

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

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

### Section I: Efforts to Reach Regulatory Goals

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

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

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

The percentage of PWD in the GS-11 to SES cluster was 10.41% in FY 2024, which fell below the goal of 12%.

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

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

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

The percentage of PWTD in the GS-11 to SES cluster was 1.95% in FY 2024, which fell below the goal of 2%.

Grade Level Cluster(GS or Alternate Pay Planb)	Total	Reportable Disability		Targeted Disability	
	#	#	%	#	%
Numerical Goal	--	12%		2%	
Grades GS-11 to SES	246497	24886	10.10	4675	1.90
Grades GS-1 to GS-10	181974	24254	13.33	5396	2.97

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

The numerical goals, information about the Disability Program, and other resources are available on the ORM’s website and socialized in other ways throughout the agency. Additionally, VA periodically issued written guidance through internal networks and briefed HR professionals on the use of Veteran and other hiring authorities to attract/encourage hiring eligible and qualified candidates to include PWD/PWTD.

### Section II: Model Disability Program

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

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

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

Answer No

VA plans to increase staffing to assist with the administration of the RA program.

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

Disability Program Task	# of FTE Staff By Employment Status			Responsible Official (Name, Title, Office Email)
	Full Time	Part Time	Collateral Duty	
Special Emphasis Program for PWD and PWTB	19	0	343	Varies Throughout Department
Answering questions from the public about hiring authorities that take disability into account	19	0	378	Varies Throughout Department
Processing applications from PWD and PWTB	34	1	160	Varies Throughout Department
Section 508 Compliance	24	0	0	Chet Frith Director, Section 508 Office Chet.Frith@va.gov
Architectural Barriers Act Compliance	13	1	7	Mark Goeller Architect Mark.Goeller@va.gov
Processing reasonable accommodation requests from applicants and employees	162	0	0	Varies Throughout Department

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

Answer Yes

During FY 2024, the Departmental Disability SEPM leveraged training as well as guidance materials from the DOL, ODEP, and the FEED. Additionally, the Departmental Disability SEPM attended the EEOC’s PWFA Training Program Presentation.

**B. PLAN TO ENSURE SUFFICIENT FUNDING FOR THE DISABILITY PROGRAM**

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

Answer No

VA plans to hire additional personnel to assist with the administration of the RA program. Additionally, the Section 508 Office plans to increase staffing and budget to support training, end to end testing, and auditing.

### Section III: Program Deficiencies In The Disability Program

<b>Brief Description of Program Deficiency</b>	B.4.a.10. to effectively manage its reasonable accommodation program? [see 29 CFR §1614.203(d)(4)(ii)]		
<b>Objective</b>	Hire additional staff to adequately staff the RA Program.		
<b>Target Date</b>	Sep 30, 2025		
<b>Completion Date</b>			
<b>Planned Activities</b>	<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>	<u>Planned Activity</u>
<b>Accomplishments</b>	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	

<b>Brief Description of Program Deficiency</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.		
<b>Objective</b>	Hire additional staff to adequately staff the RA Program.		
<b>Target Date</b>	Sep 30, 2025		
<b>Completion Date</b>			
<b>Planned Activities</b>	<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>	<u>Planned Activity</u>
<b>Accomplishments</b>	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	

<b>Brief Description of Program Deficiency</b>	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]		
<b>Objective</b>	Fill vacancy for Departmental Hispanic Special Emphasis Program Manager (SEPM).		
<b>Target Date</b>	Dec 31, 2020		
<b>Completion Date</b>			
<b>Planned Activities</b>	<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>	<u>Planned Activity</u>
	Jun 30, 2020		Obtain approval for additional full-time equivalents (FTE).
	Dec 31, 2020		Fill all remaining vacancies to ensure effective, efficient, and well-managed SEPs.
	Dec 31, 2020		Fill 2 Special Emphasis Program (SEP) vacancies that VA currently has.
<b>Accomplishments</b>	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	

<b>Brief Description of Program Deficiency</b>	C.2.b.5. Does the agency process all initial accommodation requests, excluding ongoing interpretative services, within the time frame set forth in its reasonable accommodation procedures? [see MD-715, II(C)] If “no”, please provide the percentage of timely-processed requests, excluding ongoing interpretative services, in the comments column.															
<b>Objective</b>	Train RACs on how to process requests.															
<b>Target Date</b>	Sep 29, 2024															
<b>Completion Date</b>																
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<b>Brief Description of Program Deficiency</b>	E.4.a.5. The processing of requests for reasonable accommodation? [29 CFR §1614.203(d)(4)]		
<b>Objective</b>	Update and enhance RAMS so data can be accurately captured and stored.		
<b>Target Date</b>	Sep 29, 2024		
<b>Completion Date</b>			
<b>Planned Activities</b>	<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>	<u>Planned Activity</u>
	May 31, 2019		Develop an enterprise-wide system to track reasonable accommodation requests.
	Jun 28, 2019		Test the system.
	Jul 31, 2019		Deploy the system.
	Sep 29, 2024		Coordinate with Microsoft and SMEs to enhance RAMS.
<b>Accomplishments</b>	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Accomplishment</u>	
	2018	VA has gathered system requirements and established rules regarding mandatory usage of system.	
	2020	VA has contracted with Microsoft to develop an Administration wide system. Processing maps have been created and provided to the contractor and development of the system has already begun.	
	2021	VA has completed development of the system and has trained all RACs on usage of the system.	
	2022	VA completed development of the system and trained all RACs on usage of the system.	
	2019	The RA Staff Office hired a management analyst to aid in the development of the system and monitor and track RA data once the system is developed.	
	2024	VA began the process of enhancing and updating RAMS. The RA Staff Office continues to train RACs on RAMS. Additionally, VA provided outside experts to train RA staff on available resources to include using the SharePoint portal as a communication tool.	
	2023	VA launched an Inaugural Workgroup comprised of RA practitioners to enhance the functionality of RAMS.	

