



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



EEOC FORM 715-01

U.S. Equal Employment  
Opportunity Commission

FY2023 - Farm Production and Conservation - AGFP

# Federal Agency Annual EEO Program Status Report

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

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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	15,958	359	16,317

## 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 Montaña 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
Diversity & Inclusion Officer	Vacant					
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	FWPM / VEPM	0343	GS-13	417-683-4816	April.Wilson@usda.gov
Hispanic and Black Emphasis Program Manager (SEPM)	Travis Watkins	NHEPM / BEPM	0201	GS-14	717-237-2147	Travis.Watkins@usda.gov
Asian American / Pacific Islander and American Indian/ Alaskan Native (SEPM)	Andy Cao Pham	AAPI / AIAN SEPM	0343	GS-13	301-504-0105	Andy.Pham@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	
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	Yes	



# 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's vision 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.
- **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. It ensures that every employee, applicant, and program participant is treated with dignity, equality, 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 July 2023. The policy is prominently posted on the 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 <https://www.usda.gov/oascr>.

USDA CR 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 CR Training and Special Emphasis Programming in FY23. The funding was used to educate FPAC supervisors and employees about EEO processes and key Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) concepts.

## 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 CR programs, as well as DEIA models. The table below shows increased FEVS response rates from each FPAC Agency from the prior fiscal year.

Agency	2022	2023
FPAC	56%	66%
RMA	80%	83%
NRCS	62%	69%
FBC	64%	68%
FSA	46%	63%

Data Source: OPM: 2022/2023 FPAC Response Rate

## FPAC Awards and Recognition

FPAC issued a total of 21,701 awards during FY 2023 acknowledging the accomplishments of individuals and teams within the organization. Agency acknowledgment enables leaders to recognize members of their team and peers, as well as cross-team recognition.

Total	Males	Females	Hispanic Males	Hispanic Females	White Males	White Females	Black Males	Black Females	Asian Males	Asian Females
<b>21,701</b>	10,572	11,129	569	520	8,672	8,649	755	1,275	239	234
<b>100%</b>	48.72%	51.28%	2.62%	2.40%	39.96%	39.86%	3.48%	5.88%	1.10%	1.08%

	Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander Males	Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander Females	American Indian/Alaska Native Males	American Indian/Alaska Native Females	2+ Males	2+ Females	Disability	Target Disability
	30	24	289	354	18	73	2,173	518
	0.14%	0.11%	1.33%	1.63%	0.08%	0.34%	10.01%	2.39%

Data Source: NFC Reporting Center, MD 715 Workforce Data Tables, Oct. 15, 2023

## Mission Area Leadership Commitment

The **Farm Service Agency (FSA)** stood up their “Workforce Engagement Committee” (WE), an official group of employees responsible for leading the Agency in workforce engagement. The group is committed to listening, transparency, engagement while promoting open and honest dialogue. The group is comprised of 25 individuals passionate about FSA and their colleagues. These individuals represent all regions and most job descriptions across the Agency, bringing a well-rounded set of experience to the table. The WE Committee has four teams: Communications, Data, Events, and Innovation who are tasked with increasing FSA’s stance as one of the best places to work in the Federal Government by utilizing employees themselves to assist in developing initiatives focused on the FSA Action Plan. Throughout the year, the teams develop solutions to the manageable challenges that face FSA and the Agency’s employees. The more difficult challenges will be communicated to Agency leadership and elevated to decision makers that can make changes to enhance FSA employee’s experience.

The **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)** continues to support the Civil Rights Advisory Committee (CRAC) to the Chief. The committee identifies diversity trends and equal employment issues concerning the general workforce. The CRAC establishes lines of communication between employees and managers so they may share feedback on their views on employment practices and policies related to civil

rights and provide recommendations for program improvements. All recommendations are reported to the Chief for appropriate consideration and follow-up action.

The **Risk Management Agency (RMA)** initiated a new employee recognition program titled the “Peer-to-Peer Core Value Award Program” geared toward nonmanagement employees. It is an excellent opportunity to recognize coworkers and team achievement every quarter. Recognition areas include but are not limited to collaboration, communication, customer focus, and innovation.

The **FPAC Business Center (FBC)** promotes and enhances the culture of the Business Center making it the best place to work. The objective is to foster a workforce that brings passion and energy to the quality of our work. The Business Center is built on the core values of Integrity, Understanding, Respect, and Exceptional Service. FBC will work seamlessly together to meet needs, achieve goals, and become a trusted partner. Accountability is exceptional service. We must recognize and appreciate that what may appear to be different priorities for Business Center functions are actually our united mission, vision and core values applied to service.

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

In February of 2022, USDA released its newly revised Departmental Strategic Plan 2022-2026. Civil Rights and EEO principles, which are an integral part of the current strategic plan, are integrated into the FPAC’s mission. Currently, FPAC’s Human Resources Division (HRD) has a 5-year Strategic HRD Plan. CREEOD actively integrates Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) initiatives through collaboration among leaders, internal partners, and stakeholders. The Division staff serves as a resource to managers and supervisors by providing direction, guidance, and monitoring of critical activities to achieve a diverse workplace free of barriers to equal employment opportunity.

During FY 2023 the CREEOD Title VII Branch prepared the mission area directive FPAC-P CREEOD-001: Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Observers for Interviews Panels with the express purpose to ensure interviews comply with federal civil rights laws. The CREEOD Title VI Branch takes the lead on training and support to FPAC’s Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Program which promotes equity through accessible language capacity.

The FPAC Civil Rights and EEO 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. The CREEOD is sufficiently staffed and trained to carry out its responsibilities, assuring the integrity of the Civil Rights and Equal Employment Opportunity program.

Additionally, the FPAC Under Secretary is the immediate supervisor of the Civil Rights and EEO Director, per the Elijah E. Cummings Act. A Civil Rights Impact Analysis was completed, and Congressional approval was received.

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

### **Compliance Review FY23 Schedule**

FPAC conducts management and program accountability reviews through our annual Civil Rights Compliance Review (CRCR). FPAC CREEOD’s Compliance Team conducts nine (9) CRCR per year on a 6-year rotating basis. This is done so that each State and Area Office can participate in a review and analysis of its current and prior year workforce by Race, Sex, National Origin, and Disability Status (RSNOD). The CRCR Team reviews the effects of the state or area’s management and personnel actions related to Hiring, Internal Promotions, Separations, Awards, and Recognition. The Team also examines evidence to underscore each State and Area Offices’ adherence to MD 715 policies and regulations. The final report to each Agency Head, State Leadership, and the CREEOD Director includes findings, corrective actions, and

recommendations to lead each state to a Model EEO Program. During FY23, FPAC CREEOD conducted nine (9) internal audits of the following NRCS, FSA, and RMA State Offices:

1. Arizona - January
2. Mississippi - February
3. California - March
4. Connecticut April
5. Rhode Island - April
6. Colorado - May
7. Louisiana - June
8. Florida - July
9. Vermont - August

The Compliance Review Team provided four (4) overview training sessions during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarters of FY2023. This essential overview covered topics which included: The purpose of CRCR audits and reviews, compliance with USDA Directive DR 4330-006 Civil Rights Compliance Review, and explains indicators, requirements, criteria, and what to expect during a CRCR audit.

### **Establish EEO Process and Procedures**

FPAC CREEOD serves as a focal point for responding to inquiries from the FPAC Business Center (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 the FPAC agencies in carrying out responsibilities for equal opportunity in employment, services, and program delivery. By establishing core Civil Rights and EEO process and procedures, the CREEOD Director sets the strategic direction and operational priorities of the Division. These actions ensure the staff delivers essential CR and EEO activities and programs for appropriate management and oversight.

Activities during FY2023 included:

- Affirmative Employment Program (AEP) Team distributed 32 state-level workforce analysis reports resulting from requests for demographic data.
- AEP provided quarterly Special Emphasis Program Manager Training for 53 new collateral duty SEPMs at the state level.
- CREEOD staff observed 73 panel interviews at the GS-13 and Senior Grade levels.

### **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 may include affirmative employment, MD 715 reporting, the revamped 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 equal employment and furthers Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility for the FPAC workforce.

HRD Workforce Planning, Outreach and Recruitment Team work 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 engaged with the USDA-wide Employee Resource Groups to implement agency-wide DEIA, including participation in job fairs, conducting cultural awareness training, and organizing annual cultural observances and events.

During FY2023 Agency 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 diversity outreach and recruitment activities support Executive Order 14035, “Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) in the Federal Workforce,” and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) DEIA strategic plan. 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. The Human Resources Division (HRD) provided agencies with a template to use at their discretion to help develop their agency hiring plan focusing on diversity hiring. Farm Service Agency (FSA) used this template to create their current year hiring plans. The FPAC Business Center, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and Risk Management Agency (RMA) used different plans/processes for outreach and recruitment in FY23.

FPAC hosted 67 outreach events during FY23. The sign-in event rosters reached 828 individuals (some overlap exists):

- 1st Qtr. (Oct/Nov/Dec) - 23 Virtual and 4 In-Person
- 2nd Qtr. (Jan/Feb/Mar) - 2 Virtual and 19 In-Person
- 3rd Qtr. (Apr/May/Jun) - 3 Virtual and 4 In-Person
- 4th Qtr. (Jul/Aug/Sep) - 8 Virtual and 4 In-Person

AI/AN	B/AA	H/L	AA	LGBTQ	NH/PI	PwD	Vet.	W	Multiple Groups
7	14	14	6	2	5	4	5	1	13

*American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN), Black/African American (B/AA), Hispanic/Latino (HL), Asian American (AA), Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer/Questioning (LGBTQ), Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (NH/PI), Persons with Disabilities (PwD), Veterans (Vet.), Women (W).*

FPAC utilizes the USDA Mentoring Portal offering mentor and protégé opportunities to all employees. New supervisors and interns are directed to participate in the mentoring program to aid in their professional development. There are also assigned Mentoring Coordinators at the local level to provide information and assistance to employees on the Mentoring Program. In addition to the online mentoring portal, FPAC hosted a Flash Mentoring event in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of FY23 with seven (7) SES and 39 protégés participating in the event.

FPAC conducted the 2023 Strategic Leadership Development Program (SLDP) which is a career development opportunity for permanent employees in grades 13 - 15.

- Nineteen (19) applicants applied and were selected for the SLDP Class which ended September 30, 2023. The class make-up was:
  - o Nine (9) White males, five (5) White females, two (2) African American males, one (1) African American female, and two (2) Asian males.
  - o Eight (8 or 42%) of the participants self-identified as a person with a disability (PwD).
- Minorities represented 26% of selectees
- Females selections were at 31%
- FPAC agency representation consisted of twelve (12) from NRCS, six (6) from Business Center, and one (1) from FSA.

## 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 by assigning a new Anti-Harassment Program Manager to administer and oversee the expanded program. It mandates that each Agency must establish protocols and procedures for the Program with a goal to prevent or reduce harm to any employee subjected to harassment or bullying, and to hold accountable those who are responsible.

The newly revised 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, whether or not based on membership in a protected category. Additionally, there is no deadline for filing a harassment complaint. FPAC CREEOD continues its partnership with HRD/Employee and Labor Relations Team, which oversees the day-to-day administration of the program, and the Office of General Counsel (OGC) to update the current Anti-Harassment Training Module. The topics includes recognizing and mitigating discriminatory workplace behaviors; anti-harassment, disability discrimination, sexual harassment, unconscious bias, and addressing biases and stereotypes. FPAC, in consultation with the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR) and OGC, are in discussion to make this course and a supplemental Unconscious Bias training mandatory for all FPAC employees, including FSA County employees for the upcoming fiscal year (FY24).

During FY2023, CREEOD referred 44 instances of harassment to the Employee Relations/Anti-Harassment Program Manager. 90% of all referrals stemmed from FSA and NRCS (with 20 cases or 45% each).

### Anti-Harassment Referrals

FY23	FBC	FSA	NRCS	RMA
Q1	2	3	3	0
Q2	0	6	4	0
Q3	0	5	6	0
Q4	1	6	7	1
Total	3	20	20	1

## 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 the affected personnel the benefits and privileges of full employment. Agency personnel and applicants can find RA and PAS policy statements and forms on all agencies' public and internal websites.

### Reasonable Accommodation Program Effectiveness:

- FY2023 received 564 requests.
- The average processing time was 12 business days each.
- The approval rate was 97%.



## Reasonable Accommodation 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 1,500 cases/notifications.
- The overall Fiscal Year processing time to remedy an Agency Decision was reduced by 45%, from 22 business days in FY22 to 12 business days in FY23.
- The Fiscal Year carryover was reduced by 69%, from a carryover of 126 cases in FY22 to 38 cases in FY23.

## Findings/Disciplinary Actions

During FY23, twenty-five (25) EEO complaints were closed, resulting in four (4) cases with findings of discrimination. The basis of findings included Disability and Familial and Parental Status (a USDA protected basis). The issues included Appointment/Hire, Assignment of Duties, Termination, Terms and Conditions of Employment, and Reasonable Accommodation. In accordance with USDA's Civil Rights Accountability Process, FPAC reviewed each case to determine warranted corrective and disciplinary actions.

Agency	Bases	Corrective Actions
FSA	Familial and Parental Status	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Removal of termination record from eOPF</li> <li>2. Reinstatement</li> <li>3. Referral for Disciplinary Action</li> <li>4. EEO Training for RMOs</li> <li>5. Posting Notification</li> </ol>
FSA	Reprisal	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. EEO Training for RMOs</li> <li>2. Referral for Disciplinary Action</li> <li>3. Posting Notice</li> </ol>
FSA	Disability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Removal of Removal record from eOPF</li> <li>2. Reinstatement</li> <li>3. Back Pay (\$86,303.92)</li> <li>4. Compensatory Damages (in process)</li> <li>5. Referral for Disciplinary Action</li> <li>6. Discrimination Training</li> <li>7. Posting Notice</li> </ol>
NRCS	Disability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Compensatory Damages (in process)</li> <li>2. Restoration of Leave (\$4,225.26)</li> <li>3. Referral for Disciplinary Action</li> <li>4. Posting Notice</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; Objective 6.1 Foster a Culture of Civil Rights, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility, Transparency, and Accountability <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/usda-fy-2022-2026-strategic-plan.pdf>

## Management Performance Appraisals and Evaluation

Managers and supervisors are evaluated on adherence to CR, 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 CR and Equal Employment Opportunity and the adherence of the revised USDA Anti-Harassment policy.

All FPAC managers and supervisors have a CR/EEO element in the Mission Results section of their annual performance evaluation. The element regulates supervision-related EEO and civil rights performance actions while incorporating necessary accountability to ensure that all customers and employees 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.

## Alternative Dispute Resolution Program and other Early Intervention Practices

FPAC CREEOD offers impartial Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) at the pre-complaint and formal complaint stages 100% of the time, when appropriate. EEO counselors and specialists encourage all employees to utilize ADR in the appropriate circumstances. Once ADR is offered to a complainant and accepted, FPAC managers and supervisors are *required* to participate in good-faith. Under the FPAC CREEOD’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. To further strengthen the effectiveness and quality of the ADR program, staff analysts prepare and analyze post-ADR program participant survey responses. This process assists in evaluating ADR program data every quarter for general process improvement. CREEOD also provides bi-annual training to new and existing Resolving Officials, or the senior leader who represents the Agency during ADR mediation, to build the cadre and keep them up-to-date on EEO procedure and practices.

## Early Intervention Program

The FPAC HRD Employee and Labor Relations Team provides an ADR-adjacent program in the work-life domain called “Dialogue at Work”. This program, while not specifically for discrimination-based complaints, assists employees at all levels with the opportunity to address conflict early and in a nonjudgmental manner. This may result in solutions that improve working relationships and provide more productive office environments. To accomplish this, the Dialogue at Work program focuses primarily on early intervention. The Program practice is, the sooner the better, and may offer suggestions on having a more productive conversation with your supervisor.

## CREEOD Affirmative Employment Program (AEP)

The primary objective of Affirmative Employment is to take positive steps so that all FPAC employees and applicants have an 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 advances and strengthens relationships with Special Emphasis Programs, Employee Resource and Affinity Groups to implement and ensure a progressive and inclusive program for all FPAC personnel.

The Team ensures that EEO initiatives and activities become an integral part of FPACs equal employment opportunity 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 CR and EEO policies, regulations, and guidance, as well as workforce analysis and career development opportunities.



During FY23 the AEP established monthly meetings in order to bring together HRD, Employee Resource Groups and collateral duty SEPMs to provide topics of interest as well as providing a hub for related news, information and activities that are integral in making the program inclusive and pervasive throughout the FPAC organization. The establishment of monthly recurring meetings keeps CREEOD up-to-date on work-force personnel programs while allowing CREEOD officials access to HRD officials and leadership.

The CREEOD AEP: Black Emphasis Program planned and facilitated the first ever USDA-wide Juneteenth flag-raising ceremony at USDA Headquarters, Whitten Building in Washington, DC. This initiative displayed leadership commitment to diversity and inclusion at the highest level. USDA Secretary, Tom Vilsack, conducted the ceremony along with other USDA executives from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR), the Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer (CDIO), the Acting CREEOD Director, as well as over 75 senior leaders in attendance.

The AEP Team provided fresh and exciting experiences to supplement traditional reoccurring monthly cultural events with Book Club Discussions, Cooking Demonstrations, Trivia Contests, and Health and Wellness activities (for example Yoga Demo, and Veterans' Wellness Challenge). With a total of over 3,100 employees in attendance of 22 special events. The AEP Team produced, conducted, and hosted thought provoking and original events, observances including but not limited to:

- African American History Month Observance - The Conversation by Dr. Robert Livingston
- Women History Month - My Own Words by Ruth Bader Ginsberg
- Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month - Cross Cultural Communication
- LGBTQI+ Pride Month - LGBTQI+ Farmers Roundtable Discussion
- Juneteenth Celebration (USDA-wide) - Jubilee: History, Celebration, and Tradition
- Women's Equality Day - Equal Pay with a Federal Emphasis
- Hispanic Heritage Month - Our America: A Hispanic History of the United States

### **Compliance and Training Branch**

FPAC employees and supervisors are specifically directed to engage in professional development through the FPAC CREEOD Compliance and Training Branch, which provides solutions and tools for

addressing discrimination in all forms, conflict management, diversity and inclusion, and unconscious bias in program delivery. The wide variety of subjects ensured supervisors and employees received regular CR/EEO training and information regarding diversity and inclusion, conflict management and other CR/EEO topics. The training team presented four in-person State Leadership training sessions geared toward FSA, NRCS, and RMA Leaders.

