural America to thrive; promoting agriculture production that better nourishes Americans while also helping feed others throughout the world; and to preserve our Nation's natural resources through conservation, restored forests, improved watersheds, and healthy private working lands.

- **FPAC Business Center (FBC)** - provides mission and enterprise support services to the Farm Service Agency (FSA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and Risk Management Agency (RMA).
- **Farm Service Agency (FSA)** - equitably serves all farmers, ranchers, and agricultural partners through the delivery of effective and efficient agricultural programs.
- **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** - delivers conservation solutions, so agricultural producers can protect natural resources and feed a growing world.
- **Risk Management Agency (RMA)** - serves America's agricultural producers through effective, market-based risk management tools which strengthen the economic stability of agricultural producers and rural communities.

FPAC's **Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity Division (CREEOD)** ensures equal employment opportunities and program access for all FPAC employees and customers. The division ensures that every employee, applicant, and program participant is treated with dignity, and respect by enforcing Civil Rights (CR) and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) statutes, protected federal laws, policies, management directives and executive orders.

#### Element A – Demonstrated Commitment from Agency Leadership

The USDA Secretary endorsed his Civil Rights (CR) and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) commitment with the issuance of the Civil Rights Policy Statement published in June 2024. The policy is prominently posted on USDA and FPAC websites. All current CR and EEO department directives and regulations are located on the USDA, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR) public website.

USDA Civil Rights and EEO Policy Statements and other EEO-related statements (i.e., Anti-Harassment, Reasonable Accommodations, and Personal Assistance Services, etc.) are available on the USDA public and intranet websites. Policy statements and other EEO-related documents are prominently posted at USDA service centers, offices, and employee bulletin boards in accordance with USDA and FPAC policy.

All four component Agency Heads provided the FPAC Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity Division (CREEOD) appropriate funding to support Civil Rights Training and Special Emphasis Programming in FY24. The funding was used to educate FPAC supervisors and employees on Civil Rights and EEO concepts and processes.

## Participation in Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS)

Employee participation in the FEVS granted the agency a tool to determine if agency actions improved engagement and has the intended effect on Civil Rights programs. This year's kickoff event and video was distributed by the Workforce Engagement group (link found at [FBC/WE/FEVSADMINISTRATION](#)) during May 2024 to ensure the widest audience and highest number of survey respondents possible.

FSA improved on each of the accessibility questions for the FY24 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey.

- I can easily make a request of my organization to meet my accessibility needs. (Increased by 4%).
- My organization responds to my accessibility needs in a timely manner. (Increased by 3.5%).
- My organization meets my accessibility needs. (Increased by 3.5%).

## FPAC Awards and Recognition

FPAC presented a total of 21,211 awards during FY24, where the agency acknowledged and recognized the accomplishments of its workforce. In comparison, there were 21,701 awards provided in FY23. Funding limitations for monetary awards resulted in an increased usage and number of Time-off Awards during FY24, which has been historically lower.

AWARDS CATEGORY	FY23	FY24
Time-Off Awards	2,233	3,083
Total Hours	30,840	42,128

## FPAC Mission Area Leadership Commitment

The **FPAC's Business Center** released its Strategic Plan during the 3rd quarter of 2024. The Strategic Plan 2024 - 2027 sets the direction for the next 4 years. The Agency commits to these five strategic goals: Provide Extraordinary Services, Foster an Innovative and Empowered Workforce, Promote and Enhance the Culture of the Business Center, Operate the Business Center as a Unified Team Dedicated to One Mission, and Provide Strategic Leadership across the FPAC Mission Area. This commitment will strategically reinforce the direction already understood by the FPAC workforce and will assist in meeting increasing demands and maintaining the momentum of Agency accomplishments.

The **Farm Service Agency** contracted with ORIGINALVOICE CONSULTING, L.L.C. was executed and work is ongoing to design and deliver system-wide, human-centered change management strategies.

**The following notices were published by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) leadership:** FSA employees were assigned agency-required training for completion before September 30, 2024. Required courses included:

- **Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Training** - LEP persons are those whose proficiency in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding English, as a result of national origin, is such that it would deny or limit their meaningful access to programs and services provided by the Department if language assistance was not provided. This course will review LEP program rules, regulations, and processes, and increase FPAC mission area employee knowledge and participation in FPAC's LEP services (telephonic interpretation/document translation/in person interpretation).
- **Get Growing Together** - This course will teach you how to cultivate good customer experience at USDA. It will provide a basic introduction and overview of USDA organizations, and mission areas. It will define customer experience and customer journey-mapping, as well as key skills and tools for customer experience.
- **Influencing Excellence Effective Leadership** - FSA provided 12 sessions training 340 new supervisors through National Leadership Training.
- **Skills for Success** - FSA has provided Skills for Success training to 111 trainers to train their states.
- **Formal Mentorship** - program available for new District Directors and Farm Loan Chiefs.

**AO-1861:** 2024 FSA Training Requirement on Federal Trust Responsibilities to Tribes  
FSA employees, State Committee (STC), and County Committee (COC) members were assigned agency-required training for completion before June 28, 2024. Required courses included:

- Tribal Trust Responsibility Training
- History of Federal Tribal Relationships Training
- Tribal Sovereignty Training
- Tribal Consultation Training

In addition, all STC and COC members are required to complete the paper-based training Working Effectively with Tribal Governments.

**AO-1882:** Language Access Guidance

This notice informs State and County Offices how to access the FPAC Mission Area Language Access Plan, FY24 - FY 2026; new policies and procedures to assist language access customers.

The EEO policy statement was provided to all national, state and county employees.

All USDA employees were required to complete Mandatory and Annual Anti-Harassment Training by March 4, 2024.

**PM-3080:** Whistleblower Policy for FSA County Office Employees

The notice provided guidance on the whistleblower protection policy for FSA County Office (CO) employees and processes for CO employees to file whistleblower complaints and retaliation claims.

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

Civil Rights and EEO principles are vital parts of the USDA Strategic Plan 2022-2027 which FPAC has fully integrated into its mission. CREEOD in partnership with the Human Resources Division (HRD) serves as a resource to hiring officials, managers, and supervisors to uphold and provide direction and guidance while monitoring critical activities to ensure a workplace free of barriers to equal employment opportunities.

The FPAC CREEO Director controls all aspects of the Civil Rights Program, including Equal Employment Opportunity Complaints Processing and Resolution (Title VII), Alternative Dispute Resolution, the Affirmative Employment Program, Program Complaints Processing and Resolution (Title VI), Limited English Proficiency Program, Civil Rights Impact Analyses, Civil Rights Compliance Reviews, and Civil Rights Training. CREEOD is sufficiently staffed and trained to carry out its responsibilities, assuring the integrity of the Civil Rights and EEO program. Additionally, the FPAC Under Secretary is the immediate supervisor of the Civil Rights and EEO Director, per the Elijah E. Cummings Act and 29 CFR 1614.

During FY24, the CREEOD Title VII Branch continued to make available the mission area directive FPAC-P CREEOD-001: Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Observers for Interview Panels with the express purpose to ensure interviews comply with federal civil rights and EEO laws. The Farm Service Agency developed an agency-wide EEO Observer Program with oversight from the Title VII EEO Complaints Team, who trained over 175 employees to serve as EEO observers for employment interviews.

Additionally, the Title VII Branch improved its Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Program by enhancing the Resolving Officials (RO) Training Program with new and updated training events:

- Mock Mediation for Resolving Officials - June 2024
- Resolving Official Training - July 2024
- Resolving Official Panel Discussion - August 2024

Resulting in twenty-seven (27) RO's trained-to-date:

- FBC = 8
- NRCS = 13
- RMA = 6

FSA allocated sufficient resources to create and/or maintain Title VII and Rehabilitation Act programs that: 1) identify and eliminate barriers that impair the ability of individuals to compete in the workplace because of race, national origin, sex or disability; 2) establish and maintain training and education programs designed to provide maximum opportunity for all employees to advance; and 3) ensure that unlawful discrimination in the workplace is promptly corrected and addressed.

The following notices were published by the Farm Service Agency (FSA) leadership:

**PM-3081**, Achievement Award and Employee Recognition Guidance, provided direction for recognizing employee accomplishments in FY24 with monetary awards, time off awards, and other forms of employee recognition, as well as, developing state employee recognition programs.

**PM-3082** announced FY24 FSA Administrator's Awards for Service to Agriculture. 148 individual and 43 team awards were given.

**PM-3083** announced County Office (CO) Program Technician (PT) Reclassification. CO PTs will now have a faster promotion path and increased pay potential.

**PM-3084** announced FY24 Student Loan Repayment Program. FSA approved 1,042 applications.

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

### **Compliance Review FY24 Schedule**

FPAC conducts management and program accountability reviews through our annual Civil Rights Compliance Review (CRCR) program. FPAC CREEOD's Compliance Team conducts eight to nine (8-9) CRCRs per year on a 6-year rotating basis. This is done so that each State Office and associated field offices can participate in a review and analysis of its current and prior year workforce. The CRCR Team reviews effects of each State Office and associated field office's management, and personnel actions related to Hiring, Internal Promotions, Separations, Awards, and Recognition. The Team also examines evidence to underscore each State and field offices' adherence to MD-715 policies and regulations. A final report is provided to each Agency Head, State Office Leadership, and CREEOD Director which includes findings, corrective actions, and recommendations to guide each State Office to a Model EEO Program. During FY24, FPAC CREEOD conducted nine (9) Onsite and Desk/Virtual Audits of the following FSA, NRCS, RMA State Offices, and RMA Approved Insurance Providers (AIPs):

1. Nevada - February
2. Georgia - March
3. Wisconsin - April and May
4. Tennessee - April
5. Wyoming - May
6. Utah - June
7. North Dakota - July
8. South Carolina - August
9. South Dakota - September

### **Special Compliance Reviews**

The following are Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR) mandated reviews that were conducted in accordance with a Final Agency Decision (FAD).

1. Louisiana - February
2. Oklahoma - February

FSA conducted regular internal audits, on at least an annual basis, to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of their Title VII and Rehabilitation Act programs and to ascertain whether the agency made a good faith effort to identify and remove barriers in the workplace by establishing procedures to prevent all forms of discrimination, including harassment, retaliation, and failure to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities.

## FY24 Briefings and Trainings

1. The Compliance Review Team provided four (4) overview training sessions during the 2nd and 3rd quarters of FY24. Topics included:
  - Purpose of CRRCR audits and reviews.
  - Compliance with USDA Directive DR 4330- 006, Civil Rights Compliance Reviews.
  - Explanations, indicators, requirements, criteria, and what to expect during CRRCRs.
2. The Compliance Team also delivered NRCS Lunch-n-Learn Civil Rights Compliance Training to State Leadership. The sessions were conducted virtually in smaller, more personal settings to assist with supporting State Leadership to prepare for CRRCRs. This was a new initiative to offer additional customer service.

## Establish EEO Process and Procedures

FPAC CREEOD serves as a focal point for responding to inquiries from the FBC, FSA, NRCS, and RMA. The organization provides timely and consistent guidance throughout the FPAC Mission Area. The Division provides management and consulting services to assist FPAC agencies in carrying out responsibilities for equal opportunity in employment, services, and program delivery. By establishing core Civil Rights and EEO processes and procedures, the CREEOD Director sets strategic direction and operational priorities of the Division. These actions ensure the staff delivers essential Civil Rights and EEO activities and programs for appropriate management and oversight.

Activities during FY24 included:

- Affirmative Employment Program (AEP) Team distributed 209 state-level workforce analysis reports in response to 44 different State Office requests for organizational demographic data.
- AEP provided quarterly Special Emphasis Program Manager Training for 53 new collateral duty SEPMs at the State Office level.
- CREEOD staff observed 142 panel interviews at the GS-13 and Senior Grade levels.

## FY24 Interview Observations

FY24	FBC	FSA	NRCS	RMA
Q1	0	7	8	3
Q2	6	28	3	0
Q3	0	25	6	0
Q4	0	41	12	3
Total	6	101	29	6

## Coordination/Partnership with HR

FPAC's HRD and CREEOD personnel coordinate activities and tasks that allow the divisions to provide critical assistance, advice, and guidance to FPAC Leaders and Agency Heads. CREEOD officials and staff are readily available to answer any questions or concerns HRD may have concerning Civil Rights and EEO matters. During monthly meetings, the two divisions work on issues, concerns, and activities, which include affirmative employment, MD-715 reporting, the revised Anti-Harassment Program, recruitment, outreach, employee training and development, and other tasks and programs where Human Resources and Civil Rights partner to create an environment that enhances civil rights and equal employment for the FPAC workforce.

The HRD Workforce Planning, Outreach and Recruitment Team works closely with the CREEOD Affirmative Employment Team to complete the MD-715 annual report, the Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP) report, and the Disabled Veteran Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP) report to provide accurate and complete workforce data and other relevant information required to complete the annual reports.

CREEOD's Affirmative Employment Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPM) engaged with USDA-wide Employee Resource Groups to implement agency-wide Civil Rights and EEO concepts, including participation in job fairs, conducting cultural awareness training, and organizing annual cultural observances and events.

During FY24, FPAC outreach efforts consisted of strengthening partnerships with educational institutions and various organizations for outreach and recruitment, including, but not limited to: Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), Minority Serving Institutions (MSI), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI), veteran placement and support organizations, and vocational rehabilitation organizations.

FPAC's outreach and recruitment activities support USDA and FPAC agency strategic plans. The vision is to create practical career paths for veterans, students, and a diverse set of skilled job seekers to integrate them into the USDA workforce.

FPAC hosted 40 outreach events during FY24. The sign-in event rosters reached over 1,800 individuals (some overlap exists):

- 1st Qtr. (Oct/Nov/Dec) - 2 Virtual, 2 In-Person
- 2nd Qtr. (Jan/Feb/Mar) - 4 Virtual, 4 In-Person
- 3rd Qtr. (Apr/May/Jun) - 6 Virtual, 9 In-Person
- 4th Qtr. (Jul/Aug/Sep) - 6 Virtual, 7 In-Person

FPAC utilizes the USDA Mentoring Portal. Additional engagement between HRD, CREEOD, and our mission partners is needed.

FPAC conducted the FY24 Strategic Leadership Development Program (SLDP) which is a career development opportunity for permanent employees in grades 13-15.

- Twenty-Three (23) applicants applied and were selected for the SLDP Class which ended September 30, 2024. FPAC agency representation consisted of nineteen (19) NRCS, two (2) FBC, and two (2) FSA employees.
- The class make-up was:
  - Ten (10) White males, five (5) White females, two (2) African American males, three (3) African American females, one (1) Hispanic female, and two (2) Hispanic males.
  - Five (22%) of the participants self-identified as a person with a disability (PWD).
- Minorities represented 34% of selectees.
- Female selections were at 39%.

### Anti-Harassment Policy/Program

CREEOD and HRD reaffirmed their commitment to USDA's revised Anti-Harassment Policy DR 4300-003 (rev. April 2023) and refreshed FPAC's Anti-Harassment Program and assigned a collateral duty Anti-Harassment Program Manager to administer and oversee the expanded program. The program applies to all FPAC personnel, contractors, volunteers, and individuals who provide work and services on behalf of USDA in all Mission Areas. The program and policy cover harassment and bullying, and it is not based on membership in a protected category.

All FPAC employees received harassment prevention training during FY24 through two mandatory AgLearn courses: USDA Anti-Harassment Training for All Employees and Anti-Harassment Training for Leaders/Managers.

Agency	Total Workforce	Total Completed	% Completed
FBC	1,633	878	54%
FSA	3,482	2,312	66%
NRCS	12,011	6,884	57%
RMA	410	197	48%



The Anti-Harassment program established an electronic reporting system to monitor and track reports of harassment. In FY24 there were 260 cases submitted to the Anti-Harassment program. Of the cases: 60 (23%) were referred from CREEOD, 121 (46%) were completed within ten days, 105 (40%) cases required an investigation, and 46 (18%) required the administration of a corrective action. Additionally, 14 (5%) complaints were filed against SES or political appointees.

<b>FY24 Anti-Harassment Data</b>	<b>FSA</b>	<b>NRCS</b>	<b>RMA</b>	<b>FBC</b>	<b>Total</b>
Number # of AH Cases	82	124	6	48	260
Number # of Cases referred from EEO	23	35	0	2	60
Number # of Cases- Inquiry Completed in 10 Days	32	60	3	26	121
Number # of Cases that required an Investigation	38	53	3	11	105
Number # of Cases in which Corrective Action was Administered	14	20	3	9	46
Number # of Cases alleged against SES or political appointee referred to IG	0	2	0	12	14

## Reasonable Accommodation and Personal Assistance Services

In adherence to applicable federal regulations and guidelines USDA and FPAC's Reasonable Accommodations (RA) and Personal Assistance Services (PAS) Program provides qualified individuals with disabilities the opportunity to successfully perform the essential functions of their job to the same extent as employees without disabilities. This provides affected personnel the benefits and privileges of full employment. Agency personnel and applicants can find RA and PAS policy statements and forms on agencies' public and internal websites.

### Reasonable Accommodation Program Effectiveness:

- The total RA requests - 466
- 211 RA requests reached an Agency Decision
- The average processing time - 9 business days
- The approval rate - 88.5%

### Reasonable Accommodation Program Accomplishments:

- On December 15, 2023, produced an audio/visual for New Employee Onboarding training.
- On December 19, 2023, conducted a presentation on the Reasonable Accommodations process for the Federal Women Program Managers.
- On December 21, 2023, conducted a presentation on the Reasonable Accommodations process for the Veteran's SEPM's.
- On March 28, 2024, provided a presentation on the reasonable accommodation process for NRCS Davis, CA supervisors and hiring managers.
- On April 2, 2024, conducted a presentation on the Reasonable Accommodation process at the National SEPM Disability Meeting.
- On May 16, 2024, conducted a presentation on the Reasonable Accommodation process and the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA) at the Nursing Mothers Support Group.

FSA implemented effective reasonable accommodation procedures that comply with applicable executive orders, EEOC guidance, the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board's Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards and Electronic and Information Technology Accessibility Standards.

## Findings/Disciplinary Actions

During FY24, fifty-two (52) EEO complaints were closed, resulting in two (2) cases with findings of discrimination. The basis of findings included Reprisal, Sex, and Disability. The issues included Appraisal/Evaluation, Harassment, Promotion/Non-selection, and Reasonable Accommodation. In accordance with USDA's Civil Rights Accountability Process, FPAC reviewed each case to determine warranted corrective and disciplinary actions.

## FY24 Findings of Discrimination

Agency	Bases	Issues	Corrective Actions
NRCS	Reprisal, and Sex (Female)	Appraisal/Evaluation, Harassment (Non-Sexual and Sexual), and Promotion/Non-Selection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Backpay with interest</li> <li>2. Referral for disciplinary action</li> <li>3. EEO training for RMOs</li> <li>4. Restoration of sick leave</li> <li>5. Posting notification</li> </ol>
FSA	Disability (Physical), and Reprisal (Prior EEO Activity)	Reasonable Accommodation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop an effective reasonable accommodation for Complainant's disability</li> <li>2. Referral for disciplinary action</li> <li>3. EEO training for RMOs</li> <li>4. Restoration of annual leave and sick leave</li> <li>5. Posting Notification</li> </ol>

## Essential Element D: Proactive Prevention of Unlawful Discrimination

USDA and FPAC strive to achieve its mission by setting goals through capacity building and learning to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of agency operations servicing the workforce and key partners. USDA and FPAC commit to the empowerment and engagement of all employees as well as internal and external customers using a people-centric approach to deliver consistent and exceptional service.

FPAC and its mission agencies adhere to the current 2022 - 2026 USDA Strategic Plan: Strategic Goal 6: Attract, Inspire, and Retain an Engaged and Motivated Workforce that's Proud to Represent USDA; Transparency, and Accountability.

### Management Performance Appraisals and Evaluation

Managers and supervisors are evaluated on adherence to Civil Rights and EEO, and Anti-Harassment policies and ensuring personnel policies are clear and consistently implemented. The Mission Area incorporated the requirements of DR 4300-010, "Civil Rights Accountability Policy and Procedures," which requires that annual performance appraisals for managers and supervisors include an evaluation of their contributions to FPAC's commitment to Civil Rights and EEO and the adherence of the revised USDA Anti-Harassment policy.

All FPAC managers and supervisors have a revised and updated Civil Rights and EEO mandatory element in the Mission Results section of their annual performance evaluation plan. The newly revised element adheres to 29 CFR §1614.102(a)(5), stating "all managers and supervisors have an element in their performance appraisal that evaluates their commitment to agency EEO processes and programs". The element incorporates and codifies accountability that all employees, partners and customers are fairly and equitably treated. The performance standards for all new employees whether supervisory or non-supervisory, are put in place within 30 days of entry on duty.

### Resolving Officials

Under FPAC CREEOD's ADR program, a Resolving Officials (RO) with settlement authority, different from the responsible management official named in the complaint, is required to be available during the dispute resolution process. During FY24, FPAC increased the number of ROs by seven (7) who are now available to participate in the ADR program. CREEOD also concentrated on better training by revising and enhancing its RO Training Program to include EEO Observer Training (delivered quarterly), Mock Mediation for Resolving Officials, and a Resolving Official Panel Session. Civil Treatment for Leaders training was also introduced in FY24 and CREEOD will work to deliver this course to all managers and supervisors in FY 2025.



