



Food Safety and Inspection Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Fiscal Year 2022 Management Directive 715



Protecting Public Health and Preventing Foodborne Illness

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MD-715
Parts A Through D

Part A - Department or Agency Identifying Information

Agency	Second Level Component	Address	City	State	Zip Code (xxxxx)	Agency Code (xxxx)	FIPS Code (xxxx)
U.S. Department of Agriculture	Food Safety and Inspection Service	1400 Independence Avenue, SW Jamie L. Witten Building, Room 331-E	Washington	DC	20250	AG37	

Part B - Total Employment

Total Employment	Permanent Workforce	Temporary Workforce	Total Workforce
Number of Employees	8,639	100	8,739

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

Agency Leadership	Name	Title
Head of Agency	Paul Kiecker	Administrator
Head of Agency Designee	Terri Nintemann	Deputy Administrator

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

EEO Program Staff	Name	Title	Occupational Series (xxxx)	Pay Plan and Grade (xx-xx)	Phone Number (xxx-xxx-xxxx)	Email Address
Principal EEO Director/ Official	Angela Kelly	Director	0260	GS-15	(301) 504-7755	Angela.Kelly@usda.gov
Affirmative Employment Program Manager	Angela Kelly	Director	0260	GS-15	(301) 504-7755	Angela.Kelly@usda.gov
Complaint Processing Program Manager	Angela Kelly	Director	0260	GS-15	(301) 504-7755	Angela.Kelly@usda.gov

EEO Program Staff	Name	Title	Occupational Series (xxxx)	Pay Plan and Grade (xx-xx)	Phone Number (xxx-xxx-xxxx)	Email Address
Diversity & Inclusion Officer	Danisha Montague	Diversity Program Manager	0301	GS-14	(301) 504-7755	Danisha.Montague@usda.gov
Hispanic Program Manager (SEPM)	Denise Lauletta	Consumer Safety Inspector	1862	GS-9	(423) 242-6596	HispanicSEPM@usda.gov
Women's Program Manager (SEPM)	Tisha Lighty-Cain	Consumer Safety Inspector	1862	GS-09	(267) 226-4539	WomenSEP@usda.gov
Disability Program Manager (SEPM)	Damali Carr	EEO Specialist	0260	GS-14	(301) 504-7753	NDEAMSEPM@usda.gov
Special Placement Program Coordinator (Individuals with Disabilities)	Shonda Moore	Program Manager	0201	GS-14	(202) 720-7250	Shonda.Moore@usda.gov
Reasonable Accommodation (RA) Program Manager	Julaine McCabe	Equal Employment Specialist/ Reasonable Accommodation Advisor	0260	GS-13	(612) 852-7708	ReasonableAccommodations@usda.gov
Anti-Harassment Program Manager	Pamela Washington-Brock	Human Resources Specialist/Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Program Manager	0201	GS-13	(1-877) 987-3747	WorkplaceViolencePrevention@usda.gov
ADR Program Manager	Angela Kelly	Director	0260	GS-15	(301) 504-7755	Angela.Kelly@usda.gov
Principal MD-715 Preparer	Damali Carr	EEO Specialist	0260	GS-14	(301) 504-7753	Damali.Carr@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)
N/A					

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

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

Did the agency submit the following mandatory documents?	Please respond Yes or No	Comments
Organizational Chart	Yes	
EEO Policy Statement	Yes	
Strategic Plan	Yes	
Anti-Harassment Policy and Procedures Draft	Yes	
Reasonable Accommodation (RA) Procedures	Yes	
Personal Assistance Services (PAS) 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	No	
Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP) Report	No	
Operational Plan for Increasing Employment of Individuals with Disabilities under Executive Order 13548	No	
Diversity and Inclusion Plan under Executive Order 13583	No	
Diversity Policy Statement (EEO Policy Statement)	Yes	
Human Capital Strategic Plan	No	
EEO Strategic Plan	No	The Agency's EEO strategic plans and goals are included in the FSIS

Did the agency submit the following optional documents?	Please respond Yes or No	Comments
		Strategic Plan available at: Strategic Planning Food Safety and Inspection Service (usda.gov) .
Results from most recent Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey or Annual Employee Survey	No	

Part E – Executive Summary

Part E.1 - Executive Summary: Mission

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is the public health agency in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) whose mission is to protect the public's health by ensuring the safety of the Nation's commercial supply of meat, poultry, and egg products. FSIS ensures food safety through the authorities of the Federal Meat Inspection Act, the Poultry Products Inspection Act, and the Egg Products Inspection Act, as well as humane animal handling through the Humane Methods of Slaughter Act.

FSIS currently employs 8,739 employees and 14 Public Health Service (PHS) Commission Corps Officers; a majority of the employees are assigned to one of the ten districts or three laboratories that are located throughout the United States. In support of the Agency's mission, FSIS employees are primarily responsible for inspecting meat, poultry, and egg products to ensure the products are safe, wholesome, and properly labeled.

FSIS STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION

Office of the Administrator: FSIS is comprised of the Office of the Administrator (OA) and eleven program areas. OA is responsible for providing oversight with respect to carrying out the full mission of the Agency, to include all inspection, regulatory, and non-regulatory activities. OA is also responsible for ensuring that FSIS accomplishes the goals and objectives in its Strategic Plan. OA reports to the Office of Food Safety.

Subordinate components directly aligned under OA: The following two offices are directly aligned under OA and report directly to the Agency Head:

- **Civil Rights Staff:** Responsible for providing advice, guidance, and assistance for all aspects of the Agency's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Civil Rights (CR) programs. The Civil Rights Staff also ensures that programs are administered in accordance with applicable EEO/CR laws and regulations. These programs include, but are not limited to: complaints management, Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), affirmative employment, and special emphasis. The Civil Rights Staff also ensures the fair and equal treatment of internal and external customers, regardless of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), national origin, age (40 or older), disability, genetic information, or reprisal.
- **Internal Affairs (IA):** Responsible for conducting investigations of employee misconduct and for performing inquiries related to allegations of fraud, waste, and mismanagement of Agency programs. IA also coordinates Office of the Inspector General, whistleblower, and hotline referrals on behalf of FSIS.

Program Areas in FSIS: Below are the eleven Program Areas within FSIS:

- **Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO):** Responsible for budget and financial management in FSIS. OCFO leads development of financial policy and manages accounting systems and financial reporting to support FSIS' public health objectives.
- **Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO):** Responsible for information technology and information management for FSIS. OCIO develops, oversees, and implements strategies that improve the efficiency, security and performance of FSIS business technologies, information systems and processes to protect public health.

- Office of Employee Experience and Development (OEED): Responsible for employee development, education, and training programs designed to ensure public health and food safety through both inspection and enforcement. OEED is also responsible for employee engagement activities such as i-Impact, the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS), and the Administrator's Awards for Excellence throughout FSIS.
- Office of Field Operations (OFO): Responsible for managing and administering the nation's meat, poultry and egg products inspection and verification program. Organized into 10 District Offices nationwide, OFO carries out FSIS' food safety mission in processing and slaughter facilities across the country. OFO is also responsible for managing all certification work including export verification.
- Office of International Coordination (OIC): Oversees and coordinates the Agency's international activities related to public health and food safety, implementing the Agency's international strategic objectives and formulating international policies and programs. OIC also represents FSIS with other U.S. government agencies and foreign governments on technical issues pertaining to the import and export of meat, poultry, and egg products to promote the safe international trade of these products.
- Office of Investigation, Enforcement and Audit (OIEA): Conducts surveillance and investigation of regulated and in-commerce meat, poultry, and egg products facilities; conducts investigation of foodborne illness outbreaks; responds to natural disasters and intentional contamination events; executes and applies enforcement of FSIS criminal, civil and administrative sanctions and authorities; verifies that state meat and poultry programs are conducted in a manner at least equal to the federal program; and audits foreign food safety systems to verify that meat, poultry and egg products imported into the United States are produced under equivalent standards. OIEA is also responsible for defending the Agency before third parties concerning complaints of discrimination, appeals of adverse actions, and unfair labor practice charges.
- Office of Management (OM): Delivers a full range of human resources and administrative management services to FSIS. OM's Human Resources (HR) portfolio spans across the human capital lifecycle, including talent acquisition and sustainment, performance management, workforce planning, personnel suitability, and employee/labor relations. OM's administrative management portfolio includes acquisition management, real property and fleet management, supply management, safety, physical security, and information management services. Additionally, the Significant Incident Preparedness and Response Staff (SIPRS) develops and coordinates FSIS activities to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from significant incidents. The SIPRS portfolio is comprised of food defense, emergency management, and continuity of operations.
- Office of Planning, Analysis, and Risk Management (OPARM): Supports food safety and protects public health through strategic planning, evaluation, data analysis and visualization, as well as enterprise risk management and internal controls Agency-wide.
- Office of Policy and Program Development (OPPD): Responsible for developing and publishing all Agency policy. OPPD also develops and publishes instructions to the field necessary to implement policy. In addition, OPPD develops guidance for industry to ensure industry understands Agency policy. OPPD also reviews and approves labels of product under FSIS jurisdiction and reviews and approves new technologies and ingredients for such product. Finally, OPPD provides administrative oversight for the Agency's National

Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection, which operates under the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

- Office of Public Affairs and Consumer Education (OPACE): Ensures that the Agency's food safety information reaches external stakeholders, public health partners and Agency employees. OPACE works to inform the public, members of Congress and USDA regulated industries of vital food safety policies or changes and assesses the impact and effectiveness of messaging and education efforts on public health.
- Office of Public Health Science (OPHS): Responsible for collecting, analyzing, and reporting scientific information. OPHS scientists develop science-based, and data driven advice and recommendations (including risk assessments) for use by Agency decision makers. OPHS oversees three field service laboratories that analyze samples collected from FSIS regulated products nationwide to monitor for pathogens, chemical residues, allergens, species verification, and more. OPHS also provides administrative oversight for the National Advisory Committee on Microbiological Criteria for Foods, which operates under the requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

Part E.2 - Executive Summary: Essential Elements A - F

Essential Element A: Demonstrated Commitment from Agency Leadership

The Agency issues annual policy statements:

- On an annual basis, the Secretary of Agriculture issues policy statements to the USDA workforce. Once they are issued, the Agency Head distributes these policies to the FSIS workforce, and in doing so, reinforces the commitment to ensuring that the Agency is a discrimination and harassment-free workplace. In accordance with EEOC guidelines, the Agency issues EEO and anti-harassment policy statements that include the following principles:
 - Harassment is unwelcome conduct based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, genetic information, sexual orientation, marital status, familial and/or parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or gender identity.
 - Harassment becomes unlawful when tolerating the offensive conduct becomes a condition of continued employment, or the conduct is sufficiently severe or pervasive to create a work environment a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive.
 - Retaliation against an individual for reporting harassment or because of an individual's involvement in an inquiry related to such will not be tolerated.

The Agency communicated EEO policies and procedures to all employees:

- On a continuing basis, the Agency ensures that policies and procedures, relating to EEO/CR laws, EEO complaints process, Reasonable Accommodation (RA) procedures, and the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) process, are communicated to employees. They are communicated through several means: instructing supervisors and managers to ensure that they are prominently posted in conspicuous places in work units; distributing the policies and procedures to the workforce through the Agency's weekly newsletter, *Food for Thought*; distribution during annual Title VII compliance reviews; and discussing the policies and procedures during EEO/CR training sessions and meetings. The policies are also posted on the Agency's Civil Rights Staff's website; and can be found at the following link:
<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/employees/civil-rights>.

- The Civil Rights Staff (EEO Director, EEO Practitioners, and Mediators) is responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the Agency's EEO programs. The Agency's Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPM) are also an integral part of the Agency's overall EEO goals and objectives. The SEPMs are actively involved in various initiatives aimed at educating the workforce. The link for the Civil Rights Staff and a listing of the Agency's SEPMs can be found at the following link: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/employees/civil-rights>.
- RA and Personal Assistance Service (PAS) procedures are issued by USDA (also referred to as "the Department"). The RA and PAS procedures were approved by the EEOC and issued to all USDA employees in FY 2021. The procedures can also be found at the following link: <http://www.usda.gov/ra>.
- The Agency utilizes several methods to inform employees of their rights and responsibilities pursuant to the EEO process, which include: educating the workforce on anti-harassment, ADR, and RA programs, as well as behaviors that could result in discipline. The methods used to convey this information include, but are not limited to, training, postings, brochures, other communications such as email messages, and information that is provided during the informal complaint process. With respect to training, during FY 2022, the Agency delivered training on topics such as the EEO process, anti-harassment, RA, diversity and inclusion, ADR, effective communication, and conduct and discipline.

The Agency assesses and ensures EEO principles are part of its culture:

- The Agency has an achievement award program that recognizes and rewards employees for outstanding accomplishments that support the Agency's mission, operations, workforce, and contributions to EEO/CR and diversity. Further, on an annual basis, the Administrator's Awards for Excellence recognize employees, supervisors, managers, and teams for their exceptional accomplishments in various categories, to include Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA). The Administrator's Award is the highest recognition an employee can receive within the Agency. The Agency also has established the Model EEO Advisory Committee Award. The award recognizes the work unit that demonstrates excellence in informing and/or educating employees with respect to EEO/CR and diversity and inclusion. The Agency's newsletter, *Food for Thought*, also highlights the accomplishments of Agency employees on a weekly basis. The Civil Rights Staff also provides positive feedback, accolades, and other sentiments of appreciation to Agency employees for their contributions to EEO/CR.
- The Agency utilizes annual Title VII compliance reviews, information from EEO complaints, and information from the FEVS to glean information regarding employees' perceptions of their work environment as it relates to EEO/CR.

Essential Element B: Integration of Equal Employment Opportunity into the Agency's Strategic Mission

The Agency's reporting structure ensures a successful EEO program:

- EEO/CR is incorporated into Goal 3 of the Agency's Strategic Plan, which states: "*Achieve Operational Excellence.*" Aligned under this goal, the Agency has established "*Outcome 3.1: Sustain and Advance an Adaptable, High-Performing, and Engaged Workforce,*" and more specifically, "*Objective 3.1.3: Ensure Equal Opportunity, Civil Rights, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Work Environment.*" Under this measure, the Agency focuses on (1) increasing employees' participation in the ADR process, specifically the acceptance rate (percentage) of ADR offers at the informal stage of the EEO complaint

process; and (2) increasing the percentage of supervisors and managers who complete Diversity and Inclusion training. In FY 2022, the Agency established an interim draft strategic plan as it closed out its FY 2017 – FY 2021 plan and moved its new FY 2023 – FY 2026 plan through clearance. The interim plan included objectives and measures that were implemented and tracked throughout FY 2022.

- The Agency’s Civil Rights Director has access to the Agency Head through several means: (1) reporting directly to the Agency Head; (2) attendance at weekly meetings with Agency officials where a myriad of topics such as personnel, budget, and workforce issues are discussed; and (3) attending ad-hoc meetings as necessary to discuss various subjects and issues as they arise. The Civil Rights Director also communicates directly with the Agency Head and senior Agency officials through email messages and telephonic discussions, as necessary. On a monthly basis, the Director meets with the Deputy Under Secretary, Agency Head, Deputy Administrator and/or Chief Operating Officer to discuss the Agency’s EEO program and compliance with EEOC requirements. Further, on an annual basis, Agency leadership is briefed on the “State of the Agency;” the briefing covers all components of the Agency’s MD-715 report to include an analysis of the Agency’s overall workforce; underrepresentation with respect to the mission critical occupations; and proposed actions to address barriers to underrepresentation.
- The Agency’s Civil Rights Staff conducts Civil Rights Impact Analyses (CRIA) on proposed Agency action (e.g., policies, rules, reorganizations, realignments). CRIAs are conducted to determine if the proposed action would adversely and/or disproportionately impact employees or customers based on their membership in one or more of the protected groups. CRIAs also provide mitigating strategies to offset any adverse impact found in the analysis.

The Agency has sufficient budget and staffing:

- On an annual basis, the Civil Rights Staff is allocated sufficient funding and staffing to successfully carry out various activities. The budget enables the staff to perform numerous EEO/CR activities, to include: (1) conducting annual Title VII reviews of various Agency work units; (2) conducting a comprehensive workforce analysis wherein specific barriers and triggers are identified; (3) timely processing informal and formal EEO complaints; (4) timely conducting ADR-related services; (5) providing EEO training to employees, supervisors, and managers; (6) administering an effective SEP; and (7) ensuring the Agency is in compliance with orders issued by the EEOC.
- EEO practitioners within the Agency are sufficiently trained to carry out the duties and responsibilities of their positions. In an effort to keep abreast of the latest information pertaining to EEO/CR, staff members attend conferences, webinars, audio conferences, and other training related to a variety of EEO/CR subjects on an annual basis. The staff also receives the required annual EEO counseling and mediator refresher training.
- The Agency utilizes uniform performance plans for all EEO practitioners and ensures that their duties and responsibilities are clearly defined in the performance standards. Uniform performance plans are also in place for non-EEO professionals (both bargaining unit and non-bargaining unit positions). These plans include pre-written performance expectations for EEO/CR duties and responsibilities. Supervisors are required to discuss the plans with employees on a quarterly basis.

The Agency trains and involves managers in the implementation of its EEO program:

- Managers and supervisors who are new to the Agency are required to complete EEO/CR training within one year of their appointment. Thereafter, they complete EEO/CR training on an annual basis. Training provided to managers and supervisors include anti-harassment, RA, the EEO process, ADR, and anti-reprisal. Information on the EEO complaint process is also posted on the FSIS website at: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/employees/civil-rights>.

Essential Element C: Management and Program Accountability

The Agency conducts regular internal audits of its component and field offices:

- The Agency's policies and practices are monitored through Title VII compliance reviews of headquarters and field work units. The reviews are conducted annually, on a rotational basis, or when a need is identified (e.g., excessive complaint activity, request by management). The reviews include: (1) a workforce analysis; (2) an assessment of internal procedures and practices; (3) an analysis of EEO complaint activity for a 3-year period; (4) a climate assessment survey; and (5) a facility assessment. Once the reviews are completed, findings and recommendations are issued, and corrective action plans are developed to address areas where deficiencies were noted. The Civil Rights Staff monitors implementation of the recommendations and ensures compliance. The work units are deemed compliant, and the review is closed if and when the recommended actions are completed.

The Agency has established procedures to prevent all forms of discrimination:

- In keeping with the EEOC requirement, the Agency's anti-harassment program is not a part of the Civil Rights Staff; the program is a part of the Agency's Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Program (WVPRP). The WVPRP is available to all employees who believe that they have been subjected to any form of harassment in the FSIS workplace, regardless of whether or not the alleged harassment is related to membership of one or more of the protected categories. The Civil Rights Director has no involvement in the day-to-day operations of the anti-harassment program; however, the WVPRP and Civil Rights Staff work closely to ensure that the WVPRP is kept apprised of EEO complaints alleging harassment and to ensure the Civil Rights Staff is made aware of any harassment complaints where EEO claims are involved. The Agency is in the process of developing anti-harassment procedures that fully outline the process for all parties involved (complainants, supervisors, managers, Civil Rights Staff, WVPRP, Internal Affairs, and Labor and Employment Relations Division (LERD)) during the processing of an allegation of harassment. The procedures will be separate from the EEO complaint process and will require that all allegations of harassment be addressed promptly in order to prevent or eliminate the conduct before it rises to the level of unlawful harassment. The procedures will continue to ensure that there is a firewall between the Civil Rights Staff and WVPRP to avoid a conflict of interest.
- In accordance with FSIS Directive 4735.3, *Employees' Responsibilities and Conduct*, employees are placed on notice regarding appropriate standards of conduct in the FSIS workplace; the consequences for inappropriate workplace behavior; and instructions and resources for reporting such conduct. The directive is available at: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media-files/documents/management-Directive-715-report-FY2021.pdf>.
- The Agency has an established RA program that processes all requests for accommodations and PAS. The RA program, which has full-time RA Advisors, is part of the Agency's Human

Resources component. USDA's Departmental Regulation 4300-008, *Reasonable Accommodations and Personal Assistance Services for Employees and Applicants with Disabilities* provides overall guidance for the implementation of the RA program.

The Agency ensures effective coordination between its EEO programs and Human Resources (HR) programs:

- The Agency ensures effective coordination between its EEO and HR programs by regularly meeting and collaborating on MD-715 initiatives and affirmative action plans. The Civil Rights Director and the Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) meet weekly with the Agency's leadership team and at least annually to discuss the "State of the Agency." The HR offices residing under the CHCO work closely with the Civil Rights Staff during the completion of the MD-715 report to: (1) assess whether the Agency's personnel programs, policies, and procedures comply with EEOC requirements; (2) develop an affirmative action plan that addresses all deficiencies and barriers to EEO; and (3) ensure access to accurate and complete workforce data and other types of HR-related information. The Civil Rights Director also provides regular updates and answers EEO-related questions during weekly Management Council meetings that are attended by the Agency's leadership team. The AskCRD@usda.gov mailbox is also available for employees, managers, and supervisors seeking guidance on EEO-related matters and questions. The mailbox is monitored by the Civil Rights Staff and responses are usually provided within 1 to 2 business days.