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

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

### A. PLAN TO IDENTIFY JOB APPLICATIONS WITH DISABILITIES

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

VA leverages various programs and resources to identify job applicants with disabilities. Hiring authorities, such as Schedule A and 30% or More Disabled Veteran Hiring, expedite the hiring of PWD/PWTD, including Veterans with disabilities. Additionally, VA leverages the Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) Program, formerly known as Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment, to identify job applicants with disabilities and to provide job-related training to assist disabled Veterans with building skills necessary to obtain employment. The Veteran and Military Spouse Talent Engagement Program (VMSTEP) aims to support Veterans and military spouses in finding VA employment. To identify job applicants with disabilities and targeted disabilities, VMSTEP utilizes the following resources and programs: 1. PWTD Hiring Authorities: These authorities, such as the Schedule A and 30% or More Disabled Veteran Hiring Authorities, expedite the hiring of PWD, including Veterans with disabilities. 2. Online Application Systems (USAJOBS): USAJOBS provides an option for applicants to self-identify as PWD ensuring they receive appropriate consideration. This allows VMSTEP and other hiring managers to target the PWD/PWTD applicant pool using USAJOBS Agency Talent Portal. 3. Partnerships with Organizations That Support PWD: VMSTEP collaborates with disability-

centric organizations and programs such as VBA’s VR&E Program, Hiring Our Heroes, Blue Star Families, Rally Point, and GI Jobs to source applicants with disabilities. These collaborations aim to introduce VA opportunities and help cultivate a VA employee readiness talent pool. 4. Veterans Resource Guide and Fact Sheets: VMSTEP provides HR offices, hiring managers, Veterans, and military spouses with comprehensive guides and fact sheets on Veteran and military spouse hiring authorities, and other hiring flexibilities to enhance awareness and understanding of disabilities and targeted disabilities. 5. Networking and Outreach: VMSTEP participates in job fairs, outreach events, and networking opportunities targeting PWD. Monthly webinars on the Federal application are offered to help Veterans with disabilities eligible for special hiring authorities navigate through the hiring process and provide comprehensive guidance and assistance regarding disability related appointing authorities (30% Disabled Veterans, Schedule A, and so forth), supporting documentation required, and benefits of self-identifying on Federal applications. In addition, the National and Administration-level Selective Placement Program managers and Selective Placement Program Coordinators (SPPC) provide services to assist PWD/PWTD with employment opportunities using the Schedule A hiring authority.

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

VA hiring managers, in coordination with VA HR offices, use the Schedule A hiring authority to select qualified PWD for appointment to positions for which they qualify. Additionally, VA hiring managers use the 30% or more disabled Veterans authority to select qualified Veterans with a service-connected disability rating of 30% or more for appointment to positions for which they qualify. Furthermore, VA hiring managers use the Veterans’ Recruitment Appointment authority to select qualified disabled Veterans to positions at any grade level up to the GS-11 or equivalent for which they qualify. After VA HR offices verify the applicants’ eligibility, VA hiring managers may use any of the above-mentioned authorities to hire highly qualified PWD/PWTD candidates non-competitively, by law. VA HR offices may use these streamlined hiring procedures to appoint applicants at a faster rate than usual. To further attract PWD/PWTD candidates, all VA Job Opportunity Announcement templates in the USA Staffing system includes a statement encouraging PWD to apply.

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

The SPPC receives the individual’s resume and supporting documentation and reviews it to ensure eligibility. Once confirmed, the SPPC forwards the resume to the hiring manager of an open, vacant position for consideration and advises the hiring manager of the benefits of using this non-competitive hiring authority. Regardless of the referral method, whether via SPPC for Schedule A, VMSTEP, or self-referral to hiring managers for disabled PWD using other non-competitive hiring authorities, VA HR offices must verify eligibility and qualifications prior to appointment as described below. 1. VA HR Specialists must review the resume of the PWD/PWTD to determine if they meet the specialized experience and qualification requirements for the position. 2. VA HR Specialists must review the supporting documentation of the PWD/PWTD to determine if they meet the eligibility requirements. 3. If the PWD/PWTD meets both above requirements, the VA HR Specialist refers the PWD, on a Certificate of Eligibles, for consideration by the hiring manager. 4. If interested, the hiring manager may conduct an interview and select the candidate. 5. The hiring manager must return the Certificate of Eligibles with the selection of the PWD/PWTD. 6. HR Specialists must contact the PWD/PWTD and notify the candidate of the selection and extend a tentative job offer. 7. When the PWD/PWTD accepts the firm job offer, after successfully completing all pre-employment requirements, the HR office may then affect the appointment.

