



FEDERAL AGENCY EMPLOYMENT STRATEGIES:
A Framework for Disability Inclusion (2018 Edition)

The Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion (EARN) is a resource for employers seeking to recruit, hire, retain and advance qualified employees with disabilities. It is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy under a cooperative agreement with The Viscardi Center. For more information, visit AskEARN.org.

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Note: The practices in this document do not necessarily track the specific strategies required under EEOC’s regulations implementing Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or those suggested in EEOC Management Directive 715 (MD-715), but rather are strategies that EARN believes have the potential to improve the recruitment, hiring, retention and advancement of people with disabilities in the Federal Government.

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INTRODUCTION

Just like the private sector, federal agencies need talented workers to meet current challenges and address new priorities in the 21st century. Currently, there is an underutilized community of talented individuals who want to work, and specifically want to work for the Federal Government: individuals with disabilities, including individuals with targeted (significant) disabilities and disabled veterans. To better leverage this untapped pool of talent, in September 2012, the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) published, *Federal Agency Employment Strategies: A Framework for Disability Inclusion*. This report identified existing, promising and emerging proactive and dynamic employment strategies and practices for recruiting, hiring, advancing and retaining qualified individuals with disabilities. It was intended to assist federal agencies in making their workplaces more diverse and inclusive of and welcoming to people with disabilities.

Due in part to the implementation of existing, promising and emerging practices by federal agencies, more people with disabilities work for the Federal Government currently than at any point during the past 35 years. According to the Report on the Employment of Individuals with Disabilities in the Federal Executive Branch, Fiscal Year 2015, by the end of Fiscal Year 2015, there were 264,844 non-seasonal full-time career employees with disabilities, including 30 percent or more disabled veterans working for the Federal Government, or 14.41 percent of the federal workforce. Of these, 26,466 joined the federal workforce that year, representing 19.02 percent of all new hires.

Despite this progress, there is still a great deal of work to be done.

- In FY 2015, there were 20,274 people with targeted (significant) disabilities working for the Federal Government, which translates to only 1.10 percent of the federal workforce. Of these, 1,768 joined the federal workforce that year, representing only 1.27 percent of new hires. Yet, the goal for individuals with targeted disabilities for FY 2015 was 2 percent for federal agencies.
- In FY 2015, the representation rate of individuals with disabilities at the GS-11 level and above was roughly 30 percent lower than their representation rate at the GS-10 level and below, and the representation rate of individuals with targeted disabilities was roughly 60 percent lower at the GS-11 level and above.¹

To continue and accelerate progress in hiring, retaining and advancing individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with targeted disabilities, in the federal workforce, on January 3, 2017, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) published in the *Federal Register* a [Final Rule](#) to amend the regulations implementing Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 501), which imposes two distinct obligations on federal agencies:

- Prohibits agencies from discriminating against individuals with disabilities in accordance with the same standards that are “applied under title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990...and the provisions of sections 501 through 504, and 510 of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ...as such section relate to employment.” The ADA standards are codified in [29 CFR part 1630](#).
- Requires each federal agency to maintain, update annually and submit to EEOC an “affirmative action plan for the hiring, placement and advancement of individuals with disabilities.”

The Rule amended [29 CFR 1614.203](#) to clarify the affirmative action obligations that Section 501 imposes on federal agencies as employers. The new Section 501 Rule codifies a variety of obligations currently placed on federal agencies by management directives and Executive Orders.

Since the 2012 publication of *Federal Agency Employment Strategies: A Framework for Disability Inclusion*, additional promising and emerging employment strategies and practices have been identified for recruiting, hiring, advancing and retaining qualified individuals with disabilities. Thus, the 2018 version of *Federal Agency Employment Strategies: A Framework for Disability Inclusion* reflects a combination of legal/regulatory requirements and strategies and other practices used by public and private sector employers, including strategies and practices:

- Identified in the Section 501 rule,
- Identified in EEOC Management Directive 715 (MD-715) and other guidance provided by EEOC, and
- Derived from a review of plans submitted by federal agencies pursuant to Section 501 and Executive Order 13548 and private sector affirmative action plans submitted pursuant to Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Links to useful resources and research are included in an accompanying Resource and Research Compendium. By identifying, adopting and refining these employment strategies and practices, and making them part of your agency's Affirmative Action plan, your agency will benefit from having people with disabilities as part of your vibrant, diverse workforce.

These practices are organized into six action areas to correspond to the components of an Affirmative Action Plan as specified in the updated Section 501 Rule:

- **Lead the Way:** Model Employer of Individuals with Disabilities
- **Build the Pipeline:** Outreach and Recruitment
- **Hire (Advance and Keep) the Best:** Personnel Processes
- **Ensure Productivity:** Reasonable Accommodation and Personal Assistance Services Policies and Procedures
- **Be Tech Savvy:** Accessible Information and Communication Technology
- **Grow Success:** Continuous Assessment and Improvement and Accountability



I. LEAD THE WAY: MODEL EMPLOYER OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

The Section 501 Rule [29 CFR 1614.203(c)] and EEOC Management Directive 715 (MD-715) require that the Federal Government be a model employer of individuals with disabilities. This means that agencies must give full consideration to the hiring, advancement and retention of qualified individuals with disabilities in the federal workforce. They must also take affirmative action to promote the recruitment, hiring and advancement of qualified individuals with disabilities, with the goal of eliminating under-representation of this population in the federal workforce.

The Section 501 Rule [29 CFR 1614.203(d)] also requires that each agency adopt and implement an Affirmative Action Plan that provides sufficient assurances, procedures and commitments to provide adequate hiring, placement and advancement opportunities for individuals with disabilities at all levels of federal employment. MD-715 requires that agency heads issue an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) written policy statement annually expressing their commitment to equal employment opportunity and a workplace free of discrimination [29 CFR 1614.203(b)] and harassment [29 CFR 1614.203(d)(2)].

Becoming a model employer includes:

- Leadership and commitment
- External and internal communication
- Designation of responsible individuals
- Anti-harassment policy

A. Leadership and Commitment

One key element of being a model employer is the creation and maintenance of a truly diverse and inclusive work environment. Establishing a diverse and inclusive agency-wide culture begins with leadership at the highest levels, including political appointees, personnel in the Senior Executive Service (SES) and their leadership teams. Mid-level managers and supervisors, and particularly human resources (HR) staff and other personnel involved in hiring decisions, must also understand the role they play in facilitating a diverse and inclusive environment. Finally, communicating the agency's goal of an inclusive and diverse workplace to employees at all levels of the organization and indicating what they can do to help is also extremely important.

The Section 501 Rule and MD-715 includes examples of practices that facilitate an agency's efforts to become a model employer of individuals with disabilities, such as:

- Annually issuing a signed and dated EEO statement on agency letterhead that clearly communicates the agency's commitment to EEO for all employees that address all protected bases, including disability.
- Appointing Disability Program Managers (DPMs) and Selective Placement Program Coordinators (SPPCs) and providing them with sufficient training to carry out their responsibilities.

- Providing all supervisors and employees with training and published materials on the agency's EEO program, including the provision of reasonable accommodations.
- Suggesting staff responsible for recruiting and hiring complete OPM's [SPPC Online Training](#), and organizing an award ceremony to recognize employees who have successfully completed the training curriculum.
- Effectively administering a special emphasis program for individuals with disabilities and requiring senior leadership participation at agency events.
- Ensuring that disability-related questions from members of the public are answered promptly and correctly.
- Designating sufficient qualified staff and providing sufficient funding and other resources to successfully implement its disability program.

Agency Promising Practice

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY (DHS):

The Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity Division of the Office for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties at DHS provides continuous training and guidance on disability employment issues, including leading quarterly Disability Employment Advisory Council meetings covering ongoing program guidance, updates and sharing of best practices across DHS components. Staff also developed and delivered DHS Selective Placement Program Coordinator (SPPC) training to all identified SPPCs and Disability Program Managers.

Other existing, promising and emerging strategies for becoming a model employer of individuals with disabilities include the following:

1. **Encouraging** leadership to adopt a comprehensive, aggressive, deliberate and continual approach to creating a more diverse and inclusive workplace.
2. **Creating** a strong infrastructure to support workplace initiatives through senior leadership, commitment and accountability by establishing an agency-wide team consisting of executives, managers and employees with disabilities to support and advance the recruiting, hiring, retention and promotion of individuals with disabilities. Responsibilities of the team may include:
 - Notifying supervisors and employees of their responsibilities.
 - Providing updates on significant changes to laws, regulations and guidelines.
 - Identifying barriers to employment opportunities.
 - Recommending strategies and actions to remove identified or potential barriers.
 - Monitoring and evaluating progress of initiatives. This team may also function as a disability-focused employee resource group (ERG) or affinity group.
3. **Conducting** monthly meetings for DPMs to share promising and emerging practices.
4. **Making** (and publicizing) the "business case" for employing qualified individuals with disabilities by:
 - Framing the issue in communication with managers in terms of return on investment, as well as direct and indirect benefits to the agency and all employees.

- Stressing that enhancing diversity by employing people with disabilities recognizes changing demographics of the workforce.
 - Highlighting that employing qualified people with disabilities improves employee engagement, productivity, retention and advancement, in addition to reducing costs.
5. **Including** disability as part of the agency's larger diversity and inclusion policies and activities. This includes using the words "disability" and "people with disabilities" in statements defining the agency's diversity policies, inviting disability organizations and people with disabilities to the agency's diversity events, and recognizing that people with disabilities are part of the agency's other diverse communities (including racial and ethnic minority populations, veterans and the LGBT community).
 6. **Establishing** a Diversity and Inclusion Change Agent program by resourcing, training and certifying change agents from all levels of the agency, including SES personnel, who are empowered to educate the workforce about diversity and inclusion.
 7. **Expecting** managers to increase their use of special hiring authorities to fill vacancies, including Schedule A.
 8. **Conducting** a summit to secure support, promote dialogue and explore implementation issues.
 9. **Encouraging** workers with disabilities and other employees to identify barriers, issues and individual and systemic concerns involving equal employment opportunity, without fear of reprisal, and providing mechanisms such as surveys to allow them to share this information anonymously.
 10. **Establishing** a universal policy providing workplace flexibility and accommodations for all applicants and employees, with and without disabilities, who can document the need. This includes the use of flexplace and flextime options, if appropriate.
 11. **Implementing** work-life programs (e.g., Health and Wellness, Employee Assistance Programs, Family and Dependent Care) and initiatives to help employees balance the needs of the workplace with the rest of their lives.
 12. **Joining** and actively participating in the Federal Exchange on Employment and Disability (FEED), an interagency working group focused on information sharing, promising practices and collaborative partnerships designed to make the Federal Government a model employer of people with disabilities. Membership is open to federal employees at any level whose job duties involve inclusion of people with disabilities, including recruitment, hiring, retention and advancement.