The Agency evaluates managers and supervisors on their efforts to EEO:

- In order to ensure management's commitment to EEO policies, principles, and programs, FSIS incorporates a standardized EEO/CR measure into all supervisors' and managers' critical "General Supervision and Leadership" performance standard. The element sets performance expectations to ensure compliance with EEO requirements and involvement in implementing EEO programs that support MD-715 requirements. Further, all non-supervisory performance plans include EEO/CR expectations in the "Mission Results" element.

The Agency ensures accountability for findings of discrimination:

- To further ensure accountability, the Agency utilizes USDA's table of penalties to address discriminatory misconduct. The LERD conducts accountability assessments on all findings of discrimination and settlement agreements. Where appropriate, Responsible Management Officials (RMO) are held accountable for their conduct through corrective and/or disciplinary action. Managers and supervisors are also informed about findings of discrimination through email communication. Additionally, the Agency reviews findings of discrimination against existing policies and procedures to determine any systemic or other issues or inconsistencies in the application of processes or procedures; systemic issues could potentially lead to a finding of discrimination.

Essential Element D: Proactive Prevention of Unlawful Discrimination

The Agency conducts a self-assessment on at least an annual basis that identifies areas where barriers may operate to exclude certain groups, and develops strategies to eliminate identified barriers:

- On an annual basis, the Agency conducts a comprehensive analysis of the FSIS workforce to assist in identifying underrepresentation within protected groups. The analysis includes a review of employment and applicant demographic data, complaint data, feedback from the

FEVS, and internal climate assessment surveys to identify barriers. Once barriers are identified, an affirmative action plan is developed to address them. The plan includes recruitment, retention, and career development strategies for the underrepresented race/sex categories and Persons with a Disability (PWD). To ensure implementation and completion, the Agency tracks the progress of the action items on a quarterly basis and at year-end. The most recent plan is available on the FSIS website at:

https://www.fsis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media_file/documents/Management-Directive-715-Report-FY2021.pdf.

- In addition to the barrier analysis, the Agency conducts CRIAs to determine if proposed Agency regulations and HR actions will adversely and/or disproportionately impact employees or customers based on protected status. CRIAs are conducted prior to the implementation of the proposed regulations or action; if adverse or disproportionate impact(s) is found from the proposed regulations or HR action, strategies to mitigate or eliminate them are provided.

Essential Element E: Efficiency

The Agency maintains an efficient, fair, and impartial complaint resolution process:

- The Agency oversees all steps of the informal EEO complaint process; the formal complaint process is managed by USDA's Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR). However, FSIS assists with the EEO investigations portion of the process; this includes coordinating document requests for EEO investigations; submitting complaint files into the Federal Sector EEO Portal (FedSEP); implementing final orders and actions; and overall case monitoring to ensure complaints progress during the formal process.
- FSIS uses full-time permanent EEO counselors to process informal complaints. During case processing, counselors provide written notification of rights and responsibilities to all aggrieved parties. Work performed by the EEO counselors is monitored for technical accuracy and to ensure timeframes are met in accordance with EEO requirements. Specific measures are also included in EEO counselors' performance standards to ensure timely and appropriate processing of all informal complaints.
- The Agency maintains proper separation between its Civil Rights Staff and the legal representation function. The legal representation function is performed by both the Agency's Enforcement Litigation Division and USDA's Office of General Counsel. This separation ensures a neutral EEO process and prevents the intrusion of the Agency's legal representation during the processing of EEO complaints (counseling, investigation, and final agency decisions). Legal sufficiency reviews of EEO reports of investigation is conducted by OASCR.

Alternative Dispute Resolution Program:

- FSIS has an active ADR program that is used by supervisors, managers, and employees to assist in resolving workplace conflict and EEO complaints. The Agency has certified mediators who conduct both EEO and non-EEO mediations (Early Intervention ADR). Supervisors and managers are required to participate in good faith in all ADR sessions. To remove perceptions of partiality, Resolving Officials are designated at the Senior Executive Service (SES) level.
- Use of ADR during the informal stage of the EEO process is tracked by the Agency as a part of the FSIS Strategic Plan: "*Goal 3: Achieve Operational Excellence;*" "*Outcome 3.1:*

Sustain and Advance an Adaptable, High-Performing, and Engaged Workforce;” “Objective 3.1.3: Ensure Equal Opportunity, Civil Rights, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Work Environment.” In accordance with Objective 3.1.3, the Agency measures ADR acceptance among Aggrieved Parties during the informal process. The Agency markets the ADR program to increase the participation by: (1) educating parties during the informal complaint process; (2) delivering ADR training; and (3) disseminating ADR brochures and promotional materials.

The Agency has effective and accurate data collection systems in place to evaluate its EEO Program:

- USDA utilizes the USDA Civil Rights Enterprise System (CRES) (referred to as iComplaints), which is the system that sub-agencies are required to use. iComplaints enables the Agency to enter EEO complaint case information and track the complaint from the time it is initiated until it closes. The Agency utilizes the system on a daily basis and ensures that it contains the most recent case information. The system is also utilized to accurately analyze complaint activity and trends in order to complete annual reports such as the Federal EEO Statistical Report of Discrimination Complaints (EEOC Form 462), No FEAR Act, and MD-715. In addition, when needed, the Agency utilizes the system to prepare reports for Agency leadership, union officials, Agency representatives, and other officials who may have need for complaint information. The Agency also has the appropriate access to the EEOC’s FedSEP database. The Agency has successfully utilized this database to ensure that both the MD-715 and EEOC-462 reports are transmitted to the EEOC in a timely manner. Additionally, the Agency uses this database to timely retrieve orders from EEOC judges and ensure that hearing requests are processed.
- The Agency utilizes the National Finance Center (NFC) databases to collect, report, and analyze demographic data of the FSIS workforce. In addition, the USA Staffing system is used to assess hiring and applicant flow data. The HR office also maintains an automated tracking system for RA requests and dispositions, and the WVPRP staff utilizes an automated tracking system to process and monitor all allegations of harassment, intimidation, threats, and workplace violence.
- The Agency also offers its managers various Talent Management tools to assist with recruitment. These applications allow hiring officials to publicize vacancies to colleges and universities, including minority serving institutions. Additionally, the applications include recruitment tracking features that allow the Agency to determine the effectiveness of its recruitment efforts.

The Agency identifies significant trends and best practices in its EEO programs:

- FSIS uses several methods to identify trends and/or best practices in EEO. These methods include analysis of complaint data on a routine basis; annual No FEAR Act trend analysis; and conducting annual barrier analyses, CRIAs, and Title VII compliance reviews. Once trends are identified, and if appropriate, actions are developed to address them. When best practices are identified, they are disseminated to appropriate officials, personnel, etc., for implementation.
- The Agency continuously collaborates with the Department and USDA agencies on various EEO/CR initiatives and programs. These collaborations help identify trends, streamline processes, and implement best practices across USDA and within FSIS.

Essential Element F: Responsiveness and Legal Compliance

The Agency has processes in place to ensure timely and full compliance with EEOC orders and settlement agreements:

- As noted previously, the Agency utilizes the iComplaints system to capture all complaint-related information. In addition, the system monitors adherence to regulatory timeframes in the various stages of the EEO process, to include the implementation of EEOC judges' orders and settlement agreements. The Agency has procedures in place to ensure that EEOC judges' decisions and settlement agreements (for both monetary and non-monetary reliefs) are implemented in accordance with the timeframes established in the orders or the settlement agreements. When judges' orders or settlement agreements are received by the Agency, the Civil Rights Staff coordinates the implementation of the orders and agreements with the appropriate office and monitors compliance. Monetary reliefs are processed by the OCFO. The OCFO has procedures in place to ensure that monetary reliefs are processed timely once they are received from the Civil Rights Staff. Once all orders and agreements have been implemented, the Civil Rights Staff has procedures in place to ensure that compliance reports are prepared and submitted to the appropriate office or to the EEOC. EEO Specialists are held accountable for the timely processing of EEOC orders and settlement agreements in their performance standards.

The Agency complies with the law, including EEOC regulations, management directives, orders and other written instructions:

- The Agency responds timely to all orders and requests for information from the EEOC. Timeframes are captured and tracked in the iComplaints system. The Agency also has a process in place to ensure the timely implementation and compliance of EEO issued orders. Part of this process involves responding to EEOC orders, hearing request notifications, or requests for reports of investigations within 5 calendar days or within the timeframe established by the EEOC. There have been no instances of untimely responses to EEOC orders or settlements and no remands or notices for failure to comply with any orders issued by EEOC.

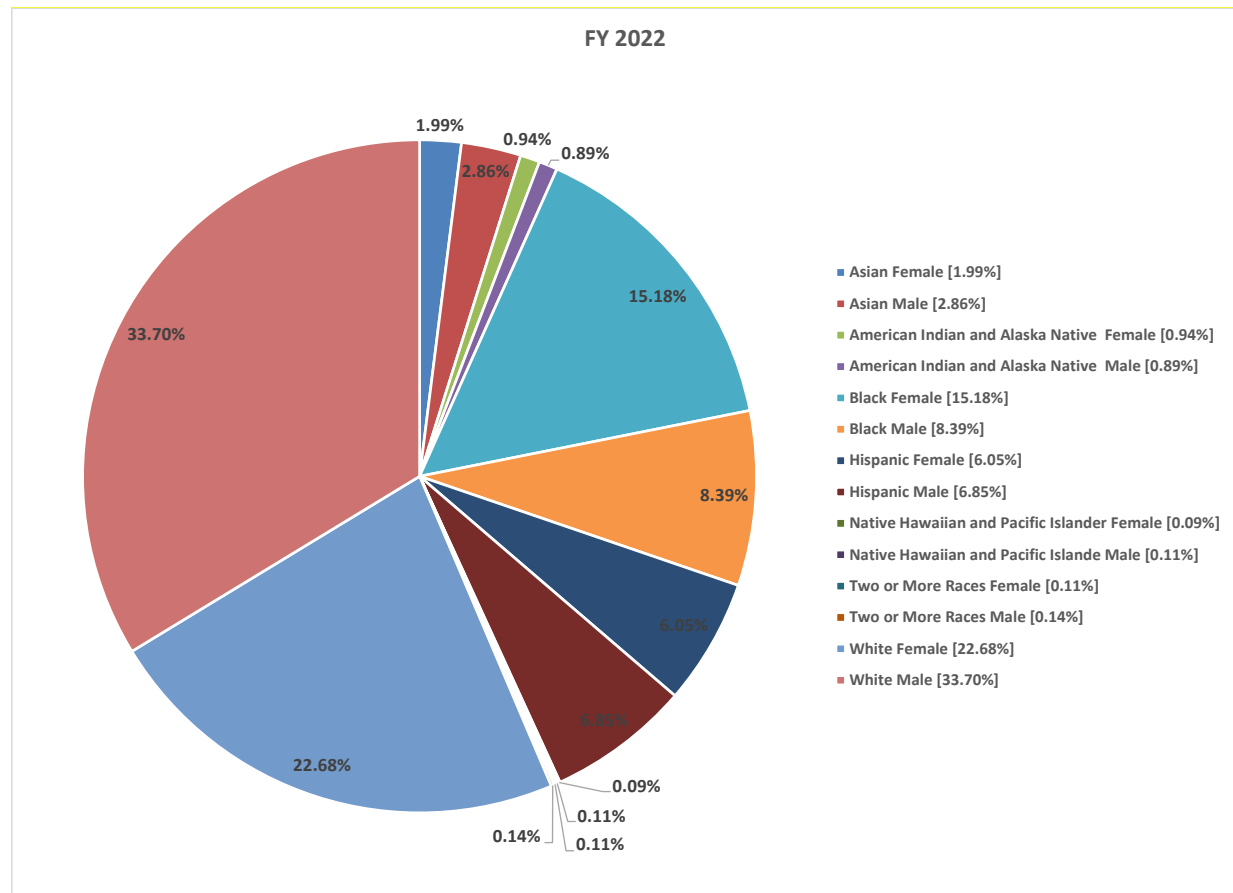
The Agency annual accomplishments and EEO compliance to EEOC:

- The Agency reports annual accomplishments and EEO compliance to the EEOC through the timely submission of the No FEAR Act, MD-715, and EEOC Form 462 reports, responses to technical assistance correspondence from the EEOC, as well as other reports as appropriate. Regarding legal compliance with EEO complaint processing, Agency's EEO practitioners are responsible for processing EEO complaints, to include ensuring timely compliance with settlement agreements, EEOC orders, and final Agency actions.

Part E.3 - Executive Summary: Workforce Analyses

During FY 2022, the Agency's workforce totaled 8,739; this represented a decrease of 129 employees when compared to FY 2021, when there were 8,868 in the workforce. Of the race/ethnicity and sex groups, Asian females experienced the greatest increase (7.41%) during FY 2022, followed by Black males with an increase of 3.53% and Hispanic males with an increase of 3.45%. Hispanic females, and Two or More Races (TMR) males also experienced increases; there was however, a decrease in representation of Asian males during FY 2022 when compared to FY 2021.

Figure 1: FSIS Total Workforce by Race/Ethnicity and Gender (Permanent and Temporary)

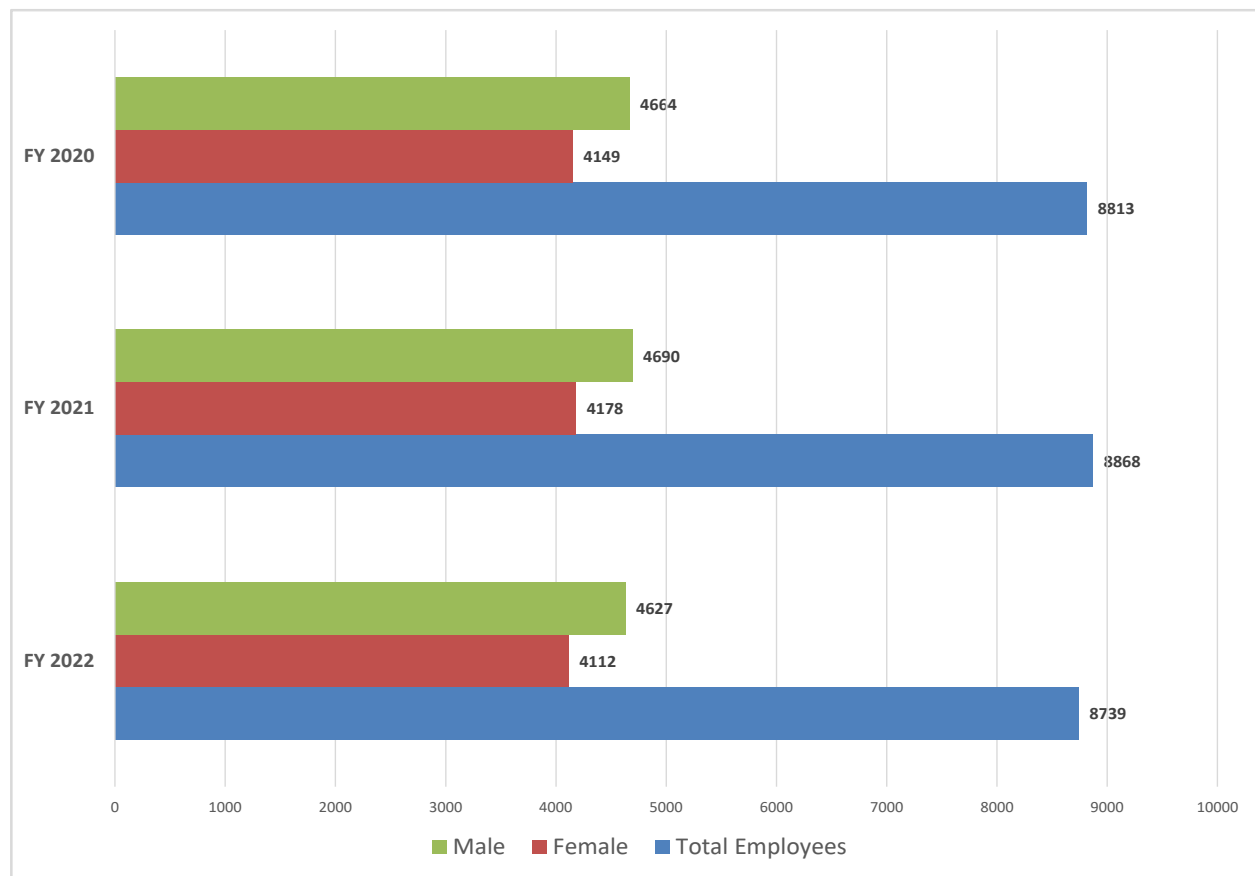


FY 2020 – FY 2022 Trend Analysis

A 3-year trend analysis from FY 2020 to FY 2022 shows that the number of Agency employees decreased by approximately 0.83%, from 8,813 to 8,739. The representation of females decreased by approximately 0.89% during the 3-year period; however, their representation rate remained fairly steady at 47.08% in FY 2020 compared to 47.05% in FY 2022. The representation of males decreased by approximately 0.79% during the same period, and their representation was also stable at 52.92% in FY 2020 and 52.95% in FY 2022. As illustrated in Figure 2, the number of all employees increased slightly (0.62%) in FY 2021, then decreased (-1.45%) in FY 2022. Females as a group were represented below the Civilian Labor Force (CLF) in FY 2022.¹

¹ Male representation was FY 2020, 52.83%; FY 2021, 52.89%; and FY 2022 52.95%. Their CLF was 51.80% over this period.

Figure 2: FSIS Workforce, FY 2020-FY 2022



Further analysis of the various race/ethnicity and sex categories revealed underrepresentation of females (overall), Asian and Hispanic females, and White females and males from FY 2020 to FY 2022. Over this period, their respective participation rates were consistently below the CLF.² When applying a 10% variance³ from the CLF, Asian and White females were considered underrepresented. In Figure 3, the 10% variance and underrepresentation of these groups are highlighted.

² The most current CLF data is from the 2018 Estimates from the Census.

³ In accordance with USDA guidance, a 10% variance was used to determine the expected or proportional range for each race and sex category. Participation outside the range are considered disproportional to the benchmark.

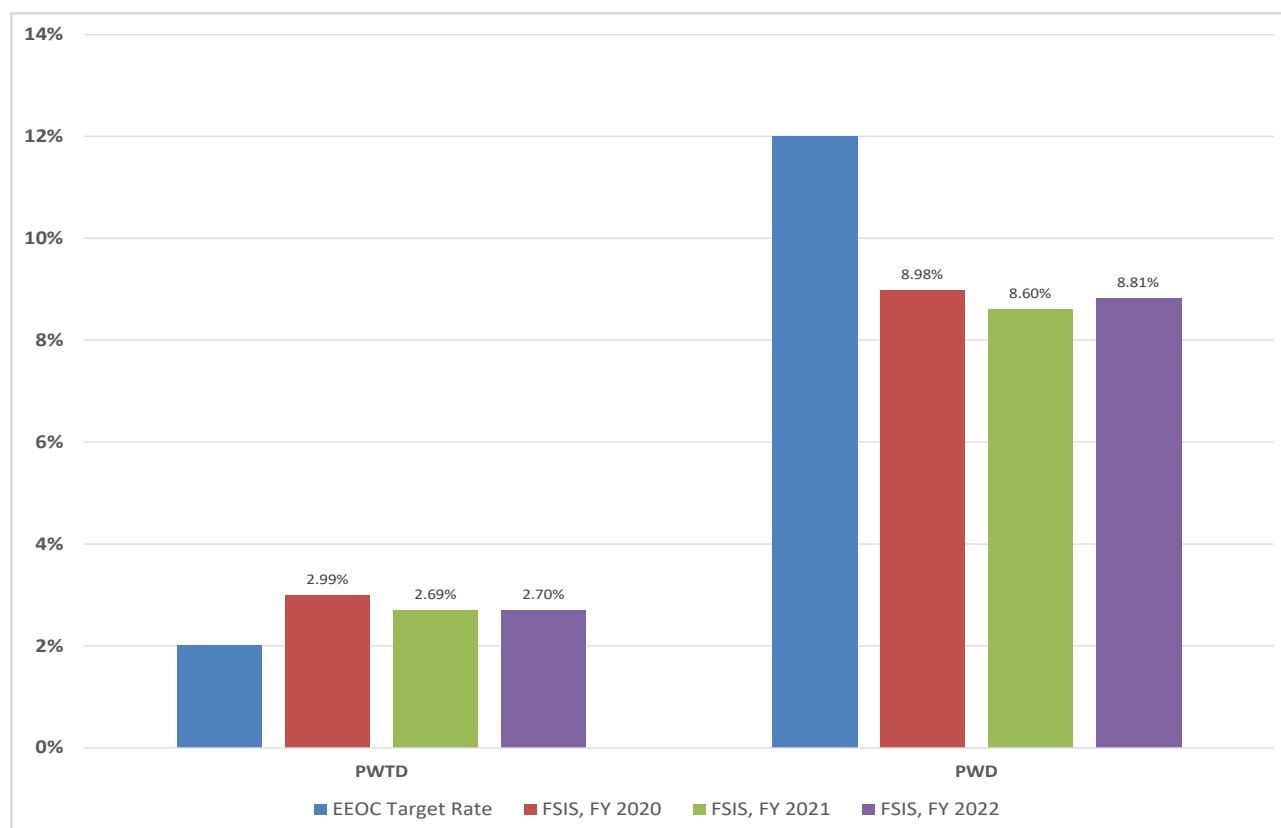
Figure 3: FSIS Workforce Below the CLF, FY 2020-FY 2022

FY	Female		Hispanic Female		White Female		White Male		Asian Female	
	CLF		CLF		CLF		CLF		CLF	
2020	47.07%	48.20%	5.53%	6.20%	23.05%	31.80%	35.11%	35.60%	1.72%	2.20%
2021	47.14%		5.75%		23.14%		34.42%		1.80%	
2022	47.05%		6.05%		22.68%		33.70%		1.99%	

The representation of the following groups from FY 2020 to FY 2022 equaled or surpassed the CLF: males (overall); American Indian or Alaska Native (AI/AN) females and males; Asian males; Black females and males; and NHPI females.

