



The State of the Agency



FY 2023

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
EEO Program and MD-715 Status Report

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MD-715
Parts A Through D

Part A - Department or Agency Identifying Information

Agency	Second Level Component	Address	City	State	Zip Code	Agency Code	FIPS Code
U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI)	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)	1849 C Street, N.W.	Washington	DC	20240	IN15	1448

Part B - Total Employment

Total Employment	Permanent Workforce	Temporary Workforce	Total Workforce
Number of Employees	8372	636	9008

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

Agency Leadership	Name	Title
Head of Agency	Martha Williams	Director
Head of Agency Designee	Stephen Guertin	Deputy Director

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

EEO Program Staff	Name	Title	Occupational Series	Pay Plan and Grade	Phone Number	Email Address
Principal EEO Director/Official	Inez Uhl	EEO Director	0260	GS-15	571-389-5878	Inez_Uhl@fws.gov
Affirmative Employment Program Manager	Julia Bumbaca	Affirmative Employment Program Manager	0260	GS-14	703-358-2349	Julia_Bumbaca@fws.gov
Complaint Processing Program Manager (Informal and Formal Complaints)	Michelle Witter	EEO Complaints and Compliance Manager	0260	GS-14	303-236-4460	Michelle_Witter@fws.gov

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EEO Program Staff	Name	Title	Occu- pational Series	Pay Plan and Grade	Phone Number	Email Address
Public Civil Rights Program	Bobbea Cadena	Public Civil Rights Program Manager	0260	GS-14	703-346-5175	Bobbea_Cadena@fws.gov
Diversity & Inclusion Program	Hector Zarate	National Diversity Program Manager	0260	GS-14	703-358-2003	Hector_Zarate@fws.gov
Hispanic Program Manager (SEPM)	Rhonda Spinks	Program Analyst	0343	GS-12	571-395-0749	Rhonda_Spinks@fws.gov
Women's Program Manager (SEPM)	Rachel McCracken	Workforce Diversity Specialist	0343	GS-13	303-236-4589	Rachel_F_McCracken@fws.gov
Disability Program Manager (SEPM)	Bobbea Burnette Cadena	Public Civil Rights Program Manager	0260	GS-14	703-346-5175	Bobbea_Cadena@fws.gov
Special Placement Program Coordinator (Individuals with Disabilities)	Bill Fuller	Accountability Officer	0201	GS-14	571-319-7294	Bill_Fuller@fws.gov
Anti-Harassment Program Manager	Kimberly Hintz	Policy Analyst	0201	GS-14	256-656-6112	Kimberly_Hintz@fws.gov
ADR Program Manager	Michelle Witter	EEO Complaints and Compliance Manager	0260	GS-14	303-236-4460	Michelle_Witter@fws.gov
Compliance Manager	Michelle Witter	EEO Complaints and Compliance Manager	0260	GS-14	303-236-4460	Michelle_Witter@fws.gov
Principal MD-715 Preparer	Julia Bumbaca	Affirmative Employment Program Manager	0260	GS-14	703-358-2349	Julia_Bumbaca@fws.gov

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Part D.1 – List of Subordinate Components Covered in this Report

Please identify the subordinate components within the agency (e.g., bureaus, regions, etc.).

If the agency does not have any subordinate components, please check the box.

Subordinate Component	City	State	Country (Optional)	Agency Code	FIPS Codes
Region 1	Portland	OR		IN1501	1448
Region 2	Albuquerque	NM		IN1502	1448
Region 3	Bloomington	MN		IN1503	1448
Region 4	Atlanta	GA		IN1504	1448
Region 5	Hadley	MA		IN1505	1448
Region 6	Lakewood	CO		IN1506	1448
Region 7	Anchorage	AK		IN1507	1448
Region 8	Sacramento	CA		IN1508	1448
Headquarters	Falls Church	VA		IN1509	1448
Management & Administration / IRTM	Falls Church	VA		IN1510	1448

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

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

Did the agency submit the following mandatory documents?	Please respond Yes or No	Comments
Organizational Chart	Yes	
EEO Policy Statement	Yes	
Strategic Plan	Yes	
Anti-Harassment Policy and Procedures	Yes	
Reasonable Accommodation Procedures	Yes	
Personal Assistance Services Procedures	Yes	
Alternative Dispute Resolution Procedures	Yes	

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In the table below, the agency may decide whether to submit these documents with its MD-715 report.

Did the agency submit the following optional documents?	Please respond Yes or No	Comments
Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP) Report	Yes	
Disabled Veterans Affirmative Action Program (DVAAP) Report	Yes	
Operational Plan for Increasing Employment of Individuals with Disabilities under Executive Order 13548	Yes	
Diversity and Inclusion Plan under Executive Order 13583	Yes	
Diversity Policy Statement	Yes	
Human Capital Strategic Plan	Yes	
EEO Strategic Plan	Yes	
Results from most recent Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey or Annual Employee Survey	Yes	

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PART E	<i>U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission</i> FEDERAL AGENCY ANNUAL EEO PROGRAM STATUS REPORT
Executive Summary	

Part E.1 - Executive Summary: Mission

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) is *working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.*

FWS is a bureau within the Department of the Interior (DOI) with a mission governed by many of the nation's most important environmental [laws, agreements, and treaties](#). Its vision is to be a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for scientific and public service excellence.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, there were 8,372 people in the permanent workforce working at a national executive office and headquarters in Washington, D.C., and Falls Church, Virginia; [eight regional offices](#); and field offices across the country. The director, deputy directors, regional directors, and assistant directors for national programs comprise the agency Directorate (Directorate).

Read more about the FWS mission and vision, statutory authorities, organization, and programs [on the FWS website](#).

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

Introduction

"Our success in meeting the mission of the Service is built from a foundation of a shared purpose, values, and core beliefs that we can be our true selves at work, that we will treat each other with dignity and respect, and that our individual and collective accomplishments have genuine worth.

A workforce united works more effectively to serve the diverse needs of the public and the many species and their habitats under our watch. When employees feel all-in on our mission, they are our best ambassadors internally and externally with our partners and the public we serve."

— Service Director Martha Williams, December 2023

The FWS's commitment to transforming its workplace culture and prioritizing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) is based on [Director's Order 226, Advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility \(DEIA\) for Transformational Change in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#) (Director's Order 226/Order), which sets a vision, expectations, and accountability for advancing DEIA. The Order charts a course for lasting culture change throughout ongoing implementation of the FWS Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Plan (DIIP).

The DIIP is a five-year strategy that empowers employees at all levels to create inclusive and welcoming workplaces and enact promising practices that remove inequities for employees, partners, and stakeholders. FWS continues to drive organizational change under three overarching objectives — employee engagement, barrier analysis and removal, and recruitment and hiring.

FWS develops and implements work plans under the DIIP each fiscal year that build on past progress and prioritize actions informed by employee input and recommendations from barrier analysis teams, working groups, and employee feedback. The work plans align with Presidential and Secretarial priorities and other official direction for advancing DEIA across the federal government.

In this annual report to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), FWS affirms that its Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program in FY 2023 met the requirements outlined in Management Directive 715 (MD-715). The following sections demonstrate an organizational commitment to be a model employer and public service agency and a strategy to prevent traditionally ingrained policies and practices that exclude people from the FWS workforce or its services, partnership opportunities, and resources.

In FY 2023, FWS acted under the DIIP and made progress in advancing DEIA in multifaceted ways, such as:

- Establishing five core organizational values with extensive employee involvement across the organization.

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- Offering DEIA and EEO training and interactive virtual DEIA programs to ensure that all employees have foundational knowledge on bias as well as harassment and bullying mitigation.
- Expanding staffing for internship and fellowship coordination to FWS regions, leading to real results in hiring a diverse workforce.
- Completing the [Co-Stewardship Implementation Work Plan](#), which serves as a continuation of the work already done to build relationships and fulfill FWS' Tribal Trust responsibilities.
- Conducting a live three-day broadcast for all employees to learn about the [Standards of Excellence](#), that include eight tenets to ensure our work with others is inclusive, community-focused, and fosters collaborative, long-term relationships through which wildlife and people thrive.
- Fostering inclusive and welcoming workplaces by supporting the establishment and growth of employee-led communities of practice and resource groups
- Publishing the [Stay Interview Guide](#) as a new tool for managers and supervisors to help foster relationships and build trust to encourage employee retention.
- Targeting recruitment outreach to academic institutions and other organizations serving minorities, Veterans, and people with disabilities (PWD).

The workforce representation analysis (described in more detail below) indicates that FWS has achieved mixed results during FY 2023. The participation rates for minority men in the FWS permanent workforce declined (-0.3%), while the representation rates of minority women increased (+0.3%). However, FWS achieved an important FY 2023 milestone and closed the participation gap for White women in the permanent workforce as a whole as well as the professional biology workforce.

On the whole, FY 2023 was a year in which diversity outcomes for the Fish & Wildlife Service were varied. At the beginning of the fiscal year the participation of minorities in the FWS permanent workforce was 6.6 percentage points below their participation in the CLF. While the participation of minority women increased +0.3 percentage points, there was a comparable -0.3 percentage point decline in the participation of minority men, so the participation of minorities as a group was unchanged.

Looking ahead, FWS will continue to build on progress and prioritize actions that are informed by feedback from employee teams, working groups, and surveys as well as official direction for advancing DEIA across the federal government. Ongoing efforts will have an impact across multiple demographic, gender, and disability groups and are intended to create a culture of dignity and respect, where everyone's talents and contributions are recognized, valued, and used in a manner that contributes to the mission.

Element A: Demonstrated Commitment from Agency Leadership

Organizational commitment to EEO and DEIA is evident at the highest levels of the agency. The Director's Office oversees the EEO Director/Chief Diversity Officer, who leads the Office of Diversity and Inclusive Workforce Management (ODIWM). The EEO Director/Chief Diversity Officer sits on the Directorate and is an ex-officio member of the DEIA Committee. The Joint Administrative Operations (JAO) program provides executive level direction for Human Resources (HR) and other administrative

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policy functions supporting EEO. FWS' National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) plans and delivers employee training to meet DEIA objectives throughout the organization.

The following organizational entities further fulfill executive-level roles for EEO and DEIA:

- **DEIA Committee:** The DEIA Committee is chartered to provide leadership, influence, and oversight in the implementation of Executive and Secretarial Orders related to DEIA, national level DEIA initiatives, and the DIIP. The Deputy Director of Operations serves as Committee Chair, and its executive decision-making team is comprised of several Directorate and Deputies Group members. Ex-officio members serve in a consulting capacity and represent FWS programs, employee resource groups, and communities of practice within the sphere of DEIA.
- **FWS Directorate:** Under [Director's Order 226](#), leaders at the highest level of the organization are expected to act with integrity, exemplify treating others with dignity and respect, and fully embrace the commitment to organizational transformation to advance DEIA and ensure a culture of belonging. They lead DEIA efforts in their respective administrative regions and programs and ensure that employees are empowered to participate in and lead DEIA initiatives and DIIP actions.
- **Office of Diversity and Inclusive Workforce Management (ODIWM):** The EEO Director leads ODIWM and is the Chief Diversity Officer for FWS. The program is responsible for a broad management portfolio that includes recruitment and outreach, diversity and inclusion, accessibility, equal employment opportunity, affirmative employment, and public civil rights. ODIWM is an integral part of achieving the mission and works closely with the Director's office, Directorate, DEIA Committee, and other leadership teams across the organization. The Chief Diversity Officer/EEO Director provides briefings, serves as an advisor to leadership, is involved in both personnel and management actions, and oversees the delivery of diversity and EEO programs and services.
- **Racial Equity + Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (RE+JEDIA) Team:** This cross-programmatic leadership team chaired by Directorate members developed recommendations for the agency's response to addressing RE+JEDIA challenges. Team recommendations continue to inform actions to advance DEIA and to ensure fair, just, and impartial treatment of external partners and communities served by FWS.
- **External Partnerships for DEIA:** FWS is represented at, actively participates on the leadership board of, and staffs the [Diversity Joint Venture for Careers in Conservation](#), a consortium of more than 60 federal and state agencies, universities, non-governmental organizations, foundations, and professional societies working in partnership to increase the number of women and minorities in the environmental and conservation workforce. Additionally, FWS through its Office of Communications' Division of Partners and Intergovernmental Affairs has established official memorandums of understanding (MOU) and partnerships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) and other minority-serving institutions and organizations to advance DEIA through recruitment and career opportunities.

In FY 2023, FWS completed its Co-Stewardship Implementation Work Plan to guide its government-to-government relationships with Tribes, Alaska Native Corporations and

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Organizations, and the Native Hawaiian.

FWS also offered an Engaging Communities in Conservation Summit, a live three-day broadcast for FWS and DOI employees to learn about the Standards of Excellence and hear examples of the successful implementation of the Standards across all Service Programs, and to become part of a vision for broader community engagement in the future. The Standards of Excellence includes eight tenets that provide guidance to ensure our work with others is inclusive, community-focused, and fosters collaborative, long-term relationships that share an intentional vision to support our mission through which wildlife and people thrive.

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

As FWS endeavors to advance DEIA to be a model employer and public service agency, it has aligned EEO efforts to its mission through [Director's Order 226](#), the FWS DIIP, organizational priorities, and strategic actions that align with Presidential, EEOC, Secretarial, and other official direction, including the [Government-wide Strategic Plan to Advance DEIA in the Federal Workforce](#).

Advancing DEIA for lasting and transformational change in the FWS is mission critical with organizational intent to:

- Make a sustained commitment to affect transformational and lasting change as an employer and organization by identifying and eliminating traditionally ingrained policies and practices that exclude people from the workforce, services, partnership opportunities, and resources,
- Identify, acknowledge, and dismantle existing systems that contribute to inequities and replace them with policies and practices that benefit the entire organization, create equal opportunity, ensure environmental justice, and enable FWS to fully achieve its mission with partners and constituents, and
- Establish and sustain a welcoming workplace culture that inspires, values, and empowers every employee to learn, grow, and succeed.

FWS Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Plan: The FWS sets overarching and strategic direction to achieve DEIA goals through implementation of the DIIP. FWS has been taking actions to implement its current five-year DIIP since FY 2020 and is making progress to transform its work culture through employee engagement, barrier analysis and removal, and recruitment and hiring:

- *Employee engagement* — FWS will continue to engage employees with a consistent and meaningful message that prioritizes inclusion and will adopt promising practices and take actions that lead to a welcoming workplace for all.
- *Barrier Analysis and Removal* — FWS will continuously analyze barriers to DEIA, engage in barrier identification and elimination, and monitor the metrics that show how FWS is making progress to advance DEIA across the organization.
- *Recruitment and Hiring* — FWS will continue to connect with the values of a diverse public and enhance support for conservation by recruiting and hiring in a way that focuses on excellence and is supported by diverse applicant pools. It will focus on targeted recruitment to reach groups of prospective applicants who are underrepresented in FWS or who

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historically have been excluded from conservation jobs.

The EEO Director oversees the delivery of EEO programs and is responsible for a broad portfolio that includes recruitment and outreach, diversity and inclusion, accessibility, equal employment opportunity, affirmative employment, and public civil rights. This centralized leadership facilitates collaboration with leadership and managers of regions and programs nationwide who have direct involvement in carrying out the EEO program. This integration is evident in the following key areas:

- **Barrier Analysis:** The FWS conducts a barrier analysis process each year. During FY 2023, the FWS is acting on recommendations based on findings by and employee-led barrier analysis team in FY 2022, with a focus on providing guidance and support for supervisors for advancing DEIA. The ODIWM led the barrier analysis process in FY 2023, and resulting recommendations will lead to actions under the DIIP moving forward.
- **Additional Barrier Analysis on Point of Selection:** The DOI DEIA Council directed the FWS and other bureaus to conduct a barrier analysis related to hiring selections. ODIWM is overseeing this process in collaboration with the FWS Human Capital team. Hiring managers who filled Mission Critical Occupation (MCO) or Commonly Filled Occupations (CFO) hiring selections in FY 2022 will inform the analysis.
- **FY 2023 Annual DEIA and EEO Training for FWS Employees:** FWS delivered the mandatory 2023 DEIA and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) training course to the workforce. The course was developed in collaboration with the FWS National Conservation Training Center, building on curricula in previous year and focusing on topics to address barriers and effect behavioral change.
- **Coordinated Recruitment and Outreach:** FWS has a centralized team of recruitment specialists serving under a National Recruitment Program Manager in ODIWM. The recruiters serve specific geographic regions, which enables each of them to build relationships with leaders and hiring managers and to develop more localized outreach strategies for job announcements. The National Targeted Recruitment Team, formed four years ago, is made up of employees representing each region and program. The team facilitates participation by managers and employees in recruitment outreach activities and in cultivating partnerships with minority-serving academic institutions.
- **Public Civil Rights (PCR):** The PCR Division ensured that facilities, programs, and activities managed by FWS, and recipients of federal financial assistance, provided access in a non-discriminatory manner. PCR accessibility consultants conducted compliance reviews and offered guidance on accessibility standards.
- **Special Observance Program Sponsorship:** Under the DIIP, Directorate members and their respective regions/programs hosted and delivered live national events and other educational programs in collaboration with the Affirmative Employment Program in ODIWM to engage employees in official special observances. These partnerships reinforced leadership accountability in building cultural awareness and achieving DEIA objectives in the workplace.
- **Internal Communications for Employee Engagement:** ODIWM employs a full-time communications specialist to support leadership messaging and employee communications for DEIA nationally. The communications specialist and agency internal communications lead co-chair a DEIA Communications Team that includes core representation from headquarters

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programs with a leadership role in DEIA and FWS regions. DEIA-related communication efforts at the national level are coordinated by the team to ensure consistent and clear messaging, effective communication strategies for the DIIP and other DEIA actions, and content management and editorial oversight for the Welcoming Workplace intranet page and other platforms.