B. External and Internal Communication

Federal agencies must communicate to the public (and the agency's contractors/subcontractors) their commitment to diversity and inclusion that includes individuals with disabilities. Strong external communication strategies will be more effective if they are accompanied by internal support from supervisory and management personnel and understanding by coworkers who may have limited contact with individuals with disabilities.

1. External Communications

External communication is a critical strategy to maximize an agency's commitment to being a model employer in

accordance with 29 CFR 1614.203(c) and its ability to attract qualified individuals with disabilities in accordance with 29 CFR 1614.203(d)(1). Examples of existing, promising and emerging external communication strategies and practices include:

1. **Including** individuals with visible disabilities when employees are pictured in publications and other materials produced by the agency, including job announcements.
2. **Sponsoring** and participating in job fairs that target job seekers with disabilities, including veterans with disabilities.
3. **Hosting** career days, mentoring programs and related community activities sponsored by the agency.
4. **Sending** information about relevant agency policies and priorities to subcontractors, vendors and suppliers and requesting their support.
5. **Establishing** and maintaining contacts with disability employment organizations to help build a pipeline of qualified candidates by entering into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with these organizations.
6. **Communicating** with union officials and/or employee representatives to inform them of the agency's policies and seek their cooperation.
7. **Using** the agency's external/public website to post the agency's:
 - Policy statement regarding diversity and inclusion and reasonable accommodation.
 - Special recruitment and hiring initiatives.
 - Targeted internship, mentoring and job shadowing programs.
 - Hiring goals and progress in achieving them.

2. Internal Communications

In accordance with the requirement that the Federal Government be a model employer [29 CFR 1614.203(c)] and guidance provided in MD-715 relating to demonstrations of commitment by leadership and supervisory personnel discussed previously, an agency's affirmative action efforts will be most effective if managers and employees are involved in their implementation. Internal communication and other strategies targeting managers, supervisors and coworkers can foster awareness, acceptance and support among all levels of staff within the agency.

Examples of existing, promising and emerging internal communication strategies and practices include the following:

1. **Establishing** an agency-wide leadership communication network.

Agency Promising Practice

USDA ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE (APHIS):

APHIS has established a direct line of communication between Human Resources (HR) and the Office of Civil Rights Diversity and Inclusion (OCRDI). During their monthly meetings, the offices discuss the Agency Recruitment Plan, the Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP) and the Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program. The agency publishes an HR Broadcast Newsletter on a quarterly basis to provide information to managers, supervisors and employees on topics such as disability hiring and outreach efforts. Quarterly updates are also provided to the National Civil Rights and Diversity Advisory Committees regarding the efforts of OCRDI and HR.

2. **Establishing** an office that delivers a holistic approach to disability program management by bringing together the operational components of reasonable accommodation, case work, policy, oversight and education.
3. **Establishing** and supporting a Disability Employment Advisory Council comprised of both national and regional representatives such as HR professionals, hiring managers, recruitment coordinators and employees with disabilities.
4. **Supporting** a Community of Practice consisting of employees with disabilities and hiring managers to increase the network of disability resources, host focus groups, discuss promising practices and share resources.
5. **Developing** and implementing an EEO Executive Committee, which includes representation by individuals with expertise related to policies and practices impacting individuals with disabilities, with direct access to the agency head.
6. **Establishing** a disability employee resource group (ERG) aligned with the agency's diversity and inclusion program and composed of employees with disabilities and employees with family members or friends with disabilities. The purpose of this group may include helping to identify policies and procedures that support a positive work environment for people with disabilities.
7. **Publicizing** the agency's commitment in its internal publications (e.g., intranet, employee newsletters/ magazines), including the availability of Schedule A and other special hiring authorities and providing metrics and resources about agency progress on achieving goals. All information posted must be reviewed for compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, and in particular, screen reader compatibility (See the "Be Tech Savvy" section below).
8. **Developing** a centralized website as a one-stop shop for disability employment and return-to-work/stay-at-work information and resources.
9. **Using** intranet and email to facilitate direct communication with employees with disabilities about new and emerging disability-related policies, practices and procedures.
10. **Updating** the agency intranet with appropriate links and information on accelerated hiring processes and reasonable accommodation procedures.
11. **Conducting** meetings and orientation and training programs with executive, management and supervisory personnel; union officials; and employee representatives for the purpose of communicating the commitment of the agency and its leadership to foster an inclusive corporate culture and work environment.
12. **Establishing** a policy that managers and supervisors share responsibility for the successful implementation of the agency's diversity and inclusion policy and ensuring that they are held accountable through their performance evaluation plans, including how a manager uses Schedule A and other special hiring authorities.
13. **Adopting** disability management and prevention programs (stay-at-work/return-to-work programs as part of the agency's employee assistance program), with the goal that workers who become injured on the job remain part of the workforce.
14. **Adopting** recognition and awards program acknowledging individuals responsible for achieving progress and positive outcomes related to disability employment.
15. **Including** images of employees with disabilities along with employees without disabilities in employee handbooks and other internal publications and ensuring that language used does not perpetuate stereotypes about individuals with disabilities.

C. Designation of Responsible Individuals

In accordance with MD-715, it is the responsibility of each agency head to take such measures as may be necessary to incorporate the principles of equal opportunity into the agency's organizational structure, including the designation of responsible individuals. MD-715 further states that agencies must maintain a reporting structure that provides the agency's EEO Director with regular access to the agency head and other senior management officials for reporting on the effectiveness, efficiency and legal compliance of the agency's Civil Rights Act Title VII and Rehabilitation Act programs. In addition, MD-715 indicates that to emphasize the importance of the position, the agency head should be involved in the selection and performance review of the EEO Director.

Related existing, promising and emerging strategies and practices include:

1. **Designating** DPMS who have the same title and grade level as other Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPMs) (with commensurate credentials and duties) and comparable access to senior management officials and who are fully empowered to implement the agency's EO and disability inclusion programs.
2. **Assigning** and defining the scope of responsibility for implementation of agency EO and disability inclusion policies and programs to specific individuals.
3. **Identifying** the responsible individual(s) tasked with implementing the agency's internal and external communications efforts related to EO and disability inclusion (see section I, subsection B for specific tasks associated with internal and external communications efforts).
4. **Providing** top management support (including budgets) and, if appropriate, staff to manage implementation.
5. **Explaining** to managers and supervisors how performance elements included in their performance plans related to the recruitment, hiring, advancement and retention of persons with disabilities will be assessed.

D. Anti-Harassment Policy

Another key element of being a model employer is the adoption of a written anti-harassment policy. The Section 501 Rule [29 CFR 1614.203(d)(2)] specifies that agencies are required to specifically state in their anti-harassment policy that harassment based on disability is prohibited, and must include examples in training materials of the types of conduct that would constitute disability-based harassment.

Agency Promising Practice

FEDERAL HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY (FHFA):

FHFA adjusted its job performance plan competency for all executives, managers and supervisors to include diversity, inclusion and EEO performance expectations. The new competencies require executives, managers and supervisors to: (1) support EEO principles, policies and programs; (2) Recruit, retain and develop the talent needed to achieve a high-quality, diverse workforce and (3) provide and model values of an inclusive workplace that fosters the development of others to their full potential, facilitate collaboration and support constructive resolution of conflicts.

Examples of anti-harassment policy derived from a review of MD-715 include:

- Using complaint data, determine whether a higher percentage of persons with disabilities and persons with targeted disabilities file a formal EEO complaint alleging harassment, as compared to the government-wide average.
- Using complaint data, determine whether any complaints alleging harassment based on disability status result in a finding of discrimination or a settlement agreement.

In addition, you may want to consider adopting recommendations presented by the [Select Task Force on the Study of Harassment in the Workplace](#).

II. BUILD THE PIPELINE: OUTREACH AND RECRUITMENT

“Where can I find qualified applicants with disabilities?” Agencies have expressed concern that one of the greatest barriers they face regarding the hiring of individuals with disabilities, including veterans with disabilities, is the challenge of finding qualified candidates. Agencies must adopt effective outreach and recruitment strategies to ensure that their workforce includes qualified individuals with disabilities, including individuals with targeted disabilities and disabled veterans.

With respect to outreach and recruitment, the Section 501 Rule [1614.203(d)(1)(i)] specifies that the Affirmative Action Plan must require the federal agency to take specific steps to ensure that a broad range of individuals with disabilities, including individuals with targeted disabilities, are aware of and encouraged to apply for job vacancies, when eligible. These steps shall include, at a minimum:

- Using programs and resources that identify job applicants with disabilities, including individuals with targeted disabilities, who are eligible to be appointed under a special hiring authority that takes disability into account, provided that their appointment is consistent with applicable OPM regulations. Examples of such programs and resources include: programs that provide the qualifications necessary for particular positions within the agency to individuals with disabilities; databases of individuals with disabilities who previously applied to the agency, but were not hired for the positions they applied for; and training and internship programs that lead directly to employment for individuals with disabilities.
- Establishing and maintaining contacts with organizations specializing in the placement of individuals with disabilities, including individuals with targeted disabilities, such as American Job Centers, State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program, Centers for Independent Living, and Ticket to Work program Employment Network service providers.

Such contacts may be formed through formal partnerships (e.g., where agreements are signed that formalize expectations from both parties) or informal interactions (e.g., meetings, exchange of contact information and staffing needs and ongoing communication regarding job openings and candidates).

These outreach and recruitment practices will be well worth the effort; an agency will not only secure access to talent that it otherwise may have overlooked, but also benefit from other supports that can assist in effectively integrating job candidates with disabilities into the workforce.