## **Affirmative Employment Program (AEP)**

The primary objective of Affirmative Employment is to take positive steps so that all FPAC employees and applicants have equal opportunity to compete fairly in all aspects of their recruitment, hiring, training, promotion, and retention. The AEP Team ensures the workplace is welcoming, inclusive, and accessible to all groups.

The Team ensures that EEO initiatives and activities become an integral part of FPACs EEO programs. The national Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs) provide technical assistance and procedural guidance to collateral duty SEPMs as well as the NRCS Civil Rights Advisory Committee (CRAC) regarding Civil Rights and EEO policies, regulations, and guidance, as well as workforce analysis and career development opportunities.

During FY24, the AEP coordinated a Disability Emphasis Program to assist in establishing the FPAC mission area's first Disability Employee Resource Group.

CREEOD's Federal Women's Emphasis Program, held the Department wide celebration of Women's Equality Day: "Equality Starts with Empowered Women" on August 28, 2024. The hybrid event was hosted at the USDA Whitten Building Patio and was led by special guest Mika Cross, Workplace Transformist Strategist.

The AEP Team provided fresh and exciting experiences to supplement traditional reoccurring monthly cultural events with Book Club Discussions, Cooking Demonstrations, and a homage to Jeopardy with a Trivia Contest. This included a total of 21 special events produced, conducted, and hosted in FY24. Examples included:

- Native American Heritage Month – Indigenous Cooking Demo with Cafe Ohlone
- African American History Month Observance – Senior Leadership Panel
- Women History Month – The Changing Face of Farming Video
- Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month – Hawaii: Grown with Aloha
- LGBTQI+ Pride Month - Queer Through the Years – Jeopardy Event
- Juneteenth Celebration - Celebrating Juneteenth: From Galveston to Prairie View
- Women's Equality Day (USDA-wide) - Equality Starts with Empowered Women
- Hispanic Heritage Month – Todos Somos, Somos Uno: Trivia Challenge

## **Compliance and Training Branch**

CREEOD placed high emphasis on delivering quality, results-oriented training, and special events to educate and advance civil rights across the landscape of FPAC operations in FY24. FPAC employees and supervisors were required to engage in professional development through the FPAC CREEOD Compliance and Training Branch, which provided solutions and tools for addressing discrimination in all forms. Training offered included 19 separately planned webinar training events taught by 11 different vendors, including small business, woman-owned, veteran-owned, and minority-owned companies that worked along with CREEOD, and other partnership organizations, to deliver the courses. The wide variety of topics ensured supervisors and employees received regular CR/EEO training, conflict management, and other CR/EEO topics.

One of the most popular courses was the Civil Rights Compliance in Program Delivery (CRCPD) course delivered in person and reached 433 attendees across all regions of the contiguous United States. A cadre of 35 subject-matter-expert instructors was assembled and trained especially to teach this important course.

In partnership with all CREEOD Branches, FPAC also produced the first-ever CREEOD Training Course Catalog containing 25 ready-to-teach Civil Rights and EEO courses. The catalog not only fulfilled CREEOD's goal to provide FPAC offices a range of courses from which they could choose from but also provided our FPAC partners a menu of courses they could count on to be delivered to their workforce when needed.

Virtual training and live events provide soft skills training to increase participants' knowledge and provide tools to assist participants in addressing and resolving conflict at the lowest level. Topics included:

- EEO and ADR: The Road to Resolution
- Resolving Officials Training
- Special Hiring Authorities

Training and education provided guidance for employee behavior and perspective in the workplace. The training raised employee awareness about workforce hiring and promotion, and helped employees overcome unconscious biases. As a result, employers could build a more inclusive work environment, encourage team cohesion, and improve relationships among employees, partners, and customers.

FY24 webinars included but is not inclusive of all the training that was conducted:

- Customer Service – Shifting Service to Experience from an Emotional Intelligence Approach
- Ableism: What It Is and Why It Matters to Everyone
- Navigating Conflict
- Communication Strategies
- Emotional Intelligence

FSA conducted a self-assessment on at least an annual basis to monitor progress, identify areas where barriers may operate to exclude certain groups and develop strategic plans to eliminate identified barriers.

- FSA participates in a self-assessment on an annual basis with its leadership team to monitor progress and identify areas where barriers may exist.
- FSA continues to strive to make improvements in the Civilian Labor Force benchmarks that are not met, as the agency is committed to aligning with the department strategic plan to identify and remove systemic barriers to build a workforce more representative of America.
- Over 40 FSA Headquarters staff completed a BiasSync Assessment. The assessments provided insights into unconscious bias, and components like openness and cognitive empathy with debriefing by a certified BiasSync trainer.

## **Essential Element E: Efficiency**

### **Efficient, Fair, and Impartial Complaint Resolution Process**

In FY24, CREEOD completed 117 pre-complaint counselings compared to 99 pre-complaint counselings in the prior year. The Division completed 116 of the 117 counseling sessions in a timely manner, continuing the positive trend of a nearly 100% on-time counseling rate. More specifically, of the 117 completed counselings, 54 were completed within 30 days; 17 were completed with written extensions of no longer than 60 days; 45 were processed through FPAC's ADR program and completed within 90 days; and 1 was completed beyond 90 days. CREEOD provided individuals with written notification of their rights and responsibilities in the EEO process for each counseling session. The Division places high priority on excellent customer service and includes timely processing and EEO counseling as a requirement in all GS-260 Counselors' performance plans.

**Total Counseling Completed by Timeframe (Part I, Form 462 Report)**

Counseling Timeframe Categories	FY23	FY24
Counseled Within 30 Days	44	54
Counseled Within 31 to 90 Days	54	62
Counseled Within Written Extension Period No Longer Than 60 Days	11	17
Counseled Within 90 Days Where Individual Participated in ADR	43	45
Counseled Within 31-90 Days That Were Untimely	0	0
Counseled Beyond 90 Days	1	1
Total Completed Counseling sessions	99	117

During FY24, CREEOD continued its partnership with OASCR for the issuance of acknowledgement letters and/or acceptance/dismissal decisions, the completion of formal EEO complaint investigations, and the issuance of final actions. Throughout the fiscal year, CREEOD held quarterly meetings with OASCR to ensure that acceptance/dismissal decisions, investigations, and final actions were dispensed in a timely manner. The agency ensures that all employees fully cooperate with EEO Counselors and EEO Investigators, including providing access to personnel records pertinent to an investigation.

In FY24, 63 new formal EEO complaints were filed, compared with 35 in FY23. The average time for OASCR to issue a letter of acceptance/partial acceptance/dismissal was 17 days. Additionally, 39 EEO complaints were investigated, an increase from 24 completed in FY23. Of the 39 investigations completed in FY24, 36 were completed on time.

**Timeliness and Average Processing Days of Formal EEO Investigation (Part IX, Form 462 Report)**

Formal EEO Complaint Categories	FY23	FY24
No. of Formal Filed	35	63
No. of Investigations Completed	24	39
No. of Timely Completed Investigations	24	36
Percent of Timely Investigations	100%	92%
Average Processing Days for All Investigations (including amended cases)	146	163
Average Cost per Investigation (Direct Cost Reported)	\$3,885	\$3,819

During FY24, OASCR issued 17 (merit) Final Agency Decisions (FADs), compared with 18 in FY23. In FY24 the average time for OASCR to issue (merit) FADs was 37 days, a considerable improvement from 77 days in FY23. Of the 17 (merit) FADs issued, 15 (88%) were issued within 60 days of receipt of the request an improvement from the 13 (72%) issued on time in the prior fiscal year. Throughout FY24, CREEOD worked closely with OASCR to improve on the timeliness by which it issues (merit) FADs.

**Average Processing Time to Issue Merit FADs (Part VI D, Form 462 Report)**

AVG Processing Categories	FY23	FY24
# Merit FADS Issued	18	17
Average Days	79	37
# Merit FADS Timely Issued	13	15
% Merit FADS Timely Issued	72%	88%

Once CREEOD receives notice that a complainant has requested a hearing before an EEOC Administrative Judge (AJ) or has filed a final agency action appeal with EEOC's Office of Federal Operations (OFO), CREEOD promptly submits the appropriate complaint file and other associated documents in the proper format to EEOC through the EEOC's Federal Sector EEO Portal (FedSEP). The Division also ensures that OASCR issues final agency actions in a timely manner following receipt of any EEOC Administrative Judge (AJ) decision.

## Neutral EEO Process

Throughout FY24, as part of the agency's commitment to preserve the integrity and impartiality of the EEO process, CREEOD maintained a strict separation between its EEO complaint program and the Office of General Counsel (OGC), which handles representation of the USDA Secretary in EEO complaints. In the event the agency needs to obtain a legal sufficiency review of an EEO matter, such reviews are handled by a functional unit that is separate and apart from the unit responsible for defending the Department against EEO complaints. Moreover, CREEOD ensures that the OGC legal defense function does not intrude upon counseling, investigation, and final agency decision stages of the EEO process.

## Alternative Dispute Resolution Program

In FY24, CREEOD offered and encouraged participation in its impartial ADR program at both the pre-complaint and formal complaint stages. Pursuant to Management Directive 110, Chapter 3 (III)(C), EEOC has established a goal that Federal agencies utilize ADR in 50% of their EEO counselings. In FY24, ADR was offered in 93 (79%) of the 117 pre-complaints filed. Of the 93 pre-complaints where ADR was offered, 49 (53%) elected to participate in ADR so CREEOD met the EEOC goal in FY24.

Once ADR is offered to an aggrieved person or complainant, FPAC managers and supervisors have the responsibility to participate in good faith in the ADR process. Under the FPAC's ADR program, a Resolving Official with settlement authority, different from the Responsible Management Official named in the complaint, is required to be available during the dispute resolution process. The agency prohibits the Responsible Management Official named in the dispute from having settlement authority in the dispute resolution of the matter. To further strengthen the effectiveness and quality of the ADR program, during FY24, CREEOD analyzed post-ADR program participant survey responses on a quarterly basis as well as evaluated ADR program data on a bi-annual basis. Moreover, in FY24, CREEOD revised the Resolving Officials (RO) training program for new and existing ROs. The revised training includes mock mediations, and panel discussions to equip officials with the knowledge and skills to serve as ROs and to keep them up to date on EEO mediation and facilitation best practices.

As mentioned above, CREEOD met the 50% use of ADR goal in FY24, however, FPAC's ADR resolution rate was 49%, a decrease from the resolution rate of 62% in FY23. CREEOD continued to utilize surveys to improve upon the agency's ADR acceptance rate. Aggrieved Parties' responses for not electing to participate in the ADR process in FY24 included: "my supervisor will not be truthful in the ADR session", "it will not make a difference if I'm in front of [my supervisor]", and "I do not think a resolution can be made".

### Complaint Rate and ADR Usage in the Pre-complaint Stage (FY24 Form 462 Report)

ADR and Pre-complaints	FY23	FY24
FPAC Workforce	16,316	17,468
# of Pre-complaints	99	117
Complaint Rate	.61%	.67%
ADR Offer Rate	93%	79%
ADR Election Rate	49%	53%
ADR Resolution Rate	62%	49%

## **Data Collection Systems**

In FY24, CREEOD continued to utilize Entellitrak EEO (ETK), a web-based EEO case management system, to track and report on EEO complaints. ETK has functionalities that enable CREEOD to collect, monitor, and analyze such complaint activity such as issues and bases of complaints, the aggrieved individuals/complainants, and the involved management officials. Additionally, ETK has capabilities that allow the Mission Area to evaluate the effectiveness of its EEO process and program, including analyzing pre-complaint data, formal complaint data, ADR program data, and final action data.

FPAC collects and maintains personnel demographic data for reporting and monitoring purposes. During FY24, USDA continued to employ the National Finance Center (NFC) Reporting Center to collect and monitor data and evaluate trends of its permanent workforce. Schedule A workforce data is available from the NFC Report Center's EEOC MD 715 Workforce Data Table B1. FPAC receives applicant flow data through the USA Staffing system. The EDPT-Dashboard employs Tableau Data Analytics software which enables CREEOD to track current workforce populations by race, sex, national origin, disability and veteran status.

FSA utilizes procedures developed by the Department and/or the FPAC mission area. A one-pager was developed for employees to have easily accessible resources for: Whistleblower, Reporting Fraud, Waste, and Abuse, Discrimination and EEO Complaints, Anti-Harassment Grievance, Employee Assistance Program, Requesting Reasonable Accommodations, Reporting Threats in the Office, and Reporting Unsafe or Unhealthful Working Conditions.

## **Essential Element F: Responsiveness and Legal Compliance**

### **Compliance with EEOC Orders and Settlement Agreements**

When CREEOD receives notice that a complainant has requested a hearing before an EEOC Administrative Judge (AJ) or has filed an appeal of a final agency action with EEOC's OFO, CREEOD staff promptly submit the complaint file to the appropriate EEOC office. OASCR also issues final actions in a timely manner following the receipt of any EEOC AJ decision.

During FY24, CREEOD processed and fully complied with all laws, EEOC regulations, management directives, orders, written instructions, final agency actions, and settlement agreement.

### **Settlements**

CREEOD responds on-time and fully complies with all EEOC orders and requests issued as part of the hearing and/or appeals process. CREEOD staff also monitors and facilitates compliance with all EEOC orders, final agency actions, and settlement agreements; this includes working with human resources, financial management staff, the Office of General Counsel, and other agency stakeholders, as necessary.

FPAC managers and supervisors are evaluated and held accountable to annual performance standards that require them to comply with EEOC orders, final agency actions, and settlement agreements. At the same time, CREEOD staff are responsible and are also evaluated according to annual performance standards that require timely compliance with orders and agreements. To date, the FPAC Mission Area has never been cited or sanctioned by the EEOC for failure to comply with any EEOC order, final agency action, or settlement agreement.

The agency submits an accurate, complete, and timely No FEAR Act Report to EEOC each year. USDA posts individual agency quarterly No FEAR Act data on its public facing website. In accordance with USDA DR 4120-001, No FEAR Act of 2002 training is assigned to all new hires and transfers to USDA (including interns and contractors) within 90 days of hire/transfer. During FY24, No FEAR Act Refresher training was required of all USDA personnel, partners, and technical service providers.

Agency	Assigned	Completed	
FBC	1,671	1,516	91%
FSA	3,438	3,314	96%
NRCS	11,970	11,799	98%
RMA	410	409	99%
FSACO	16,380	9,118	56%

Data Source: AgLearn Course Status Report, Nov. 8, 2024.

## Workforce Analyses

FPAC Mission Area reports on the General Service pay plan (GS or SES) workforce personnel of the mission agencies (FSA, NRCS, RMA, and the FBC). The nearly 16,000 Farm Service Agency County (FSACO) personnel under the pay plan Administratively Determined (AD) are not reported for MD 715 but may opt into FPAC's Civil Rights and EEO administrative processes. The following set of analyses assess current FPAC Mission Area, GS and SES, permanent employees.

### FPAC Permanent Workforce

Demographic Groups	CLF (2018)	FY24	%	FY23	%	FY22	%
All Males	51.80%	8,829	51.60%	8,409	52.69%	8,209	53.39%
All Females	48.20%	8,282	48.40%	7,549	47.31%	7,167	46.61%
Hispanic Males	6.80%	522	3.05%	506	3.17%	500	3.25%
Hispanic Females	6.20%	412	2.41%	400	2.51%	385	2.50%
White Males	35.60%	7,078	41.37%	6,751	42.30%	6,596	42.90%
White Females	31.80%	6,449	37.69%	5,828	36.52%	5,521	35.91%
Black Males	5.70%	753	4.40%	695	4.36%	653	4.25%
Black Females	6.60%	953	5.57%	897	5.62%	843	5.48%
Asian Males	2.20%	166	0.97%	161	1.01%	158	1.03%
Asian Females	2.20%	172	1.01%	154	0.97%	145	0.94%
Nat. Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Males	0.10%	26	0.15%	23	0.14%	20	0.13%
Nat. Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Females	0.10%	23	0.13%	22	0.14%	18	0.12%
American Indian/Alaskan Nat. Males	0.30%	256	1.50%	249	1.56%	259	1.68%
American Indian/Alaskan Nat. Females	0.30%	225	1.31%	205	1.28%	211	1.37%
Two or More Race Males	1.00%	28	0.16%	24	0.15%	23	0.15%
Two or More Race Females	1.00%	48	0.28%	43	0.27%	44	0.29%
Persons with Disability*	12.00%	1,619	9.46%	1,512	9.47%	1510	9.82%
Targeted Disability*	2.00%	345	2.02%	336	2.11%	343	2.23%

\*501 EEOC Goal. Red highlights indicate the FPAC percentages are below the CLF.

Data Source: NFC MD 715 Workforce Data Tables A1/B1, October 13, 2024.



The FY24 FPAC permanent workforce consists of 17,111 employees. The number of permanent employees increased by 1,153 from the prior fiscal year. Last fiscal year's FPAC permanent employees totaled 15,958. The permanent employee workforce increased versus the prior fiscal year for the following groups: White females (37.69% v 36.52%) Asian females (1.01% v 0.97%), Native Hawaiian Other Pacific Islander males (.15% v .14%), American Indian Alaskan Native females (1.31% v 1.28%), Two or More Race males (.16% v .15%) and Two or More Race females (.28% v .27%).

Trend analysis reveals Hispanics, Black/African Americans, Asians, Two or More Races and Persons with Disability populations are lower than expected when compared to their availability in the Civilian Labor Force (CLF) or 501 Regulatory Goal. While these groups are consistently underrepresented during the 3-year period, there has been positive numerical and net increases in the workforce.

Men, Whites, Native Hawaiian Other Pacific Islanders, American Indian/Alaskan Natives and [self-identified Persons with] Targeted Disabilities (TD) are consistently above the CLF or 501 Regulatory Goal.

## Comparison of Gains and Losses

Data Source: NFC MD 715 Workforce Data Tables A1/B1, Oct. 13, 2024

### Hiring/Gains

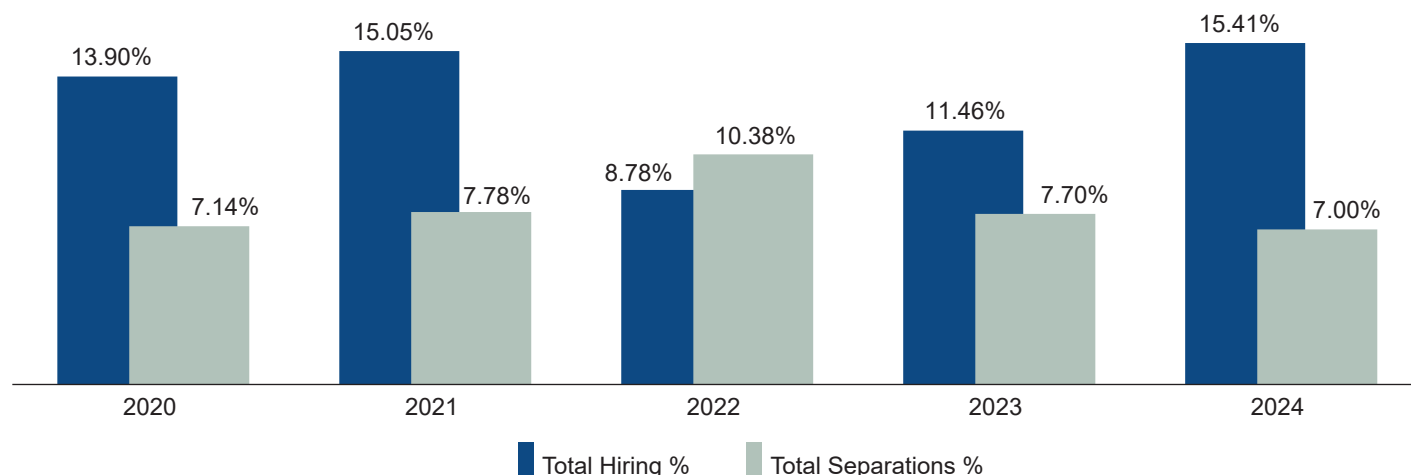
FPAC on-boarded 2,637 new hires during FY24. Female hires were in the majority with 1,359 (57.41%) of new hires. Male new hires totaled 1,008 (42.50%). Minority hires totaled 407 (17.19%) of new hires. PWD new hires totaled 151 (6.38%) of which 27 (1.14%) were Persons with Targeted Disabilities. Schedule A hires totaled 40 (7.17%) of all new hires.

### Separations/Losses

During the same period, a total of 1,197 (7.00%) FPAC employees separated from the agency. Females separated at the higher number of 604 (50.46%), while 593 (49.54%) of FPAC Males separated. There were 119 (9.94%) PWD who separated; of those, 29 (2.42%) were employees with targeted disabilities and 9 (6.04%) were Schedule A employees.

A trigger can occur if the percentage of employees separating from the agency outpace the percentage of gains or new hires. Comparing prior years hiring and separation rates, FPAC shows the ratio of hires outpaced separations during FY 2020, 2021, 2023 and 2024. NRCS and FSA acquired Direct Hiring Authority (DHA) permissions through OPM for FY2021, 2023 and 2024. This suggests special hiring authority provides positive conditions for increased hiring. A trigger occurred during FY2022 when losses outpaced hiring, however this may be an outlier year and a result of the COVID-era office closures and related health and wellness conditions. Further investigation is recommended.