Element C: Management and Program Accountability

There is an expectation that every employee will play a role in ensuring a climate of inclusion in every work unit and in work with others outside the organization. [Director's Order 226](#) (Section 5) establishes accountability and articulates responsibilities for leadership, supervisors, managers, and employees as follows:

- **All Employees:** All employees must ensure that the workplace environment is conducive to inclusiveness and welcoming for everyone and are expected to participate in DEIA efforts and barrier removal at their respective levels. In the continuous pursuit of excellence, all employees share responsibility in creating a culture of dignity and respect in FWS, where everyone's talents and contributions are recognized, valued, and used in a manner that contributes to mission accomplishment.
- **Managers and Supervisors:** Managers and supervisors must lead by example and proactively implement efforts to make lasting change for DEIA in their work units. To achieve a goal of recruiting, developing, and retaining a diverse and inclusive workforce of the highest caliber, supervisors and managers will be held accountable for prioritizing DEIA, modeling promising practices, implementing DIIP actions, and engaging in barrier removal. Managers and supervisors must ensure that employees in their work units are empowered and have the time they need to participate in and lead DEIA activities.
- **FWS Directorate:** Leaders at the highest level of the organization must act with integrity, exemplify treating others with dignity and respect, and fully embrace the commitment to organizational transformation to advance DEIA and ensure a culture of belonging. Directorate members are expected to lead DEIA efforts in their respective regions and programs, and they must ensure that employees are empowered to participate in and lead DEIA initiatives and DIIP actions.

Performance Measures: All supervisors are accountable for DEIA actions in their employee performance appraisal plans (EPAP). At the leadership level, SES positions include an EPAP critical element for EEO and diversity advocacy, and Directorate members are expected to communicate EEO-related responsibilities to their subordinates to set clear expectations. In addition, all employees have a mandatory annual EEO and diversity training requirement that is tracked in the agency's learning management system.

DIIP Accountability Tracking: In addition to the overarching accountability set under the Director's Order and performance plans, the DIIP and annual work plans establish responsibilities and timelines for actions. ODIWM and the DEIA Committee coordinator hold frequent meetings among responsible parties to review progress in accomplishing DIIP actions and deadlines, share information, and address any challenges. The status of DIIP work plan actions is tracked and the information is made

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available to leadership. Additionally, progress is shared on an ongoing basis with employees through briefings, quarterly DIIP updates, news and stories posted on the FWS intranet site, and a weekly email digest to all employees.

Element D: Proactive Prevention

The DIIP and Proactive Prevention

The DIIP is an adaptive strategy to proactively identify and address EEO barriers. Annual work plans under the DIIP include targeted actions that are timely, directed at correcting deficiencies, informed by employee feedback and barrier analysis, and that continue to build on progress. In addition to complying with EEO laws, regulations, and policies, efforts are focused on three objectives – employee engagement, barrier analysis and removal, and recruitment and hiring. The significant benchmarks set and achieved for FY 2023 aligned with these objectives and are described below.

DIIP Objective 1: Employee Engagement

- **Values Project:** Co-created by employees across the organization, the FWS established five organizational values at the end of FY 2023. The values - Stewardship, Integrity, Respect, Collaboration, and Innovation – will be lived as part of the FWS identity to support a workplace culture that is respectful and inclusive of everyone. The values were informed by employee feedback from 56 listening sessions, open houses, online feedback forums, and barrier analysis results.
- **Grassroots Employee Groups:** Employee resource groups (ERG) and communities of practice are welcoming forums and drivers of inclusion and positive change in FWS. Two new ERGs formed in FY 2023 – the FWS Vets ERG and the FWS Women’s+ ERG – increasing the total number of official ERGs to five with the FWS Pride ERG; Black, Indigenous, and People of Color ERG; and FWS People with Disabilities ERG. The Institutional Change Community of Practice accomplishes projects and initiatives to adopt a community-focused conservation approach for DEIA and environmental justice.
- **DEIA and EEO Training:** FWS developed and delivered its mandatory 2023 DEIA and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) training course that builds on content from previous years’ courses, fulfills training requirements, and addresses identified attitudinal barriers. FWS also conducted reasonable accommodations training for employees and supervisors. The training provided an opportunity for participants to learn about their role in the reasonable accommodation process and to be aware of their rights and responsibilities. FWS is also conducting a comprehensive needs assessment for DEIA-related training that includes identifying what training already exists within the bureau and how to leverage existing knowledge and communities, including identifying current skill gaps for competencies to advance DEIA. Additionally, the FWS Unconscious Bias Team delivered at least 45 training sessions, primarily with hiring panels, and several skill-building workshops that helped employees develop competencies related to the FWS Values Journey.
- **IDEA – Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility – Conversations:** In FY 2023, ODIWM hosted three live events for the IDEA Conversation series [*It Starts with Us: An IDEA Conversation Series for Building an Inclusive Workplace*](#), which focused on the “I” in IDEA –

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Inclusion. These conversations focused on areas that helped FWS recognize and dismantle barriers to inclusion, build relationships and trust with one another, and turn our good intent into best practices. In addition, employees had the opportunity to participate in these conversations which reinforced what they've learned in the FWS required 2023 DEIA and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Training Course.

- **Engaging Communities in Conservation Summit:** FWS held a live three-day broadcast in August for FWS and DOI employees to learn about the Standards of Excellence, to hear examples of the successful implementation of the Standards across all Service Programs, and to become part of a vision for broader community engagement in the future. The Standards of Excellence includes eight tenets that provide guidance to ensure our work with others is inclusive, community-focused, and fosters collaborative, long-term relationships that share an intentional vision to support our mission through which wildlife and people thrive.
- **Mentoring:** The Mentoring Advisory Workgroup (MAWG) led the creation of a Mentoring SharePoint site to connect employees to existing mentorship opportunities and to support the next stages toward building and strengthening robust mentorship programs across FWS. In addition, the MAWG published a report with recommendations on a framework to inform best practices, enhance existing programs, inspire the development of new programs, and support informal one-on-one mentoring. The team's recommendations inform DIIP work plan actions to ensure that all employees have access and opportunity to participate in mentoring relationships, either as a mentor or mentee.
- **Special emphasis observance partnerships:** Directorate members and their respective regions/programs hosted and delivered live national educational programs in cooperation with ODIWM's Diversity Team to engage employees in nine official special observances in FY 2023.

DIIP Objective 2: Barrier Analysis and Removal

- **Barrier Analysis:** The FWS conducts a barrier analysis process each year. During FY 2023, the FWS is acting on recommendations based on findings by an employee-led barrier analysis team in FY 2022, with a focus on providing guidance and support for supervisors for advancing DEIA. The ODIWM led the barrier analysis process in FY 2023, and resulting recommendations will lead to actions under the DIIP moving forward.
- **Additional Barrier Analysis on Point of Selection:** The DOI DEIA Council directed the FWS and other bureaus to conduct a barrier analysis related to hiring selections. ODIWM is overseeing this process in collaboration with the FWS Human Capital team. Hiring managers who filled Mission Critical Occupation (MCO) or Commonly Filled Occupations (CFO) hiring selections in FY 2022 will inform the analysis.

DIIP Objective 3: Recruitment and Hiring

- FWS has a centralized team of workforce recruiters serving under the national recruitment program manager in ODIWM. Each recruiter is assigned a specific FWS region to provide continued mission support for local outreach inquiries. The centralized ODIWM recruitment

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team provides coordination of outreach activities and initiatives and promoted consistency of Service-wide messaging.

- FWS has official MOUs with four minority-serving institutions, which include Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) New Mexico State University and University of Texas San Antonio, as well as HBCUs Tuskegee University and Fort Valley State University. FWS also has official MOUs with Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Incorporated, and Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Incorporated, both members of the National Pan-Hellenic Council, familiarly known as “The Divine Nine”. These MOUs promote relationship building to foster pathways to careers in the agency.
- In FY 2023, FWS Recruitment specialists participated in 71 outreach events. Of that number, 46 outreach events were with colleges/universities, 32 of which are minority serving institutions, including 11 with HBCUS. FWS also participated in 25 events with professional organizations serving diverse populations including minorities, Veterans, and persons with disabilities.
- Under the White House Initiative on HBCUs, FWS shares funding and internship and employment opportunities with faculty and staff at HBCUs across the country. FWS participated in 18 recruitment outreach events at HBCUs and participates on the initiative’s Interagency Work Group. FWS in collaboration with DOI participated in the 5th Annual National HBCU Week Career and Recruitment Fair from September 24-28, 2023, in the DC Metro Area, that welcomed over 600 in-person job seekers. FWS recruiters, hiring managers, and HR specialists were on site to promote open job opportunities with prospective applicants, assist with federal resume preparation and review, and conduct mock interviews.
- FWS recruitment efforts are enhanced through a listserv with 10,000+ student and organization professional contacts representing organizations and schools that serve or represent diverse constituents. The centralized listserv allows FWS to continuously communicate all FWS vacancies and internships, and information on other hiring initiatives and FWS diversity activities that will help promote interest from a diverse applicant pool.
- FWS, when sharing vacancy information, continued to invest in online job boards such as HBCU Connect; Professional Diversity Network; Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS); and United Latino Job Bank.
- FWS transitioned to a new process for entry-level positions to require non-competitive candidate solicitation and consideration. The purpose of the new process is to expedite the hiring process at the entry level, ensure FWS is considering the candidates in which it has already invested, including internal employees, interns, fellows, temps, and terms, and increase the diversity of the workforce through authorities that allow more effective recruitment of Veterans, people with disabilities, and candidates from other underrepresented groups. In FY 2023, 121 requests for noncompetitive candidates (i.e., those who are eligible for Schedule A, Veterans Recruitment Appointment, 30% or more disabled Veterans, Pathways Student Interns eligible for conversion, and former interns with Public Lands Corps Act authority) have been processed with over 379 noncompetitive applicants.
- There are now Intern and Fellow Coordinators in each of the FWS’s eight regions. This cadre has been instrumental in supporting the implementation of the entry level hiring rules announced in April. As a result, in FY 2023 more than 65 interns were brought on who can be converted into entry level positions in the professional and administrative series.
- FWS currently uses direct hire authority to employ Directorate Resource Assistant Fellows Program (DFP) participants after they complete their degree and hiring through new Recent Graduate and Post-Secondary hiring authorities. These opportunities are promoted at recruitment outreach events and to source candidates through careers-focused social media

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accounts. In FY 2023, FWS recruited for the DFP through the Hispanic Access Foundation (HAF), MANRRS, and the Doris Duke Foundation for targeted outreach to improve minority participation. FWS also posted DFP on job boards with Native American serving organizations. In FY 2023, DFP opportunities were afforded to 57 students (77% female and 67% minorities) increasing minority representation to its highest level in since the programs implementation.

- FWS continues to sponsor Career Discovery Internship Program (CDIP) through an ongoing partnership with the Student Conservation Association (SCA). CDIP's goal is to provide summer internships that introduce diverse undergraduate students to work in conservation.
- To efficiently address questions on job opportunities and internships and to ensure consistent responsiveness to potential candidates, the recruitment team established and monitors a general inbox (connect@fws.gov) that features an automated reply that provides each recruiter's email for additional questions and inquiries.
- FWS is represented and actively participates on the leadership board of the [Diversity Joint Venture for Careers in Conservation \(DJV\)](#), a consortium of more than 60 federal and state agencies, universities, non-governmental organizations, foundations, and professional societies working in partnership to increase the number of women and minorities in the environmental and conservation workforce. Additionally, FWS provides staff support for the DJV Board.

Proactive Prevention and Policies

- The EEO Non-Discrimination Policy, Anti-Harassment Policy and Personal Assistance Services Procedures, and the annual Director's Memorandum on Mandatory Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity Training for managers, supervisors, and employees were issued and distributed to all employees.
- The FWS Anti-Harassment Policy: (1) informs employees of what type of behavior is prohibited and the appropriate steps to take if they believe harassment has occurred; (2) provides for multiple avenues of redress, in addition to the EEO complaint process; (3) provides for a prompt management inquiry and appropriate corrective and disciplinary action; and, (4) prohibits acts of retaliation against employees and witnesses.
- FWS followed Personnel Bulletin 21-03, DOI Policy and Procedures on Reasonable Accommodation for Individuals with Disabilities, issued on October 24, 2022, which sets policy for DOI bureaus and offices when responding to reasonable accommodation requests.
- FWS continued to provide personal assistance services in accordance with Personnel Bulletin 17-18, issued on January 10, 2018.

Element E: Efficiency

FWS achieves efficiency in its EEO program in several ways, such as:

- There is sufficient staffing, funding, and authority to achieve the identification and elimination of barriers.
- ODIWM is kept separate from the Office of the Solicitor or other agency offices having conflicting or competing interests.
- The EEO Director manages a fair and impartial complaint resolution and adjudication process and refers complaints to the DOI Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Civil Rights (ODICR) when a conflict of interest occurs.

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- FWS has an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) program that facilitates the early, effective, neutral, and informal resolution of disputes. Managers and supervisors are required to participate in ADR when mediation is elected by a complainant. In FY 2023, the ADR rate was 31% compared to 52% in FY 2022.
- FWS tracked complaint information through DOI's online tracking system (*Entellitrak*) and tracked complaints electronically using a computerized log to provide live updates on complaint status.
- FWS employs full-time permanent EEO counselors as well as contract counselors when necessary. Work performed by the counselors is monitored for technical accuracy and to ensure that deadlines are met. If the work by a contract counselor is not completed in the specified timeframes, FWS negotiates costs to reflect a reduction in compensation due to the delay.
- Access to FWS and federally funded properties is ensured through the PCR Division within ODIWM. The PCR Division works with headquarters and field offices and responds to complaints involving the lack of availability of access to properties.
- Employee relations specialists provide advisory services and assistance for employees and managers in the implementation of the reasonable accommodations policy. Regions and programs have been assigned a servicing specialist to ensure prompt response to inquiries.
- ODIWM developed internal webpages that describe services and resources the program provides for employees and managers. This is a centralized location to share information, training opportunities, upcoming events, and other information.

Element F: Responsiveness and Legal Compliance

FWS has a system in place to ensure that officials comply promptly with any orders or directives issued by EEOC, the DOI, and all other adjudicatory bodies with jurisdiction over EEO laws.

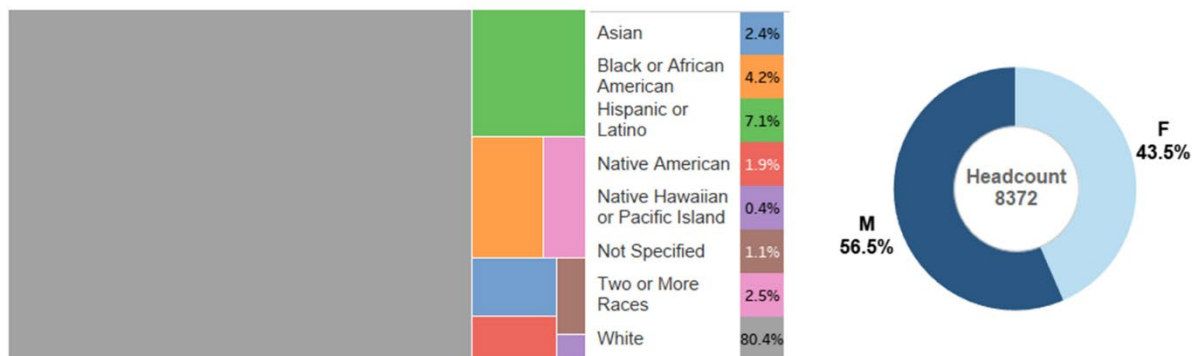
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Part E.3 - Executive Summary: Workforce Analyses

Summary

FY2023 Total Permanent Workforce



At the start of FY 2023, the participation of minorities in the FWS permanent workforce was 6.6 percentage points below their participation in the CLF. While the participation of minority women increased +0.3 percentage points, there was a comparable -0.3 percentage point decline in the participation of minority men, so the participation of minorities as a group was unchanged.

This lack of progress in minority participation is primarily attributable to a hiring shortfall. Of the 972 permanent hires, 184 (18.9%) were members of minority groups, well below the 260 (26.3%) expected by the CLF availability standard in the occupations hired. Overall White women were hired in numbers which were significantly above their availability in CLF 2018 in the occupations filled, and both minority women and minority men were hired in numbers which were significantly below theirs. At the same time, overall minority separations were comparable to their participation in the permanent workforce at the beginning of the fiscal year.

At the beginning of FY 2023, the low participation groups were Black or African American men and women, Hispanic or Latino men and women, and Asian men and women. For these low participation groups, there were small increases in the participation of Black or African American men and Asian women, as well as a decline in the participation of Hispanic or Latino men and of Asian men.

An important FY 2023 milestone is that for the first time in FWS history, the participation gap was closed for White women in the permanent workforce as a whole. Although the participation of White women in some mission-critical occupations remains low (e.g. law-enforcement officers and Wildland Firefighters), identifying the RNO of substantial numbers of employees who were previously not-identified eliminated the overall participation shortfall for White women at the beginning of the fiscal year, and hiring substantially increased their participation +0.5 percentage points during FY 2023.