CREEOD placed high emphasis on delivering quality, results-oriented training, and special emphasis events to educate and advance civil rights across the spectrum of FPAC operations in FY23. CREEOD goal was to produce 28 training events. The year concluded with 62 total events, exceeding the goal by 121% in FY23.

The CREEOD Training Team delivered the Civil Rights Compliance in Program Delivery (CRCPD) course at 15 locations across NRCS. Additionally, the Training Team developed and delivered a CRCPD adjunct instructor course for 33 participants specifically designed to increase capacity and proficiency of the collateral duty instructors cadre.

Virtual training and live events provide soft skill training to increase participants' knowledge and reduce the initiation of EEO complaints. The topics also provide tools to participants in addressing and resolving conflict at the lowest level. The topics during FY23 included the following:

- EEO 101 Training: The Road to Resolution
- Resolving Officials Training

- DEIA Representative
- Special Hiring Authorities

Diversity and inclusion training consist of training and education to provide guidance for employee behavior and perspective in the workplace. This training raises employee awareness about workforce diversity and inclusion, educates about diversity in hiring and promotion, and helps employees overcome their unconscious biases. As a result of this training, employers can build a more inclusive work environment, encourage team cohesion, and improve relationships among employees, partners, and customers. In collaboration with FSA, the Training Team developed and delivered a DEIA certification training for FSA hiring managers, resulting in 100% participation by FSA managers and a 1300% increase (1 to 15) in internal DEIA Representatives.

FY23 diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility webinars included:

- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and the New IQ
- Addressing Bias and Stereotypes in the Delivery of USDA Programs and Services
- Unconscious Bias
- Cultural Sensitivity
- Customer Service – Shifting Service to Experience from an Emotional Intelligence Approach
- Ableism: What It Is and Why It Matters to Everyone
- Disability Inclusion in the Workplace
- Microaggressions
- Cultivating an Inclusive Workplace Through Gender Equity
- Ouch! That Stereotype Hurts
- Social Biases in the workplace
- Cultural Diversity and Inclusion
- Navigating Conflict
- Communication Strategies
- Emotional Intelligence

## **Essential Element E: Efficiency**

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

In FY23, CREEOD completed 99 pre-complaint counseling sessions compared to 55 pre-complaint counseling sessions in the prior year. The Division completed 98 of the 99 counseling sessions in a timely manner; continuing the positive trend of a 99% on-time counseling rate. Specifically, of the 99 counseling sessions completed, 44 were completed within 30 days; 11 were completed with written extensions of no longer than 60 days; and 49 were processed through the Agency’s ADR program and completed within 90 days. CREEOD provided individuals with written notification of their rights and responsibilities in the EEO process for each of these counselings sessions. To encourage and ensure that counseling sessions are promptly processed, CREEOD integrates a timely counseling element in the performance standards of all GS-0260 EEO Counselors.

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

<b>Counseling Timeframe Categories</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
Counseled Within 30 Days	28	44
Counseled Within 31 to 90 Days	27	54
Counseled Within Written Extension Period No Longer Than 60 Days	4	11
Counseled Within 90 Days Where Individual Participated in ADR	23	49
Counseled Within 31-90 Days That Were Untimely	0	0
Counseled Beyond 90 Days	0	1
<b>Total Completed Counseling sessions</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>99</b>

Throughout FY23, CREEOD continued its partnership with OASCR for the issuance of acceptance/partial acceptance/dismissal decisions of formal EEO complaints, the completion of formal

EEO investigations, and the issuance of final actions. At the same time, during the fiscal year, CREEOD held quarterly meetings with OASCR to ensure investigations and final actions were issued in a timely manner.

In FY23, 35 new formal EEO complaints were filed, compared with 31 in FY21. The average time for OASCR to issue a letter of acceptance/partial acceptance/dismissal was 27 days. Additionally, 24 EEO complaints were investigated, a decrease from 41 completed in FY22. Of the 24 investigations completed in FY23, all were completed on time, thus maintaining a rate of 100% timely completed investigations.

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

<b>Formal EEO Complaint Categories</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
No. of Formal Filed	31	35
No. of Investigations Completed	41	24
No. of Timely Completed Investigations	41	24
Percent of Timely Investigations	100%	100%
Average Processing Days for All Investigations (including amended cases)	128	146
Average Cost per Investigation (Direct Cost Reported)	\$3,463	\$3,885

During FY23, OASCR issued 18 (merit) Final Agency Decisions (FADs) with an average processing time of 79 days. Of the 18 (merit) FADs issued, 13 (72%) were issued within 60 days of receipt of the request, a slight decrease from 18 (75%) issued on time in the prior fiscal year. Throughout FY23, CREEOD continued to work 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)**

<b>AVG Processing Categories</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
# Merit FADS Issued	24	18
Average Days	59	79
# Merit FADS Timely Issued	18	13
% Merit FADS Timely Issued	75%	72%

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

### Neutral EEO Process

In keeping with 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. If a legal sufficiency review is required, reviews are handled by a functional unit distinct from the department responsible for defending the Department against EEO complaints. Moreover, CREEOD ensures that the OGC legal defense function does not engage with the counseling, investigation, and final agency decision stages of the EEO process.

### Widespread ADR Program

In FY23, CREEOD offered and encouraged participation in its impartial Alternative Dispute Resolution (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 counseling sessions. FPAC encourages all employees to use ADR, where ADR is determined appropriate.

Once ADR is offered to an aggrieved person or complainant, FPAC managers and supervisors are required 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. To further enhance the effectiveness and quality of the ADR program, during FY23, CREEOD analyzed post-ADR program participant survey responses on a quarterly basis as well as evaluated ADR program data on a bi-annual basis. Furthermore, in FY23, CREEOD offered bi-annual training to new and existing Resolving Officials to build the agency's cadre of Resolving Officials and keep them up to date on EEO best practices.

In FY23, ADR was offered in 95 (96%) of the 99 pre-complaints filed. It was recognized in four (4) pre-complaints that ADR was not appropriate to be offered to the Aggrieved. Of the 95 pre-complaints wherein ADR was offered, 49 (52%) elected to participate in ADR. During FY23, FPAC's ADR resolution rate was 60%, a considerable increase from the rate of 40% in FY22. 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 included: "believe [traditional counseling] is the quickest option", "do not want additional stress", and "not comfortable directly confronting supervisor." No specific trends were identified.

#### Complaint Rate and ADR Usage in the Pre-complaint Stage (FY23 Form 462 Report)

ADR and Pre-complaints	2022	2023
FPAC Workforce	15,430	16,316
# of Pre-complaints	55	99
Complaint Rate	.35%	.61%
ADR Offer Rate	100%	96%
ADR Election Rate	42%	52%
ADR Conducted Rate	89%	82%
ADR Resolution Rate	44%	62%

## **Effective and Accurate Data Collection Systems**

In July of 2023, USDA began utilizing Entellitrak-EEO (ETK), a cloud-based, compliant, enterprise-wide civil rights complaint tracking system. Additionally, ETK-EEO adheres to regulatory reporting requirements and provides data for all USDA civil rights reporting purposes. The ETK-EEO case management system tracks and reports on EEO complaint activity. The new system replaced the former EEO case management system, iComplaints. ETK has many functionalities that allows CREEOD to input, process, track, manage, and report on EEO complaint cases. Additionally, ETK has capabilities that enable 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. Currently, USDA employs the National Finance Center Reporting Center to collect and monitor data and assess trends of its permanent workforce. Schedule A workforce data is now available from the NFC Reporting Center's EEOC MD 715 Workforce Data Table B1. FPAC receives applicant flow data through the USA Staffing system. The EDAPT-Dashboard employs Tableau Data Analytics software to track current workforce populations by race, sex, national origin, disability, and veteran status.

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

### **Ensure Timely and Full 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.

Throughout FY23, CREEOD ensured a timely system to process and fully comply with all laws, EEOC regulations, management directives, orders, written instructions, final agency actions, and settlement agreements.

### **Settlements**

CREEOD responds on-time and fully complies with all EEOC orders and requests that may be issued as part of the hearing and/or appeals process. CREEOD staff is responsible for monitoring and facilitating compliance with all EEOC orders, final agency actions, and settlement agreements; this includes working with human resources staff, 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. Similarly, 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.

In accordance with USDA DR 4120-001, Annual CR Training of the No FEAR Act of 2002 is assigned to all new hires and transfers to USDA (including interns and contractors) receive the course within 90 days of hire/transfer. FY23 was not a mandatory No FEAR refresher training year.

## No FEAR Mandated Training Courses All FPAC – Completions for FY 2023

Agency	Assigned	Not Yet Started	%	In Progress	%	Completed	%
FBC	31	1	3.23%	1	9.23%	29	93.55%
FSA	82	1	1.22%	16	19.51%	65	79.27%
NRCS	215	5	2.33%	25	11.63%	185	86.05%
RMA	3	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	3	100%
County/Contractors	1,626	0	0.00%	126	7.75%	1,500	92.25%
FPAC Total	1,950	7	0.35%	168	8.61%	1,782	91.38%

Data Source: USDA AgLearn Course Status Report 10/02/2023

## PART E.4 - ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### Special Employment Programs/Special Hiring Authorities

Federal agencies have specific hiring programs for veterans, people with disabilities, students, recent graduates, and other applicants. While there was an overall increase in hiring using Special Hiring Programs, Direct Hire Authority (DHA) showed a decrease of about 18% during FY23. External hiring information for the fiscal year 2022-2023 is reflected below for FPAC.

External Hire Type (Federal)	#FY22	%FY22	# FY23	% FY23	Incr/Decr	Net Change
Direct Hire Authority	294	19.97%	25	1.37%	-269	-18.61%
Disabled Veteran	16	1.09%	128	7.00%	112	5.91%
Intern/Fellow	30	2.04%	51	2.79%	21	0.75%
Military Spouse*	--	--	2	0.11%	2	0.11%
Other Non-Special Hiring Authority	789	53.60%	1,092	59.70%	303	6.10%
Pathways Appointment-Recent Grad	111	7.54%	167	9.13%	56	1.59%
Pathways Intern	187	12.70%	303	16.57%	116	3.86%
Physical Disability	3	0.20%	4	0.22%	1	0.01%
Schedule A	5	0.34%	7	0.38%	2	0.04%
Severe Physical Disability	13	0.88%	14	0.77%	1	-0.12%
Veteran Recruitment Appointment (VRA)	14	0.95%	13	0.71%	-1	-0.24%
Veterans Employment Opportunity Act (VEOA)	10	0.68%	23	1.26%	13	0.58%
Total	1,472	100%	1,829	100%	357	0.00%

\*Data for Military Spouse not available in 2022. Red font = negative number or ratio

Data Source: NFC\_EmpowHR\_HR Solutions Oct. 2023

### FY23 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.

Utilization of all student hiring authorities allow for a combination of fair and open competition along with supporting the Department’s goals to increase agricultural opportunities for minority, American Indian, and Native Alaskan students. All recruitment areas directly impact the ability to address attrition, as all positions have a true “pathway” to a career position within FPAC. The table below depicts the diversity of the Pathway program as of the final pay period of FY23.

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
37	38	6	2	1	0	7	3	3	3	4	4	139	100	22	347
10.66%	10.97%	1.73%	0.58%	0.29%	0.00%	2.02%	0.86%	0.86%	0.86%	1.15%	1.15%	40.06%	28.82%	6.34%	100%

Data Source: OHRM Dashboard/NFC Insight Oct. 4, 2023

Fifty (50) 1890 National Scholars and one (1) 1994 Tribal Scholars newly selected during FY23 are not included in these totals as they were not formally onboarded at time of report.

### FY23 FPAC Student Programs Conversions

FY23 conversions to full time positions include:

- 113 - Pathway Interns
- 91 - Recent Graduate
- 2 - Presidential Management Fellow
- 22 -1890 Scholars
- 1 -1994 Tribal Scholar

Retaining these talented students and recent graduates not only meets agency needs but provides the individuals greater employment opportunities within the federal sector.

### Workforce Engagement (WE)

Business Center leadership established the Workforce Engagement (WE) Team to collaborate with and facilitate employee engagement by ensuring communications are consistent throughout all FPAC agencies. The team is comprised of WE representatives from each FPAC agency. It also includes other employees across FPAC who have expressed interest in volunteering their time and talents to further the WE efforts.

WE Team FY23 accomplishments include:

- Created one of a kind FEVS Dashboard and Power BI to help leaders and employees better understand the FEVS data and create transparency within our workforce.
- To increase awareness around WE, we’ve created the WE Communication series, which comes out once a month via FPAC Roundup.
- Analyzed the FEVS data to identify strengths and weaknesses, gathered input from employees through focus groups and pulse survey, and used the information to identify improvement actions needed to increase the FPAC Mission Area and each agency’s FEVS scores.
- Provided 2022 FPAC FEVS analysis and briefings to agency leadership, the FPAC Under Secretary, and various organizations.

- Discussed WE efforts and provided monthly updates on various initiatives with the FPAC Under Secretary.
- Developed and implemented the FPAC WE Action Plan to address challenges to meet agency engagement goals.
- Assisted organizations with understanding the best practices and organizational challenges identified by the FEVS results.
- Provided consultations to help organizations develop their FEVS action plans targeting the less-than-optimal results.
- Maintained the “WEareFPAC” SharePoint site, which contains the FEVS data and resources, providing access for all employees to help improve engagement across the Mission Area.
- Established a “WEareFPACatwork!” SharePoint site where all FPAC employees can share their implemented WE activities within their respective organizations to inspire and support each other.
- Continued the lunch and learn series called “Feed Your Mind” to connect and improve the engagement culture, providing multiple faceted information of an employee’s work and personal life.

## **PART E.4.1 MISSION AGENCY ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

### **FPAC Business Center**

#### **Acquisition Division**

As directed by the Presidents Executive Order 13985 (Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities through the Federal Government) and to support the Secretary’s directive to lead change with a commitment to utilizing the principles of adopting diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) practices (USDA Strategic Goal 6.1), The Acquisition Division (AD) has taken the following actions:

1. Implemented a quarterly Small Business Spotlight Outreach Program. This program allows underserved business owners the opportunity to present their capabilities to FPAC’s Program Office Representatives. Through the quarterly spotlight events, representatives from all small business socio-economic categories have presented their capabilities to FPACs program offices with over 300 program officials in attendance.
2. Awarded a contract to a woman-owned, 8a company for the construction of an emergency watershed protection project. Secretary Vilsack recognized this effort in his First Friday Newsletter for the award of a contract to a small disadvantage business in support of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility.
3. Collaborated with the Risk Management Agency (RMA) to establish a long-term solution to their Diversity Outreach program which targets specific diverse demographics. The collaboration resulted in AD establishing a \$4,000,000 contract to provide diversity outreach services for five years. The result of this contract provides greater awareness of RMA programs amongst underserved groups and provides technical guidance on how these groups can be more successful in establishing agreements with RMA.
4. Awarded 4 new BPAs to HUBZone small businesses valued at \$11.2M to assist farmers with limited English proficiency (LEP) by providing translation and transcription services. AD also supported LEP by providing staff to the OSEC Discrimination Financial Assistance Program call center to mitigate issues with the system for Spanish speaking farmers and ranchers who have experienced discrimination under USDA Farm Loan programs.
5. Researched and utilized the Operation Warfighter Program. This program allows wounded warriors on active duty to obtain federal government experience prior to being discharged. AD onboarded an active-duty Air Force member who was an experienced contracting professional at no charge to the Department while supporting DEIA goals. This was the first time the program had been utilized in



FPAC, and AD was recognized in the USECs Weekly Newsletter as an example to follow and a process for others to consider.

6. The Nation Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) National Archeologist/Federal Preservation Officer, Erika Seibert, requested AD assistance with updating information for the NRCS Cultural Resource Specialists on Contracting Options and Process for when they have cultural resource requirements. This resulted in updating their guidance document and AD staff presenting the information to the NRCS Cultural Resource Specialists during their annual meeting.
7. Developed an Employee On-Boarding Guide to familiarize new employees with organization leadership within the AD. This onboarding process is continued through a week-long “Boot Camp” where they continue to learn the roles of critical staff, become familiar with the different systems used in day-to-day operation, and are exposed to what each of our Mission Partners do to support farmers, ranchers, and producers throughout the United States.
8. The White House commended USDA for being the only large Federal agency to exceed set Small Business Goals. FPAC exceeded goals directly contributed to this effort.

Description	Goal	Overall Actuals
Small Business	55.0%	73.9%
Small Disadvantaged Business, 21.5%	38.02%	47.1 %
Woman-Owned Small Business	5.0%	20.3 %
Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business	3.0%	13.7%

9. FY2023 Small Business Outreach Efforts and Accomplishments.

- 1st ever Virtual IT Industry Day for Small Business with 364 attendees
- 4 Small Business Spotlight virtual events giving diverse small businesses the opportunity to present their capabilities to FPAC program offices and acquisitions
- The FPAC Small Business Coordinator (SBC) attended 39 Small Business Outreach events for WOSB, HUBZone, 8(a)/SDB, VOSB, Hispanic-Owned SB, American Indian Enterprises, US Black Chamber of Commerce Buying Black among others
- FPAC presently maintains a Small Business database with approximately 1100 diverse small businesses vetted and able to do business with the federal government and meet our contracting needs
- The SBC communicated with different small businesses over 7000 times in FY2023

10. FY2024 plan is to continue these outreach efforts.

- 2nd annual Virtual IT industry Day for Small Business with 317 in attendance
- The SBC communicated with different small businesses over 3000 time to date (busy first quarter)
- The SBC has attended/hosted six Outreach events so far in FY2024, IT Industry Day, HUBZone, VOSB, etc. and added a new virtual event on 10/26/2023 “How to Navigate the USDA Procurement Forecast Portal” with DOC MBDA to make it easier for small businesses to identify procurement opportunities within all of USDA.