The Agency's representation of PWD remained steady from FY 2020 to FY 2022, ranging from 8.60% to 8.98% (See Figure 4). This was below the EEOC target participation rate of 12%. The representation of Persons with Targeted Disabilities (PWTD) decreased from FY 2020 to FY 2022, from 2.99% in FY 2020 to 2.70% in FY 2022. However, during the three fiscal years, the Agency was above the EEOC's target participation rate of 2%. In FY 2020, seven PWTD were hired for permanent positions; in FY 2021, ten PWTD were hired for permanent positions; and in FY 2022, fifteen (15) PWTD were hired for permanent positions. During all three years, PWTD were hired at rates both below their representation on the FSIS workforce and the EEOC participation rate.

Figure 4: FSIS PWTD and PWD Workforce Representation, FY 2020-FY 2022



With respect to the Agency’s mission critical occupations of Veterinary Medical Officer (VMO) (0701), Consumer Safety Inspector (CSI) (1862), and Food Inspector (FI) (1863), applying a 10% variance indicated the following:

- From FY 2020 to FY 2022, the representation of males as a group in the VMO occupation decreased from 53.33% to 51.10%; despite the decrease, the representation remained above the Relevant CLF (RCLF) of 39.30%. In the CSI occupation, male representation decreased from 57.99% to 56.80% (above the RCLF of 47.40%); and in the FI occupation, male representation increased from 47.99% to 48.20% (below the RCLF of 75.60%);
- Over the same period, females as a group experienced increases in the VMO occupation, from 46.67% to 48.90% (below the RCLF of 60.70%), and in the CSI occupation, from 42.01% to 43.20% (below the RCLF of 52.60%). The FI occupation female representation decreased from 52.01% to 51.80%; however, the representation was above the RCLF of 24.40%;
- Hispanic males were consistently represented at or above the RCLF in all major occupations over this period, with increased representation in the CSI occupation, from FY 2020 to FY 2022;
- Black males and females were consistently represented at or above the RCLF in all major occupations; and
- White females were consistently represented below the RCLF in all major occupations.

Figure 5 provides the participation rates from FY 2020 to FY 2022 for all race/ethnicity and sex categories for each of the major occupations; a 10% variance from the pertinent CLF was used. The groups that are underrepresented are highlighted in red and those that are overrepresented are highlighted in blue.

Figure 5: FY 2020 to FY 2022 FSIS Workforce Representation Compared to the RCLF

FY 2020								
	Asian Female	Asian Male	Black Female	Black Male	Hispanic Female	Hispanic Male	White Female	White Male
Veterinary Medical Science (0701)	1.01%	4.51%	8.79%	5.98%	2.25%	2.59%	33.71%	39.91%
RCLF	1.30%	1.40%	1.20%	0.60%	1.40%	1.90%	45.50%	45.70%
Consumer Safety Inspection (1862)	1.18%	2.43%	15.17%	8.11%	4.43%	6.58%	19.91%	39.51%
RCLF	2.30%	3.00%	6.80%	4.30%	4.60%	4.60%	31.70%	40.40%
Food Inspection (1863)	1.47%	2.07%	17.95%	8.76%	10.66%	9.03%	20.62%	26.61%
RCLF	1.70%	2.40%	8.40%	6.70%	7.70%	7.80%	23.10%	39.30%
FY 2021								
Veterinary Medical Science (0701)	0.78%	4.36%	2.24%	5.93%	2.24%	2.57%	36.02%	38.26%
RCLF	2.40%	1.60%	1.20%	0.50%	2.40%	1.80%	53.40%	35.00%
Consumer Safety Inspection (1862)	1.26%	2.80%	14.97%	8.03%	4.77%	7.19%	19.93%	38.41%
RCLF	2.90%	2.40%	6.80%	4.60%	5.10%	5.10%	36.20%	34.00%
Food Inspection (1863)	1.75%	1.75%	11.60%	10.20%	11.60%	8.80%	20.12%	25.10%
RCLF	1.70%	2.40%	8.40%	6.70%	7.70%	7.80%	23.10%	39.30%

FY 2022								
Veterinary Medical Science (0701)	1.00%	3.90%	8.30%	5.40%	2.50%	2.70%	36.30%	38.90%
RCLF	2.10%	1.10%	1.20%	0.50%	2.40%	1.60%	53.90%	35.70%
Consumer Safety Inspection (1862)	1.40%	2.90%	15.50%	8.50%	5.50%	7.50%	19.60%	36.40%
RCLF	2.90%	2.40%	6.70%	4.50%	5.10%	5.10%	36.40%	34.10%
Food Inspection (1863)	2.20%	1.30%	17.80%	10.90%	12.20%	9.80%	18.30%	24.60%
RCLF	0.50%	0.70%	1.30%	3.90%	7.50%	19.00%	14.50%	50.30%

Part E.4 - Executive Summary: Accomplishments

The information below reflects the Agency's accomplishments under each element.

Essential Element A: Demonstrated Commitment from Agency Leadership

The Agency Head issued the following EEO/CR policy statements:

- Civil Rights policy issued on August 23, 2022 – addressed equity, inclusion, equal employment opportunity, and zero tolerance for any form of discrimination, harassment, or reprisal for employees and customers;
- Anti-Harassment policy issued on August 25, 2022 – re-emphasized FSIS' commitment to Secretary Vilsack's Anti-Harassment policy and procedures issued in April 2021 for reporting harassment, making inquiries, and taking prompt action as warranted; and
- Limited English Proficiency (LEP) policy issued on June 17, 2022 – addressed equal access to agency services, programs, and activities for LEP customers.

Managers and supervisors were instructed to prominently post policies in their work units and periodically review content with employees. The policies were also posted on the Civil Rights Staff's webpage at: <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/employees/civil-rights>.

The Agency communicated EEO policies and procedures to all employees:

- In FY 2022, several methods were used to communicate EEO policies and procedures to the workforce. These included: 1) prominent display of policy statements and posters in all FSIS occupied workspace; 2) electronic posting of policies, posters, and information on EEO complaint filing procedures on the FSIS Civil Rights internet website; 3) electronic posting of RA policies, procedures, and forms on FSIS' HR intranet portal and in articles published in the Agency's weekly newsletter, *Food for Thought*; 4) workforce training including mandatory modules on the No FEAR Act, FSIS RA policy and procedures, and Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. Additional training and educational efforts included Agency-wide special emphasis programs, webinars, and EEO/CR special emphasis programs, webinars, and EEO/CR articles in the *Food for Thought* and in local newsletters issued by individual program area and district EEOACs.
- The Agency continued to manage its anti-harassment program as a part of WVPRP and utilized FSIS Directive 4735.4 and FSIS Form 4735.4 to provide guidance on reporting and processing non-EEO-related claims of harassment. In accordance with EEOC requirements, the directive and filing form were posted on the Agency's website. At the close of FY 2022, 484 incidents were reported; 301 incidents were resolved; and 183 incidents were pending.

The Agency assesses and ensures EEO principles are part of its culture:

- The FY 2022 Administrator's Awards for Excellence recognized employees, supervisors, and managers for exceptional accomplishments in multiple categories including DEIA. Over 100 employees received recognition and an additional 111 employees received honorable mentions. Eight employees were recognized specifically for DEIA efforts.
- Two Model EEOAC awards were presented during the Agency's annual Virtual Diversity and Inclusion Conference. Specifically, the OCIO and Philadelphia District EEOACs were recognized for their outstanding contributions to the success of the Agency's EEO/CR and diversity programs.

- As part of the performance management program, GS level employees were recognized for their day-to-day performance, special projects, and contributions to the Agency mission including diversity and inclusion efforts. The Agency disbursed its entire awards budget and issued 22,000 awards. Nearly 300 non-monetary recognition coins were also issued to employees demonstrating FSIS' values of accountability, collaboration, empowerment, and solutions-oriented performance.
- The Civil Rights Staff provided positive feedback, accolades, and other sentiments of appreciation to employees for their notable contributions to EEO/CR.

Essential Element B: Integration of Equal Employment Opportunity into the Agency's Strategic Mission

The Agency's reporting structure ensures a successful EEO program:

- In FY 2022, the Agency established an interim draft strategic plan as it closed out its FY 2017 – FY 2021 Strategic Plan and moved its new FY 2023 – FY 2026 plan through clearance. The interim plan included the following EEO/CR goal, outcome, and result measures: *“Goal 3: Achieve Operational Excellence;” “Outcome 3.1: Sustain and Advance an Adaptable, High-Performing, and Engaged Workforce;”* and *“Objective 3.1.3: Ensure Equal Opportunity, Civil Rights, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Work Environment.”* In accordance with Measure 3.1.3.1, the Agency reported that 74% of employees accepted ADR when offered during the informal EEO complaint process. This exceeded the target goal of 61%. For Measure 3.1.3.2, the Agency reported that 96% of managers and supervisors completed Diversity and Inclusion training in FY 2022, also exceeding the target goal of 94%.
- In support of Executive Order (EO) 13985, *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*, and EO 14035, *Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce*, the Agency collaborated with the USDA Equity Lead working group to establish a Department-wide Equity Action Plan. The plan included various actions to ensure equity among external and internal stakeholders. FSIS' component of the plan included an action to establish a MD-715 workgroup to identify barriers to equal employment opportunity and develop an action plan to address the identified barriers. Throughout the year, FSIS' Equity workgroup met monthly and monitored the progress of all Equity actions, to include those in support of the MD-715 workgroup.
- The Agency contributed to the development of the USDA DEIA Strategy, FY2022 – FY2026. FSIS representatives actively participate in the Department's DEIA Coordinating Group meetings.
- The Agency hosted a second Virtual Diversity and Inclusion Conference providing all FSIS employees the opportunity to receive training on diversity and inclusion, conflict management, health and wellness and other topics. The Agency also hosted seven virtual observances for all recognized Special Emphasis months as well as an observance in January 2022 for Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and published articles in various newsletters to educate the workforce on EEO, civil rights, and diversity.
- In FY 2022, the Civil Rights Director had access to the Agency Head through several means: (1) reported directly to the Agency Head; (2) attended weekly meetings with Agency officials where personnel, budget, and workforce issues were discussed; and (3) attended ad-hoc meetings to discuss various issues as they arise. The Director also communicated with the Agency Head and senior Agency officials through email messages and telephonic discussions. On a monthly basis, the Director met with the Deputy Under Secretary, Agency Head, Deputy

Administrator and/or Chief Operating Officer to discuss the Agency's EEO program and compliance with EEOC requirements. The Civil Rights Director also provided regular updates and answered EEO-related questions during weekly Management Council meetings where Agency leadership was in attendance.

- In December 2021, the Director and the Deputy Director briefed Agency leadership on the "State of the Agency," and in May 2022, these briefings were also presented to all District Management. These briefings included an analysis of the Agency's overall workforce, a discussion of underrepresentation in three mission critical occupations, and proposed actions to address barriers to underrepresentation.
- The Civil Rights Staff conducted five comprehensive CRIAs on proposed Agency rulemaking and reorganizations and reviewed numerous draft notices and directives to determine if proposed actions presented potential adverse and/or disproportionate impact to employees or customers based on membership in one or more protected EEO groups. Where appropriate, mitigating strategies were recommended.

The Agency has sufficient budget and staffing:

- The Civil Rights Staff was allocated sufficient funding and staffing in FY 2022 to successfully carry out its EEO/CR programs and activities. These included: (1) four Title VII employment compliance reviews; (2) comprehensive workforce and barrier analyses; (3) EEO complaint processing including compliance with EEOC orders; (4) providing ADR-related services; (5) EEO workforce training; (6) administering an effective SEP; and (7) completing all required EEOC and congressional reports. The allocated funds ensured Agency EEO practitioners received sufficient annual training to perform their duties, including attendance or participation at group conferences, webinars, audio conferences, and other training related to EEO/CR topics.
- The Agency utilized uniform performance plans for all 14 full time EEO practitioners and ensured duties and responsibilities were clearly defined in the performance standards. On a monthly basis the Deputy Director held 'check-in' meetings with all practitioners to discuss on-going work, and on a quarterly basis the Deputy Director held 'quarterly conversations' with practitioners to review their performance plans and provide feedback on performance. Final ratings were timely given at the end of the rating cycle. Additionally, uniform performance standards for all non-supervisory positions within the Agency included EEO/CR expectations in the "Mission Results" critical element. Agency supervisors were required to discuss the plans and provide feedback to employees on a quarterly basis with a final performance rating provided at the end of the rating cycle.

The Agency trains and involves managers in the implementation of its EEO program:

- In FY 2022, 132 new supervisors received mandatory training in EEO/CR, RA, ADR, employee conduct, anti-harassment, and effective communication and interpersonal skills. This included an inaugural Hybrid New Supervisor Training Program pilot initiated in the 4th quarter. Supervisors and managers with two or more years of service completed the Experienced Supervisor Training program. A total of 1,566 supervisors participated in 12 webinars through the *FSIS Gateway: A Supervisor's Path to Continual Learning*, which covered a variety of subjects germane to effective supervision, customer service, communication, teambuilding, and work life balance. Additional EEO/CR training was provided to these populations during employee engagement meetings, leadership and supervisory conferences, work unit meetings, and by request. Ten sessions of RA training were presented by RA staff to six Districts and two program areas reaching 284 participants

including supervisory personnel. A training session was recorded and made accessible through the Supervisory Help application. RA training to supervisors was also delivered through a mandatory AgLearn module. Three Agency newsletter articles were published on the topic of RA, and RA staff regularly interfaced with supervisors as needed to provide guidance.

Essential Element C: Management and Program Accountability

The Agency conducts regular internal audits of its component and field offices:

- The Agency continued to monitor the execution of EEO/CR policies and practices through regularly scheduled Title VII employment compliance reviews of headquarters and field work units. In FY 2022, one district office and three headquarters programs were audited. Findings and recommendations for program improvement were issued in final reports and corrective actions plans were monitored throughout the fiscal year.

The Agency has established procedures to prevent all forms of discrimination:

- In compliance with the EEOC requirement to keep the Agency's anti-harassment program distinct from functions of its Civil Rights Staff, the program was administered under OM as part of the Agency's WVPRP. While the Civil Rights Director did not have involvement in the day-to-day operations of the anti-harassment program, both staffs communicated as needed to ensure each program was apprised of harassment filings falling under their jurisdiction, but which were raised in the other program's forum. The Agency continued to follow policy and procedures contained in the Secretary's FY 2021 anti-harassment policy statement, which the Agency Head re-issued in FY 2022.
- With respect to the RA program, policy and procedures for RA and PAS have been emphasized to the workforce for the past two fiscal years, first in FY 2021, when supervisory and non-supervisory modules were issued by the Department to all USDA employees, and again in FY 2022, when training was issued to all Agency employees on FSIS-specific RA policies, procedures, and resources.

The Agency ensures effective coordination between its EEO programs and Human Resources (HR) programs:

- The Civil Rights Staff collaborated with HR practitioners on various programs and initiatives such as RA, anti-harassment, MD-715, and training. The Civil Rights Director and the Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) met weekly with the Agency's leadership team and annually to discuss the "State of the Agency". HR practitioners worked closely with the Civil Rights Staff during the completion of the MD-715 report to: (1) assess whether the Agency's personnel programs, policies, and procedures complied with EEOC requirements; (2) develop an affirmative action plan to address deficiencies and barriers; and (3) ensure access to complete and accurate workforce data and other types of HR-related information.

The Agency evaluates managers and supervisors on their efforts to EEO:

- In FY 2022, all supervisory and managerial performance standards contained a critical "General Supervision and Leadership" element wherein EEO/CR requirements were incorporated. Among other requirements, the element outlined expectations regarding EEO programs that support MD-715 requirements. At the end of the rating cycle,

managers and supervisors were rated either Fully Successful or Unacceptable.

The Agency ensures accountability for findings of discrimination:

- The Agency continued to routinely conduct Civil Rights accountability assessments where findings of discrimination are received either from an adjudicatory body and in settlement agreements where Agency liability was identified. In FY 2022, there was one settlement agreement where potential Agency liability was identified. Case documentation was assessed by USDA's OHRM and the FSIS LERD. The latter office reviewed existing policies and procedures at issue to identify potential inconsistencies in application as well as reviewed actions of supervisory officials who contributed to the adverse findings or potential liability to assess misconduct.
- To ensure civil rights accountability, LERD continued to issue corrective and/or disciplinary actions where warranted. For the settlement agreement where liability was determined, adverse action was taken against the responsible supervisor based on separate substantiated findings of systemic misconduct in the work unit. No further discipline was imposed for the potential liability in the EEO case.

Essential Element D: Proactive Prevention of Unlawful Discrimination

The Agency conducts a self-assessment on at least an annual basis that identifies areas where barriers may operate to exclude certain groups, and develops strategic plans to eliminate identified barriers:

- The Agency conducted an annual comprehensive barrier analysis based on triggers identified through employment and applicant demographic data, complaint data, FEVS feedback, and internal climate assessment surveys. Barriers were identified and an affirmative action plan was developed identifying objectives and action items addressing applicable employment actions. Throughout the year, the Agency tracked progress of the action items on a quarterly basis. The plan was also posted on the Agency's website at: https://www.fsis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media_file/documents/Management-Directive-715-Report-FY2021.pdf.

Essential Element E: Efficiency

The Agency maintains an efficient, fair, and impartial complaint resolution process:

- Two full time EEO Counselors and one EEO Specialist, who was assigned counseling 25% of the time, processed 119 informal EEO complaints in FY 2022. All informal complaints were timely counseled. Seventy-eight (78) of the 119 cases were resolved for a resolution rate of 66%. These closures consisted of 12 settlement agreements and 66 cases closed by withdrawal or where no formal complaint was filed. Eighty-five percent (85%) of aggrieved parties were offered ADR during counseling with an acceptance rate of 74%. ADR was not offered in 15% of informal cases as a result of aggrieved parties' failure to cooperate in counseling or withdrawing from the process during initial contact with the Counselor.
- Forty-one formal EEO complaints were filed in FY 2022 and processed by two EEO Specialists where formal complaint work accounted for 50% of their workload. The total FY 2022 formal complaint inventory was 104 cases of which 56 closed by the end of the fiscal year. Disposition of those 56 complaints included 12 closures by settlement

agreement, 3 by withdrawal, 21 by merit final agency decisions, 3 by procedural dismissal, and 17 by EEOC decisions.

- The Agency continued to ensure a firewall existed between its Civil Rights Staff and its defensive function during FY 2022. The Agency's OIEA, Litigation Division and USDA's Office of General Counsel shared responsibility for defending the Agency during third party proceedings. This ensured a neutral EEO counseling and investigative process and prevented intrusion of the Agency's legal representation during EEO processing. Although legal sufficiency reviews of EEO reports of investigation were conducted by USDA's OASCR, the Agency assisted in this process by ensuring all relevant documentation was included as evidence in the report of investigation.

Alternative Dispute Resolution Program:

- Three full time Mediators provided ADR services in both EEO and non-EEO related workplace disputes. The Mediators used various forms of ADR including mediations, facilitations, one-on-one coaching, and team conflict resolution. In total, 58 EEO ADR sessions utilizing mediation were conducted with a 71% resolution rate. The resolution of those cases when combined with resolutions reached through traditional counseling contributed to an overall EEO resolution rate of 66%. The resolution of complaints via ADR has not only assisted in reducing the Agency's formal complaint inventory, but it has also aided in addressing conflict in the workplace. In FY 2022 and in prior years, FSIS' resolution rate has exceeded the resolution rates of both USDA and the Federal government. The Mediators also conducted 35 non-EEO ADR sessions addressing conflicts and workplace disputes. Training on ADR and conflict management was provided during new supervisor training sessions, Frontline Supervisor meetings, work unit meetings, and upon request.