Comparing FY 2023 permanent hires to FY 2022 permanent hires revealed significantly increased use of authorities to hire Intern, Recent Graduate, current and former temporary/term employees eligible under the Land Management Workforce Flexibility Act, and current temporary/term employees and

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external applicants using the Government-wide Direct Hire Authority for professional biologist in grades GS-11 and above. FY 2023 also saw a significant decline in the use of the Veteran Recruitment authority and in the appointment of permanent employees from the rolls of other bureaus/agencies using merit staffing authorities.

Comparing FY 2023 to FY 2022, there was a significant increase in minority hires among interns, among DFP graduates, and among veterans with 30%+ service-connected disabilities. At the same time, there was a significant decline in minority hires among Recent Graduates, among Schedule-A hires of persons with severe disabilities, among veterans obtaining Veteran Recruitment Appointments, and among those hired from Direct Hire certificates for professional biologists in grades GS-11 and above.

In FY 2022, the FWS hired an Intern & Fellow Coordinator for each of its eight regions. These coordinators orchestrate the recruitment of DFP fellows, interns, recent graduates, and workers eligible to apply for permanent appointments under the Land Management Workforce Flexibility Act and the Public Land Corps. These coordinators also orchestrate the placement of DFP and intern graduates on completion of their education. During FY 2023, the Intern & Fellow Coordinators focused on highly localized recruitment, including at HBCUs and Minority Serving Institutions.

Recent workforce planning efforts have increased the availability of entry level developmental positions to focus more on competencies and less on prior experience. In FY 2023, 48.3% of permanent outside hires in Professional and Administrative occupations were filled at grades 05, 07, or 09 (or by interns). This percentage is up from the 43.5% achieved during FY 2022.

The table below compares the demographics of these entry-level developmental hires to other hires in Administrative and Professional occupations. As the table documents, these measures appear to have increased the appointment of minority women but to have had little impact on the appointment of minority men.

Impact of Entry-Level Hiring in Administrative & Professional Occupations															
		White men		White women		Minority women		Minority men		Minority total		Not Identified		Total	Pct of Admin & Prof
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%		
FY 2022	Developmental	79	26.2%	141	46.7%	44	14.6%	28	9.3%	72	23.8%	10	3.3%	302	43.5%
	Other	145	36.9%	156	39.7%	40	10.2%	36	9.2%	76	19.3%	16	4.1%	393	
	All Admin & Prof	224	32.2%	297	42.7%	84	12.1%	64	9.2%	148	21.3%	26	3.7%	695	
FY 2023	Developmental	104	32.8%	128	40.4%	52	16.4%	22	6.9%	74	23.3%	11	3.5%	317	48.3%
	Other	129	38.1%	147	43.4%	30	8.8%	28	8.3%	58	17.1%	5	1.5%	339	
	All Admin & Prof	233	35.5%	275	41.9%	82	12.5%	50	7.6%	132	20.1%	16	2.4%	656	
FY 22 & 23	Developmental	183	29.6%	269	43.5%	96	15.5%	50	8.1%	146	23.6%	21	3.4%	619	45.8%
	Other	274	37.4%	303	41.4%	70	9.6%	64	8.7%	134	18.3%	21	2.9%	732	
	All Admin & Prof	457	33.8%	572	42.3%	166	12.3%	114	8.4%	280	20.7%	42	3.1%	1351	

The results of two initiatives give the FWS a head start on participation gains for minorities in the FY 2024 permanent workforce. First, 38 of the 57 (66.7%) of the FY 2023 DFP fellows were minorities.

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When combined with DFP fellows from the FY 2022 and the FY 2021 DFP cohorts who had not yet been placed, 80 of the 187 (42.8%) eligible for appointment to the FWS permanent workforce without further competition on completion of their education are members of minority groups.

Not-Placed DFP Fellows as of September 30, 2023						
		Minority Women	Minority Men	Minority Not Binary	Minority Total	All RNO Groups
FY 2023	#	27	9	2	38	57
	%	47.4%	15.8%	3.5%	66.7%	100.0%
FY 2022 Not Placed	#	21	3		24	68
	%	30.9%	4.4%	0.0%	35.3%	100.0%
FY 2021 Not Placed	#	15	3		18	62
	%	24.2%	4.8%	0.0%	29.0%	100.0%
Total	#	63	15	2	80	187
	%	33.7%	8.0%	1.1%	42.8%	100.0%

Second, at the beginning of FY 2024, 9 of the 19 (47.4%) of the Pathways and post-secondary intern temporary workforce were minorities (see table below). This puts the FWS in a more favorable position heading into FY 2024 than it was at the beginning of FY 2023 when only 5 of the 32 (15.6%) of the temporary interns were minorities.

Pathways Interns with Temporary Appointments and Post-secondary Appointments													
	White men		White women		Minority women		Minority men		Minority total		Not Identified		Total
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
9/30/2023	3	15.8%	6	31.6%	5	26.3%	4	21.1%	9	47.4%	1	5.3%	19
9/30/2022	9	28.1%	17	53.1%	3	9.4%	2	6.3%	5	15.6%	1	3.1%	32

As is the case with DFP fellows, on completion of their education these temporary interns can be appointed to the FWS permanent workforce without further competition.

Professional Biology

Professional biologists constitute 47.8% of the FWS permanent workforce and 57.3% of its senior positions (GS-13 and above). Thus, the diversity of the professional biology workforce today is central to the diversity of the FWS leadership tomorrow and to the diversity of the organization as a whole.

During FY 2023, the size of the FWS professional biology permanent workforce increased by 174 (up +4.6%). In terms of overall participation rate, women and minorities were up +1.4%: women were up +1.7% (White women were up +1.3% and minority women were up +0.4%). Minorities were up +0.1% (minority women were up +0.4% and minority men were down -0.3%).

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Focusing on single RNO/Gender groups, the participations of Black or African American men and women, of Asian men and women, of Hispanic or Latino women, of men and women identifying with two or more races, and of White women in the FWS professional biology workforce were low at the beginning of the fiscal year when compared to their participations in similar occupations in CLF 2018. During FY 2023, the participation of minority women in each of these low participation minority groups increased slightly, resulting in a substantial +0.4 percentage point increase in the participation of minority women. Especially noteworthy is the fact that the participation of White women in professional biology increased by +1.3 percentage points, and for the first time in FWS history closed the participation gap with White women in similar professional biology occupations in the CLF.

During FY 2023, the FWS hired 380 Professional Biologists from outside and competitively selected another 32 from other occupations to fill professional biology positions. Asian men and women, White men, and minority men as a group were hired in numbers which were significantly below their availability in CLF 2018 in the positions filled, while White women were hired in numbers which were significantly above theirs.

In professional biology, all individual RNO/gender groups left the FWS in numbers which were consistent with their participation in the professional biology workforce at the beginning of the fiscal year. The table below tabulates additions to the permanent professional biology and biology student workforce by appointment authority and fiscal year.

Sources of Additions to the Professional Biology Workforce														
Appointment Authority	Fiscal Year	White men		White women		Minority women		Minority men		Minority total		Not specified		Total #
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
DFP	FY2023	7	15.2%	28	60.9%	7	15.2%	4	8.7%	11	23.9%		0.0%	46
	FY2022	9	19.6%	26	56.5%	7	15.2%	2	4.3%	9	19.6%	2	4.3%	46
Public Lands Corps	FY2023	2	20.0%	6	60.0%	2	20.0%		0.0%	2	20.0%		0.0%	10
	FY2022		0.0%	4	100.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	4
Students (Temp) to Career	FY2023	3	37.5%	4	50.0%		0.0%	1	12.5%	1	12.5%		0.0%	8
	FY2022	3	30.0%	5	50.0%		0.0%	2	20.0%	2	20.0%		0.0%	10
Disability (Sch-A)	FY2023	3	30.0%	5	50.0%	2	20.0%		0.0%	2	20.0%		0.0%	10
	FY2022	1	12.5%	5	62.5%	2	25.0%		0.0%	2	25.0%		0.0%	8
Veterans Recruitment Appointment (VRA)	FY2023	2	100.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	2
	FY2022	4	66.7%		0.0%		0.0%	1	16.7%	1	16.7%	1	16.7%	6
Pathways interns (indefinite)	FY2023	2	6.3%	11	34.4%	12	37.5%	4	12.5%	16	50.0%	3	9.4%	32
	FY2022	1	9.1%	5	45.5%	4	36.4%		0.0%	4	36.4%	1	9.1%	11
Recent Grad	FY2023	15	41.7%	16	44.4%	3	8.3%	2	5.6%	5	13.9%		0.0%	36
	FY2022	1	4.8%	11	52.4%	5	23.8%	4	19.0%	9	42.9%		0.0%	21

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Land Mgmt Workforce Flex	FY2023	12	50.0%	12	50.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	24
	FY2022	7	30.4%	15	65.2%	1	4.3%		0.0%	1	4.3%		0.0%	23
Merit Staffing	FY2023	20	42.6%	20	42.6%	2	4.3%	5	10.6%	7	14.9%		0.0%	47
	FY2022	28	37.8%	37	50.0%	5	6.8%	2	2.7%	7	9.5%	2	2.7%	74
DEU	FY2023	25	40.3%	30	48.4%	6	9.7%		0.0%	6	9.7%	1	1.6%	62
	FY2022	30	34.5%	42	48.3%	7	8.0%	5	5.7%	12	13.8%	3	3.4%	87
DHA GS-11+ Biology	FY2023	46	37.7%	66	54.1%	9	7.4%	1	0.8%	10	8.2%		0.0%	122
	FY2022	23	37.7%	32	52.5%	4	6.6%	1	1.6%	5	8.2%	1	1.6%	61
DHA Wildland fire	FY2023	6	66.7%	2	22.2%		0.0%	1	11.1%	1	11.1%		0.0%	9
	FY2022	8	72.7%	1	9.1%		0.0%	1	9.1%	1	9.1%	1	9.1%	11
Other	FY2023	2	50.0%	2	50.0%		0.0%	0	0.0%		0.0%	0	0.0%	4
	FY2022	5	41.7%	7	58.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	12
All	FY2023	145	35.2%	202	49.0%	43	10.4%	18	4.4%	61	14.8%	4	1.0%	412
	FY2022	120	32.1%	190	50.8%	35	9.4%	18	4.8%	53	14.2%	11	2.9%	374

As the table documents, significantly more Pathways interns, significantly more recent graduates, and significantly more appointments based on government-wide direct-hire authorities for professional biologists in grades GS-11 and above were made in FY 2023 than in FY 2022. Also, significantly fewer merit-staffing appointments, and significantly fewer DEU appointments were made during FY 2023 than in FY 2022.

Appointment of DFP graduates and Pathways interns accounted for 27 of 61 (44.3%) of minority additions to the professional biology and biology student permanent workforce in FY 2023, up from 13 of 53 (24.5%) in FY 2022.

The recent grad category in the table includes both Pathways recent graduate appointments and college graduate appointments. Significantly fewer minorities were appointed in this combined category during FY 2023. It also turns out that 8 of the 21 appointments in this combined category in FY 2022 were college graduate appointments, while only 2 of 36 were college graduate appointments in FY 2023. Five (5) of the 8 college graduate appointments in FY 2022 were minorities (62.5%), while neither of the 2 college graduate appointments in FY 2023 was a member of a minority group.

Beginning in April 2023, managers sought to fill biology vacancies in the permanent professional biology workforce at entry level when possible. An entry level hire was defined as an appointment at grades 05, 07, or 09, (irrespective of the full-performance-level grade) or as an indefinite appointment of a Pathways biology intern. The following table documents the extent to which entry-level hiring occurred and the impact of entry-level hiring on minority accessions.

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Impact of FY 2023 Entry-Level Hiring														
Appointment Authority	Grade	White men		White women		Minority women		Minority men		Minority total		Not specified		Total
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
DFP	GS-05/07/09	5	11.9%	26	61.9%	7	16.7%	4	9.5%	11	26.2%		0.0%	42
	GS-11 & up	2	50.0%	2	50.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	4
Public Lands Corps	GS-05/07/09	2	20.0%	6	60.0%	2	20.0%		0.0%	2	20.0%		0.0%	10
	GS-11 & up		-		-		-		-		-		-	0
Students (Temp) to Career	GS-05/07/09	3	37.5%	4	50.0%		0.0%	1	12.5%	1	12.5%		0.0%	8
	GS-11 & up		-		-		-		-		-		-	0
Disability (Sch-A)	GS-05/07/09	2	25.0%	4	50.0%	2	25.0%		0.0%	2	25.0%		0.0%	8
	GS-11 & up	1	50.0%	1	50.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	2
Veterans Recruitment Appointment (VRA)	GS-05/07/09	2	100.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	2
	GS-11 & up		-		-		-		-		-		-	0
Pathways interns (perm)	All grades	2	6.3%	11	34.4%	12	37.5%	4	12.5%	16	50.0%	3	9.4%	32
Recent Grad	GS-05/07/09	14	41.2%	15	44.1%	3	8.8%	2	5.9%	5	14.7%		0.0%	34
	GS-11 & up	1	50.0%	1	50.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	2
Land Mgmt Workforce Flex	GS-05/07/09	10	47.6%	11	52.4%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	21
	GS-11 & up	2	66.7%	1	33.3%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	3
Merit Staffing	GS-05/07/09	9	52.9%	7	41.2%	1	5.9%		0.0%	1	5.9%		0.0%	17
	GS-11 & up	11	36.7%	13	43.3%	1	3.3%	5	16.7%	6	20.0%		0.0%	30
DEU	GS-05/07/09	18	51.4%	13	37.1%	3	8.6%		0.0%	3	8.6%	1	2.9%	35
	GS-11 & up	7	25.9%	17	63.0%	3	11.1%		0.0%	3	11.1%		0.0%	27
DHA GS-11+ Biology	GS-05/07/09		-		-		-		-		-		-	0
	GS-11 & up	46	37.7%	66	54.1%	9	7.4%	1	0.8%	10	8.2%		0.0%	122
DHA Wildland fire	GS-05/07/09	1	100.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1
	GS-11 & up	5	62.5%	2	25.0%		0.0%	1	12.5%	1	12.5%		0.0%	8
Other	GS-05/07/09	2	66.7%	1	33.3%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	3
	GS-11 & up		0.0%	1	100.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	1
All	Entry	70	32.9%	98	46.0%	30	14.1%	11	5.2%	41	19.2%	4	1.9%	213
	GS-11 & up	75	37.7%	104	52.3%	13	6.5%	7	3.5%	20	10.1%	0	0.0%	199

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As anticipated, overall, significantly more minority women and consequently significantly more minorities as a group) were appointed to entry-level Biology positions than to positions at grades GS-11 and above.

Professional/Administrative Occupations (except Professional Biology and Law Enforcement Officers)

Professional occupations in this group include a variety of non-biology STEM occupations such as Geology, Chemistry, Hydrology, Cartography, Engineering, Archeology, Geography, Statistics, as well as occupations such as Accounting, Economics, and Contracting. Administrative occupations include occupations such as Park Ranger, Recreation Planning, Human Resources, Program Management, Public Affairs, Administrative Officer, and Budget Analysis. While these occupations are essential to the FWS mission, most are too small to focus separately, and many have similar enough demographic distributions to make analyzing them together meaningful. These occupations constitute 29.2% of the FWS permanent workforce and 33.8% of its senior positions (GS-13 and above). Hence, the diversity of these occupations is key to the diversity of the FWS leadership and to the FWS as a whole.

At the beginning of the fiscal year, the participations of men who self-identify as Hispanic or Latino, as Asian, or as White, as well as women who self-identify as Asian were significantly low when compared to their participation in a similar group of occupations in CLF 2018. During FY 2023, the participation of Asian women increased, while the participations of all other low-participation groups declined. Although not low participation, the participation of minority women as a group increased +0.6%, while the participations of the low participation groups declined (Hispanic or Latino men -0.2%, Asian men -0.2%, White men -0.3% and minority men -0.2%).

In FY 2023, the FWS hired 245 employees in these occupations from outside sources and competitively selected 52 from other FWS occupations. All RNO/gender groups except American Indian or Alaska Native men and women, Hispanic or Latino men, men and women who identify with two or more races, and White men were hired in numbers consistent with their participation in similar occupations in CLF 2018. American Indian or Alaska Native men and women and men and women who identify with two or more races were hired at significantly higher rates than expected relative to their availability in CLF 2018 in the occupations hired, while Hispanic or Latino men and White men were hired at significantly lower rates than theirs.

During FY 2023, 196 permanent employees in these occupations left the FWS and another 19 moved to occupations outside this group. All RNO/gender groups left in numbers which were consistent with their participation in this segment of the workforce at the beginning of the fiscal year.

These data suggest that the decline in the participation of Hispanic or Latino men and White men can primarily be attributed to hiring shortfalls, while attribution of the increase in the participation of Asian women is more complex. For Asian women hiring and separations were both within the expected ranges, but the number of Asian women who separated was on the low end of the range.

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In FY 2023, the proportion of Other Administrative and Professional vacancies filled at levels which can be considered to be developmental increased substantially. During FY 2023, entry-level developmental positions constituted 44.1% of permanent outside hires in these occupations. This percentage is up from the 30.3% in FY 2022.

Law Enforcement Officers

It is well established that effective law enforcement requires a diverse law enforcement officer workforce. Currently, the FWS has 440 full-time law enforcement officers, 222 in the Office of Law Enforcement and 218 in the Division of Refuge Law Enforcement. Overall, the participation of women and minorities in the law-enforcement officer workforce are low when compared to the availability of women and minorities in similar occupations in CLF 2018.