A. Recruitment Sources

In addition to the recruitment sources identified in the Section 501 Rule, you may want to consider the following recruitment sources:

1. Public recruiting sources, including state employment agencies.
2. Educational institutions, such as community colleges, universities and other institutions of learning and/or training, including those that offer programs for individuals with specific disabilities, such as people who are blind, deaf or have learning disabilities. Most college campuses have designated offices for students with disabilities. For recruitment purposes, agencies may contact these offices in addition to the schools' generic career services offices.
3. Nonprofit entities and social service agencies, including labor organizations, organizations of and for individuals with disabilities and other such entities that may provide referrals, technical assistance and other advice on proper placement, recruitment and accommodations.
4. Private recruiting sources, including professional organizations, consulting services and companies with expertise in disability.

B. Outreach and Recruiting Strategies

Existing, promising and emerging strategies and steps that may be taken to attract and recruit qualified individuals with disabilities include the following:

1. **Organizing** an agency disability recruitment task force (e.g., "Hiring Tiger Team") made up of HR staff, EEO staff, current employees with disabilities and managers who have hired persons with disabilities to help the agency establish a network of disability recruitment resources. The task force/team tasks would include brainstorming new ideas, conducting research, improving processes, providing training and participating in the outreach and recruitment process.
2. **Adopting** special recruitment programs for individuals with targeted disabilities.
3. **Appointing** an SPPC to recruit individuals with disabilities. The SPPC should be sufficiently senior to advise management and be trained in Schedule

Agency Promising Practice

DOD NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY (NSA):

NSA awarded a contract to a new, local Veteran-Owned small business to attract and vet mostly technical (STEM) candidates with targeted disabilities in an effort to meet agency recruitment goals regarding disability and targeted disability.

Agency Promising Practice

U.S. SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION (SEC):

In FY 2017, the SEC hosted its second annual Informational and Networking Event for Individuals with Disabilities at the Commission's headquarters. The event provided guests the opportunity to learn more about the SEC's mission, hear about the agency's benefits and reasonable accommodations and network with SEC hiring managers. After the event, the agency's Office of Human Resources shared contact information for attendees with hiring managers for their consideration. Additionally, the SEC created an internal resume database for applicants with disabilities that is accessible to hiring managers for all hiring actions.

A and other special hiring authorities, reasonable accommodations and workforce representation analysis. Responsibilities of the individual may include developing recruitment strategies, establishing contacts with external recruitment sources (including disability-focused websites, colleges and universities, and employment assistance programs serving people with disabilities) and facilitating targeted outreach programs.

4. **Holding** formal and informal briefing sessions, preferably on agency premises, with representatives from recruiting sources. Components of formal briefings may include: agency tours, explanations of current and future job openings and position descriptions, explanations of the agency's selection process, recruitment literature and a description of opportunities for formalizing arrangement for referrals of applicants.
5. **Establishing** formal arrangements with representatives from recruitment sources for referral of applicants, following up with sources and providing feedback on whether an applicant was interviewed and hired.
6. **Implementing** a training program on how and why to hire individuals with disabilities and delivering it to agency employees responsible for recruitment.
7. **Using** accessible online applications and recruitment and social networking sites so that job seekers with disabilities can learn about the agency and its hiring initiatives. Such sites can also be used to generate leads on available jobs within disability-focused organizations nationally and within the geographical area from which the company usually recruits.
8. **Posting** job announcements on accessible online job boards that specialize in identifying qualified individuals with disabilities (including veterans with disabilities), in disability-related publications and with specific disability service organizations.
9. **Participating** in career fairs targeting veterans and other candidates with disabilities.
10. **Engaging** current employees or an ERG as referral sources and asking if they know individuals with disabilities who would make good job candidates.
11. **Including** people with disabilities on agency recruitment teams.
12. **Building** a talent pipeline for youth and young adults with disabilities (transitioning high school students and college students) (see section III, subsection A.5. for ideas for specific tactics to implement).
13. **Attracting** qualified individuals with disabilities not currently in the workforce.
14. **Developing** specific and targeted strategies for recruiting, hiring and integrating veterans with disabilities, including wounded returning service members, and internal training on these strategies. Such strategies may include:
 - Using [Wounded Warrior Internship Programs](#).
 - Launching a "Why Hire a Disabled Veteran?" campaign.
 - Establishing a "Hire a Hero" internship program offering veterans opportunities to gain practical employment experience during their transition from the military to post-military careers.
 - Implementing a Veteran's Integration Program providing new veterans with access to academic courses.

- Adopting an awards program for senior management officials who make significant contributions toward the hiring and retention of disabled veterans.

15. **Developing** an email distribution list of disability advocacy groups, both nationally and in the local geographic area, and regularly sending email notices to these organizations with all job openings, as well as a description of the Schedule A hiring authority for people with disabilities and basic instructions on how to apply for a federal job using it.

16. **Using** social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter to help recruit individuals with disabilities and raise awareness of the agency as an inclusive employer.

III. HIRE (ADVANCE AND KEEP) THE BEST: PERSONNEL PROCESSES

Consistent with the Section 501 Rule and MD-715, your agency must review and, if necessary, modify personnel policies, practices and procedures to facilitate equal employment opportunity of qualified persons with disabilities, including persons with targeted disabilities and disabled veterans.

Personnel processes include the following:

- Hiring
- Advancement, including career development, and
- Retention.

A. Hiring

With respect to the application process, the Section 501 Rule [29 CFR 1614.203(d)(1)(ii)] and MD-715 specify that an agency's Affirmative Action Plan must ensure that the agency has designated sufficient staff to handle any disability-related issues that arise during the application and selection processes and provide them with sufficient training, support and other resources to carry out their responsibilities. These responsibilities shall include, at a minimum:

- Promptly and correctly answering any disability-related questions from members of the public regarding the application and hiring processes.
- Processing requests for and ensuring that the agency provides reasonable accommodations needed by job applicants during the application and selection processes.
- Accepting applications for appointment under hiring authorities that take disability into account, consistent with applicable OPM regulations.
- If an individual has applied for appointment to a particular position under a hiring authority that takes disability into account, determining whether the individual is eligible for appointment under such authority, and if so,

Agency Promising Practice

PENSION BENEFIT GUARANTY CORPORATION
(PBGC):

The PBGC's Veteran's Integration Program (VIP), which was developed by the Human Resources Department's Learning and Development Division, assists new veterans, including disabled veterans, in transitioning from military service to the civil service of the Federal Government through online and in-person courses. PBGC has received awards for this program, including the 2014 Change Management Award Training from the Training Officers Consortium, a nonprofit organization of federal trainers and other professionals.

forwarding the individual's application to the relevant hiring officials with an explanation of how and when the individual may be appointed, consistent with all applicable laws.

- Overseeing any other agency programs designed to increase hiring of individuals with disabilities.

Additional existing, promising and emerging strategies related to the process for hiring individuals with disabilities, including qualification standards, job announcements, special hiring authorities and special initiatives for youth are set out below.

1. Qualification Standards

Examples of existing, promising and emerging personnel strategies and practices relating to qualification standards include the following:

1. **Reviewing** the agency's eligibility criteria and any agency-specific qualification standards for positions to identify and revise criteria and standards that are unnecessarily restrictive and potentially exclude people with disabilities.
2. **Assisting** hiring managers in identifying the essential functions of positions to ensure that applicants have the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities to successfully perform them, with or without reasonable accommodations.
3. **Reviewing** personnel processes and their implementation on an annual basis and making necessary modifications or improvements, when appropriate.

2. Job Announcements

Examples of existing, promising and emerging personnel strategies and practices relating to job announcements include drafting clear, understandable job announcements that:

- Explain in plain language the required qualifications and duties of the job.
- Indicate that the agency encourages applications by qualified individuals with disabilities.
- Note the availability of reasonable accommodations for qualified job applicants and employees with disabilities, and provide contact information for requesting them.
- Contain information explaining how to apply under Schedule A.
- Include the [universal access symbol](#) for emphasis.

3. Hiring Process, In General

Examples of existing, promising and emerging personnel strategies and practices relating to the hiring process include the following:

1. **Considering** applicants with disclosed disabilities for all available positions for which they may be qualified, when the position(s) applied for is unavailable.
2. **Implementing** an early consideration model in the hiring process requiring hiring managers to review pre-qualified candidates with disabilities for all grade levels and in various job occupations (inclusive of the SES) in a departmental talent bank prior to the posting of job announcements.

3. In the case that a hiring manager does not select a pre-qualified candidate with a disability, **requiring** that the hiring manager document for the record the reason for the non-selection.
4. **Providing** opportunities for practice interviews for qualified job seekers with disabilities referred by community-based organizations as a way of identifying potential candidates for current or future job vacancies.
5. **Utilizing** a Hiring Manager's Feedback Form for applicant interviews.
6. **Ensuring** that job offers are not rescinded for inappropriate reasons.
7. **Using** job fairs as hiring events.
8. **Creating** a resume database or applicant bank and encouraging managers to use the database or bank before announcing the job to the public.

4. Special Hiring Authorities

Examples of existing, promising and emerging personnel strategies and practices relating to special hiring authorities include the following:

1. **Using** special hiring authorities, including excepted hiring authorities for individuals with disabilities under Schedule A and rules related to disabled veterans.
2. **Developing** Schedule A policies and standard operating procedures, which could include:
 - a. Developing standardized training (including training materials for educating key internal and external stakeholders regarding Schedule A) and training all hiring managers on the use of the hiring authorities that take disability into account.
 - b. Establishing a talent bank/database to collect resumes and disability certifications from people with disabilities and Schedule A candidates.
 - c. Creating and using standard language in all job vacancy announcements and making sure they contain information explaining how to apply under Schedule A.

Agency Promising Practice

DOD OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL (OIG):

In 2017, the OIG's SES and senior officials conducted on-the-spot interviews at Gallaudet University to obtain candidates for career ladder positions within the agency. During a hiring summit in FY 2017, OIG's hiring managers received extensive training on the Schedule A hiring process, including the online process to obtain candidates from the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) database. OIG has placed an average of four to five Schedule A applicants with disabilities during each of the last six years.