4. Has the agency provided training to all hiring managers on the use of hiring authorities that take disability into account (e.g., Schedule A)? If “yes”, describe the type(s) of training and frequency. If “no”, describe the agency’s plan to provide this training.

Answer Yes

VA provides training on hiring authorities that take disability into account through Recruitment and Placement Policy Service quarterly Customer Connect calls, monthly OCHCO HR Professional Calls, and HCSC WRP briefs. Job aids that provide a listing of the various hiring flexibilities are also available on the OCHCO SharePoint site.

**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.

VMSTEP collaborates with disability-centric organizations and programs such as VBA’s VR&E Program, Hiring Our Heroes, Blue Star Families, Rally Point, and GI Jobs to source applicants with disabilities. These collaborations aim to introduce VA opportunities and help cultivate a VA employee readiness talent pool. Additionally, VA places responsibility on each facility to ensure they are partnering with and marketing employment opportunities to external organizations such as the state and local Disability Committees, Commissions, DOL, and organizations as well as the disability offices at local colleges and universities.

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

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

- a. New Hires for Permanent Workforce (PWD) Answer Yes
- b. New Hires for Permanent Workforce (PWTD) Answer No

Among new hires in the permanent workforce in FY 2024, triggers exist for PWD (11.47%).

New Hires	Total (#)	Reportable Disability		Targeted Disability	
		Permanent Workforce (%)	Temporary Workforce (%)	Permanent Workforce (%)	Temporary Workforce (%)
% of Total Applicants	433909	6.49	0.13	3.88	0.08
% of Qualified Applicants	314862	6.16	0.12	3.64	0.07
% of New Hires	28675	8.90	1.36	1.94	0.23

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

- a. New Hires for MCO (PWD) Answer Yes
- b. New Hires for MCO (PWTD) Answer Yes

As compared to the benchmark, triggers exist for PWD in the Psychology and Medical Officer occupations. Triggers exist for PWTD in all MCOs except HR Management and Cemetery Caretaking.

New Hires to Mission-Critical Occupations	Total (#)	Reportable Disability	Targetable Disability
		New Hires (%)	New Hires (%)
Numerical Goal	--	12%	2%
0080 SECURITY ADMINISTRATION	23	13.04	4.35
0180 PSYCHOLOGIST	526	8.37	1.33
0185 SOCIAL WORK	2474	10.02	1.78
0201 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	907	20.95	4.30
0602 MEDICAL OFFICER	3179	3.49	0.53
0610 NURSING	8757	5.87	0.83

New Hires to Mission-Critical Occupations	Total (#)	Reportable Disability	Targetable Disability
		New Hires (%)	New Hires (%)
Numerical Goal	--	12%	2%
0901 GENERAL LEGAL AND KINDRED ADMINISTRATION	1188	14.90	3.54
0996 VETERANS CLAIMS EXAMINING	3482	19.33	4.60
1102 CONTRACTING	347	11.24	3.17
2210 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT	191	12.57	4.71
3566 CUSTODIAL WORKER	3102	16.28	4.67
4754 CEMETERY CARETAKING	186	12.90	4.84

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

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

As compared to the benchmark, triggers exist for PWD in all MCOs. There are no triggers for PWTD.

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

- a. Promotions for MCO (PWD) Answer Yes
- b. Promotions for MCO (PWTD) Answer Yes

As compared to the benchmark, triggers exist for PWD in the Medical Officer occupation. Triggers exist for PWTD in all the MCOs.

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

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

### A. ADVANCEMENT PROGRAM PLAN

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

VA markets career advancement opportunities to all employees, including PWD and PWTD. VBA notifies employees by email of advancement opportunities.

### B. CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITES

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

VA has informal and formal career and leadership development opportunities available for all employees. All VA employees have access to TMS and LinkedIn Learning, providing access to electronic training and development. VA markets education, leadership development programs, and local mentoring program opportunities to all employees, including PWD and PWTD. VBA notifies employees by email of program deadlines for a variety of career development programs such as the Aspiring Senior Leader Program, Leadership Enhancement and Development, Competency Development for Leaders, and Supervisory Management Training. VHA offers the following career development programs to employees and candidates for employment: Technical Career Field program; Graduate Health Administration Training Program; Virtual Aspiring Leadership Program; Healthcare Leadership Development Program; SES Development Program; Veterans Integrated Services Network and facility Leadership Effectiveness Accountability & Development Program. NCA utilizes the intranet to announce leadership development programs and detail opportunities to its employees. Additionally, NCA provides training to all employees through the National Training Center and encourages employees to participate to assist with career development.