The Agency has effective and accurate data collection systems in place to evaluate its EEO Program:

- FSIS EEO practitioners continued to utilize iComplaints as its EEO case management system. Mediators used Intellectrak for ADR case management. Practitioners entered information and updated these systems daily to ensure the most recent case information was captured. The iComplaints system was used to track and analyze complaint activity and trends for use in reports such as the Federal EEO Statistical Report of Discrimination Complaints (EEOC Form 462), the annual No FEAR Act report, and the annual MD-715 report. The system was also used to generate ad-hoc reports based on requests from Agency leadership or union officials. The Agency also used FedSEP to create cases for hearing, exchange hearing documents amongst parties, and timely transmit EEO required reports.

The Agency identifies significant trends and best practices in its EEO programs:

- FSIS used several methods to identify trends and/or best practices in EEO. These included: routine analyses of complaint data; annual analysis of No FEAR Act report data, annual MD-715 barrier analyses, preparation of CRIAs, and Title VII compliance reviews. Trends were identified and actions were developed, where appropriate, to address them. Best practices were identified and disseminated to appropriate officials, personnel, etc., for implementation. In FY 2022, the Agency continued to make process improvements, using best practices and trend analysis, to improve its EEO programs. Improvements to data analysis tools were made to facilitate more accurate analyses of a large amount of employment data used in identifying triggers and completing barrier analyses for the annual MD-715 reports and for workforce and employee survey data for Title VII compliance

reviews. These data analysis tools streamlined the trigger analysis process and enabled the Agency to perform a more efficient and thorough analysis of workforce data to identify barriers. The Agency also utilized best practices and hosted a second Virtual Diversity and Inclusion Conference and broadcasted virtual SEP observances for all SEP months in order to reach all employees Agency-wide. Recorded sessions were made available on-demand and facilitated bringing diversity and inclusion training and cultural awareness to a geographically dispersed workforce.

- In collaboration with other USDA agencies, FSIS was part of several teams that worked on numerous EEO-related initiatives. These included: supporting USDA's Equity Leads Working Group with implementing EO 13985 and 14035; developing a new agency head assessment to evaluate the civil rights performance of USDA sub-agency leaders; developing and establishing a USDA-wide DEIA strategic plan; and assisting with the pending deployment of a new EEO complaint tracking system.

Essential Element F: Responsiveness and Legal Compliance

The Agency has processes in place to ensure timely and full compliance with EEOC orders and settlement agreements:

- Agency EEO Practitioners utilized iComplaints to capture and track the processing of all complaint-related information. The system monitored Agency adherence to regulatory timeframes in various stages of the EEO process including implementation of EEOC judges' orders and settlement agreements. During FY 2022, the Agency ensured EEOC judges' decisions and settlement agreements for monetary and non-monetary relief were documented and implemented in accordance with timeframes set forth in the documents. When judges' orders or settlement agreements were received, the Agency timely coordinated implementation of orders and agreements with appropriate offices and monitored compliance. All orders and agreements for monetary relief were timely submitted to the OCFO for processing. Once orders and agreements were implemented, the Agency prepared reports containing documented proof of compliance which were timely distributed to the appropriate parties. EEO practitioners were held accountable through performance standards for the timely and accurate processing of EEOC orders and settlement agreements.

The Agency complies with the law, including EEOC regulations, management directives, orders and other written instructions:

- The Agency continued to adhere to EEOC regulations in all stages of EEO complaint processing under its area of responsibility. All adjudication, settlement, and compliance orders and requests for information from the EEOC were implemented and responded to by the Agency in a timely manner. No remand orders or notices of noncompliance were issued by EEOC.

The Agency annual accomplishments and EEO compliance to EEOC:

- The Agency timely submitted the following reports:
 - EEOC Form 462 for FY 2021 was submitted on November 5, 2021.
 - No FEAR Act report for FY 2021 was submitted on January 19, 2022,

and quarterly No FEAR Act data was posted at:

<https://www.usda.gov/nofear/agencies>.

- MD 715 for FY 2021 was submitted on June 21, 2022, and posted on the FSIS internet site at

https://www.fsis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media_file/documents/Management-Directive-715-Report-FY2021.pdf.

- With respect to legal compliance with EEO complaint processing, Agency EEO practitioners were responsible for processing EEO complaints, to include ensuring the timely compliance with settlement agreements, EEOC orders, and final Agency actions.

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FEDERAL AGENCY ANNUAL EEO PROGRAM STATUS REPORT

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

I, Angela Kelly, Civil Rights Director, GS-0260-15 am the
 (Insert name above) (Insert official title/series/grade above)

Principal EEO
Director/Official for

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food Safety and Inspection Service

(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.

ANGELA KELLY Digitally signed by ANGELA KELLY
Date: 2023.02.01 13:08:13 -05'00'

Signature of Principal EEO Director/Official

Date

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

PAUL KIECKER

Digitally signed by PAUL KIECKER
Date: 2023.02.01 14:20:53 -05'00'

Signature of Agency Head or Agency Head Designee



Date

USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service

For period covering October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022

Agency Self-Assessment Checklist



Essential Element: A Demonstrated Commitment From Agency Leadership

 Compliance Indicator		Measure Has Been Met			For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report
 Measures		Yes	No	N/A	
	A.1. The agency issues an effective, up-to-date EEO policy statement.				
	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)]	X			FSIS issued an electronic memorandum Dated June 8, 2022, fully adopting USDA's Civil Rights policy statement.
	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)] If the EEO policy statement covers any additional bases (e.g., marital status, veteran status and political affiliation), please list them in the comments column.	X			

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Agency Self-Assessment Checklist

 Compliance Indicator		Measure Has Been Met			
 Measures		Yes	No	N/A	For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report
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)]		X			
A.2.a.2. Reasonable accommodation procedures? [see 29 CFR § 1614.203(d)(3)]		X			
A.2.b. Does the agency prominently post the following information throughout the workplace and on its public website?		X			
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)]		X			
A.2.b.2. Written materials concerning the EEO program, laws, policy statements, and the operation of the EEO complaint process? [see 29 CFR § 1614.102(b)(5)]		X			
A.2.b.3. Reasonable accommodation procedures? [see 29 CFR § 1614.203(d)(3)(i)] If so, please provide the internet address in the comment's column.		X			https://www.usda.gov/ra/how-obtain-services
A.2.c. Does the agency inform its employees about the following topics?					
A.2.c.1. EEO complaint process? [see 29 CFR §§ 1614.102(a)(12) and 1614.102(b)(5)] If "yes", please provide how often and how such training is delivered.		X			Annually
A.2.c.2. ADR process? [see MD-110, Ch. 3(II)(C)] If "yes", please provide how often.		X			Annually
A.2.c.3. Reasonable accommodation program? [see 29 CFR § 1614.203(d)(7)(ii)(C)] If "yes", please provide how often.		X			Annually
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.		X			Annually
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.		X			Annually

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Agency Self-Assessment Checklist



 Compliance Indicator		Measure Has Been Met			For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report
Measures		Yes	No	N/A	
	A.3. The agency assesses and ensures EEO principles are part of its culture.	X			Recognition is provided through (1) the Agency's Administrator's Award for Excellence in "Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility"; and the Model EEOAC Award.
	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]	X			

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Agency Self-Assessment Checklist



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

 Compliance Indicator		Measure Has Been Met			For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report
 Measures		Yes	No	N/A	
	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.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)]	X			
	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.			X	
	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)]	X			
	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]	X			
	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 comment's column.	X			"State of the Agency" briefing was delivered to Agency leadership (FSIS Administrator, Deputy Administrator, Assistant Administrators, and District Managers) numerous times during FY 2022. Specifically, during leadership meetings and during one-on-one meetings with District Managers.
	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)]	X			

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Agency Self-Assessment Checklist

 Compliance Indicator		Measure Has Been Met			For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report
 Measures		Yes	No	N/A	
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)] If not, identify the office with this authority in the comment's column.		X			
B.2.b. Is the EEO Director responsible for overseeing the completion of EEO counseling? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(c)(4)]		X			
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.]				X	USDA's Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (OASCR) is responsible for performing this function.
B.2.d. Is the EEO Director responsible for overseeing the timely issuance of final agency decisions? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(c)(5)] [This question may not be applicable for certain subordinate level components.]				X	OASCR is responsible for performing this function.
B.2.e. Is the EEO Director responsible for ensuring compliance with EEOC orders? [see 29 CFR §§ 1614.102(e); 1614.502]		X			
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)]		X			
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); (c)(3)]		X			

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Agency Self-Assessment Checklist

 Compliance Indicator		Measure Has Been Met			For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report
 Measures		Yes	No	N/A	
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)]		X			
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 comment's column.		X			Objective 3.1.3 - Ensure Equal Opportunity, Civil Rights, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Work Environment. Measure 3.1.3.1 - Percentage of ADR acceptance rate for informal EEO complaints. Measure 3.1.3.2 - Percentage of supervisors and managers who complete Diversity and Inclusion training.

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Agency Self-Assessment Checklist

 Compliance Indicator		Measure Has Been Met			For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report
 Measures		Yes	No	N/A	
	B.4. The agency has sufficient budget and staffing to support the success of its EEO program.				
	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)]	X			
	B.4.a.10. to effectively manage its reasonable accommodation program? [see 29 CFR §1614.203(d)(4)(ii)]	X			
	B.4.a.11. to ensure timely and complete compliance with EEOC orders? [see MD-715, II(E)]	X			
	B.4.a.2. to enable the agency to conduct a thorough barrier analysis of its workforce? [see MD-715, II(B)]	X			
	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)]	X			
	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.	X			
	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)]	X			
	B.4.a.6. to publish and distribute EEO materials (e.g. harassment policies, EEO posters, reasonable accommodations procedures)? [see MD-715, II(B)]	X			
	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.	X			
	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]	X			
	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]	X			
	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)]	X			
	B.4.c. Are the duties and responsibilities of EEO officials clearly defined? [see MD-110, Ch. 1(III)(A), 2(III), & 6(III)]	X			
	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?	X			
	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)(C) of MD-110?	X			

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Agency Self-Assessment Checklist



 Compliance Indicator		Measure Has Been Met			For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report
 Measures		Yes	No	N/A	
	B.5. The agency recruits, hires, develops, and retains supervisors and managers who have effective managerial, communications, and interpersonal skills				
	B.5.a. Pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.102(a)(5), have all managers and supervisors received orientation, training, and advice on their responsibilities under the following areas under the agency EEO program:				
	B.5.a.1. EEO complaint process? [see MD-715(II)(B)]	X			
	B.5.a.2. Reasonable Accommodation Procedures? [see 29 CFR § 1614.102(d)(3)]	X			
	B.5.a.3. Anti-harassment policy? [see MD-715(II)(B)]	X			
	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)]	X			
	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)(E)]	X			
 Compliance Indicator		Measure Has Been Met			For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report
 Measures		Yes	No	N/A	
	B.6. The agency involves managers in the implementation of its EEO program.				
	B.6.a. Are senior managers involved in the implementation of Special Emphasis Programs? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]	X			
	B.6.b. Do senior managers participate in the barrier analysis process? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]	X			
	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]	X			
	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)]	X			

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Agency Self-Assessment Checklist



Essential Element: C Management and Program Accountability

 Compliance Indicator		Measure Has Been Met			For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report
 Measures		Yes	No	N/A	
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		X			During FY 2022, four Title VII compliance reviews were conducted of field and headquarters components. The work units that were reviewed were: Office of Field Operations – Headquarters (OFO-HQ), OCIO, OPACE, and OFO Springdale District. The reviews were conducted during the course of fiscal year.
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.		X			Annually. During FY 2022, four Title VII compliance reviews were conducted of field and headquarters components. The work units that were reviewed were: OFO-HQ, OCIO, OPACE; and OFO Springdale District. The reviews were conducted during the course of fiscal year.
C.1.c. Do the component and field offices make reasonable efforts to comply with the recommendations of the field audit? [see MD-715, II(C)]		X			

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 Compliance Indicator		Measure Has Been Met			For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report
 Measures		Yes	No	N/A	
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)]		X			
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]		X			
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)]		X			
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)]		X			
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.]		X			
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 Complainant v. Dep't of Veterans Affairs, EEOC Appeal No. 0120123232 (May 21, 2015); Complainant v. Dep't of Defense (Defense Commissary Agency), EEOC Appeal No. 0120130331 (May 29, 2015)] If "no", please provide the percentage of timely-processed inquiries in the comments column.		X			
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)]		X			
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)]		X			
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)]		X			
C.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)]		X			
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)]		X			
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)]		X			
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.		X			
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)]		X			

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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.		X			Reasonable Accommodation (usda.gov)
	Compliance Indicator				For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report
	Measures	C.3. The agency evaluates managers and supervisors on their efforts to ensure equal employment opportunity.			
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?		X			
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]		X			
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)]		X			
C.3.b.3. Ensure a workplace that is free from all forms of discrimination, including harassment and retaliation? [see MD-715, II(C)]		X			
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]		X			
C.3.b.5. Provide religious accommodations when such accommodations do not cause an undue hardship? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(a)(7)]		X			
C.3.b.6. Provide disability accommodations when such accommodations do not cause an undue hardship? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(a)(8)]		X			
C.3.b.7. Support the EEO program in identifying and removing barriers to equal opportunity?. [see MD-715, II(C)]		X			
C.3.b.8. Support the anti-harassment program in investigating and correcting harassing conduct?. [see Enforcement Guidance, V.C.2]		X			
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)]		X			
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)]		X			
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)]		X			

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Agency Self-Assessment Checklist

 Compliance Indicator		Measure Has Been Met			For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report
 Measures		Yes	No	N/A	
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)]		X			
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]		X			
C.4.c. Does the EEO office have timely access to accurate and complete data (e.g., demographic data for the workforce, applicants, training programs, etc.) required to prepare the MD-715 workforce data tables? [see 29 CFR §1614.601(a)]		X			
C.4.d. Does the HR office timely provide the EEO office with access to other data (e.g., exit interview data, climate assessment surveys, and grievance data), upon request? [see MD-715, II(C)]		X			
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)]		X			
C.4.e.2. Develop and/or conduct outreach and recruiting initiatives? [see MD-715, II(C)]		X			
C.4.e.3. Develop and/or provide training for managers and employees? [see MD-715, II(C)]		X			
C.4.e.4. Identify and remove barriers to equal opportunity in the workplace? [see MD-715, II(C)]		X			
C.4.e.5. Assist in preparing the MD-715 report? [see MD-715, II(C)]		X			

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Agency Self-Assessment Checklist

 Compliance Indicator		Measure Has Been Met		N/A	For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report
 Measures		Yes	No		
C.5.a. Does the agency have a disciplinary policy and/or table of penalties that covers discriminatory conduct? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(a)(6); see also Douglas v. Veterans Administration, 5 MSPR 280 (1981)]		X			
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.	C.5. Following a finding of discrimination, the agency explores whether it should take a disciplinary action.	X		N/A	During FY 2022, there were no findings of discrimination with the Agency.
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 (e.g., post mortem to discuss lessons learned)? [see MD-715, II(C)]		X			

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 Compliance Indicator		Measure Has Been Met			For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report
 Measures		Yes	No	N/A	
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 comment’s column.		X			Weekly meetings between Civil Rights Director and Agency leadership; monthly meetings with the Agency Head; and annual meetings between the Civil Rights Director and Program Heads
C.6.b. Are EEO officials readily available to answer managers’ and supervisors’ questions or concerns? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]		X			

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Essential Element: D Proactive Prevention

 Compliance Indicator		Measure Has Been Met			For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report
 Measures		Yes	No	N/A	
	D.1. The agency conducts a reasonable assessment to monitor progress towards achieving equal employment opportunity throughout the year.				
	D.1.a. Does the agency have a process for identifying triggers in the workplace? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]	X			
	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; and/or external special interest groups? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]	X			
	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 29 CFR §1614.203(d)(1)(iii)(C)]	X			
 Compliance Indicator		Measure Has Been Met			For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report
 Measures		Yes	No	N/A	
	D.2. The agency identifies areas where barriers may exclude EEO groups (reasonable basis to act.)				
	D.2.a. Does the agency have a process for analyzing the identified triggers to find possible barriers? [see MD-715, (II)(B)]	X			
	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)]	X			
	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)]	X			
	D.2.d. Does the agency regularly review the following sources of information to find barriers: complaint/	X			EEO complaint FEVS results; Title VII compliance reviews; workplace violence complaints.

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 Compliance Indicator		Measure Has Been Met			For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report
 Measures		Yes	No	N/A	
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)]	D.3. The agency establishes appropriate action plans to remove identified barriers.	X			
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)]		X			
D.3.c. Does the agency periodically review the effectiveness of the plans? [see MD-715, II(D)]		X			Quarterly
 Compliance Indicator		Measure Has Been Met			For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report
 Measures		Yes	No	N/A	
D.4.a. Does the agency post its affirmative action plan on its public website? [see 29 CFR §1614.203(d)(4)] If yes, please provide the internet address in the comments.	D.4. The agency has an affirmative action plan for people with disabilities, including those with targeted disabilities.	X			https://www.fsis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media_file/documents/Management-Directive-715-Report-FY2021.pdf
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)]		X			
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)]		X			
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)]		X			

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Agency Self-Assessment Checklist



Essential Element: E Efficiency

 Compliance Indicator		Measure Has Been Met			For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report
 Measures		Yes	No	N/A	
E.1.a. Does the agency timely provide EEO counseling, pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.105?		X			
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)?		X			
E.1.c. Does the agency issue acknowledgment letters immediately upon receipt of a formal complaint, pursuant to MD-110, Ch. 5(I)?				X	OASCR is responsible for performing this function.
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(I)? If so, please provide the average processing time in the comments.				X	OASCR is responsible for performing this function.
E.1.e. Does the agency ensure that 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)?		X			
E.1.f. Does the agency timely complete investigations, pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.108?				X	OASCR is responsible for performing this function.
E.1.g. If the agency does not timely complete investigations, does the agency notify complainants of the date by which the investigation will be completed and of their right to request a hearing or file a lawsuit, pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.108(g)?				X	OASCR is responsible for performing this function.
E.1.h. When the complainant did not request a hearing, does the agency timely issue the final agency decision, pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.110(b)?				X	OASCR is responsible for performing this function.
E.1.i. Does the agency timely issue final actions following receipt of the hearing file and the administrative judge's decision, pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.110(a)?				X	OASCR is responsible for performing this function.
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.				X	OASCR is responsible for performing this function.
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)]		X			
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)]		X			

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 Compliance Indicator		Measure Has Been Met			For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report
 Measures		Yes	No	N/A	
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)] If "yes", please explain.		X			The EEO complaint program is managed by the Civil Rights Staff and the Agency's defensive function is managed by the Hearings and Appeal Branch. The Civil Rights Staff reports directly to the Agency Head; the Agency representative staff reports to the Assistant Administrator of OIEA.
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.				X	This function is performed by OASCR.
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)]				X	This function is performed by OASCR.
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)]		X			
E.2.e. If applicable, are processing time frames incorporated for the legal counsel's sufficiency review for timely processing of complaints? [see EEOC Report, Attaining a Model Agency Program: Efficiency (Dec. 1, 2004)]		X			

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 Measures		Yes	No	N/A	
	E.3. The agency has established and encouraged the widespread use of a fair alternative dispute resolution (ADR) program.				

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)]

X

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)]

X

E.3.c. Does the Agency encourage all employees to use ADR, where ADR is appropriate? [See MD-110, Ch. 3(IV)(C)]

X

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)]



X

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)]

X

E.3.f. Does the agency annually evaluate the effectiveness of its ADR program? [see MD-110, Ch. 3(II)(D)]

X

 Compliance Indicator		Measure Has Been Met			For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report
 Measures		Yes	No	N/A	
	E.4. The agency has effective and accurate data collection systems in place to evaluate its EEO program.				

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)]

X

E.4.a.2. The race, national origin, sex, and disability status of agency employees? [see 29 CFR §1614.601(a)]

X

E.4.a.3. Recruitment activities? [see MD-715, II(E)]

X

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)]

X

E.4.a.5. The processing of requests for reasonable accommodation? [29 CFR §1614.203(d)(4)]

X

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]

X



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]

X

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 Compliance Indicator		Measure Has Been Met			For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report
 Measures		Yes	No	N/A	
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.		X			When areas that need to be addressed are noted during Title VII compliance reviews, the Civil Rights Staff provides recommendations to address those areas. CRS also monitors implementation to ensure that the recommended actions are completed.
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.		X			The Agency collaborated with sister agencies to improve equity programs throughout USDA; develop an Agency Head assessment tool to evaluate USDA'S sub-agencies' EEO/CR programs; develop and establish a USDA-wide DEIA strategic plan; and assist with the pending deployment of a new EEO complaint tracking system.
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)]		X			

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Agency Self-Assessment Checklist



Essential Element: F Responsiveness and Legal Compliance

 Compliance Indicator		Measure Has Been Met			For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report
 Measures		Yes	No	N/A	
	F.1. The agency has processes in place to ensure timely and full compliance with EEOC orders and settlement agreements.				
	F.1.a. Does the agency have a system of management controls to ensure that its officials timely comply with EEOC orders/directives and final agency actions? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(e); MD-715, II(F)]	X			
	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)]	X			
	F.1.c. Are there procedures in place to ensure the timely and predictable processing of ordered monetary relief? [see MD-715, II(F)]	X			
	F.1.d. Are procedures in place to process other forms of ordered relief promptly? [see MD-715, II(F)]	X			
	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)]	X			
 Compliance Indicator		Measure Has Been Met			For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report
 Measures		Yes	No	N/A	
	F.2. The agency complies with the law, including EEOC regulations, management directives, orders, and other written instructions.				
	F.2.a. Does the agency timely respond and fully comply with EEOC orders? [see 29 CFR §1614.502; MD-715, II(E)]	X			
	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)]	X			
	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]	X			
	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)]			X	Performed by OASCR
	F.2.a.4. Pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.502, does the agency promptly provide EEOC with the required documentation for completing compliance?	X			

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 Compliance Indicator		Measure Has Been Met			For all unmet measures, provide a brief explanation in the space below or complete and attach an EEOC FORM 715-01 PART H to the agency's status report
 Measures		Yes	No	N/A	
	F.3. The agency reports to EEOC its program efforts and accomplishments.				
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)]		X			
F.3.b. Does the agency timely post on its public webpage its quarterly No FEAR Act data? [see 29 CFR §1614.703(d)]		X			

Essential Element: O Other

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Plan to Attain Essential Elements

Part H

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

Describe the status of each plan the agency has implemented to correct deficiencies in the EEO program.