Agency Promising Practice

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE (IRS):

In FY 2017, the IRS achieved an 11.3 percent hiring goal of persons with disabilities and a 3.23 percent hiring goal of persons with targeted disabilities. During the first two quarters of the fiscal year, the Information Technology (IT) Hiring Surge allowed the IRS to quickly hire well qualified candidates under the Schedule A and 30 percent disabled veteran hiring authorities. The IRS Schedule A program was highlighted in *Careers & the disABLED Magazine*. A similar article was published internally in the *HCO Bubbler* and the *Employment, Talent and Security (ETS) Newsletter*.

- d. Providing timely input and feedback on Schedule A policies and procedures to enhance quality assurance.
- e. Developing and implementing methods to track the number and processing of Schedule A applications.
- f. Providing monthly progress reports to the Secretary or other agency head.

3. **Utilizing** Schedule A not only for hiring but also as a promotion and retention strategy.

4. **Establishing** a disability task force for Schedule A hiring and recruiting.

5. Special Initiatives for Youth with Disabilities

Examples of existing, promising and emerging personnel strategies and practices relating to special initiatives for youth with disabilities include the following:

1. **Developing** programs for students and recent graduates with disabilities, including building a talent pipeline for youth and young adults with disabilities (transitioning high school students and college students) through mentoring, internships and work experience programs; summer programs; career days; mock interviews and resume writing (including identifying key words in job descriptions to target for electronic keyword searches); youth motivational programs; and job shadowing activities.

There are several internship programs designed exclusively for students with disabilities, including:

- [Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students with Disabilities \(WRP\)](#)
- American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) [Entry Point! internship program](#)
- National Business and Disability Council (NBDC) [Emerging Leaders Internship Program for College Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Project SEARCH](#)

2. **Establishing** a website to encourage mentoring and communication with students and student interns and marketing this website to include recruitment and communication with students with disabilities.

3. **Tracking** interns with disabilities participating in internship programs.

4. **Establishing** an accessible centralized one-stop application process for all interns, inclusive of students with disabilities.

5. **Establishing** a centralized fund to support needed full-time equivalents (FTEs) and funding for payment of student interns with disabilities (a tactic that some agencies are taking under consideration).

Agency Promising Practice

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY (DOE):

In FY 2017, DOE hosted a Disability Mentoring Day event in collaboration with the American Association of People with Disabilities' (AAPD) annual effort. Fourteen of DOE's program offices offered students an opportunity for career and internship exploration, in addition to an afternoon of job shadowing and mentoring. Six colleges within the DC, Maryland and Virginia area participated in the event.

B. Advancement, Including Career Development

With respect to advancement, the Section 501 Rule [29 CFR 1614.203(d)(1)(iii)] specifies that the Affirmative Action Plan shall require the agency to take specific steps to ensure that current employees with disabilities have sufficient opportunities for advancement. Such steps may include efforts to inform and provide opportunities to enroll in relevant training programs, including management training when eligible; development or maintenance of mentoring programs for individuals with disabilities; and administration of exit interviews that include questions on how the agency could improve the recruitment, hiring, inclusion and advancement of individuals with disabilities.

Additional examples derived from a review of MD-715 include:

- Adopting career development programs, including:
 - o Leadership development programs (e.g., pre-supervisory training)
 - o Formal mentoring programs for employees with disabilities
 - o Apprenticeship programs
 - o On-the-job training opportunities
 - o SES candidate development programs
 - o Schedule A usage for internal promotions
- Adopting a plan to ensure people with disabilities, including persons with targeted disabilities, have sufficient opportunities for advancement, including career development opportunities through:
 - o Internship programs
 - o Fellowship programs
 - o Mentoring programs
 - o Coaching programs
 - o Training programs
- Identifying triggers (i.e., trends, disparities or anomalies that suggest the need for further inquiry into a particular practice, procedure or condition) for people with disabilities and people with targeted disabilities among the applicants and/or selectees for any of the career development programs (the appropriate benchmarks are

Agency Promising Practice

DOD DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY (DLA):

In FY 2017, DLA successfully utilized the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) for College Students and Graduates with Disabilities to hire 65 individuals with disabilities. Out of the 65 hires, four individuals were hired into the Pathways to Career Excellence (PaCE) program – a two-year entry-level program that includes built-in promotion potential for successful performers.

the relevant applicant pool for the applicants and the applicant pool for selectees).

- Using the inclusion rate as the benchmark, identifying triggers involving people with disabilities and people with targeted disabilities for any level of the time-off awards, bonuses or other incentives.
- Using the [inclusion rate](#) at the benchmark, identifying triggers involving people with disabilities and people with targeted disabilities for quality step increases or performance-based pay increases.
- If the agency has other types of employee recognition programs, determining whether people with disabilities and people with targeted disabilities are recognized disproportionately less than employees without disabilities (the appropriate benchmark is the inclusion rate).
- Identifying [triggers](#) involving people with disabilities and people with targeted disabilities among the qualified internal applicants and/or selectees for promotions to the senior grade levels (the appropriate benchmarks are the relevant applicant pool of qualified internal applicants and the qualified applicant pool of selectees).

Agency Promising Practice

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE (FWS):

The FWS closely monitors persons with disabilities and persons with targeted disabilities to ensure those individuals include activities for formal and informal training, mentoring programs, career development opportunities, awards programs, details to promotions and similar programs that address advancement. The FWS also develops one-year training plans for eligible 30 percent disabled veterans who were hired under the Veterans Readjustment Appointment.

Additional examples of existing, promising and emerging personnel strategies and practices relating to advancement, including career development include the following:

1. **Adopting** a promotion policy that includes disability among the positive selection factors or provides priority consideration to qualified employees with disabilities.
2. **Adopting** an internal targeted recruitment initiative to fill vacancies with individuals with disabilities. This may involve reviewing employment records of qualified employees with known disabilities available for promotions or desirable transfers to ensure that their present and potential skills are being fully used and developed.
3. **Providing** training to leadership, managers and line staff on new strategies such as workforce flexibility, which includes customized employment around job tasks (including job restructuring, job sharing and job creation).
4. **Ensuring** that advertisements for training/workshops in career development include language specifying the provisions of reasonable accommodations.
5. **Tracking** the number of employees with disabilities who complete Individual Development Plans and enroll in mentoring programs.
6. **Monitoring** the composition of participants in training and mentoring programs and tracking and reporting participation rates of individuals with disabilities.

C. Retention

With respect to retention, the Section 501 Rule [29 CFR 1614.203(d)(1)(iii)] specifies that the plan shall require the agency to take specific steps to ensure that current employees with disabilities have sufficient opportunities for advancement. Such steps may include the administration of exit interviews that include questions on how the agency could improve the recruitment, hiring, inclusion and advancement of individuals with disabilities.

Examples related to retention derived from a review of MD-715 include:

- Documenting whether all eligible Schedule A employees with a disability are converted into the competitive service after two years of satisfactory service.
- Using the inclusion rate as the benchmark, determining whether the percentage of individuals with disabilities and individuals with targeted disabilities among voluntary and involuntary separations exceed that of individuals without disabilities.
- Identifying triggers involving the separation rate of individuals with disabilities and individuals with targeted disabilities.
- Using exit interview results and other data sources to document why employees with disabilities leave the agency.

Additional examples of existing, promising and emerging personnel strategies and practices related to retention include the following:

1. **Adopting** disability management and prevention programs (e.g., stay-at-work and return-to-work programs).
2. **Identifying** and implementing methods of collecting feedback on the needs and interests of employees with disabilities (e.g., hosting regular focus groups and allowing for the submission of anonymous surveys).
3. **Working** with the agency organization for employees with disabilities to identify specific strategies for improving retention numbers.
4. **Adopting** retention plans and strategies based on information obtained from surveys and exit interviews.
5. **Developing** and disseminating a procedures manual related to the retention of employees with disabilities and targeted disabilities.
6. **Developing** and implementing a plan to review proposed terminations to ensure that disability accommodations were considered, where appropriate.

Agency Promising Practice

USDA AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE
(ARS) & APHIS:

ARS established a new category for Honor Awards that recognizes accomplishments in diversity and recruitment.

APHIS's Administrator's Civil Rights Award is given to honor employees who have made outstanding contributions to APHIS' Civil Rights program. The award gives honor and distinction to those who excel in providing equal opportunity to others seeking employment or employees currently in the federal service. It also highlights the Civil Rights program by publicizing the superior accomplishments of the award recipients, and recognizing the positive impact those accomplishments have had on other individuals.

7. **Conducting** exit interviews with individuals with disabilities leaving federal employment; including specific questions seeking to determine if any reason related to the person’s disability led to the decision to leave.
8. **Analyzing** and monitoring terminations of permanent employees with disabilities and reporting the agency’s findings to the Secretary or other agency head on a quarterly basis.

IV. ENSURE PRODUCTIVITY: REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION AND PERSONAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Some individuals with disabilities may require “reasonable accommodations” to perform the essential functions of a job. The failure to provide reasonable accommodations is a form of discrimination unless it would result in undue hardship. According to the U.S. Department of Labor’s [Job Accommodation Network \(JAN\)](#), data collected suggest that more than half of all accommodations cost nothing. Furthermore, JAN’s [statistics](#) show that most employers report financial benefits in the form of reduced insurance and training costs and increased productivity.

Other individuals with targeted (significant) disabilities may require personal assistance services (PAS) while at work. PAS are services that help individuals with targeted disabilities perform activities of daily living, such as removing and putting on clothing, eating and using the restroom. The provision of PAS that are needed on the job is not generally considered a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), or as a matter of nondiscrimination under Section 501. Based on this policy alone, many agencies did not authorize the provision of PAS. This lack of PAS in the workplace posed a major barrier to employment for some people with targeted disabilities. To address this, the Section 501 Rule was updated to require the provision of PAS as an affirmative action requirement.

This section describes policies and practices relating to the nondiscrimination reasonable accommodation requirement as well as the affirmative action PAS requirement.