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

Career Development Opportunities	Total Participants		PWD		PWTD	
	Applicants (#)	Selectees (#)	Applicants (%)	Selectees (%)	Applicants (%)	Selectees (%)
Internship Programs		128		23%		3%
Fellowship Programs	350	10		30%		
Mentoring Programs						
Detail Programs						
Coaching Programs	347	347				
Training Programs	11,044	2,579				
Other Career Development Programs	393	61				

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

- a. Applicants (PWD) Answer N/A
- b. Selections (PWD) Answer N/A

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

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

- a. Applicants (PWTD) Answer N/A
- b. Selections (PWTD) Answer N/A

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

**C. AWARDS**

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

a. Awards, Bonuses, & Incentives (PWD) Answer Yes

b. Awards, Bonuses, & Incentives (PWTD) Answer Yes

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

Time-Off Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 hours: Awards Given	21541.00	14.2983	85.7017	3.0361	96.9639
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 Hours: Total Hours	138555.00	14.1770	85.8230	3.0399	96.9601
Time-Off Awards 1 - 10 Hours: Average Hours	6.43	6.3776	6.4413	6.4404	6.4319
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 hours: Awards Given	4316.00	13.2530	86.7470	2.7340	97.2660
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 Hours: Total Hours	68433.00	13.0390	86.9595	2.6274	97.3726
Time-Off Awards 11 - 20 Hours: Average Hours	15.86	15.5997	15.8945	15.2373	15.8730
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 hours: Awards Given	1935.00	15.5039	84.4961	3.2041	96.7959
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 Hours: Total Hours	47216.00	15.4482	84.5518	3.1578	96.8422
Time-Off Awards 21 - 30 Hours: Average Hours	24.40	24.3133	24.4171	24.0484	24.4127
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 hours: Awards Given	4834.00	15.9082	84.0918	2.9375	97.0625
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 Hours: Total Hours	183099.00	16.0318	83.9682	2.9208	97.0792
Time-Off Awards 31 - 40 Hours: Average Hours	37.88	38.1717	37.8216	37.6620	37.8838
Time-Off Awards 41 or more Hours: Awards Given	391.00	12.5320	87.4680	2.0460	97.9540
Time-Off Awards 41 or more Hours: Total Hours	30615415.00	9.3798	90.6202	1.2112	98.7888
Time-Off Awards 41 or more Hours: Average Hours	78300.29	58605.1633	81122.1111	46351.1250	78967.6397

Cash Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Cash Awards \$500 and Under: Awards Given	45116.00	13.3478	86.6522	2.9169	97.0831
Cash Awards \$500 and Under: Total Amount	14701103.00	13.1627	86.8373	2.8520	97.1480
Cash Awards \$500 and Under: Average Amount	325.85	321.3323	326.5473	318.5973	326.0692
Cash Awards: \$501 - \$999: Awards Given	47032.00	10.9309	89.0691	2.2028	97.7972

Cash Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Cash Awards: \$501 - \$999: Total Amount	35619462.00	10.9431	89.0569	2.1947	97.8053
Cash Awards: \$501 - \$999: Average Amount	757.35	758.1933	757.2412	754.5676	757.4078
Cash Awards: \$1000 - \$1999: Awards Given	137050.00	10.9405	89.0595	2.2977	97.7023
Cash Awards: \$1000 - \$1999: Total Amount	189266779.00	11.0685	88.9315	2.3166	97.6834
Cash Awards: \$1000 - \$1999: Average Amount	1381.01	1397.1617	1379.0206	1392.3709	1380.7380
Cash Awards: \$2000 - \$2999: Awards Given	64209.00	10.9720	89.0280	2.1305	97.8695
Cash Awards: \$2000 - \$2999: Total Amount	146771599.00	11.0735	88.9265	2.1586	97.8414
Cash Awards: \$2000 - \$2999: Average Amount	2285.84	2306.9966	2283.2343	2315.9591	2285.1859
Cash Awards: \$3000 - \$3999: Awards Given	31100.00	12.6495	87.3505	2.2283	97.7717
Cash Awards: \$3000 - \$3999: Total Amount	104315636.00	12.6796	87.3204	2.2364	97.7636
Cash Awards: \$3000 - \$3999: Average Amount	3354.20	3362.1797	3353.0450	3366.4012	3353.9225
Cash Awards: \$4000 - \$4999: Awards Given	13705.00	12.2218	87.7782	2.0503	97.9497
Cash Awards: \$4000 - \$4999: Total Amount	57536409.00	12.2223	87.7777	2.0390	97.9610
Cash Awards: \$4000 - \$4999: Average Amount	4198.21	4198.3785	4198.1816	4174.9929	4198.6916
Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Awards Given	12316.00	10.7990	89.2010	1.9162	98.0838
Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Total Amount	396939524.00	8.2380	91.7620	2.0531	97.9469
Cash Awards: \$5000 or more: Average Amount	32229.58	24586.4977	33154.8772	34531.2669	32184.6147

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

a. Pay Increases (PWD) Answer Yes

b. Pay Increases (PWTD) Answer Yes

VA identified triggers involving the percentage of PWD and PWTD who received performance-based pay increases.

Other Awards	Total (#)	Reportable Disability %	Without Reportable Disability %	Targeted Disability %	Without Targeted Disability %
Total Performance Based Pay Increases Awarded	556.00	9.1727	90.8273	1.6187	98.3813

3. If the agency has other types of employee recognition programs, are PWD and/or PWTD recognized disproportionately less than employees without disabilities? (The appropriate benchmark is the inclusion rate.) If “yes”, describe the employee recognition program and relevant data in the text box.

a. Other Types of Recognition (PWD) Answer N/A

b. Other Types of Recognition (PWTD) Answer N/A

**D. PROMOTIONS**

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

a. SES

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Answer Yes

ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Answer No

b. Grade GS-15

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Answer No

ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Answer Yes

c. Grade GS-14

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Answer No

ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Answer Yes

d. Grade GS-13

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Answer No

ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Answer Yes

The percentage of PWD among qualified internal applicants for SES (0.00%) fell below the relevant applicant pool benchmark. The percentage of PWD among internal selections for GS-15 (10.0%), GS-14 (12.27%), and GS-13 (11.62%) fell below the respective qualified applicant pool benchmark.