At the beginning of FY 2023, the FWS Office of Law Enforcement had 205 Criminal Investigators, 63 of whom were women or minorities (or 30.7%), which was significantly below the 46.1% participation rate of women and minorities in similar occupations in CLF 2018. During FY 2023, the Office of Law Enforcement hired 19 Criminal Investigators from the outside and selected another 11 from other FWS occupations. Seven of these new law-enforcement officer appointments were women or minorities, but 4 women and minorities were among the 14 Criminal Investigators who left. The net effect was that the participation of women and minorities in the Criminal-Investigator workforce declined -0.8%. Notably, 8 of 19 outside hires were veterans, 5 of whom had service-connected disabilities rated 30% or more.

At the beginning of FY 2022, the FWS Division of Refuge Law Enforcement had 230 law-enforcement officers, 54 of whom were women and minorities (or 23.5%), which was significantly below the 46.1% participation rate of women and minorities in similar occupations in CLF 2018. During FY 2023, Refuge Law Enforcement hired 12 law-enforcement officers from the outside and internally selected 1 from another occupation. Three of these new law-enforcement officer appointments were women or minorities, but 4 women or minorities left. The net effect was that the participation of women and minorities declined -0.8%. Notably, 6 of the 12 (50%) outside hires were veterans, 4 of which had Service-connected disabilities rated 30% or more.

Technical biology and Federal Wage System Occupations.

At the end of FY 2023 there were 995 employees in this segment of the permanent workforce. This consisted of 261 mostly Forestry and Range Technicians and Engineering Equipment Operators who do the heavy lifting in the FWS Fire programs, 204 Biology/Forestry/Range technicians who are not part of the Fire program whose contributions are critical to the FWS key conservation programs, 502 maintenance workers/engineers and equipment operators who are critical to the functioning of the National Wildlife Refuges, National Fish Hatcheries and other FWS facilities, and 28 Animal Caretakers, who maintain the animals in the fish facilities.

At the beginning of the fiscal year the demographics of these occupations in the FWS were overwhelmingly male (89.3%) and White (80.7%). In contrast, the availability of men and Whites in this group of occupations in CLF 2018 was male (76.9%) and White (71.7%). Drilling down to single

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FY 2022	Apprentice	12	46.2%	6	23.1%	2	7.7%	4	15.4%	6	23.1%	2	7.7%	26
	Other	37	75.5%	1	2.0%	2	4.1%	6	12.2%	8	16.3%	3	6.1%	49
	All	49	65.3%	7	9.3%	4	5.3%	10	13.3%	14	18.7%	5	6.7%	75
FY 2023	Apprentice	15	50.0%	7	23.3%	1	3.3%	6	20.0%	7	23.3%	1	3.3%	30
	Other	36	81.8%	5	11.4%	1	2.3%	1	2.3%	2	4.5%	1	2.3%	44
	All	51	68.9%	12	16.2%	2	2.7%	7	9.5%	9	12.2%	2	2.7%	74
FY 2022 & 2023	Apprentice	27	48.2%	13	23.2%	3	5.4%	10	17.9%	13	23.2%	3	5.4%	56
	Other	73	78.5%	6	6.5%	3	3.2%	7	7.5%	10	10.8%	4	4.3%	93
	All	100	67.1%	19	12.8%	6	4.0%	17	11.4%	23	15.4%	7	4.7%	149

Overall, White women, minority men and minority women were hired at significantly lower rates than expected relative to their availability in the positions filled in CLF 2018, while White men were hired at a significantly higher rate than theirs. Although the number of minority men hired was low, as was the case in FY 2022, hires of minority men in the Fire program spanned available RNO groups, including Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Asian, and Native American.

During FY 2023, 41 permanent Fire program employees in these occupations left the FWS and another 6 moved to occupations outside this group. White women, White men, minority men and minority women left in numbers which were consistent with their participation in this segment of the permanent workforce at the beginning of the fiscal year.

Notably, all six of those who moved to other FWS occupations were White men and all 6 moves resulted in promotions. Five of the 6 movers remained within the Fire program, moving to 0401 Biology positions.

Biological Science/ Forestry/ Range Technician Non-Fire Workforce

Progress was made in the small non-Fire Biology technicians' workforce. At the beginning of the fiscal year, the participations of White women, minority men, and minority women in this segment of the permanent workforce were low when compared to their participation in similar occupations in CLF 2018. FY 2023 posted a +3.1% increase in the participation of White women and a +0.9% increase in the participation of minority women, although the participation of minority men declined -0.8%.

During FY 2023, 83 were hired from the outside (3 in Ecological Services, 78 in Fisheries, and 2 in Refuges). Overall, minority men and minority women were hired at significantly lower rates than expected relative to their availability in the positions filled in CLF 2018, while White men were hired at a significantly higher rate than theirs. Although not quite significant, White women constituted 35.7% of hires, while their availability in CLF 2018 was only 28.5%.

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During FY 2023, 19 employees in this segment of the permanent workforce left the FWS and another 17 moved to occupations outside of this group. Significantly more White women and significantly fewer minority men left than anticipated by an equiprobability model based on their participation in this segment of the permanent workforce at the beginning of the fiscal year.

As noted above, all of the 17 who moved to occupations in the FWS outside of this group of occupations were either White or not identified (6 White women, 10 White men, and 1 man with an unidentified RNO). Sixteen of the 17 moves were promotions, while the final one was a lateral with a higher full-performance-level grade. Sixteen of the 17 moved to entry-level professional biology positions and one moved to Small Craft Operating (5786).

Maintenance Workers/Engineers and Equipment Operators

At the beginning of the fiscal year in the maintenance worker/engineer and equipment operator occupations, the participations of minority men and of White women were low relative to their availability in similar occupations in CLF 2018. During FY 2023, although the participation of White women increased +0.2%, the participation of minority men declined -0.8%.

During FY 2023, 79 employees were hired from the outside and 2 were competitively selected from other occupations 13 in Fisheries, 66 in Refuges, 1 in Ecological Services, and 1 at NCTC. In Fisheries all of the 13 hires were White men. In Refuges, 6 of the 66 hires were minority men, 3 were White women, 50 were White men, and 7 were men who did not identify their RNO. Notably, 28 of the 81 hires were veterans, 17 of whom had service-connected disabilities rated 30% or more.

During FY 2023, 60 employees in this segment of the permanent workforce left the FWS and another 6 moved to occupations outside this group. All groups left in numbers which were consistent with their participation in this segment of the permanent workforce at the beginning of the fiscal year.

Animal Caretaker Workforce

At the beginning of the fiscal year, the small Animal Caretaker workforce had no Black or African Americans, no Asians, and no Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders. During FY 2023, 2 were hired from the outside (both White), 6 left the FWS and 2 remained in the FWS but left the Animal Caretaker workforce. By the end of the fiscal year, the 28-person Animal Caretaker workforce had no Black or African Americans, no Hispanic or Latinos, no Asians, and no Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders.

Senior Workforce

It is essential that FWS improves diversity at the senior levels of the organization among those who have authority and make decisions that affect every aspect of the agency. FWS uses the total permanent administrative/professional workforce as the standard against which to compare the demographic distribution of its senior workforce. The participation of women and minorities remains low in comparison to this standard. Despite these statistics, in FY 2023 the participation of women increased +1.1% and the participation of minorities increased +0.3%.

The participation for Hispanic women, Black/African American men, Asian men, and White women all saw gains, while the participation of Native American women declined. All other RNO groups remained unchanged.

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Historically, roughly two-thirds of entrants to the senior workforce gain entry through internal promotion; the other third is hired from outside. The proportion of additions through internal promotions has steadily declined over the past four years, and this trend continued in FY 2023. In FY 2023, 51.4% of entrants to the senior workforce gained entry through internal promotion, slightly down from 51.6% in FY2022 and 54.1% in FY 2021.

Significantly more White women and Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders were promoted than expected by an equiprobability model. All other RNO/gender groups were promoted to GS-13 in numbers that were consistent with their participation in the GS-12 workforce at the beginning of the fiscal year.

The CLF is tabulated by occupation, not by occupation and grade, so it is not an appropriate standard against which to gauge the availability of RNO/gender additions to the senior workforce. As the senior workforce is drawn from all administrative and professional series (including biology and law enforcement), the distribution of the entire administrative and professional workforce is used as a comparator. By that standard, it turns out that senior additions of Native American men were significantly higher than expected. The participation rates of other groups are within or above the range expected based on their respective participation rates in the administrative and professional series.

There were 165 separations from the senior workforce in FY 2023. All RNO/gender groups left in numbers consistent with their participation in the senior workforce at the beginning of the fiscal year except for Hispanic or Latino females, Two or More Races, and minority women overall, all of whom separated at a rate lower than expected. Unfortunately, despite being added at a higher rate than expected in the senior workforce, it was also found that Asian men separated at a higher rate than expected during FY 2023.

Leadership Development

In FY 2023, FWS sponsored two agency-wide leadership development programs. Stepping Up to Leadership (SUTL) was open to employees in grades GS-11 and GS-12 as well as wage grade (WG) supervisors and employees in WG-9/10/11 positions. The Advanced Leadership Development Program (ALDP) was available to GS-13/14 employees.

Regarding SUTL, while significantly more White women and employees who identified as Two or More Races, applied from the pool of eligible employees than would be expected based on an equiprobability statistical model, significantly fewer Black/African American employees and minority women applied than would be expected. All other individual RNO/gender groups applied in numbers that were consistent with their participation in the pool of eligible employees.

Black/African American males, Hispanic/Latino, and Asian employees were all selected for SUTL in numbers that were higher than expected from the list of applicants. All other individual RNO/gender groups were selected in numbers consistent with an equiprobability statistical model from the list of applicants.

Significantly more minority women, predominately Hispanic/Latino and Asian women, applied for ALDP than was predicted by an equiprobability statistical model. All other individual RNO/gender groups applied in numbers that were consistent with their participation in the pool of eligible employees.

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It is noteworthy that four selectees in the highly selective ALDP program were minority women. Significantly more Hispanic/Latino women, Asian women, and white women were selected than predicted by an equiprobability statistical model. There were no African American selectees. All other individual RNO/gender groups were selected at a rate consistent with their participation in the pool of applicants.

Employees with disabilities applied to the SUTL program at an expected rate. No individuals with targeted disabilities were selected for SUTL, although this is within the expected range based on their availability in the applicant pool. In the ALDP program, however, no employee with a disability was selected.

Employees with Disabilities

The EEOC established two standards for agencies to use in evaluating the adequacy of their workforce with respect to the employment of persons with disabilities. A no-less-than 2% standard applies to employees with targeted disabilities, and a no-less-than 12% standard applies to employees with reportable disabilities, where "reportable" refers to all disabilities listed on OPM's Self-identification of Disabilities form (SF-256). Each standard applies separately to the segment of the permanent workforce in grades GS-10 and below and the segment of the permanent workforce in grades GS-11 and above. The table below captures the extent to which the permanent workforce met these standards at the end of FY 2023 and the progress made since the end of FY 2022.

Employment of Persons with Disabilities (Permanent Workforce)							
		Targeted		Reportable		Permanent Workforce	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
All grades	9/30/2022	213	2.6%	891	11.1%	8059	100.0%
	9/30/2023	230	2.7%	964	11.5%	8372	100.0%
	Change	+17	+0.1%	+73	+0.4%	+313	
GS-10 & below	9/30/2022	98	3.9%	368	14.6%	2520	100.0%
	9/30/2023	101	3.9%	381	14.8%	2571	100.0%
	Change	+3	+0.0%	+13	+0.2%	+51	
GS-11 & above	9/30/2022	115	2.1%	523	9.4%	5539	100.0%
	9/30/2023	129	2.2%	583	10.1%	5795	100.0%
	Change	+14	+0.1%	+60	+0.7%	+256	
Standard			2.0%		12.0%		

As the table indicates, FWS met both standards for the segment of the permanent workforce in grades GS-10 and below, in addition to employees with targeted disabilities in grades GS-11 and above. The participation of employees with disabilities increased by 0.4% during FY 2023. In particular, the participation of employee with disabilities in the upper grades increased by .7%, though FWS still fell short of the standard of employees with reportable disabilities in grades GS-11 and above.

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The EEOC also requires agencies "to take specific steps that are reasonably designed to gradually increase the number of individuals with disabilities employed at the agency until it meets the goals established above." To this end, the Director continued to challenge the eight Regional Directors and as a group the Assistant Directors for headquarters' programs to each hire at least three individuals with targeted disabilities annually, for a minimum total of 27 hires per year. During FY 2023, FWS continued to exceed this goal by hiring 156 PWD, including 35 PWTD, from outside the organization.

Despite this success, a statistical analysis of separations in the permanent workforce indicated that employees with reportable disabilities voluntarily separated from FWS at a significantly higher rate than was anticipated by an equiprobability model and made up 25% of resignations in the permanent workforce. Voluntary resignations of employees with targeted disabilities were also higher than expected in comparison to employees with targeted disabilities in the permanent workforce.

Trends in EEO Complaints

FY 2023 showed a slight decrease from FY 2022 in the percentage of individuals who proceeded from the pre-complaint process to the formal complaint process. In FY 2022, 67% of pre-complainants filed formal complaints. In FY 2023, 58% of pre-complainants filed formal complaints.

Trends in FWS Complaints FY 2014 - FY 2023										
	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
Pre-Complaints	39	33	52	47	44	43	35	35	49	52
Formal Complaints	31	23	37	29	16	23	22	25	33	30
% Pre-Complaints Go Formal	79%	70%	71%	62%	36%	53%	63%	71%	67%	58%

Reprisal was the most common basis of discrimination reported in FY 2023, alleged in 16 complaints. The second most frequently alleged bases were race and disability.

Trends in Basis for Discrimination Complaints (Referenced from Part IV of the EEOC 462 Report)										
Basis	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
Race	14	10	9	8	3	2	9	2	7	8
Sex	9	11	15	13	5	6	12	14	12	7
Age	8	7	8	9	3	10	10	3	7	8

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Color	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	2	5	2
National Origin	4	1	4	0	1	0	0	3	2	3
Religion	0	3	2	1	0	0	0	1	3	3
Disability	13	8	15	18	5	11	19	12	12	10
Reprisal	18	16	20	12	10	16	6	18	17	16
Genetics	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0

Harassment (non-sexual) remains a significant reason for complaints (see chart below), as it is government wide. The number of harassment complaints at 22 was an increase from FY 2022.

Harassment (Non-Sexual) Complaint Trends

(Referenced 4th Quarter of the No FEAR Report)

FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
21	15	21	22	12	15	12	14	17	22

Employees who enter the EEO process are given the choice of traditional EEO counseling or ADR when appropriate. In FY 2023, the ADR rate was 31%, a significant decrease compared to 52% in FY 2022. Further analysis is forthcoming.

Part E.4 - Executive Summary: Accomplishments

In FY 2023, FWS continued implementing its five-year (FY 2020-2024) DIIP, a strategy that empowers employees at all levels to create inclusive and welcoming workplaces and enact promising practices that remove inequities for employees, partners, and stakeholders. Progress was made to drive change under three overarching objectives — employee engagement, barrier analysis and removal, and recruitment and hiring – with the following benchmarks:

- **Barrier Analysis:** The FWS conducts a barrier analysis process each year. During FY 2023, the FWS is acting on recommendations based on findings by the employee-led barrier analysis team in FY 2022, with a focus on providing guidance and support for supervisors for advancing DEIA. The ODIWM led the barrier analysis process in FY 2023, and resulting recommendations will lead to actions under the DIIP moving forward.
- **Additional Barrier Analysis on Point of Selection:** The DOI DEIA Council directed the FWS and other bureaus to conduct a barrier analysis related to hiring selections. ODIWM is overseeing this process in collaboration with the FWS Human Capital team. Hiring

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managers who filled Mission Critical Occupation (MCO) or Commonly Filled Occupations (CFO) hiring selections in FY 2022 will inform the analysis.

- **Values Project:** Co-created by employees across the organization, the FWS established five organizational values at the end of FY 2023. The values - Stewardship, Integrity, Respect, Collaboration, and Innovation – will be lived as part of the FWS identity to support a workplace culture that is respectful and inclusive of everyone. The values were informed by employee feedback from 56 listening sessions, open houses, online feedback forums, and barrier analysis results.
- **Grassroots Employee Groups:** Employee resource groups (ERG) and communities of practice are welcoming forums and drivers of inclusion and positive change in FWS. Two new ERGs formed in FY 2023 – the FWS Vets ERG and the FWS Women’s+ ERG – increasing the total number of official ERGs to five with the FWS Pride ERG; Black, Indigenous, and People of Color ERG; and FWS People with Disabilities ERG. The Institutional Change Community of Practice accomplishes projects and initiatives to adopt a community-focused conservation approach for DEIA and environmental justice.
- **DEIA and EEO Training:** FWS developed and delivered its mandatory 2023 DEIA and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) training course that builds on content from previous years’ courses, fulfills training requirements, and addresses identified attitudinal barriers. FWS also conducted reasonable accommodations training for employees and supervisors. The training provided an opportunity for participants to learn about their role in the reasonable accommodation process and to be aware of their rights and responsibilities. FWS is also conducting a comprehensive needs assessment for DEIA-related training that includes identifying what training already exists within the bureau and how to leverage existing knowledge and communities, including identifying current skill gaps for competencies to advance DEIA. Additionally, the FWS Unconscious Bias Team delivered at least 45 training sessions, primarily with hiring panels, and several skill-building workshops helped employees develop competencies related to the FWS Values Journey.
- **IDEA – Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility – Conversations:** In FY 2023, ODIWM hosted three live events for the IDEA Conversation series *It Starts with Us: An IDEA Conversation Series for Building an Inclusive Workplace*, which focused on the “I” in IDEA – Inclusion. These conversations focused on areas that helped FWS recognize and dismantle barriers to inclusion, build relationships and trust with one another, and turn our good intent into best practices. In addition, employees had the opportunity to participate in these conversations which reinforced what they’ve learned in the FWS required 2023 DEIA and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Training Course.
- **Engaging Communities in Conservation Summit:** FWS held a live three-day broadcast in August for FWS and DOI employees to learn about the Standards of Excellence to hear examples of the successful implementation of the Standards across all Service Programs. The Standards of Excellence includes eight tenets that provide guidance to ensure our work with others is inclusive, community-focused, and fosters collaborative, long-term relationships that share an intentional vision to support our mission through which wildlife and people thrive.
- **Mentoring:** The Mentoring Advisory Workgroup (MAWG) led the creation of a Mentoring SharePoint site to connect employees to existing mentorship opportunities and to support the next stages toward building and strengthening robust mentorship programs across FWS. In addition, the MAWG published a report with recommendations on a framework

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to inform best practices, enhance existing programs, inspire the development of new programs, and support informal one-on-one mentoring. The team's recommendations inform DIIP work plan actions to ensure that all employees have access and opportunity to participate in mentoring relationships, either as a mentor or mentee.