A. Reasonable Accommodation Policies and Procedures

[Executive Order 13164](#), signed by former President Clinton in 2000, required agencies to have written reasonable accommodations procedures; MD-715, as updated in 2003, included this requirement as well. In addition, EEOC has now made this requirement part of the Section 501 Rule, which states that the Affirmative Action Plan shall require the agency to adopt, post on its public website and make available to all job applicants and employees in written and accessible formats, reasonable accommodations procedures

Agency Promising Practice

PEACE CORPS:

To help ensure that the Peace Corps retains employees who need accommodations, the Agency’s Office of Civil Rights and Diversity (OCD) partners with the Department of Defense’s Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program and the Department of Agriculture’s TARGET Center to provide needs assessments, consultations and free assistive devices to employees with disabilities.

In addition, because Returned Peace Corps Volunteers constitute a significant portion of the agency’s employee-applicant pipeline, the agency has entered into a letter of intended commitment with Mobility International USA (MIUSA) to ensure that the agency’s Volunteer Corps is as inclusive as possible of people with disabilities. The agency has also established a “Peace Corps Prep” program with Gallaudet University.

that are easy to understand. [1614.203(d)(3)] Accessible formats includes American Sign Language, documents in Braille or large print, documents in an electronic format that can be read by screen reading software, an individual to read the document aloud, and other types of accessible formats [82 FR 661 (January 3, 2017)].

The Section 501 Rule also includes in the written procedures many components of reasonable accommodation procedures. The Section 501 Rule now requires the procedures to address 20 specific topics, including expedited processing, interim accommodations, reasonable accommodation requests, confidentiality, processing deadlines, the process for filing complaints, and notice of denied requests [82 FR 661 (January 3, 2017)].

Examples of reasonable accommodation processes and procedures derived from a review of the MD-715 include:

- Designating an official or other mechanism to coordinate or assist with processing requests for reasonable accommodations throughout the agency.
- Establishing a firewall between the Reasonable Accommodation Program Manager and the EEO Director to ensure employees' confidentiality.
- Ensuring that job applicants can request and receive reasonable accommodations during the application and placement process.
- Using EEO complaint data for the last fiscal year, determining whether a higher percentage of persons with disabilities and persons with targeted disabilities file a formal EEO complaint alleging failure to provide a reasonable accommodation, as compared to the government-wide average.
- Using EEO complaint data during the last fiscal year, determining whether complaints alleging failure to provide reasonable accommodation result in a finding of discrimination or a settlement agreement.
- Assessing the effectiveness of the reasonable accommodation policies, practices and procedures using criteria such as:
 - o Timely processing of requests.
 - o Timely approval of accommodations.
 - o Conducting training for managers and supervisors.
 - o Monitoring accommodation requests for trends.

Agency Promising Practice

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
(EPA):

The EPA is committed to providing quality sign language interpreting services to its deaf and hard of hearing employees, job applicants and members of the public attending EPA events. The EPA initiated efforts to strengthen the contract procedures associated with the Sign Language Interpreter Program by forming a working group to develop procedures for the EPA headquarters Sign Language Interpretation Services Program. As a result of these efforts, the new procedures allow individuals who receive interpreting services to identify specific support requirements, skills and knowledge that an interpreter must have to effectively support communication, and to identify "preferred providers" and provide feedback on their experience using the contract and the interpreters with whom they work.

The Section 501 Rule also includes a provision stating that the agency Affirmative Action Plan shall require the agency to take specific steps to ensure that requests for reasonable accommodation are not denied for reason of cost, and that individuals with disabilities are not excluded from employment due to the anticipated cost of a reasonable accommodation, if the resources available to the agency as a whole, excluding those designated by statute for a specific purpose that does not include reasonable accommodation, would enable it to provide an effective reasonable accommodation, without undue hardship. Such steps shall be reasonably designed to, at a minimum:

- Ensure that anyone who is authorized to grant or deny requests for reasonable accommodation or make hiring decisions is aware that, in accordance with the undue hardship regulations, all resources available to the agency as a whole (excluding those designated by statute for a specific purpose that does not include reasonable accommodation) are considered when determining whether a denial based on cost is lawful; and
- Ensure that anyone authorized to grant or deny requests for reasonable accommodation or to make hiring decisions is aware of, and knows how to arrange for the use of, agency resources available to provide the accommodation, including any centralized fund the agency may have for that purpose [1614.203(d)(3)(ii); 82 FR 663 (January 3, 2017)].

In response to the proposed Rule, some commenters stated that the final rule should require agencies to establish a “[centralized fund](#)” to pay for required reasonable accommodations.

In its analysis of the Section 501 Rule, the EEOC affirms, “a centralized fund is one of the best and easiest ways to ensure that requests for reasonable accommodation are not denied for reason of cost, and that individuals with disabilities are not excluded from employment due to the anticipated cost of a reasonable accommodation, if the resources available to the agency as a whole would enable it to provide one without undue hardship.” [82 FR 663 (January 3, 2017)].

However, the final Section 501 Rule does not require agencies to establish centralized funds. Instead, it requires that agencies take “specific steps” toward meeting the goals outlined above, either through a centralized fund or through other means. This wording allows agencies to adopt systems that perform the same valuable functions of centralized funds, while providing them with flexibility to work within existing budgetary schemes.

Under MD-715, agencies are asked to report whether they use a centralized fund for purposes of providing reasonable accommodations across the agency.

Additional examples of existing, promising and emerging strategies and practices relating to reasonable accommodations include the following:

1. **Establishing** an administrative mechanism or centralized source of expertise (appointing a specific individual and/or establishing an office or team for complex issues) for assessing, evaluating and providing reasonable accommodations (including assistive technology) to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of the reasonable accommodation process.
2. **Consulting** with [JAN](#) for free, expert and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues.

3. **Establishing** and/or continuing relationships with the Department of Defense's [Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program \(CAP\)](#), the Department of Agriculture's [TARGET Center](#) and/or the Department of Transportation [Disability Resource Center](#).
4. **Providing** training opportunities (including online and video) to learn about new strategies and devices, such as telework and new assistive technology devices.
5. **Creating** an online/electronic system for tracking accommodations to document timely processing of requests and their successful use.
6. **Assigning** a full time director of disability services or workplace supports to coordinate accommodations strategies.

B. Personal Assistance Services: Policies and Procedures

Under the Section 501 Rule, each agency is required to prepare annually, and submit to EEOC for approval, an Affirmative Action Plan that includes a copy of its personal assistance services (PAS) procedures and information on its efforts to implement them [1614.203(d)(5)]. This is a new affirmative action requirement. EEOC has issued guidance regarding the PAS requirement in its "[Questions and Answers: Federal Agencies' Obligation to Provide Personal Assistance Services \(PAS\) under Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act](#)." This document helps to clarify the requirement and includes examples of promising practices.

The term "personal assistance services" means assistance with performing activities of daily living that an individual would typically perform if he or she did not have a disability, and that is not otherwise required as a reasonable accommodation, including, for example, assistance in removing and putting on clothing, eating and using the restroom [29 CFR 1614.203(a)(5)] [Preamble to Section 501 Rule, 82 FR 654, 665].

Under the Section 501 Rule, the Affirmative Action Plan requires the agency to provide an employee with, in addition to professional services required as a reasonable accommodation under the standards set forth in 29 CFR part 1630 (Regulations to Implement the Equal Employment Provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act), PAS during work hours and job-related travel if all of the following conditions are met:

- The employee requires such services because of a targeted disability.
- Provision of such services would, together with any reasonable accommodations required under the standards set forth in part 1630 of Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations, enable the employee to perform the essential functions of their position.
- Provision of such services would not impose undue hardship on the agency [29 CFR 1614.203(d)(5)(i)] [Preamble to Section 501 Rule, 82 FR 666].

Agency Promising Practice

NSA:

The NSA's Workplace Care Attendant program has running for several years and was recently awarded a new contract in September 2017. With the new contract, the nursing assistants not only meet the daily needs for toileting and feeding (Activities of Daily Living) for employees who require it, but also are also able to assist in the Occupational, Health, Environmental, and Safety Services Medical Center Acute/Urgent Care clinic, providing their services as nursing assistants. Employees who need assistance with their Activities of Daily Living are referred to the Program Manager, and a collaborative agreement between employee and assistant is developed to meet their needs.

The Section 501 Rule requires agencies to provide PAS to employees who, because of targeted disability, require such assistance in order to be at work, or participate in work-related travel [Preamble to Section 501 Rule, 82 FR 654]. This includes providing PAS for employees to participate in employer-sponsored events to the same extent as they must provide reasonable accommodations [FAQ 17].

Under the Section 501 Rule, the affirmative action plan shall state that PAS must be performed by a personal assistance service provider. The term “personal assistance service provider” means an employee or independent contractor whose primary job functions include provision of personal assistance services [29 CFR 1614.203(a)(5)]. The plan may permit the agency to require PAS providers to provide PAS services to more than one individual. The plan may also permit the agency to require PAS service providers to perform tasks unrelated to PAS services, but only to the extent that doing so does not result in failure to provide required PAS in a timely manner [29 CFR 1614.203(d)(5)(ii)].

Agencies may structure their own budgets as they see fit. However, the resources available to the agency as a whole are considered when determining whether an agency can provide PAS without undue hardship. Agencies are entitled to consider all available resources when arranging for PAS, including outside sources that are already providing PAS or are willing to provide PAS at their own expense, such as a state or veterans’ rehabilitation agency. However, agencies are ultimately responsible for ensuring that the services are provided in a timely manner and cannot rely on the fact that an outside source has promised or is otherwise obligated to provide PAS as a reason for denying an employee’s request [FAQ 38].

Examples of practices related to PAS included in MD-715 or specified in EEOC’s PAS “Questions and Answers” document include:

- Prescribing in its reasonable accommodation procedures that requests for PAS will be processed in the same manner and shall be subject to the same standards as requests for reasonable accommodations.
- In the agency’s written PAS policies and procedures, describing/explaining/delineating the:
 - o Relationship between reasonable accommodations and PAS, including work-related travel as a reasonable accommodation and teleworking.
 - o Roles of various staff, including human resources, EEO staff and DPM.
 - o Qualifications of PAS service providers.
 - o Process for selecting PAS providers (e.g., through use of federal employees or contractors).
 - o Use of pools of PAS providers or individual assignments of PAS providers.
 - o Use of family members as PAS providers.
 - o Security clearance process for PAS service provider.
 - o Use of volunteers/coworkers.
 - o Unavailability of PAS service provider.
 - o Assignment of non-PAS job functions to PAS service providers.