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

a. SES

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD) Answer Yes

ii. Internal Selections (PWTD) Answer No

b. Grade GS-15

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD) Answer Yes

ii. Internal Selections (PWTD) Answer No

c. Grade GS-14

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD) Answer Yes

ii. Internal Selections (PWTD) Answer No

d. Grade GS-13

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

The percentage of PWTD among qualified internal applicants for SES (0.00%), GS-15 (0.14%), GS-14 (0.27%), and GS-13 (0.45%) fell below the respective relevant applicant pool benchmark.

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

- a. New Hires to SES (PWD) Answer Yes
- b. New Hires to GS-15 (PWD) Answer Yes
- c. New Hires to GS-14 (PWD) Answer Yes
- d. New Hires to GS-13 (PWD) Answer Yes

The percentage of PWD among the new hires of the SES (8.33%), GS-15 (3.88%), GS-14 (11.30%), and GS-13 (7.81%) fell below the respective qualified applicant pool benchmark.

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

- a. New Hires to SES (PWTD) Answer Yes
- b. New Hires to GS-15 (PWTD) Answer Yes
- c. New Hires to GS-14 (PWTD) Answer Yes
- d. New Hires to GS-13 (PWTD) Answer Yes

The percentage of PWTD among the new hires at the SES (0.00%), GS-15 (0.63%), GS-14 (2.32%), and GS-13 (1.40%) fell below the qualified applicant pool benchmark.

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

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

c. Supervisors

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

In comparison to the qualified applicant pool, triggers exist for PWD among the selectees for promotions to executive (10.33%), manager (15.68%), and supervisor (13.84%) positions.

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

a. Executives

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

b. Managers

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

c. Supervisors

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

In comparison to the relevant applicant pool, a trigger exists for PWTD among the qualified internal applicants for supervisor (0.18%). In comparison to the qualified applicant pool, triggers exist for PWTD among the selectees for promotions to executive (1.32%), and manager (3.32%).

7. Using the qualified applicant pool as the benchmark, does your agency have a trigger involving PWD among the selectees for new hires to supervisory positions? If “yes”, describe the trigger(s) in the text box. Select “n/a” if the applicant data is not available for your agency, and describe your plan to provide the data in the text box.

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

In comparison to the qualified applicant pool, triggers exist for PWD among the new hires to executive (6.94%) and manager (11.75%) positions.

8. Using the qualified applicant pool as the benchmark, does your agency have a trigger involving PWTD among the selectees for new hires to supervisory positions? If “yes”, describe the trigger(s) in the text box. Select “n/a” if the applicant data is not available for your agency, and describe your plan to provide the data in the text box.

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

In comparison to the qualified applicant pool, triggers exist for PWTD among the new hires to executive (1.67%), manager (1.83%), and supervisor (2.83%) positions.

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

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

### A. VOLUNTARY AND INVOLUNTARY SEPARATIONS

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

Answer No

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

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

a. Voluntary Separations (PWD) Answer Yes

b. Involuntary Separations (PWD) Answer Yes

Triggers exist for PWD who voluntarily separated from VA (9.36%), as compared to the rate of persons without disabilities (7.01%) and for PWD who involuntarily separated from VA (1.53%), as compared to the rate of persons without disabilities (0.88%).

Separations	Total #	Reportable Disabilities %	Without Reportable Disabilities %
Permanent Workforce: Reduction in Force	1	0.00	0.00
Permanent Workforce: Removal	4419	1.49	0.85
Permanent Workforce: Resignation	19388	4.78	3.96
Permanent Workforce: Retirement	10668	3.14	2.11
Permanent Workforce: Other Separations	3680	1.18	0.71
Permanent Workforce: Total Separations	38156	10.59	7.62

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

a. Voluntary Separations (PWTD) Answer Yes

b. Involuntary Separations (PWTD) Answer Yes

Triggers exist for PWTD who voluntarily separated from VA (9.98%), as compared to the rate of persons without targeted disabilities (7.22%), and for PWTD who involuntarily separated from VA (2.20%), as compared to the rate of persons without targeted disabilities (0.92%).

Separations	Total #	Targeted Disabilities %	Without Targeted Disabilities %
Permanent Workforce: Reduction in Force	1	0.00	0.00

Seperations	Total #	Targeted Disabilities %	Without Targeted Disabilities %
Permanent Workforce: Removal	4419	2.13	0.89
Permanent Workforce: Resignation	19388	5.47	4.02
Permanent Workforce: Retirement	10668	2.89	2.21
Permanent Workforce: Other Separations	3680	1.29	0.76
Permanent Workforce: Total Separations	38156	11.78	7.88

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

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

**B. ACCESSIBILITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND FACILITIES**

Pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.203(d)(4), federal agencies are required to inform applicants and employees of their rights under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 794(b), concerning the accessibility of agency technology, and the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (42 U.S.C. § 4151-4157), concerning the accessibility of agency facilities. In addition, agencies are required to inform individuals where to file complaints if other agencies are responsible for a violation.