### FPAC Gains v Losses Trend



## Exit Interviews

Data Source: FPAC Exit Interview Survey Results (HRD), Oct. 18, 2024

Exit interviews and questionnaires are confidential and can help the Agency to identify patterns to separation. Detecting patterns can help FPAC to devise strategies to improve retention and the work-life environment. FPAC 2024 exit surveys are not specific to one demographic group, but the results give a general point of view why employees separate from the Agency. Of the 1,197 employees who separated from FPAC 799 (66%) responded to the exit survey citing the following:

### Lack of Career Opportunities

Upward or lateral mobility is limited. Feeling isolated or unsupported, especially during initial onboarding and training periods

- Inadequate/Unsupported Training (99)
- On-Boarding/Hiring (56)
- Lack of Career Opportunities (50)

### Job Stress / Increased Workload

Staffing issues and unsustainable workloads. Inadequate or no access to job-related equipment, systems and software.

- Unsustainable Workload (60)
- Options to Telework/Remote Work (48)
- Staffing Issues (39)
- Efficiency/Competence (26)
- Inadequate Access to Equipment/Systems (24)

### Leadership/Policy

Leaders not listening to or not communicating with employees. Conflict with Leadership and inconsistencies between applicable policy and supervisory direction.

- Lack of Communication, Conflict with or Inconsistent Leadership (107)
- Inconsistent Policy Application (36)

### Compensation/Salary/Benefits

Low compensation or not adequately compensated for the increasing workload, especially when compared to corresponding roles in the private sector.

- Compensation/Salary (79)
- Benefits/Amenities (33)

### Interpersonal Conflict

Harassment, discrimination, communication or interpersonal conflicts were factors in the decision to resign.

- Poor Communication with Supervisors and Management (60)
- Interpersonal Conflicts (31)
- Job Stress (4)

### Civil Rights/ Equal Opportunity

Discrimination, or a Lack of Reasonable Accommodation

- Denial / Lack of Reasonable Accommodation (18)
- Equal Opportunity (16)
- Harassment (8)
- Reprisal (4)
- Wellness (1)



## Summary of Employee Awards and Recognition

Data Source: NFC MD 715 Workforce Data Tables A9/B9, Oct. 13, 2024

FPAC issued a total of 21,211 awards during FY24. The Agency disperses employees awards and recognition as Monetary / Non-monetary, Quality Step Increases (QSI) and/or Performance-based Awards. CREEOD tracks the average distribution of awards by gender, race, ethnicity, and disability status. Awards below the average amount, may be a trigger which reveals disparities and should be investigated further. (Red font indicates award is below the average amount).

### a. Time Off Awards

FPAC issued 3,088 Time-off awards or 18% of the permanent workforce. The average distribution was 14 (fourteen) hours.

Time-Off	HM	HF	WM	WF	BM	BF	AM	AF	NH/OPIIM	NH/OPIF	AI/ANM	AI/ANF	TMRM	TMRF	PWD	TD
Total	65	57	975	1,490	96	210	41	35	2	3	33	63	5	8	324	63
	2.1%	1.8%	31.6%	48.3%	3.1%	6.8%	1.3%	1.1%	0.1%	0.1%	1.1%	2.0%	0.2%	0.3%	10.5%	2.0%
AVG	15	15	14	13	16	14	15	15	16	15	14	12	6	11	15	15

### b. Small Cash Awards up to \$1,000

FPAC issued 7,305 (43%) small cash awards up to \$1,000 to the permanent workforce with an average amount of \$631.

Cash	HM	HF	WM	WF	BM	BF	AM	AF	NH/OPIIM	NH/OPIF	AI/ANM	AI/ANF	TMRM	TMRF	PWD	TD
Total	180	176	3,068	3,033	179	268	57	75	13	12	97	120	7	20	699	153
	2.5%	2.4%	42.0%	41.5%	2.5%	3.7%	0.8%	1.0%	0.2%	0.2%	1.3%	1.6%	0.1%	0.3%	9.6%	2.1%
AVG	\$643	\$640	\$636	\$625	\$622	\$634	\$645	\$621	\$637	\$656	\$652	\$609	\$640	\$588	\$627	\$620

### c. Cash Awards between \$1,000 and \$3,999

FPAC dispersed 10,519 (61%) awards to the permanent workforce with an average amount of \$1,545.

Cash	HM	HF	WM	WF	BM	BF	AM	AF	NH/OPIIM	NH/OPIF	AI/ANM	AI/ANF	TMRM	TMRF	PWD	TD
Total	287	249	4,537	4,017	370	498	112	112	17	18	133	124	14	31	969	209
	2.7%	2.4%	43.1%	38.2%	3.5%	4.7%	1.1%	1.1%	0.2%	0.2%	1.3%	1.2%	0.1%	0.3%	9.2%	2.0%
AVG	\$1,545	\$1,556	\$1,530	\$1,532	\$1,664	\$1,668	\$1,618	\$1,581	\$1,540	\$1,504	\$1,532	\$1,581	\$1,484	\$1,584	\$1,530	\$1,546

### d. Cash Awards more than \$4,000

FPAC distributed 184 (1%) cash awards of \$4,000 or more to the permanent workforce with an average amount of \$5,010

Cash	HM	HF	WM	WF	BM	BF	AM	AF	NH/OPIIM	NH/OPIF	AI/ANM	AI/ANF	TMRM	TMRF	PWD	TD
Total	6	4	78	55	10	20	2	4	0	0	0	3	1	1	20	6
	3.3%	2.2%	42.4%	29.9%	5.4%	10.9%	1.1%	2.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	0.5%	0.5%	10.9%	3.3%
AVG	\$4,600	\$4,485	\$5,213	\$4,737	\$4,856	\$4,799	\$6,000	\$7,361	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,333	\$5,000	\$5,082	\$5,440	\$4,643

e. Other Performance-based Awards

FPAC distributed 120 (.70%) performance-based awards with an average benefit of \$5,077.

Cash	HM	HF	WM	WF	BM	BF	AM	AF	NH/ OPIIM	NH/ OPIF	AI/ ANM	AI/ ANF	TMRM	TMRF	PWD	TD
Total	2	1	48	33	13	10	7	2	0	1	3	0	0	0	12	5
	1.7%	0.8%	40.0%	27.5%	10.8%	8.3%	5.8%	1.7%	0.0%	0.8%	2.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	4.2%
AVG	\$10,057	\$9,697	\$4,720	\$4,352	\$5,383	\$5,744	\$4,568	\$8,146	\$0	\$10,290	\$7,762	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,921	\$4,329

## Management Participation in the Workforce

FPAC's management consists of employees under the federal supervisory status codes of (2) Supervisor/Manager, (4) Supervisor (CSRA<sup>1</sup>), and (5) Manager (CSRA). The management category may be a mix of general schedules grades beginning at GS-11 through GS-15 and the SES-level. It may also involve any of FPAC's major occupational series. Comparing the Senior-level and Management participation to FPAC's current permanent workforce to measure if the groups correspond to their availability in the FPAC workforce.

Demographic Groups	FPAC Perm	FY24	%	FY23	%	FY22	%
All Males	51.60%	978	58.88%	972	60.00%	974	60.61%
All Females	48.40%	683	41.12%	648	40.00%	633	39.39%
Hispanic Males	3.05%	70	4.21%	67	4.14%	67	4.17%
Hispanic Females	2.41%	34	2.05%	36	2.22%	34	2.12%
White Males	41.37%	746	44.91%	741	45.74%	750	46.67%
White Females	37.69%	525	31.61%	499	30.80%	493	30.68%
Black Males	4.40%	104	6.26%	103	6.36%	97	6.04%
Black Females	5.57%	82	4.94%	81	5.00%	76	4.73%
Asian Males	0.97%	16	0.97%	17	1.05%	13	0.81%
Asian Females	1.01%	14	0.84%	9	0.56%	7	0.44%
Nat. Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Males	0.15%	3	0.18%	3	0.19%	3	0.19%
Nat. Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Females	0.13%	2	0.12%	2	0.12%	2	0.12%
American Indian/Alaskan Nat. Males	1.50%	35	2.11%	37	2.28%	34	2.12%
American Indian/Alaskan Nat. Females	1.31%	22	1.32%	17	1.05%	11	0.68%
Two or More Race Males	0.16%	4	0.24%	4	0.25%	10	0.62%
Two or More Race Females	0.28%	4	0.24%	4	0.25%	10	0.62%
Persons with Disability*	9.46%	142	8.55%	137	8.46%	132	8.21%
Targeted Disability*	2.02%	32	1.93%	35	2.16%	37	2.30%

\*501 Regulatory Goals determined by EEOC/OPM.Data Source: NFC MD 715 Workforce Data Tables A3/B3, Oct. 13, 2024.

A review of the 3-year trend in Management demographics reveal that female personnel and PWD representation are still below expectations when compared to the current FPAC workforce at the senior/management levels: Females (41.12% v 48.40%), Hispanic females (2.05% v 2.14%), White females (31.61% v 37.69%), Black females (4.94% v 5.57%), Asian Females 0.84% v 1.01%) Two or More Races females (0.24% v 2.4%) and PWD (8.55% v 9.46%).

<sup>1</sup>CSRA – Civil Rights Retirement Act – Position meets the definition of Supervisory in 5 U.S.C. 7103(a) (10) but does not meet the minimum requirements for application of the Supervisory Grade-Evaluation Guide.

## Additional Accomplishments/Planned Activities

### Farm Service Agency

Planned and completed recruitment activities are available through FSA's Outreach Tracking and Information System. States reported 1,051 recruitment events with 661 of those to a targeted underserved audience.

FSA continues to utilize the Workforce Engagement (WE) Committee. The group's purpose is to ensure that FSA and all its stakeholders are implementing employee programs and providing resources, with transparency and maximum effort to establish FSA as one of the best places to work in the USDA and the Federal government. Throughout the year, WE develop solutions to the manageable challenges that face FSA and the Agency's employees. The more difficult challenges are communicated to Agency leadership and elevated to decision makers that can make changes to enhance FSA employee's experience.

WE started a monthly all-employee call entitled Coffee Break addressing concerns in FEVS and employee submitted topics. Due to WE's diligent work, 2024 FEVS response rate increased, and scores went up in every category: Employee Experience, Performance Confidence, Global Satisfaction, and Performance Dimensions.

Efforts to simplify and centralize information was a part of FSA's SharePoint and internal resource modernization. An Employee Central was developed to enhance communications from HQ to the states and uniform across states. In addition to each HQ Deputy Area and Office updating their SharePoint, all states have modernized their pages. Survey to collect live feedback on all FSA SharePoint products is active.

### FSA Pay and Compensation

- County Office (CO) employee reclassification from CO-5/6/7 Program Technician (PT) to a CO-5/7/9 Program Analyst.
- 27-PM codified changes to the County Executive Director Classification to all positions having CO-12 full promotion potential.

### FPAC Special Employment Programs/Special Hiring Authorities

Federal agencies have specific hiring programs for veterans, people with disabilities, students, recent graduates, and other applicants.

External Hire Type (Federal)	#FY22	%FY22	# FY23	% FY23	#FY24	%FY24
Direct Hire Authority	294	19.97%	25	1.37%	724	30.57%
Disabled Veteran	16	1.09%	128	7.00%	137	5.79%
Intern/Fellow	30	2.04%	51	2.79%	176	7.43%
Military Spouse*	--	--	2	0.11%	16	0.68%
Other Non-Special Hiring Authority	789	53.60%	1,092	59.70%	410	17.31%
Pathways Appointment-Recent Grad	111	7.54%	167	9.13%	330	13.94%
Pathways Intern	187	12.70%	303	16.57%	435	18.37%
Physical Disability	16	1.09%	18	0.98%	13	0.55%
Schedule A	5	0.34%	7	0.38%	41	1.73%
Veterans Employment Opportunity Act (VEOA)	10	0.68%	23	1.26%	10	0.42%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,472</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,829</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,368</b>	<b>100%</b>

## FY24 FPAC Student Programs

One of the most productive practices the mission area conducts is working with colleges and universities to encourage students in underrepresented groups to consider federal service as a career of choice by participating in the USDA Pathways Programs. The Pathways Programs includes the Internship Program, Recent Graduates Program, and Presidential Management Fellows (PMF) Program. FPAC uses the Pathways Programs to acquire new federal talent and to supplement its competitive hiring drive. The programs remain a significant asset in FPAC's overall recruitment efforts and are an effective tool to recruit young talent into the federal workforce.

FPAC participated in the USDA 1890 National Scholars Program, a partnership between USDA and 1890 Historically Black Land-Grant Universities, and the 1994 Tribal Scholars Program. These programs award scholarships to students who attend one of 1890 Historically Black Land-Grant Universities or 1994 Tribal Colleges and Universities, respectively. The table below depicts the diversity of the Pathway program as of the final pay period of FY24.

African American		Asian		Native Hawaiian Pacific islander		Hispanic		Native American Alaskan Native		Two or More Races		White		PWD	Total
F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	All	All
104	83	5	3	1	0	9	10	9	7	2	2	277	169	24	681
15.27%	12.19%	0.73%	0.44%	0.15%	0.00%	1.32%	1.47%	1.32%	1.03%	0.29%	0.29%	40.68%	24.82%	3.52%	100%

## Workforce Planning and Capacity-building

Each year FPAC invests in career and workforce development through on-the-job and formal training. For FY 2025, each agency within FPAC will continue to conduct workforce planning and capacity-building activities.

## Programs and Initiatives

FPAC supports sustainability by investing in a strong workforce framework. NRCS intends to add collaborations where possible towards Veterans' hiring and Junior Ambassador Programs for High Schoolers. FSA plans to continue County employee reclassification from CO-5/6/7 Agriculture Program Technician to a CO-5/7/9 Agriculture Program Analyst. The Business Center is committed to creating a more transparent environment with interactive communication and feedback from all levels to fulfill the Strategic Goal of "Fostering an Innovative and Empowered Workforce". RMA plans to continue placing ads in national magazines to drive outreach while marketing the agency's mission.

## FPAC Strategic Leadership Development Program (SLDP)

FPAC will continue to develop a leadership cadre to represent the diverse communities and customers we serve. In FY 2025, FPAC will once again administer FPAC's SLDP expecting approximately 30 applicants to participate in the program.

## Workforce Engagement (WE)

To collaborate among agencies and divisions and ensure overall effective communications are consistent, the WE Team continues to work with FPAC WE POCs. It also includes other employees across FPAC who have expressed interest in volunteering their time and talents to further WE efforts.

In FY 2025, the WE Team plans to:

- Continue to facilitate focus groups to ascertain root cause and underlying factors which may contribute to lower than expected FEVS scores.
- Compile and report findings for FPAC agencies and leaders from the FY24 FEVS results.
- Encourage Employee Engagement and Change Management trainings throughout the year to agency leadership.
- Market and encourage FPAC personnel to participate in the FEVS.
- Meet with leadership to help streamline the action planning process.



# Parts F

## Certification of Establishment of Continuing Equal Employment Opportunity Programs

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

I, Willisa Donald Director/0260/SES am the  
(Insert name above) (Insert official title/series/grade above)

Principal EEO  
Director/Official for

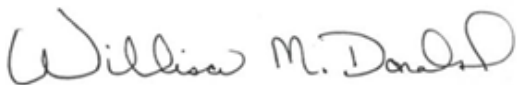
Civil Rights Equal Employment Opportunity Division  
FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION

(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



# PART G

## Agency Self-Assessment Checklist







## MD-715 - PART G


### Agency Self-Assessment Checklist



#### Essential Element A: DEMONSTRATED COMMITMENT FROM AGENCY LEADERSHIP

*This element requires the agency head to communicate a commitment to equal employment opportunity and a discrimination-free workplace.*

 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>A.1 – The agency issues an effective, up-to-date EEO policy statement.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Current Part G Questions</b>
A.1.a	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 comments column. [see MD-715, II(A)]	Yes	June 28, 2024	A.1. a.2
A.1.b	Does the EEO policy statement address all protected bases (age, color, disability, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, and gender identity), genetic information, national origin, race, religion, and reprisal) contained in the laws EEOC enforces? [see 29 CFR § 1614.101(a)]	Yes		New



 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>A.2 – The agency has communicated EEO policies and procedures to all employees.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Current Part G Questions</b>
A.2.a	Does the agency disseminate the following policies and procedures to all employees:			
A.2. a.1	Anti-harassment policy? [see MD 715, II(A)]	Yes		New
A.2. a.2	Reasonable accommodation procedures? [see 29 C.F.R § 1614.203(d)(3)]	Yes		New
A.2.b	Does the agency prominently post the following information throughout the workplace and on its public website:			
A.2.b.1	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	Completed 1/16/2024.	New
A.2.b.2	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
A.2.b.3	Reasonable accommodation procedures? [see 29 C.F.R. § 1614.203(d)(3)(i)] If so, please provide the internet address in the comments column.	Yes	USDA/RA Program <a href="https://www.usda.gov/ra">https://www.usda.gov/ra</a>	New


 <b>Compliance Indicator</b> <b>Measures</b>	<b>A.2 – The agency has communicated EEO policies and procedures to all employees.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Current Part G Questions</b>
A.2.c	Does the agency inform its employees about the following topics:			
A.2.c.1	EEO complaint process? [see 29 CFR §§ 1614.102(a)(12) and 1614.102(b)(5)] If “yes”, please provide how often.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly “EEO 101” Training Webinars.</li> <li>Physical posters displayed near the entrance of all USDA Services Centers.</li> <li>In break rooms or employee rest areas of all USDA Service Centers</li> <li>Public and Internal Website.</li> </ul>	A.2.a
A.2.c.2	ADR process? [see MD-110, Ch. 3(II)(C)] If “yes”, please provide how often.	Yes	Same as above	New
A.2.c.3	Reasonable accommodation program? [see 29 CFR § 1614.203(d)(7)(ii)(C)] If “yes”, please provide how often.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject training is provided by HR throughout the year</li> <li>Public and Internal Website</li> </ul>	New
A.2.c.4	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provided directly to all employees by email</li> <li>Provided through the Public and Internal Website.</li> </ul>	New
A.2.c.5	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provided through the Public and Internal Website.</li> </ul>	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>Current Part G Questions</b>
A.3.a	<p>Does the agency provide recognition to employees, supervisors, managers, and units demonstrating superior accomplishment in equal employment opportunity? [see 29 CFR § 1614.102(a) (9)] If “yes”, provide one or two examples in the comments section.</p>	Yes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. FPAC-BC's Chief Operating Officer Awards for exemplary service in moving the mission forward.</li> <li>2. NRCS - Chief's EEO awards through the NCRACC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chief's National Civil Rights Award</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	New
A.3.b	<p>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]</p>	NA	H.1 - FEVS 2024 Results are in and being reviewed.	New


## Essential Element B: INTEGRATION OF EEO INTO THE AGENCY'S STRATEGIC MISSION


*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>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>Current Part G Questions</b>
B.1.a	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.1.a.1	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	EEO Director reports to Agency Head.	New
B.1.a.2	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.1.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.1.c	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	5/23/2023	B.2.b
B.1.d	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

 Compliance Indicator Measures	B.2 – The EEO Director controls all aspects of the EEO program.	Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments	Current Part G Questions
B.2.a	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.2.b	Is the EEO Director responsible for overseeing the completion of EEO counseling [see 29 CFR §1614.102(c)(4)]	Yes		New
B.2.c	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.]	N/A	EEO Investigations are handled at the Departmental level at OASCR.	New
B.2.d	Is the EEO Director responsible for overseeing the timely issuing final agency decisions? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(c)(5)] [This question may not be applicable for certain subordinate level components.]	N/A	FADs are drafted at the Departmental level at OASCR.	New
B.2.e	Is the EEO Director responsible for ensuring compliance with EEOC orders? [see 29 CFR §§ 1614.102(e); 1614.502]	Yes		F.3.b
B.2.f	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	Monthly and quarterly reports to Agency Head.	New
B.2.g	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)]	Yes		New


 <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>Current Part G Questions</b>
B.3.a	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)]	No	H.2-Target date modified to 12/31/2025	B.2.c & B.2.d
B.3.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	FPAC follows USDA's Strategic Plan. Goal 6: Attract, Inspire, and Retain an Engaged and Motivated Workforce that's Proud to Represent USDA civil rights; and create a culture that respects, welcomes, and supports all employees, including LGBTQ+ individuals and people with disabilities.	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?</b> <b>(Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Current Part G Questions</b>
B.4.a	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.4.a.1	to conduct a self-assessment of the agency for possible program deficiencies? [see MD-715, II(D)]	Yes		B.3.b
B.4.a.2	to enable the agency to conduct a thorough barrier analysis of its workforce? [see MD-715, II(B)]	Yes		B.4.a
B.4.a.3	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		E.5.b
B.4.a.4	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 comments column.	Yes		B.4.f & B.4.g
B.4.a.5	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.4.a.6	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.4.a.7	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.4.a.8	to effectively administer its special emphasis programs (such as, Federal Women's Program, Hispanic Employment Program, and People with Disabilities Program Manager)? [5 USC § 7201; 38 USC § 4214; 5 CFR § 720.204; 5 CFR § 213.3102(t) and (u); 5 CFR § 315.709]	Yes		B.3.c, B.3.c.1, B.3.c.2, & B.3.c.3
B.4.a.9	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.4.a.0	to effectively manage its reasonable accommodation program? [see 29 CFR § 1614.203(d)(4)(ii)]	Yes		B.4.d
B.4.a.1	to ensure timely and complete compliance with EEOC orders? [see MD- 715, II(E)]	Yes		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>Current Part G Questions</b>
B.4.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.4.c	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.4.d	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
B.4.e	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)(A) 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>Current Part G Questions</b>
B.5.a	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.5.a.1	EEO Complaint Process? [see MD-715(II)(B)]	Yes		New
B.5.a.2	Reasonable Accommodation Procedures? [see 29 C.F.R. § 1614.102(d)(3)]	Yes		A.3.d
B.5.a.3	Anti-Harassment Policy? [see MD-715(II)(B)]	Yes		New
B.5.a.4	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.5.a.5	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)(B)]	Yes		E.4.b