☐ If the agency did not address deficiencies during the reporting period, check the box.

1. Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency

Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan

Date Initiated	Objective	Target Date	Modified Date	Date Completed

Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address Plan? (Yes or No)

Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective

Target Date	Planned Activities	Sufficient Funding & Staffing? (Yes or No)	Modified Date	Completion Date

Report of Accomplishments

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments

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

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

Source of the Trigger	Specific Workforce Data Table	Narrative Description of Trigger
Advancement and hiring of qualified and selected applicants.	Total Workforce – Distribution by Race/Ethnicity and Sex (Table A1), Applicant Flow Data from USA Staffing	<p><u>Promotions</u> During FY 2022, a total of 8,835 internal candidates (FSIS and USDA) applied for vacant positions within FSIS. Of those, 4,076 qualified for the positions to which they applied. Using the relevant applicant pool (i.e., total workforce) as the benchmark, multiple triggers were identified when looking at candidates that qualified. Specifically, the qualified applicant rate for the following minority groups fell at least 10% below the relevant applicant pool: AI/AN males (0.7%) and NHPI males (0.05%).</p> <p>During FY 2022, FSIS promoted a total of 772 employees, of which 638 provided demographic data. Using the qualified applicant pool as a benchmark, multiple triggers were identified when looking at selection rates. The selection rate for the following groups fell at least 10% below the rate of qualified applicants: Black males (selection rate 10.0%); Black females (14.6%); Asian males (3.0%); and AI/AN females (0.3%).</p> <p><u>New Hires</u> During FY 2022, a total of 8,756 external candidates applied for vacant positions within FSIS. Of those, 4,660 qualified for the positions to which they applied. Using the relevant applicant pool (i.e., CLF) as a benchmark, multiple triggers were identified when looking at candidates that qualified. Specifically, the qualified applicant rate (i.e., the rate at which candidates qualified for vacant positions) for the following minority groups fell at least 10% below the relevant applicant pool: NHPI males (0.0%); Two or More Races (TMR) males (0.3%); and TMR females (0.2%).</p> <p>During FY 2022, FSIS hired a total 925 new employees, of which 877 provided demographic data. Using the qualified applicant pool as a benchmark, multiple triggers were identified when looking at selection rates. The selection rate for the following groups fell at least 10% below the rate of qualified applicants: Hispanic males (selection rate 6.4%); Black females (15.4%); and Asian males (3.1%).</p>

EEO Group(s) Affected by Trigger

EEO Group
Selections for Promotions: Black males; Asian males; and AI/AN females
Selections for New Hires: Hispanic males; Black females; and Asian males

Barrier Analysis Process

Sources of Data	Source Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
Workforce Data Tables	Yes	Total Workforce – Distribution by Race/Ethnicity and Sex (Table A1)
Complaint Data (Trends)	Yes	No FEAR data and EEO complaints data that include bases and claims relevant to promotion/non-selection
Grievance Data (Trends)	No	
Findings from Decisions (e.g., EEO, Grievance, MSPB, Anti-Harassment Processes)	No	
Climate Assessment Survey (e.g., FEVS)	Yes	Employee climate surveys administered to four work units as part of the Title VII employment compliance reviews and FEVS data.
Exit Interview Data	No	
Focus Groups	No	
Interviews	No	
Reports (e.g., Congress, EEOC, MSPB, GAO, OPM)	No	
Other (Please Describe)	Yes	Applicant flow data from the USA Staffing database

Status of Barrier Analysis Process

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

Statement of Identified Barrier(s)

Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice

Based on the uneven rates of promotion and hiring observed, the analysis suggests that barriers may exist that impact the hiring and advancement of some race and sex groups. Triggers were identified among various groups when looking at qualified applicant rates for both promotions and new hires. This may suggest that barriers exist in the Agency's outreach and recruitment programs/processes that are preventing the Agency from attracting diverse qualified internal and external candidates. Triggers were also identified among various groups when looking at the selection rates for both promotions and new hires. This may indicate a potential barrier during the hiring process that is filtering out diverse qualified candidates.

Promotions

A disproportionate impact was identified for one race and sex groups when looking at the rates at which internal candidates qualified (i.e., qualified applicant rate) for FSIS vacant positions. The expected range for each race and sex category was established using a 10% variance below each category's respective participation rate in the Agency total workforce. Qualified applicant rates less than the lower bound of the 10% range equated to disproportionate impact. Using this method, disproportionate impact was identified for the following minority groups: AI/AN males (qualified applicant rate 0.7%, lower bound 0.9%); and NHPI males (qualified applicant rate 0.05%, lower bound 0.1%).

In addition, disproportionate impact was identified for multiple groups when looking at the rates at which each group was selected for FSIS vacant positions. The expected range for each race and sex category was established using a 10% variance above and below each category's respective qualified applicant rate. Selection rates less than the lower bound of the range suggested a disproportionate impact. Using this method, disproportionate impact was identified for the selection rates of the following groups: Black males (selection rate 10.0%, lower bound 11.5%); Black females (selection rate 14.6%, lower bound 18.4%); Asian males (selection rate 3.0%, lower bound 4.1%); AI/AN females (selection rate 0.3%, lower bound 1.4%); NHPI males (selection rate 0.0%, lower bound 0.1%); NHPI females (selection rate 0.0%, lower bound 0.1%); and TMR females (selection rate 0.0%, lower bound 0.1%).

New Hires

A disproportionate impact was identified for multiple race and sex categories when looking at the rates at which external candidates qualified for FSIS vacant positions. The expected range for each race and sex category was established using a 10% variance below each category's respective CLF rate. Qualified applicant rates less than the lower bound of the 10% range equated to disproportionate impact. Using this method, disproportionate impact was identified for the following minority groups: NHPI males (qualified applicant rate 0.0%, lower bound 0.1%); TMR males (qualified applicant rate 0.3%, lower bound 0.9%); and TMR females (qualified applicant rate 0.2%, the lower bound was 0.9%).

While looking at the selection rates for external candidates, a disproportionate impact was identified for multiple groups. The expected range for each race and sex category was established using a 10% variance below each category's respective qualified applicant rate. Selection rates lower than the lower bound of the range equated to disproportionate impact. Disproportionate impact was identified for the following groups: Hispanic males (selection rate 6.4%, lower bound 8.9%); Black females (selection rate, 15.4%, lower bound 16.6%); Asian males (selection rate 3.1%, lower bound 3.7%); NHPI females (selection rate 0.0%, lower bound was 0.1%); TMR males (selection rate 0.2%, lower bound 0.3%); and TMR females (selection rate 0.1%, lower bound 0.2%).

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)
Expand outreach and recruitment to optimize the quality and diversity of the applicant pool.	10/01/2022	09/30/2023	Yes		
Market FSIS leadership development programs to Agency personnel and prospective hires.	10/01/2022	09/30/2023	Yes		
Improve outreach to potential participants for leadership development programs.	10/01/2022	09/30/2023	Yes		
Ensure equity during hiring process	10/01/2022	Ongoing	Yes		

Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
Assistant Administrator, OEED	Soumaya Tohamy	Yes
Assistant Administrator, OM	Frank Mays	Yes
Director, Civil Rights Staff	Angela Kelly	Yes
All Program Executives		Yes

Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
01/30/2023	Establish Chief Talent Management Officer position to lead the Agency's talent management strategy.		
09/30/2023	Establish Diversity Program Manager position to promote DEIA initiatives and programs within the Agency, to include those related to recruitment and outreach.		
09/30/2023	Partner with at least three affinity groups, employee organizations, educational institutions, and/or military and civilian organizations to broaden recruitment outreach efforts and strengthen talent pipeline.		
09/30/2023	Promote recruitment incentives for front-line positions.		
09/30/2023	Disseminate Agency leadership development program announcements via numerous methods that include (but, are not limited to): The <i>Food for Thought</i> newsletter, the FSIS Gateway Listserv, SEPMs, and FSIS EEO Advisory Committees.		
09/30/2023	Increase and enhance career development resources to assist with internal promotions.		
09/30/2023	Implement upward mobility program for field personnel.		
09/30/2023	Issue annual mandatory EEO, Civil Rights, and Diversity and Inclusion training and ensure completion.		
09/30/2023	Provide recruitment and hiring resources to hiring managers.		

Report of Accomplishments

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="407 262 1443 367">1. In FY 2022, FSIS ranked second best among agencies in USDA on time-to-hire, with a 95-day average time-to-hire as compared with the USDA average of 108 days. <li data-bbox="407 409 1443 1165">2. FSIS continued to complement its Model EEO program with its talent management pilot program, which entered its second year in FY 2022 and is set for expansion in FY 2023. The program was designed to improve the quality and diversity of applicant pools and leverage the opportunity to be competitive with private industry through virtual career fairs and recruiting events. FSIS' internal workgroup, consisting of representatives across the Agency, developed new recruitment materials, including tailored "Insider View" stories that provide first-person accounts of different employees' roles in the Agency and how they help protect public health. Through these tools, the Agency expanded its outreach to over 1,400 schools and alumni associations with a reach of nearly 10 million students and graduates and covering over one third of all minority-serving institutions. FSIS also entered a partnership with the State University of New York, resulting in the opportunity to directly recruit for positions within the largest comprehensive university system in the United States by participating in over 10 STEM events. As a result, the Agency was able to fill positions in data science fields and attract those interested in veterinary medicine, microbiology, and information technology. Results from recruitment events, including print and digital promotion in targeted spaces, garnered significant successes throughout the year. Two such events occurred in Dodge City, Kansas, where the Agency successfully recruited and hired 67 new FIs. This staff expansion further enhances FSIS' capabilities to meet its critical public health mission. <li data-bbox="407 1207 1443 1753">3. FSIS continued to use incentives as a recruitment strategy. During FY 2022, 395 inspectors signed on to receive an incentive. Additionally, recruitment incentives were offered to 28 newly hired VMOs and retention incentives to 205 currently employed VMOs. In FY 2022, 75 VMOs received student loan repayments of \$10,000 each. Additionally, to invest in the future of the Agency's workforce, the Adel A. Malak Scholars program, a Federal employment pathway for qualified veterinary students to train for careers at FSIS, offered tuition assistance up to \$15,000 per year for up to four years. In FY 2022, FSIS converted seven scholars of the Adel A. Malak Scholars program to permanent VMO positions and offered 14 new scholarships. Since 2017, 35 veterinary students have completed the program and converted to full time FSIS VMOs. At the end of FY 2022, FSIS approved a referral bonus award incentive for employees who refer new qualified in-plant FIs, CSIs, VMOs to join FSIS. This initiative, which will begin in FY 2023, grants \$1,000 to the referring FSIS employee once their referred new hire has onboarded and performed successfully for 90 days. <li data-bbox="407 1795 1443 1913">4. FSIS' digital presence significantly expanded across recruitment platforms such as LinkedIn, Handshake, Craigslist, Indeed, ZipRecruiter, Facebook, and Twitter. To increase the diversity and breadth of candidates applying for specialized laboratory positions, FSIS shared announcements via its new talent management tool,

	<p>12Twenty. The tool reached 31 schools with diverse student populations, including private and public universities and land grant colleges. By growing its digital presence on LinkedIn, FSIS saw an increase of 264 percent in total update impressions and a 222 percent increase in new followers. Based on initial data across platforms, hundreds of applicants used these digital tools to find FSIS positions, with a notable increase in interest from those in under-represented groups. FSIS learned, anecdotally, that many applicants only found out about the available positions through these digital platforms and had been previously unaware of Federal employment opportunities on USAJobs.gov. FSIS continues to participate in virtual and in-person career fairs, course lectures, and national veterinary conferences to promote career opportunities.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. The Agency implemented various recruitment incentive initiatives providing monetary incentives for hard-to-fill locations and payment of moving expenses to first duty station; monetary incentives with service agreements to newly appointed VMOs, FIs, and CSIs; public transit subsidies in select areas; and participation in the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program. 6. To inform recruitment strategy, FSIS created an internal recruitment dashboard to provide insights into the mission-critical field inspector recruitment processes. 7. In August 2022, FSIS launched the Professionals with Disabilities page on the FSIS website to serve as an outreach knowledge bank for managers and PWD seeking information on disability intelligence training and strategies for recruiting, hiring, retaining, and advancing PWD. FSIS assisted 36 veterans (both internal and external candidates) and PWD with resume building and job searches, which resulted in the placements of 10 veterans and one PWD. These process improvements have allowed FSIS to issue job offers more quickly and secure quality candidates amidst high competition with private industry. 8. To support career growth within the Agency, FSIS developed and published four visual career pathway charts showing possible avenues for employees to develop a career in FSIS. FSIS laboratory leadership, for example, created a forum to discuss the skills needed to develop staff not only within their current positions, but also prepare them for future opportunities including leadership. 9. All supervisors received training on “Diversity Recruiting,” which discussed biases in the recruitment processes and strategies for achieving success. This type of training was paramount to building a workforce more representative of America and ensuring the Agency can best meet the needs of all whom it serves. Other mandatory trainings in FY 2022 covered topics such as cyber security, ethics, reasonable accommodation, and fostering equity in the workplace to prevent harassment, bullying, and retaliation. 10. FSIS launched a new initiative in support of continuous development that permits each employee up to 40 hours of training of their choice. In support of this new initiative, FSIS’ “Help Resources” button on employee e-Devices (computers and mobile phones) launched a new feature that highlights suggested trainings.
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	<p>11. FSIS hosted EEO events throughout the year, such as special emphasis observances and for the second year, a virtual diversity and inclusion conference with sessions on inclusive mindset, gender bias, hidden disabilities, and conflict resolution.</p> <p>12. Agency internet and intranet websites: Continued improvements were made to modernize the public facing website to improve page layouts, search capabilities, and make enhancements to security and 508 requirements. This was to enhance user experiences including improving communication of information and Agency resources to applicants for employment. Modernization of the FSIS Intranet for similar improvements to information and resources for employees continues with replacement by a USDA-wide solution.</p>
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Statement of Condition That Was a Trigger for a Potential Barrier:

Source of the Trigger	Specific Workforce Data Table	Narrative Description of Trigger
Large and small cash award participation rate in comparison to the participation rate of the Permanent Workforce.	Total Workforce – Distribution by Race/Ethnicity and Sex (Table A1), Employee Recognition and Awards participation rates (Table A13)	<p><u>Awards</u></p> <p><u>Cash Awards of \$500 and Below</u> FSIS issued 10,786 cash awards of \$500 or less. When analyzing the distribution of awards in this category, the award rate for Black males (7.3%) and females (12.4%) and Asian males (2.5%) was lower than their expected participation rate within the workforce.</p> <p><u>Cash Awards of \$501 and Above</u> FSIS issued 11,085 cash awards of \$501 or more. When analyzing the distribution of awards in this category, the award rate for Hispanic females (5.1%), Black males (7.2%) and females (13.3%), and AI/AN males (0.7%) and females (0.6%) was lower than their expected participation rate within the workforce.</p> <p><u>Cash Awards by Mission Critical Occupation</u> Consumer Safety Inspection (CSI) (GS-1862): The award rate for Black females (13.0%) in the CSI occupation was lower than their expected participation rate within the workforce.</p> <p>Food Inspector (FI) (GS-1863): The award rate for Black males (9.0%) and females (13.2%) in the FI occupation was lower than their expected participation rate within the workforce.</p> <p>Veterinary Medical Officer (VMO) (GS-701): The award rate for Asian males (1.4%) in the VMO occupation was lower than their expected participation rate within the workforce.</p>

EEO Group(s) Affected by Trigger

EEO Group
Hispanic females; Black males and females; Asian males; and AI/AN males and females (based on overall award distribution)

Barrier Analysis Process

Sources of Data	Source Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
Workforce Data Tables	Yes	Total Workforce – Distribution by Race/Ethnicity and Sex (Table A1); Employee Recognition and Awards participation rates (Table A13); Insight Reports Providing Performance Award Data by Mission Critical Occupation (MCO).
Complaint Data (Trends)	Yes	No FEAR Report; i-Complaint data relating to the EEO complaints that include bases and claims relevant to awards
Grievance Data (Trends)	No	
Findings from Decisions (e.g., EEO, Grievance, MSPB, Anti-Harassment Processes)	Not Applicable	The Agency had no findings in FY 2022
Climate Assessment Survey (e.g., FEVS)	Yes	Employee climate surveys administered on four work units as part of the Title VII employment compliance reviews and FEVS data
Exit Interview Data	No	
Focus Groups	No	
Interviews	No	
Reports (e.g., Congress, EEOC, MSPB, GAO, OPM)	No	
Other (Please Describe)	Yes	Title VII compliance reviews

Status of Barrier Analysis Process

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

Statement of Identified Barrier(s)

Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice

A barrier may exist that is impacting the award actions for various race and sex categories. This conclusion is based on the disproportionate impact noted for some minority groups.

Cash Awards \$500 and Below

In FY 2022, FSIS issued 10,786 cash awards of \$500 or less. The expected range for each race and sex category was established using a 10% variance above and below each category's respective workforce participation rate. Award rates lower than the range (i.e., less than the lower bound of the range) equated to negative impact. Using this method, the lower bound for Black males was 8.4%, but the award rate was 7.3%. The lower bound for Black females was 15.2%, yet the award rate was 12.4%. The lower bound for Asian males was 2.9%, but the award rate was 2.5%.

Cash Awards of \$501 and Above

In FY 2022, FSIS issued 11,085 cash awards of \$501 and above. The lower bound for Hispanic females was 6.1%, but the award rate was 5.1%. The lower bound for Black males was 8.4%, but the award rate was 7.2%. The lower bound for Black females was 15.2%, but the award rate was 13.3%. The lower bound for AI/AN males was 0.9%, but the actual award rate was 0.7%. The lower bound for AI/AN females was 0.9%, but the award rate was 0.6%.

Cash Awards by MCO

When looking at cash award distribution by MCO, several minority groups were disproportionately awarded in one or more of the MCOs.

Black males: A disproportionate impact was identified in the FI occupation; the lower bound for this group was 9.8%, but their award rate was 9.0%.

Black females: A disproportionate impact was identified for Black females in two (2) MCOs. In the CSI occupation, the lower bound for Black females was 14.0%, but their award rate was 13.0%. In the FI occupation, the lower bound for Black females was 16.0%, but their award rate was 13.2%.

Asian males: A disproportionate impact was identified for Asian males in the VMO occupation; the lower bound for this group was 3.5%, but their award rate was 1.4%. However, while the cash awards issued to Asian males in VMO positions may be disproportionate, the total dollar value of the cash awards received appear to be in line with other categories. All Asian males received at least one cash award in FY 2022. They either received at least one award of \$500 or less or at least one award of \$501 or more.

Two or More Races males: A disproportionate impact was identified in the distribution of cash awards for TMR males in the FI occupation; the lower bound was 0.2%, but their award rate was 0.0%. However, determination of a barrier cannot be determined for TMR males because the population of employees in this category is too small.

Two or More Races females: A disproportionate impact was identified for TMR females in the VMO occupation; the lower bound was 0.1%, but their award rate was 0.0%. However, determination of a barrier cannot be determined for TMR females because the population of employees in this category is too small.

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)
Continue to ensure the consistent and fair administration of the USDA's two-tier performance management and awards programs, under which Achievement Awards, Non-Monetary Awards, Quality Step Increases and Recognition Coins are awarded.	10/01/2021	09/30/2022	Yes	09/30/2023	
Continue to ensure nonmonetary awards programs are available to supervisors and managers.	10/01/2021	09/30/2022	Yes	09/30/2023	

Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
Assistant Administrator, OM	Frank Mays	Yes
Assistant Administrator, OEED	Soumaya Tohamy	Yes
Chief Financial Officer	Cara LeConte	Yes
Assistant Administrator, OPARM	Geraldine French	Yes
All Program Executives		Yes

Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
9/30/2023	Administer the FY 2022 Administrator's Awards for Excellence nomination process and publicize in employee publications.		
09/30/2023	Market the Agency's awards programs through employee publications, EEOACs, and SEPMS to promote the importance and availability of employee recognition.		
09/30/2023	Continue the Agency's Achievement Award Program for all personnel.		
03/31/2023	Monitor work units' awards spending to ensure supervisors and managers are sufficiently utilizing awards funds.		
03/31/2023	Monitor application of awards across various demographic categories.		