1. Please provide the internet address on the agency’s public website for its notice explaining employees’ and applicants’ rights under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, including a description of how to file a complaint.

<https://www.va.gov/accessibility-at-va/>

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

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

3. Describe any programs, policies, or practices that the agency has undertaken, or plans on undertaking over the next fiscal year, designed to improve accessibility of agency facilities and/or technology.

CFM procured a contract to survey 10 VA facilities with the goal of going above and beyond current accessibility standard contained in the VA Barrier Free Design Standard. Additionally, CFM initiated monthly meetings amongst the various VA services to discuss accessibility issues and on-going guidelines from the US Access Board. The Section 508 Office hopes to increase staff and budget to support the Department’s Section 508 compliance which includes training, end to end testing, and auditing. Additionally, the Office is coordinating with the Acquisition and Procurement department to improve products coming into VA, ensuring compliance from the beginning and not just after the fact. Furthermore, during Disability Awareness Week, the Section 508 Office hosted training on various disability topics. Additionally, they showcased VA technology tools to assist various disabilities at a community event.

**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.)

During FY 2024, the average time frame to process initial RA requests was 14 days.

- 2. Describe the effectiveness of the policies, procedures, or practices to implement the agency’s reasonable accommodation program. Some examples of an effective program include timely processing requests, timely providing approved accommodations, conducting training for managers and supervisors, and monitoring accommodation requests for trends.

Although improvements have been made with the RA program, more improvements are needed in the collection and analysis of RA requests. RAMS was launched in July 2022 with significant flaws in data collection and user friendliness resulting in accommodation fields not being labeled correctly and RACs struggling to input data forcing them to find workarounds.

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

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

Describe the effectiveness of the policies, procedures, or practices to implement the PAS requirement. Some examples of an effective program include timely processing requests for PAS, timely providing approved services, conducting training for managers and supervisors, and monitoring PAS requests for trends.

The implementation of the PAS requirement is underway. The RAMS database was updated to collect PAS requests, and the VA will conduct trend analysis in the future.

**Section VII: EEO Complaint and Findings Data**

**A. EEO COMPLAINT DATA INVOLVING HARASSMENT**

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

Answer No

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

Answer Yes

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

In FY 2024, there were 17 cases where there were findings of discrimination involving PWD filing a harassment claim based on disability. In each case, the remedial and corrective action ordered included: • Training for all individuals involved. • Consideration of disciplinary action for involved management officials. • Make-whole relief for the complainant (to include compensatory damages). • Restoration of leave. • Posting a notice of the violation. • Payment of attorney fees (if represented).

**B. EEO COMPLAINT DATA INVOLVING REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION**

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

Answer No

- 2. During the last fiscal year, did any complaints alleging failure to provide reasonable accommodation result in a finding of

discrimination or a settlement agreement?

Answer Yes

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

In FY 2024, there were 42 cases where there were findings of discrimination involving a failure to provide an RA. In each case, the remedial and corrective action ordered included: • Training for all individuals involved. • Providing the complainant with an RA. • Consideration of disciplinary action for involved management officials. • Make-whole relief for the complainant (to include compensatory damages). • Restoration of leave. • Posting a notice of the violation. • Payment of attorney fees (if represented).

## Section VIII: Identification and Removal of Barriers

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

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

Answer Yes

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

Answer Yes

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

<b>Source of the Trigger:</b>	Anecdotal				
<b>Specific Workforce Data Table:</b>	Workforce Data Table - B1				
<b>STATEMENT OF CONDITION THAT WAS A TRIGGER FOR A POTENTIAL BARRIER:</b>  Provide a brief narrative describing the condition at issue.  How was the condition recognized as a potential barrier?	The results of the PWD/PWTD barrier analysis revealed that the RA process is slow and challenging to navigate, RA is not well understood by managers and employees, and RAMS is inefficient and insufficient.				
<b>STATEMENT OF BARRIER GROUPS:</b>	<i>Barrier Group</i> People with Disabilities People with Targeted Disabilities				
<b>Barrier Analysis Process Completed?:</b>	Y				
<b>Barrier(s) Identified?:</b>	Y				
<b>STATEMENT OF IDENTIFIED BARRIER:</b>  Provide a succinct statement of the agency policy, procedure or practice that has been determined to be the barrier of the undesired condition.	<b>Barrier Name</b>		<b>Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice</b>		
	Training and Support		Lack of training and support.		
	RA Policy		Out-of-date RA specific policies and directives.		
	System Functionality		RAMS lacks usability and functionality.		
	RA Process/Program and Standardization		Unclear guidance on VA's roles and responsibilities.		
RA Process/Program and Standardization		Lack of awareness of RA process/program and standardization.			
<b>Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan</b>					
<b>Date Initiated</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Sufficient Funding / Staffing?</b>	<b>Date Modified</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>	<b>Objective Description</b>
09/30/2023	12/31/2025	Yes			Ensure consistent, efficient, and standardized RA training.
09/30/2023	09/30/2025	Yes			Increase alignment between documented procedures and actual practices.
09/30/2023	09/30/2025	Yes			Improve service quality.
09/30/2023	06/30/2026	Yes			Improve user experience, reduce redundancies, correct errors.
09/30/2023	12/31/2025	Yes			Improve collaboration among different stakeholders.
09/30/2023	09/30/2026	Yes			Improve reassignment outcomes.
09/30/2023	09/30/2025	Yes			Ensure policies, procedures, and systems are up-to-date, effective, and compliant with all relevant laws and regulations.
09/30/2023	09/30/2025	Yes			Create a more engaging, routine, and normalized communication process for all employees and applicants that require RA and for internal stakeholders that are a part of it.