 Compliance Indicator Measures	B.6 – The agency involves managers in the implementation of its EEO program.	Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments	Current Part G Questions
B.6.a	Are senior managers involved in the implementation of Special Emphasis Programs? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]	No	H.3- target date modified to 9/30/2025.	New
B.6.b	Do senior managers participate in the barrier analysis process? [see MD- 715 Instructions, Sec. I]	No	H.4	D.1.a
B.6.c	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]	No	H.4	D.1.b
B.6.d	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)]	No	H.4	D.1.c


#### Essential Element C: MANAGEMENT AND PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY


*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.*


 Compliance Indicator Measures	C.1 – The agency conducts regular internal audits of its component and field offices.	Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments	Current Part G Questions
C.1.a	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	Jan – GA Feb – NV Mar – WI Apr – TN May – WY and OK Jun – UT Jul – ND Aug – SC Sept - SD	New
C.1.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	Jan – GA Feb – NV Mar – WI Apr – TN May – WY and OK Jun – UT Jul – ND Aug – SC	New
C.1.c	Do the component and field offices make reasonable efforts to comply with the recommendations of the field audit? [see MD-715 (C)]	Yes		New


 <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</b>	<b>Current Part G Questions</b>
C.2.a	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)]	Yes		New
C.2.a.1	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
C.2.a.2	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
C.2.a.3	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
C.2.a.4	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
C.2.a.5	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. Dept. of Veterans Affairs</u> , EEOC Appeal No. 0120123232 (May 21, 2015); <u>Complainant v. Dept. 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 comments column.	Yes	Of the 260 total inquiries 121 or 47% were processed timely during FY24.	New
C.2.a.6	Do the agency's training materials on its anti-harassment policy include examples of disability-based harassment? [see 29 CFR 1614.203(d)(2)]	Yes	Anti-Harassment Training was provided to all FPAC Employees and Managers during FY24 with a 60% completion rate.	New

 <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?</b> <b>(Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Current</b> <b>Part G</b> <b>Questions</b>
C.2.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
C.2.b.1	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
109C.2.b.2	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
C.2.b.3	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
C.2.b.4	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
C.2.b.5	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 comments column.	Yes		E.1.e
C.2.c	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
C.2.c.1	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 comments column.	Yes	USDA RA/PAS Program <a href="https://www.usda.gov/ra">https://www.usda.gov/ra</a>	New

 Compliance Indicator Measures	C.3 - The agency evaluates managers and supervisors on their efforts to ensure equal employment opportunity.	Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments	Current Part G Questions
C.3.a	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?	No	H.5 – All performance plan elements have been updated. by 7/22/2024	New
C.3.b	Does the agency require rating officials to evaluate the performance of managers and supervisors based on the following activities:			
C.3.b.1	Resolve EEO problems/disagreements/conflicts, including the participation in ADR proceedings? [see MD-110, Ch. 3.I]	Yes		A.3.a.1
C.3.b.2	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
C.3.b.3	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
C.3.b.4	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
C.3.b.5	Provide religious accommodations when such accommodations do not cause an undue hardship? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(a)(7)]	Yes		A.3.a.7
C.3.b.6	Provide disability accommodations when such accommodations do not cause an undue hardship? [ see 29 CFR §1614.102(a)(8)]	Yes		A.3.a.8
C.3.b.7	Support the EEO program in identifying and removing barriers to equal opportunity. [see MD-715, II(C)]	Yes		New
C.3.b.8	Support the anti-harassment program in investigating and correcting harassing conduct. [see Enforcement Guidance, V.C.2]	Yes		A.3.a.2
C.3.b.9	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
C.3.c	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
C.3.d	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



 Compliance Indicator Measures	C.4 – The agency ensures effective coordination between its EEO programs and Human Resources (HR) program.	Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments	Current Part G Questions
C.4.a	Do the HR Director and the EEO Director meet regularly to assess whether personnel programs, policies, and procedures conform to EEOC laws, instructions, and management directives? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(a)(2)]	Yes		New
C.4.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	H.6 timetables have been established. Action was completed 9/16/2024.	C.2.a, C.2.b, & C.2.c
C.4.c	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
C.4.d	Does the HR office timely provide the EEO office have timely access to other data (e.g., exit interview data, climate assessment surveys, and grievance data), upon request? [see MD-715, II(C)]	Yes		New
C.4.e	Pursuant to Section II(C) of MD-715, does the EEO office collaborate with the HR office to:			
C.4.e.1	Implement the Affirmative Action Plan for Individuals with Disabilities? [see 29 CFR §1614.203(d); MD-715, II(C)]	No	H.7 Target dates were modified to 9/30/2025.	New
C.4.e.2	Develop and/or conduct outreach and recruiting initiatives? [MD-715, II(C)]	No	H.7 Target dates were modified to 9/30/2025.	New
C.4.e.3	Develop and/or provide training for managers and employees? See MD- 715, II(C)]	No	H.7 Target dates were modified to 9/30/2025.	New
C.4.e.4	Identify and remove barriers to equal opportunity in the workplace [see MD-715, II(C)]	No	H.7 Target dates were modified to 9/30/2025.	New
C.4.e.5	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>Current Part G Questions</b>
C.5.a	Does the agency have a disciplinary policy and/or table of penalties that covers discriminatory conduct? 29 CFR § 1614.102(a)(6); see also Douglas v. Veterans Administration, 5 MSPR 280 (1981)	NA	USDA rescinded its Guide for Disciplinary Penalties on August 27, 2020. This guidance is still in effect for the collective bargaining unit.	C.3.a.
C.5.b	When appropriate, does the agency discipline or sanction managers and employees for discriminatory conduct? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(a)(6)] If “yes”, please state the number of disciplined/sanctioned individuals during this reporting period in the comments.	Yes	Two managers were disciplined, one manager left the agency prior to disciplinary action.	C.3.c
C.5.c	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>Current Part G Questions</b>
C.6.a	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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Once yearly during the Annual “State of the Agency” briefing</li> <li>Adhoc when requested by Agency Leadership</li> </ul>	C.1.a
C.6.b	Are EEO officials readily available to answer managers’ and supervisors’ questions or concerns? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]	Yes		New


## Essential Element D: PROACTIVE PREVENTION

*This element requires that the agency head make early efforts to prevent discrimination and to identify and eliminate barriers to equal employment opportunity.*

 <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>Current Part G Questions</b>
D.1.a	Does the agency have a process for identifying triggers in the workplace? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]	Yes	H.8- this action was completed on 02/18/2024.	New
D.1.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
D.1.c	Does the agency conduct exit interviews or surveys that include questions on how the agency could improve the recruitment, hiring, inclusion, retention, and advancement of individuals with disabilities? [see 9 CFR 1614.203(d)(1)(iii)(C)]	No	H.10 – Target date modified to 12/31/2025.	New

 <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</b>	<b>Current Part G Questions</b>
D.2.a	Does the agency have a process for analyzing the identified triggers to find possible barriers? [see MD-715, (II)(B)]	No	H.11-no change since the working groups haven't met yet.	New
D.2.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)]	No	H.12 Target date modified to 9/30/2025.	B.2.c.2
D.2.c	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	Civil Rights Impact Analyses.	B.2.c.1
D.2.d	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 comments column.	No	H.11 – no change since the working groups haven't met yet.	New

 Compliance Indicator Measures	D.3 – The agency establishes appropriate action plans to remove identified barriers.	Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments	Current Part G Questions
D.3.a.	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)]	No	H.13 - no change since the working groups haven't met yet.	New
D.3.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)]	No	H.13 - no change since the working groups haven't met yet.	New
D.3.c	Does the agency periodically review the effectiveness of the plans? [see MD-715, II(D)]	No	H.13 - no change since the working groups haven't met yet.	New



 Compliance Indicator Measures	D.4 – The agency has an affirmative action plan for people with disabilities, including those with targeted disabilities	Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments	Current Part G Questions
D.4.a	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.	Yes	<a href="https://www.fpacbc.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2024-10/FY23_fpac_md715_aap_report.pdf">https://www.fpacbc.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2024-10/FY23_fpac_md715_aap_report.pdf</a>	New
D.4.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
D.4.c	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
D.4.d	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	H.14 – Modified the target date to 9/30/2025.	New





## Essential Element E: EFFICIENCY


*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.*

 Compliance Indicator  Measures	E.1 - The agency maintains an efficient, fair, and impartial complaint resolution process.	Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments	Current Part G Questions
E.1.a	Does the agency provide timely EEO counseling, pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.105?	Yes		E.3.a.1
E.1.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
E.1.c	Does the agency issue acknowledgment letters immediately upon receipt of a formal complaint, pursuant to MD-110, Ch. 5(l)?	NA	This function is handled at the Department level by OASCR.	New
E.1.d	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(l)? If so, please provide the average processing time in the comments.	NA	This function is handled at the Department level by OASCR.	New
E.1.e	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)?	Yes		New
E.1.f	Does the agency timely complete investigations, pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.108?	NA	This function is handled at the Department level by OASCR.	E.3.a.3
E.1.g	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	This function is handled at the Department level by OASCR.	New
E.1.h	When the complainant does not request a hearing, does the agency timely issue the final agency decision, pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.110(b)?	No	H.15 Target date modified to 9/30/2025.	E.3.a.4
E.1.i	Does the agency timely issue final actions following receipt of the hearing file and the administrative judge's decision, pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.110(a)?	NA	This function is handled at the Department level by OASCR.	E.3.a.7
E.1.j	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 comments column.	NA	This function is handled at the Department level by OASCR.	E.2.c
E.1.k	If the agency uses employees to implement any stage of the EEO complaint process, does the agency hold them accountable for poor work product and/or delays during performance review? [See MD-110, Ch. 5(V)(A)]	Yes		New
E.1.l	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)]	Yes		New

 Compliance Indicator  Measures	E.2 – The agency has a neutral EEO process.	Measure Met? (Yes/ No/NA)	Comments	Current Part G Questions
E.2.a	Has the agency established a clear separation between its EEO complaint program and its defensive function? [see MD-110, Ch. 1(IV)(D)]	Yes	These functions are maintained under two separate divisions: CREEOD at the Mission Area level and the Agency Rep Staff at the Business Center level.	New
E.2.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 comments column.	Yes	Agency Representative staff completes this function.	E.6.a
E.2.c	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
E.2.d	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
E.2.e	If applicable, are processing time frames incorporated for the legal counsel’s sufficiency review for timely processing of complaints? 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>Current Part G Questions</b>
E.3.a	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
E.3.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
E.3.c	Does the agency encourage all employees to use ADR, where ADR is appropriate? [see MD-110, Ch. 3(IV)(C)]	Yes		D.2.a
E.3.d	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
E.3.e	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
E.3.f	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>Current Part G Questions</b>
E.4.a	Does the agency have systems in place to accurately collect, monitor, and analyze the following data:			
E.4.a.1	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
E.4.a.2	The race, national origin, sex, and disability status of agency employees? [see 29 CFR §1614.601(a)]	Yes		E.5.c
E.4.a.3	Recruitment activities? [see MD-715, II(E)]	Yes		E.5.f
E.4.a.4	External and internal applicant flow data concerning the applicants' race, national origin, sex and disability status? [see MD-715, II(E)]	Yes		New
E.4.a.5	The processing of requests for reasonable accommodation? [29 CFR § 1614.203(d)(4)]	Yes		New
E.4.a.6	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
E.4.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



 Compliance Indicator Measures	E.5 – The agency identifies and disseminates significant trends and best practices in its EEO program.	Measure Met? (Yes/ No/NA)	Comments	Current Part G Questions
E.5.a	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.	No	H.16 – Target date modified to 09/30/2025	E.5.e
E.5.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.	No	H.16 – Target date modified to 09/30/2025	E.5.g
E.5.c	Does the agency compare its performance in the EEO process to other Federal agencies of similar size? [see MD-715, II(E)]	No	H.16 – Target date modified to 09/30/2025	E.3.a


#### Essential Element F: RESPONSIVENESS AND LEGAL COMPLIANCE

*This element requires federal agencies to comply with EEO statutes and EEOC regulations, policy guidance, and other written instructions.*

 Compliance Indicator Measures	F.1 – The agency has processes in place to ensure timely and full compliance with EEOC Orders and settlement agreements.	Measure Met? (Yes/ No/NA)	Comments	Current Part G Questions
F.1.a	Does the agency have a system of management controls to ensure that its officials timely comply with EEOC orders/directions and final agency actions? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(e); MD-715, II(F)]	Yes		F.1.a
F.1.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)]	Yes		E.3.a.6
F.1.c	Are there procedures in place to ensure the timely and predictable processing of ordered monetary relief? [see MD-715, II(F)]	Yes		F.2.a.1
F.1.d	Are procedures in place to process other forms of ordered relief promptly? [see MD-715, II(F)]	Yes		F.2.a.2
F.1.e	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)]	Yes		F.3.a.

 <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>Current Part G Questions</b>
F.2.a	Does the agency timely respond and fully comply with EEOC orders? [see 29 CFR §1614.502; MD-715, II(E)]	Yes		C.3.d
F.2.a.1	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)]	Yes		E.3.a.5
F.2.a.2	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]	Yes		E.3.a.7
F.2.a.3	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)]	Yes		New
F.2.a.4	Pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.502, does the agency promptly provide EEOC with the required documentation for completing compliance?	Yes		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>Current Part G Questions</b>
F.3.a	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
F.3.b	Does the agency timely post on its public webpage its quarterly No FEAR Act data? [see 29 CFR §1614.703(d)]	Yes		New



# Part H

## Agency EEO Plan to Attain the Essential Elements of a Model EEO Program

## MD-715 – Part H.1

### Agency EEO Plan to Attain the Essential Elements of a Model EEO Program FY24 - October 2023 – September 2024

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
A.2.b.1	The business contact information for FPAC EEO Counselors is not posted to the external / internal website.

#### 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)
10/01/2022	Create EEO Contact Poster listing contact information for the FPAC EEO Director, EEO Counselors, and National Special Emphasis Program Managers.	5/10/2024		1/16/2024

#### Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
EEO Director	Willisa Donald	Yes
Title VII Branch Chief	Michelle Hart	Yes
Affirmative Employment Program (AEP) Team Lead	Charles Thomas	Yes
Title VII (EEO Complaints) Team Lead	Sandra McWhirter	Yes
Civil Rights Compliance Team Lead	James Currington	Yes

#### Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Funding & Staffing?	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
10/01/2023	Disseminate to sub-agency POCs to ensure information is posted in all State Offices and Service Centers.	Yes		11/8/2023
10/01/2023	Update internal and external website with EEO Contact Poster.	Yes		1/10/2024
05/31/2024	Work with Digital Communications team to upload new information.	Yes		1/10/2024
03/29/2024	Work with CREEOD Compliance Team to ensure updated poster is disseminated to Field Offices.	Yes		1/16/2024

## Report of Accomplishments

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
FY24	Internal and public facing websites have been updated with contact information. Created and dispersed Mission Area - wide new Civil Rights Directory Poster.
	Created and dispersed Mission Area - wide new Civil Rights Directory Poster.



## MD-715 – Part H.2

### Agency EEO Plan to Attain the Essential Elements of a Model EEO Program FY24 - October 2023 – September 2024

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
B.3.a	EEO program officials do not participate in agency meetings regarding workforce changes that might impact EEO issues, including strategic planning, recruitment strategies, vacancy projections, succession planning, and selection for training/career development opportunities.

#### 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)
10/01/2022	CREEOD will collaborate with Human Resources regarding strategic planning, recruitment strategies, vacancy projections, succession planning, selection for training/ career development.	12/31/2024	12/31/2025	

#### Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
EEO Director	Willisa Donald	Yes
Chief Human Capital Officer	Terri Meighan	Yes
CR Compliance and Training Branch Chief	Carl Butler	Yes
Title VII Branch Chief	Michelle Hart	Yes
Special Placement Program Coordinator (Acting)	Shannon Logan	Yes

#### Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Funding & Staffing?	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
05/31/2024	CREEOD Director and Human Resources (HR) Director will designate Points of Contacts (POCs) to participate in standing meetings for strategic workforce planning, recruitment and outreach, vacancy projection, succession planning, and training/career development.	Yes	12/31/2025	
05/31/2024	HR will provide Title VII Branch Chief the annual recruitment and outreach schedule to solicit participation of Special Emphasis Program Managers to attend.	Yes	09/30/2025	

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Funding & Staffing?	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
08/31/2024	HR will ensure EEO POCs are invited to participate and collaborate on strategic workforce planning initiatives.	Yes	09/30/2025	
08/31/2024	HR will ensure EEO POCs are invited to participate and collaborate on training and career development initiatives.	Yes	09/30/2025	
08/31/2024	HR will ensure EEO POC(s) are invited to participate and collaborate on succession planning.	Yes	09/30/2025	
08/31/2024	HR will ensure EEO POC(s) are invited to participate and collaborate on vacancy projections.	Yes	09/30/2025	
Bi-annual	CREEOD Director and HR Director (or designated officials) will meet bi-annually to review results and identify potential barriers.	Yes		

#### Report of Accomplishments

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
FY24	The Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity Director participated in a monthly meeting with the Human Resources Division Director to discuss recruitment and retention.
	The Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity Staff and the Human Resources Division, Talent Acquisitions and Management Directorate conducted monthly collaboration meetings on increasing hiring efforts from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs). Schedule A and Workforce Recruitment resources were created and disseminated to assist hiring officials.

## MD-715 – Part H.3

### Agency EEO Plan to Attain the Essential Elements of a Model EEO Program FY24 – October 2023 – September 2024

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
B.6.a	Are senior managers involved in the implementation of Special Emphasis Programs?

#### 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)
10/01/2022	Involve senior managers in Special Emphasis Programs activities.	09/30/2024	09/30/2025	

#### Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
Title VII Branch Chief	Michelle Hart	Yes
Affirmative Employment Program Section Team Lead	Charles Thomas	Yes

#### Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Funding & Staffing?	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
05/31/2024	Identify and create listing of senior managers in the Mission Area for participation in SEP observances/event.	Yes		1/6/2024
07/31/2024	Draft participation memos for CREEOD Director to sign soliciting participation for identified senior manager.	Yes		1/6/2024
09/30/2024	Issue participation memo to senior managers.	Yes	09/30/2025	

#### Report of Accomplishments

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
FY24	Mission Area senior level officials participated in the 2nd Annual Special Emphasis Program Conference.
	Senior managers and supervisors attended the Quarterly Special Emphasis Program Managers Orientation training.
	Senior leadership assisted with developing and reviewing the newly released Special Emphasis Program policy.

## MD-715 – Part H.4

### Agency EEO Plan to Attain the Essential Elements of a Model EEO Program FY24 - October 2023 – September 2024

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
B.6.b	Do senior managers participate in the barrier analysis process?
B.6.c	When barriers are identified, do senior managers assist in developing agency EEO action plans (Part I, Part J, or the Executive Summary)?
B.6.d	Do senior managers successfully implement EEO Action Plans and incorporate the EEO Action Plan Objectives into agency strategic plans?

#### 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)
10/01/2022	Ensure senior manager participate in the barrier analysis process.	09/30/2025		
10/01/2022	Ensure senior managers assist in the development and implementation of the EEO Action Plans.	09/30/2025		

#### Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
EEO Director	Willisa Donald	Yes
Chief Human Capital Officer	Terri Meighan	Yes
Title VII Branch Chief	Michelle Hart	Yes
Affirmative Employment Program Section Team Lead	Charles Thomas	Yes

#### Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Funding & Staffing?	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
09/30/2024	Develop a strategy to enlist FPAC Managers and Leadership involvement in the barrier analysis process.	Yes	09/30/2025	
09/30/2025	Conduct barrier analysis training for senior managers.	Yes		
09/30/2025	Conduct trigger analysis training for senior managers.	Yes		
12/31/2024	Establish a standard operating procedure for conducting a barrier analysis, which will include the roles/responsibilities of senior managers when participating in the barrier analysis process.	Yes	12/31/2025	
12/31/2024	Implement a process where senior managers are included to identify triggers for potential barriers in policies, procedures or practices for employees and applicants by race, ethnicity, and gender.	Yes	12/31/2025	
09/30/2025	Senior managers will participate in the development of EEO action plans.	Yes	12/31/2025	

#### Report of Accomplishments

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
FY24	Mission Area managers assisted with the Barrier Analysis Group Charter (draft) for the Women's, Hispanic, and Individuals with Disabilities minority groups.

## MD-715 – Part H.5

### Agency EEO Plan to Attain the Essential Elements of a Model EEO Program FY24 – October 2023 – September 2024

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
C.3.a	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?