- Funding PAS through a centralized fund and using a centralized office to administer PAS and use of PAS service providers.
- Assessing the effectiveness of the PAS policies, practices and procedures using criteria such as:
 - o Timely processing of requests.
 - o Timely providing approved PAS.
 - o Conducting training for managers and supervisors.
 - o Monitoring PAS requests for trends.

V. BE TECH SAVVY: ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The development, procurement, lease, maintenance and use of information and communication technology (ICT) are central to the operation of federal agencies in the 21st century. The internet has dramatically changed the way that agencies conduct work and communicate with the public, including the manner in which individuals apply for jobs. Further, agency use of the internet, email and social media is dramatically changing the way agencies communicate, both internally and externally. Title V of the Rehabilitation Act requires agencies to adapt to these changes in the following ways:

- Section 508 requires agencies to provide federal employees with disabilities and members of the public access to information and data that is comparable to the access provided to federal employees without disabilities. Regulations implementing Section 508 are codified at [36 CFR part 1194](#).
- Section 501 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability including the failure to provide reasonable accommodation (incorporating by reference 29 CFR 1630.9), including the failure to acquire or modify equipment or devices (e.g., assistive technology devices and services).
- Section 504 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in federally conducted activities. Examples of this kind of discrimination include failing to make reasonable modifications to policies, practices and procedures, as well as failing to provide auxiliary aids and services.

If applicants and employees with disabilities are to fully participate in the workforce, they must have access to and use of information and data that is comparable to the access and use by applicants and employees without

Agency Promising Practice

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
(DHS):

In FY 2017, DHS issued the policy and procedures for Nondiscrimination for Individuals with Disabilities in DHS-Conducted Programs and Activities (Non-Employment). Directive Number 065-01 outlines DHS' policy and Instruction Number 065-01-001 provides implementing its instruction. This policy requires all agency components to identify Disability Access Coordinators and to conduct a self-evaluation of DHS programs and activities to ensure accessibility.

disabilities. For example, if an online application system is not accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, applicants with disabilities may never “get through the front door” to apply for a job.

Once an individual with a disability is on board, if they are not provided with accessible ICT and training, they are limited in their ability to develop skills needed to be productive team members and advance in your agency. A specific commitment by the agency (and all program operating components) to ensure accessible and usable ICT is as essential to facilitating meaningful and effective employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities as structural elements are to ensuring access to buildings and offices.

The Section 501 Rule [29 CFR 1614.203(d)(4)] specifies that the Affirmative Action Plan shall require the agency to adopt, post on its public website and make available to all employees in written and accessible formats, a notice that:

- Explains their rights under Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act concerning accessibility of agency technology, and the Architectural Barriers Act concerning accessibility of agency buildings and facilities.
- Provides contact information for an agency employee who is responsible for ensuring accessibility of electronic and information technology, as well as the individual responsible for ensuring accessibility of buildings and facilities.
- Provides instructions on how to file complaints alleging violations of Section 508 and the Architectural Barriers Act.

If an agency’s investigation of a complaint shows that a different entity is responsible for the alleged violation, the Affirmative Action Plan shall require the agency to inform the individual who filed the complaint where they may file a complaint against the other entity, if possible.

Existing, promising and emerging agency practices regarding accessible ICT include the development of comprehensive strategic action plans that address the following areas:

- Leadership and Team Approach
- Needs Assessment and Priorities
- Formal Policies, Practices and Procedures
- Agency-Wide Infrastructure
- Evaluation and Accountability

A. Leadership and Team Approach

1. **Securing** the support of leadership at the highest levels of agency leadership in order to facilitate “buy-in” and establish and sustain organizational commitment.
2. **Establishing** a network of individuals responsible for implementing a plan to improve accessibility. This “accessibility team” may be comprised of managers across divisions, including HR, ICT, procurement, education and training, financial and marketing and Section 504 and 508 compliance.

3. **Making** sure leadership understands and communicates the “business case” for ensuring that technology used by the agency is accessible to the largest possible number of applicants, employees and customers.

B. Needs Assessments and Priorities

1. **Considering** all of the ICT used or offered and making a list of those platforms, devices and applications.
2. **Evaluating** accessibility by testing ICT applications with automated accessibility testing tools and by considering the user experience of applicants, employees and customers.
3. **Establishing** a process and adopting criteria that can be used for setting priorities.

C. Formal Policies, Practices and Procedures

1. **Adopting** specific technical ICT accessibility standards and functional performance criteria regarding software applications and operating systems, intranet and internet applications, telecommunication products, video and multimedia products, self-contained closed products (e.g., copiers and printers) and computers.
2. **Adopting** accessible online application systems that cover: website integration, job posting and distribution tools, application and resume submission, communication between applicants and employer, resume extraction and management, candidate search and selection processes, and communication regarding a job offer or rejection.

D. Agency-Wide Infrastructure

1. **Providing** outsourcing guidelines, including copies of the ICT accessibility guidelines, to suppliers and partners, and ensuring that contracts stipulate suppliers will apply ICT accessibility standards where relevant.
2. **Establishing** clear procurement policies, including a solicitation policy that states that ICT should be accessible, indicates which accessibility standards apply and communicates plans to inspect deliverables based on those standards.
3. **Delineating** the respective roles and responsibilities of key personnel, including the Chief Acquisition Officer, Chief Information Officer and Chief Accessibility Technology Officer.
4. **Conducting** training for in-house staff, including program managers, contracting and procurement officers, software developers, web developers and video-multimedia developers, including IT help desk staff.

Agency Promising Practice

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE (IRS):

Alternative Media employees at IRS participated in 10 hours of Section 508 webinars offered by the U.S. Access Board and other vendors that provide accessibility services. In Q2 of FY 2018, two employees also received contracting officer’s representative (COR) training to assist with ensuring contracts include Section 508 compliance and that PDF and HTML versions of IRS training materials are Section 508 compliant.

5. **Deploying** accessible ICT throughout the agency (e.g., establishing a mechanism for centralized expertise and/or payment).

E. Evaluation and Accountability

1. **Appointing** a Chief Accessibility Technology Officer.
2. **Notifying** managers and employees about the agency's ICT accessibility policy.
3. **Involving** individuals with disabilities and experts in the development, implementation and evaluation of policy.
4. **Establishing** measurable objectives and benchmarks for accessibility, including checklists, scorecards and grid-based tracking documents.
5. **Designing** and implementing data collection and continuous improvement strategies, including tracking and reporting systems and regularly scheduled reporting.

VI. GROW SUCCESS: CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

While the adoption of written policies, practices and procedures are necessary to enhance employment opportunities for qualified individuals with disabilities, the ultimate objective is ensuring their implementation through continuous assessment and improvement and accountability (recordkeeping and reporting).

Consistent with the Section 501 Rule and MD-715, existing, promising and emerging agency strategies and practices related to continuous assessment and improvement and accountability include:

- Adopting adequate data systems for effective workforce analyses of applicant flow, on-board workforce and personnel transaction data.
- Establishing agency-wide goals.
- Conducting barrier analysis.
- Taking specific steps to facilitate progression toward goals and continuous improvement.
- Maintaining records and preparing reports.
- Investigating and resolving complaints.

Agency Promising Practice

USDA AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE
(AMS):

The Civil Rights Program at AMS provides monthly statistical tables relating to hires, promotions, separations and workforce representation of persons with disabilities and persons with targeted disabilities (along with the numerical goals listed) to each of its programs' Deputy Administrators and to the Agency Administrator. Both the Administrator and Civil Rights Director emphasize the Secretary's vision and civil rights initiatives and goals during weekly staff meetings and through frequent updates in the AMS Voice newsletter.

A. Workforce Analysis, Including Self-Identification [1614.203(d)(6)]

The Section 501 Rule specifies that the Affirmative Action Plan shall require the agency to perform an annual workforce analysis to determine what percentage of its employees at each grade level and salary level have disabilities, and what percentage of its employees at each grade level and salary level have targeted disabilities. For purposes of performing the workforce analysis, an employee may be classified as an individual with a disability or an individual with a targeted disability on the basis of:

- The individual's self-identification as an individual with a disability or an individual with a targeted disability on a form, including but not limited to OPM's Standard Form (SF) -256, Self-Identification of Disability, which states that the information collected will be kept confidential and used only for statistical purposes, and that completion of the form is voluntary.
- Records relating to the individual's appointment under a hiring authority that takes disability into account (such as Schedule A), if applicable.
- Records relating to the individual's request for reasonable accommodation, if any.

In other words, the Section 501 Rule permits agencies to design their own forms or use existing forms as appropriate. For example, agencies are permitted to use the approach taken in EEOC's Applicant Flow Form. This form asks, among other things, whether the individual has a non-targeted disability. It does not, however, require the individual to identify which non-targeted they have [82 FR 667 (January 3, 2017)].

Footnote 93 in the section-by-section analysis of the Section 501 Rule reaffirms that the anti-discrimination regulations permit agencies (and employers generally) to ask disability-related questions for purposes of engaging in affirmative action for individuals with disabilities [82 FR 668 (January 3, 2017)].

Examples of practices relating to workforce analysis set out in MD-715 include:

- Establishing a process to integrate supplemental data into the demographic data. (Agencies that do not report their demographic data to OPM may adopt a process to integrate the supplemental data into their demographic data).
- Ensuring that workforce utilization process does not double count employees with disabilities in their demographic data.

Examples of practices relating to **self-identification** include:

Agency Promising Practice

FEDERAL DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION (FDIC):

In April 2017, the FDIC Chairman announced the FDIC's first Disability Employment Program Strategic Plan, which was issued in March 2017. The Chairman advised all employees of increased efforts to hire and retain people with disabilities and people with targeted disabilities. In addition, the updated goals were provided to all employees by the Chairman in a September 2017 global email message encouraging employees to update their self-identification of disabilities policies and procedures.