**Environmental Activities Division**

1. Ensured Section 508 compliance for all Leaflet newsletters and public-facing documents.
2. Developed the Environmental Compliance Tool (ECT) to address and prevent discrimination through consistent application of the environmental compliance process.

3. Integrated the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST) into overall program strategy and funding prioritization for the Hazardous Waste Cleanup Program. Within FPAC, ENV was the first to institutionalize the use of CEJST and 36% of active sites are in CEJST communities (toward the Administration goal of 40%).
4. Provided environmental compliance in response to natural disasters at the broadest possible level (i.e., programmatic) to ensure equal access, opportunities, and benefits for all of FSA's producers, while minimizing work required by State/field staff.
5. Used FEVS and annual focus group feedback to benefit the team and our customer service.
  - Workforce engagement activities:
    - i. Attended two annual group trainings.
    - ii. Took time to celebrate and understand the group's diversity (e.g., Jewish holidays, queer scientists).
    - iii. Participated in "Innovation Wednesday" quarterly meetings where ENV brainstorms innovative solutions to improve customer service, which allows for healthy debate and disagreement to avoid groupthink limiting our creative problem solving.
    - iv. Realized full utility of ENV's career ladders to provide developmental opportunities for FPAC staff in lower graded positions to move up and into ENV leadership positions.

### **Management Services Division**

(MSD) Annual Agency Accomplishments in Achieving a Model EEO Program includes employee wellness, health and safety, equity, accessibility, rewards, and awareness. This reporting period, MSD has achieved the following:

1. Successfully implemented targeted recruitment strategies to attract a diverse pool of internal and external candidates for 49 vacant positions. Tracked and celebrated promotions and career milestones achieved by individuals from diverse backgrounds resulting in 14 internal employee promotions. These activities increased the representation of underrepresented groups in the organization.
2. Initiated a comprehensive plan aimed at elevating federal employee engagement and satisfaction based on insights gathered from the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) resulting in an 18% increase in employee participation (e.g., 59% in 2022 to 77% in 2023).
3. Orchestrated a comprehensive strategy to enhance federal employee engagement and satisfaction, involving a meticulous analysis of FEVS results identifying key themes and specific areas for improvement.
4. Emphasizing transparency, summarized results were disseminated, fostering a culture of open communication within the division.
5. Cross-functional teams were formed to successfully implement targeted initiatives, resulting in notable improvements in identified problem areas and an overall boost in employee satisfaction.
6. Developed an engaging and inclusive offsite program to strengthen team cohesion and foster a sense of belonging. Ensured that offsite events incorporate activities promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion, FEVS results, mission and vision statements, recognized employee achievements, goals, and respective discipline training enhancing overall employee satisfaction and collaboration. Each branch held a one week offsite which provided employees an opportunity for team building, networking, and promoted a positive workplace culture, aligning with the organization's commitment to creating an inclusive environment.
7. Developed and implement an equity awards program. Nearly >150 (e.g., 79%) employees received a monetary and/or time-off award with a cumulative totaling nearly \$382 K, e.g., 95% burn rate. This is an >20% increase.

8. Continue to integrate accessibility considerations into >450 new replacement lease solicitations, ensuring that prospective facilities adhere to EEO accessibility standards from the initial stages of planning and lease acquisition.
9. Formatting 508 Compliant Documents - Increased Section 508 compliant FPAC Forms and FPAC Directives templates and postings. Longer documents such as standard operating procedures, reports, and other document-heavy projects present larger Section 508 challenges.
10. Established channels for employees to share feedback on diversity and inclusion efforts. Used feedback to make continuous improvements and address emerging challenges.

## **Performance Accountability and Risk (PAR) Division**

PAR has maintained a long history of diversification and inclusion. In addition to hiring, in FY23 under leadership of the former Acting Director, the focus was and continues to be on internal processes to improve efficiency delivery of services utilizing limited staffing and other resources.

As we continue to build our internal processes, we plan to build more inclusive documents that are 508 compliant, address diverse internal and external stakeholders, etc., to support FPAC and Business Center missions.

## **Risk Management Agency**

1. Integration of EEO Into the Agency's Strategic Mission
  - The FPAC CREEOD Director is invited to monthly RMA leadership meetings to highlight areas of emphasis and to address any agency questions.
  - RMA maintains resources and quickly addresses employee requests for reasonable accommodations.
  - RMA attains and maintains an inclusive workplace environment where individuals with disabilities are able to fully participate in all work-based activities, Senior Leadership placed exceptional focus on proactively looking for opportunities where qualified individuals could be assisted by leveraging the opportunities available through the reasonable accommodation process. As a result, RMA achieved a score of 89% on its FEVS results in response to the statement, "I can easily make a request of my agency to meet my accessibility needs." And on the statement, "My agency responds to my accessibility needs in a timely manner", RMA achieved a score of 85%.
  - RMA has placed a high priority on employee development and education.
  - RMA continues to transfer funding saved from our reduced physical footprint and invest those funds back into our employees Any and all discrimination is promptly addressed and corrected.
2. Management and Program Accountability
  - RMA utilizes procedures developed by the Department and/or the FPAC mission area to prevent all forms of discrimination, including harassment, retaliation, and failure to provide reasonable accommodation.
  - DEIA is a critical element on all RMA employee Performance Plans. Supervisors are appraised each year to ensure their compliance with DEIA requirements.
  - RMA fully complies in maintaining clearly defined, well-communicated, consistently applied and implemented personnel policies, selection and promotion procedures, evaluation procedures, rules of conduct and training systems.
  - RMA 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.

- RMA is mindful of the agency's disability program obligations, including the provision of reasonable accommodations, when negotiating collective bargaining agreements with recognized labor organization(s) representing agency employees.
- RMA's Disability SEPM proactively presented disability awareness briefings during business area staff meetings to highlight agency reporting processes associated with individual employee self-certification practices. The intent was to encourage every agency employee to voluntarily update their individual EPP profiles to reflect their actual disability status thereby improving reporting accuracy for agency workforce participation purposes.
- RMA reviews each finding of discrimination and determines the appropriateness of disciplinary action in collaboration with FPAC-CRD and/or OASCR. Tracking and reporting is handled by FPAC-CREEOD.
- RMA fully complies with the implementation of all settlement agreements and orders.

### 3. Proactive Prevention of Unlawful Discrimination

- RMA participates in the self-assessment on an annual basis and identifies gaps as well as opportunities for improvement with its leadership team.
- RMA Identified and disseminated best workplace practices. Being a small organization (total staffing level is just over 400 employees), especially when compared to level of responsibility/ authority and nature of the mission assigned to the organization, retaining, and hiring people with the proper skillsets is vital to the success of RMA. Understanding that the employee retention rate is often a very clear indicator of a healthy (i.e., Model) work environment, Senior Leadership placed exceptional emphasis on internal efforts to motivate and retain employees and to do so in a manner that maximized work-life balance to the greatest extent possible. Specifically, as a result of Senior Leadership's intense and continuing focus on enhancing employee engagement, in FY 2023 the Risk Management Agency attained a remarkable employee retention rate of 97%. On the FEVS survey, when asked, "Are you considering leaving your organization within the next year", 82% of employees responded, "No". Senior Leadership's approach to building a positive work environment based on open and honest communication, mutual trust, personal and professional accountability, and a focus on equity and inclusion that ensures employees are provided with fair and equal opportunities led directly to the exceptionally low employee turnover rate which enabled the Risk Management Agency to significantly reduce the tangible costs (e.g., management time spent on new employee recruiting and hiring, new employee training, etc.) and intangible costs (e.g., loss of productivity, loss of employee expertise, loss of employee morale, etc.) associated with needing to replace an employee that has left the organization.
- In addition, during FY2023, the Risk Management Agency (RMA) placed outreach (diversity focused) ads in six (6) different DiversityComm magazine/journals (Black EOE Journal, HISPANIC Network Magazine, Professional WOMAN's Magazine, U.S. Veterans Magazine, Diversity in STEM Magazine, DIVERSEability Magazine) in response to the Administration and Department's prioritizing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts. RMA has a 5-year Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) capped at \$0.5M to place two-page ads in these national magazines to drive recruitment, promote the agency's mission, and outreach accomplishments. To date, RMA has invested roughly \$100,000 in ad placements and published ten articles, reaching more than twenty million readers.

## Farm Service Agency

### 1. Demonstrated Commitment from Agency Leadership:

- The FSA Administrator issued an FSA Equity Statement which prioritizes DEIA and Programmatic equity across the agency. Additionally, the FSA Administrator issued an "I Matter" employee card to all field staff expressing commitment. The Equity Statement posters are required to be displayed in all FSA county offices.

- The FSA Administrator requested each Deputy area hire an equity program analyst to work on programmatic equity and DEIA in each division (Field Operations, Farm Loan Programs and Farm Programs).
2. Integration of EEO Into the Agency's Strategic Mission:
    - FSA approved approximately 975 applications for the Student Loan Repayment Program totaling about \$8.8 million in 2023.
    - FSA offered a 6% pay retention incentive to 6,300 GS/AD-1101, and GS/AD-1165 employees.
    - FSA posted 56 additional Loan Analyst positions and will assess possible implementation of a County Office (AD) program analyst position.
    - FSA Administrator's Awards which includes a Civil Rights Leadership category, provided 289 awards during FY2023.
    - FSA conducted 12 sessions of National Leadership Training with over 310 participants.
    - DAFO will work with CREEOD to develop and implement a Civil Rights Compliance in Program Delivery training (similar to the NRCS course).
  3. Management and Program Accountability
    - FSA added a diversity recruitment standard to the Mission Results element of FY2023 performance plans.
  4. Proactive Prevention of Unlawful Discrimination
    - FSA performed a self-assessment and developed FY 2023 Diversity Hiring and Recruitment plan. Overall FSA met Civilian Labor Force (CLF) benchmarks for American Indian Alaskan Native males and females and White female employees.
    - FSA continues to strive to make improvements in the CLF benchmarks not met, as the agency is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion accessibility (DEIA) to build a workforce more representative of American farmers, ranchers, and landowners.
    - FSA Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey results reported 13.6% do not feel they have similar access to advancement opportunities (promotion, career development, training) as others in their unit. 19.1% did not feel that excellent work is similarly recognized for all employees (awards, acknowledgements) in their work unit.
  5. Efficiency
    - Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Farm Loan Programs established the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access-Reboot (DEIA-Reboot) Task Force in Fall 2021. The work was guided by Executive Orders 13985, 14035, 14058; interviews; experience working with Farm Loans; and data analyses. The task force is divided into five focus groups to develop recommendations on specific areas of improvement. These five focus groups are Statutory and Regulatory, Business Processes, Recruitment, and Retention, Data Collection, Analysis, and Reporting, and Training/Technical Assistance. During FY2023 thirty-two (32) recommendations were made across the five focus areas.

## **National Resource Conservation Service**

1. Integration of EEO Into the Agency's Strategic Mission
  - A diverse and highly skilled workforce is essential to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) delivery of technical assistance and services to the American public.
2. Management and Program Accountability
  - NRCS issued a policy statement on advancing equity on October 07, 2022. The soon to be released NRCS Strategic Plan will address the need to identify and eliminate barriers to employment and advancement.

- NRCS diversity outreach and recruitment activities support Executive Order 14035, “Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) in the Federal Workforce,” and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) DEIA strategic plan. 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.
3. Proactive Prevention of Unlawful Discrimination
- Each state has developed a “Roadmap to Success” that identifies barrier and plans are being put into place to address and eliminate the barriers.
4. NRCS FY2023 Outreach and Recruitment Activity
- Targeted Outreach and Recruitment: In addition to participating in 67 outreach events with FPAC, NRCS participated in an additional 17 events throughout the fiscal year. These events assisted NRCS to further strengthen partnerships with educational institutions and various outreach organizations for recruitment and outreach purposes, including, but not limited to: Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI), Asian American/Pacific Islander Institutions (AAPISI), Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), Minority Serving Institutions (MSI), veteran placement and support organizations, and vocational rehabilitation organizations.

Quarter 1:

- October 6-8, 2022: American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) National Conference
- October 19, 2022: Texas A&M, College Station, All Majors Virtual Career Fair
- November 10-12, 2022: Agriculture Future of America (AFA) Annual Conference

Quarter 2:

- February 12-15, 2023: Society for Range Management (SRM) 76th Annual Meeting
- February 12-15, 2023: NACD Annual Mtg + AFA Sustainability Institute

Quarter 3:

- April 30-May 2, 2023: AISES Leadership Summit
- May 9-11, 2023: Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) Annual Conference
- June 12, 2023: University of Arizona-Yuma, AgDiscovery Program
- June 23-26, 2023: Agriculture Future of America (AFA) Crop Science Institute

Quarter 4:

- September 6-9, 2023, Land Trust Alliance-RALLY Conference
- September 11-14, 2023, Out & Equal Workplace Summit
- September 13-14, 2023, Prairie View A&M University, Fall 2023 All Majors Career Fair
- September 21, 2023, Cal Poly Pomona, Fall 2023 Career Fair
- September 19-20, 2023, New Mexico State University, Fall 2023 Engineering Science and Technology Fair
- September 20-23, 2023, Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF) Leadership Institute Annual Conference
- September 29, 2023, Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) College Career Fair
- September 29-30, 2023, Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS) Regional Cluster



- NRCS Diversity Programs and Initiatives: NRCS promotes the effectiveness and sustainability of a national diversity recruitment and inclusion effort by supporting various diversity partnerships and investments. NRCS successfully worked with partners to establish 22 diversity initiatives, which resulted in 30 partnership agreements, obligating \$3.2 million of FY2023 funds.
- NRCS Student Ambassador Program: The Student Ambassador program is an internship program that links Federal agencies and Minority Serving Institutions to expand the pool of Hispanics, African Americans, Asian Americans, and Native Americans in mission critical and STEM occupations such as agronomists, soil conservationists, soil scientists, range conservationists, and civil engineers. Student Ambassadors work a traditional summer internship at NRCS, then continue working part-time for NRCS during the school year.
  - These work appointments provide NRCS a campus recruitment presence at the partnering Minority Serving Institutions by employing students with agency knowledge and experience and training them to conduct outreach activities. The program operates within the guidelines of the USDA-NRCS Pathways Internship Program and is approved by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management. The purpose of the overall Student Ambassador program is to create a peer-to-peer recruitment approach by connecting prospective students to agency recruitment staff and NRCS student programs.
  - In August 2023, NRCS appointed 5 Student Ambassadors from the following universities: Florida A&M University, Alcorn State University, University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, Southern University and A&M College, and Montana State University.
- NRCS Pathways Incentives Pilot: Using existing authorities, including Service Level Agreements, we offer multi-year annual recruitment incentives of \$3,000-\$6,000, with a \$10,000 incentive payment upon conversion to a permanent appointment. The program is designed with cost-of-living adjustments to ensure equitable incentive amounts and intended to:
  - Ensure all students are able to participate in the Pathways Intern Program
  - Increase NRCS's competitiveness in the STEM Marketplace
  - Reduce declinations for Pathways intern positions. There were 378 declinations for Pathways Internships in FY22
  - Improve the percentage of Pathways positions (typically around 50%)
  - Improve conversion rates and retention
  - In the first year of the Incentives Pilot, NRCS awarded 161 multi-year recruitment incentives, a total investment of \$529,300, with the following average incentives awarded:
    - GS-2 - \$3,606
    - GS-3 - \$3,230
    - GS-4 - \$3,438
- Special Youth Outreach Programs - Junior Ambassador: NRCS plans to develop and implement a comprehensive high school outreach program. The program will develop high-school appropriate outreach materials to promote the Earth Team Volunteer program, and create a NRCS Youth Institute, a residential experiential orientated program focused on agriculture and natural resources educational curriculum.
- NRCS Employee Development: NRCS continues to develop a leadership cadre to represent the diverse communities and customers we serve. NRCS succession plans support and encourage all employees at the GS-13 and above to apply and participate in the Strategic Leadership Development Program (SLDP).

## **PART E.5 - PLANNED ACTIVITIES**

FPAC strives to be a model for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, where the workforce reflects the diversity of the American people. Accordingly, FPAC plans to continue to strengthen its ability to recruit, hire, develop, promote, and retain our Nation's talent and remove barriers to equal opportunity. FPAC plans to provide resources and opportunities to strengthen and advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. A diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible workplace yields a higher-performing organization.

FPAC CREEOD and HRD will work on widening collaboration in several areas but most specifically to improve senior leader commitment to EEO principles and DEIA. Several areas that require a closer working relationship include among others:

- Establishing workgroups and teams to produce more thorough and robust barrier analysis
- Audit procedures to gauge the effects of Agency-wide directives and the impact of the management/personnel policies, procedures, and practices on a diverse workforce
- Review exit surveys and processes to include questions about high attrition rates of PWD employees
- Develop and revise process for data collection and systematic analysis of trends, triggers, and barriers

### **Diversity Recruitment and Workforce Planning and Recruitment**

Continuing to recruit a talented and diverse federal workforce is a top goal for FPAC leadership. Key to meeting this goal is placing a high priority on a customer centric approach to service delivery. For FY24, each agency within the FPAC mission area will individually conduct workforce planning and diversity recruitment activities to reach their diversity goals, fulfill agency hiring plans, and support Executive Order 14035 in the federal workforce.