- **Special Emphasis Observance Partnerships:** Directorate members and their respective regions/programs hosted and delivered live national educational programs in cooperation with ODIWM's Diversity Team to engage employees in nine official special observances in FY 2023.

- **Public Civil Rights (PCR):**
 - FWS conducted and completed a total of 12 (six on-site and six remote) Federally Assisted Program (FAP) civil rights compliance reviews. The PCR team worked with state recipients of federal funding to complete 100% of the scheduled reviews and issue Reports of Findings before the close of the fiscal year.
 - FWS coordinated and collaborated with the Deputies group to develop four options to conduct self-evaluations of all Service occupied facilities (954) on a recurring schedule. A total of 26 Federally Conducted Program (FCP) self-evaluations were conducted and completed. The PCR team worked with regional leadership to complete 100% of scheduled self-evaluations.
 - FWS conducted two pilot FCP self-evaluations for Service leadership at the Lower Suwannee/Cedar Keys NWR and the San Luis NWR Complex.
 - FWS developed a process to highlight FWS facilities that are increasing access. An article was written on the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge and featured on intranet news feeds and shared in the FWS all-employee email digest (FWS Wild Weekly).

- **Recruitment Partnerships and Outreach:**
 - FWS has official MOUs with four minority-serving institutions and two historically Black Greek organizations to foster pathways to careers in the agency. In FY 2023, FWS signed official MOUs with two HBCUs: Fort Valley State University and Tuskegee University. Under the White House Initiative on HBCU, FWS shares funding and internship and employment opportunities with faculty and staff at HBCU across the country. FWS participated in 18 recruitment outreach events at HBCU and participates on the initiative's Interagency Work Group.
 - FWS in collaboration with the Department of the Interior (DOI) and its other bureaus participated in the 5th Annual National HBCU Week Career and Recruitment Fair from September 24-28, 2023, in the DC Metro Area, that welcomed over 600 in-person job seekers. FWS recruiters, hiring managers, and human resource specialists were on site to promote open job opportunities with prospective applicants, assist with federal resume preparation and review, and conduct mock interviews. Students were invited to apply for open positions during the event and to submit their resumes for positions happening in the future. During the conference exhibit hall, FWS Office of Law Enforcement Special

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Agents showcased the work of their program including its K9 unit and promoted career opportunities in national and international conservation law enforcement.

- FWS is represented and actively participates on the leadership board of the [Diversity Joint Venture for Careers in Conservation](#), a consortium of more than 60 federal and state agencies, universities, non-governmental organizations, foundations, and professional societies working in partnership to increase the number of women and minorities in the environmental and conservation workforce. Additionally, FWS provides staff support for the DJV Board. Coordination included supporting the Management Board (Board) of representatives from government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and universities in the day-to-day activities of the Board to enhance the representation of women and people of color in the conservation field. In FY 2023, FWS onboarded five new Board members and established working groups for the DJV priority areas. A cooperative agreement with the National Park Foundation (NPF) and contributing partners funded a pilot project for the Student Internship Discovery Tool, which uses artificial intelligence (AI) technology to match students with internship opportunities online.
- FWS maintained proactive partnerships with organizations such as Corazon Latino, Environment for the Americas, Green Latinos, Greening Youth Foundation, Hispanic Access Foundation, Hispanics Enjoying Camping, Hiking and the Outdoors, Hispanic Prosperity Initiative, Latino Outdoors, League of United Latin American Citizens, Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, SODAS LIFE, Urban American Outdoors, White House Initiative on HBCU, and the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority.
- Recruitment specialists participated in 168 outreach events at 127 schools, 71 of which are minority serving institutions, and 41 events with organizations serving minorities, Veterans, and PWD.
- FWS welcomed the 2023 Directorate Fellowship Program (DFP) cohort for a week-long orientation program at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC). The recruitment effort in partnership with the Doris Duke Foundation; Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANNRS); and the Hispanic Access Foundation resulted in 421 eligible candidates for the fifty-seven projects available for our Directorate Fellows Program (DFP), FWS's Resource Assistant program. This year's cohort has representation rates of 67% for People of Color and 77% for women.
- FWS promoted targeted outreach for five assistant director and regional director positions and two deputy regional director vacancies by announcing the opportunities on the FWS listserv of professional organizations serving diverse populations. Additional outreach included the posting of the vacancies to job boards of targeted organizations and/or sharing announcement with a targeted network to promote increased diversity. Organizations included HBCU Connect, Professional Diversity Network, Native American Job Board, and Hire Vets, and other executive networks identified in the DOI recruitment plan.
- FWS Deputies Group established a coordinated hiring process via the Pathways Program and has brought on more than 65 new interns via these coordinated

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hires who can be converted directly into entry level positions in the professional and administrative series. FWS hired 25 Pathways Student Interns -- seven of the selections were candidates from HBCUs and 16 were from Minority Serving Institutions.

- Every FWS region has added capacity to implement internship and fellowship programs to build awareness and interest in opportunities with a goal of improving diversity in the workforce. Regions and headquarters have appointed staff to coordinate programs and special hiring authorities to attract current students, recent graduates, and other eligible talent to careers within government service.
- FWS worked with partners to develop an outreach and recruitment toolkit approach to help connect conservation organizations and college and university career centers in ways that center diversity, equity, and inclusion on both their organizational culture and recruitment strategies.
- Certain regions in an ongoing partnership with the Student Conservation Association (SCA) hosted undergraduate interns through the Career Discovery Internship Program (CDIP).
- To efficiently address questions on FWS job opportunities and internships and to ensure consistent responsiveness to potential candidates, the recruitment team maintains a general inbox (connect@fws.gov), which features an automated reply that provides each recruiter's email for additional questions and inquiries.
- **Direct Hiring Authorities:**
 - FWS uses direct hire authority for the Directorate Resource Assistant Fellows Program (DFP) participants after they complete their degree and are now using new Recent Grads and Post-Secondary hiring authorities to announce positions at recruitment outreach events and to source candidates through careers-focused social media accounts.
 - FWS transitioned to a new process for entry-level positions to require non-competitive candidate solicitation and consideration. The purpose of the new process is to (1) expedite the hiring process at the entry level, (2) to ensure we're considering the candidates in whom FWS has already invested, including our internal employees, interns, fellows, temps, and terms, and (3) to increase the diversity of the workforce through authorities that allow us to more effectively recruit veterans, individuals with disabilities, and candidates from other underrepresented groups. In FY 2023, 121 requests for noncompetitive candidates (i.e., those who are eligible for Schedule A, Veterans Recruitment Appointment (VRA), 30% or more disabled Veterans, Pathways Student Interns eligible for conversion, and former interns with Public Lands Corps Act authority) have been processed with over 379 noncompetitive applicants.
- **Promoting Employee Retention:**

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- The FWS produced a Stay Interview Guide as a new tool for managers and supervisors to help foster relationships and build trust to encourage employee retention.
- The FWS posts a New Hire Onboarding Guide on fws.gov to ensure new hires have everything they need to make a successful transition into their new role from tentative selection to starting their new job.
- ODIWM will continue to track and fulfill regional and program requests for facilitation of conversations related to DEIA.

Part E.5 - Executive Summary: Planned Activities

As FWS endeavors to advance DEIA to be a model employer and public service agency, the intentional steps it takes transform its work culture are as important as vision-setting for the future. The FY 2024 DIIP Work Plan builds on collective successes to date and prioritizes actions that are informed by feedback from employee teams, working groups, and surveys as well as official direction for advancing DEIA across the federal government. FWS will continue to carry out activities under its DIIP, in alignment with the governmentwide DEIA plan. The following planned activities will have an impact across multiple demographic, gender, and disability groups.

Among other actions, this year FWS will:

- Operationalize and implement the Service's core Values, Vision, and Purpose
- Improve supervisor connections and communications
- Build awareness and knowledge through focused DEIA and EEO training opportunities
- Communicate expectations for accountability to DEIA, including the required DEIA performance element for supervisors
- Quarterly disseminate DIIP progress report messages to all employees
- Continue a series of live broadcasts on IDEA – Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility – Conversations to spark ideas and dialogue among employees and share promising practices for DEIA
- Foster inclusive and welcoming workplaces by supporting and providing funding for Employee Resource Groups
- Complete a training needs assessment that will help identify DEIA competency gaps in the workforce

Efforts in FWS to advance DEIA are intended to create a culture of dignity and respect, where everyone's talents and contributions are recognized, valued, and used in a manner that contributes to the mission.

Please refer to Part I and Part J for a breakdown of the barrier analysis and removal actions for FY 2023.

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**EEOC FORM 715-01
PART F**

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Certification of Establishment of Continuing Equal Employment Opportunity Programs

I, Inez Uhl, GS-0260-15, am the Principal EEO Director for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS).

FWS has conducted an annual self-assessment of Section 717 and Section 501 programs against the essential elements as prescribed by EEO MD-715. If an essential element was not fully compliant with the standards of EEO MD-715, a further evaluation was conducted and, as appropriate, EEO Plans for Attaining the Essential Elements of a Model EEO Program, are included with this Federal Agency Annual EEO Program Status Report.

FWS has also analyzed its workforce profiles and conducted barrier analyses aimed at detecting whether any management or personnel policy, procedure or practice is operating to disadvantage any group based on race, national origin, gender or disability. EEO Plans to eliminate identified barriers, as appropriate, are included with this Federal Agency Annual EEO Program Status Report.

I certify that proper documentation of this assessment is in place and is being maintained for EEOC review upon request.

Inez Uhl, EEO Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Date

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

Martha Williams
Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Date

MD-715 - PART G

Agency Self-Assessment Checklist

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

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

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





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

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

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MD-715 - PART G Agency Self-Assessment Checklist

Essential Element A: DEMONSTRATED COMMITMENT FROM AGENCY LEADERSHIP			
This element requires the agency head to communicate a commitment to equal employment opportunity and a discrimination-free workplace.			
 Compliance Indicator		Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments
 Measures			
A.1.a	A.1 – The agency issues an effective, up-to-date EEO policy statement. Does the agency annually issue a signed and dated EEO policy statement on agency letterhead that clearly communicates the agency’s commitment to EEO for all employees and applicants? If “yes”, please provide the annual issuance date in the Comments column. [see MD-715, II(A)]	Yes	The policy was issued to all employees on February 8, 2023. The memo was included in the annual DEIA training for employees to confirm that they had read it.
A.1.b	Does the EEO policy statement address all protected bases (age, color, disability, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation and gender identity), genetic information, national origin, race, religion, and reprisal) contained in the laws EEOC enforces? [see 29 CFR § 1614.101(a)]	Yes	
 Compliance Indicator	A.2 – The agency has communicated EEO policies and procedures to all employees.	Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments
 Measures			
A.2.a	Does the agency disseminate the following policies and procedures to all employees	Yes	
A.2.a.1	Anti-harassment policy? [see MD 715, II(A)]	Yes	On the intranet (SharePoint) site and through mandatory annual EEO/Diversity training https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/elips/documents/pb-18-01-prevention-and-elimination-of-harassing-conduct-signed-2018-03-23-508.pdf



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A.2.a.2	Reasonable accommodation procedures? [see 29 C.F.R § 1614.203(d)(3)]	Yes	DOI PB 21-03 https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/elips/documents/pb-21-03-processing-requests-for-reasonable-accommodation-for-individuals-with-disabilities-10-24-2022-508.pdf
A.2.b	Does the agency prominently post the following information throughout the workplace and on its public website		
A.2.b.1	The business contact information for its EEO Counselors, EEO Officers, Special Emphasis Program Managers, and EEO Director? [see 29 C.F.R § 1614.102(b)(7)]	Yes	Contact information is provided on the ODIWM Public Web Page and on ODIWM internal Sharepoint Pages.
A.2.b.2	Written materials concerning the EEO program, laws, policy statements, and the operation of the EEO complaint process? [see 29 C.F.R § 1614.102(b)(5)]	Yes	
A.2.b.3	Reasonable accommodation procedures? [see 29 C.F.R. § 1614.203(d)(3)(i)] If so, please provide the internet address in the comments column.	Yes	DOI Personnel Bulletin 21-03 https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/elips/documents/pb-21-03-processing-requests-for-reasonable-accommodation-for-individuals-with-disabilities-10-24-2022-508.pdf
A.2.c	Does the agency inform its employees about the following topics:		
A.2.c.1	EEO complaint process? [see 29 CFR §§ 1614.102(a)(12) and 1614.102(b)(5)] If “yes”, please provide how often.	Yes	Annually through the EEO Policy Statement, required training, and on an ongoing basis through the internal SharePoint site.
A.2.c.2	ADR process? [see MD-110, Ch. 3(II)(C)] If “yes”, please provide how often.	Yes	On an ongoing basis through the SharePoint site and as needed for employees who engage with EEO Counselors.
A.2.c.3	Reasonable accommodation program? [see 29 CFR § 1614.203(d)(7)(ii)(C)] If “yes”, please provide how often.	Yes	Annually through various methods including required training and on an ongoing basis through the internal SharePoint site.
A.2.c.4	Anti-harassment program? [see EEOC Enforcement Guidance on Vicarious Employer Liability for Unlawful Harassment by Supervisors (1999), § V.C.1] If “yes”, please provide how often.	Yes	Annually
A.2.c.5	Behaviors that are inappropriate in the workplace and could result in disciplinary action? [5 CFR § 2635.101(b)] If “yes”, please provide how often.	Yes	Annually

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 Compliance Indicator  Measures	A.3 – The agency assesses and ensures EEO principles are part of its culture.	Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments New Compliance Indicator
A.3.a	Does the agency provide recognition to employees, supervisors, managers, and units demonstrating superior accomplishment in equal employment opportunity? [see 29 CFR § 1614.102(a) (9)] If “yes”, provide one or two examples in the comments section.	Yes	The FWS submits nominations for the Secretary’s Diversity Award: These awards, which are signed by the Secretary, recognize and honor employees or groups of employees who have provided exemplary service and/or have made significant contributions to efforts to increase diversity at all levels.
A.3.b	Does the agency utilize the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey or other climate assessment tools to monitor the perception of EEO principles within the workforce? [see 5 CFR Part 250]	Yes	

Essential Element B: INTEGRATION OF EEO INTO THE AGENCY’S STRATEGIC MISSION
This element requires that the agency’s EEO programs are structured to maintain a workplace that is free from discrimination and supports the agency’s strategic mission.