#### 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)
10/01/2022	Partner with HRD to ensure managers and supervisors' performance appraisals include an element that evaluates their commitment and participation in the EEO program.	01/31/2025		07/22/2024

#### Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
EEO Director	Willisa Donald	Yes
Chief Human Capital Officer	Terri Meighan	Yes

#### Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Funding & Staffing?	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
9/30/2024	CREEOD Director and HRD Director will identify POCs to create a working group to review managers and supervisor performance appraisal elements and ensure EEO elements are included or added.	Yes		07/19/2024
01/31/2025	Working Group will review, revise, and develop (if needed) standardized elements regarding manager and supervisor commitment to agency EEO policy and participation in the EEO program for review by CREEOD Director and HR Director.	Yes		07/22/2024

#### Report of Accomplishments

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
FY24	The Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity Division collaborated with Human Resources Division, Management and Employee Services Directorate to update the supervisory Equal Employment Opportunity performance element for all Mission Area managers and supervisors' performance plans.

## MD-715 – Part H.6

### Agency EEO Plan to Attain the Essential Elements of a Model EEO Program FY24 - October 2023 – September 2024

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
C.4.b	The agency has not 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?

#### 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)
10/01/2022	Establish an annual schedule for CREEOD to review FPAC's HR Directives for systemic barriers.	09/30/2024		09/16/2024

#### Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
EEO Director	Willisa Donald	Yes
CREEOD Deputy Director	Stephen Thompson	Yes
Chief Human Capital Officer	Terri Meighan	Yes
Title VII Branch Chief	Michelle Hart	Yes
CR Compliance and Training Branch Chief	Carl Butler	Yes
Title VI Branch Chief	Tiffany Wallace-Isler	Yes

#### Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Funding & Staffing?	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
06/30/2024	Title VII Branch Chief and HRD will identify POCs to review HRD policies, procedures, and practices on an annual schedule.	Yes		06/30/2024
07/30/2024	POCs will develop a timeline to review management personnel policies, procedures, and practices.	Yes		07/30/2024

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Funding & Staffing?	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
09/30/2024	POCs will submit a report to CREEOD outlining system barriers within any management/personnel policy, procedure, or practice that impede full participation minority groups or underserved communities.	Yes		09/16/2024

#### Report of Accomplishments

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
FY24	The Civil rights and Equal Employment Opportunity Division, Title VII Branch developed and received approval for the FY25 Human Resource Division Directive Review Timeline to review internal Mission Area directives and policies for systemic barriers.
	The Title VII Branch completed the Temporary Promotion and Detail directive review and submitted a report to the Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity Division leadership for review.



## MD-715 – Part H.7

### Agency EEO Plan to Attain the Essential Elements of a Model EEO Program FY24 - October 2023 – September 2024

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
C.4.e.1	Does the EEO Office collaborate with the HR office to implement the Affirmative Action Plan for Individuals with Disabilities (IWDs)?
C.4.e.2	Does the EEO Office collaborate with the HR office to develop and/or conduct outreach and recruiting initiatives?
C.4.e.3	Does the EEO Office collaborate with the HR office to develop and/or provide training for managers and employees?
C.4.e.4	Does the EEO Office collaborate with the HR office to identify and remove barriers to equal opportunity in the workplace?

#### 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)
10/01/2022	Participate in meetings with Human Resources that focus on addressing low participation rates regarding PWDs (to include minorities and women) for outreach and recruitment, and training.	09/30/2024	09/30/2025	

#### Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
EEO Director	Willisa Donald	Yes
Chief Human Capital Officer	Terri Meighan	Yes
Title VII Branch Chief	Michelle Hart	Yes
National Disability Program Manager	Joshua Allen	Yes

### Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Funding & Staffing?	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
05/31/2024	CREEOD Director and HR Director will identify POCs.	Yes	09/30/2025	
09/30/2024	POCs will meet bi-annually to identify and develop any HR, CR, and EEO training to provide to the Agency.	Yes	09/30/2025	
09/30/2024	POCs will meet bi-annually to analyze workforce demographic data to identify triggers to remove barriers to equal opportunity in the workplace.	Yes	09/30/2025	
09/30/2024	POCs will meet to develop an action plan on how to implement the Agency Affirmative Action Plan for Individuals with Disabilities (Part J).	Yes	09/30/2025	
09/30/2024	POCs will meet to develop annual outreach and recruitment plan.	Yes	09/30/2025	
09/30/2024	POCs will meet quarterly to discuss the Affirmative Action Plan for People with Disabilities.	Yes	09/30/2025	
09/30/2024	POCs will provide a list of colleges and universities for outreach and recruitment efforts; provide recommendations and share recruitment best practices for PWDs.	Yes	09/30/2025	
09/30/2024	POCs will track Agency recruitment efforts by applicant groups using applicant flow data provided by HR.	Yes	09/30/2025	
09/30/2024	POCs will meet bi-annually to assess recruitment efforts.	Yes	09/30/2025	

### Report of Accomplishments

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
FY24	The Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity Division in collaboration with the Human Resources Division, Reasonable Accommodation staff hosted Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) training to over 100 hiring officials in utilizing the WRP portal to recruit and hire Individual with Disabilities.

## MD-715 – Part H.8

### Agency EEO Plan to Attain the Essential Elements of a Model EEO Program FY24 – October 2023 – September 2024

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
D.1.a	Agency does not have a process for identifying triggers in the workplace.

#### 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)
10/01/2022	Develop a process to identify triggers in management/personnel policies and process for minority or underserved groups.	12/31/2024		11/19/2024

#### Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
EEO Director	Willisa Donald	Yes
Chief Human Capital Officer	Terri Meighan	Yes
Title VII Branch Chief	Michelle Hart	Yes

#### Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Funding & Staffing?	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
09/30/2024	Conduct workforce analysis and identify triggers to find barriers and work to eliminate deficiencies in the Agency.	Yes		02/18/2024
09/30/2024	Conduct trend analysis to determine if disparities exist based on race, sex, and/or disability.	Yes		11/19/2024
09/30/2024	Review OHRM dashboard and NFC workforce data to examine data trends.	Yes		10/24/2024 (on-going with monthly reporting).

#### Report of Accomplishments

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
FY24	The Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity Division conducted monthly workforce trigger analysis to identify low representation within the Mission Area workforce and posted result to Mission Area internal SharePoint site for Agency's review and awareness.

## MD-715 – Part H.9

### Agency EEO Plan to Attain the Essential Elements of a Model EEO Program FY24 – October 2023 – September 2024

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
D.1.b	Agency does not 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.

#### 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)
10/01/2022	Establish a regular review of the following sources of information to find barriers: complaint/grievance data, exit surveys, employee climate surveys, focus groups, affinity groups, unions, program evaluations, anti-harassment program, reasonable accommodation, special emphasis program, and/or external special interest groups.	12/31/2024	09/30/2025	

#### Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
EEO Director	Willisa Donald	Yes
Chief Human Capital Officer	Terri Meighan	Yes
Title VII Branch Chief	Michelle Hart	Yes
CR Compliance and Training Branch Chief	Carl Butler	Yes
Union Representative	Leonard Randolph, Jr.	N/A
FPAC Offboarding Program Manager	Kelly Ryan	Yes
Reasonable Accommodation Program Manager	Count Branham	Yes
Anti-Harassment Program Manager	Melinda Richards	Yes
Federal Women Special Emphasis Program Manager	April Wilson	Yes
National Disability Program Manager	Joshua Allen	Yes
Black Special Emphasis Program Manager	Travis Watkins	Yes
Hispanic Special Emphasis Program Manager		
Asian American/Native Hawaiian Program Manager	Andy Cao Pham	Yes

#### Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Funding & Staffing?	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
06/30/2024	CREEOD Director, HR Director, Union Leaders, and Employee Resource Group will identify POCs to work on this initiative.	Yes	09/30/2025	
09/30/2024	Conduct complaint and grievance trend analysis by gender and RNO.	Yes	09/30/2025	
09/30/2024	Review training evaluations to assess needs and overarching EEO concerns.	Yes	09/30/2025	
09/30/2024	Examine workforce demographic data to identify specific trends.	Yes	09/30/2025	
09/30/2024	Collect and review information from the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey to identify and address opportunities for improvements.	Yes	09/30/2025	

#### Report of Accomplishments

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
FY24	The Civil Rights and Equal Employment and Opportunity Division in collaboration with the Human Resources Division, Talent Acquisitions and Management Division Directorate reviewed the Federal Viewpoint Survey to identify and create action plans to address improvement areas.

## MD-715 – Part H.10

### Agency EEO Plan to Attain the Essential Elements of a Model EEO Program FY24 - October 2023 – September 2024

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
D.1.c	Agency does not conduct exit interviews or surveys that include questions on how the agency could improve the recruitment, hiring, inclusion, retention, and advancement of individuals with disabilities.

#### 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)
10/01/2022	Ensure exit interviews or surveys include questions to improve recruitment, hiring, inclusion, retention, and advancement with IWDs.	12/31/2024	12/31/2025	

#### Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
EEO Director	Willisa Donald	Yes
Chief Human Capital Officer	Terri Meighan	Yes
Title VII Branch Chief	Michelle Hart	Yes
National Disability Program Manager	Joshua Allen	Yes
FPAC Offboarding Program Manager	Kelly Ryan	Yes

#### Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Funding & Staffing?	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
09/30/2024	CREEOD Director and HR Director will identify POCs to review existing exit interview questions.	Yes	12/31/2025	
03/31/2025	POCs will review, develop, or revise exit interview and survey questions.	Yes	12/31/2025	
09/30/2025	POCs will update exit interviews to include targeting recruitment, hiring, inclusion, retention, and advancement with IWDs.	Yes	12/31/2025	
Bi-annually	POCs will meet bi-annually to discuss the results to enhance recruitment, hiring, inclusion, retention, and advancement of IWDs.	Yes	12/31/2025	

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Funding & Staffing?	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
Annually	POCs will brief CREEOD and HR leaders on exit survey results.	Yes	12/31/2025	

#### Report of Accomplishments

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
FY24	The Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity Division collaborated with Human Resource Division on the revision of the Mission Area Standardized Off-Boarding Exit Survey form. Revision to the survey included the collection of demographic information and questions to improve recruitment, hiring, retention, advancement for Individuals with Disabilities.

## MD-715 – Part H.11

### Agency EEO Plan to Attain the Essential Elements of a Model EEO Program FY24 – October 2023 – September 2024

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
D.2.a	Agency does not have a process for analyzing the identified triggers to find possible barriers.
D.2.d	Agency does not 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.

#### 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)
10/01/2022	Develop a process to collect data and conduct a trend analysis for management/personnel policies and practices by race, national origin, sex, and disability.	12/31/2025		

#### Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
EEO Director	Willisa Donald	Yes
Chief Human Capital Officer	Terri Meighan	Yes
Title VII Branch Chief	Michelle Hart	Yes
CR Compliance and Training Branch Chief	Carl Butler	Yes
Union Representative	Leonard Randolph	N/A
Reasonable Accommodation Program Manager	Count Branham	Yes
Anti-Harassment Program Manager	Melinda Richards	Yes
ERG Executive Board President	Victor Hernandez	N/A



### Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Funding & Staffing?	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
09/30/2024	CREEOD will establish a Working Group to review management policies, practices, and procedures for hidden impediments to equal employment opportunity.	Yes	12/31/2025	
12/31/2025	Working Group will review Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey to identify and address opportunities for improvement to the EEO Program.	Yes		
12/31/2025	Working Group will conduct complaint and anti-harassment trends analysis.	Yes		
12/31/2025	Working Group will meet with National Special Emphasis Program managers to identify employment challenges in policies, procedures, and practices.	Yes		
12/31/2025	Working Group will review workforce demographic data to identify triggers.	Yes		

### Report of Accomplishments

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
FY24	The Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity Division developed a trigger analysis table to analyze workforce data and identify where there is need for a barrier analysis working group. The barrier analysis working group would develop action plan to increase the low representation identified by the trigger analysis.

## MD-715 – Part H.12

### Agency EEO Plan to Attain the Essential Elements of a Model EEO Program FY24 - October 2023 – September 2024

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
D.2.b	Agency does not regularly examine the impact of management/personnel policies, procedures, and practices by race, national origin, sex, and disability.

#### 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)
10/01/2022	Develop a process to collect data and conduct trend analysis on management/personnel policies and practices by race, national origin, sex, and disability.	3/30/2025	09/30/2025	

#### Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
EEO Director	Willisa Donald	Yes
Chief Human Capital Officer	Terri Meighan	Yes
Union Representative	Leonard Randolph	N/A
ERG Executive Board President	Victor Hernandez	N/A

#### Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Funding & Staffing?	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
6/30/2024	CREEOD Director, HR Director, Union, and Employee Resource Group leaders will identify POCs.	Yes	09/30/2025	
9/30/2024	POCs will develop a process to regularly examine management/personnel policies related to merit promotion, employee recognition, employee development/training programs.	Yes	09/30/2025	
9/30/2024	POCs will develop a timeline and schedule with milestones to the review of all management/ personnel policies.	Yes	09/30/2025	
3/30/2025	POCs will examine the impact of the management/ personnel policies, procedures, and practices on race national origin, sex, and disability.	Yes	09/30/2025	

## MD-715 – Part H.13

### Agency EEO Plan to Attain the Essential Elements of a Model EEO Program FY24 - October 2023 – September 2024

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
D.3.a	Agency does not effectively tailor action plans to address the identified barriers in policies, procedures, or practices.
D.3.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?
D.3.c	Does the agency periodically review the effectiveness of the plans?

#### 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)
10/01/2022	Tailor action plans to address the identified barriers in policies, procedures, practices in Part I and Part J.	9/30/2025		

#### Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
EEO Director	Willisa Donald	Yes
Chief Human Capital Officer	Terri Meighan	Yes

#### Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Funding & Staffing?	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
9/30/2025	Create an action plan that addresses how to identify barriers in Agencies' policies, procedures, and practices.	Yes		
9/30/2025	CREEOD and HR staff will examine the impact of the management/personnel policies, procedures, and practices on race, national origin, sex, and disability.	Yes		
9/30/2025	CREEOD and HR staff will identify a system and a process to obtain a viable plan to regularly examine management/personnel policies related to merit promotion, employee recognition, employee development/training programs.	Yes		
Annually	Review the action plan annually to ensure its effectiveness.	Yes		

## MD-715 – Part H.14

### Agency EEO Plan to Attain the Essential Elements of a Model EEO Program FY24 - October 2023 – September 2024

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
D.4.d	Agency had not 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.

#### 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)
10/01/2022	Develop an action plan focusing on increasing persons with disabilities or targeted disabilities representation within the workforce to meet EEOC regulatory goal.	03/30/2025	09/30/2025	

#### Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
EEO Director	Willisa Donald	Yes
Chief Human Capital Officer	Terri Meighan	Yes
Title VII Branch Chief	Michelle Hart	Yes
National Disability Special Emphasis Program Manager	Joshua Allen	Yes

#### Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Funding & Staffing?	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
09/30/2024	Identify CREEOD and HRD POCs to develop an action plan towards increasing persons with disability and targeted disability representation.	Yes	09/30/2025	
03/30/2025	Establish a Working Group to develop an action plan toward increasing persons with disability and targeted disability representation.	Yes	09/30/2025	
Annually	Review action plan until workforce reaches EEOC regulatory goal.	Yes	09/30/2025	

## Report of Accomplishments

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
FY24	The Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity Division in collaboration with Natural Resource Conservation Services agency implemented an agency-wide Disability Resurvey Campaign aimed to accurately reflect it disability workforce representation data.
	The Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity Division in partnership with the Human Resource Division hosted monthly focus session on awareness and updating employee disability demographic data.

## MD-715 – Part H.15

### Agency EEO Plan to Attain the Essential Elements of a Model EEO Program FY24 - October 2023 – September 2024

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
E.1.h	When the complainant does not request a hearing, the agency does not timely issue the final agency decision, pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.110(b).

#### 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)
10/01/2022	Develop a monthly schedule with OASCR to discuss and improve the timelines of pending FPAC Final Agency Decisions (FADs).	06/01/2024	09/30/2025	

#### Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
EEO Director	Willisa Donald	Yes
Title VII Branch Chief	Michelle Hart	Yes
Title VII (EEO Complaints) Team Lead	Sandra McWhirter	Yes

#### Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Funding & Staffing?	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
09/30/2024	Review the status of EEO complaints pending FADs on a weekly basis.	Yes	09/30/2025	
09/30/2024	Collaborate with OASCR's Employment Adjudication Division to monitor progress of 60-day timeline.	Yes	09/30/2025	

#### Report of Accomplishments

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
FY24	The Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity Division report an 88% timely completion of Final Agency Decisions.

## MD-715 – Part H.16

### Agency EEO Plan to Attain the Essential Elements of a Model EEO Program FY24 - October 2023 – September 2024

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
E.5.a	Agency does not monitor trends in its EEO program to determine whether the agency is meeting its obligations under the statutes EEOC enforces.
E.5.b	Agency does not review other agencies' best practices and adapt them, where appropriate, to improve the effectiveness of its EEO program.
E.5.c	Agency does not compare its performance in the EEO process to other federal agencies of similar size.

#### 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)
10/01/2022	Monitor the EEO program trends to ensure Agency meets its obligations; review other agencies best practices to improve effectiveness and compare Agency's performance to similar-sized federal agencies.	06/30/2025	09/30/2025	

#### Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
EEO Director	Willisa Donald	Yes
Title VII Branch Chief	Michelle Hart	Yes
CR Compliance and Training Branch Chief	Carl Butler	Yes

### Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Funding & Staffing?	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
09/30/2024	Identify CREEOD POCs to identify specific trends the Agency is obligated to review to ensure compliance with CR and EEO statutes.	Yes	09/30/2025	
09/30/2024	Schedule bi-annual meeting with POCs to discuss 2-year trends regarding CR statutes enforced by EEOC.	Yes	09/30/2025	
09/30/2024	Conduct research to identify other federal agencies' best practices to incorporate and implement new strategies and ideas.	Yes	09/30/2025	
09/30/2024	Identify one internal and one external agency of similar size to the FPAC Mission Area to compare performance in the EEO process.	Yes		1/15/2024
03/31/2025	Collaborate with other USDA agencies on specific program areas to enhance EEO program effectiveness.	Yes		02/06/2024
06/30/2025	Meet with at least one external federal agency to conduct comparative analysis of EEO program.	Yes		06/26/2024

### Report of Accomplishments

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
FY24	The Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity Division hosted a Best Practices and Improvement meeting with Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA).
	The Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity hosted a Best Practices and Improvement meeting with Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).





# Part I

## Agency EEO Plan to Eliminate Identified Barrier

## MD-715 – Part I.1

### 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
FPAC Black/African American Workforce	A1	FPAC's Black /African American male and female workforce participation rates are below their availability in the national labor force or CLF.

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

EEO Group
Black/African American Males and Females

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

Sources of Data	Sources Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
<b>MD 715 Workforce Data Tables</b> A1 Total Workforce A8 Management Positions A6 Mission Critical Occupations A9 Awards and Recognition	Yes	<p><b>Permanent Workforce</b>  FPAC's FY2024 <i>permanent</i> workforce consisted of 17,111 individuals, an increase of 1,153 as compared to FY23 of 15,958. FPACs workforce participation of Black/African American males and females are below the 2018 CLF:</p> <p><u>Black/African American males</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CLF = 5.70%.</li> <li>FPAC = 4.40%.</li> </ul> <p><u>Black/African American females</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CLF = 6.60%.</li> <li>FPAC = 5.57%.</li> </ul> <p><u>Management Positions</u>  The total Management participation rate for Black/African American males is 6.26% which is above their FPAC permanent workforce participation rate of 4.40%.</p> <p>The total Management participation rate for Black/African American females is 4.94% which is below their FPAC permanent workforce participation rate of 5.57%.</p> <p><b>Senior-grade level</b> Black/African American male FY24 representation compared to FY23 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GS-14 – 6.49% an increase compared to FY23 (5.66%).</li> <li>GS-15 – 5.97% a decrease compared to FY23 (6.15%).</li> </ul> <p><b>Senior-grade level</b> Black/African American female FY24 representation compared to FY23 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GS-14 –11.69% a decrease compared to FY23 (12.08%).</li> <li>GS-15 –14.93% an increase compared to FY23 (13.85%).</li> </ul> <p><u>Mission Critical Occupations (MCOs)</u>  FPAC compares its MCO workforce participation rates to the 2018 Occupational Civilian Labor Force (OCLF). Black/African American males and females are below their corresponding OCLF benchmarks in the following series:</p> <p><u>Black/African American Male MCO Participation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0458 Soil Con Tech – 3.64% v 4.40%.</li> <li>1100 Gen. Business – 1.52% v 4.00%.</li> <li>1145 Ag Pr. Specialist – 1.58% v 4.00%.</li> </ul> <p><u>Black/African American Female MCO Participation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0458 Soil Con Tech – 0.91% v 4.40%.</li> <li>1101 Gen. Business – 1.52% v 7.20%.</li> <li>1145 Ag Pr. Specialist – 1.58% v 7.20%.</li> <li>1165 Farm Loan Specialist – 2.99% v 4.90%.</li> </ul> <p><u>Awards and Recognition</u>  Black/African American male and female FY24 Total Awards are at 3.15% v 4.40% for males and 4.74% v. 5.57% for females which is below their FY24 FPAC permanent workforce participation rate.</p>
Complaint Data (Trends)	Yes	The number of bases cited in EEO complaint activity increased from 80 during the prior fiscal year to 107 during FY24. Bases that increased in complaints activity are Age (+2), Color (+3), Disability (+8), Race (+5), and Reprisal (+13).
Grievance Data (Trends)	No	
Findings from Decisions (e.g., EEO, Grievance, MSPB, Anti-Harassment Processes)	Yes	<p>Findings in discrimination complaints decreased over the past 3 years.</p> <p><u>FY # of Findings</u></p> <p>FY2022 1  FY23 4  FY24 2</p> <p>Both findings Bases included Reprisal, other bases were Disability and Sex.</p>
Climate Assessment Survey (e.g., FEVS)	Yes	Attitudinal results were similar to the previous year; employees felt a lack of recognition (awards), acknowledgement, and opportunities to advance in their positions. 2023 FEVS responses were not specific to one demographic group.