Report of Accomplishments

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. FSIS continued to ensure its employee recognition programs aligned with the Agency's strategic goals. The Agency established quarterly goals for award spending and closely monitored program areas' award budget execution to ensure all available award money was utilized by supervisors to recognize employees. 2. Agency leadership discussed FSIS awards and specifically recognized work units and employees during multiple monthly employee Town Hall meetings. Leadership also featured related information in the Agency's weekly newsletter, <i>Food for Thought</i>, and posted award and recognition content on the <i>Inside FSIS</i> intranet site. 3. Agency leadership held the FY 2022 Administrator's Awards for Excellence ceremony on September 14, 2022, to publicly recognize FSIS employees, supervisors, and groups for the contributions in nine (9) award categories. These areas included: Administrator's Award for Excellence in Food Safety; Administrator's Award for Excellence in Transformation and Innovation; Administrator's Award for Operational Excellence; Administrator's Award for Excellence in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility; Administrator's Award for Excellence in Customer Service; Administrator's Award for Employee of the Year (In Plant/Non-In Plant); and Administrator's Award for Supervisor of the Year (In Plant/Non-In Plant). 4. FSIS leveraged its resources in OCFO to perform a comprehensive Achievement Awards equity analysis of FY 2021 awards data, looking at award distribution by work unit, location, grade level, race/national origin, and sex. The analysis was presented to FSIS' leadership team in September 2022.

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

Source of the Trigger	Specific Workforce Data Table	Narrative Description of Trigger
Total Separation rates compared to Total Participation rates using 10% variance and standard deviation analyses.	Total Workforce – Distribution by Race/Ethnicity and Sex (Table A1), Separations	<p>Separations/Retention Using a standard deviation analysis, separation rates for females were significantly disproportionate when compared to their total workforce representation.</p> <p>Total separations: The rates at which AI/AN females (1.3%) separated from service were higher than their workforce participation rates. While similar separation rates were identified in the FY 2021 barrier analysis, there was marginal improvement observed in the rate of separations between fiscal years.</p> <p>Voluntary Separations: The voluntary separation rate for AI/AN females (1.2%) was higher than their participation rate. While similar separation rates were identified in last year's barrier analysis, there was marginal improvement observed in the rate of separations between fiscal years.</p> <p>Involuntary Separations: The involuntary separation rates for Black females (27.7%), Black males (11.88%), and AI/AN females (1.98%) were higher than their participation rates. Black and AI/AN females had separation rates approaching double their participation rates.</p>

EEO Group(s) Affected by Trigger

EEO Group
Females as a group, Females – Black/African American, Females – American Indian/Alaska Native, Males – Black/African American

Barrier Analysis Process

Sources of Data	Source Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
Workforce Data Tables	Yes	Total Workforce – Distribution by Race/Ethnicity and Sex (Table A1), Employee Separations by Type of Separation – Distribution by Race/Ethnicity and Sex (Table A14)
Complaint Data (Trends)	Yes	No FEAR Report; EEOC 462 report; iComplaints data
Grievance Data (Trends)	No	
Findings from Decisions (e.g., EEO, Grievance, MSPB, Anti-Harassment Processes)	Not Applicable	The Agency had no findings in FY 2022
Climate Assessment Survey (e.g., FEVS)	No	Employee climate surveys administered on four work units as part of Title VII employment compliance reviews and FEVS data
Exit Interview Data	No	
Focus Groups	No	
Interviews	No	
Reports (e.g., Congress, EEOC, MSPB, GAO, OPM)	No	
Other (Please Describe)	Yes	Title VII compliance reviews

Status of Barrier Analysis Process

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

Statement of Identified Barrier(s)

Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice
<p>Barriers may exist that are impacting retention of various race and sex categories. This conclusion is based on the disproportionate impact noted for some groups.</p> <p>Unfavorable work life balance and pay limitations contribute to job dissatisfaction:</p>

Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice

Front-line staffing shortages and pay limitations may create challenges that contribute to work-life balance and retention issues (doubling/tripling of assignments, mandatory overtime, working the slaughter line to cover vacancies, detail assignments to cover vacancies, inability to retain staff in high cost of living areas).

Prior to accepting positions, applicants may not fully understand work schedules and travel requirements may conflict with work/life balance. In addition, working conditions and other factors such as interactions with industry personnel may result in job dissatisfaction and attrition.

Limited job placement opportunities as a reasonable accommodation or in work reductions:

Medical requirements of front-line positions may disqualify some employees who become disabled in the course of employment resulting in disability retirements or removals since there are limited Department-wide positions to which to reassign these employees.

Work reductions resulting from industry adoption of the New Poultry Inspection System create a surplus of Food Inspectors with limited local placement.

Failure to satisfy training as a condition of employment requirements:

Employees promoted into positions with training as a condition of employment may fail to successfully complete the on-line training and testing requirements; this could result in demotion, removal, retirement, or resignation.

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)
Develop, implement, and advertise recruitment and retention incentives	10/01/2022	09/30/2023	Yes		
Continue transparent communication, information sharing, solicitation of employee feedback, and training within the Agency	10/01/2022	09/30/2023	Yes		
Promote employee engagement, empowerment, and retention	10/01/2022	09/30/2023	Yes		

Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
Assistant Administrator, OPACE	Carol Blake	Yes
Assistant Administrator, OM	Frank Mays	Yes
Assistant Administrator, OFO	Philip Bronstein	Yes
Assistant Administrator, OEED	Soumaya Tohamy	Yes
Director, Civil Rights Staff	Angela Kelly	Yes

Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
9/30/2023	Gather employee feedback from Agency exit surveys and assess for conditions/trends contributing to retention issues.	Yes	
09/30/2023	Issue annual mandatory EEO, Civil Rights, and Diversity and Inclusion training and ensure completion.	Yes	
09/30/2023	Advertise employee awards/recognition programs and career development programs through Town Hall meetings, employee publications, EEOACs, SEPMS, and program alumni to promote awareness of available opportunities.	Yes	
09/30/2023	Implement and advertise recruitment and retention incentives to front-line positions.	Yes	
09/30/2023	Advertise tuition reimbursements for continuing education and training programs available to all employees	Yes	

09/30/2023	Explore flexible work arrangements for employees that promote work-life balance.	Yes	
09/30/2023	Implement the Workforce Investment Initiative Pilot, a program designed to help field employees envision their careers within the Agency.	Yes	
09/30/2023	Evaluate efficacy of on-line training versus in-person instructor led training for positions subject to training as a condition of employment	Yes	

Report of Accomplishments

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
2022	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruitment and retention initiatives: Recruitment initiatives that were implemented included monetary incentives for hard-to-fill locations and payment of moving expenses to first duty station; monetary incentives with service agreements to newly appointed VMOs, FIs, and CSIs; public transit subsidies in select areas; and participation in the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program. At the end of FY 2022, FSIS approved a referral bonus award incentive for employees who refer new qualified in-plant FIs, CSIs, and VMOs to join FSIS. The initiative, which will begin in FY 2023, grants \$1,000 to the FSIS employee making the referral once their referred new hire has onboarded and performed successfully for 90 days. Retention initiatives implemented included government-paid move for geographic relocation for competitive promotions; relocation bonus up to 25% of base pay to accept position and establish residence in hard-to-fill locations on case-by-case basis; paid moving expenses with service agreement to Veterinarians to relocate to hard-to-fill locations; retention bonus up to 25% of base pay with service agreement to Veterinarians who complete service periods; Student Loan Repayment Program with service agreement to in-plant Veterinarians and other occupations on case-by-case basis; family friendly workplace alternatives including less than full time work schedules in select locations; and provision of free EAP services. 2. Continuing Education Program, College Tuition reimbursement: Participation in the program for college tuition reimbursement was expanded to include all FSIS employees who are permanent, full-time employees in good standing with a minimum of one year of service with FSIS at the time of application. All eligible employees may qualify for up to \$5,000 per fiscal year in tuition reimbursement towards graduate or undergraduate college courses from accredited colleges or universities. 3. Agency-wide exit surveys: Biannual analyses of data were completed and feedback provided to programs identifying contributing factors to employee attrition, including those identified by and impacting PWD/PWTD. 4. Agency leadership development programs: Competitive announcements for the Federal Executive Institute and FSIS Escalade Leadership Development Program, and announcements for the New Supervisor Training Program were communicated through multiple sources including the FSIS Gateway Listserv, <i>Food for Thought</i> newsletter, SEPMs, EEOACs, and program graduates. Virtual and offsite training opportunities were provided to new and experienced FSIS employees to satisfy USDA and FSIS mandates. This included open-enrollment programs such as the Learning Trove Program (for all employees), the FSIS Gateway Program (for supervisors), the Escalade Leadership Development Program (for supervisors), the New Supervisor Training Program, and the Experienced Supervisor Training Program. 5. I-Impact: My Agency, My Career initiative: Career journey visual maps for Food Inspectors and Consumer Safety Inspectors were developed and published to the Employee Help site button, and a FSIS Notice was issued. 6. RA and PAS processes: Mandatory AgLearn training was issued to all employees on FSIS RA processes and procedures. A recorded RA training session was posted to the Supervisory Help button. The RA team published three articles in the Agency Food for Thought newsletter, provided eight training sessions to districts/programs, and regularly met with customers to assist with needs.

	<p>7. Mandatory EEO/CR training: FSIS RA training was provided to all employees and Diversity Recruitment training was provided to all supervisors and managers.</p>
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MD-715 – Part J

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

To capture agencies' affirmative action plan for PWD and PWTD, EEOC regulations (29C.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 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.

Cluster GS-1 to GS-10 (PWD)

Answer: Yes

Cluster GS-11 to SES (PWD)

Answer: No

In the GS-1 to GS-10 cluster, PWD comprise 7.90%. This grade cluster is primarily representative of the in-plant inspection workforce where the FI and CSI mission critical positions have medical requirements that may potentially disqualify persons with physical disabilities

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.

Cluster GS-1 to GS-10 (PWTD)

Answer: No

Cluster GS-11 to SES (PWTD)

Answer: No

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

The Civil Rights Director holds annual “State of the Agency” briefings with hiring managers who include the Agency Head, Deputy Administrator, 11 Assistant Administrators, and 10 District Managers. Numerical employment goals for PWD/PWTD are presented and each program’s current PWD/PWTD representation is discussed with recommendations for improvement. Disability employment representation and numerical employment goals are also communicated to the FSIS Disability Employment Program Manager, to each program area and district EEOAC and are identified in the Agency’s annual MD-715 report posted on the Agency’s website.

Section II: Model Disability Program

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

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

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

Yes

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	
Architectural Barriers Act Compliance	1	0	0	Yolanda Chambers, Director Office of Management (OM) Administrative Services Division Yolanda.chambers@usda.gov
Processing applications from PWD and PWTD	35	0	0	Laura Frantes, Assistant Director OM, Office of Human Resources (OHR) laura.frantes@usda.gov
Special Emphasis Program for PWD and PWTD	1	0	0	Tisha Lighty-Cain, Consumer Safety Inspector, Office of Field Operations Philadelphia District Tisha.lighty@usda.gov
Processing reasonable accommodation requests from applicants and employees	2	0	0	OM, Human Resources Business Systems Division, Program Management and Information Systems Branch ReasonableAccommodations@usda.gov John Paul Antonetti, Chief
Section 508 Compliance	1	0	0	Kyna Fernandez, Management Analyst, Office of the Chief Information Officer kyna.fernandez@usda.gov
Answering questions from the public about hiring authorities that take disability into account	35	0	0	Laura Frantes, Assistant Director OM-OHR laura.frantes@usda.gov

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

The RA Advisors attend annual training and stay updated on relevant authorities and information pertaining to RA and disability employment. All employees received training on USDA and FSIS RA processes and procedures in FYs 2021 and 2022. All 35 HR Specialists who process employment applications are required to complete training on Veterans Employment. This training covers the use of special hiring authorities for veterans, including 30% or more disabled veterans, as well as Schedule A authority used to hire PWTD.

Section III: Plan to Recruit and Hire Individuals with Disabilities

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

A. PLAN TO IDENTIFY JOB APPLICANTS WITH DISABILITIES

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

The Agency continued to use a distribution list of numerous programs and resources that serve PWD and PWTD; information such as vacancies at FSIS and other career information was shared with these groups and programs during FY 2022. The list includes the following: USDA’s Veterans and Disability Employment Program Managers, Department of Veterans Affairs Regional Employment Coordinators, Soldier for Life Transition Assistance Programs, National and State Vocational Rehabilitation Offices, Student Veterans of America, and LinkedIn professional groups for Veterans and Professionals with Disabilities and Centers for College Students with Disabilities located across the country.

FSIS’ Veterans and Disability Recruitment Program Coordinator assisted veterans and candidates with disabilities in the job recruitment process, provided resume guidance, assisted establishing USAJOB accounts, and answered questions on veterans’ preference, non-competitive hiring and the application process. The Coordinator also: used the Workforce Recruitment Program and USAJobs Resume Mining to locate and refer qualified candidates eligible for non-competitive hiring to FSIS positions; shared FSIS student employment vacancies listed in the Workforce Recruitment Program database with disabled students which also included disabled veterans; and maintained a resume repository to retain and manage unsolicited applications of qualified veterans and applicants with disabilities. This recruitment tool was used by HR Specialists during strategic recruitment discussions with districts and program areas, and potential applicants were referred to hiring managers for consideration.

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.

FSIS continued to utilize Schedule A authority and the Veterans Recruitment authority or 30% or More Disabled Veteran authority to recruit disabled candidates and disabled veterans. Agency vacancy announcements available on USAJobs were open to status candidates, veterans, and Schedule A applicants concurrently.

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.

When applicants apply for positions on USAJobs, they indicate whether they are eligible for and are applying under Schedule A authority. When reviewing applications, HR Staffing Specialists are able to determine the applicants' qualifications and Schedule A eligibility. Once the review is complete, applicants who are eligible and qualified to be hired under a special hiring authority are referred to the hiring manager for consideration.

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

In FY 2022 all hiring managers were required to take Veteran Employment training; the training covers the use of special hiring authorities for veterans, including the 30% or more disabled veterans and Schedule A. For new supervisors, training on the use of special hiring authorities was also a part of course content provided at each FSIS New Supervisors Training Program session.

The Veterans and Disability Recruitment Program Coordinator also trained hiring managers on special hiring authorities used to recruit disabled veterans and PWDs. This training also included the use of hiring flexibilities and consideration of disabled veterans, professionals with disabilities and targeted disabilities.

B. PLAN TO ESTABLISH CONTACTS WITH DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT ORGANIZATIONS

During FY 2022, FSIS continued to collaborate with the Department of Veterans Affairs' Regional Employment Coordinators, Soldier for Life Transition Assistance Programs, National and State Vocational Rehabilitation Offices, Student Veterans of America, the Viscardi Center, and Centers for College Students with Disabilities located nationwide. These collaborations included ensuring that potential applicants were informed about FSIS career opportunities or to request referrals of qualified non-competitive applicants. FSIS also continued to promote job announcements on professional groups such as LinkedIn for veterans and PWD.

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

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”, describe the triggers below.

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

Triggers were identified for PWD and PWTD. PWD had a permanent new hire rate of 6.6%, which was disproportionately lower than the benchmark of 12%, and PWTD had a permanent new hire rate of 1.7%, also disproportionately lower than the benchmark of 2%

2. Using the Qualified Applicant Pool as the benchmark, do triggers exist for PWD and/or PWTB among the **new hires for any of the mission-critical occupations (MCO)**? If “yes”, describe the triggers below.

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

Using the qualified applicant pool as a benchmark, triggers were identified for two (2) MCOs for PWD. For GS-1862 CSIs, the rate of new hires for PWD (2.6%) was below the qualified applicant pool (4.5%). For GS-1863 FIs, the rate of new hires for PWD (2.1%) was below the qualified applicant pool (2.7%).

Triggers were also identified for two (2) MCOs for PWTB; for GS-1862, the rate of New Hires for PWTB (1.3%) was below the qualified applicant pool (4.5%). for GS-1863, the rate of new hires for PWTB (0.8%) was below the qualified applicant pool (1.1%).

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”, describe the triggers below.

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

Using the relevant applicant pool as a benchmark, triggers were identified for two (2) MCOs for PWD. For GS-1862 CSIs, the rate of qualified applicants for PWD (4.3%) was below the relevant applicant pool (7.2%). For GS-701 VMOs, the rate of qualified applicants for PWD (5.0%) was below the relevant applicant pool (8.5%)

Triggers were also identified for three (3) MCO for PWTD. For GS-1862 CSIs, the rate of qualified applicants for PWTD (0.8%) was below the relevant applicant pool (2.2%). For GS-1863 FIs, the rate of qualified applicants for PWTD (0.0%) was below the relevant applicant pool (1.6%). For GS-701 VMOs, the rate of qualified applicants PWTD (2.0%) was below the relevant applicant pool (2.8%).

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”, describe the triggers below.

- | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| a. Promotions for MCO (PWD) | Yes X | No |
| b. Promotions for MCO (PWTD) | Yes | No X |

Using the qualified applicant pool as a benchmark, triggers were noted for one (1) MCO for PWD. For GS-701 VMOs, the rate of promotions for PWD (2.9%) was below the qualified applicant pool (5.0%).

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

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

FSIS' competitive leadership development programs are open to all Agency GS employees and Commissioned Corps Officers who have a minimum performance rating of "Fully Successful" and obtain supervisory acknowledgement of the candidate's intention to compete for program participation. Applications do not contain names or demographic data and are reviewed and rated by an external contractor to ensure objectivity. For competitive leadership development programs, top scoring applications are selected based on available funding.

B. CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

1. Describe career development opportunities the agency provides to employees.

FSIS New Supervisor Training Program: Increases participants' self-awareness and develops new knowledge, perspectives, behaviors, and skills to manage employees within the context of supervision.

Target Audience: Permanent FSIS Supervisors in their first or second year as a Supervisor.

FSIS Experienced Supervisor Training Program: A one-week classroom training and on-line training modules assigned to assist supervisors in meeting training requirements, increasing knowledge about latest practices, and maintaining skills already developed. *Target Audience: Permanent FSIS Supervisors with one or more years of supervisory experience.*

FSIS Gateway Program: A Supervisors' Path to Continual Learning: Provides FSIS Supervisors with ongoing training and resources to support successful management, mentoring and coaching of employees. *Target Audience: All FSIS Supervisors.*

FSIS Learning Trove Program: Provides facilitator-led, daytime and evening webinars and traditional classroom instruction that may include assessment tools, books, and videos. *Target Audience: All FSIS Employees.*

FSIS Virtual Escalade Leadership Development Program: Addresses the need for Agency succession planning and enhances Agency leadership competencies by offering development to current and aspiring leaders within FSIS who may assume future formal leadership positions. *Target Audience: GS-9 through GS-13 Non-supervisors and Supervisors, and Commissioned Corps Offices O-3 and O-4.*

Federal Executive Institute (FEI) - Leadership for a Democratic Society (LDS): Designed to prepare senior-level government executives for complex challenges of leadership through expert instruction and experiential learning. The program develops visionary leaders who can transform their organizations and government. *Target Audience: GS-15 or equivalent/military officer rank of O-6 or above, and GS-14 employees who have executive-level duties and are granted an OPM waiver to participate.*

Continuing Education Program, College Tuition Reimbursement Program: Provides eligible employees that qualify up to \$5,000 per fiscal year in tuition reimbursement towards graduate or undergraduate college courses from accredited colleges or universities. In accordance with FSIS notice 34-22, this program is open to all employees.

Continuous Development Program: The Continuous Development Initiative offers employees at least 40 hours of development and training per fiscal year to be completed during their tour of duty and encourages them to utilize FSIS' "Help Resources" button on employee e-Devices (computers and mobile phones) that highlights suggested trainings.

These programs are publicized through the Agency's weekly *Food for Thought* newsletter, EEOACs, and SEPMs for optimal marketing visibility to employees with disabilities.

2. In the table below, provide 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 (#)
Federal Executive Institute	15	15	0%	0	0%	0
FSIS Gateway Program	278	278	9%	25	4%	12
FSIS New Supervisor Training Program	114	114	6%	7	3%	4
Learning Trove Program	1367	1367	8%	122	4%	55

3. Do triggers exist for PWD among the applicants and/or selectees for any of the career development programs? (The appropriate benchmarks are the Relevant Applicant pool for the applicants and the Applicant Pool for selectees.) If "yes", describe the trigger(s) in the text box.