Responsible Official(s)				
Title	Name	Standards Address The Plan?		
Director, Office of Accessibility & Accommodations	Karen M. Basnight	Yes		
Chief of Reasonable Accommodation Services	Heather Ulesoo	Yes		
Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective				
Target Date	Planned Activities	Sufficient Staffing & Funding?	Modified Date	Completion Date
07/18/2024	Conduct a thorough investigation of relevant data, policies, procedures, and practices to identify barrier(s).	Yes		09/25/2024
09/25/2024	Create an action plan to eliminate identified barrier(s).	Yes		09/25/2024
09/30/2024	Conduct periodic reviews of VA websites to ensure critical information regarding the RA and PAS process, including forms and handbook, is clearly posted.	Yes		09/30/2024
09/30/2024	Consolidate email for 0857B.	Yes		09/30/2024
09/30/2024	Fix the workflow that requires administrative closure to be completed prior to reconsideration.	Yes		09/30/2024
09/30/2024	Establish RAMS office hour sessions to demonstrate a RAC using RAMS to complete the full RA process. Consolidate and record these sessions to allow for future RACs to review.	Yes		09/30/2024
09/30/2024	Add date fields in RAMS to allow for tracking of interim accommodations.	Yes		09/30/2024
09/30/2024	Establish a RAMS Help Desk Support team to assist users with issue resolution and management, customer support, and service requests.	Yes		09/30/2024
09/30/2024	Design and develop a standard foundational, mandatory training on the legal landscape governing RA, RA objectives, goals, processes, and roles and responsibilities.	Yes		09/30/2024
09/30/2024	Revise the RA module in the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act (No FEAR) training to serve as an overview of the mandatory foundational training.	Yes		09/30/2024
09/30/2024	Implement fixes and features identified by RAMS users.	Yes		09/30/2024
09/30/2024	Establish a monthly meeting with Administration and Staff Level National Reasonable Accommodation Consultants (NRAC) to provide VA-wide program updates, trends, and challenges.	Yes		09/30/2024
09/30/2024	Standardize key steps of the RA process in accordance with EEOC guidelines across the three Administrations and VACO.	Yes		09/30/2024
09/30/2024	Incorporate reassignment as a topic for RA training for supervisors and employees to bring awareness and education on the advantages, potential risks, and consequences associated with seeking reassignment.	Yes		09/30/2024
09/30/2024	Provide visibility into known RAMS issues and the timelines of fixes.	Yes		09/30/2024

<b>Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective</b>				
<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Planned Activities</b>	<b>Sufficient Staffing &amp; Funding?</b>	<b>Modified Date</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
09/30/2024	Educate end-users on how to report issues that are straightforward and visible via the system or the ORM website.	Yes		09/30/2024
09/30/2024	Conduct a RAMS usability assessment on improving case tracking, search capabilities, access to historical data, reduce end-user burden and error rates by auto-populating forms, and minimize the need for exporting caseloads into Excel.	Yes	09/30/2025	
01/31/2025	Update the RAMS Functional User Guide and subsequent documentation to include updated functionality that is currently missing and recent system changes. Ensure these documents are easily accessible.	Yes		
02/28/2025	Review options for final status in RAMS and include denial as an option.	Yes		
02/28/2025	Include the ability to add an approved alternate RA in RAMS.	Yes		
02/28/2025	Evaluate the utility of all VA Forms 0857, eliminating unnecessary ones such as Form 0857b and Form 0857q.	Yes		
02/28/2025	Ensure all VA Forms 0857 are accurately captured in Handbook 5975.1, contain clear instructions, and have their intended use and target audience explicitly defined.	Yes		
04/30/2025	Develop an SOP to accompany the VA Request for Medical Documentation Form (VA0857e).	Yes		
04/30/2025	Publish instructions for applicant requestors seeking a RA on the ORM website.	Yes		
06/30/2025	Address privacy concerns related to emails being sent to incorrect case files.	Yes		
09/30/2025	Develop a comprehensive communication strategy to inform employees about the RA program. This strategy should include a designated point of contact to lead RA communications, an outreach schedule for sharing information, various modalities for disseminating information, and identified distribution channels to reach as many employees as possible.	Yes		
09/30/2025	Update RA-specific policy directives and VA Handbooks 5975.1 to include current guidance on telework (VA Handbook 5011/37), equipment purchasing, PWFA, roles and responsibilities, defining obvious and qualifying disabilities, and so forth.	Yes		
09/30/2025	Create RA data metrics based on Executive Order 13164, and subsequent key performance metrics aligned with the VA RA Program strategic goals and budgetary needs.	No		
09/30/2025	Leverage RAMS to expand the data collection and analysis plan to calculate and track trends in RA, including approval rates, processing time, types of RA, costs, performance outcomes, and complaints.	Yes		
09/30/2025	Develop a RAMS Corner Newsletter to keep RAMS users informed of updates and changes.	No		