Sources of Data	Sources Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
Exit Interview Data	Yes	Demographic data was not available this reporting period. Retirement was the most common single selection with 15.94% of respondents selecting it as a factor. Job stress and workload constituted 19.21% of the selections. Better compensation and/or benefits, and lack of career opportunities were selected by 29.04% of respondents. 2.51% of responses indicated that Harassment, Discrimination, or a Lack of Reasonable (Workplace) Accommodation were a factor in the decision to resign.
Focus Groups	No	
Interviews	No	
Reports (e.g., Congress, EEOC, MSPB, GAO, OPM)	No	
Other (Please Describe)	Yes	Triggers and other workforce issues are discussed during monthly SEPM Meetings (Meeting Notes).

**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)
Increase FPAC's African American male and female workforce participation rates to meet CLF benchmarks,	10/01/2022	12/31/2025	Yes		

**Responsible Official(s)**

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
Civil Rights and EEO Director	Willisa Donald	Yes
Black Emphasis Program Manager	Travis Watkins	Yes
Chief Human Capital Officer	Terri Meigan	Yes

**Statement of Identified Barrier(s)**

Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice
<b>Institutional Barriers:</b>
<b>Attitudinal Barriers:</b>
<b>Physical Barriers:</b>

**Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objectives**

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Staffing & Funding	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
12/31/2025	Develop a recruitment strategy improvement plan, utilizing BEPMs as much as possible and focusing on 1890/Land Grants Colleges/Institutions, all of which are Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCU).	Yes		
03/31/2025	Conduct a barrier analysis of the underrepresentation in FPAC's deficient areas – MCOs and Grade Levels.	Yes		
12/31/2024	Examine utilization of 1890 Program, looking at all associated application and hiring processes and history of the retention.	Yes		Completed October 2024
12/31/2024	Increase cultural awareness and inclusivity climate through cultural observances and employee engagement.	Yes		Completed October 2024
12/31/2024	Develop a working group to review current mentorship program and develop strategy to address African American employee onboarding, development, promotion, and retention.	Yes		

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Staffing & Funding	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
12/31/2024	Host a mentor-centric Senior leaders panel featuring an African American senior leadership cadre providing insight and career guidance to entry-level and mid-career employees aimed at improving retention, successful promotion, and overall feeling of belongingness among African American employees.	Yes		Completed 2/21/2024

#### Accomplishments

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
FY23	<p>FPAC agencies (NRCS, FSA and the Business Center) entered an Interagency Agreement with USDA/Office of Partnerships, Public Engagement (OPPE) and the Thurgood Marshall College Fund program through September 2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NRCS obligated \$249,638 in FY23</li> <li>FSA obligated \$296,455 in FY23</li> </ul> <p>62 minority Interns were placed through the Thurgood Marshall College Fund Internship Program which targets students enrolled in Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU's) and 1890 Institutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NRCS – 46 interns</li> <li>FSA – 16 interns</li> </ul> <p>Planned &amp; facilitated first ever USDA-wide Juneteenth flag-raising ceremony at USDA Headquarters in Washington, DC, demonstrating leadership commitment to cultural awareness and inclusivity at the highest level. Ceremony featured US Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, as well as a host of others from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR) and the Chief Diversity &amp; Inclusion Officer (CDIO).</p>
FY24	<p>Hosted Black History Month event on 2/22/2024 featuring African American senior leadership cadre providing insight and career guidance to entry-level and mid-career employees.</p> <p>Hosted monthly collaboration meetings with over 30 Mission Area collateral duty Special Emphasis Program Managers focusing on Mission Area – wide recruitment, hiring, career development, retention, and career development</p> <p>Created Spreadsheet listing all 1890 Land-Grant Universities listing Agriculture Focus (Program) area and Mission Area Point-of-Contact for intern recruitment initiatives.</p>

## MD-715 – Part I.2

### 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
FPAC Asian American Workforce	A1	FPAC's Asian male and female workforce participation rates are below their availability in the national labor force or CLF.

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

EEO Group
FPAC Asian Male and Female Workforce

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

Sources of Data	Sources Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
A1 Total Workforce A3 Occupational Categories A4 Senior Grades and GS Schedules A6 Mission Critical Occupations A9 Awards and Recognition	Yes	<p>FPAC's FY24 <i>permanent</i> workforce consisted of 17,111 individuals, an increase of 1,153 as compared to FY23 of 15,958. FPACs workforce participation of Asian males and females are below the 2018 CLF.</p> <p><u>Asian males</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CLF = 2.20%.</li> <li>• FPAC = 0.97%.</li> </ul> <p><u>Asian females</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CLF = 2.20%.</li> <li>• FPAC = 1.01%.</li> </ul> <p><u>Management Positions</u></p> <p>The total <b>Management</b> participation rate for Asian males is 0.96% which is just below their FPAC permanent workforce participation rate of 0.97%.</p> <p>The total <b>Management</b> participation rate for Asian females is (0.84%) which is below their FPAC permanent workforce participation rate of 1.01%.</p> <p><b>Senior-grade level</b> Asian male FY24 representation compared to FY23:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SES – 2.77% a decrease compared to FY23 (4.88%).</li> <li>• GS-15 – 5.97% a decrease compared to FY23 (6.15%).</li> <li>• GS 14 – 2.02% a decrease compared to FY23 (2.45%).</li> <li>• GS-13 – 2.20% a decrease compared to FY23 (2.35%).</li> </ul> <p><b>Senior-grade level</b> Asian female FY23 representation compared to FY2022 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SES – 2.27% a decrease compared to FY2022 (2.44%).</li> <li>• GS-15 – 2.99% a decrease compared to FY23 (4.62%).</li> <li>• GS-14 – 2.74% an increase compared to FY23 (2.45%).</li> <li>• GS-13 – 1.34% a decrease compared to FY23 (1.47%).</li> </ul> <p><u>Mission Critical Occupations (MCOs)</u></p> <p>FPAC compares its MCO workforce participation rates to the 2018 Occupational Civilian Labor Force (OCLF). Asian males and females are below their corresponding OCLF benchmarks in the following series:</p> <p><u>Asian Male MCO Participation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0301 Misc Admin – 1.09% v 3.50%.</li> <li>• 0401 Nat. Resource Mgmt. - 0.53% v 4.20%.</li> <li>• 0458 Soil Con Tech – 0.13% v 3.40%.</li> <li>• 0810 Engineering – 3.82% v 6.70%.</li> <li>• 1101 Gen. Business – 0.48% v 3.50%.</li> <li>• 1145 Ag Pr. Specialist – 0.00% v 4.00%.</li> <li>• 1165 Farm Loan Specialist – 0.45% v 2.80%</li> </ul> <p><u>Asian Female MCO Participation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0301 Gen Admin – 1.56% v 3.50%.</li> <li>• 0401 Nat. Resource Mgmt. – 1.00% v 5.00%.</li> <li>• 0458 Soil Con Tech – 0.65% v 3.40%.</li> <li>• 1101 Gen. Business – 1.05% v 3.50%.</li> <li>• 1145 Ag Pr. Specialist – 0.53% v 3.50%.</li> <li>• 1165 Farm Loan Specialist – 0.52% v 2.80%.</li> </ul> <p><u>Awards and Recognition</u></p> <p>Asian <b>males</b> total awards given at 1.03% are above their permanent participation rate of 0.97%.</p> <p>Asian <b>females</b> total awards given at 1.07 are above their permanent participation rate of 1.01%.</p>



Sources of Data	Sources Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
Complaint Data (Trends)	Yes	The number of bases cited in EEO complaint activity increased from 80 during the prior fiscal year to 107 during FY24. Bases that increased in complaints activity are Age (+2), Color (+3), Disability (+8), Race (+5), and Reprisal (+13).
Grievance Data (Trends)	No	
Findings from Decisions (e.g., EEO, Grievance, MSPB, Anti-Harassment Processes)	Yes	Findings in discrimination complaints decreased over the past 3 years. <u>FY # of Findings</u> FY2022 1 FY23 4 FY24 2 Both findings Bases included Reprisal, other bases were Disability and Sex.
Climate Assessment Survey (e.g., FEVS)	Yes	FPAC's 2023 FEVS overall attitudinal results were similar to the previous year; employees felt a lack of recognition (awards), acknowledgement, and opportunities to advance in their positions. 2023 FEVS responses were not specific to one demographic group.
Exit Interview Data	Yes	Demographic data was not available this reporting period. Retirement was the most common single selection, with 15.94% of respondents selecting it as a factor. Job stress and workload constituted 19.21% of the selections. Better compensation and/or benefits, and access to career opportunities were selected by 29.04% of respondents. 2.51% of responses indicated that Harassment, Discrimination, or a Lack of Workplace Accommodation were a factor in the decision to resign.
Focus Groups	No	
Interviews	No	
Reports (e.g., Congress, EEOC, MSPB, GAO, OPM)	No	
Other (Please Describe)	Yes	Triggers and other workforce issues are discussed during monthly SEPM Meetings (Meeting Notes).

#### 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)
Increase FPAC's Asian male and female retention and overall workforce participation.	10/01/2022	12/31/2025	Yes		
Increase FPAC's Asian SEPM's (which may include Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders) knowledge and usage of workforce data tables for analysis.	10/01/2022	9/30/2024	Yes		Completed 09/30/2024

**Responsible Official(s)**

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
Civil Rights and EEO Director	Willisa Donald	Yes
Asian American and Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander Emphasis Program Manager	Andy Cao Pham	Yes
Chief Human Resources Officer	Terri Meigan	Yes

**Statement of Identified Barrier(s)**

Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice
<b>Institutional Barriers:</b> Institutional barriers for applicants and retaining employees may include:
<b>Attitudinal Barriers:</b>
<b>Physical Barriers:</b>

**Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objectives**

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Staffing & Funding (Yes or No)	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
09/30/2025	Collaborate with HRD on their Recruitment and Outreach Plan to identify undergraduate, graduate schools and universities, summer internships, and associations for specific mission skillsets reaching Asian males and females.	Yes		
06/30/2025	Participate with HRD and attend outreach events and efforts for Asian males and females.	Yes	09/30/2025	
09/30/2025	Review quarterly workforce data and statistics to determine if there are any barriers in Asian males and females applying and being selected for MCOs.	Yes		05/23/2024
09/30/2025	Conduct an analysis in collaboration with Departmental ERG, Asian Pacific American Network in Agriculture (APANA), to identify policies and practices that may prevent advancement and representation of management positions among Asian males and Asian females.	Yes		

## Accomplishments

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
FY2024	<p>FPAC began collaborating and building a working relationship with APANA. Observance events and analysis meetings were planned and executed.</p> <p>FPAC agencies proceeded with the Asian American/Pacific Islander Recruitment Initiative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In FY24, NRCS allocated \$1,700,000.00 for a 5-year period as part of the AANHPI Recruitment Initiative for a 5 year period <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NRCS obligated \$450,000.00 in FY24.</li> </ul> </li> <li>In FY24, NRCS has two partner recipients; University of Texas, Arlington as part of the Engineering recruitment efforts focused on AANHPI students; and FAPAC Federal Asian Pacific American Council which is fully funded through 2029.</li> </ul> <p>FPAC Pathways Program placed 7 Asian American/Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander interns during FY24.</p> <p>Hosted monthly collaboration meetings with over 30 Mission Area collateral duty Special Emphasis Program Managers focusing on Mission Area – wide recruitment, hiring, career development, retention, and career development</p>

## MD-715 – Part I.3

### 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 ☐

Source of the Trigger	Specific Workforce Data Table	Narrative Description of Trigger
FPAC Hispanic Male and Female Workforce	A1	FPAC's Hispanic male and female workforce participation rates are below their availability in the national labor force or CLF.

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

EEO Group
Hispanic Male and Female Workforce

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

Sources of Data	Sources Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
<b>Workforce Data Tables:</b> A1 Total Workforce A3 Occupational Categories A4 Senior Grades and GS Schedule A6 Mission Critical Occupations A9 Awards and Recognition	Yes	<p><u>Permanent Workforce</u></p> <p>FPAC's FY24 <i>permanent</i> workforce consisted of 17,111 individuals, an increase of 1,153 as compared to FY23 of 15,958.</p> <p>The participation rate of Hispanic males and females in the FPAC workforce are both historically below the 2018 CLF.</p> <p><u>Hispanic males</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CLF = 6.80%.</li> <li>• FPAC = 3.17%.</li> </ul> <p><u>Hispanic females</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CLF = 6.20%.</li> <li>• FPAC = 2.51%.</li> </ul> <p><u>Management Positions</u></p> <p>The total <b>Management</b> participation rate for Hispanic males is 4.14% which is above their FPAC permanent workforce participation rate of 3.17%.</p> <p>The total <b>Management</b> participation rate for Hispanic females is 2.22% which is below their FPAC permanent workforce participation rate of 2.51%.</p> <p><b>Senior-grade level</b> Hispanic male FY24 representation compared to FY23 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SES – 4.55% a decrease compared to FY23 (4.88%).</li> <li>• GS15 – 2.99% a decrease compared to FY23 (4.62%).</li> <li>• GS14 – 4.62% an increase compared to FY23 (3.98%).</li> <li>• GS13 – 3.16% a decrease compared FY23 (3.39%).</li> </ul> <p><b>Senior-grade level</b> Hispanic female FY24 representation compared to FY23 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SES – 2.27% a decrease compared to FY23 (2.44%).</li> <li>• GS15 – 1.49 a decrease compared to FY23 (1.54%).</li> <li>• GS14 – 2.02% an increase compared to FY23 (1.07%).</li> <li>• GS13 – 2.47% a decrease compared to FY23 (2.68%).</li> </ul> <p><u>Mission Critical Occupations (MCOs)</u></p> <p>FPAC compares its MCO workforce participation rates to the 2018 Occupational Civilian Labor Force (OCLF). Hispanic males and females are below their corresponding OCLF benchmarks in the following series:</p> <p><u>Hispanic Male MCO Participation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0301 Misc Admin – 2.81% v 3.50%.</li> <li>• 0458 Soil Con Tech – 0.13% v 3.40%.</li> <li>• 0458 Soil Con Tech – 1.69% v 6.40%.</li> <li>• 1101 Gen. Business – 1.05% v 3.50%.</li> <li>• 1145 Ag Pr. Specialist – 2.37% v 4.00%.</li> <li>• 1165 Farm Loan Specialist – 1.64% v 2.80%.</li> <li>• 1801 – Compl. Investigator – 4.30% v 5.10%.</li> </ul> <p><u>Hispanic Female MCO Participation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0401 Nat. Resource Mgmt. – 2.06% v 5.00%.</li> <li>• 0458 Soil Con Tech – 0.52% v 3.40%.</li> <li>• 1145 Ag Pr. Specialist – 1.84% v 3.50%.</li> <li>• 1165 Farm Loan Specialist – 2.54% v 2.80%.</li> <li>• 1801 Compl. Investigator – 4.30% v 5.10%.</li> <li>• 2210 IT Mgmt. – 0.76% v 1.60%.</li> </ul> <p><u>Awards and Recognition</u></p> <p>Total Awards given for Hispanic Males at 2.55% is below their FY24 FPAC workforce participation of 3.17%.</p> <p>Hispanic female Total Awards given is 2.30% which is below their FY24 FPAC workforce participation rate of 2.51%.</p>
Complaint Data (Trends)	Yes	<p>The number of bases cited in EEO complaint activity increased from 80 during the prior fiscal year to 107 during FY24. Bases that increased in complaints activity are Age (+2), Color (+3), Disability (+8), Race (+5), and Reprisal (+13).</p>

Sources of Data	Sources Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
Grievance Data (Trends)	No	
Findings from Decisions (e.g., EEO, Grievance, MSPB, Anti-Harassment Processes)	Yes	Findings in discrimination complaints increased over the past 3 years. <u>FY # of Findings</u> FY2022 1 FY2023 4 FY2024 2 Both findings Bases included Reprisal, other bases were Disability and Sex.
Climate Assessment Survey (e.g., FEVS)	Yes	FPAC's 2023 FEVS DEIA overall attitudinal results were similar to the previous year; employees felt a lack of recognition (awards), acknowledgement, and opportunities to advance in their positions. 2023 FEVS responses were not specific to one demographic group.
Exit Interview Data	Yes	Demographic data was not available this reporting period.  Retirement was the most common single selection, with 15.94% of respondents selecting it as a factor.  Job stress and workload constituted 19.21% of the selections.  Better compensation and/or benefits, and access to career opportunities were selected by 29.04% of respondents.  2.51% of responses indicated that Harassment, Discrimination, or a Lack of Workplace Accommodation were a factor in the decision to resign.
Focus Groups	No	
Interviews	No	
Reports (e.g., Congress, EEOC, MSPB, GAO, OPM)	No	
Other (Please Describe)	Yes	Triggers and other workforce issues are discussed during monthly SEPM Meetings (Meeting Notes).

#### Status of Barrier Analysis Process

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

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

Objective	Date Initiated (mm/dd/yyyy)	Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Sufficient Funding & Staffing?	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Date Completed (mm/dd/yyyy)
Increase FPAC's Hispanic male and female participation rates retention rates	10/01/2022	12/31/2025	Yes		

#### Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
Civil Rights and EEO Director	Willisa Donald	Yes
Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager	Travis Watkins	Yes
Chief Human Resources Officer	Terri Meigan	Yes

**Statement of Identified Barrier(s)**

Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice
<b>Institutional Barriers:</b>
<b>Attitudinal Barriers:</b>
<b>Physical Barriers:</b>

**Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objectives**

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Staffing & Funding	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
09/30/2024	Utilizing collateral duty HEPMs and Hispanic ERG (National Organization of Professional Hispanic Natural Resource Conservation Service or NOPS), identify recruitment concerns and develop a recruitment strategy improvement plan that addresses identified barriers to recruitment, hiring, and retention of utilizing HEPMs as much as possible, focusing on Hispanic Serving Institutions.	Yes		
09/30/2024	Increase cultural awareness and inclusivity climate through cultural observances and employee engagement	Yes		Completed 09/30/2024
09/30/2024	Develop working group to review current mentor program and develop strategy to address Hispanic employee onboarding, development, promotion, and retention.	Yes		Completed 09/30/2024

**Accomplishments**

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
FY24	<p>Held successful Hispanic heritage month event featuring Speaker Carmen Jovet (Pioneers of Change).</p> <p>Hosted monthly collaboration meetings with over 30 Mission Area collateral duty Special Emphasis Program Managers focusing on Mission Area – wide recruitment, hiring, career development, retention, and career development.</p> <p>Hosted monthly collaboration meetings with over 30 Mission Area collateral duty Special Emphasis Program Managers focusing on Mission Area – wide recruitment, hiring, career development, retention, and career development.</p> <p>Created Spreadsheet listing all Hispanic Serving Institutes listing Agriculture Focus (Program) area and Mission Area Point-of-Contact for intern recruitment initiatives.</p> <p>Partnered with Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities to sponsor three (3) interns within Civil Rights Division, 13 Mission Area – wide.</p>

## MD-715 – Part I.4

### 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 ☐

Source of the Trigger	Specific Workforce Data Table	Narrative Description of Trigger
FPAC Female Workforce	A1	During FY24 more than half of voluntary separations (resignations) were female personnel.

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

EEO Group
FPAC Female Workforce

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

Sources of Data	Sources Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
<b>Workforce Data Tables</b> A1 Total Workforce A4 Senior Grades and GS Schedule A6 Mission Critical Occupations	Yes	<u>Permanent Workforce</u> FPAC's FY24 <i>permanent workforce</i> consisted of 17,111 individuals, an increase of 1,153 as compared to FY23 of 15,958. The participation rate of females in the FPAC workforce lies at 48.40% which is slightly above their CLF representation 48.20%, but there are female demographic groups which are historically below the 2018 CLF:Hispanic males <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hispanic – 2.41% v 6.20%.</li> <li>Black/African American – 5.57% v 6.60%.</li> <li>Asian – 1.01% v 2.20%.</li> <li>Two or More Races – 0.28% v 1.00%</li> </ul> <u>High Rate of Total Female Resignations</u> During FY24 more than half of total voluntary separations (resignations) were female. There were 518 total resignations with FPAC females resigning at 54% (279). <u>Management Positions</u> The total <b>Management</b> participation rate for FPAC females is 40% which is below their FPAC permanent workforce participation rate of 47.31%.
Complaint Data (Trends)	Yes	The number of bases cited in EEO complaint activity increased from 80 during the prior fiscal year to 107 during FY24. Bases that increased in complaints activity are Age (+2), Color (+3), Disability (+8), Race (+5), and Reprisal (+13).
Grievance Data (Trends)	No	
Findings from Decisions (e.g., EEO, Grievance, MSPB, Anti-Harassment Processes)	Yes	Findings in discrimination complaints increased over the past 3 years. <u>FY # of Findings</u> FY2022 1 FY23 4 FY24 2 Both findings Bases included Reprisal, other bases were Disability and Sex.