- a. Applicants (PWD) Yes No **X**
- b. Selections (PWD) Yes No **X**

--

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

- | | | |
|---------------------|-----|-------------|
| a. Applicants (PWD) | Yes | No X |
| b. Selections (PWD) | Yes | No X |

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”, describe the trigger(s) in the text box.

a. Awards, Bonuses, & Incentives (PWD)	Yes	No	X
b. Awards, Bonuses, & Incentives (PWTD)	Yes	No	X

1. 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”, describe the trigger(s) in the text box.

a. Pay Increases (PWD)	Yes	No	X
b. Pay Increases (PWTD)	Yes	X	No

When comparing the rate of Quality Step Increases (QSI) with the inclusion rate, the rate of QSIs for PWD (7.69%) and PWTD (0%) was below the inclusion rate for PWD (8.60%) and PWTD (2.69%). The differences fell outside the 10% variance.

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

Non-monetary awards are a form of employee recognition, but distribution of these awards is not tracked.

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, use the approximate senior grade levels. If “yes”, describe the trigger(s) in the text box.

a. SES

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) N/A

ii. Internal Selections (PWD) N/A

b. Grade GS-15

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) **Yes X** No

ii. Internal Selections (PWD) **Yes** **No X**

c. Grade GS-14

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) **Yes X** No

ii. Internal Selections (PWD) **Yes X** No

d. Grade GS-13

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) **Yes X** No

ii. Internal Selections (PWD) **Yes X** No

The qualified internal applicant rate for PWD was below the permanent employment rate in the relevant applicant pool for three (3) grade levels. The qualified internal applicant rate was 5.6% for GS-13s, while the relevant applicant pool was 9.9%. The qualified internal applicant rate was 7.0% for GS-14s, while the relevant applicant pool was 12.1%. The qualified internal applicant rate was 4.4% for GS-15s, while the relevant applicant pool was 15.3%.

The internal selection rate for PWD was below the permanent employment rate in the qualified internal applicant for three (3) grade levels. The internal selection rate was 2.5% for GS-13s, while the qualified internal applicant rate was 5.6%. The internal selection rate was 4.0% for GS-14s, while the qualified internal applicant rate was 7.0%. The internal selection rate was 0.0% for GS-15s, while the qualified internal applicant rate was 4.4%.

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) N/A

ii. Internal Selections (PWTD) N/A

b. Grade GS-15

• Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD) **Yes X** No

• Internal Selections (PWTD) **Yes** **No X**

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

The qualified internal applicant rate for PWTD was below the permanent employment rate in the relevant applicant pool for two (2) grade levels. The qualified internal applicant rate was 3.1% for GS-13s, while the relevant applicant rate was 3.5%. The qualified internal applicant rate was 0.0% for GS-15s, while the relevant applicant rate was 4.4%.

The internal selection rate for PWTD was below the permanent employment rate in the qualified internal applicant pool for two (2) grade levels. The internal selection rate was 0.8% for GS-13s, while the qualified internal applicant rate was 3.1%. The internal selection rate was 0.0% for GS-14s, while the qualified internal applicant rate was 3.9%.

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) | N/A | |
| b. New Hires to GS-15 (PWD) | Yes X | No |
| c. New Hires to GS-14 (PWD) | Yes X | No |
| d. New Hires to GS-13 (PWD) | Yes | No X |

The new hiring rate for PWD was below the qualified applicant rate for three (2) grade levels. The new hire rate was 0.0% for GS-13s, while the qualified applicant rate was 2.9%. The new hire rate was 0.0% for GS-14s, while the qualified applicant rate was 1.1%.

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) | N/A | |
| b. New Hires to GS-15 (PWTD) | Yes | No X |
| c. New Hires to GS-14 (PWTD) | Yes X | No |
| d. New Hires to GS-13 (PWTD) | Yes X | No |

The new hiring rate for PWD was below the qualified applicant rate for two (2) grade levels. The new hire rate was 0.0% for GS-13's, while the qualified applicant rate was 0.7%. The new hire rate was 0.0% for GS-14's, while the qualified applicant rate was 1.1%.

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) N/A

ii. Internal Selections (PWD) N/A

b. Managers

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Yes **No X**

ii. Internal Selections (PWD) **Yes X** No

c. Supervisors

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) **Yes X** No

ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Yes **No X**

The qualified applicant rate for PWD was below the permanent employment rate in the relevant applicant pool for supervisors and managers. The qualified applicant rate was 3.2% for Supervisors, while the relevant applicant pool was 10.6%. The qualified applicant rate was 4.4% for Supervisors, while the relevant applicant pool was 15.3%.

The internal selection rate for PWD was below the permanent employment rate in the qualified applicant rate for Managers. The internal selection rate was 0.0% for Managers, while the qualified applicant rate was 4.4%.

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) N/A

ii. Internal Selections (PWTD) N/A

b. Managers

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD) **Yes X** No

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

c. Supervisors

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD) **Yes X** No

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

The qualified internal applicant rate for PWTD was below the permanent employment rate in the relevant applicant pool. The qualified internal applicant rate was 0.1% for Supervisors, while the relevant applicant pool was 3.2%. The qualified internal applicant rate was 0.0% for Managers, while the relevant applicant pool was 4.3%.

The internal selection rate for PWTD was below the permanent employment rate in the qualified internal applicant rate for Supervisors. The internal selection rate was 0.0% for Supervisors, while the qualified internal applicant rate was 2.6%.

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) N/A

b. New Hires for Managers (PWD) **Yes X** No

c. New Hires for Supervisors (PWD) **Yes X** No

The new hiring rate for PWD was below the qualified internal applicant rate for Supervisors. The new hire rate was 0.0% for Supervisors, while the qualified internal applicant rate was 2.7%.

8. Using the Qualified Applicant Pool as the benchmark, does your agency have a trigger involving PWTD among the selectees for **new hires to supervisory positions?** If “yes”, describe the trigger(s) in the text box.

a. New Hires for Executives (PWTD) N/A

b. New Hires for Managers (PWTD) **Yes X** No

c. New Hires for Supervisors (PWTD) **Yes X** No

The new hiring rate for PTWD was below the qualified internal applicant rate for Supervisors. The new hire rate was 0.0% for Supervisors, while the qualified internal applicant rate was 1.8%.

Section V: Plan to Improve Retention of Persons with Disabilities

To be a model employer for PWD, 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”, explain why the agency did not convert all eligible Schedule A employees.

Yes ☒ No ☐

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

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

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

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

The voluntary separation rate for PWTD (3.0%) was above the inclusion rate for PWTD (2.7%), also exceeding the 10% variance range.

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

Exit Survey data was collected in FY 2022 by the Agency; however, the analysis had not been completed in time to be included with this report.

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. 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.fsis.usda.gov/policy/fsis-directives/1300.4>

2. 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 government buildings in which Agency employees are located are leased from the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA). Thus, FSIS compliance with the Architectural Barriers Act is met via GSA's ABA's posted information.

[Accessible Facility Design | GSA](#)
[National Accessibility Program Standards, Policies and Procedures \(gsa.gov\)](#) ([Online Architectural Barriers Act \(ABA\) Complaint Form \(access-board.gov\)](#))

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

During FY22 and continuing into FY23, FSIS will be updating its forms to ensure they are 508 compliant. Additionally, OCIO staff is participating in a training program for 508 compliance testing. This two-part training program will initially cover the fundamentals of 508 manual testing, including analyzing Word and PDF documents and how to make them 508-compliant. The second part of the course will concentrate on the creation of a testing procedure leveraging 508 tools, such as JAWs and browser extensions, as well as automated testing tools (Deque's Axe DevTools, WAVE, and SiteImprove Accessibility Checker). Once complete OCIO personnel will identify the best 508 testing tools for the Agency's requirements. These tools will be integrated in the Agency's application testing lifecycle to improve accessibility to FSIS forms.

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. Provide the average time frame for processing initial requests for reasonable accommodations during the reporting period. (Do not include previously approved requests with repetitive accommodations, such as interpreting services.)

The average timeframe for processing initial RA requests for FY 2022 was 13 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.

The Agency continued to use a tracking and recordkeeping system to improve case processing times and to maintain program accountability. A total of 148 cases were processed in FY 2022, reflecting a net increase of 2.7% (4 cases) from FY 2021. The percentage of timely processed requests was 93%, reflecting a 3% increase from FY 2020 (90%). Furthermore, USDA's RA procedures allow for extended timeframes in specific extenuating circumstances. The 7% that were not processed within the prescribed timeframe met the criteria for those extenuating circumstances, as described in the Departmental Regulation. Continued efforts to improve processing timeframes for RA requests were demonstrated by delivering continued training to supervisors/managers, adding additional managerial review/approval levels above the first level supervisor in the processing of RA requests, and adhering to due dates for Agency receipt of complete employee documentation before closing cases.

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 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 Agency did not receive any requests for PAS in FY 2023.

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 governmentwide average?

No. The government-wide average of all PWD alleging harassment was 21.98% based on most recent EEOC data (FY 2022). The Agency-wide average of complainants who are PWD who filed harassment complaints was 7.5% in FY 2022.

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, there were four complaints, each resulting in a settlement agreement.

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.

N/A

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?

No. Agency 12.5%, government-wide average 14.03%.

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, there were three complaints, each resulting in a settlement agreement.

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.

N/A

Section VII: Identification and Removal of Barriers

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

1. Has the agency identified any barriers (policies, procedures, and/or practices) that affect employment opportunities for PWD and/or PWTD?
- Yes **X** No
2. Has the agency established a plan to correct the barrier(s) involving PWD and/or PWTD?
- Yes **X** No
3. Identify each trigger and plan to remove the barrier(s), including the identified barrier(s), objective(s), responsible official(s), planned activities, and, where applicable, accomplishments.

Trigger(s)	<p><i>Triggers for disproportionate impact were identified when employment percentages fell outside a 10% variance range from applicable benchmarks.</i></p> <p><u>New Hires:</u></p> <p>Triggers were identified for PWD and PWTD when looking at new hires. PWD had a permanent new hire rate of 6.6%, which was disproportionately lower than EEOC's benchmark of 12%, and PWTD had a permanent new hire rate of 1.7%, also disproportionately lower than the benchmark of 2%.</p> <p><u>Mission critical occupations (MCOs):</u> When analyzing MCO hiring data, the Agency compared the demographic data of those selected to the demographic data of the qualified applicant pool. Using the qualified applicant pool as a benchmark, triggers were identified in two (2) MCOs for PWD. For the GS-1862 CSI occupation, the rate of new hires (selections) for PWD (2.6%) was below the qualified applicant rate (4.5%). For the GS-1863 FI occupation, the rate of new hires for PWD (2.1%) was below the qualified applicant rate (2.7%).</p> <p>Triggers were also identified in two (2) MCOs for PWTD. For the GS-1862 CSI occupation, the rate of new hires for PWTD (1.3%) was below the qualified applicant rate (4.5%). For the GS-1863 FI occupation, the rate of new hires for PWTD (0.8%) was below the qualified applicant rate (1.1%).</p>
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Grades (GS-1 to GS-10): In the GS-1 to GS-10 cluster, PWD account for 7.9% of new hires. This grade cluster is primarily representative of the in-plant inspection workforce where FI and CSI mission critical positions have medical requirements which may potentially disqualify a person with physical disabilities.

Senior Grade level (GS 13 to GS 15): When looking at the senior level positions, the rate of new hires (selections) for PWD was below the qualified applicant pool for two (2) senior grade levels. The new hire rate was 0.0% at the GS-13 grade level, while the qualified applicant rate was 2.9%. The new hire rate was 0.0% at the GS-14 grade level, while the qualified applicant rate was 1.1%.

The rate of new hires for PWD was also below the qualified applicant pool for two (2) senior grade levels. The new hire rate was 0.0% at the GS-13 grade level, while the qualified applicant rate was 0.7%. The new hire rate was 0.0% at the GS-14 grade level, while the qualified applicant rate was 1.1%.

Supervisors and Managers: The rate of new hires for PWD and PWD among supervisory positions was below the qualified applicant pool. The new hire rate for PWD was 0.0% for supervisory positions, while the qualified applicant rate was 2.7%. The new hire rate for PWD was 0.0%, while the qualified applicant rate was 1.8%.

The rate of new hires for PWD and PWD among managerial positions was below the qualified applicant pool. The new hire rate for PWD and PWD for managerial positions was 0.0%, while the qualified applicant rates were 3.9% and 1.5%, respectively.

Applicant workflow data was not available for SES positions.

Promotions:

MCOs: When analyzing MCO promotions data, the Agency assessed disproportionate impact at two stages of the hiring process: qualifications and selections. To identify disproportionate impact during the qualifications process, the Agency compared the demographic data of those that qualified to the demographic data of the relevant applicant pool. Using this as the benchmark, triggers were identified among those that qualified for two (2) MCOs for PWD. For the 1862 CSI occupation, the rate that PWD qualified (4.3%) was below the relevant applicant pool (7.2%). For the GS-0701 VMO occupation, the rate PWD qualified (5%) was below the relevant applicant rate (8.5%).

Triggers were also identified for two (2) MCOs for PWD. For the GS-1863 occupation, the rate of qualified applicants for PWD (0.0%) was below the relevant applicant rate (1.6%). For the GS-0701 VMO occupation, the rate of qualified applicants for PWD (2.0%) was below the relevant applicant rate (2.8%).

To identify disproportionate impact during the selections process, the Agency compared the demographic data of those selected to the demographic data of the qualified applicant pool. Using the qualified applicant pool as a benchmark, triggers in selections were identified in one (1) MCO for PWD. For the GS-0701 VMO occupation, the rate at which PWD were selected for promotions (2.9%) was below the qualified applicant rate (5.0%).

There were no triggers identified for PWD among those selected for promotions.

	<p><u><i>Senior Grades (GS-13 to GS-15):</i></u> When looking at the senior level positions, the rate of promotion for PWD was below the qualified applicant pool for all three (3) senior grade levels. The selection rate was 2.5% for PWD at the GS-13 grade level, while the qualified applicant rate was 5.6%. The selection rate was 4% at the GS-14 grade level, while the qualified applicant rate was 7%. The selection rate was 0.0% at the GS-15 grade level, while the qualified applicant rate was 4.4%.</p> <p>The rate of promotions for PWTD was below the qualified applicant pool for two (2) senior grade levels. The selection rate was 0.8% at the GS-13 grade level, while the qualified applicant rate was 3.1%. The selection rate was 0.0% at the GS-14 grade level, while the qualified applicant rate was 3.9%.</p> <p><u><i>Supervisors and Managers:</i></u></p> <p>The selection rate for PWTD among supervisory positions (0.0%) was below the qualified applicant rate (2.7%). PWD were proportionately represented among promotions into supervisory positions.</p> <p>The selection rate for PWD among managerial positions (0.0%) was below the qualified applicant rate (4.4%). PWTD were proportionately represented among promotions into managerial positions.</p> <p>Applicant workflow data was not available for SES positions.</p> <p><u>Separations:</u></p> <p><u><i>Voluntary Separations:</i></u> The voluntary separation rate for PWTD (3.0%) was above the inclusion rate for PWTD (2.7%), also exceeding the 10% variance range.</p>
<p>Barrier(s)</p>	<p><u>New Hires and Promotions:</u></p> <p>Institutional barriers may exist for positions in MCOs regarding medical qualifications, physical requirements, or job requirements (such as tours of duty, mandatory overtime, travel requirements, and relocation) that result in insufficient qualified applicant pools and/or the eventual disqualification of applicants during the hiring process.</p> <p>An attitudinal barrier may exist among hiring officials that disadvantages disabled candidates from receiving objective consideration for positions, including those in the three MCOs and positions at senior level grades. This attitudinal barrier may continue to exist despite continued training of hiring officials on the use and benefits of special hiring authorities, recurring strategic staffing discussions between HR and hiring officials, and awareness of the EEOC's targeted affirmative employment goals.</p> <p><u>Separations:</u></p> <p>Institutional barriers may exist regarding supervisory resistance or misunderstanding regarding the continuing obligation to engage in the interactive RA process; the limited Agency job placement options for employees who become disabled during employment; and supervisory decisions determining if/when accommodations constitute undue Agency hardship. These factors may contribute to the disproportionate percentage of PWTD who voluntarily separate.</p>

Objective(s)	<p>Increase the numbers of PWD/PWTD within qualified applicant pools and improve percentages of PWD/PWTD hired and promoted with an emphasis on MCOs and senior grade levels to align with appropriate benchmarks.</p> <p>Continue improvements to the RA Program through issuance of a supplemental Agency directive, advertising and promoting the availability of online RA resources, and continuing Agency-wide education and training efforts.</p>	
Responsible Official(s)		Performance Standards Address the Plan?
Chief Human Capital Officer, RA Advisors, Chief Training Officer, Hiring Officials, Supervisors and Managers		Yes
Barrier Analysis Process Completed?		Barrier(s) Identified?
Yes		Yes
Sources of Data	Sources Reviewed?	Identify Information Collected
Workforce Data Tables	Yes	<p>Total Workforce – Distribution by Disability (Table B1); Participation rates by GS grades (Tables B4-1); Participation rates for Major Occupations (Table B6-1); Permanent Hires by Disability (Table B-1); Employee Recognition and Awards by Disability (Table B9-1 and B9-2); Total Separations by Disability (Table B-1). Applicant flow data for Tables B7-1 and B7-2 Internal Competitive Promotions and Tables B8-1 and B8-2 Internal Selections for Senior Level Positions</p>

Complaint Data (Trends)	Yes	No FEAR data; iComplaints data involving failure to accommodate and disparate treatment disability discrimination claims.		
Grievance Data (Trends)	No			
Findings from Decisions (e.g., EEO, Grievance, MSPB, Anti-Harassment Processes)	No			
Climate Assessment Survey (e.g., FEVS)	Yes	Employee climate surveys administered on four work units as part of the Title VII employment compliance reviews and FEVS data.		
Exit Interview Data	No			
Focus Groups	No			
Interviews	No			
Reports (e.g., Congress, EEOC, MSPB, GAO, OPM)	No			
Other:	Yes	Title VII employment compliance reviews		
Target Date	Planned Activities	Sufficient Staffing & Funding?	Modified Date	Completion Date
09/30/2023	<p>Continue to train the workforce on the RA process and requirements through the following efforts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing RA training to employees and managers using various formats such as webinars, YouTube, Adobe Connect, and AgLearn. • Ensuring the RA team presents at least: 2 NSTP training sessions, 2 Agency or program-wide webinars, and 4 district/program specific information sessions. • Publishing at least 2 <i>Food for</i> 	Yes		

	<p><i>Thought</i> educational articles informing employees of the RA process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regularly meeting with supervisors across the Agency to assist with their RA needs. 			
09/30/2023	Continue to collect and improve analyses of applicant flow data for employment actions for use in trigger identification and barrier analysis affecting PWD and PWTD.	Yes		
09/30/2023	Continue to increase outreach activities with relevant entities working with and providing services to disabled persons and veterans.	Yes		
09/30/2023	Continue training efforts on special hiring authorities that take disability into account; continue to emphasize the EEOC target employment goals and the availability/benefits of utilizing these hiring authorities during recurring strategic recruitment discussions with hiring officials.	Yes		
09/30/2023	Continue to offer details designed to provide employees the opportunity to spend up to 3 months assigned to another program area or to HQ component of their program, to include a shadowing and mentoring program, including PWD and PWTD.	Yes		
09/30/2023	Establish a new Diversity Program Manager position that can advocate for PWD and PWTD and collaborate with the Disability Program Manager and Agency supervisors and managers to promote the hiring and retention of PWD and PWTD.	Yes		

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
2022	<p>FSIS continued to focus on providing RA training to employees, supervisors and managers throughout the Agency. In FY 2022, RA trainings were provided through the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denver District Supervisory Public Health Veterinarian Meeting 1/13/2022 • OPARM All Hands Meeting 2/15/2022 • Dallas District Front Line Supervisor/Enforcement, Investigation, Analysis Officer Meeting 3/30/2022 • <i>Food for Thought</i> Article 3/24/2022 • Jackson District Front Line Supervisor Meeting 4/12/2022 • Chicago District Front Line Supervisor Meeting 5/3/2022 • OPPD Brown Bag 6/21-23/2022 • <i>Food for Thought</i> Article 4/28/2022 • Jackson District Front Line Supervisor Meeting 9/13/2022 • Des Moines District Front Line Supervisor/ Enforcement, Investigation, and Analysis Officer Meeting 9/14/2022 • <i>Food for Thought</i> Article 7/20/2022
2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FSIS continued to implement an Agency-wide exit survey process to identify factors, including those identified by and affecting PWD and PWTD, that contribute to employee attrition. The survey asked separating employees for various demographic information to allow the Agency to analyze the exit survey results by disability status as well as other demographic categories. • The FSIS Veterans' Outreach Coordinator continued to conduct outreach activities by conducting five (5) site visits and four (4) virtual career fairs targeting Veterans and disabled persons, where the Coordinator provided resume writing and interview sessions for veterans and disabled persons. The Outreach Coordinator provided one-on-one training on Schedule A and the hiring process for disabled persons and initiated a partnership with Department of Veterans Affairs' Veteran Readiness and Employment to match qualified veterans and disabled persons with jobs. In addition, the coordinator initiated partnerships with Gallaudet University. • The Agency developed a "Soldier to Ag" coalition with Fort Bragg and North Carolina State. FSIS participated in Career Information Briefings and Table Day marketing campaigns at Fort Bragg to market to an audience of Veterans, Disabled Veterans and transitioning servicemembers. The Agency partnered with the Department of Veteran Affairs to conduct Job Club briefings to Disabled Veterans to increase awareness of opportunities within the Agency and provide resume, job search and interview strategies. In addition, the Outreach Coordinator met with Joint Base Lewis-McChord and conducted quarterly virtual Brown Bag Sessions. The Agency also continuously provided services to countless Veterans and PWD/PWTD to assist them with their resumes, job searches, interview skills and job applications. • The Agency developed a Persons with Disabilities webpage on the FSIS website that includes a Disability Intelligence training library and On Demand training.