 Compliance Indicator  Measures	B.1 - The reporting structure for the EEO program provides the principal EEO official with appropriate authority and resources to effectively carry out a successful EEO program.	Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments
B.1.a	Is the agency head the immediate supervisor of the person (“EEO Director”) who has day-to-day control over the EEO office? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(b)(4)]	Yes	Effective March 20, 2023, the EEO Director reported to the head of the agency. The organization chart was updated in May 2023 to reflect this change.
B.1.a.1	If the EEO Director does not report to the agency head, does the EEO Director report to the same agency head designee as the mission-related programmatic offices? If “yes,” please provide the title of the agency head designee in the comments.	NA	
B.1.a.2	Does the agency’s organizational chart clearly define the reporting structure for the EEO office? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(b)(4)]	Yes	
B.1.b	Does the EEO Director have a regular and effective means of advising the agency head and other senior management officials of the effectiveness, efficiency and legal compliance of the agency’s EEO program? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(c)(1); MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]	Yes	





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B.1.c	During this reporting period, did the EEO Director present to the head of the agency, and other senior management officials, the "State of the agency" briefing covering the six essential elements of the model EEO program and the status of the barrier analysis process? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]] If "yes", please provide the date of the briefing in the comments column.	Yes	On March 13, 2023, the EEO Director provided a briefing to the Director and the Deputy Directors on the State of the Agency covering all components of MD-715.
B.1.d	Does the EEO Director regularly participate in senior-level staff meetings concerning personnel, budget, technology, and other workforce issues? [see MD-715, II(B)]	Yes	
 Compliance Indicator  Measures	B.2 – The EEO Director controls all aspects of the EEO program.	Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments New Compliance Indicator
B.2.a	Is the EEO Director responsible for the implementation of a continuing affirmative employment program to promote EEO and to identify and eliminate discriminatory policies, procedures, and practices? [see MD-110, Ch. 1(III)(A); 29 CFR §1614.102(c)]	Yes	
B.2.b	Is the EEO Director responsible for overseeing the completion of EEO counseling [see 29 CFR §1614.102(c)(4)]	Yes	
B.2.c	Is the EEO Director responsible for overseeing the fair and thorough investigation of EEO complaints? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(c)(5)] [This question may not be applicable for certain subordinate level components.]	Yes	
B.2.d	Is the EEO Director responsible for overseeing the timely issuance of final agency decisions? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(c)(5)] [This question may not be applicable for certain subordinate level components.]	Yes	Although final agency decisions are issued by the DOI, ODICR and the EEO Director monitors their completion to ensure timeliness.
B.2.e	Is the EEO Director responsible for ensuring compliance with EEOC orders? [see 29 CFR §§ 1614.102(e); 1614.502]	Yes	
B.2.f	Is the EEO Director responsible for periodically evaluating the entire EEO program and providing recommendations for improvement to the agency head? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(c)(2)]	Yes	
B.2.g	If the agency has subordinate level components, does the EEO Director provide effective guidance and coordination for the components? [see 29 CFR §§ 1614.102(c)(2) and (c)(3)]	Yes	

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 Compliance Indicator  Measures		Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments
	B.3 - The EEO Director and other EEO professional staff are involved in, and consulted on, management/personnel actions.		
B.3.a	Do EEO program officials participate in agency meetings regarding workforce changes that might impact EEO issues, including strategic planning, recruitment strategies, vacancy projections, succession planning, and selections for training/career development opportunities? [see MD-715, II(B)]	Yes	
B.3.b	Does the agency's current strategic plan reference EEO / diversity and inclusion principles? [see MD-715, II(B)] If "yes", please identify the EEO principles in the strategic plan in the comments column.	Yes	The DOI FY2022-2026 Strategic Plan states, "The Department commits itself to upholding and advancing DEIA.... We will remove obstacles that adversely affect our ability to hire and retain members of underrepresented communities. We will assess the workplace culture, identifying and addressing behaviors that can lead to inequity, intolerance, discrimination, and harassment."
 Compliance Indicator  Measures		Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments
	B.4 - The agency has sufficient budget and staffing to support the success of its EEO program.		
B.4.a	Pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.102(a)(1), has the agency allocated sufficient funding and qualified staffing to successfully implement the EEO program, for the following areas:		
B.4.a.1	to conduct a self-assessment of the agency for possible program deficiencies? [see MD-715, II(D)]	Yes	
B.4.a.2	to enable the agency to conduct a thorough barrier analysis of its workforce? [see MD-715, II(B)]	Yes	
B.4.a.3	to timely, thoroughly, and fairly process EEO complaints, including EEO counseling, investigations, final agency decisions, and legal sufficiency reviews? [see 29 CFR § 1614.102(c)(5) & 1614.105(b) – (f); MD-110, Ch. 1(IV)(D) & 5(IV); MD-715, II(E)]	Yes	
B.4.a.4	to provide all supervisors and employees with training on the EEO program, including but not limited to retaliation, harassment, religious	Yes	





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	accommodations, disability accommodations, the EEO complaint process, and ADR? [see MD-715, II(B) and III(C)] If not, please identify the type(s) of training with insufficient funding in the comments column.		
B.4.a.5	to conduct thorough, accurate, and effective field audits of the EEO programs in components and the field offices, if applicable? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(c)(2)]	Yes	
B.4.a.6	to publish and distribute EEO materials (e.g. harassment policies, EEO posters, reasonable accommodations procedures)? [see MD-715, II(B)]	Yes	
B.4.a.7	to maintain accurate data collection and tracking systems for the following types of data: complaint tracking, workforce demographics, and applicant flow data? [see MD-715, II(E)]. If not, please identify the systems with insufficient funding in the comments section.	Yes	
B.4.a.8	to effectively administer its special emphasis programs (such as, Federal Women's Program, Hispanic Employment Program, and People with Disabilities Program Manager)? [5 USC § 7201; 38 USC § 4214; 5 CFR § 720.204; 5 CFR § 213.3102(t) and (u); 5 CFR § 315.709]	Yes	
B.4.a.9	to effectively manage its anti-harassment program? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I); EEOC Enforcement Guidance on Vicarious Employer Liability for Unlawful Harassment by Supervisors (1999), § V.C.1]	Yes	
B.4.a.10	to effectively manage its reasonable accommodation program? [see 29 CFR § 1614.203(d)(4)(ii)]	Yes	
B.4.a.11	to ensure timely and complete compliance with EEOC orders? [see MD-715, II(E)]	Yes	
B.4.b	Does the EEO office have a budget that is separate from other offices within the agency? [see 29 CFR § 1614.102(a)(1)]	Yes	
B.4.c	Are the duties and responsibilities of EEO officials clearly defined? [see MD-110, Ch. 1(III)(A), 2(III), & 6(III)]	Yes	
B.4.d	Does the agency ensure that all new counselors and investigators, including contractors and collateral duty employees, receive the required 32 hours of training, pursuant to Ch. 2(II)(A) of MD-110?	Yes	
B.4.e	Does the agency ensure that all experienced counselors and investigators, including contractors and collateral duty employees, receive the required 8 hours of annual refresher training, pursuant to Ch. 2(II)(C) of MD-110?	Yes	





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 Compliance Indicator  Measures		Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments New Indicator
	B.5 – The agency recruits, hires, develops, and retains supervisors and managers who have effective managerial, communications, and interpersonal skills.		
B.5.a	Pursuant to 29 CFR § 1614.102(a)(5), have all managers and supervisors received training on their responsibilities under the following areas under the agency EEO program:		
B.5.a.1	EEO Complaint Process? [see MD-715(II)(B)]	Yes	
B.5.a.2	Reasonable Accommodation Procedures? [see 29 C.F.R. § 1614.102(d)(3)]	Yes	
B.5.a.3	Anti-Harassment Policy? [see MD-715(II)(B)]	Yes	
B.5.a.4	Supervisory, managerial, communication, and interpersonal skills in order to supervise most effectively in a workplace with diverse employees and avoid disputes arising from ineffective communications? [see MD-715, II(B)]	Yes	
B.5.a.5	ADR, with emphasis on the federal government’s interest in encouraging mutual resolution of disputes and the benefits associated with utilizing ADR? [see MD-715(II)(E)]	Yes	
 Compliance Indicator  Measures	B.6 – The agency involves managers in the implementation of its EEO program.	Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments New Indicator
B.6.a	Are senior managers involved in the implementation of Special Emphasis Programs? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]	Yes	
B.6.b	Do senior managers participate in the barrier analysis process? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]	Yes	
B.6.c	When barriers are identified, do senior managers assist in developing agency EEO action plans (Part I, Part J, or the Executive Summary)? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]	Yes	
B.6.d	Do senior managers successfully implement EEO Action Plans and incorporate the EEO Action Plan Objectives into agency strategic plans? [29 CFR § 1614.102(a)(5)]	Yes	

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Essential Element C: MANAGEMENT AND PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY			
This element requires the agency head to hold all managers, supervisors, and EEO officials responsible for the effective implementation of the agency's EEO Program and Plan.			
 Compliance Indicator		Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments
 Measures			
	C.1 – The agency conducts regular internal audits of its component and field offices.		
C.1.a	Does the agency regularly assess its component and field offices for possible EEO program deficiencies? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(c)(2)] If "yes", please provide the schedule for conducting audits in the comments section.	Yes	The EEO Director and EEO Program Managers communicate and consult with members of the Directorate frequently to bring any program deficiencies to their attention. Component and field offices are required to provide information on progress towards completing their EEO, diversity and inclusion, and barrier removal requirements.
C.1.b	Does the agency regularly assess its component and field offices on their efforts to remove barriers from the workplace? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(c)(2)] If "yes", please provide the schedule for conducting audits in the comments section.	Yes	In FY 2023, the FWS Affirmative Employment Program Division reviewed data and tracked progress on barrier analysis and removal.
C.1.c	Do the component and field offices make reasonable efforts to comply with the recommendations of the field audit? [see MD-715, II(C)]	Yes	
 Compliance Indicator		Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments
 Measures			New Indicator
	C.2 – The agency has established procedures to prevent all forms of EEO discrimination.		
C.2.a	Has the agency established comprehensive anti-harassment policy and procedures that comply with EEOC's enforcement guidance? [see MD-715, II(C); Enforcement Guidance on Vicarious Employer Liability for Unlawful Harassment by Supervisors (Enforcement Guidance), EEOC No. 915.002, § V.C.1 (June 18, 1999)]	Yes	
C.2.a.1	Does the anti-harassment policy require corrective action to prevent or eliminate conduct before it rises to the level of unlawful harassment? [see EEOC Enforcement Guidance on Vicarious Employer Liability for Unlawful Harassment by Supervisors (1999), § V.C.1]	Yes	



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C.2.a.2	Has the agency established a firewall between the Anti-Harassment Coordinator and the EEO Director? [see EEOC Report, Model EEO Program Must Have an Effective Anti-Harassment Program (2006)]	Yes	
C.2.a.3	Does the agency have a separate procedure (outside the EEO complaint process) to address harassment allegations? [see Enforcement Guidance on Vicarious Employer Liability for Unlawful Harassment by Supervisors (Enforcement Guidance), EEOC No. 915.002, § V.C.1 (June 18, 1999)]	Yes	
C.2.a.4	Does the agency ensure that the EEO office informs the anti-harassment program of all EEO counseling activity alleging harassment? [see Enforcement Guidance, V.C.]	Yes	
C.2.a.5	Does the agency conduct a prompt inquiry (beginning within 10 days of notification) of all harassment allegations, including those initially raised in the EEO complaint process? [see Complainant v. Dep't of Veterans Affairs, EEOC Appeal No. 0120123232 (May 21, 2015); Complainant v. Dep't of Defense (Defense Commissary Agency), EEOC Appeal No. 0120130331 (May 29, 2015)] If "no", please provide the percentage of timely-processed inquiries in the comments column.	Yes	
C.2.a.6	Do the agency's training materials on its anti-harassment policy include examples of disability-based harassment? [see 29 CFR 1614.203(d)(2)]	Yes	
C.2.b	Has the agency established disability reasonable accommodation procedures that comply with EEOC's regulations and guidance? [see 29 CFR 1614.203(d)(3)]	Yes	DOI Personnel Bulletin 21-03 https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/elips/documents/pb-21-03-processing-requests-for-reasonable-accommodation-for-individuals-with-disabilities-10-24-2022-508.pdf
C.2.b.1	Is there a designated agency official or other mechanism in place to coordinate or assist with processing requests for disability accommodations throughout the agency? [see 29 CFR 1614.203(d)(3)(D)]	Yes	
C.2.b.2	Has the agency established a firewall between the Reasonable Accommodation Program Manager and the EEO Director? [see MD-110, Ch. 1(IV)(A)]	Yes	
C.2.b.3	Does the agency ensure that job applicants can request and receive reasonable accommodations during the application and placement processes? [see 29 CFR 1614.203(d)(1)(ii)(B)]	Yes	
C.2.b.4	Do the reasonable accommodation procedures clearly state that the agency should process the request within a maximum amount of time (e.g., 20 business days), as established by the agency in its affirmative action plan? [see 29 CFR 1614.203(d)(3)(i)(M)]	Yes	DOI Personnel Bulletin 21-03 https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/elips/documents/pb-21-03-processing-requests-for-reasonable-accommodation-for-individuals-with-disabilities-10-24-2022-508.pdf



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			reasonable-accommodation-for-individuals-with-disabilities-10-24-2022-508.pdf
C.2.b.5	Does the agency process all accommodation requests within the time frame set forth in its reasonable accommodation procedures? [see MD-715, II(C)] If “no”, please provide the percentage of timely-processed requests in the comments column.	Yes	
C.2.c	Has the agency established procedures for processing requests for personal assistance services that comply with EEOC’s regulations, enforcement guidance, and other applicable executive orders, guidance, and standards? [see 29 CFR 1614.203(d)(6)]	Yes	DOI Personnel Bulletin 17-18 https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/personnel_bulletin_17-18_personal_assistance_services.pdf
C.2.c.1	Does the agency post its procedures for processing requests for Personal Assistance Services on its public website? [see 29 CFR § 1614.203(d)(5)(v)] If “yes”, please provide the internet address in the comments column.	Yes	www.doi.gov/accommodations/PAS
 Compliance Indicator  Measures	C.3 - The agency evaluates managers and supervisors on their efforts to ensure equal employment opportunity.	Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments New Indicator
C.3.a	Pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.102(a)(5), do all managers and supervisors have an element in their performance appraisal that evaluates their commitment to agency EEO policies and principles and their participation in the EEO program?	Yes	
C.3.b	Does the agency require rating officials to evaluate the performance of managers and supervisors based on the following activities:		
C.3.b.1	Resolve EEO problems/disagreements/conflicts, including the participation in ADR proceedings? [see MD-110, Ch. 3.]	Yes	
C.3.b.2	Ensure full cooperation of employees under his/her supervision with EEO officials, such as counselors and investigators? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(b)(6)]	Yes	
C.3.b.3	Ensure a workplace that is free from all forms of discrimination, including harassment and retaliation? [see MD-715, II(C)]	Yes	
C.3.b.4	Ensure that subordinate supervisors have effective managerial, communication, and interpersonal skills to supervise in a workplace with diverse employees? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]	Yes	





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C.3.b.5	Provide religious accommodations when such accommodations do not cause an undue hardship? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(a)(7)]	Yes	
C.3.b.6	Provide disability accommodations when such accommodations do not cause an undue hardship? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(a)(8)]	Yes	
C.3.b.7	Support the EEO program in identifying and removing barriers to equal opportunity. [see MD-715, II(C)]	Yes	
C.3.b.8	Support the anti-harassment program in investigating and correcting harassing conduct. [see Enforcement Guidance, V.C.2]	Yes	
C.3.b.9	Comply with settlement agreements and orders issued by the agency, EEOC, and EEO-related cases from the Merit Systems Protection Board, labor arbitrators, and the Federal Labor Relations Authority? [see MD-715, II(C)]	Yes	
C.3.c	Does the EEO Director recommend to the agency head improvements or corrections, including remedial or disciplinary actions, for managers and supervisors who have failed in their EEO responsibilities? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(c)(2)]	N/A	There were no findings of discrimination in FY 2023; therefore, the EEO Director did not make recommendations for remedial or disciplinary action.
C.3.d	When the EEO Director recommends remedial or disciplinary actions, are the recommendations regularly implemented by the agency? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(c)(2)]	N/A	There were no recommendations for disciplinary action by the EEO Director for FY 2023 per C.3.c above.
 Compliance Indicator  Measures	C.4 – The agency ensures effective coordination between its EEO programs and Human Resources (HR) program.	Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments
C.4.a	Do the HR Director and the EEO Director meet regularly to assess whether personnel programs, policies, and procedures conform to EEOC laws, instructions, and management directives? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(a)(2)]	Yes	
C.4.b	Has the agency established timetables/schedules to review at regular intervals its merit promotion program, employee recognition awards program, employee development/training programs, and management/personnel policies, procedures, and practices for systemic barriers that may be impeding full participation in the program by all EEO groups? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]	Yes	
C.4.c	Does the EEO office have timely access to accurate and complete data (e.g., demographic data for workforce, applicants, training programs, etc.) required to prepare the MD-715 workforce data tables? [see 29 CFR §1614.601(a)]	Yes	

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C.4.d	Does the HR office timely provide the EEO office with access to other data (e.g., exit interview data, climate assessment surveys, and grievance data), upon request? [see MD-715, II(C)]	Yes	
C.4.e	Pursuant to Section II(C) of MD-715, does the EEO office collaborate with the HR office to:		
C.4.e.1	Implement the Affirmative Action Plan for Individuals with Disabilities? [see 29 CFR §1614.203(d); MD-715, II(C)]	Yes	
C.4.e.2	Develop and/or conduct outreach and recruiting initiatives? [see MD-715, II(C)]	Yes	
C.4.e.3	Develop and/or provide training for managers and employees? [see MD-715, II(C)]	Yes	
C.4.e.4	Identify and remove barriers to equal opportunity in the workplace? [see MD-715, II(C)]	Yes	
C.4.e.5	Assist in preparing the MD-715 report? [see MD-715, II(C)]	Yes	
 Compliance Indicator  Measures	C.5 – Following a finding of discrimination, the agency explores whether it should take a disciplinary action.	Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments
C.5.a	Does the agency have a disciplinary policy and/or table of penalties that covers discriminatory conduct? [see 29 CFR § 1614.102(a)(6); see also <u>Douglas v. Veterans Administration</u> , 5 MSPR 280 (1981)]	Yes	
C.5.b	When appropriate, does the agency discipline or sanction managers and employees for discriminatory conduct? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(a)(6)] If “yes”, please state the number of disciplined/sanctioned individuals during this reporting period in the comments.	N/A	There were no findings of discrimination in FY 2023.
C.5.c	If the agency has a finding of discrimination (or settles cases in which a finding was likely), does the agency inform managers and supervisors about the discriminatory conduct? [see MD-715, II(C)]	N/A	There were no findings of discrimination in FY 2023.
 Compliance Indicator  Measures	C.6 – The EEO office advises managers/supervisors on EEO matters.	Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments
C.6.a	Does the EEO office provide management/supervisory officials with regular EEO updates on at least an annual basis, including EEO complaints, workforce demographics and data summaries, legal	Yes	The EEO Office provides workforce demographic updates on a monthly basis. Additionally, management/supervisory officials