Sources of Data	Sources Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected	
Climate Assessment Survey (e.g., FEVS)	Yes	FPAC's 2023 FEVS overall attitudinal results were similar to the previous year; employees felt a lack of recognition (awards), acknowledgement, and opportunities to advance in their positions. 2023 FEVS responses were not specific to one demographic group.	
Exit Interview Data	Yes	Demographic data was not available this reporting period. Retirement was the most common single selection, with 15.94% of respondents selecting it as a factor. Job stress and workload constituted 19.21% of the selections. Better compensation and/or benefits, and access to career opportunities were selected by 29.04% of respondents. 2.51% of responses indicated that Harassment, Discrimination, or a Lack of Workplace Accommodation were a factor in the decision to resign.	
Focus Groups	No		
Interviews	No		
Reports (e.g., Congress, EEOC, MSPB, GAO, OPM)	No		
Other (Please Describe) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informal Survey conducted by National FWPM.</li> <li>352 Survey Participants / 604 Responses.</li> <li>Individuals were able to describe more than one reason for separation.</li> <li>The number of total responses are more than the total number of survey participants</li> </ul>	Yes	Voluntary Separations	%
		Work Life Balance	26%
		Pay and Salary Issues	19%
		Poor Management	12%
		Lack of Career Advancement	11%
		Heavy Workloads	8%
		Relocation	7%
		Other	6%
		Discrimination or Harassment	5%
		No Training/Development Opportunities	3%
		Safety Concerns	2%
		Failure to provide an accommodation	1%

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

Objective	Date Initiated (mm/dd/yyyy)	Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Sufficient Funding & Staffing?	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Date Completed (mm/dd/yyyy)
Increase FPAC's Female employee retention and workforce participation.	10/01/2022	12/31/2025	Yes		
Increase prospects for upward mobility for FPAC's female population.	10/01/2022	12/31/2025	Yes		
Increase hiring activity (outreach and recruitment) of females in all groups.	10/01/2022	12/31/2025	Yes		

#### Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
Civil Rights and EEO Director	Willisa Donald	Yes
Federal Women's Program Manager	April Wilson	Yes
Chief Human Capital Officer	Terri Meigan	Yes

### Statement of Identified Barrier(s)

Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice
Institutional Barriers:
Attitudinal Barriers:
Physical Barriers:

### Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objectives

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Staffing & Funding	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
12/31/2024	Collaborate with Agency Recruitment and Outreach Team on events and efforts for Females of all groups.	Yes		
12/31/2024	Review exit interviews of voluntary separations to determine cause of high separation rate for female employees.	Yes		Completed 07/31/2024
6/30/2025	Conduct an analysis to determine retention issues within the Agency (i.e., exit survey, Employee Viewpoint Survey).	Yes		Completed 07/31/2024
12/31/2024	Review Strategic Leadership Development Program female application and participation rates to see if unintentional disparate conditions exist.	Yes		Completed 6/27/2024
6/30/2025	Determine if there are any barriers to upward advancement of females into Senior Leadership/SES positions.	Yes		
9/30/2025	Develop action plan to address any barriers to females into Senior Leadership/SES positions.	Yes		
12/31/2025	Collaborate with ERGs to develop workshops aimed at potential SLDP applicants.	Yes		

## Accomplishments

Fiscal Year FY24	Accomplishments
	<p>Hosted quarterly Village and Nursing Mothers programs. Topics include Working with Kids, Handling Difficult Situations During Farm Visits, Overview of Employee Assistance Program, Leave Options for New Parents, Lactation Consultant, and Open Discussion Forums.</p> <p>Women's History Month events: Guest Speaker-Marji Alaniz, founder of FarmHer, Female Producer Panel, and FPAC Employee/Female Farmer Video</p> <p>Hosted USDA Women's Equality Day Event featuring guest speaker: Mika Cross presenting "Wellbeing for Resilient Workers and Inclusive Teams."</p> <p>Created Domestic Violence Awareness information sheet.</p> <p>Created New Parents Toolkit that contains information regarding leave options, nursing policy and Dissemination to all FPAC employees expected in FY 2025.</p> <p>Create and send monthly newsletters to collateral duty FWPM's. Purpose is to share upcoming events and training opportunities, topics of interest, and basic contact information for filing a complaint and EAP, anti-harassment program.</p> <p>Organized and host monthly meetings with National FWPM's from USDA agencies. AMS, FS, NASS, APHIS, ARS, FNS, RD, FAS, ERS.</p> <p>Monthly meetings include a brief training. FY24 training topics include Complaints Procedures, Anti-Harassment Policy, Reasonable Accommodations Process, Training &amp; Compliance Team Briefing, ERG's for Women and Veterans, NSEPM Team Members, Workforce Data/Barrier Assessments, Veteran Farmer Program Manager for RMA, and LEP Program Briefing.</p> <p>Informal poll sent to FWPM's and ERG's for FPAC employee input on why women are separating at a higher rate than men. Received 355 responses. Information collated, reviewed, and shared.</p> <p>Created Women's working group charter. Kick off expected in FY 2025.</p> <p>Requested and received from HR for exit interview information.</p>

## MD-715 – Part I.5

### 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 ☐

Source of the Trigger	Specific Workforce Data Table	Narrative Description of Trigger
FPAC Female STEM Workforce	A6	The U.S. EEOC issued a report during calendar year 2022 analyzing women employed in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics fields (STEM) federal workforce for potential issues, concerns or barriers involving hiring, employment, and advancement.

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

EEO Group
FPAC STEM Female Workforce

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

Sources of Data	Sources Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected																																											
Workforce Data Tables A6 Mission Critical Occupations	Yes	<p><u>Permanent Workforce</u></p> <p>The main disparity affects the female and minority workforces compared to the national Civilian Labor Force (CLF) from 2018. STEM Groups below the CLF are Females 36.66% contrasted with the CLF benchmark of 48.20%, Hispanic females 2.00% v 6.20%, White females at 30.34% v 31.80%, African American females 2.31% v 6.60%, Asian females 0.73% v 2.20% and Two or More Race females 0.15% v 1.00%.</p> <p><u>Executive / Senior Management</u></p> <p>To assess FPAC’s STEM Senior grade level benchmarks this report uses the 2020 North American Industry Classification System (2020 NAICS). It is the occupational labor force standard used by Federal agencies in analyzing STEM workforce statistical data.</p> <p>The table below shows the female Senior Leaders in STEM grades are below the NAISC benchmarks.</p> <table><tr><th>Grades</th><th>Total</th><th>Males</th><th>Females</th></tr><tr><td>NAISC</td><td></td><td>53.02%</td><td>46.98%</td></tr><tr><td rowspan="2">GS/GM13</td><td>404</td><td>287</td><td>117</td></tr><tr><td>%</td><td>71.04%</td><td>28.96%</td></tr><tr><td rowspan="2">GS14</td><td>270</td><td>174</td><td>96</td></tr><tr><td>%</td><td>64.44%</td><td>35.56%</td></tr><tr><td rowspan="2">GS15</td><td>14</td><td>8</td><td>6</td></tr><tr><td>%</td><td>57.14%</td><td>42.86%</td></tr><tr><td rowspan="2">SES</td><td>767</td><td>517</td><td>250</td></tr><tr><td>%</td><td>67.41%</td><td>32.59%</td></tr><tr><td rowspan="2">Total</td><td>767</td><td>517</td><td>250</td></tr><tr><td>%</td><td>67.41%</td><td>32.59%</td></tr></table>	Grades	Total	Males	Females	NAISC		53.02%	46.98%	GS/GM13	404	287	117	%	71.04%	28.96%	GS14	270	174	96	%	64.44%	35.56%	GS15	14	8	6	%	57.14%	42.86%	SES	767	517	250	%	67.41%	32.59%	Total	767	517	250	%	67.41%	32.59%
Grades	Total	Males	Females																																										
NAISC		53.02%	46.98%																																										
GS/GM13	404	287	117																																										
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Complaint Data (Trends)	Yes	The number of bases cited in EEO complaint activity increased from 80 during the prior fiscal year to 107 during FY24. Bases that increased in complaints activity are Age (+2), Color (+3), Disability (+8), Race (+5), and Reprisal (+13).																																											
Grievance Data (Trends)	No																																												
Findings from Decisions (e.g., EEO, Grievance, MSPB, Anti-Harassment Processes).	Yes	Findings in discrimination complaints increased over the past 3 years. <u>FY # of Findings</u> FY2022 1 FY2023 4 FY2024 2 Both findings Bases included Reprisal, other bases were Disability and Sex.																																											
Climate Assessment Survey (e.g., FEVS)	Yes	FPAC’s 2023 FEVS DEIA overall attitudinal results were similar to the previous year; employees felt a lack of recognition (awards), acknowledgement, and opportunities to advance in their positions. 2023 FEVS responses were not specific to one demographic group.																																											
Exit Interview Data	Yes	Demographic data was not available this reporting period. Retirement was the most common single selection, with 15.94% of respondents selecting it as a factor. Job stress and workload constituted 19.21% of the selections. Better compensation and/or benefits, and access to career opportunities were selected by 29.04% of respondents. 2.51% of responses indicated that Harassment, Discrimination, or a Lack of Workplace Accommodation were a factor in the decision to resign.																																											

Sources of Data	Sources Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected	
Focus Groups	No		
Interviews	No		
Reports (e.g., Congress, EEOC, MSPB, GAO, OPM)	No		
Other (Please Describe) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informal Survey conducted by National FWPM.</li> <li>352 Survey Participants / 604 Responses.</li> <li>Individuals were able to describe more than one reason for separation.</li> <li>The number of total responses are more than the total number of survey participants.</li> </ul>	Yes	Voluntary Separations	%
		Work Life Balance	26%
		Pay and Salary Issues	19%
		Poor Management	12%
		Lack of Career Advancement	11%
		Heavy Workloads	8%
		Relocation	7%
		Other	6%
		Discrimination or Harassment	5%
		No Training/Development Opportunities	3%
		Safety Concerns	2%
		Failure to provide an accommodation	1%

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

Objective	Date Initiated (mm/dd/yyyy)	Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Sufficient Funding & Staffing?	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Date Completed (mm/dd/yyyy)
Increase prospects for upward mobility for FPAC's STEM female participation	10/01/2022	12/31/2025	Yes		
Increase hiring activity (outreach and recruitment) of females in all groups.	10/01/2022	12/31/2025	Yes		

#### Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan?
Civil Rights and EEO Director	Willisa Donald	Yes
Federal Women's Program Manager	April Wilson	Yes
Chief Human Resources Officer	Terri Meigan	Yes

**Statement of Identified Barrier(s)**

Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice
<b>Institutional Barriers:</b>
<b>Attitudinal Barriers:</b>
<b>Physical Barriers:</b>

**Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objectives**

Target Date	Planned Activities	Sufficient Staffing & Funding (Y/N)	Modified Date	Completion Date
9/30/2025	Collaborate with Agency Recruitment and Outreach Team on events and efforts for STEM Females of all groups.	Yes		
9/30/2025	Review exit interviews of voluntary separations to determine cause of high separation rate for female employees.	Yes		Completed 07/31/2024
9/30/2025	Conduct an analysis to determine overall retention issues within the Agency (i.e., exit survey, Employee Viewpoint Survey).	Yes		Completed 07/31/2024
9/30/2025	Determine the barriers to upward advancement of females into STEM positions.	Yes		
9/30/2025	Develop action plan to address barriers to female participation ratios in STEM positions.	Yes		

**Accomplishments**

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
FY24	FWPM conducted an informal poll regarding high separation rates among FPAC's female workforce (352 responses collected). Solicited and received 5 state-level FWPM volunteers for working group.

## MD-715 – Part I.6

### 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 ☐

Source of the Trigger	Specific Workforce Data Table	Narrative Description of Trigger
FPAC Total Permanent Workforce vs the CLF	A1	FPAC's Two or More Race male and female workforce participation rates are below their availability in the national labor force or CLF.

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

EEO Group
Two or More Races Males and Females

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



Sources of Data	Sources Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
<b>Workforce Data Tables</b> A1 Total Workforce A3 Occupational Categories A4 Senior Grades and GS Schedule A6 Mission Critical Occupations A9 Awards and Recognition	Yes	<p><u>FPAC Permanent Workforce</u></p> <p>FPAC's FY24 <i>permanent</i> workforce consisted of 17,111 individuals, an increase of 1,153 as compared to FY23 of 15,958. FPAC's workforce participation of Two or More Races males and females are below the 2018 CLF:</p> <p><u>Two or More Races Males</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CLF = 1.00%.</li> <li>• FPAC = 0.16%.</li> </ul> <p><u>Two or More Races Females</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CLF = 1.00%.</li> <li>• FPAC = 0.28%.</li> </ul> <p><u>Management Positions</u></p> <p>The total <b>Management</b> participation rate for Two or More Race males is 0.24% which is above their FPAC permanent workforce participation rate of 0.16%.</p> <p>The total <b>Management</b> participation rate for Two or More Race females is 0.24% which is below their FPAC permanent workforce participation rate of 0.28%.</p> <p><b>Senior-grade level</b> Two or More Races male FY24 representation compared to FY23 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SES and GS-15 – 0 (0%) the same as FY23.</li> <li>• GS-14 – 0.14% a decrease from FY23 (0.15%).</li> <li>• GS-13 0.16% the same as FY23.</li> </ul> <p><b>Senior-grade level</b> Two or More Race female FY24 representation compared to FY23 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SES and GS-15 – 0 (0%) the same as FY23.</li> <li>• GS-14 – 0.72% a decrease from FY23 (0.76%).</li> <li>• GS-13 – 0.27 an increase from FY23 (0.22%).</li> </ul> <p><u>Mission Critical Occupations (MCOs)</u></p> <p>FPAC compares its MCO workforce participation rates to the 2018 Occupational Civilian Labor Force (OCLF). Two or More Race males and females are below their corresponding OCLF benchmarks in most all MCO categories during FY24 except 0301-Misc Admin and 0810-Civil Engineer where Two or More Race females are above the OCLF. (See Table A/6).</p> <p><u>Awards and Recognition</u></p> <p>Two or More Race male and female FY24 Total Awards are at 0.13% for males which is below their FPAC FY24 permanent workforce participation.</p> <p>Two or More Race females are at 0.28% which is on par with their FY24 FPAC permanent workforce participation rate.</p>
Complaint Data (Trends)	Yes	The number of bases cited in EEO complaint activity increased from 80 during the prior fiscal year to 107 during FY24. Bases that increased in complaints activity are Age (+2), Color (+3), Disability (+8), Race (+5), and Reprisal (+13).
Grievance Data (Trends)	No	
Findings from Decisions (e.g., EEO, Grievance, MSPB, Anti-Harassment Processes)	Yes	<p>Findings in discrimination complaints increased over the past 3 years.</p> <p><u>FY # of Findings</u></p> <p>FY2022 1  FY2023 4  FY2024 2</p> <p>Both findings Bases included Reprisal, other bases were Disability and Sex.</p>

Sources of Data	Sources Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
Climate Assessment Survey (e.g., FEVS)	Yes	FPAC's 2023 FEVS overall attitudinal results were similar to the previous year; employees felt a lack of recognition (awards), acknowledge-ment, and opportunities to advance in their posi-tions. 2023 FEVS responses were not specific to one demographic group.
Exit Interview Data	Yes	Demographic data was not available this reporting period. Retirement was the most common single selection, with 15.94% of respondents selecting it as a factor. Job stress and workload constituted 19.21% of the selections. Better compensation and/or benefits, and access to career opportunities were selected by 29.04% of respondents. 2.51% of responses indicated that Harassment. Discrimination, or a Lack of Workplace Accommodation were a factor in the decision to resign.
Focus Groups	No	
Interviews	No	
Reports (e.g., Congress, EEOC, MSPB, GAO, OPM)	No	
Other (Please Describe)	No	

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

Objective	Date Initiated (mm/dd/yyyy)	Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Sufficient Funding & Staffing?	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Date Completed (mm/dd/yyyy)
Increase outreach, recruitment and hiring activity regarding 2 or More Race males and females.	10/01/2022	12/31/2025	Yes		

#### Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan?
Civil Rights and EEO Director	Willisa Donald	Yes
Affirmative Employment Program Team Lead	Charles Thomas	Yes
Chief Human Resources Officer	Terri Meigan	Yes

#### Statement of Identified Barrier(s)


Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice
<b>Institutional Barriers:</b> To be determined.
<b>Attitudinal Barriers:</b> To be determined.
<b>Physical Barriers:</b> To be determined.

**Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objectives**

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Staffing & Funding (Yes or No)	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
12/31/2025	Review outreach and recruitment plans and activity (if any) for Two or More Race individuals.	Yes		
12/31/2025	Identify and analyze triggers and barriers preventing retention and upward mobility.	Yes		

**Accomplishment**

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
FY24	Trigger analysis data is published on the shared drives and available monthly to all SEPM's.



# Part J

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

## 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 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Cluster GS-11 to SES (PWD)  | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

##### Workforce Triggers below 12%

- GS 1 – GS 10 PWD Cluster, 581 individuals or 8.59%.
- GS 11 – SES PWD Cluster, 1,038 individuals or 10.03%.

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 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| b. Cluster GS-11 to SES (PWTD)  | Yes <input type="checkbox"/>            | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

##### Workforce Triggers below 2%

GS 1 – GS 10 PWTD Cluster, 122 individuals or 1.80%.

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

CREEOD Director provides an annual update to all FPAC Leaders and Agency Heads during the annual MD 715 State of the Agency briefing. FPAC workforce data tables are provided quarterly to OASCR for monitoring and review.

FPAC HRD provides Hiring Managers an in-depth supervisor training, which is a mandatory course for all 1st time and seasoned managers. Special hiring authorities topics covered include Schedule A Program and Hiring, Direct Hire Authority, VERA, and Veteran's Preference. Accordingly, each FPAC Division has an HR Specialist assigned to assist managers with any HR-related needs, and they are encouraged to meet bi-weekly.

On-demand resources are available to all managers and senior leaders where they may review workforce statistics on the HRD CXO Dashboard (permission-dependent) and on the CREEOD intranet website. FPAC Managers may also request data from the CREEOD Title VII Branch, Affirmative Employment Team, as needed.

CREEOD has developed a workforce resurvey campaign to share data with special emphasis program managers and associated employees as well as encourage workforce to update their online personnel page and self-certify as having a disability or targeted disability.

## 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

FPAC provided sufficient resources, as well as funding, to maintain individual development and training plan requirements for the entire HR Staff and Supervisors. The Agency offers RA/PAS Program Managers, and Affirmative Employment Special Emphasis Program Managers sufficient resources and training funds to carry out their position responsibilities.

HRD provided Hiring Manager courses discussing the use of special hiring authorities for 30% veterans, VRA, and Schedule A applications. Additionally, FPAC RA Program Managers and Outreach Staff stay abreast of relevant disability employment law, updates to agency policy and other topics via attendance at annual discipline-related conferences, webinars, and online education systems like Linked-in Learning or Skillsoft.

FY24 training attended:

- HireNow Training for Hiring Managers.
- FPAC HR Webinar Series for Supervisors.
- Supervising for Excellence.
- Managing for Excellence.
- Special Emphasis Program Managers Training.
- Advanced Barrier Analysis Training.
- How to be an Ally for the Disabled Training Meeting.
- Reasonable Accommodation Training.
- “Ableism: What It Is and Why It Matters to Everyone” Training.
- Schedule A Hiring Authority Training.
- 508 Compliance Training.
- Supporting Co-workers with Disabilities Training.
- Embedding Inclusion into Everyday Experiences.
- How to Learn Sign Language and How Long It Takes?
- Use of AI in Assistive Technology.
- Empowering Effective Communication: A Guide to Etiquette for Interacting with Individuals with Disabilities.
- How to Effectively Overcome Communication Barriers when Working with People with Disabilities.

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 (Staffing Personnel)	84			Joe Stueber, Director, Talent Acquisition and Management <a href="mailto:Joe.Stueber@usda.gov">Joe.Stueber@usda.gov</a>
Answering questions from the public about hiring authorities that take disability into account (Staffing Team Leads).	6			Barry Culbreath, Chief, Talent Management Branch Barry. <a href="mailto:Culbreath@usda.gov">Culbreath@usda.gov</a>
Processing reasonable accommodation requests from applicants and employees.	5			Count Branham, Chief, Work Life Programs, Count. <a href="mailto:Bran-ham@usda.gov">Bran-ham@usda.gov</a>
Section 508 Compliance	4			Darren AshDirector, Information Solutions, <a href="mailto:darren.ash@usda.gov">darren.ash@usda.gov</a>
Architectural Barriers Act Compliance	4			
Special Emphasis Program for PWD and PWTD	6		69	Michelle Hart Chief, Equal Employment Complaints Processing & Resolutions Branch <a href="mailto:michelle.hart@usda.gov">michelle.hart@usda.gov</a>

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

FPAC provided sufficient resources, as well as funding, to maintain individual development and training plan requirements for the entire HR Staff and Supervisors. The Agency offers RA/PAS Program Managers, and Affirmative Employment Special Emphasis Program Managers sufficient resources and training funds to carry out their position responsibilities.