	<p>Hiring managers also have the ability via the webpage to request training on Schedule A and other disability-related topics. The webpage can be found at Professionals with Disabilities Food Safety and Inspection Service (usda.gov)</p>
2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Agency continued to utilize the established HR phone number and email address to streamline the process for HR-related inquiries, including those related to RA, special emphasis hiring, and WVPRP/harassment.
2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FSIS continued to utilize Department Regulation (DR) 4300-008 <i>Reasonable Accommodations and Personal Assistance Services for Employees and Applicants with Disabilities</i> as the authority for the FSIS RA program. In coordination with the regulation, FSIS submitted a request to the Department to use FSIS-developed and OMB approved forms as a part of its RA program; FSIS is currently awaiting a determination from the Department.
2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Agency issued mandatory RA training to all employees; the deadline to complete the training was September 30, 2022. FSIS provided additional RA training to employees and managers using various means such as webinars, YouTube, Adobe Connect, and AgLearn. In addition, the RA office regularly provided one-on-one training to employees and supervisors on an informal basis as RA requests were being considered.
2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicant flow data was pulled from various HR staffing systems, such as USA Staffing and the NFC Personnel and Payroll System database. To improve FSIS' ability to collect and analyze the data, Human Resources Operations Division (HROD) provided training and direction to their employees to encourage applicants to provide their disability and race/ethnicity status when applying for a position. This information was electronically collected for reporting and analysis.
2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Agency increased outreach and recruitment activities by partnering with Army Career Services, WorkEx and Soldier For Life Transition Assistance Program (SFL-TAP) to implement apprenticeship programs specifically for Veterans, some of which may be disabled. FSIS' Human Resources Business Systems Division (HRBSD) and HROD collaborated to provide guidance and policy information to Veterans and disabled persons. HRBSD maintained various contacts/partnerships and increased its outreach activities with current contacts to increase the qualified hiring pool.
2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a practice, FSIS Staffing Specialists conducted Strategic Recruitment Discussions (SRD) with hiring officials prior to starting recruitment efforts. During the SRD, the importance of diversity hiring, and special hiring authorities were discussed. In FY 22, FSIS' HROD updated the SRD Checklist to include a more robust discussion around hiring persons with disabilities and veterans, and to include a section emphasizing the importance for hiring officials to conduct pre-announcement outreach activities, to include underrepresented, disadvantaged and diverse communities. When submitting a recruitment request, hiring officials had to complete the Appendix A, which required hiring officials to consider the use of non-competitive methods for hiring veterans and persons with disabilities.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Agency developed a new Internal Operation Procedure to ensure a consistent methodology was used among Staffing Specialists to ensure veterans and PWD candidates applying for positions outside of a USAJobs application, were provided equitable treatment when compared to applicants applying through USAJobs. • FSIS developed and disseminated a guide for hiring officials to outline and share best practices in outreach and hiring activities, with the goal of obtaining a more diverse workforce. In support of this effort, it was established as standard practice for hiring officials to open their jobs to veterans and PWD, providing transparency around the opportunity to apply for FSIS positions. • In FY22, the FSIS Veterans and PWD Outreach Coordinator worked collaboratively with OPACE to establish a website (https://www.fsis.usda.gov/careers/professional-disabilities) to assist hiring managers with strategies for recruiting, hiring, retaining and advancing PWDs. This site serves as an information portal for PWDs because it contains information regarding Schedule A, a disability intelligence training library, and resources to combat challenges.
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4. Explain factor(s) that prevented the agency from timely completing any of the planned activities.

Not applicable.

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

The Agency's recruitment efforts resulted in the hiring of 58 PWD, with 15 reporting a targeted disability.

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.

Multi-year timeframes are needed to realize greater change. The Agency will continue to implement and monitor planned activities and will consider additional strategies to further improve the representation of PWD and PWTB if changes are not realized.

FSIS Hispanic Representation Workforce Analysis

In FY 2017 the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) mandated that Federal agencies with at least 1,000 full-time equivalent employees conduct a focused barrier analysis on Hispanic employment. In keeping with this mandate, on an annual basis, FSIS conducts a comprehensive barrier analysis of the Hispanic workforce; this analysis is separate and apart from the overall barrier analysis of the workforce that is conducted.

The results of the FY 2022 barrier analysis indicates that Hispanics represented 12.90% of the total FSIS workforce for both permanent and temporary employees. Hispanic females were 6.05% of the workforce, below the CLF representation of 6.20%, and Hispanic males were 6.85% of the workforce, above the CLF representation of 6.80%. When applying a 10% variance to the respective CLF, neither Hispanic females nor males were underrepresented in the FSIS workforce.

In FY 2022, Hispanic representation in the workforce was primarily at the GS-5, GS-7 and GS-9 grades; representation at the GS-12 through SES was as follows:

	GS-12	GS-13	GS-14	GS-15	SES	CLF
Female	3.19%	3.06%	3.27%	20%	0%	6.20%
Male	4.45%	2.88%	3.27%	0%	7.69%	6.80%

Hispanic females and males representation at these grades were below their respective CLF or non-existent (Hispanic females in the SES and males in GS-15). Two Hispanic males (7.69%) were represented at the SES level. Hispanic females and males were represented in all the grades and SES positions at lower rates than Black and White females and males.

The barrier analysis has determined that the Agency's Hispanic females and males were principally represented at the GS-5, GS-7 and GS-9 grades; underrepresented at the GS-10 and GS-11 grade levels; clustered in GS-12 and GS-13 grades; and underrepresented at the GS-14. Hispanic males were completely absent at the GS-15 grade level. The Agency representations at the GS-13 (Hispanic females 3.06%; males 2.88%) and GS-14 grades (females 3.27%; males 3.27%) were disproportionately below the CLF benchmarks and, thus, hindered the advancement of Hispanic females and males into leadership and SES positions.

New Hires

In FY 2022, the representation of Hispanic male external applicants that applied for GS-13 (9.84%), GS-14 (7.14%) and GS-15 (8.57%) positions was equal to or above the CLF (6.80%) and Agency (6.51%) benchmarks. Hispanic female external applicant rates for GS-13 (5.49%) and GS-15 (5.00%) positions were below both the CLF (6.20%) and the Agency (5.73%) benchmarks. The percentage of Hispanic female external applicants for GS-14 (6.12%) was below the CLF (6.80%) but was above the Agency benchmark (5.73%).

The representation of qualified external Hispanic female (8.20%) and male applicants (10.07%) at the GS 13 level was above the CLF (Hispanic females, 6.20%; males 6.80%) and Agency (Hispanic females, 5.73%; males 6.51%) benchmarks. At the GS-14 grade, the rates of qualified Hispanic female applicants (1.54%) and qualified male external applicants (4.62%) were both below the CLF (Hispanic females, 6.20%; males 6.80%) and Agency (Hispanic females, 5.73%; males 6.51%) benchmarks. At the GS-15 level, there were no qualified female or male Hispanic external applicants. These mixed results in terms of both the number of applicants and qualified applicants suggests that outreach to

Hispanics, Hispanic organizations, and at Hispanic-focused outreach/recruitment events should improve in order to better target Hispanics applying for GS-13 through GS-15 grades.

Internal Promotions

In FY 2022, the representation of Hispanic male internal applicants that applied for GS-13 (5.45%) and GS-14 (5.78%) positions was below both the CLF (6.80%) and Agency (6.51%) benchmarks. The percentage of Hispanic male internal applicants for GS-15 positions (14.47%) exceeded both benchmarks. The rate of Hispanic female internal applicants for GS-13 positions (6.03%) was below the CLF (6.20%) but above the Agency (5.73%) benchmark. The percentage of Hispanic female internal applicants for GS-14 (4.73%) positions was below both the CLF and Agency benchmarks. The percentage of Hispanic female internal applicants for GS-15 (7.89%) positions exceeded both the CLF and Agency benchmarks.

The representation of qualified internal Hispanic female (3.86%) and male applicants (5.60%) at the GS-13 level were below both the CLF (Hispanic females, 6.20%; males 6.80%) and Agency benchmarks (Hispanic females 5.73%; males 6.51%). Qualified internal Hispanic female applicants at the GS-14 (4.73%) and GS-15 (5.41%) levels were below both benchmarks. Hispanic male internal applicants at the GS-14 (7.10%) and GS-15 (16.22%) surpassed both benchmarks.

Table 1 shows the representation of internal Hispanic females and males among those that applied, qualified and selected permanent GS-13 through GS-15 positions during FY 2022. Four internal Hispanic male applicants were selected for GS-13 positions, and one was selected for a GS-14 position. No internal Hispanic male applicants were selected for GS-15 positions. Four internal Hispanic female applicants were selected for GS-13 positions. No internal Hispanic female applicants were selected for GS-14 or GS-15 positions.

Table 1: FSIS Hispanic Internal Selections for GS-13 through GS-15, FY 2022

Grade		Female	Male
GS-13	Total Applicants	Total	1270 (56.75)
		Hispanic	135 (6.03%)
	Qualified	Total	613 (59.17%)
		Hispanic	40 (3.86%)
	Selected	Total	62 (60.78%)
		Hispanic	4 (3.92%) 4 (3.92%)

GS-14	Total Applicants	571	
	Total	245 (42.91%)	326 (57.09%)
	Hispanic	27 (4.73%)	33 (5.78%)
Qualified			
	Total	68 (40.24%)	101 (59.76%)
	Hispanic	8 (4.73%)	12 (7.10%)
Selected			
	Total	10 (52.63%)	9 (47.37%)
	Hispanic	0 (0.00%)	1 (5.26%)
GS-15	Total Applicants	76	
	Total	25 (32.89%)	51 (67.11%)
	Hispanic	6 (7.89%)	11 (14.47%)
Qualified			
	Total	16 (43.24%)	21 (56.76%)
	Hispanic	2 (5.41%)	6 (16.22%)
Selected			
	Total	3 (75.00%)	1 (25.00%)
	Hispanic	0 (0.00%)	0 (0.00%)

Both the number of applicants and number of qualified applicants suggest that barriers may exist for Agency Hispanic female and male employees that are preventing them from applying, qualifying and being selected for positions at the GS-13 grade level and higher. This may reveal a need for increased communications regarding vacancy announcements and career and leadership development opportunities as well as guidance on the hiring process (i.e., application requirements, resume writing, interview skills, etc.).

FSIS Hispanic Representation Across Agency Mission Critical Occupations

The Agency's mission critical occupations (MCO) and series are: Veterinary Medical Science (VMS) - 0701; Consumer Safety Inspection (CSI) - 1862; and Food Inspection (FI) - 1863. When applying a 10% variance from the Relevant CLF (RCLF), Hispanic females and males were represented within the expected range for almost all MCOs. Only for the FI occupation did Hispanic males (9.8%) fall below the RCLF (19.0%)

Table 2 shows the FY 2022 applicant flow data for Hispanic applicants and selections for MCO permanent positions. For the VMS occupation, there were no Hispanic female applicants that were selected. Hispanic males in this occupation were selected at a rate of 18.75%, well above their VMS representation in the Agency workforce of 2.65%. Hispanic females qualified for positions in this MCO at a rate of 3.85% and Hispanic males at a rate of 5.77%.

In the CSI occupation, Hispanic female applicants were selected at a rate of 10.51%, above their CSI representation in the Agency workforce of 5.51%. Hispanic males were selected at a rate of 8.41%, above their CSI representation on the Agency workforce of 7.51%. Hispanic females qualified for CSI positions at a rate of 9.01% and Hispanic males at a rate of 9.47%.

In the FI occupation, Hispanic female applicants were selected at a rate of 14.05%, above their FI representation in the Agency's workforce of 5.51%. Hispanic males were selected at a rate of 16.12%, above their FI representation on the Agency workforce of 7.51%. Hispanic females qualified for FI positions at a rate of 12.19% and Hispanic males at a rate of 18.14%.

Table 2: FSIS MCO Applicant Flow Data for Hispanic Employees, FY 2022

Applicants for FSIS MCO		Female	Male
Veterinary Medical Science (0701) (Grade Range: GS-11 to GS-15)			
Total Applicants		99	
Applicants Self-Identified			
Total		53 (53.54%)	46 (46.46%)
Hispanic		7 (7.07%)	7 (7.07%)
Qualified			
Total		36 (69.23%)	16 (30.77%)
Hispanic		2 (3.85%)	3 (5.77%)
Selected			
Total		10 (62.50%)	6 (37.50%)
Hispanic		0 (0.00%)	3 (18.75%)

Consumer Safety Inspection (1862) (Grade Range: GS-5 to GS-10)			
Total Applicants		3,607	
Applicants Self-Identified			
	Total	1739 (48.21%)	
	Hispanic	309 (8.57%)	380 (10.54%)
	Qualified		
	Total	1175 (53.48%)	
	Hispanic	198 (9.01%)	208 (9.47%)
	Selected		
	Total	166 (49.85%)	167 (50.15%)
	Hispanic	35 (10.51%)	28 (8.41%)

Food Inspection (1863) (Grade Range: GS-5 and GS-9)			
Total Applicants		2,567	
Applicants Self-Identified			
	Total	1172 (45.66%)	1395 (54.34%)
	Hispanic	322 (12.54%)	452 (17.61%)
	Qualified		
	Total	678 (49.20%)	700 (50.80%)
Hispanic	168 (12.19%)	250 (18.14%)	
Selected			
Total	123 (50.83%)	119 (49.17%)	
Hispanic	34 (14.05%)	39 (16.12%)	

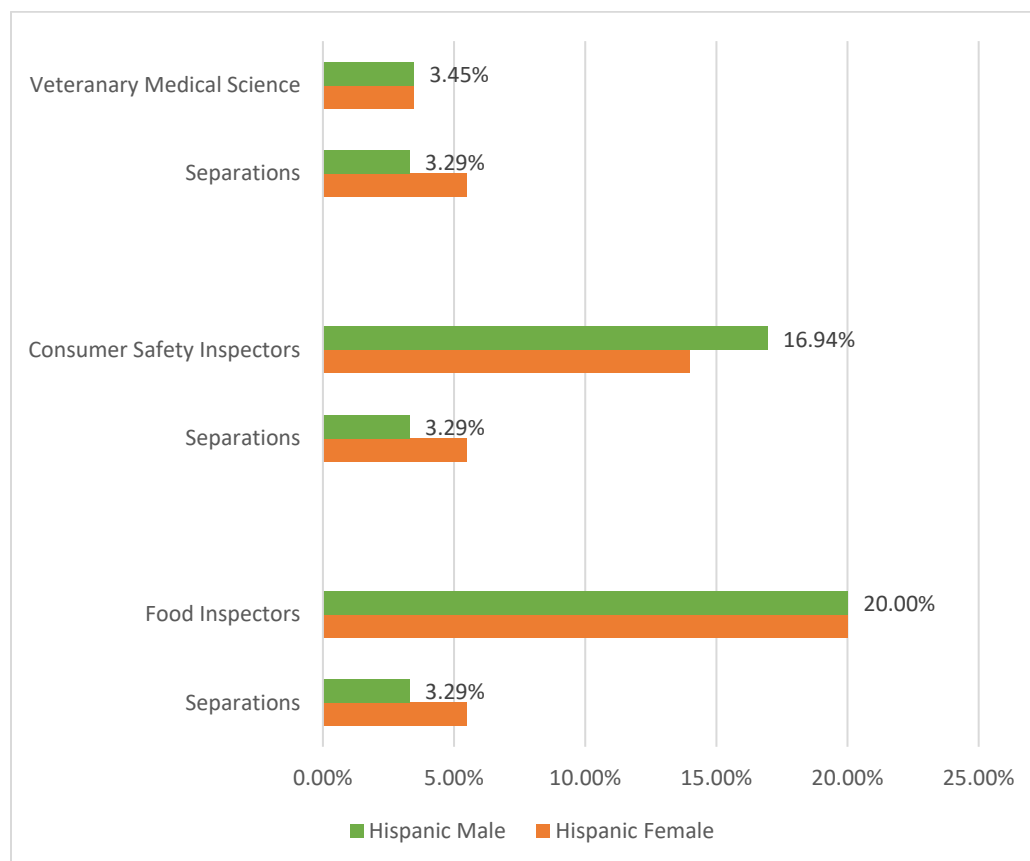
Comparing Hispanics to the overall applicant flow:

- In the MCO of VMO, Hispanic males, White females, Black females and Asian males were selected at rates above their representations among qualified applicants. Hispanic females, White males, Black males, and Asian females were selected at rates below their representations among the qualified applicants;
- In the MCO of CSI, Hispanic females, White males and females, Asian males and females, NHPI females, AI/AN males and TMR males were selected at rates that surpassed their representations among qualified applicants. Hispanic females, Black males and females, NHPI males, AI/AN females, and TMR females were selected at rates below their representations among the qualified applicants; and
- In the MCO of FI, Hispanic females, White males and females, Black females, Asian females, and AI/AN males and females were selected at rates over their representations among qualified applicants. Hispanic males, Black males, Asian males, NHPI males and females, and TMR males and females were selected at lower rates than their representations among qualified applicants.

Chart 1 compares rates of internal competitive promotions for Hispanic employees compared to their separation rates. In FY 2022, one Hispanic female was selected for a VMO position; 60 were selected for CSI positions; and one was selected for a FI position. One Hispanic male was selected for a VMO position; 62 were selected for CSI positions; and one was selected for a FI position. Meanwhile, Hispanic females separated at a rate of 5.48% and Hispanic males at a rate of 3.29%. The separation rate of Hispanic females exceeded their internal competitive promotion selection rate for the VMO

occupation (3.45%). Their separation rate was less than their respective selection rates for the CSI (13.51%) and FI (20.00%) occupations. Hispanic males separated at a rate below their internal competitive promotion selection rate for the VMO (3.45%), CSI (13.96%) and FI (20.00%) occupations.

Chart 1: FSIS Hispanic MCO Internal Competitive Promotions Compared to Separations, FY 2022



Root Cause Analysis and Actions Taken

One of the issues that may contribute to the underrepresentation of Hispanics in the Agency is outreach. It is possible that vacancy announcements about positions in FSIS are not reaching potential internal and/or external Hispanic candidates. To remedy this, during FY 2022, the Agency continued its efforts to increase Hispanic representation in the workforce through several outreach efforts. Vacancy announcements were posted and shared with numerous Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) and other entities, including workforce centers, that have large Hispanic populations. The outreach efforts also focused on veterinary and animal science programs. For internal candidates, the Agency ensured that vacancy announcements were distributed via email and posted in work units. FSIS also utilized its Hispanic SEP Manager's network to announce and promote job opportunities as well as publicize career development programs that may assist internal candidates advance and/or secure internal promotions.

Training may be another factor contributing to the underrepresentation of Hispanic employees in senior grade level positions. For this reason, among others, the Agency has made a variety of leadership and development training available to the FSIS workforce. The following virtual training and development programs were available to employees: (1) New Supervisor Training Program (NSTP); (2) Experienced Supervisor Training; (3) Escalade Leadership Development Program; (4) Learning Trove Program; and (5) Gateway and Mentoring programs. These programs, which were also available to Hispanics, aimed

to assist with career development and advancement into senior grade levels. A breakdown of Hispanic employees who attended or participated in these trainings is provided below.

Table 3: FSIS Hispanic Employees Training Participation, FY 2022

FSIS Training Program	Hispanic Employees Trained
New Supervisor Training Program	13
Gateway Program	18
Learning Trove Program (<i>includes open-enrollment and customized training</i>)	94
Total:	125

FSIS Best Practices

In FY 2022, FSIS delivered the mandatory training *Reasonable Accommodations* to the workforce and *Diversity Recruiting* training to FSIS supervisors and managers. This training was provided to both educate and provide guidance to its workforce. The training was added to employees' learning plans in the USDA department-wide system known as AgLearn.

Additionally, four (4) Title VII compliance reviews were completed, and reports were given to the Agency's respective management officials. The reviews provided the work unit with information regarding their work unit and recommendations for improvements that would ensure equitable treatment for all employees.

In FY 2022, Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs) worked with USDA's Diversity and Inclusion Managers to ensure that the Department promoted USDA programs and services and addressed the matters relevant to each of the special emphasis programs. Additionally, during FY 2022, FSIS observed Hispanic Heritage Month, *Unidos: Inclusivity for a Stronger Nation* by providing employees with a virtual event with Professor Carlos Rodriguez Sallaberry, Departments of Agricultural Technology and Natural Sciences, University of Puerto Rico, Utuado Campus.