### **Diversity Programs and Initiatives**

FPAC supports the effectiveness and sustainability of a national diversity recruitment and inclusion effort by investing in a strong diversity recruitment framework. For example, NRCS intends to continue supporting their existing initiatives and add new collaborative ones for FY24 that include:

- Disability Recruitment Initiative (\$30,000),
- NRCS Junior Ambassador Program for High School Students (Funding TBD)

### **Third-Party Internship Program**

The FPAC third-party student internship program plans are to select interns at the collegiate level consisting of: Tribal Recruitment Initiative, Hispanic American Recruitment Initiative, Asian-American/ Native Hawaiian-Pacific Islander, HACU- Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities National Internship Program [HACU-HNIP], Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCFF) Internship Program, Women's Recruitment Initiative, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning (LGBTQ+) Recruitment Initiative, Florida A&M University, Tennessee State University, and North Carolina A&T State University.

### **FPAC Strategic Leadership Development Program (SLDP)**

FPAC plans to continue to develop a leadership cadre to represent the diverse communities and customers we serve. In FY24, FPAC will administer the Mission Area's SLDP, with the application period for the class of FY24 ending in October 2023 and class notifications being made in November 2023. Approximately 30 applicants are expected to request participation in the program.



## Workforce Engagement (WE)

Secretary Vilsack has recognized Employee Engagement (EE) as a top priority, and his goal is for USDA to become one of the top ten best places to work within the federal government. He has required all USDA agencies to develop and submit an EE Action Plan. To collaborate among agencies and divisions and ensure overall effective communications are consistent, the WE Team continues to work with each FPAC WE POCs. It also includes other employees across FPAC who have expressed interest in volunteering their time and talents to further the WE efforts.

In FY24, the WE Team plans to:

- Continue to encourage the facilitation of focus groups to ascertain root cause and underlying factors which may contribute to low FEVS scores.
- Compile and report findings for FPAC agencies and leaders from the FY2023 FEVS results.
- Encourage Employee Engagement and Change Management trainings throughout the year to agency leadership.
- Market the FY2024 FEVS tool and encourage all FPAC employees to participate.
- Meet with leadership to help streamline the action planning process.



# Parts F

## Certification of Establishment of Continuous EEO Programs

**715-01**

**PART F FEDERAL AGENCY ANNUAL EEO PROGRAM STATUS REPORT**

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

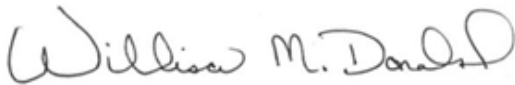
Civil Rights Equal Employment Opportunity Division  
FARM PRODUCTION AND CONSERVATION

(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.



3/25/2024

Signature of Principal EEO Director/Official

Date

Certifies that this Federal Agency Annual EEO Program Status Report is in compliance with EEO MD-715.



3/25/2024

Signature of Agency Head or Agency Head Designee

Date



# PART G

## Agency Self-Assessment Checklist

## **PART G**

### **Agency Self-Assessment Checklist**

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

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

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

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

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



## 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	July 25, 2023	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
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)]	No	H.1	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>	A.3.c
A.2.c	Does the agency inform its employees about the following topics:			



 <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.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	Quarterly “EEO 101” Training Webinars Physical posters displayed near the entrance of all USDA Services Centers In break rooms or employee rest areas of all USDA Service Centers Public and Internal Website	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	Subject training is provided by HR throughout the year Public and Internal Website	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	Provided directly to all employees by email Provided through the Public and Internal Website	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	Provided through the Public and Internal Website	A.3.b
A.3.a	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.	Yes	FPAC-BC’s Chief Operating Officer Awards for exemplary service in moving the mission forward. NRCS - Chief’s EEO awards through the NCRACC Chief’s National Civil Rights Award Chief’s Awards for Workforce Diversity	New
A.3.b	Does the agency utilize the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey or other climate assessment tools to monitor the perception of EEO principles within the workforce? [see 5 CFR Part 250]	Yes		New



**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






 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>B.2 – The EEO Director controls all aspects of the EEO program.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Current Part G Questions</b>
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	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; advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility; 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? (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	Will partner with HR to ensure RA and Harassment information is physically posted in all USDA locations.	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



 <b>Compliance Indicator</b> <b>Measures</b>	<b>B.6 – The agency involves managers in the implementation of its EEO program.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Current Part G Questions</b>
B.6.a	Are senior managers involved in the implementation of Special Emphasis Programs? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]	No	H.3	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.*


 <b>Compliance Indicator</b> <b>Measures</b>	<b>C.1 – The agency conducts regular internal audits of its component and field offices.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Current Part G Questions</b>
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	<b>FY2023 CRCR Schedule</b> Jan - CA Feb – MS Mar – CA Apr – CT and RI May CO Jun – LA Jul – FL Aug VT	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	<b>FY2023 CRCR Schedule</b> Jan - CA Feb – MS Mar – CA Apr – CT and RI May CO Jun – LA Jul – FL Aug VT	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		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	USDA released its first Anti-Harassment policy in April of 2023 and planned to release mandatory training that never came to fruition. It is planned for FY2024.	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.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



 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>C.3 - The agency evaluates managers and supervisors on their efforts to ensure equal employment opportunity.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Current Part G Questions</b>
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	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	<b>C.4 – The agency ensures effective coordination between its EEO programs and Human Resources (HR) program.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Current Part G Questions</b>
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]	No	H.6	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	New
C.4.e.2	Develop and/or conduct outreach and recruiting initiatives? [MD-715, II(C)]	No	H.7	New
C.4.e.3	Develop and/or provide training for managers and employees? See MD- 715, II(C)]	No	H.7	New
C.4.e.4	Identify and remove barriers to equal opportunity in the workplace [see MD-715, II(C)]	No	H.7	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 <u>Douglas v. Veterans Administration</u> , 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	Four (4)	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	Once yearly during the Annual “State of the Agency” briefing Adhoc when requested by Agency Leadership	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]	No	H.8	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]	No	H.9	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	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	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	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	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	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	New
D.3.c	Does the agency periodically review the effectiveness of the plans? [see MD-715, II(D)]	No	H.13	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/about/civil-rights-and-equal-employment-opportunity/accessibility/index.html#aap">https://www.fpacbc.usda.gov/about/civil-rights-and-equal-employment-opportunity/accessibility/index.html#aap</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)]	No	H.14	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. Average time = 35 days	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 complete timely 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 complete timely 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 issue the final agency decision timely, pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.110(b)?	No	H.15	E.3.a.4
E.1.i	Does the agency issue final actions timely 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		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, Attaining a Model Agency Program: Efficiency (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



 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>E.5 – The agency identifies and disseminates significant trends and best practices in its EEO program.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/ No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Current Part G Questions</b>
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	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	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	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.*

 <b>Compliance Indicator</b>  <b>Measures</b>	<b>F.1 – The agency has processes in place to ensure timely and full compliance with EEOC Orders and settlement agreements.</b>	<b>Measure Met? (Yes/ No/NA)</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Current Part G Questions</b>
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

### 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		10/25/2023

### 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		
10/01/2023	Update internal and external website with EEO Contact Poster.	Yes		
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

## MD-715 – Part H.2

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

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
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		

#### 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		
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		
08/31/2024	HR will ensure EEO POCs are invited to participate and collaborate on strategic workforce planning initiatives.	Yes		

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 training and career development initiatives.	Yes		
08/31/2024	HR will ensure EEO POC(s) are invited to participate and collaborate on succession planning.	Yes		
08/31/2024	HR will ensure EEO POC(s) are invited to participate and collaborate on vacancy projections.	Yes		
Bi-annual	CREEOD Director and HR Director (or designated officials) will meet bi-annually to discuss Agency recruitment efforts and review results to identify potential barriers.	Yes		



## MD-715 – Part H.3

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

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
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		

#### 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		
07/31/2024	Draft participation memos for CREEOD Director to sign soliciting participation for identified senior manager listing.	Yes		
09/30/2024	Issue participation memo to senior managers.	Yes		

## MD-715 – Part H.4

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

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
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**

<b>Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b>	<b>Planned Activities</b>	<b>Sufficient Funding &amp; Staffing?</b>	<b>Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b>	<b>Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b>
09/30/2024	Develop a strategy to enlist FPAC Managers and Leadership involvement in the barrier analysis process.	Yes		
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		
12/31/2024	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		
09/30/2025	Senior managers will participate in the development of EEO action plans.	Yes		

## MD-715 – Part H.5

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

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
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.	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

#### 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		
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		

## MD-715 – Part H.6

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

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
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		

#### 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		
07/30/2024	POCs will develop a timeline to review management personnel policies, procedures, and practices.	Yes		
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		

## MD-715 – Part H.7

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

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
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		

#### 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**

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



## MD-715 – Part H.8

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

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
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		

#### 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		
09/30/2024	Conduct trend analysis to determine if disparities exist based on race, sex, and/or disability.	Yes		
09/30/2024	Review OHRM dashboard and NFC workforce data to examine data trends.	Yes		

## MD-715 – Part H.9

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

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
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		

#### 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
FPAC Onboarding / Offboarding Program Manager	Tina Cothran	Yes
Reasonable Accommodation Program Manager	Count Branham	Yes
Anti-Harassment Program Manager	Melinda Richards	Yes
Workforce Engagement Coordinator	Thevee Gray	Yes
ERG Executive Board President	Victor Hernandez	N/A
Federal Women Special Emphasis Program Manager	April Wilson	Yes
National Disability Program Manager	Joshua Allen	Yes
Black Special Emphasis Program Manager Hispanic Special Emphasis Program Manager	Travis Watkins	Yes
Asian American/Native Hawaiian Program Manager American Indian/Alaskan Native Program Manager	Andy Cao Pham	Yes

**Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective**

<b>Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b>	<b>Planned Activities</b>	<b>Sufficient Funding &amp; Staffing?</b>	<b>Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b>	<b>Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b>
05/30/2024	CREEOD Director, HR Director, Union Leaders, and Employee Resource Group will identify POCs to work on this initiative.	Yes		
09/30/2024	Conduct complaint and grievance trend analysis by gender and RNO.	Yes		
09/30/2024	Review training evaluations to assess needs and overarching EEO concerns.	Yes		
09/30/2024	Examine workforce demographic data to identify specific trends.	Yes		
09/30/2024	Collect and review information from the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey to identify and address opportunities for improvements.	Yes		

## MD-715 – Part H.10

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

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
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		

#### 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 Onboarding / Offboarding Program Manager	Tina Cothran	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		
03/31/2025	POCs will review, develop, or revise exit interview and survey questions.	Yes		
09/30/2025	POCs will update exit interviews to include targeting recruitment, hiring, inclusion, retention, and advancement with IWDs.	Yes		
Bi-annually	POCs will meet bi-annually to discuss the results to enhance recruitment, hiring, inclusion, retention, and advancement of IWDs.	Yes		
Annually	POCs will brief CREEOD and HR leaders on exit survey results.	Yes		

## MD-715 – Part H.11

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

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
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.	12/31/2024		

#### 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
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
Workforce Engagement Coordinator	Thevee Gray	Yes
ERG Executive Board President	Victor Hernandez	N/A

**Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective**

<b>Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b>	<b>Planned Activities</b>	<b>Sufficient Funding &amp; Staffing?</b>	<b>Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b>	<b>Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b>
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	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		

## MD-715 – Part H.12

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

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
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.	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
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		
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		
9/30/2024	POCs will develop a timeline and schedule with milestones to the review of all management/ personnel policies.	Yes		
3/31/2025	POCs will examine the impact of the management/ personnel policies, procedures, and practices on race national origin, sex, and disability.	Yes		

## MD-715 – Part H.13

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

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
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)
6/30/2025	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

#### 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.	12/31/2025		

#### 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
Chief Human Capital Officer	Terri Meighan	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		
03/31/2025	Establish a Working Group to develop an action plan toward increasing persons with disability and targeted disability representation.	Yes		
Annually	Review action plan until workforce reaches EEOC regulatory goal.	Yes		

## MD-715 – Part H.15

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

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
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 the timelines of pending FPAC Final Agency Decisions (FADs).	06/01/2024		

#### 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
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		
09/30/2024	Collaborate with OASCR's Employment Adjudication Division to monitor progress of 60-day timeline.	Yes		

## MD-715 – Part H.16

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

#### Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
E.5.a	Agency does not monitor trends in its EEO program to determine whether the agency is meeting its obligations under the statues 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.	09/30/2024		

#### 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
CR Compliance and Training Branch Chief	Carl Butler	Yes

**Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective**

<b>Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b>	<b>Planned Activities</b>	<b>Sufficient Funding &amp; Staffing?</b>	<b>Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b>	<b>Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)</b>
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		
09/30/2024	Schedule bi-annual meeting with POCs to discuss 2-year trends regarding CR statutes enforced by EEOC.	Yes		
09/30/2024	Conduct research to identify other federal agencies' best practices to incorporate and implement new strategies and ideas.	Yes		
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		
03/31/2025	Collaborate with other USDA agencies on specific program areas to enhance EEO program effectiveness.	Yes		
06/30/2025	Meet with at least one external federal agency to conduct comparative analysis of EEO program.	Yes		



# 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 African American Workforce	A1	<p>FPAC’s African American male and female participation rates are below the CLF benchmark of for both males and females.</p> <p><b>FY2023 FPAC Permanent Workforce</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>African American males 4.36% v 5.70%</li> <li>African American females 5.62% v 6.60%</li> </ul>

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

EEO Group
African American Males and Females

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
<p><b>MD 715 Workforce Data Tables</b></p> <p>A1 Total Workforce</p> <p>A8 Management Positions</p> <p>A6 Mission Critical Occupations</p> <p>A9 Awards and Recognition</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p><b>Permanent Workforce</b>  FPAC's FY2023 <i>permanent</i> workforce consisted of 15,958 individuals, an increase of 582 as compared to FY2022 of 15,376. FPACs workforce participation of African American males and females are below the 2018 CLF:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• African American males 5.70%</li> <li>• African American females 6.60%</li> </ul> <p>The FY2023 <i>permanent</i> African American male workforce consisted of 695 or 4.36% vs 5.70% 2018 CLF. There was a ratio change of 0.11% in comparison to the prior year.</p> <p>The FY2023 permanent African American female workforce consisted of 897 or 5.62% vs. 6.60% CLF. There was a ratio change of 0.14% in comparison with the prior year.</p> <p><b>FPAC Gains and Losses</b></p> <p>FPAC <b>New Hires</b> of African American males participation gained 75 (4.10%) during FY2023 an increase compared to FY2022 (40 new hires or 3.25%).</p> <p>FPAC <b>New Hires</b> of African American females participation gained 109 (5.96%) during FY2023 an increase compared to FY2022 (70 new hires or 5.16%).</p> <p>FPAC <b>Separations</b> of African American males consisted of 40 (3.25%) during FY2023 a decrease compared to FY2022 (43 separations or 2.68%).</p> <p>FPAC <b>Separations</b> of African American females consisted of 68 (5.53%) during FY2023 a decrease compared to FY2022 (73 separations or 4.55%).</p> <p><b>Management Positions</b></p> <p>The total <b>Management</b> participation rate for Black males is 103 (6.36%) which is above their FPAC Permanent workforce participation rate of 4.36%. African American male executives and managers are above the permanent African American male participation rate and supervisors are below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executives 12.99%</li> <li>• Managers 6.65%</li> <li>• Supervisors 2.79%</li> </ul> <p>The total <b>Management</b> participation rate for African American females is 81 (5.00%) which is below their FPAC permanent workforce participation rate of 5.62%. African American female executives and managers are above the permanent African American female participation rate and supervisors are below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executives 10.39%</li> <li>• Managers 5.64%</li> <li>• Supervisors 1.39%</li> </ul> <p><b>Senior-grade level African American male FY2023 representation compared to FY2022 included:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SES - 7 (17.07%) an increase compared to FY2022 (12.82%).</li> <li>• GS-15 – 4 (6.15%) a decrease compared to FY2022 (6.35%).</li> <li>• GS-14 – 37 (5.66%) a decrease compared to FY2022 (5.99%).</li> <li>• GS-13 –116 (6.34%) an increase compared to FY2022 (5.99%).</li> </ul> <p><b>Senior-grade level African American female FY2023 representation compared to FY2022 included:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SES – 5 (12.20%) an increase compared to FY2022 (10.26%).</li> <li>• GS-15 – 9 (13.85%) an increase compared to FY2022 (12.70%).</li> <li>• GS-14 –79 (12.08%) a decrease compared to FY2022 (12.15%).</li> <li>• GS-13 –172 (9.39%) an increase compared to FY2022 (9.38%).</li> </ul> <p><b>Mission Critical Occupations (MCOs)</b></p> <p>There are 8 main MCO within the FPAC Misson Area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soil Conservation - 0457</li> <li>• Soil Con Technician - 0458</li> <li>• Civil Engineering - 0810</li> <li>• Gen. Business and Admin - 1101</li> <li>• Agriculture Program Specialist - 1145</li> <li>• Farm Loan Specialist - 1165</li> <li>• Inspec., Investigation &amp; Compliance - 1801</li> <li>• IT Management - 2210</li> </ul>