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	updates, barrier analysis plans, and special emphasis updates? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I] If “yes”, please identify the frequency of the EEO updates in the comments column.		are provided a copy of the EEOC MD-715 Report, which includes the 462 Report on Complaints, barrier analysis plans, and special emphasis accomplishments.
C.6.b	Are EEO officials readily available to answer managers’ and supervisors’ questions or concerns? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]	Yes	





Essential Element D: PROACTIVE PREVENTION

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

 Compliance Indicator	D.1 – The agency conducts a reasonable assessment to monitor progress towards achieving equal employment opportunity throughout the year.	Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments
 Measures			
D.1.a	Does the agency have a process for identifying triggers in the workplace? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]	Yes	
D.1.b	Does the agency regularly use the following sources of information for trigger identification: workforce data; complaint/grievance data; exit surveys; employee climate surveys; focus groups; affinity groups; union; program evaluations; special emphasis programs; reasonable accommodation program; anti-harassment program; and/or external special interest groups? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]	Yes	
D.1.c	Does the agency conduct exit interviews or surveys that include questions on how the agency could improve the recruitment, hiring, inclusion, retention and advancement of individuals with disabilities? [see 29 CFR 1614.203(d)(1)(iii)(C)]	Yes	
 Compliance Indicator	D.2 – The agency identifies areas where barriers may exclude EEO groups (reasonable basis to act.)	Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments
 Measures			New Indicator
D.2.a	Does the agency have a process for analyzing the identified triggers to find possible barriers? [see MD-715, (II)(B)]	Yes	

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D.2.b	Does the agency regularly examine the impact of management/personnel policies, procedures, and practices by race, national origin, sex, and disability? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(a)(3)]	Yes	
D.2.c	Does the agency consider whether any group of employees or applicants might be negatively impacted prior to making human resource decisions, such as re-organizations and realignments? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(a)(3)]	Yes	The EEO Office conducts adverse impact analyses for programs that are considering workforce changes.
D.2.d	Does the agency regularly review the following sources of information to find barriers: complaint/grievance data, exit surveys, employee climate surveys, focus groups, affinity groups, union, program evaluations, anti-harassment program, special emphasis programs, reasonable accommodation program; anti-harassment program; and/or external special interest groups? [see MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I] If “yes”, please identify the data sources in the comments column.	Yes	FWS uses the following data sources to find barriers: complaint data, exit surveys, employee climate surveys, focus groups, ERGs, Communities of Practice, and special emphasis programs.
 Compliance Indicator  Measures	D.3 – The agency establishes appropriate action plans to remove identified barriers.	Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments New Indicator
D.3.a.	Does the agency effectively tailor action plans to address the identified barriers, in particular policies, procedures, or practices? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(a)(3)]	Yes	
D.3.b	If the agency identified one or more barriers during the reporting period, did the agency implement a plan in Part I, including meeting the target dates for the planned activities? [see MD-715, II(D)]	Yes	
D.3.c	Does the agency periodically review the effectiveness of the plans? [see MD-715, II(D)]	Yes	
 Compliance Indicator  Measures	D.4 – The agency has an affirmative action plan for people with disabilities, including those with targeted disabilities.	Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments New Indicator
D.4.a	Does the agency post its affirmative action plan on its public website? [see 29 CFR 1614.203(d)(4)] Please provide the internet address in the comments.	Yes	https://www.fws.gov/media/md-715-reports-2017-2022



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D.4.b	Does the agency take specific steps to ensure qualified people with disabilities are aware of and encouraged to apply for job vacancies? [see 29 CFR 1614.203(d)(1)(i)]	Yes	
D.4.c	Does the agency ensure that disability-related questions from members of the public are answered promptly and correctly? [see 29 CFR 1614.203(d)(1)(ii)(A)]	Yes	
D.4.d	Has the agency taken specific steps that are reasonably designed to increase the number of persons with disabilities or targeted disabilities employed at the agency until it meets the goals? [see 29 CFR 1614.203(d)(7)(ii)]	Yes	



Essential Element E: EFFICIENCY

This element requires the agency head to ensure that there are effective systems for evaluating the impact and effectiveness of the agency's EEO programs and an efficient and fair dispute resolution process.

 Compliance Indicator	E.1 - The agency maintains an efficient, fair, and impartial complaint resolution process.	Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments
 Measures			
E.1.a	Does the agency timely provide EEO counseling, pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.105?	Yes	
E.1.b	Does the agency provide written notification of rights and responsibilities in the EEO process during the initial counseling session, pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.105(b)(1)?	Yes	
E.1.c	Does the agency issue acknowledgment letters immediately upon receipt of a formal complaint, pursuant to MD-110, Ch. 5(I)?	Yes	
E.1.d	Does the agency issue acceptance letters/dismissal decisions within a reasonable time (e.g., 60 days) after receipt of the written EEO Counselor report, pursuant to MD-110, Ch. 5(I)? If so, please provide the average processing time in the comments.	Yes	Average: Five Days
E.1.e	Does the agency ensure all employees fully cooperate with EEO counselors and EEO personnel in the EEO process, including granting routine access to personnel records related to an investigation, pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.102(b)(6)?	Yes	
E.1.f	Does the agency timely complete investigations, pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.108?	Yes	
E.1.g	If the agency does not timely complete investigations, does the agency notify complainants of the date by which the investigation will be	N/A	The FWS completes all investigations in a timely manner.





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	completed and of their right to request a hearing or file a lawsuit, pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.108(g)?		
E.1.h	When the complainant does not request a hearing, does the agency timely issue the final agency decision, pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.110(b)?	N/A	ODICR carries out FAD issuance.
E.1.i	Does the agency timely issue final actions following receipt of the hearing file and the administrative judge's decision, pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.110(a)?	Yes	
E.1.j	If the agency uses contractors to implement any stage of the EEO complaint process, does the agency hold them accountable for poor work product and/or delays? [See MD-110, Ch. 5(V)(A)] If "yes", please describe how in the comments column.	Yes	FWS holds the firms accountable by withholding payment until legally sufficient work products are received.
E.1.k	If the agency uses employees to implement any stage of the EEO complaint process, does the agency hold them accountable for poor work product and/or delays during performance review? [See MD-110, Ch. 5(V)(A)]	Yes	
E.1.l	Does the agency submit complaint files and other documents in the proper format to EEOC through the Federal Sector EEO Portal (FedSEP)? [See 29 CFR § 1614.403(g)]	Yes	
 Compliance Indicator  Measures	E.2 – The agency has a neutral EEO process.	Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments Revised Indicator
E.2.a	Has the agency established a clear separation between its EEO complaint program and its defensive function? [see MD-110, Ch. 1(IV)(D)]	Yes	The EEO Complaint program at FWS is in a clearly different structure with separate roles than the defensive function.
E.2.b	When seeking legal sufficiency reviews, does the EEO office have access to sufficient legal resources separate from the agency representative? [see MD-110, Ch. 1(IV)(D)] If "yes", please identify the source/location of the attorney who conducts the legal sufficiency review in the comments column.	Yes	ODIWM's EEO Complaints and Compliance Division conducts sufficiency reviews. The EEO specialists conducting legal sufficiency reviews are supervised by an attorney. In addition, DOI, ODICR conducts its own legal sufficiency reviews where a FAD has been requested.
E.2.c	If the EEO office relies on the agency's defensive function to conduct the legal sufficiency review, is there a firewall between the reviewing attorney and the agency representative? [see MD-110, Ch. 1(IV)(D)]	N/A	The EEO office does not rely on the defensive function to conduct legal sufficiency reviews.



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E.2.d	Does the agency ensure that its agency representative does not intrude upon EEO counseling, investigations, and final agency decisions? [see MD-110, Ch. 1(IV)(D)]	Yes	
E.2.e	If applicable, are processing time frames incorporated for the legal counsel's sufficiency review for timely processing of complaints? [see EEOC Report, <i>Attaining a Model Agency Program: Efficiency</i> (Dec. 1, 2004)]	N/A	The EEO office does not rely on the defensive function to conduct legal sufficiency reviews.
 Compliance Indicator  Measures	E.3 - The agency has established and encouraged the widespread use of a fair alternative dispute resolution (ADR) program.	Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments
E.3.a	Has the agency established an ADR program for use during both the pre-complaint and formal complaint stages of the EEO process? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(b)(2)]	Yes	
E.3.b	Does the agency require managers and supervisors to participate in ADR once it has been offered? [see MD-715, II(A)(1)]	Yes	
E.3.c	Does the agency encourage all employees to use ADR, where ADR is appropriate? [see MD-110, Ch. 3(IV)(C)]	Yes	
E.3.d	Does the agency ensure a management official with settlement authority is accessible during the dispute resolution process? [see MD-110, Ch. 3(III)(A)(9)]	Yes	
E.3.e	Does the agency prohibit the responsible management official named in the dispute from having settlement authority? [see MD-110, Ch. 3(I)]	Yes	
E.3.f	Does the agency annually evaluate the effectiveness of its ADR program? [see MD-110, Ch. 3(II)(D)]	Yes	
 Compliance Indicator  Measures	E.4 – The agency has effective and accurate data collection systems in place to evaluate its EEO program.	Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments
E.4.a	Does the agency have systems in place to accurately collect, monitor, and analyze the following data:		
E.4.a.1	Complaint activity, including the issues and bases of the complaints, the aggrieved individuals/complainants, and the involved management official? [see MD-715, II(E)]	Yes	

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E.4.a.2	The race, national origin, sex, and disability status of agency employees? [see 29 CFR §1614.601(a)]	Yes	
E.4.a.3	Recruitment activities? [see MD-715, II(E)]	Yes	
E.4.a.4	External and internal applicant flow data concerning the applicants' race, national origin, sex, and disability status? [see MD-715, II(E)]	Yes	
E.4.a.5	The processing of requests for reasonable accommodation? [29 CFR § 1614.203(d)(4)]	Yes	
E.4.a.6	The processing of complaints for the anti-harassment program? [see EEOC Enforcement Guidance on Vicarious Employer Liability for Unlawful Harassment by Supervisors (1999), § V.C.2]	Yes	
E.4.b	Does the agency have a system in place to re-survey the workforce on a regular basis? [MD-715 Instructions, Sec. I]	Yes	
 Compliance Indicator  Measures	E.5 – The agency identifies and disseminates significant trends and best practices in its EEO program.	Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments
E.5.a	Does the agency monitor trends in its EEO program to determine whether the agency is meeting its obligations under the statutes EEOC enforces? [see MD-715, II(E)] If “yes”, provide an example in the comments.	Yes	FWS monitors trends in the EEO Program and conducts barrier analyses in compliance with the statutes that EEOC administers.
E.5.b	Does the agency review other agencies' best practices and adopt them, where appropriate, to improve the effectiveness of its EEO program? [see MD-715, II(E)] If “yes”, provide an example in the comments.	Yes	FWS participates in best practices meetings and discussions with other DOI bureaus on at least a monthly basis to identify improvement opportunities. Examples include: OPM best practices in conducting ERG assessments; participating in EEOC's pilot mentoring program; using LinkedIn Recruiter to source Veterans and entry-level candidates; and sought feedback from the Gender Expansive and Transgender Federal Working Group on a proposal to expand the use of employee chosen names in online employee systems.
E.5.c	Does the agency compare its performance in the EEO process to other federal agencies of similar size? [see MD-715, II(E)]	Yes	

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Essential Element F: RESPONSIVENESS AND LEGAL COMPLIANCE

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

 Compliance Indicator  Measures		Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments
F.1.a	Does the agency have a system of management controls to ensure that its officials timely comply with EEOC orders/directives and final agency actions? [see 29 CFR §1614.102(e); MD-715, II(F)]	Yes	
F.1.b	Does the agency have a system of management controls to ensure the timely, accurate, and complete compliance with resolutions/settlement agreements? [see MD-715, II(F)]	Yes	
F.1.c	Are there procedures in place to ensure the timely and predictable processing of ordered monetary relief? [see MD-715, II(F)]	Yes	
F.1.d	Are procedures in place to process other forms of ordered relief promptly? [see MD-715, II(F)]	Yes	
F.1.e	When EEOC issues an order requiring compliance by the agency, does the agency hold its compliance officer(s) accountable for poor work product and/or delays during performance review? [see MD-110, Ch. 9(IX)(H)]	N/A	FWS did not have any delays nor poor work products in FY 2023. All Orders were adhered to in a timely manner.
<hr/>			
 Compliance Indicator  Measures		Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments
F.2 – The agency complies with the law, including EEOC regulations, management directives, orders, and other written instructions.			
F.2.a	Does the agency timely respond and fully comply with EEOC orders? [see 29 CFR §1614.502; MD-715, II(E)]	Yes	
F.2.a.1	When a complainant requests a hearing, does the agency timely forward the investigative file to the appropriate EEOC hearing office? [see 29 CFR §1614.108(g)]	Yes	
F.2.a.2	When there is a finding of discrimination that is not the subject of an appeal by the agency, does the agency ensure timely compliance with the orders of relief? [see 29 CFR §1614.501]	N/A	There were no findings of discrimination in FY 2023.
F.2.a.3	When a complainant files an appeal, does the agency timely forward the investigative file to EEOC's Office of Federal Operations? [see 29 CFR §1614.403(e)]	Yes	

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F.2.a.4	Pursuant to 29 CFR §1614.502, does the agency promptly provide EEOC with the required documentation for completing compliance?	Yes	
 Compliance Indicator  Measures	F.3 - The agency reports to EEOC its program efforts and accomplishments.	Measure Met? (Yes/No/NA)	Comments
F.3.a	Does the agency timely submit to EEOC an accurate and complete No FEAR Act report? [Public Law 107-174 (May 15, 2002), §203(a)]	Yes	
F.3.b	Does the agency timely post on its public webpage its quarterly No FEAR Act data? [see 29 CFR §1614.703(d)]	Yes	

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MD-715 – Part H

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

Please describe the status of each plan that the agency has implemented to correct deficiencies in the EEO program.

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

Statement of Model Program Essential Element Deficiency

Type of Program Deficiency	Brief Description of Program Deficiency
[Part G Question B.1.a.] Agency head is not the immediate supervisor of the person ("EEO Director") who has day-to-day control over the EEO office.	The EEO Director does not report to the agency head.

Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan

Date Initiated	Objective	Target Date	Modified Date	Date Completed
03/13/2023	Compliance with the Elijah E. Cummings Federal Employee Anti-Discrimination Act of 2020.	03/26/2023		03/20/2023

Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan?
FWS Director	Martha Williams	Yes

Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective

Target Date	Planned Activities	Sufficient Funding & Staffing? (Yes or No)	Modified Date	Completion Date
03/26/2023	Realign the EEO Director and update the FWS organization chart.	Yes		03/20/2023

Report of Accomplishments

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
FY 23	Effective March 20, 2023, the EEO Director reported to the head of the agency. The organization chart was updated in May 2023 to reflect this change.

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Agency EEO Plan to Eliminate Identified Barrier
LGBTQI+ Participation

Please describe the status of each plan that the agency implemented to identify possible barriers in policies, procedures, or practices for employees and applicants by race, ethnicity, and gender.

If the agency did not conduct barrier analysis during the reporting period, please check the box.

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

Source of the Trigger	Narrative Description of Trigger
FY 2022 Diversity and Inclusion Workplace Assessment Survey	<p>Compared to other FWS employees, diversity and inclusion training was a top concern for LGBTQI+ employees. The next biggest concern in comparison to other employees was with FWS as a welcoming workplace. Specifically:</p> <p>“FWS offers sufficient training in diversity and inclusion (D&I)” (-)20% positive response rate, compared to those who did not identify as LGBTQI+.</p> <p>“FWS is a welcoming and inclusive place to work for employees of all races and ethnicities” (-)18% positive response rate, compared to those who did not identify as LGBTQI+.</p> <p>“FWS is a welcoming and inclusive place to work for employees of all genders.” (-)17% positive response rate, compared to those who did not identify as LGBTQI+.</p> <p>“FWS is a welcoming and inclusive place to work for all employees.” (-)16% positive response rate, compared to those who did not identify as LGBTQI+.</p>

EEO Group(s) Affected by Trigger

EEO Group
All Men X
All Women X
Hispanic or Latino Males
Hispanic or Latino Females
White Males
White Females
Black or African American Males
Black or African American Females
Asian Males

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EEO Group
Asian Females
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Males
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Females
American Indian or Alaska Native Males
American Indian or Alaska Native Females
Two or More Races Males
Two or More Races Females

Barrier Analysis Process

Sources of Data	Source Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
Workforce Data Tables	Yes	Currently, there is no workforce participation data for employees who identify as LGBTQI+. The Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) data collection tool is not activated in the FWS personnel system, and this limits the ability to conduct more extensive workforce and barrier analysis.
Complaint Data (Trends)	Yes	There was no complaint activity related to sexual orientation discrimination, filed under the basis of sex.
Grievance Data (Trends)	Yes	<p>There were 58 harassment allegations in FY 23 for the following protected categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Race - 9 • Sex (Including Pregnancy & Gender Identity) - 20 • Sexual Orientation - 3 • Nation Origin – 3 • Age – 2 • Disability – 8 • Retaliation - 13 <p>Forty percent of the allegations in FY 2023 were related to Sex and Sexual Orientation. From 2017-2023 there were 184 total grievances which highlights need to continue efforts directed towards workplace inclusion.</p>

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Sources of Data	Source Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
Findings from Decisions (e.g., EEO, Grievance, MSPB, Anti-Harassment Processes)	Yes	EEO Decisions - no findings of discrimination in FY 2023.
Climate Assessment Survey (e.g., FEVS)	Yes	<p>Reported in initial triggers above. LGBTQ employees are consistently rating the workforce more negatively than non-LGBTQI+ employees.</p> <p>FY 2022 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) for all respondents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I have similar access to advancement opportunities (e.g., promotion, career development, training) as others in my work unit. (68.6% positive response) ○ In my work unit, excellent work is similarly recognized for all employees (e.g., awards, acknowledgements). (71.3% positive response) ○ My organization's management practices promote diversity (e.g., outreach, recruitment, promotion opportunities). (72.4% positive response)
Exit Interview Data	Yes	<p>Through analyzing exit survey results from FY 2020 to the end of FY 2023, it was found that the top reasons LGBTQI+ employees separated from FWS were a lack of promotion/career advancement opportunities (30%) and pay (23%). Other notable highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 65% felt included in their work environment. ○ 50% believed executives/senior leaders were effective in leading the workforce. ○ 76% believed they were provided adequate technology, tools, and equipment to effectively perform their job. ○ 41% believed they could disclose a suspected violation of any law, rule, or regulation without fear of reprisal.
SEP Observance Survey – Barrier Analysis Question		Scope of qualitative analysis was for survey data collected after these events: Hispanic Heritage Month 2022, National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2022, Native American Heritage Month 2022, Veterans Day 2022, Martin Luther King Day 2023, and Black and African American History Month 2023.