HRD provided Hiring Manager courses discussing the use of special hiring authorities for 30% veterans, VRA, and Schedule A applications. Additionally, FPAC RA Program Managers and Outreach Staff stay abreast of relevant disability employment law, updates to agency policy and other topics via attendance at annual discipline-related conferences, webinars, and online education systems like Linked-in Learning or Skillsoft.

FY24 training attended:

- HireNow Training for Hiring Managers.
- FPAC HR Webinar Series for Supervisors.
- Supervising for Excellence.
- Managing for Excellence.
- Special Emphasis Program Managers Training.
- Advanced Barrier Analysis Training.
- How to be an Ally for the Disabled Training Meeting.
- Reasonable Accommodation Training.
- "Ableism: What It Is and Why It Matters to Everyone" Training.
- Schedule A Hiring Authority Training.
- 508 Compliance Training.
- Supporting Co-workers with Disabilities Training.
- Embedding Inclusion into Everyday Experiences.
- How to Learn Sign Language and How Long It Takes?
- Use of AI in Assistive Technology.
- Empowering Effective Communication: A Guide to Etiquette for Interacting with Individuals with Disabilities.
- How to Effectively Overcome Communication Barriers when Working with People with Disabilities.

## 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.

FPAC uses the following resources to identify PWD/PWTD applicants:

- 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 at Colleges and Universities

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.

FPAC uses the established non-competitive hiring authorities that allows for the rapid appointment of qualified candidates. The hiring authorities adhere to Merit System principles.

- Schedule A Hiring Authorities
- Veterans Recruitment Appointment (VRA)
- 30% or More Disabled Veterans
- Conversations with NSEPM and NRCS State level Management and Strategy teams to strategize and encourage Schedule A hiring/retention.

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.

1. Program Managers establish relationships with specialists at vocational rehabilitation centers to develop a pool of qualified applicants for FPAC open positions. Next, qualified, eligible candidates are referred from vocational rehabilitation offices or other organizations and groups representing persons with disabilities to the agency program manager.
2. Program Managers and/or Officials review and provide resumes and related documents of qualified individuals for consideration. Managers and staff forward the application and disability qualifying documents to staffing specialists to review and qualification 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

HRD employees successfully provided specialized training for hiring managers and SEPM's during the 3rd and 4th quarter of FY24.

July and August 2024:

- Schedule A Hiring Authorities Training.

Additionally, HRD offers hiring managers training online through streaming webinars, presentations, and guidance available on the HRD internal website.

<https://intranet.usda.gov/hiring-and-onboarding-resources>

All hiring managers and professional staff attend external conferences and are encouraged to join other federally-led work groups in order to educate and enhance their career.

## B. Plan to Establish Contacts with Disability Employment Organizations

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

FPAC established and works with organizations such as RecruitMilitary.org, FEDSHIREVETS, Student Veterans of America (SVA), America Job Centers, Centers for Independent Living, Employment Network Services to name a few in order to secure and maintain a roster of individuals seeking employment with Federal Agencies.

The Affirmative Employment Team Special Emphasis Program Managers promote and support outreach activity by working closely with State-level DEPMs, and VEPMs in support of PORT initiatives and strategies.

FPAC has effectively established a working relationship with the USDA TARGET Center which provides accessibility education, trainings, support with reasonable accommodation and many other supportive resources to better support employees with disabilities and targeted disabilities.

## C. Progression Towards Goals (Recruitment and Hiring)

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

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

### Triggers

The ratio of New Hires for PWD in the permanent workforce decreased from the prior fiscal year (FY23-7.16% versus FY24-6.38%).

The ratio of New Hires for PWTD in the permanent workforce decreased from the prior fiscal year (FY23-1.59% versus FY24-1.14%).

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

### Triggers

Both groups are below the Qualified Applicant Pool (QAP) benchmarks.

- PWD QAP: 8.01% v. PWD New Hires: 6.40%.
- TD QAP: 4.72% v. TD New Hires: 1.10%.

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 ☐   No ☒
- b. Qualified Applicants for MCO (PWTD)      Yes ☐   No ☒

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 ☒      No ☐
- b. Promotions for MCO (PWTD)      Yes ☒      No ☐

### Triggers

- PWD and TD internal promotions are below the internal QAP.
- PWD Internal QAP: 10.63% v. 8.41% of internal PWD promotions.
- TD Internal QAP: 3.48% v. 1.70% of internal TD promotions.

## 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.

FPAC policy to recruit qualified, diverse individuals does not exclude Individuals with a Disability or Targeted Disability. Career development and advancement policies to all employees who wish to refresh, enrich, and advance their career and opportunities within the Agency.

FPAC facilitates programs and incentives to bring the best-qualified candidates to the attention of management. The Agency provides several pathways to improve performance and develop needed skills, as well as develop more in-depth knowledge and abilities. All employees including individuals with a disability receive appropriate consideration plus fair and equitable treatment for higher-level jobs within the Agency.

### B. Career Development Opportunities

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

Each FPAC agency annually identifies and grants appropriate funds towards staff development. To identify short-term and long-term goals for employee development, each employee completes an Individual Development Plan (IDP) approved by their first-line supervisor during mandatory, quarterly performance meetings. It is the employees' and supervisors' opportunity to discuss performance goals, and career development as well as identify special assignments and/or temporary details or assignments.

Updated career paths for mission critical occupations within the FPAC mission areas are available to all through the SharePoint site. Free web-based training is offered through AgLearn on diverse topics. Linked-in Learning modules and Skillsoft course catalogues were expanded to include leadership, administrative, diversity and inclusion, and various learning and educational topics.

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	1,884	942	7.07%	5.09%	4.53%	0.74%
Fellowship Programs						
Mentoring Programs						
Coaching Programs						

Career Development Opportunities	Total Participants		PWD		PWTD	
	Applicants (#)	Selectees (#)	Applicants (%)	Selectees (%)	Applicants (%)	Selectees(%)
Training Programs						
Detail Programs (TEMP)	N/A	524	N/A	12.21%	N/A	2.67%
Other Career Development Programs (SLDP)						

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 X No 0
- b. Selections (PWD) Yes X No 0

FY24 Internships Relevant Applicant Pool

- PWD. 3.53%

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 X No 0
- b. Selections (PWTD) Yes X No 0

FY24 Internships Relevant Applicant Pool

- TD: 0.49%.

### C. Awards

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

#### Triggers

The inclusion rate is 10.54% and small cash awards (up to \$1,000) for PWD is 9.6%, medium cash awards (\$1,000 - \$3,999) are 9.2%.

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 |

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

#### 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 X | No 0 |      |
| ii. Internal Selections (PWD)          | Yes X | No 0 |      |
| c. Grade GS-14                         |       |      |      |
| i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) | Yes 0 | No 0 |      |
| ii. Internal Selections (PWD)          | Yes X | No 0 |      |
| d. Grade GS-13                         |       |      |      |
| i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) | Yes X | No X |      |
| ii. Internal Selections (PWD)          | Yes X | No 0 |      |

Triggers exist for PWD Internal Promotions among senior grades. Although there were qualified applicants in the pool of candidates, there were either no internal PWD selections or the selections did not meet the RAP or QAP benchmark. SES data was not available during the reporting period.

- GS15: RAP = 13.4% / QAP = 6.0% / No Selections.
- GS14: RAP = 10.5% / QAP = 8.7% / Selections = 1.6%.
- GS13: RAP = 10.3% / QAP = 9.5% / Selections = 6.5%.

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 X	No 0
ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)	Yes X	No 0

c. Grade GS-14

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

d. Grade GS-13

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

Triggers exist for GS 14 and 15 PWTD Internal Promotions among senior grades. Although there were qualified applicants in the pool of candidates, there were either no internal PWTD selections or the selections did not meet the RAP or QAP benchmark. SES data was not available during the reporting period.

- GS15: RAP = 2.4% / QAP = 6.0% / No Selections.
- GS14: RAP = 2.0% / QAP = 4.3% / No Selections.

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

Triggers exist for GS 14 and 15 PWD External Hires. Although there were qualified applicants in the pool of candidates, there were no (0.0%) external PWD selections for senior grades. SES data was not available during the reporting period.

- GS-15: QAP = 8.4%.
- GS-14: QAP = 11.6%.

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

Triggers exist for GS 14 and 15 PWTB External Hires. Although there were qualified applicants in the pool of candidates, there were no (0.0%) External PWTB selections for senior grades. SES data was not available during the reporting period.

- GS-15: QAP = 3.2%.
- GS-14: QAP = 11.6%.

5. Does your agency have a trigger involving PWTB 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 (PWTB) | Yes X | No 0 |
| ii. Internal Selections (PWTB)          | Yes X | No 0 |

b. Managers

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

c. Supervisors

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

Triggers exist for PWTB Internal Promotions among the Management levels. Although there were relevant and qualified applicants in the pool of candidates, they did not meet the RAP and/or QAP benchmarks. SES data was not available during the reporting period.

- Executives: RAP = 7.8% / QAP = 0.0% / No Selections.
- Managers: RAP = 7.8% / QAP = 8.4% / Selections = 4.6%.
- Supervisors: RAP = 7.8% / QAP = 6.7% / Selections = 2.8

6. Does your agency have a trigger involving PWTB 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 (PWTB) | Yes X | No 0 |
| ii. Internal Selections (PWTB)          | Yes X | No 0 |

b. Managers

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

c. Supervisors

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



Triggers exist for Executives and Managers PWTD Internal Promotions among the Management levels. Although there were relevant and qualified applicants in the pool of candidates, there were no selections. SES data was not available during the reporting period.

- Executives: RAP = 1.7% / QAP = 0.0% / No Selections.
- Managers: RAP = 1.7% / QAP = 9.6% / No Selections.

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

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

Triggers exist for all external Management level PWD as there were qualified applicants, but no selections made for any PWD categories. SES data was not available during the reporting period.

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

Triggers exist for all external Management level PWTD as there were qualified applicants, but no selections made for any PWTD categories. SES data was not available during the reporting period.

## 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 ☒

No ☐

N/A ☐

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 <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Involuntary Separations (PWD) | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

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 <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Involuntary Separations (PWTD) | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

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

FPAC 2024 exit surveys were not specific to one demographic group.

## 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.

All USDA Section 508 and Accessibility Statement:

<https://www.usda.gov/accessibility-statement>

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

The internet sites explaining the ABA for each FPAC Agency are the same as listed above in Item #1.

The Access Board is the federal agency responsible for enforcing the ABA. The Access Board's accessibility standards are available on their website at <https://www.access-board.gov/aba/>.

If you have encountered or are aware of an accessibility barrier at a building or facility covered by the ABA, filing an ABA complaint is recommended. Examples include U.S. Post Offices, Veterans Affairs medical facilities, National Parks, Social Security Administration offices, Federal Office Buildings, U.S. Courthouses, and Federal Prisons.

### How to File an ABA Complaint

Complaints cannot be filed by phone, but if you are unable to file online or by e-mail due to a disability, call 202-272-0050 (voice) for assistance.

- Online ABA Complaint Form **recommended**
- E-mail: [enforce@access-board.gov](mailto:enforce@access-board.gov)
- Fax: 202-272-0081
- Mail: U.S. Access Board, 1331 F Street, NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20004

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.

FPAC OCIO provides mandatory Section 508 Awareness web-based modules for all USDA personnel. The course meets the requirement described in DR 4030-001 and is assigned to all USDA employees and contractors annually.

FY24: There were 13,844 courses assigned with 4,960 (71%) course completions recorded to date.

## 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.)

Upon receiving the supporting medical documentation, the average time within FY24 to process initial requests for reasonable accommodations was 10 business days out of the 30 business days required. The customer is allowed 15 business days to obtain all the sufficient medical documentation to support their claim and 30 business days 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.

### RRA Program Effectiveness:

- 564 requests were received during FY24.
- The average processing timeframe for each request was 12 business days.
- The FY23 approval ratio was 97%.

### RA Program Trainings:

- An RA overview was presented at the SEPM training in November 2022.
- A presentation on Service Animals to a group of supervisors was facilitated in January 2024.

### RA Program Accomplishments:

- The RA team coordinated, managed, and resolved an OGC identified project of over 171 full-time core telework RA cases that required conversion to remote work or maximum telework according to Departmental policy.
- The RA team coordinated a department-wide Agency specific assignment to close out every RA case related to the repeal of the vaccine mandate requirement. FPAC mission area cases amounted to approximately 1500 cases/notifications.
- The overall Fiscal Year processing time to remedy an Agency Decision was reduced by 45%, from 22 business days in FY 2022 to 12 business days in FY23.

The Fiscal Year carryover was reduced by 69%, from a carryover of 126 cases in FY 2022 to 38 cases in FY23.

QTR	RECEIVED	AVERAGE BUSINESS DAYS	ACCEPTED	DENIED	APPROVAL RATIO
1 QTR	112	10	60	2	97%
2 QTR	111	9	71	2	96%
3 QTR	112	11	65	4	94%
4 QTR	129	9	56	0	100%
Total	464	9.61	252	8	88.21%

#### **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 during the entire FY24, there wasn't a case involving this requirement.

## 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 ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐
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 ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐
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.

Government Average (Harassment) - 28.93%.

FPAC Harassment FY24 Complaints = 44% (21 of a total of 47 complaints). Settlements = 23% (3 of a total of 13 settlements).

Findings of Harassment = 50% (1 of a total of 2 findings).

Corrective Measure - Backpay with interest.

### 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 ☐ No ☒ N/A ☐
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 ☒ No ☐ N/A ☐
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.

Government Average (Reasonable Accommodation) = 20.33%

FPAC RA / Reasonable Accommodation Disability = 14% (7 of a total of 47 complaints)

Settlements = 23% (3 of a total of 13 settlements)

Findings = 50% (1 of a total of 2 findings)

Corrective Measures taken included:

Reasonable accommodation training

## 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 0

No X

N/A 0

3. Identify each trigger and plan to remove the barrier(s), including the identified barrier(s), objective(s), responsible official(s), planned activities, and, where applicable, accomplishments.

Trigger	PWD and TD are not meeting established OCLF and Relevant Applicant Pool bench-marks for Major Critical Occupations (MCO).
Barrier(s)	To be determined
Objective(s)	Increase the participation rate of PWD and PWTD in the workforce

Responsible Official(s)	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
Director, Civil Rights and EEO Division	Yes
Chief Human Capital Officer	Yes

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

Sources of Data	Sources Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
<b>Workforce Data Tables</b> B1 Total Workforce B4 Senior Grades and GS Schedule B6 Mission Critical Occupations B7 Senior Grade Levels B8 Management Positions	Yes	<p><u>Permanent Workforce</u></p> <p>FPAC's FY24 <i>permanent</i> workforce consisted of 17,111 individuals, an increase of 1,153 as compared to FY23 of 15,958. FPAC's Persons with Disability (PWD) do not meet established 501 Regulatory goal of 12.00%.</p> <p><u>PWD Workforce</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 501 Regulatory Goal = 12.00%.</li> <li>• FPAC = 9.46%.</li> </ul> <p>FPAC's Persons with Targeted Disability (PWTD) is above the established 501 Regulatory goal of 2.00%.</p> <p><u>PWTD Workforce</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 501 Regulatory Goal = 2.00%.</li> <li>• FPAC = 2.02%.</li> </ul> <p><u>Management Positions</u></p> <p>The total <b>Management</b> participation rate for PWD is 8.55% which is below their FPAC permanent workforce participation rate of 9.46%.</p> <p>The total <b>Management</b> participation rate for PWTD is 1.93% which is below their FPAC permanent workforce participation rate of 2.02%.</p> <p>Senior-grade level PWD FY24 representation compared to FY23 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SES: 6.82% a decrease from FY23 (9.76%).</li> <li>• GS-15: 16.42% an increase from FY23 (15.38%).</li> <li>• GS-14: 13.42% an increase from FY23 (12.25%).</li> <li>• GS-13: 10.56% an increase from FY23 (10.16%).</li> </ul> <p>Senior-grade level PWTD FY24 representation compared to FY23.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SES: 4.55% an increase from FY23 (2.44%).</li> <li>• GS-15: 2.90% a decrease from FY23 (4.62%).</li> <li>• GS-14: 2.45% a decrease from FY23 (2.75%).</li> <li>• GS-13: 2.09% same as FY23 (2.09%).</li> </ul> <p><u>MCO</u></p> <p>PWD and TD 457 Soil Conservation workforce is 7.87% and 1.87% respectively. Both are below the inclusion rate of 8.32% for PWD and 1.95% for TD.</p> <p>PWD and TD are underrepresented in the 458 or Soil Conservation Technician series at 7.66% vs. the Inclusion rate of 8.55% for PWD and 1.82% vs. the Inclusion rate of 1.93%.</p> <p>Underrepresentation also exists in the following FPAC mission critical occupations: 401- Natural Resource Mgmt., 810 Civil Engineering, 1101- General Business and Industry, 1145-Farm Loan Specialist, and 1165- Agricultural Loan Specialist series.</p> <p><u>Awards and Recognition</u></p> <p>A trigger is not evident for PWD FY24 Total Awards at 9.54% v 9.46% for PWD and 2.06% v. 2.02% for PWTD both are above their FY24 FPAC permanent workforce participation rate</p>



Sources of Data	Sources Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
Complaint Data (Trends)	Yes	The number of bases cited in EEO complaint activity increased from 80 during the prior fiscal year to 107 during FY24. Bases that increased in complaints activity are Age (+2), Color (+3), Disability (+8), Race (+5), and Reprisal (+13).
Grievance Data (Trends)	No	
Findings from Decisions (e.g., EEO, Grievance, MSPB, Anti-Harassment Processes)	Yes	Findings in discrimination complaints decreased over the past 3 years. <u>FY # of Findings</u> FY2022 1 FY2023 4 FY2024 2 Both findings Bases included Reprisal, other bases were Disability and Sex.
Climate Assessment Survey (e.g., FEVS)	Yes	FPAC's 2023 FEVS overall attitudinal results were similar to the previous year; employees felt a lack of recognition (awards), acknowledgement, and opportunities to advance in their positions. 2023 FEVS responses were not specific to one demographic group.
Exit Interview Data	Yes	Demographic data was not available this reporting period. Retirement was the most common single selection with 15.94% of respondents selecting it as a factor. Job stress and workload constituted 19.21% of the selections. Better compensation and/or benefits, and lack of career opportunities were selected by 29.04% of respondents. 2.51% of responses indicated that Harassment, Discrimination, or a Lack of Reasonable (Workplace) Accommodation were a factor in the decision to resign.
Focus Groups	No	
Interviews	No	
Reports (e.g., Congress, EEOC, MSPB, GAO, OPM)	No	
Other (Please Describe)	Yes	Triggers and issues discussed during monthly SEPM Meetings (Meeting Notes)

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Staffing & Funding (Yes or No)	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
12/31/2024	Create barrier analysis working group.	Yes	12/31/2025	
6/30/2025	Develop and maintain barrier analysis working group to address deficiencies in hiring, recruitment, and retention.	Yes	6/30/2027	
12/31/2024	Educate and emphasize the importance of supporting individuals with disabilities by collaborating the Reasonable Accommodations staff and HRD using various forums (i.e. lunch and learn sessions, monthly meeting trainings, etc.).	Yes		9/30/2024
12/31/2024	Connect and partner with other USDA agencies (ex. APHIS, FS, OIAI, etc.) as well as other departments (DOD, DOJ, etc.) to effectively exchange information and improve overall communication as well as employee support.	Yes		9/30/2024

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
FY2024	<p>In FY24, FPAC hosted a training webinar open to all employees during National Disability in Employment Awareness Month. The webinar was presented by Job Accommodations Network Speaker and the topic was entitled, Key Communication Strategies for Engaging in the Interactive Process. This training emphasized the importance of constructive dialogue and collaborative exploration of effective and reasonable job accommodation solutions to address the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities in the workplace, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).</p> <p>FPAC began steps to develop an Employee Resource Group for individuals with disabilities and their allies with hopes of receiving final sponsorship and approval in FY 2025.</p> <p>FPAC CREEOD partnered with mission area agencies to develop and pilot a workforce resurvey campaign to educate and help build awareness of various disabilities via the SF-256 document. Additionally, employees were encouraged and empowered to review their personnel sites to update/self-identify as either having a disability or targeted disability, in efforts to obtain more accurate workforce demographic data.</p>

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

Several activity deadlines have longer term due dates (2 - 3 years), results are forthcoming.

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

The increased education and awareness of disability data categories, coupled with the advocacy for employees to review their online personnel webpages to update and self-certify as either having a disability or targeted disability has shown an increase in overall mission area representative data.

The need for comprehensive and engaged strategies to reduce and eventually eliminate barriers have come into focus for FPAC Leadership, thus FPAC CREEOD took steps to develop a mission area wide employee resource group focused on employees with disabilities. Additionally, a working group focused on identifying barriers with the intent to advise alternatives on measures for mitigation.

3. 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.

Priorities for FY 2025 include:

- FPAC CREEOD intends to collaborate with HRD, USDA TARGET Center, and other agencies to continue spreading awareness of disability education, resources, tools, and overall information to improve hiring and retention.
- Continue promoting education and awareness of disability resources and workforce resurvey campaign to increase representative workforce disability data.
- Seek and establish Senior Leaders as Champions to sponsor FPAC disability focused employee resource group.
- Establish a collaboration/partnership with one USDA agency and one external Federal Agency to discuss and review best practices relating to Affirmative Employment and Special Emphasis Program.



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