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	FPAC compares its MCO workforce participation rates to the 2018 Occupational Civilian Labor Force (OCLF). African American males and females are below their corresponding OCLF benchmarks in the following series:  <b>African American Male MCO Participation</b> 1100 Gen. Business – 1.58% v 4.00% 1145 Ag Pr. Specialist – 1.62% v 4.00% 1165 Farm Loan Specialist – 2.00% v 3.00%  <b>African American Female MCO Participation</b> 0458 Soil Con Tech – 1.14% v 4.40% 1101 Gen. Business – 4.83% v 7.20% 1145 Ag Pr. Specialist – 5.10% v 7.20% 1165 Farm Loan Specialist – 2.54% v 4.90%  <b>Awards and Recognition</b> African American male FY2023 <b>Total Awards</b> given at 3.27% is below their participation rate of 4.35%. African American female FY2023 <b>Total Awards</b> given at 6.53% is above their participation rate of 5.62%.
Complaint Data (Trends)	Yes	The number of bases cited in EEO complaint activity increased from 55 during the prior fiscal year to 84 during FY2023. Bases that increased in complaints activity are Sex (+10), Reprisal (+7), Age (+5), Disability (+4), and Race (+3).
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> FY2021 0 FY2022 1 FY2023 4 Bases included Disability (2), Reprisal (1) and Other/Parental Status (1).
Climate Assessment Survey (e.g., FEVS)	Yes	FPAC's 2022 FEVS DEIA overall attitudinal results indicated employees felt a lack of recognition, acknowledgement, and opportunities to advance in their positions. 2022 FEVS responses were not specific to one demographic group.
Exit Interview Data	Yes	Responses were not specific to one demographic group. Approximately 22% of exit interview respondents mentioned better pay elsewhere and/or lack of career advancement as reasons for separating from the Agency.
Focus Groups	No	
Interviews	No	
Reports (e.g., Congress, EEOC, MSPB, GAO, OPM)	Yes	EEOC FY2020 Annual Report on Workforce Characteristics and EEO Commitment: 4 measures in MD 715 Part G Self-Assessment Checklist were examined to see if Agencies are committed to EEO: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A.2.b.3 – Does the Agency prominently post EEO information? Yes -91.9% (FPAC FY23=Yes)</li> <li>• B.1.a – Does the EEO Director reports to the Head of the Agency? Yes -63.0% (FPAC FY23=Yes)</li> <li>• B.6.b – Are managers involved in the barrier analysis process? Yes -75.8% (FPAC FY23=No)</li> <li>• C.3.a – Do managers have an EEO element in their performance evaluation? Yes -88.6% (FPAC FY2023=Yes)</li> </ul>
Other (Please Describe)	Yes	Triggers and issues 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)
EEO Director	Willisa Donald	Yes
Black Emphasis Program Manager	Travis Watkins	Yes
Chief Human Resources Officer	Meigan Terri	Yes

### Statement of Identified Barrier(s)

Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice
<p><b>Institutional Barriers:</b> Institutional barriers for applicants and retaining employees may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remote office locations.</li> <li>• Applicants/candidates want to remain in state to be closer to, family, community support, resources etc.</li> <li>• Lack of jobs with promotion potential within state.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Attitudinal Barriers:</b> Attitudinal barriers exist for all-applicant groups specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small number of current college-aged students and younger applicants interested in the Agribusiness.</li> <li>• Pathway positions are mostly for 499/899 (Natural Resources or Engineering).</li> <li>• Mode of applying for federal jobs (USAJOBS); understanding the federal job application process, and meeting qualification factors for specialized/technical/scientific positions.</li> <li>• Low starting salaries and slow or lack of advancement opportunities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Physical Barriers:</b> Some physical barriers include remote locations, and distance from family/community.</p>

### 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		
12/31/2024	Increase cultural awareness and inclusivity climate through cultural observances and employee engagement.	Yes		

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Staffing & Funding	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
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		
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
FY2023	<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 FY2023</li> <li>• FSA obligated \$296,455 in FY2023</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>

## 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	<p>FPAC’s Asian male and female participation rates are below the CLF benchmark for both males and females.</p> <p><u>FY2023 FPAC Permanent Workforce</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Asian males 1.01% v 2.20%</li> <li>Asian females 0.97% v 2.20%</li> </ul>

#### 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><b>FPAC Permanent Workforce</b></p> <p>FPAC's FY2023 <i>permanent</i> workforce consisted of 15,958 individuals, an increase of 582 as compared to FY2022 of 15,376. FPACs workforce participation of Asian males and females are below the 2018 CLF of 2.20% for both genders.</p> <p>The FY2023 <i>permanent</i> Asian male workforce consisted of 161 or 1.01% vs 2.20% 2018 CLF. There was a decrease in the ratio change of -0.20% in comparison to the prior year.</p> <p>The FY2023 permanent Asian female workforce consisted of 154 or 0.97% vs. 2.20% CLF. There was an increase in the ratio change of 0.20% in comparison to the prior year.</p> <p><b>FPAC Gains and Losses</b></p> <p>FPAC <b>New Hires</b> of Asian males participation gained 20 (1.90%) during FY2023 an increase compared to FY2022 (9 new hires or 0.66%).</p> <p>FPAC <b>New Hires</b> of Asian females participation gained 26 (1.42%) during FY2023 an increase compared to FY2022 (14 new hires or 1.03%).</p> <p>FPAC <b>Separations</b> of Asian males consisted of 16 (1.30%) during FY2023 a decrease compared to FY2022 (18 separations or 1.12%).</p> <p>FPAC <b>Separations</b> of Asian females consisted of 16 (1.30%) during FY2023; similar when compared to FY2022 (16 separations or 1.00%).</p> <p><b>Management Positions</b></p> <p>The total <b>Management</b> participation rate for Asian males is 17 (1.05%) which is above their FPAC permanent workforce participation rate of 1.01%. Executives and management categories are above the permanent participation rate while male Asian supervisors are below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executives 1.30%</li> <li>• Managers 1.47%</li> <li>• Supervisors 0.20%</li> </ul> <p>The total <b>Management</b> participation rate for Asian females is 9 (0.56%) which is below their FPAC permanent workforce participation rate of 0.97%. Asian female Executives are above their permanent participation rate. Managers and supervisors are below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executives 1.30%</li> <li>• Managers 0.56%</li> <li>• Supervisors 0.20%</li> </ul> <p><b>Senior-grade level</b> Asian male FY2023 representation compared to FY2022 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SES - 2 (4.88%) a decrease compared to FY2022 (7.69%).</li> <li>• GS-15 – 4 (6.15%) a decrease compared to FY2022 (6.35%).</li> <li>• GS-14 – 13 (1.99%) an increase compared to FY2022 (1.94%).</li> <li>• GS-13 – 43 (2.35%) a decrease compared to FY2022 (2.66%).</li> </ul> <p><b>Senior-grade level</b> Asian female FY2023 representation compared to FY2022 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SES –1 (2.44%) a decrease compared to FY2022 (2.56%).</li> <li>• GS-15 –3 (4.62%) an increase compared to FY2022 (1.59%).</li> <li>• GS-14 – 16 (2.45%) a decrease compared to FY2022 (2.82%).</li> <li>• GS-13 – 27 (1.47%) a decrease compared to FY2022 (1.75%).</li> </ul> <p><b>Mission Critical Occupations (MCOs)</b></p> <p>There are 8 main MCO within the FPAC Misson Area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soil Conservation - 0457</li> <li>• Soil Con Technician - 0458</li> <li>• Civil Engineering - 0810</li> <li>• Gen. Business and Admin - 1101</li> <li>• Agriculture Program Specialist - 1145</li> <li>• Farm Loan Specialist - 1165</li> <li>• Inspec., Investigation &amp; Compliance - 1801</li> <li>• IT Management - 2210</li> </ul>

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 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><b>Asian Male MCO Participation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0458 Soil Con Tech – 0.13% v 3.40%</li> <li>• 0810 Engineering – 3.79% v 6.70%</li> <li>• 1100 Gen. Business – 0.40% v 3.50%</li> <li>• 1145 Ag Pr. Specialist – 0.00% v 4.00%</li> <li>• 1165 Farm Loan Specialist – 0.54% v 2.80%</li> </ul> <p><b>Asian Female MCO Participation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0458 Soil Con Tech – 0.25% v 3.40%</li> <li>• 1101 Gen. Business – 0.99% v 3.50%</li> <li>• 1145 Ag Pr. Specialist – 0.27% v 3.50%</li> <li>• 1165 Farm Loan Specialist – 0.62% v 2.80%</li> </ul> <p><b>Awards and Recognition</b></p> <p>Asian Males awards categories are below their permanent participation rate of 1.01%. Time off Awards are at 0.96%, Small Cash Awards at 0.86% and Intermediate Cash Awards are at 0.92%. There were no Quality Step Increase (QSI) awarded to Asian males during FY2023.</p> <p>Asian Females Total Awards given are 1.08% which is above their workforce participation rate of 0.97%. The exception is Quality Step Increase (QSI) which were not awarded to Asian females during FY2023.</p>

Sources of Data	Sources Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
Complaint Data (Trends)	Yes	The number of bases cited in complaint activity has increased from 55 during the prior fiscal year to 84 during FY2023. Basis that increased in complaints activity are Sex (+10), Reprisal (+7), Age (+5), Disability (+4), and Race (+3).
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> FY2021 0 FY2022 1 FY2023 4 Bases included Disability (2), Reprisal (1) and Other/Parental Status (1).
Climate Assessment Survey (e.g., FEVS)	Yes	FPAC's 2022 FEVS DEIA overall attitudinal results indicated employees felt a lack of recognition, acknowledgement, and opportunities to advance in their positions. 2022 FEVS responses were not specific to one demographic group.
Exit Interview Data	Yes	Responses were not specific to one demographic group. Approximately 22% of exit interview respondents mentioned better pay elsewhere and/or lack of career advancement as reasons for separating from the Agency.
Focus Groups	No	
Interviews	No	
Reports (e.g., Congress, EEOC, MSPB, GAO, OPM)	Yes	EEOC FY2020 Annual Report on Workforce Characteristics and EEO Commitment: 4 measures in MD 715 Part G Self-Assessment Checklist were examined to see if Agencies are committed to EEO: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A.2.b.3 – Does the Agency prominently post EEO information? Yes -91.9% (FPAC FY23=Yes)</li> <li>B.1.a – Does the EEO Director reports to the Head of the Agency? Yes -63.0% (FPAC FY23=Yes)</li> <li>B.6.b – Are managers involved in the barrier analysis process? Yes -75.8% (FPAC FY23=No)</li> <li>C.3.a – Do managers have an EEO element in their performance evaluation? Yes -88.6% (FPAC FY2023=Yes)</li> </ul>
Other (Please Describe)	Yes	Triggers and issues 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	9/30/2023	Yes		

**Responsible Official(s)**

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

**Statement of Identified Barrier(s)**

Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice
<p><b>Institutional Barriers:</b> Institutional barriers for applicants and retaining employees may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remote locations.</li> <li>• Applicants/candidates want to remain in state to be closer to, family, community support, resources etc.</li> <li>• Lack of jobs with promotion potential within state.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Attitudinal Barriers:</b> Attitudinal barriers exist for all-applicant groups specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small number of current college-aged students and younger applicants interested in the Agribusiness.</li> <li>• Mode of applying for federal jobs (USAJOBS); understanding the federal job application process, and meeting qualification factors for specialized/technical/scientific positions.</li> <li>• Low starting salaries and slow or lack of advancement opportunities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Physical Barriers:</b> Actual physical barriers include remote locations and distance from family.</p>

**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	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		
09/30/2025	Conduct an analysis in collaboration with the 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
FY2023	<p>FPAC agencies proceeded with the Asian American/Pacific Islander Recruitment Initiative NRCS obligated \$75,000.00 in FY2023.</p> <p>FPAC Pathways Program placed 3 Asian American/Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander interns during FY2023.</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	<p>FPAC's Hispanic male and female participation rates are below the CLF benchmark of for both males and females.</p> <p><u>FY2023 FPAC Permanent Workforce</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hispanic males 3.17% v 6.80%</li> <li>Hispanic females 2.15% v 6.20%</li> </ul>

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

EEO Group
FPAC 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
<p><b>Workforce Data Tables:</b></p> <p>A1 Total Workforce  A3 Occupational Categories  A4 Senior Grades and GS Schedule  A6 Mission Critical Occupations  A9 Awards and Recognition</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p><b>Permanent Workforce</b></p> <p>The participation rate of Hispanic Males in the FPAC workforce has generally trended downward over the past five years and remains below the 2018 National Civilian Labor Force (NCLF) – most recently from 3.25% in FY2022 to 3.17% in FY 2023.</p> <p>Conversely, the participation rate of Hispanic Females, though also below the CLF benchmark, has gradually ticked upward from 2.29% in 2019 to 2.51% in 2023. Overall, in 2023, the participation rate of Hispanic Males (HM) decreased, while it remained about the same for Hispanic Females (HF) from FY22 to FY23.</p> <p><b>FPAC Gains and Losses</b></p> <p>FPAC <b>New Hires</b> of Hispanic male participation gained 41 (2.24%) during FY2023 an increase compared to FY2022 (31 new hires or 2.29%).</p> <p>FPAC <b>New Hires</b> of Hispanic female participation gained 42 (2.30%) during FY2023 an increase compared to FY2022 (27 new hires or 1.99%).</p> <p>FPAC <b>Separations</b> of Hispanic males consisted of 33 (2.69%) during FY2023 a decrease compared to FY2022 (37 separations or 2.69%).</p> <p>FPAC <b>Separations</b> of Hispanic females consisted of 23 (1.87%) during FY2023 a decrease compared to FY2022 (44 separations or 2.74%).</p> <p><b>Management Positions</b></p> <p>The total <b>Management</b> participation rate for Hispanic males is 67 (4.14%) which is above their FPAC permanent workforce participation rate of 3.17%. Executive and manager categories are above the permanent participation rate. Supervisors are below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executives 3.90%</li> <li>• Managers 4.96%</li> <li>• Supervisors 2.79%</li> </ul> <p>The total <b>Management</b> participation rate for Hispanic females is 36 (2.22%) which is below their FPAC permanent workforce participation rate of 2.51%. Executive and manager categories are below their permanent workforce participation rate and supervisors are above:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executives 1.30%</li> <li>• Managers 1.80%</li> <li>• Supervisors 3.39%</li> </ul> <p><b>Senior-grade level Hispanic male FY2023 representation compared to FY2022 included:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SES - 2 (4.88%) a decrease compared to FY2022 (5.13%).</li> <li>• GS-15 – 3 (4.62%) a decrease compared to FY2022 (4.70%).</li> <li>• GS-14 – 26 (3.98%) an increase compared to FY2022 (3.70%).</li> <li>• GS-13 –62 (3.39%) a decrease compared FY2022 (3.56%).</li> </ul> <p><b>Senior-grade level Hispanic female FY2023 representation compared to FY2022 included:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SES – 1 (2.44%) a decrease compared to FY2022 (5.13%).</li> <li>• GS-15 –1 (1.54%) an increase compared to FY2022 (0.00%).</li> <li>• GS-14 – 7 (1.07%) an increase compared to FY2022 (1.06%).</li> <li>• GS-13 – 49 (2.68%) an increase compared to FY2022 (2.20%).</li> </ul> <p><b>Mission Critical Occupations (MCOs)</b></p> <p>There are 8 main MCO within the FPAC Misson Area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soil Conservation - 0457</li> <li>• Soil Con Technician - 0458</li> <li>• Civil Engineering - 0810</li> <li>• Gen. Business and Admin - 1101</li> <li>• Agriculture Program Specialist - 1145</li> <li>• Farm Loan Specialist - 1165</li> <li>• Inspec., Investigation &amp; Compliance - 1801</li> <li>• IT Management - 2210</li> </ul>

Sources of Data	Sources Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
		<p>FPAC compares its MCO workforce participation rates to the 2018 Occupational Civilian Labor Force (OCLF). The "Professional" category on MD 715 Table A3: Occupational Categories generally includes most of FPAC's major occupations. HM are at 3.26% percent and HF at 2.55%. Both are above their FPAC permanent workforce participation, but below the 2018 CLF. Hispanic population is well represented and above the 2018 Occupational Civilian Labor Force (OCLF) at the 457 Soil Conservation series at 3.78% for HM and 2.40% for HF.</p> <p>Hispanic males and females are altogether underrepresented in the 458 or Soil Conservation Technician series at 1.88% for HM and 1.60% for HF. A low participation rate of Hispanic males and females exists in the following FPAC mission critical occupations: 500 -Budgeting, 1101-General Business, 1145/1165 -Agricultural Farm Loan, and 1801 -Compliance Enforcement series.</p> <p><b>Awards and Recognition</b></p> <p>Total Awards given for Hispanic Males at 2.62% is below Hispanic male FY2023 participation of 3.50%.</p> <p>Hispanic female Total Awards given are 2.40% which is below their FY2023 participation rate of 2.50%.</p>
Complaint Data (Trends)	Yes	The number of bases cited in complaint activity has increased from 55 during the prior fiscal year to 84 during FY2023. Bases that increased in complaints activity are Sex (+10), Reprisal (+7), Age (+5), Disability (+4), and Race (+3).
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>FY2021 0</p> <p>FY2022 1</p> <p>FY2023 4</p> <p>Bases included Disability (2), Reprisal (1) and Other/Parental Status (1).</p>
Climate Assessment Survey (e.g., FEVS)	Yes	FPAC's 2022 FEVS DEIA overall attitudinal results indicated employees felt a lack of recognition, acknowledgement, and opportunities to advance in their positions. 2022 FEVS responses were not specific to one demographic group.
Exit Interview Data	Yes	<p>Responses were not specific to one demographic group.</p> <p>Approximately 22% of exit interview respondents mentioned better pay elsewhere and/or lack of career advancement as reasons for separating from the Agency.</p>
Focus Groups	No	
Interviews	No	
Reports (e.g., Congress, EEOC, MSPB, GAO, OPM)	Yes	<p>EEOC FY2020 Annual Report on Workforce Characteristics and EEO Commitment: 4 measures in MD 715 Part G Self-Assessment Checklist were examined to see if Agencies are committed to EEO:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A.2.b.3 – Does the Agency prominently post EEO information? Yes -91.9% (FPAC FY23=Yes)</li> <li>B.1.a – Does the EEO Director reports to the Head of the Agency? Yes -63.0% (FPAC FY23=Yes)</li> <li>B.6.b – Are managers involved in the barrier analysis process? Yes -75.8% (FPAC FY23=No)</li> <li>C.3.a – Do managers have an EEO element in their performance evaluation? Yes -88.6% (FPAC FY2023=Yes)</li> </ul>
Other (Please Describe)	Yes	Triggers and issues 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	10/01/2022	12/31/2025	Yes		
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)
EEO Director	Willisa Donald	Yes
Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager	Travis Watkins	Yes
Chief Human Resources Officer	Meigan Terri	Yes

**Statement of Identified Barrier(s)**

Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice
<p><b>Institutional Barriers:</b> Institutional barriers for applicants and retaining employees may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remote locations.</li> <li>• Applicants/candidates want to remain in state to be closer to family, community support, resources etc.</li> <li>• Lack of jobs with promotion potential within state.</li> <li>• Pathway positions are mostly for 499/899 (Natural Resources or Engineering).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Attitudinal Barriers:</b> Attitudinal barriers exist not only for Hispanic applicants and candidates but with all-applicant groups specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small number of current college-aged students and younger applicants interested in the Agribusiness.</li> <li>• Mode of applying for federal jobs (USAJOBS); understanding the federal job application process, and meeting qualification factors for specialized/technical/scientific positions.</li> <li>• Low starting salaries and slow or lack of advancement opportunities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Physical Barriers:</b> Actual physical barriers like remote locations and distance from family exist.</p>

**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 NOPSY), <b>identify recruitment concerns and develop a recruitment strategy</b> improvement plan that addresses identified barriers to recruitment, hiring, and retention of utilizing HEPMs as much as possible, <b>focusing on Hispanic Serving Institutions.</b>	Yes		
09/30/2024	<b>Increase cultural awareness</b> and inclusivity climate through <b>cultural observances and employee engagement</b>	Yes		
09/30/2024	<b>Develop working group</b> to review current mentor program and develop strategy to <b>address Hispanic employee onboarding, development, promotion, and retention.</b>	Yes		

**Accomplishments**

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
FY2023	Natural Resources Conservation Service, the FPAC Business Center and Risk Management Agency invested \$15,000 obligated funds toward collaborative initiatives to the Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities (HACU) Annual Conference.  FPAC entered into IAA with OPPE to advance targeted outreach with the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) program through September 2024.