1. **Adopting** written policies and procedures to increase education and awareness of SF-256 and explain the benefits of and concerns with self-identification.
2. **Including** a description and explanation of the SF-256 at new employee orientation/on-boarding.
3. **Communicating** the definition of “disability” and including examples. (One of the reasons employees with disabilities do not self-identify is that they may not realize they meet the definition of disability).
4. **Providing** employees the option to self-identify within a secure/confidential online system where they maintain changes to tax deductions, pay check allocations, etc. (i.e., separate from the electronic personnel documents that include the SF-50, performance evaluations, etc.).
5. **Assigning** the disability ERG a key role in communicating the importance of self-identification.
6. **Launching** an enterprise communication plan encouraging employees to update their personal information. This can be done by using events throughout the year, such as the annual benefits enrollment and the employee engagement survey, to remind employees to check that their personal information is still current; or by distributing a memorandum to all employees allowing them to self-identify and explaining benefits and protections.
7. **Re-surveying** employees on an annual/periodic basis.

B. Adoption of Goals [1614.203(d)(7)(i)]

It is often said that “what gets measured gets done.” The Section 501 Rule specifies that the Affirmative Action Plan shall commit the agency to the goal of ensuring that no less than 12 percent of employees at the GS-11 level and above, together with employees who are not paid under the General Schedule but who have salaries equal to or greater than employees at the GS-11, step 1 level in the Washington, DC locality, are individuals with disabilities; and that no less than 12 percent of employees at the GS-10 level and below, together with employees who are not paid under the General Schedule but who have salaries less than employees at the GS-11, step 1 level in the Washington, DC locality, are individuals with disabilities.

In addition, the Section 501 Rule specifies that the Affirmative Action Plan shall commit the agency to the goal of ensuring that no less than 2 percent of employees at the GS-11 level and above, together with employees who are not paid under the General Schedule but who have salaries equal to or greater than employees at the GS-11, step 1 level in the Washington, DC locality, are individuals with targeted disabilities; and that no less than 2 percent of employees at the GS-10 level and below, together with employees who are not paid under the General Schedule but who have salaries less than employees at the GS-11, step 1 level in the Washington, DC locality, are individuals with targeted disabilities.

EEOC recognizes in the section-by-section analysis accompanying the Section 501 Rule and the preamble accompanying the proposed rule that there are many reasons why it may take some agencies more time than others to meet the utilization goals, such as budgetary constraints (including hiring freezes), the number of additional individuals with targeted disabilities that would have to be hired to achieve the goals, and the nature of certain jobs within an agency’s workforce that may include valid physical standards that individuals with certain disabilities may not be able to meet [82 FR 669 (January 3, 2017)].

Examples of practices related to goals set out in MD-715 include:

- Using the goal of 12 percent as the benchmark, identifying triggers (i.e., trends, disparities or anomalies that suggests the need for further inquiry into a particular practice, procedure or condition) involving persons with disabilities by grade level cluster in the permanent workforce (cluster GS-1 to GS-10; Cluster GS-11 to SES).
- Using the goal of 2 percent as the benchmark, identifying triggers involving individuals with targeted disabilities by grade level cluster in the permanent workforce (cluster GS-1 to GS-10; Cluster GS-11 to SES).
- Using the qualified applicant pool as the benchmark, identifying triggers for persons with disabilities and persons with targeted disabilities among the new hires for any of the mission-critical occupations.
- Using the relevant applicant pool as the benchmark, identifying triggers for persons with disabilities and persons with targeted disabilities among the qualified internal applicants for any of the mission-critical occupations.
- Adopting a process for communicating the numerical goals to the hiring managers and/or recruiters.

C. Barrier Analysis

Consistent with the Section 501 Rule and MD-715, in addition to collecting, maintaining and analyzing applicant flow and workforce utilization data and establishing agency-wide equal employment goals, each agency must examine existing recruitment programs and hiring practices to identify and eliminate any barriers to recruiting, hiring, advancement and retention of individuals with disabilities and, in particular, individuals with targeted disabilities.

The first step in this process is identifying triggers. MD-715 defines a trigger as “a trend, disparity, or anomaly that suggests the need for further inquiry into a particular policy, practice, or procedure, or condition (a red flag).” Triggers can be gleaned from various sources of information. For example, agency data may show that while the participation rate of individuals with targeted disabilities in the agency’s total workforce is consistent with the agency’s goals, these individuals are separating from the agency at a higher-than-expected rate.

The sources used to identify triggers may also be used later in the barrier analysis process. According to MD-715, sources of data relevant to barrier analysis include:

Agency Promising Practice

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (GSA):

As a result of identifying possible “attitudinal barriers” among selecting officials, GSA has established an Unconscious Bias Training program to dispel the belief that employees with disabilities are not able to perform the essential functions of the occupations. The training addresses negative stereotypes of persons with disabilities and persons with targeted disabilities, and provides strategies to “interrupt” unconscious biases. Managers and supervisors must also take a course titled, “Hiring, Retaining, and Including People with Disabilities,” every two years.

In addition, GSA identified a possible attitudinal barrier among selection officials, as well as institutional barriers due to the lack of training and promotion of special hiring authorities. To address the barriers, the Office of Human Resource Management ensures that the certificates of qualified individuals with disabilities are provided separately and prominently to the selecting officials.

- Workforce data tables
- Complaint data
- Grievance data
- Findings from decisions
- Exit interview data
- Focus groups
- Interviews
- Reports
- Other

Once a trigger is identified, agencies must conduct effective barrier analysis to identify its root cause (i.e., the barrier). MD-715 defines a barrier as, “an agency policy, practice or procedure that limits or tends to limit employment opportunities.” It continues, “Many employment barriers are built into the organizational and operational structures of the agency and embedded in the day-to-day procedures and practices of the agency.” According to MD-715 barriers generally fall within one of the three following categories:

- Institutional/structural
- Attitudinal
- Physical/ICT

Once the barrier is identified, the agency then needs to develop a comprehensive action plan to eliminate it. The plan should be disseminated to agency managers, who should work in collaboration with the EEO office to implement the plan. The plan should be regularly reviewed and updated to report on progress toward eliminating the root cause found, or address modifications that may be needed to the plan if new barriers are found. MD-715 recommends that for the planned activities that were completed, the agency describe the actual impact of those activities toward eliminating the barriers; if the planned activities did not eliminate the barriers, the agency may describe how it intends to improve the plan for the next fiscal year.

Some agencies may choose to create a Barrier Analysis Working Group. The Working Group would be responsible for spearheading the process of barrier analysis and building strategic partnerships with all stakeholders. The Working Group may be led by high level decision makers within the agency. Responsibilities of the Working Group may include:

1. **Carrying** out holistic and in-depth analysis of workforce profiles.
2. **Conducting** pre-decisional analyses of policies, actions and decisions that could have a potential impact on applicants and employees, including a review of personnel and management procedures.
3. **Developing** initiatives and strategic plans to increase and maintain a diverse and inclusive workforce.
4. **Providing** policy guidance on effective affirmative action programs.

5. **Ensuring** compliance with agency policies and legal provisions.
6. **Aligning** workforce requirements directly with the agency's strategic and business plans.
7. **Identifying** where gaps exist between current workforce competencies and future competencies requirements.
8. **Identifying** and implementing gap reduction strategies.
9. **Making** decisions about how best to structure and deploy the workforce.
10. **Identifying** and overcoming internal and external barriers to accomplishing workforce goals.

Agencies may also choose to organize Working Group subcommittees comprised of members of the Working Group and/or other employees within the agency. While the Working Group may meet on a quarterly basis, these subcommittees may convene more regularly (for example, monthly) to discuss:

- Training and award data for the agency as well as each program office.
- Groups with lower than expected population rates and potential barriers for those groups.
- Action plans to address barriers.

Agencies may also consider hiring/contracting with an industrial/organizational psychologist to increase the scientific rigor of barriers analysis research.

D. Progression Toward Goals [1614.203(d)(7)(ii)]

In accordance with the Section 501 Rule, the Affirmative Action Plan must require the agency to take specific steps that are reasonably designed to gradually increase the number of persons with disabilities and targeted (significant) disabilities employed at the agency until they meet the adopted goals (outlined in Part VII, Section B of this document).

Examples of specific steps in the Section 501 Rule include, but are not limited to:

- Increasing use of hiring authorities that take disability into account to hire or promote individuals with disabilities or targeted disabilities, as applicable.
- Considering disability or targeted disability status as a positive factor in hiring, promotion or assignment decisions to the extent permitted by applicable laws.
- Developing disability-related training and education campaigns for all employees in the agency.
- Increasing efforts to hire and retain individuals who require supported employment because of a disability; who have retained the services of a job coach at their own expense or at the expense of a third party; and who may be given permission to use the job coach during work hours as a reasonable accommodation without imposing undue hardship on the agency.
- Adopting training, mentoring or internship programs for individuals with disabilities.
- Additional outreach and recruitment efforts.

Specific examples related to training and educational campaigns that will help agencies progress toward the hiring goals outlined in Part VII, Section B of this document include:

1. **Providing** training on disability-related issues (e.g., understanding legal requirements, disability etiquette and disability awareness, retention and return-to-work strategies, overcoming stereotypes and other attitudinal barriers, reasonable accommodation procedures, targeted hiring programs); incorporating that training as a regular and ongoing component of the agency's diversity and inclusion initiatives.
2. **Training** managers and other employees on Schedule A and other special hiring authorities.
3. **Creating** a budget line item to fund assessment process for all managers and supervisors allowing staff to provide candid feedback.
4. **Explaining** to managers and supervisors how performance elements included in their performance plans related to the recruitment, hiring, advancement and retention of persons with disabilities will be assessed, including their use of Schedule A and other special hiring authorities.
5. **Providing** individualized coaching for supervisors who are rated "in need of improvement."
6. **Establishing** an EEO program on an agency-operated radio station to serve as a tool for EEO staff to train managers and EEO practitioners.
7. **Establishing** an online, one-stop training repository consisting of documents, links, videos and policies with sections for employees, managers and EEO practitioners.
8. **Actively** participating in the [FEED](#), an interagency working group focused on information sharing, promising practices and collaborative partnerships designed to make the Federal Government a model employer of people with disabilities.