<b>Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective</b>				
<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Planned Activities</b>	<b>Sufficient Staffing &amp; Funding?</b>	<b>Modified Date</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
09/30/2025	Create broad and scalable training content to enable offices to maintain core content while allowing for customization based on their unique needs. Ensure that these trainings build from a standard foundation and comply with policy requirements. The design of foundational content will include training and outreach material, among other resources, and ensure collaboration with key stakeholders through discussion and testing of training materials to identify issues and gather feedback to improve the course content.	Yes		
09/30/2025	Develop a reassignment policy that includes clear and comprehensive roles and responsibilities for all parties involved, particularly HROs and reassignment specialists.	Yes		
09/30/2025	Develop and provide supporting tools (such as checklists, templates, and guidelines) to aid HROs and RACs in conducting the reassignment job search.	Yes		
09/30/2025	Increase the size of the RA staff to provide more support and subject matter expertise.	No		
10/31/2025	Redesign forms and email templates used in the RA process.	Yes		
10/31/2025	Establish an RA Training Academy to ensure all stakeholders in the RA process receive standardized training on RA process and a roadmap for all RACs to follow.	Yes		
11/28/2025	Conduct both a usability evaluation and an accessibility assessment of ORM's RA webpage/website.	No		
11/28/2025	Allow for the usage of existing PDF forms in RAMS to support ease of signature.	No		
12/31/2025	Leverage OPM's classification standards to reevaluate RA roles, ensuring consistent GS-levels for the same RA role across Administrations and that supervisory roles are classified at appropriate levels relative to their subordinates. This aims to promote consistency and fairness in the allocation of roles and responsibilities.	No		
12/31/2025	Develop a standard, VA-wide employee feedback mechanism on the RA process to facilitate ongoing evaluation and improvement of the RA program.	No		

<b>Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective</b>				
<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Planned Activities</b>	<b>Sufficient Staffing &amp; Funding?</b>	<b>Modified Date</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>
12/31/2025	Establish quarterly RA collaboration meetings with representatives across Administrations to address policy challenges/updates, complex cases, and trends in EEO complaints, so forth.	Yes		
12/31/2025	Conduct reviews for RA trainings to ensure compliance with Federal and agency policies and to confirm that the right RA stakeholders have received and benefited from the training.	Yes		
02/28/2026	Include a 'case history' section in RAMS that includes a timeline of the case and case notes.	Yes		
02/28/2026	Develop a mechanism to track an inquiry versus an RA request.	No		
02/28/2026	Provide a website for employees to submit RA requests following OIT best practices.	No		
06/30/2026	Create an actionable data strategy to include data cleanup, data transformation, data validation, and data connectivity with other systems by employee ID.	No		
06/30/2026	Evaluate the feasibility of moving to web-based forms and electronic signatures that do not require PDF attachments.	Yes		
09/30/2026	Centralize the HR job search process to improve the ability to match reassignment accommodations to open vacancies by utilizing a centralized database of open positions accessible by all relevant parties and assign the job search to an HR specialist.	No		

<b>Report of Accomplishments</b>	
<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Accomplishment</b>
2024	<p>VA conducted a thorough investigation on the RA program looking at relevant data, policies, procedures, and practices to identify barriers and created an action plan to eliminate them.</p> <p>VA standardized key steps of the RA process in accordance with EEOC guidelines across the Administrations and Central Office.</p> <p>The RA module in the No FEAR training was revised to serve as an overview of the mandatory foundational training.</p> <p>Additionally, VA conducted periodic reviews of VA websites to ensure critical RA/PAS information was clearly posted.</p> <p>RAMS office hour sessions were established to demonstrate a RAC using RAMS to complete the full RA process. Sessions were recorded to allow for future review.</p> <p>A mandatory training was administered across the Administrations and will continue annually to include the legal landscape governing RA, RA objectives, goals, processes, roles, and responsibilities. Reassignment was incorporated as a topic for RA training for supervisors and employees to bring awareness and education on the advantages, potential risks, and consequences associated with seeking reassignment.</p> <p>VA established a RAMS Help Desk to assist users with issue resolution and management, customer support, and service requests.</p> <p>A monthly meeting with Administration and staff level NRACs was established to provide VA-wide program updates, trends, and challenges.</p> <p>Lastly, VA implemented fixes and features for RAMS users including reminders for deadlines, character limit increase for description purposes, "employee last name" field was added to Pending B Form view, customizable RAMS emails, date fields to allow for tracking of interim accommodations, and more. Also, the workflow that requires administrative closures to be completed prior to reconsideration was corrected.</p>
2023	<p>VA partnered with an FFRDC to conduct a barrier analysis on the RA program.</p>

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

VA was unable to conduct a usability assessment on RAMS, as it is still being developed and enhanced.

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

Not enough time has passed from completion date to gauge actual impact.

6. If the planned activities did not correct the trigger(s) and/or barrier(s), please describe how the agency intends to improve the plan for the next fiscal year.

N/A