## 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	FPAC's Female participation rates are below the CLF benchmark. FY2023: FPAC females 47.31% v 48.20%.

#### 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	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><b>Permanent Workforce</b></p> <p>FPAC's FY2023 permanent workforce consisted of 15,958 individuals, an increase of 582 as compared to FY2022 of 15,376. FPACs female workforce participation is below the 2018 CLF of 48.20%.</p> <p>The FY2023 permanent Female workforce consisted of 7,549 or 47.31% vs. 48.20% 2018 CLF. There was an increase in the ratio change of 0.89% in comparison to the prior year.</p> <p><b>FPAC Gains and Losses</b></p> <p>FPAC Female New Hires gained 1,032 (56.42%) during FY2023 an increase compared to FY2022 (731 new hires or 53.91%).</p> <p>FPAC Female Separations consisted of 624 (50.77%) during FY2023 a decrease compared to FY2022 (636 separations or 39.58%).</p> <p><b>High Rate of Resignations</b></p> <p>During FY23 more than three quarters of total [voluntary] separations were female personnel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 624 Total Separations</li> <li>• 297 (57.12%) Resignations</li> <li>• 202 (44.40%) Retirements</li> </ul> <p><b>Management Positions</b></p> <p>The total Management participation rate for FPAC females is 649 (40.00%) which is below their permanent FPAC workforce participation rate of 47.31%. All Management categories are below the permanent workforce participation rate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executives 41.56%</li> <li>• Managers 35.51%</li> <li>• Supervisors 47.21%</li> </ul> <p>Senior-grade level FPAC female FY2023 representation compared to FY2022 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SES –16 (39.02%) an increase compared to FY2022 (35.09%).</li> <li>• GS-15 –29 (44.63%) an increase compared to FY2022 (42.86%).</li> <li>• GS-14 –316 (48.32%) an increase compared to FY2022 (47.18%).</li> <li>• GS-13 –809 (44.18%) an increase compared to FY2022 (43.87%).</li> </ul> <p><b>Mission Critical Occupations (MCOs)</b></p> <p>There are 8 main MCO within the FPAC Misson Area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soil Conservation - 0457</li> <li>• Soil Con Technician - 0458</li> <li>• Civil Engineering - 0810</li> <li>• Gen. Business and Admin - 1101</li> <li>• Agriculture Program Specialist - 1145</li> <li>• Farm Loan Specialist - 1165</li> <li>• Inspection, Investigation &amp; Compliance - 1801</li> <li>• IT Management - 2210</li> </ul> <p>FPAC compares its MCO workforce participation rates to the 2018 Occupational Civilian Labor Force (OCLF). FPAC females are below their corresponding OCLF benchmarks in the following series:</p> <p><b>Female MCO Participation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0458 Soil Con Tech – 29.19% v 42.90%</li> <li>• 1801 Inspec. &amp; Compliance – 42.86% v 52.60%</li> </ul> <p><b>Awards and Recognition</b></p> <p>Total awards given to FPAC females is at 51.28% which is above their workforce participation rate of 47.31%.</p>
Complaint Data (Trends)	Yes	The number of bases cited in complaint activity has increased from 55 during the prior fiscal year to 84 during FY2023. Bases that increased in complaints activity are Sex (+10), Reprisal (+7), Age (+5), Disability (+4), and Race (+3).
Grievance Data (Trends)	No	

Sources of Data	Sources Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
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> FY2021 0 FY2022 1 FY2023 4 Bases included Disability (2), Reprisal (1) and Other/Parental Status (1).
Climate Assessment Survey (e.g., FEVS)	Yes	FPAC's 2022 FEVS DEIA overall attitudinal results indicated employees felt a lack of recognition, acknowledgement, and opportunities to advance in their positions. 2022 FEVS responses were not specific to one demographic group.
Exit Interview Data	Yes	Responses were not specific to one demographic group. Approximately 22% of exit interview respondents mentioned better pay elsewhere and/or lack of career advancement as reasons for separating from the Agency.
Focus Groups	No	
Interviews	No	
Reports (e.g., Congress, EEOC, MSPB, GAO, OPM)	Yes	EEOC FY2020 Annual Report on Workforce Characteristics and EEO Commitment 4 measures in MD 715 Part G Self-Assessment Checklist were examined to see if Agencies are committed to EEO: A.2.b.3 – Does the Agency prominently post EEO information? Yes -91.9% (FPAC FY23=Yes) B.1.a – Does the EEO Director reports to the Head of the Agency? Yes -63.0% (FPAC FY23=Yes) B.6.b – Are managers involved in the barrier analysis process? Yes -75.8% (FPAC FY23=No) C.3.a – Do managers have an EEO element in their performance evaluation? Yes -88.6% (FPAC FY2023=Yes)
Other (Please Describe)	Yes	Triggers and issues 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?	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)
EEO Director	Willisa Donald	Yes
Federal Women's Program Manager	April Wilson	Yes
Chief Human Resources Officer	Meigan Terri	Yes

### Statement of Identified Barrier(s)

Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice
<p><b>Institutional Barriers:</b> Institutional barriers for applicants and retaining employees may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why are Females separating from the Agency at 50.77%?</li> <li>• Is there evidence of unintentional disparate conditions at the Senior Grades and Management Level?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are Females being hired comparatively to their senior and management level participation rate in FPAC?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Are Females being hired at comparative rates in Senior Leadership and SES positions?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Attitudinal Barriers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low starting salaries</li> <li>• Slow or lack of advancement opportunities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Physical Barriers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be determined</li> </ul>

### 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		
6/30/2025	Conduct an analysis to determine retention issues within the Agency (i.e., exit survey, Employee Viewpoint Survey).	Yes		
12/31/2024	Review Strategic Leadership Development Program female application and participation rates to see if unintentional disparate conditions exist.	Yes		
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 FY2023	Accomplishments
	Established The Village and Nursing Mothers program. Host quarterly events for work/life balance, information, and open discussion. FY2023 topics included Being a Parent in FPAC, Nursing Policies, Overview of Employee Assistance Program, Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, and Stress-Free Holiday.
	Women's History Month events: Speaker event with Carey Portell telling her Farm Story and FPAC Women Leaders telling their Career Stories and book discussion of <i>My Own Words</i> by Ruth Bader Ginsburg.
	Women's Equality Day event hosted speakers from Department of Labor-Women's Bureau and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission discussing the topic of Pay Equality in the Federal Work Force.
	Created World Menopause Day Information Sheet, FWPM duties, WHM information, ERG information, New Parents Leave Options handout.
	Create and send monthly newsletters to collateral duty FWPM. Purpose is to share upcoming events and training opportunities, topics of interest, and basic contact information for filing a complaint and EAP.
	Collaborated with Nursing Mothers contact on HRD Work life Wellness Team on DR about Nursing Policies.
	Monthly meetings that include a brief training. FY2023 training topics include: Civil Rights Statement, EEO 101, MD-715, Pronouns and Terminology, Anti-Harassment Policy, Outreach/Recruiting, and EEO 101.
	Participated in 2023 Women in STEM Barrier Analysis

## 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	A1	The U.S. EEOC issued a report during 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	Yes

Sources of Data	Sources Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
<p><b>Workforce Data Tables</b></p> <p>A1 Total Workforce A4 Senior Grades and GS Schedule A6 Mission Critical Occupations</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p><b>Permanent Workforce</b></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 35.35% contrasted with the CLF benchmark of 48.20%, Hispanic females 1.98% v 6.20%, White females at 29.21% v 31.80%, African American females 2.28% v 6.60%, Asian females 0.73% v 2.20% and Two or More Race females 0.14% v 1.00%. Male groups below the CLF are Hispanic males 3.90% v 6.80%, African American males 3.79% v 5.70%, Asian males at 1.10% v 2.20%, and Two or More Race males at 0.15% v 1.00%</p> <p>Groups that meet or are above the national CLF include Males at 64.65% v 51.80%, White males at 53.65% v 35.60%, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander males at 0.18% v 0.11%, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander females at 0.12% v 0.10%, American Indian/Alaskan Native males 1.88% v 0.30%, American Indian/Alaskan Native females at 0.90% v 0.30%.</p> <p><b>Executive / Senior Management</b></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>There are 17 STEM executives at SES-level. 64.71% (11) are males and above the 2020 North American Industry Classification System (2020 NAICS) of 53.02%. 35.29% (6) are females which is below the 2020 NAICS business standard for STEM occupations at 46.98% for females.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GS 15 STEM males are 61.80% (52), while STEM females are 38.10% (32).</li> <li>• GS 14 STEM males are 66.06% (181) while females are 33.94% (93).</li> <li>• GS 13 level STEM males are 71.75% (475) while females are 28.25% (187).</li> </ul> <p>Data reveals that the proportion of male STEM Workforce is approximately 3:1 of the female STEM workforce in senior grades. FPAC's STEM males participation is above the NAICS benchmark (53.02%) while FPAC STEM females below the NAICS benchmark (35.29%)</p> <p><b>High Rate of STEM Female Separations</b></p> <p>FY23 saw far more resignation of female STEM employees than voluntary retirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 425 Total Separations:</li> <li>• 110 (25.88%) Resignations</li> <li>• 24 (5.65%) Retirements</li> <li>• 23 (5.41%) Removal/Terminations</li> </ul>
<p>Complaint Data (Trends)</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The number of bases cited in complaint activity has increased from 55 during the prior fiscal year to 84 during FY2023. Bases that increased in complaints activity are Sex (+10), Reprisal (+7), Age (+5), Disability (+4), and Race (+3).</p>
<p>Grievance Data (Trends)</p>	<p>No</p>	

Sources of Data	Sources Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
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> FY2021 0 FY2022 1 FY2023 4 Bases included Disability (2), Reprisal (1) and Other/Parental Status (1).
Climate Assessment Survey (e.g., FEVS)	No	
Exit Interview Data	Yes	Responses were not specific to any demographic group. Approximately 22% of exit interview respondents mentioned better pay elsewhere and/or lack of career advancement as reasons for separating from the Agency.
Focus Groups	No	
Interviews	No	
Reports (e.g., Congress, EEOC, MSPB, GAO, OPM)	Yes	EEOC FY2020 Annual Report on Workforce Characteristics and EEO Commitment 4 measures in MD 715 Part G Self-Assessment Checklist were examined to see if Agencies are committed to EEO: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A.2.b.3 – Does the Agency prominently post EEO information? Yes -91.9% (FPAC FY23=Yes)</li> <li>B.1.a – Does the EEO Director reports to the Head of the Agency? Yes -63.0% (FPAC FY23=Yes)</li> <li>B.6.b – Are managers involved in the barrier analysis process? Yes -75.8% (FPAC FY23=No)</li> <li>C.3.a – Do managers have an EEO element in their performance evaluation? Yes -88.6% (FPAC FY2023=Yes)</li> </ul>
Other (Please Describe)	Yes	Triggers and issues 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?	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?
EEO Director	Willisa Donald	Yes
Federal Women's Program Manager	April Wilson	Yes
Chief Human Resources Officer	Meigan Terri	Yes

## Statement of Identified Barrier(s)

Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice
<p><b>Institutional Barriers:</b> Institutional barriers for applicants and retaining employees may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of female participants in the SLDP (Strategic Leadership Development Program) limits the number of qualified applicants for Leadership Positions. Possibly creating a glass ceiling for women in Senior Leadership and SES positions.</li> <li>STEM female protected groups were disproportionately impacted in separations specifically resignation and removal/termination. In other words, there may be conditions in separating from the Agency which are less favorable to female STEM employees. This requires further investigation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Attitudinal Barriers:</b> Attitudinal barriers exist in recruiting affinity and minority groups specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small number of current college-aged students and younger applicants interested in the Agribusiness.</li> <li>Mode of applying for federal jobs (USAJOBS); understanding the federal job application process, and meeting qualification factors for specialized/technical/scientific positions.</li> <li>Low starting salaries and slow or lack of advancement opportunities .</li> </ul>
<p><b>Physical Barriers:</b> It is understood that actual physical barriers (remote/rural locations) exist, other incidents dealing with nursing mothers and the lack of hygienic, safe spaces to express milk. This requires further investigation.</p>

## 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		
9/30/2025	Conduct an analysis to determine overall retention issues within the Agency (i.e., exit survey, Employee Viewpoint Survey).	Yes		
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
FY2023	Established The Village and Nursing Mothers program. Host quarterly events for work/life balance, information, and open discussion. FY2023 topics included Being a Parent in FPAC, Nursing Policies, Overview of Employee Assistance Program, Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, and Stress-Free Holiday.

## 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	<p>FPAC's Two or More Race male and female participation rates are below the CLF benchmark of 1.00% for both males and females.</p> <p><b>FY2023 FPAC Permanent Workforce</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two or More Race males 0.15% v 1.00%</li> <li>Two or More Race females 0.14% v 1.00%</li> </ul>

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

EEO Group
Two or More Race Males Two or More Race Females

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
<p><b>Workforce Data Tables</b></p> <p>A1 Total Workforce  A3 Occupational Categories  A4 Senior Grades and GS Schedule  A6 Mission Critical Occupations  A9 Awards and Recognition</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p><b>FPAC Permanent Workforce</b></p> <p>FPAC's FY2023 <i>permanent</i> workforce consisted of 15,958 individuals, an increase of 582 as compared to FY2022 of 15,376. FPACs workforce participation of Two or More Race males and females are lower than the CLF of 1.00%.</p> <p>The FY2023 <i>permanent</i> Two or More Race male workforce consisted of twenty-four (24) or 0.15% vs 1.00% 2018 CLF.</p> <p>The FY2023 permanent Two or More Race female workforce consisted of forty-three (43) or 0.27% vs. 1.00% CLF. There was a ratio change of 0.27% in comparison with the prior year.</p> <p><b>FPAC Gains and Losses</b></p> <p>FPAC <b>New Hires</b> of Two or More Race males participation gained 1 (0.05%) during FY2023 a decrease compared to FY2022 (4 new hires or 0.37%).</p> <p>FPAC <b>New Hires</b> of Two or More Race females participation gained 3 (0.16%) during FY2023 a decrease compared to FY2022 (4 new hires or 0.29%).</p> <p>FPAC <b>Separations</b> of Two or More Race males consisted of 1 (0.08%) during FY2023 a decrease compared to FY2022 (2 separations or 0.12%).</p> <p>FPAC <b>Separations</b> of Two or More Race females consisted of 3 (0.27%) during FY2023 a decrease compared to FY2022 (4 separations or 0.25%).</p> <p><b>Management Positions</b></p> <p>The total <b>Management</b> participation rate for Two or More Race males is 0.25% (4). Each management category is above their FPAC permanent workforce participation rate of 0.15%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executives 0.43%</li> <li>• Managers 0.34%</li> <li>• Supervisors 0.21%</li> </ul> <p>The total <b>Management</b> participation rate for Two or More Race females is 0.25% (4). Each management category is above their FPAC permanent workforce participation rate of 0.14%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executives 0.87%</li> <li>• Managers 0.23%</li> <li>• Supervisors 0.41%</li> </ul> <p><b>Senior-grade level</b> Two or More Races male FY2023 representation compared to FY2022 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SES - 1 (0.43%) an increase from FY2022 (0.00%).</li> <li>• GS-15 – 0 (0%) the same as FY2022.</li> <li>• GS-14 - 1 (0.15%) the same as FY2022.</li> <li>• GS-13 3 (0.16%) an increase from FY2022 (0.06%).</li> </ul> <p><b>Senior-grade level</b> Two or More Races female FY2023 representation compared to FY2022 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SES – 2 (0.87%) an increase from FY2022 (0%).</li> <li>• GS-15 – 0 (0%) a decrease from FY2022 (1.59%).</li> <li>• GS-14 – 5 (0.76%) a decrease from FY2022 (0.88%).</li> <li>• GS-13 – 4 (0.22%) the same as FY2022 (0.22%).</li> </ul> <p><b>Mission Critical Occupations (MCOs)</b></p> <p>There are 6 main MCO within the FPAC Misson Area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soil Conservation - 0457</li> <li>• Soil Con Technician - 0458</li> <li>• Civil Engineering - 0810</li> <li>• Gen. Business and Admin - 1101</li> <li>• Agriculture Program Specialist - 1145</li> <li>• Farm Loan Specialist - 1165</li> <li>• Inspection, Investigation &amp; Compliance - 1801</li> <li>• IT Management - 2210</li> </ul> <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 all MCO categories during FY2023 (See FY2023 Table A6).</p>

Sources of Data	Sources Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
Complaint Data (Trends)	Yes	The number of bases cited in complaint activity has increased from 55 during the prior fiscal year to 84 during FY2023. Bases that increased in complaints activity are Sex (+10), Reprisal (+7), Age (+5), Disability (+4), and Race (+3).
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> FY2021 0 FY2022 1 FY2023 4 Bases included Disability (2), Reprisal (1) and Other/Parental Status (1).
Climate Assessment Survey (e.g., FEVS)	No	
Exit Interview Data	Yes	Responses were not specific to any demographic group. Approximately 22% of exit interview respondents mentioned better pay elsewhere and/or lack of career advancement as reasons for separating from the Agency.
Focus Groups	No	
Interviews	No	
Reports (e.g., Congress, EEOC, MSPB, GAO, OPM)	Yes	EEOC FY2020 Annual Report on Workforce Characteristics and EEO Commitment 4 measures in MD 715 Part G Self-Assessment Checklist were examined to see if Agencies are committed to EEO: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A.2.b.3 – Does the Agency prominently post EEO information? Yes -91.9% (FPAC FY23=Yes)</li> <li>B.1.a – Does the EEO Director reports to the Head of the Agency? Yes -63.0% (FPAC FY23=Yes)</li> <li>B.6.b – Are managers involved in the barrier analysis process? Yes -75.8% (FPAC FY23=No)</li> <li>C.3.a – Do managers have an EEO element in their performance evaluation? Yes -88.6% (FPAC FY2023=Yes)</li> </ul>
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?
EEO Director	Willisa Donald	Yes
Affirmative Employment Program Team Lead	Charles Thomas	Yes
Chief Human Resources Officer	Meigan Terri	Yes



**Statement of Identified Barrier(s)**


<b>Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice</b>
<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



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.