E. Establishing Accountability Measures, Including Recordkeeping and Reporting and Complaint Resolution

Accountability, including recordkeeping and reporting mechanisms, is necessary to ascertain whether the agency is complying with the nondiscrimination and affirmative action requirements; whether current policies, practices and procedures are effective; and whether the agency is making progress in improving employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

1. Recordkeeping [1614.203(d)(8)]

The Section 501 Rule specifies that the Affirmative Action Plan shall require the agency to keep records that it may use to determine whether it is complying with the nondiscrimination and affirmative action requirements imposed under Section 501, and make these required

Agency Promising Practice

FEDERAL RESERVE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

(FRB):

FRB implemented a Diversity and Inclusion Scorecard to hold each division accountable for its diversity and inclusion efforts. The scorecard identifies objectives, actions and outcomes covering four performance areas: Leadership Engagement, Talent Acquisition, Talent Management and Supplier Diversity. Every division head must submit a quarterly report to the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, which reviews and provides feedback on their diversity and inclusion efforts.

records available to the EEOC upon request. The required records are necessary for an agency to determine whether it is providing “adequate hiring, placement and advancement opportunities for individuals with disabilities,” as required under Section 501.

Specifically, the Rule requires that each agency keep a record of:

- The number of job applications received from individuals with disabilities, and the number of individuals with disabilities who were hired by the agency.
- The number of job applications received from individuals with targeted disabilities, and the number of individuals with targeted disabilities who were hired by the agency.
- All rescissions of conditional job offers, demotions and terminations taken against applicants or employees as a result of medical examinations or inquiries.
- All employees hired under Schedule A hiring authority for persons with certain disabilities, and each such employee’s date of hire, entering grade level, probationary status and current grade level.
- The number of employees appointed under Schedule A hiring authority for persons with certain disabilities who have been converted to career or career-conditional appointments in the competitive service, and the number of such employees who were terminated prior to being converted to a career or career-conditional appointment in the competitive service.
- Details about each request for reasonable accommodation.

2. Reporting [1614.203(d)(9)]

The Section 501 Rule includes specific reporting requirements, including the annual submission of:

- A copy of its current plan to the Commission.

The results of the two most recent workforce analyses showing the percentage of employees with disabilities and employees with targeted disabilities in each of the designated pay groups.

The number of individuals appointed to positions within the agency under the Schedule A hiring authority for persons with certain disabilities during the previous year, and the total number of employees whose employment at the agency began by appointment under Schedule A hiring authority for persons with certain disabilities.

- A list of changes made to the plan since the prior submission, if any, and an explanation of why those changes were made.

In accordance with the Section 501 Rule, each agency shall make the information submitted to the EEOC available to the public by, at a minimum, posting a copy of the submission on its public website and providing a means by which members of the public may request copies of the submission in accessible formats.

3. Complaint Resolution

In accordance with Federal Sector Equal Opportunity Rule [1614.104], each agency shall adopt procedures for processing individual and class complaints of discrimination. Examples of existing, promising and emerging practices include:

1. **Conducting** a periodic study to improve the quality and efficiency of EEO complaint processing.
2. **Forming** a Compliance Team to achieve efficiency in complaint processing, including discussing due dates, status of complaints and challenges in processing complaints.
3. **Launching** EEO E-file, which automates parts of the EEO process and allows complainants to file and track complaints online in real time.
4. **Developing** a Reports of Investigation Feedback Tool to assess the quality of reports of investigation, enabling EEO office to use that tool to provide feedback reports to sub-components on a regular basis.

VII. APPENDIX: RESOURCE AND RESEARCH COMPENDIUM

This Resource and Research Compendium includes a selective list of federal and state agency regulatory and policy materials, research studies and reports and other reports/guidance identifying existing, promising and emerging practices regarding the recruitment, hiring, retention and advancement of people with disabilities

SECTION 501 STATUTE, REGULATIONS AND EEOC GUIDANCE

- [Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act](#) and implementing [regulations](#)
- [Management Directive 715: Affirmative Action Plan for the Recruitment, Hiring, Advancement and Retention of Persons with Disabilities \(2018\)](#):
 - o [Instructions](#)
 - o [Parts A-E](#)
 - o [Part J](#) Special Programs Plan for Recruitment, Hiring, Advancement and Retention of Persons with Disabilities
- [Questions and Answers: The EEOC's Final Rule on Affirmative Action for People with Disabilities in Federal Employment](#)
- [Questions and Answers: Federal Agencies' Obligation to Provide Personal Assistance Services \(PAS\) under Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act](#)
- [Questions and Answers: Promoting Employment of Individuals with Disabilities in the Federal Workforce](#)
- [The ABCs of Schedule A](#)
- [Practical Advice for Drafting and Implementing Reasonable Accommodation Procedures under Executive Order 13164](#)

SECTION 508 STATUTE, REGULATIONS AND GUIDANCE

- [Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act](#)
 - o [Regulations](#)
 - o [Implementation guidance](#)
- [Section508.gov](#)

EXECUTIVE ORDERS RELATED TO FEDERAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT

- [Executive Order No. 13548 Increasing Federal Employment of Individuals with Disabilities](#) (July 26, 2010)
- [Executive Order No. 13583 Establishing a Coordinated Government-Wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce](#) (August 18, 2011)

- [Executive Order No. 13163 Increasing the Opportunity for Individuals with Disabilities to be Employed in the Federal Government](#) (July 28, 2000)
- [Executive Order No. 13164 Requiring Federal Agencies to Establish Procedures to Facilitate the Provision of Reasonable Accommodation](#) (July 28, 2000)
- [Executive Order No. 13078 Increasing Employment of Adults with Disabilities](#) (March 13, 1998)

FEDERAL AGENCY TOOLKITS AND MODEL STRATEGIES

- [Increasing Disability Employment in the Federal Government](#), Office of Disability Employment Policy, U.S. Department of Labor
- [Federal Workforce—Practices to Increase the Employment of Individuals with Disabilities](#), Statement of Yvonne Jones, Director Strategic Issues, U.S. General Accountability Office (February 16, 2011)
- [Participant-Identified Leading Practices that Could Increase the Employment of Individuals with Disabilities in the Federal Workforce](#), Highlights of a Forum, U.S. General Accountability Office (October 2010)
- [Improving the Participation Rate of People with Targeted Disabilities in the Federal Work Force](#), U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (January 2008)
- [Increasing the Federal Employment of People with Disabilities – Resources for Implementing Executive Order 13548](#), Memorandum for Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies
- [A Guide to Telework in the Federal Government](#), U.S. Office of Personnel Management

RESEARCH PAPERS AND REPORTS

- [Report on the Employment of Individuals with Disabilities in the Federal Executive Branch, Fiscal Year 2015](#), U.S. Office of Personnel Management
- [Framework for Designing and Implementing Accessible Information and Communication Technology \(ICT\) Strategic Plans](#), Office of Disability Employment Policy (July 20, 2011)

FEDERAL RESOURCE CENTERS

- [U.S. Department of Agriculture TARGET Center](#)
- [U.S. Department of Defense's Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program](#)
- [U.S. Department of Labor Civil Rights Center](#)
- [U.S. Department of Transportation Disability Resource Center](#)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR FEDERAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES

- [Office of Disability Employment Policy \(ODEP\) website](#)
- [Resources for federal employers](#)

- [Diversifying Your Workforce—A Four Step Reference Guide to Recruiting, Hiring, and Retaining Employees with Disabilities](#)
- Information on [customized employment](#)
- [Accessible Technology Resources](#): links to websites with information about assistive technology devices and services and accessible information and communication technology (ICT)
- Information on [emergency preparedness for people with disabilities](#)
- [Disability employment statistics](#) from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)
- [Database of Registered Apprenticeship Programs](#) from the Employment and Training Administration (ETA)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT RESOURCES

- [VA State and Local Resources Directory](#)
- [National Resource Directory](#)

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES

- [ADA National Network](#): A network of 10 regional ADA centers that provide information, referrals, resources and training on the ADA to businesses, employers, government entities and individuals with disabilities.
- [Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion \(EARN\)](#): 1-855-275-3276 (Voice/TTY). Resource for public and private sector employers seeking to recruit, hire, advance and retain qualified employees with disabilities.
 - o [Federal Exchange on Employment & Disability \(FEED\)](#)
 - o [Finding Job Candidates with Disabilities](#)
 - o [Inclusion@Work: A Framework for Building a Disability-Inclusive Organization](#)
 - o [Section 501 Information Center](#)
 - o [Federal Agency Promising and Emerging Practices Facilitating Self-Identification of Disability](#)
 - o [A Roadmap for Developing Effective Collaborations & Partnerships to Advance the Employment of Individuals with Disabilities in the Federal Sector](#)
 - o [Advancing & Retaining Federal Employees with Disabilities—The Case for Centralized Accommodation Programs & Funding](#)
- [Job Accommodation Network \(JAN\)](#): 1-800-526-7234 (TTY: 1-877-781-9403). Source of expert guidance on workplace accommodations, the ADA and related legislation and disability employment issues.
- [Partnership on Employment & Accessible Technology \(PEAT\)](#): promotes the employment, retention and career advancement of people with disabilities through the development, adoption and promotion of accessible technology.

- [Disability:IN](#): a national organization that represents employers using a “business to business” strategy to promote the business imperative of including people with disabilities in the workforce.

STATE AND LOCAL RESOURCES FOR RECRUITING & HIRING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES:

- [American Job Centers](#)
- [Centers for Independent Living](#)
- [Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation National Employment Team \(NET\)](#)
- [Disability and Veterans Community Resources Directory](#)
- [State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies](#)
- [Ticket to Work Program Employment Networks \(ENs\)](#)

INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

- [American Association for the Advancement of Science \(AAAS\) Entry Point! Internship Program](#)
- [National Business & Disability Council Emerging Leaders Internship Program for College Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Project SEARCH](#)
- [Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students with Disabilities \(WRP\)](#)

RESOURCES FOR STATE EMPLOYERS AND POLICYMAKERS

- [Work Matters: A Framework for States on Workforce Development for People with Disabilities](#)
- [A Joint Resolution or Executive Order to Encourage States to Be Model Employers of People with Disabilities](#)
- [National Conference of State Legislatures \(NCSL\) Disability Employment State Statute and Legislation Scan](#)