- 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, 553 individuals or 8.62%

GS 11 – SES PWD Cluster, 979 individuals or 10.02%

- 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, 115 individuals or 1.86%

- 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.

## SECTION II: MODEL DISABILITY PROGRAM

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

### A. Plan to Provide Sufficient & Competent Staffing for the Disability Program

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

Yes X

No 0

- 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			William “Randy” Bridges, Chief, Workforce Staffing <a href="mailto:william.bridges@usda.gov">william.bridges@usda.gov</a>
Answering questions from the public about hiring authorities that take disability into account (Staffing Team Leads)	6			
Processing reasonable accommodation requests from applicants and employees	5			Monique Salahuddin Chief, Employee Services <a href="mailto:monique.salahuddin@usda.gov">monique.salahuddin@usda.gov</a>
Section 508 Compliance	4			Darren Ash Director, 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>

- 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.

FY2023 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

## 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.

### 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

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

FPAC's Employee Development Section (EDS) provided specialized training for hiring managers during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of FY2023.

January and March 2023:

- HireNow Training for Hiring Managers
- FPAC HR Webinar Series for Supervisors

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**

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

HRD's Workforce Planning, Outreach, and Recruitment Team (PORT) manages the mission area's Diversity Recruitment and Outreach initiatives. The Team has a yearly schedule that includes organizations, institutions, and universities with emphasis on the advancement of individuals with disabilities.

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.

**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 (FY22-7.68% versus FY23-7.16%)

The ratio of New Hires for PWTD in the permanent workforce increased from the prior fiscal year (FY22-0.80% versus FY23-1.59%)

Using the qualified applicant pool as the benchmark, do triggers exist for PWD and/or PWTD among the new hires for any of the mission-critical occupations (MCO)? If "yes", please describe the triggers below.

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

2. 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 X                      No 0
- b. Qualified Applicants for MCO (PWTD)                      Yes X                      No 0

Triggers

- PWD % of Relevant Applicant Pool - 9.48%
- PWD % of Internal Selections FY2023 - 9.07%
- TD % of Relevant Applicant Pool - 2.11%
- TD % of Internal Selections FY2023 - 1.93%

3. 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 X | No 0 |
| b. Promotions for MCO (PWTD) | Yes 0 | No X |

Triggers

- PWD % of Total Qualified Applicants - 9.68%
- PWD % of Internal Promotions - 9.07%

**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**

1. 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.

During FY2022-2023 HRD updated career paths for mission critical occupations within the FPAC mission areas. The plans 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.

2. In the table below, please provide the data for career development opportunities that require competition and/or supervisory recommendation/approval to participate.





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

Triggers

- PWD/Quality Step Increase - 9.00% versus Inclusion Rate of 9.89%
- No PWTD/Performance Based Awards were given during FY 2023

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

Triggers

- PWD GS-15 Relevant Applicant Pool (RAP) is 10.11%
- PWD GS-15 Qualified Applicant Pool (QAP) is at 5.45%
- PWD GS-14 and GS-13 exceeded the QAP at 13.78% and 10.38%
- GS-14 QAP is 13.78% with Selectees at 9.88%
- GS-13 QAP is 10.83% with Selectees at 0.63%

SES-level information is managed through the Department and was not available for this reporting period

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 X
ii. Internal Selections (PWTD)	Yes	X	No 0
c. Grade GS-14			
i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD)	Yes	0	No X
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	X	No 0

Triggers

- TD GS-15 Relevant Applicant Pool (RAP) is 2.30%
- TD GS-15 Qualified Applicant Pool is 1.36%
- TD GS-15 and -14 had no internal selections
- TD GS-13 had 0.63% below the QAP 2.30%

SES-level information is managed through the Department and was not available for this reporting period.

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	X	No 0
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	X	No 0

Triggers

- All Senior Grades were either below the qualified applicant pool or no selections.

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	X	No 0
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	X	No 0

- All Senior Grades were either below the qualified applicant pool or no selections.

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

a. Executives

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

b. Managers

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

c. Supervisors

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

- Managers and Supervisors were below the QAP.

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

a. Executives

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

b. Managers

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

c. Supervisors

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

- Senior-level internal selection rates were below the QAP.

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

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

- Senior-level internal selection rates were below the QAP.

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 0 | No X |

- No selection at Executive and Manager Level.

## SECTION V: PLAN TO IMPROVE RETENTION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

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

### A. Voluntary and Involuntary Separations

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

Yes X                      No 0                      N/A 0

There were twenty-eight (28) permanent Schedule A employees who identified with a disability, ten (10) were converted to full time permanent employees at the end of FY2023. The remaining eighteen (18) Schedule A's will be eligible to convert during FY 2024.

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

Triggers

- Inclusion – 8.51%
- Voluntary Separations – 9.30%

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

Triggers

- Inclusion – 2.88%
- Voluntary Separations – 10.97%

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*.

Exit interview results were not specific to any demographic or disability group.

The top result for FY2023 was Retirement at 37%. There were also a large percentage who resigned with no specific reason at 30%. Listed below are some of the reasons for separating:

- Better Pay - 4%
- Career Advancement - 3%
- Job Stress - 3%
- Job Dissatisfaction - 2%

## 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.

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

FSA: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/help/accessibility-statement/index>

NRCS: <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/accessibility>

RMA: <https://www.rma.usda.gov/en/Web-Site-Policies-and-Important-Links/Accessibility-Statement>

FPAC BC: <https://www.fpacbc.usda.gov/about/civil-rights-and-equal-employment-opportunity/accessibility/index.html>

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 provided mandatory “Section 508 Awareness Training” using web-based modules during FY2023. This new training meets the requirement described in DR 4030-001 Section 508 Accessibility and Compliance. The module is assigned to all federal employees and contractors within 45 days of entry on duty, and thereafter annually. There were 6,063 modules assigned and 4,185 (69%) course completions recorded as of September 30, 2023.

### **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 FY2023 to process initial requests for reasonable accommodations was 12 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.

RA Program Effectiveness:

- 564 requests were received during FY2023
- The average processing timeframe for each request was 12 business days.
- The FY23 approval ratio was 97%

QTR	RECEIVED	AVERAGE BUSINESS DAYS	ACCEPTED	DENIED	APPROVAL RATIO
1 QTR	174	10	60	2	97%
2 QTR	129	11	71	2	96%
3 QTR	121	15	65	4	94%
4 QTR	140	12	56	0	100%
Total	564	12	252	8	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 2023.

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 FY22 to 12 business days in FY23.
- The Fiscal Year carryover was reduced by 69%, from a carryover of 126 cases in FY22 to 38 cases in FY23.

**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 FY23, 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 X                      No 0                      N/A 0
2. During the last fiscal year, did any complaints alleging harassment based on disability status result in a finding of discrimination or a settlement agreement?  
Yes 0                      No X                      N/A 0
3. If the agency had one or more findings of discrimination alleging harassment based on disability status during the last fiscal year, please describe the corrective measures taken by the agency.

Government Average (Harassment) - 23.12%  
FPAC Harassment FY23 Complaints = 37% (13 of a total of 35 complaints)  
Settlements = 41% (5 of a total of 12 settlements)  
Findings of Harassment = 0% (0 of a total of 4 findings)

### 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 X                      No 0                      N/A 0
2. During the last fiscal year, did any complaints alleging failure to provide reasonable accommodation result in a finding of discrimination or a settlement agreement?  
Yes X                      No 0                      N/A 0
3. If the agency had one or more findings of discrimination involving the failure to provide a reasonable accommodation during the last fiscal year, please describe the corrective measures taken by the agency.

Government Average (Reasonable Accommodation) - 13.79%  
FPAC RA / Disability = 17% (6 of a total of 35 complaints)  
Settlements = 16% (2 of a total of 12 settlements)  
Findings = 50% (2 of a total of 4 findings)  
Two (2) FADs had finding of Disability. Corrective Measures taken included:

- Elimination of Removal record from eOPF
- Reinstatement
- Back Pay (\$86,303.92)
- Restoration of Leave (\$4,225.26)
- Compensatory Damages (in process)
- Referral for Disciplinary Action
- Discrimination Training
- Posting Notice

## 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.

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

Yes X                      No 0

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

Yes 0                      No X                      N/A 0

- 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 benchmarks for Major Critical Occupations (MCO)
Barrier(s)	See descriptions in table below
Objective(s)	Increase the participation rate of PWD and PWTD in the workforce

Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice
<p><b>Institutional Barriers:</b> Workforce undercount of FPAC employees and applicant demographics exists due to the self-identification policy for race, national origin, ethnicity, gender, and disability. Identifying demographic data <i>is voluntary</i> for employees and applicants alike, making it difficult and near impossible to get accurate and reliable demographic data. Because of this ongoing policy and systemic issue, reportable demographic data are often skewed. The USDA Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR) and the NFC Reporting Center are aware of the systemic data issues and working on providing specific responses to resolve them.</p> <p>Policies and procedures are in place for the hiring and advancement of all FPAC personnel at all levels. However, FPAC currently does not have a Selective Placement Coordinator or Team. Despite this, Schedule A, VEOA, and other special hiring authorities are now in use and highly encouraged to hiring managers. Although policy communications are fully disseminated, it is unclear if announcements are received in the manner they are distributed. FPAC can improve the follow-through and monitoring of AAP and EEO plans by creating implementation plans that include Senior Leaders.</p>
<p><b>Attitudinal Barriers:</b> HRD provided Special Hiring Authority and Reasonable Accommodations training to managers during FY2022 and FY2023. In addition, to improve awareness, diversity, and inclusion among FPAC's workforce, CREEOD provided training on Unconscious Bias, Ableism, and Disability Inclusion in the Workplace during the reporting period. Despite these actions, FPAC new hires for PWD and TD were below 501 regulatory goals of 12% for PWD and 2% for TD.</p>
<p><b>Physical Barriers:</b> USDA FPAC service center's physical facilities experienced non-compliance with Federal standards and regulations for building accessibility, specifically the lack of [formerly named handicap] placard parking at urban areas buildings. The onsite review of physical and structural facilities is a standard part of the civil rights compliance review (CRCR) process for NRCS but not for all other mission agencies within FPAC. In addition, curtailing mission travel continues due to the pandemic which affects onsite compliance reviews using form AD 2056 Building Accessibility.</p>

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	Yes

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	<b>Permanent Workforce</b> FPAC permanent PWD workforce participation of 9.47% is below the 501 Regulatory goals of 12.00%. <b>MCO</b> FPAC "professional" PWD employees participation is at 9.07% which is below the 501 Regulatory goals of 12% and below the perm PWD FPAC workforce participation of 9.47%. PWD and TD 457 Soil Conservation workforce is 7.68% and 1.80% respectively. Both are below the inclusion rate of 8.32% for PWD and 1.95% for TD. As a whole PWD and TD are underrepresented in the 458 or Soil Conservation Technician series at 7.87% vs. the Inclusion rate of 8.55% for PWD and 1.73% vs. the Inclusion rate of 1.93%. Underrepresentation also exists in the following FPAC mission critical occupations: 810 Civil Engineering, 1101-General Business and Industry, 1145-Farm Loan Specialist, 1165- Agricultural Loan Specialist and 1801 -Compliance Enforcement series. <b>Executive / Senior Management</b> Total FPAC PWD senior grades comprise 1.91% for PWD and 0.49% for TD which is below 501 Regulatory Goals.
Complaint Data (Trends)	Yes	The number of basis cited in complaint activity has increased from 55 during the prior fiscal year to 84 during FY2023. Basis that increased in complaints activity are Sex (+10), Reprisal (+7), Age (+5), Disability (+4), and Race (+3).
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. FY # of Findings FY2021 0 FY2022 1 FY2023 4 Bases included Disability (2), Reprisal (1) and Other/Parental Status (1).
Climate Assessment Survey (e.g., FEVS)	Yes	2022 FEVS responses were not specific to any demographic group. FPAC's 2022 FEVS DEIA overall attitudinal results indicated employees felt a lack of recognition, acknowledgement, and opportunities to advance in their positions.
Exit Interview Data	Yes	2022 FEVS responses were not specific to any demographic group. Approximately 22% of exit interview respondents mentioned either better pay elsewhere or lack of career advancement as reasons for separating from the Agency.
Focus Groups	No	
Interviews	No	

Sources of Data	Sources Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
Reports (e.g., Congress, EEOC, MSPB, GAO, OPM)	Yes	EEOC FY2020 Annual Report on Workforce Characteristics and EEO Commitment 4 measures in MD 715 Part G Self-Assessment Checklist were examined to see if Agencies are committed to EEO: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A.2.b.3 – Does the Agency prominently post EEO information? Yes -91.9% (FPAC FY23=Yes)</li> <li>B.1.a – Does the EEO Director reports to the Head of the Agency? Yes -63.0% (FPAC FY23=Yes)</li> <li>B.6.b – Are managers involved in the barrier analysis process? Yes -75.8% (FPAC FY23=No)</li> <li>C.3.a – Do managers have an EEO element in their performance evaluation? Yes -88.6% (FPAC FY2023=Yes)</li> </ul>
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		
6/30/2025	Develop and maintain barrier analysis working group to address deficiencies in hiring, recruitment, and retention.	Yes		
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		
12/31/2024	Connect and partner with other USDA agencies (ex. APHIS, FS, OUAL, etc.) as well as other departments (DOD, DOJ, etc.) to effectively exchange information and improve overall communication as well as employee support.	Yes		

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
FY2023	In October 2022, FPAC hosted a training webinar open to all employees entitled “Disability in Employment” led by the EEO Branch Chief. Topics discussed included the definition of disability, self-identification of disability status, Schedule A hiring, and reasonable accommodations.
FY2023	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 FY2024.

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 deeper dive into workforce triggers and the barrier analysis process has brought awareness of extenuating issues up front to FPAC Leadership. The need for comprehensive and engaged strategies to reduce and eventually eliminate the barriers have come into focus for FPAC Leadership.

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.

FPAC is working toward completing its 1<sup>st</sup> Strategic Plan to include a comprehensive Human Capital Operation Plan incorporating strategic information regarding special hiring authorities. CREEOD intends to work with HRD to monitor the progress of FPACs Strategic Plan when it becomes available.

Priorities for FY2024 include:

- Creating Standard of Operating Procedures for several CR/EEOD activities and programs to establish a workable process to implement EEO programs
- Seek and establish Senior Leaders as Champions to co-chair each Special Emphasis Programs
- Establish a collaboration/partnership with one USDA agency and one external Federal Agency to discuss and review best practices relating to DEIA/Affirmative Employment/Special Emphasis Program

## PART E.3 WORKFORCE ANALYSES

FPAC's permanent workforce during FY2023 totaled 15,958 and 359 temporary employees for a total workforce of 16,317 an increase from the prior year (FY2022 15,707). Comparing the FPAC workforce participation to the National Civilian Labor Force (CLF) helps to identify, if FPAC meets diversity goals recommended by the EEOC and OPM.

Although FPAC female participation increased to 47.31% as compared to the prior year of 46.61%, this group still did not meet expected participation ratios. Other groups who were below the 2018 CLF are Hispanic males at 3.17% v 6.80%, Hispanic females at 2.51% v 6.20%, African American males at 4.36% v 5.70% African American females at 5.63% v 6.60%, Asian males at 1.01% v 2.20%, Asian females at 0.97% v 2.20%, Two or More Race males at 0.15% v 1.00%, Two or More Race females at 0.27% v 1.00% and Persons with a Disability (PWD) participation at 9.47% v 12.00%. While these minority and disability participation rates are consistently underrepresented since the inception of FPAC, there have been positive net increases to the minority and disability workforce. All Males, White male and female, Native Hawaiian Other Pacific Islander male and female, American Indian/Alaskan Native male and female and [self-identified Persons with] Targeted Disabilities (TD) are consistently above the national 2018 CLF or 501 Regulatory Goal.

Demographic Groups	2018 CLF	FY23	FY23%	FY22	FY22%
All Males	51.80%	8,409	52.69%	8,209	53.39%
All Females	48.20%	7,549	47.31%	7,167	46.61%
Hispanic Males	6.80%	506	3.17%	500	3.25%
Hispanic Females	6.20%	400	2.51%	385	2.50%
White Males	35.60%	6,751	42.30%	6,596	42.90%
White Females	31.80%	5,828	36.52%	5,521	35.91%
African American Males	5.70%	695	4.36%	653	4.25%
African American Females	6.60%	897	5.62%	843	5.48%
Asian Males	2.20%	161	1.01%	158	1.03%
Asian Females	2.20%	154	0.97%	145	0.94%
Nat. Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Males	0.10%	23	0.14%	20	0.13%
Nat. Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Females	0.10%	22	0.14%	18	0.12%
American Indian/Alaskan Nat. Males	0.30%	249	1.56%	259	1.68%
American Indian/Alaskan Nat. Females	0.30%	205	1.28%	211	1.37%
Two or More Race Males	1.00%	24	0.15%	23	0.15%
Two or More Race Females	1.00%	43	0.27%	44	0.29%
Persons with Disability*	12.00%	1,512	9.47%	1,510	9.82%
Targeted Disability*	2.00%	336	2.11%	343	2.23%

\*501 Regulatory Goals determined by OPM. Ratios below the 2018 CLF or 501 Goals are highlighted in red

Data Source: NFC MD 715 Workforce Data Tables A1/B1, 10/15/2023

## FPAC Mission Critical Occupation (MCO)

There are still mission critical occupations which show no participation (0.00%) for the following groups: Asian male and female, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander male and female, and Two or More Race male and female. The occupations include GS-0458 Soil Conservation Technician, GS-0560 Budget Analyst, GS-0810 Civil Engineering, GS-1145 Farm Loan Specialist, and GS-1801 Inspection and Investigation Compliance Officer.

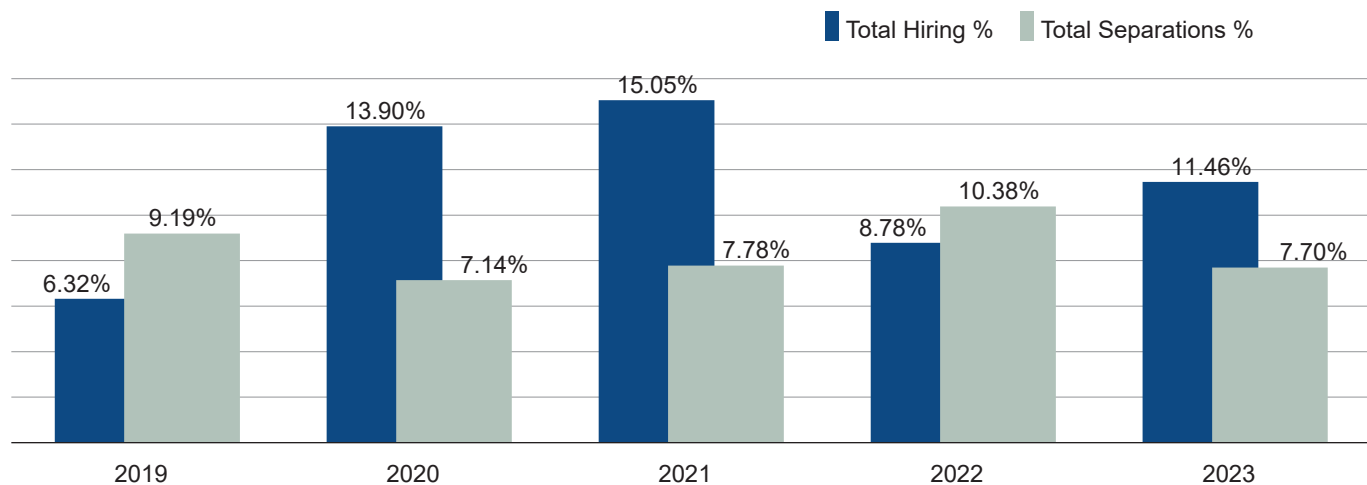
## Comparison of New Hires vs. Separations

FPAC on-boarded 1,829 new hires during FY2023. Female hires were in the majority with 1,032 (56.42%) of new hires. Male new hires totaled 797 (43.58%). Minority hires totaled 350 (19.14%) of new hires. PWD new hires totaled 131 (7.16%) of which 29 (1.59%) were Persons with Targeted Disabilities and 37 (2.02%) were Schedule A hires.

During the same period, a total of 1,229 (7.70%) of FPAC employees separated from the agency. The top 5 groups to separate were White females 495 (40.28%), White males 492 (40.03%), PWD 133 (10.82%); of those, 38 (3.09%) were employees with targeted disabilities and 1 (1.92%) Schedule A employees, African American females 68 (5.53%), and African American males 40 (3.25%).

Comparing prior years hiring and separation rates, FPAC shows the number of hires outpaced the number of separations especially during FY2020, 2021 and the current fiscal year 2023. NRCS and FSA acquired Direct Hiring Authority (DHA) permissions through OPM. This suggests special hiring authority provides conditions for increased hiring over separations.

## FPAC Hiring v Separations FY2023



Data Source: NFC MD 715 Workforce Data Tables A6/B6, Oct. 15, 2023

## Exit Interviews

Exit survey replies are confidential and can identify patterns or trends of separation which may help to devise strategies to improve career-advancement and work-life environment within the Mission Area. FPAC's 2023 exit surveys were not specific to one demographic group, but the results showed a general attitudinal response of why employees are separating from the Agency. 49% did not disclose a reason for resigning from their current position. Retirement is the next most frequent reply at 37%. Other separation reasons included: Better Pay at 4%, Job Stress and Career Advancement both at 3%, Job Dissatisfaction at 2% and Removal at 2%. Data Source: FPAC Exit Interview Survey Results, 10/25/2023.

## Summary of Employee Awards and Recognition

Employee awards and recognition may be in the form of Quality Step Increases (QSI) or Performance-based Awards. Awards may also be dispersed as Time-off and/or Small, Medium, or Large cash awards. FPAC tracks the average distribution of awards by gender, race, ethnicity, and disability demographic groups. FPAC issued a total of 21,701 awards during FY23 a substantial increase of approximately 2,807 (14%) from the prior fiscal year (18,894). Through this action FPAC acknowledged the accomplishments of individuals and teams within the organization. Awards given below the average amount may reveal disparities and should be investigated further. (Red font indicates entry is below the average amount awarded).

### a. Time Off Awards

FPAC issued 2,233 Time-off awards or 14.00 % to the total workforce. The average distribution was 14 (fourteen) hours. Asian males did not meet the average time off award of 15 hours.

Time-Off	HM	HF	WM	WF	BM	BF	AM	AF	NH/OPIIM	NH/OPIF	AI/ANM	AI/ANF	TMRM	TMRF	PWD
Total Awarded	7	53	750	1,019	61	162	27	29	3	2	24	50	0	9	257
	1.97%	2.37%	33.59%	45.63%	2.73%	7.25%	1.21%	1.30%	0.13%	0.09%	1.07%	2.24%	0%	0.40%	11.5%
AVG-Hours	15	13	14	14	14	13	11	13	15	14	14	14	0	6	14

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

FPAC issued 8,037 (50%) small cash awards up to \$1,000 to the permanent workforce with an average amount of \$608. White females, Asian males and females, Nat. Hawaiian females and Two or More Race males and females averaged below the median small cash award.

Cash Award	HM	HF	WM	WF	BM	BF	AM	AF	NH/OPIIM	NH/OPIF	AI/ANM	AI/ANF	TMRM	TMRF	PWD
Total Awarded	221	168	3,283	3,224	252	426	91	70	8	8	119	141	7	19	787
	2.75%	2.09%	40.85%	40.11%	3.14%	5.30%	1.13%	0.87%	0.10%	0.10%	1.48%	1.75%	0.09%	0.24%	9.79%
AVG-Amount	\$624	\$650	\$608	\$604	\$630	\$610	\$602	\$595	\$635	\$553	\$619	\$594	\$513	\$570	\$613

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

FPAC dispersed 11,001 (69%) awards to the permanent workforce with an average amount of \$1,440. American Indian males and Two or More Race males averaged below the median cash award.

Cash Award	HM	HF	WM	WF	BM	BF	AM	AF	NH/OPIIM	NH/OPIF	AI/ANM	AI/ANF	TMRM	TMRF	PWD
Total Awarded	292	290	4,470	4,264	419	646	114	125	19	14	139	156	11	42	1,085
	2.65%	2.64%	40.63%	38.76%	3.81%	5.87%	1.04%	1.14%	0.17%	0.13%	1.26%	1.42%	0.10%	0.38%	9.86%
AVG-Amount	\$1,442	\$1,426	\$1,402	\$1,442	\$1,551	\$1,597	\$1,641	\$1,510	\$1,487	\$1,580	\$1,344	\$1,430	\$1,373	\$1,477	\$1,442

### c. Cash Awards more than \$3,000

FPAC distributed 291 (1.82%) cash awards of \$3,000 or more to the permanent workforce with an average amount of \$4,826. Groups below the median Larger cash award included: Hispanic males and female, White female, African American female, Asian female, Nat. Hawaiian, American Indian male, Two or More Race male and female and Persons with Disabilities.



Cash Award	HM	HF	WM	WF	BM	BF	AM	AF	NH/ OPIM	NH/ OPIF	AI/ ANM	AI/ ANF	TMRM	TMRF	PWD
Total Awarded	10	5	124	83	14	31	4	8	0	0	4	5	0	3	32
	3.44%	1.72%	42.61%	28.52%	4.81%	10.65%	1.37%	2.75%	0%	0%	1.37%	1.72%	0.00%	1.03%	11%
AVG-Amount	\$4,500	\$4,400	\$4,980	\$4,707	\$4,821	\$4,719	\$5,375	\$4,643	\$0	\$0	\$4,563	\$4,916	\$0	\$4,688	\$4,751

d. Performance-based Awards

FPAC distributed 139 (.87%) performance-based awards with an average benefit of \$4,222. Hispanic female, White female, Nat Hawaiian male and female, American Indian female, and Two or More Race male and female were below the median QSI or Performance based awards.

	HM	HF	WM	WF	BM	BF	AM	AF	NH/ OPIM	NH/ OPIF	AI/ ANM	AI/ ANF	TMRM	TMRF	PWD
Total Awarded	2	4	45	59	9	10	3	2	0	0	3	2	0	0	12
	1.44%	2.88%	32.37%	42.45%	6.47%	7.19%	2.16%	1.44%	0%	0%	2.16%	1.44%	0%	0%	8.63%
AVG-Benefit	\$9,716	\$4,104	\$4,740	\$3,065	\$5,294	\$5,185	\$7,847	\$4,600	\$0	\$0	\$6,717	\$2,277	\$0	\$0	\$4,485

Data Source: NFC MD 715 Workforce Data Tables A9/B9, Oct. 15, 2023

## Management Participation in the Workforce

FPAC’s management population consists of employees under the organizational 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 and following to the GS/GM-15 and SES-level. It may also involve any of FPAC’s major occupational series. Total management level permanent workforce was

As of September 30, 2023, There was a total of 1,620 at the FPAC management level as compared to 1,607 from the previous year. FPAC’s 2023 permanent workforce participation is the comparator. Females are underrepresented at 40.00% compared to 47.31% in the 2023 permanent workforce.

Viewed together all females and minority female groups are consistently underrepresented in Leadership since the inception of FPAC: Hispanic females at 2.22% v 2.51%, White females at 30.80% v 36.52%, African American females 5.00% v 5.62%, Asian females at 0.56% v 0.97%, Nat. Hawaiian OPI females at 0.12% v 0.14%, American Indian Alaskan Native females at 1.05% v 1.28% and Two or More Race females at 0.25% v 0.27%. Persons who identify with a disability are at 1.91% v. 9.37% and Targeted Disability at 0.49% v 2.11%.

Race/Ethnicity/Gender/Disability	FPAC 2023 Perm	FY23	%	FY22	%
Male	52.69%	972	60.00%	974	60.61%
Female	47.31%	648	40.00%	633	39.39%
Hispanic Males	3.17%	67	4.14%	67	4.17%
Hispanic Females	2.51%	36	2.22%	34	2.12%
White Males	42.30%	741	45.74%	750	46.67%
White Females	36.52%	499	30.80%	493	30.68%

<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.

Race/Ethnicity/Gender/Disability	FPAC 2023 Perm	FY23	%	FY22	%
African American Males	4.36%	103	6.36%	97	6.04%
African American Females	5.62%	81	5.00%	76	4.73%
Asian Males	1.01%	17	1.05%	13	0.81%
Asian Females	0.97%	9	0.56%	7	0.44%
Nat. Hawaiian Other Pacific Islander Males	0.14%	3	0.19%	3	0.19%
Nat. Hawaiian Other Pacific Islander Females	0.14%	2	0.12%	2	0.12%
American Indian Alaskan Native Males	1.56%	37	2.28%	34	2.12%
American Indian Alaskan Native Females	1.28%	17	1.05%	11	0.68%
Two or More Race Males	0.15%	4	0.25%	10	0.62%
Two or More Race Females	0.27%	4	0.25%	10	0.62%
Persons with Disabilities*	9.47%	137	1.91%	132	1.99%
Targeted Disabilities*	2.11%	35	0.49%	37	0.50%

\*501 Regulatory Goals determined by OPM. Ratios below the 2018 CLF or 501 Goals are highlighted in red

Data Source: NFC MD 715 Workforce Data Tables A3/B3, 10/15/2023

## Diversity Programs and Initiatives

### Accomplishments

FPAC supports the effectiveness and sustainability of a national diversity recruitment and inclusion effort by establishing various diversity partnerships and investments. FPAC successfully worked with partners and leadership to submit diversity initiatives to Grants and Agreements Division, totaling over \$2.8 million of FY23 funds.

NRCS diligently worked to obligate FY2023 funds for continual financial support of collaborative initiatives, which included:

- Agricultural Future of America (AFA), \$60,000.00
- American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES), \$150,000.00
- Asian American/Pacific Islander Recruitment Initiative, \$75,000.00
- Texas A&M University, Student Training & Development, \$120,000.00
- Out in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics, \$8,250.00
- Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC), Org., \$10,000.00
- Florida A&M University, \$250,000.00
- Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities (HACU) Annual Conference, \$10,000.00
- Hispanic Recruitment Initiative (NRCDP), \$980,000.00
- Hispanic Serving Institutions National Program (HSINP) (HACU), \$172,000.00
- LGBTQ Recruitment Initiative, \$50,000.00
- Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS), \$130,000.00
- North Carolina A&T State University, \$250,000.00
- Out and Equal Workplace Advocates, \$15,000.00
- Tennessee State University, \$250,000.00
- Thurgood Marshal College Fund Annual Conference, \$50,000.00
- Tribal Recruitment Initiative (Tribal NRCDP), \$100,000.00
- Veterans Recruitment Initiative, \$85,000.00
- Women's Recruitment Initiative, \$105,000.00.

The Business Center obligated FY2023 funds for financial support of collaborative initiatives, which include:

- Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities (HACU) Annual Conference, \$2,450.00.

RMA obligated FY2023 funds for financial support of collaborative initiatives, which include:

- Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities (HACU) Annual Conference, \$2,500.00.

## Interagency Agreements

Both NRCS and FSA entered into an interagency agreement (IAA) with the USDA's Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement (OPPE) and participated in the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF) Internship Program. The program recruits students from colleges and universities throughout the U.S. with a strong focus on Historically Black Colleges and Universities. There were 46 interns selected and placed in NRCS, and 16 interns selected and placed in FSA. Two interns were also placed with NRCS for the fall session. In addition, NRCS has entered into a new IAA with OPPE for engagement with the TMCF program through September 2024; NRCS obligated \$249,638.40 in FY2023 to participate in the TMCF Internship Program. FSA obligated \$296,455.60 in FY2023 to participate in the TMCF Internship Program.

- NRCS entered into an IAA with the Agricultural Research Service to participate in the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) National Internship Program. The program recruits students from colleges and universities throughout the U.S. with a strong focus on Hispanic Serving Institutions. From the beginning of the IAA, NRCS obligated \$172,000.00 to participate in the HACU National Internship Program.
- NRCS and FSA entered into an IAA with OPPE to participate in the High School Equivalency Program and College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP). The programs recruit college students from colleges and universities throughout the U.S. with a strong focus on Hispanic Serving Institutions. NRCS recruited 3 CAMP interns, and FSA recruited 5 CAMP interns. NRCS obligated \$48,141.51 to participate in CAMP.

## Third-Party Internship Programs and Initiatives

Third-party internship programs and initiatives support targeted recruitment efforts to address underrepresentation in the FPAC Mission Area's workforce by increasing the number of students who qualify and compete for the Pathways Programs. For FY23 there were 180 actual placements of third-party interns.

- Asian American, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander Recruitment Initiative - 3 interns
  - » University of Texas, Arlington - 3 interns
- Florida A&M University - 4 interns
- Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) Program - 31 interns
  - » NRCS - 8 interns
  - » Business Center - 23 interns
- Hispanic Recruitment Initiative - 59 interns
  - » Texas A&M University, Kingsville - 12 interns
  - » Texas A&M University, Kingsville (GIS) - 3 interns
  - » University of Arizona - 9 interns
  - » Cal Poly University, Humboldt - 9 interns
  - » Cal Poly University, Pomona - 8 interns
  - » California State University, Fresno - 5 interns
  - » University of California, Davis - 4 interns
  - » University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez - 5 interns
  - » University of Texas, Rio Grande Valley - 4 interns

- » Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, and more (LGBTQ+) Recruitment Initiative - 2 interns
- » University of Arizona - 2 interns
- North Carolina A&T State University - 4 interns
- Tennessee State University - 1 intern
- Thurgood Marshall College Fund Internship Program - 62 interns
  - » NRCS - 46 interns
  - » FSA - 16 interns
- Tribal Recruitment Initiative - 6 interns
- Women's Recruitment Initiative - 8 interns
  - » University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign - 3 interns
  - » Oregon State University - 5 interns.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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