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Sources of Data	Source Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
		<p>The following key topics were identified as areas of concern by employees when answering the question: “In your opinion, what at the Service (e.g. policy, practice, or procedure) needs to change in order to provide more access to employment and development opportunities for the celebrated group of this event?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Cultural Competence/Training</u> Increase understanding and awareness about the target groups and increase related training. Provide more DEIA training specifically cultural competencies for supervisors and managers. • <u>Recruitment/Outreach</u> Increase outreach for recruitment resources and support available to the target groups. • <u>Hiring</u> Increase career ladder positions to help employees from underrepresented or systematically excluded groups to move up in their career without having to relocate.
Focus Groups	Yes	<p>FWS engaged 35% of the workforce through listening sessions and online surveys for the Values Project to create a shared vision and core values. This included 100 listening sessions and over 1,500 surveys and open houses. The information gathered across these engagement efforts led to the creation of shared purpose, core values, behaviors that embody the values, components of the agency’s voice, and guided the focus of the Service’s systems assessment</p> <p>The FY 2022 Barrier Analysis Team (BAT) consisted of a sub-team that focused on LGBTQ through discussions and worked through the barrier analysis progress. Triggers included: fear of reprisal, lack of mentoring and career advancement, insufficient diversity and inclusion training, lack of welcoming and inclusive work environment, rigid qualifications for the hiring process, and a lack of targeted recruitment for LGBTQI+.</p>
Interviews	Yes	<p>A Request for Information on hiring practices and procedures in FY 2022 was sent to all hiring managers to collect information for a barrier analysis at the point of selection. Interviews will be conducted with hiring managers in FY 2024.</p> <p>The FY 2022 BAT conducted interviews with employees from FWS employee resource groups and communities of</p>

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Sources of Data	Source Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
		practice, Joint Administrative Operations and HR, NCTC, ODIWM Complaints Program, and the FWS National Recruitment Team.
Reports (e.g., Congress, EEOC, MSPB, GAO, OPM)	Yes	OPM Guidance Regarding Gender Identity and Inclusion in the Federal Workplace <i>Supporting Gender Transition in the Federal Workplace</i> - DOI Personnel Bulletin 23-03
Other (Please Describe)	Yes	LGBTQI+ ERG Membership Survey FWS Values Project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee Engagement Report - November 2023 • Systems Assessment Results and Recommendations to Support Values Implementation - November 2023

Status of Barrier Analysis Process

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

Statement of Identified Barrier(s)

Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice
Various Human Capital and Information Technology systems do not have a chosen name field.
The Sexual Orientation and Gender Identify (SOGI) data collection tool is not currently activated to enable more extensive workforce and barrier analysis.
FWS has no policy on gender-neutral and inclusive restroom signage.
FWS does not have a procedure to engage all supervisors on a regular basis on national expectations related to DEIA and related topics (for example: topics such as accountability, reprisal, and intercultural competencies).

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Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan

Objective	Date Initiated (mm/dd/yyyy)	Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Sufficient Funding & Staffing? (Yes or No)	Modified Date (mm/dd/yy)	Date Completed (mm/dd/yy)
ODIWM and JAO will work with DOI and the Interior Business Center (IBC) to develop a plan and track action items towards integrating a chosen name field into HR and information technology systems.	12/31/2022	09/30/2023	Yes		09/30/2023
FWS will launch a dedicated SharePoint site that addresses LGBTQI+ issues and ensures employees are aware of updated policies and resources available to them.	12/31/2022	06/30/2023	Yes		06/30/2023
FWS will develop step-down policy and implementation guidance for DOI's policy on restroom signage.	12/31/2022	09/30/2023	Yes		05/10/2023
FWS will develop a standardized process to engage supervisors on national expectations related to DEIA and related topics (for example, via standardized supervisor connect forums).	12/31/2022	04/01/2023	Yes		04/01/2023
Explore the feasibility of activating the SOGI data collection tool that is currently available.	03/17/2023	09/30/2023	Yes		09/30/2023
Partner with OPM to advance the release of the SOGI data tool that is being developed for government-wide use.	03/17/2023	09/30/2023	Yes		09/30/2023
JAO incorporate Chosen Name policy/guidance in the onboarding process.	12/10/2023	03/31/2024	Yes		
Make progress with Concur, DOI Talent, or QuickTime on displaying chosen names on their online sites.	12/10/2023	12/31/2024	Yes		

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Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
Director, FWS	Martha Williams	Yes
Deputy Director, FWS	Stephen Guertin	Yes
Deputy Director, FWS	Wendi Weber	Yes
DEIA Committee Chair	Wendi Weber	Yes
Assistant Director, Management and Administration	Janine Velasco	Yes
EEO Director	Inez Uhl	Yes

Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective

Target Date	Planned Activities	Modified Date	Completion Date
09/30/2023	1. Continue to work with DOI and the Interior Business Center (IBC) on systems outside of FWS control and share information on the status of integrating a chosen name field into various HR systems.		09/30/2023
06/30/2023	2. Launch the dedicated SharePoint site that addresses LGBTQ issues and ensures employees are aware of updated policies and resources available to them.		06/30/2023
09/30/2023	3. Develop step-down policy and implementation guidance for DOI's policy on restroom signage.		05/10/2023
04/01/2023	4. Develop a standardized process to engage supervisors on national expectations related to DEIA and related topics (for example, via standardized supervisor connect forums).		03/01/2023

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Target Date	Planned Activities	Modified Date	Completion Date
10/31/2023	5. IRTM and JAO provide policy/guidance for a Chosen Name for FWS online systems		10/18/2023
06/01/2023	6. Form Supervisor Connect Team to develop an action plan for standardized supervisor connect forums to engage supervisors on national expectations related to DEIA and related topics.		06/01/2023
09/30/2024	7. Finalize the Supervisor Connect Action Plan and initiate implementation.		
03/31/2024	8. JAO incorporate Chosen Name policy/guidance in the onboarding process.		
12/31/2024	9. Make progress with Concur, DOI Talent, or QuickTime on displaying chosen names on their online sites.		

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Report of Accomplishments

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
2023	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. FWS continued to coordinate on sharing information with DOI and IBC on the status of integrating a chosen name field into HR systems. 2. JAO and the FWS Pride ERG completed the dedicated SharePoint site that addresses LGBTQI+ issues related to healthcare, benefits, and FWS and DOI policies that can impact members of this community. 3. FWS developed step-down policy and implementation guidance on May 10, 2023, for DOI's policy on restroom signage. The policy includes the approved signage. 4. ODIWM recommended to the Directorate a standardized process to engage supervisors on national expectations related to DEIA and related topics via standardized supervisor connect forums. 5. Information Resources and Technology Management (IRTM) established a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) titled <i>Updating Employee's Chosen Name within Active Directory</i>. The SOP was signed on October 18, 2023. This formalizes the process of changing an employee's name to a chosen name that will be displayed in Microsoft programs, including Outlook and Teams. 6. FWS formed a Supervisor Connect Team to develop an action plan for standardized supervisor connect forums to engage supervisors on national expectations related to DEIA and related topics. The action plan was submitted to the FWS Deputies for review on October 26, 2023. <p>Other accomplishments included:</p> <p>In FY 2023 FWS completed Phase 2 of the work of 'The Values Project' an in-depth listening process to engage a critical mass of employees in defining and establishing our shared purpose and organizational core values. The shared purpose and enduring core values were announced at the end of the fiscal year by the Director in an all-employee broadcast. The core values will guide the Service's work across priorities in meeting our conservation mission.</p> <p>After announcing the core values, FWS offered three 90-minute Values Journey Skill Building Workshops in September 2023 for all employees. The workshops provided frameworks, vocabulary and tools intended to develop and grow skills in building a culture of respect, trust and inclusion. The workshop series will continue into FY 2024.</p>

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Agency EEO Plan to Eliminate Identified Barrier
Black or African American Participation

Please describe the status of each plan that the agency implemented to identify possible barriers in policies, procedures, or practices for employees and applicants by race, ethnicity, and gender.

If the agency did not conduct barrier analysis during the reporting period, please check the box.

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

Source of the Trigger	Specific Workforce Data Table	Narrative Description of Trigger
Workforce Data Tables	Table A-1	Black or African American employees make up 4.2% of permanent workforce versus Organizational Civilian Labor Force (CLF) of 6.6%.
Workforce Data Tables	Table A-1	5.1% (50/989) of hires were Black or African American.
Workforce Data Tables	Table A-1	5.4% (35/650) of separations were Black or African Americans.
Workforce Data Tables	Table A-6	Black or African American employees make up 1.4% of biology workforce versus Occupational CLF of 3.1%.
Workforce Data Tables	Table A-6	The overall participation of Black or African American law enforcement officers in the permanent workforce is 3.4%, which is below their CLF of 10.8%.
Workforce Data Tables	Tables A-7	Black or African American employees make up 4.0% of the Senior/Executive Permanent Workforce (GS/GM 13-15 & SES).

EEO Group(s) Affected by Trigger

EEO Group
All Men
All Women
Hispanic or Latino Males
Hispanic or Latino Females
White Males
White Females

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EEO Group
Black or African American Males X
Black or African American Females X
Asian Males
Asian Females
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Males
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Females
American Indian or Alaska Native Males
American Indian or Alaska Native Females
Two or More Races Males
Two or More Races Females

Barrier Analysis Process

Sources of Data	Source Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
Workforce Data Tables	Yes	<p>Black or African Americans were a low participation group at the start of the FY and saw a small increase in participation.</p> <p>In the FWS professional biology workforce, Black or African American participation was low at the beginning of the fiscal year when compared to their participation in similar occupations in CLF 2018 and saw minimal changes.</p> <p>During FY 2023, FWS hired 380 professional biologists from outside the agency and competitively selected another 22 from other occupations to fill professional biology positions. Black or African American women were hired in numbers that were significantly below their availability in CLF 2018 in the positions filled.</p>
Complaint Data (Trends)	Yes	<p>In FY 2023, four EEO complaints were filed alleging discrimination based on Race-Black/African American. Issues included disciplinary action (2), performance evaluation (1), harassment non-sexual (4), termination (1),</p>

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Sources of Data	Source Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
		time and attendance (1), training (1), other terms/conditions of employment (3).
Grievance Data (Trends)	Yes	<p>In FY 2023, there were 58 harassment allegations for the following protected categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Race - 9 • Sex (Including Pregnancy & Gender Identity) - 20 • Sexual Orientation - 3 • Nation Origin – 3 • Age – 2 • Disability – 8 • Retaliation – 13 <p>Twenty one percent of the allegations in FY 2023 were related to Race and National Origin. From FY 2017-2023 there were 184 total grievances which highlights need to continue efforts directed towards workplace inclusion.</p>
Findings from Decisions (e.g., EEO, Grievance, MSPB, Anti-Harassment Processes)	Yes	EEO decisions (no findings of discrimination in FY 2023)
Climate Assessment Survey (e.g., FEVS)	Yes	<p>For the FY 2022 Diversity and Inclusion Workplace Assessment Survey employees who identified as a race other than white responded significantly less favorably than respondents who identified as White. The top six significantly less favorable items were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “I can disclose a suspected violation of any law, rule or regulation without fear of reprisal.” (-16% difference) ○ FWS senior leaders demonstrate support for equal opportunity, anti-discrimination, diversity and inclusion policies. (-16% difference) ○ FWS leaders are committed to a workforce representative of all segments of society. (-15% difference) ○ Employees are treated fairly in my organization. (-15% difference) ○ I can talk openly with managers and supervisors about concerns relating to issues of diversity and inclusion. (-15% difference) ○ Prohibited personnel practices are not tolerated. (-14% difference) <p>FY 2022 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) for all respondents:</p>

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Sources of Data	Source Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For Q71 (My organization's management practices promote diversity), Black/African American employees overall all had a positive response rate of less than 65%.
Exit Interview Data	Yes	<p>Through analyzing exit survey results from FY 2020 to the end of FY 2023, it was found that the top reasons Black/African Americans separated from FWS were a lack of promotion/career advancement opportunities (27%) and pay (24%). Other notable highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 73% felt included in their work environment. 58% believed executives/senior leaders were effective in leading the workforce ○ 85% believed they were provided adequate technology, tools, and equipment to effectively perform their job ○ 48% believed they could disclose a suspected violation of any law, rule, or regulation without fear of reprisal.
SEP Observance Survey – Barrier Analysis Question	Yes	<p>Scope of qualitative analysis for SEP Observance Survey was for data collected after these events: Hispanic Heritage Month 2022, National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2022, Native American Heritage Month 2022, Veterans Day 2022, Martin Luther King Day 2023, and Black and African American History Month 2023.</p> <p>The following key topics were identified as areas of concern by employees when answering the question: “In your opinion, what at the Service (e.g. policy, practice, or procedure) needs to change in order to provide more access to employment and development opportunities for the celebrated group of this event?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Cultural Competence/Training</u> Increase understanding and awareness about the target groups and increase related training. Provide more DEIA training specifically cultural competencies for supervisors and managers. ● <u>Recruitment/Outreach</u> Increase outreach for recruitment resources and support available to the target groups. ● <u>Hiring</u> Increase career ladder positions to help

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Sources of Data	Source Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
		employees from underrepresented or systematically excluded groups to move up in their career without having to relocate.
Focus Groups	Yes	<p>FWS engaged 35% of the workforce through listening sessions and online surveys for the Values Project to create a shared vision and core values. This included 100 listening sessions and over 1,500 surveys and open houses. The information gathered across these engagement efforts led to the creation of shared purpose, core values, behaviors that embody the values, components of the agency's voice, and guided the focus of the Service's systems assessment.</p> <p>The FY 2022 BAT consisted of a sub-team that focused on Black or African Americans through discussions and worked through the barrier analysis progress. Issues identified included: fear of reprisal, rampant microaggressions, lack of career advancement and detail opportunities, lack of welcoming and inclusive work environment, lack of fairness in the form of biases, experience racism that is seen but not interrupted by colleagues, and the need to increase outreach to historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU).</p>
Interviews	Yes	<p>A Request for Information on hiring practices and procedures in FY 2022 was sent to all hiring managers to collect information for a barrier analysis at the point of selection. Interviews will be conducted with hiring managers in FY 2024.</p> <p>The FY 2022 BAT conducted interviews with employees from employee resource groups and communities of practice, Joint Administrative Operations and HR, NCTC, ODIWM Complaints Program, and the FWS National Recruitment Team.</p>
Reports (e.g., Congress, EEOC, MSPB, GAO, OPM)	Yes	<p><i>Best Practices for Diversity and Inclusion in STEM Education and Research: A Guide by and for Federal Agencies</i></p> <p><i>EEOC Root Cause Barrier Analysis Tool for Hiring</i></p> <p>FWS Values Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee Engagement Report - November 2023 • Systems Assessment Results and Recommendations to Support Values Implementation - November 2023

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Sources of Data	Source Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
Other (Please describe)	Yes	In FY 2023, only one (1.6%) of the 62 DFP hires was Black or African American. A five-year trend analysis was conducted as part of outcome measures related to DOI's barrier analysis efforts to increase workforce diversity. The analysis showed an increase of +1.07% in the FWS permanent workforce for people of color from FY 2019 to FY 2023.

Status of Barrier Analysis Process

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

Statement of Identified Barrier(s)

Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice
Systemic bias in the hiring process prevents Black or African American applicants from accessing FWS.
Requirements for Qualification for the 0485 and 0486 Occupational Series are restrictive and hinder minorities from qualifying.
FWS does not have a procedure to engage all supervisors on a regular basis on national expectations related to DEIA and related topics (for example: topics such as accountability, reprisal, and intercultural competencies).
FWS does not have a national process or procedure for strengthening the capacity of HBCUs to participate in its programs, grants and procurement opportunities, and internships. This impedes FWS from creating an ecosystem where HBCU students are competitive when seeking jobs with FWS. HBCUs are underrepresented in the total amount of awards that are given to Institutions of Higher Education. FWS does not have sufficient information to understand why this is happening.

Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan

Objective	Date Initiated	Target Date	Sufficient Funding & Staffing?	Modified Date	Date Completed
Encourage managers and supervisors to use Stay Interviews.	12/31/2020	12/31/2021	Yes	3/31/2023	3/31/2023

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Objective	Date Initiated	Target Date	Sufficient Funding & Staffing?	Modified Date	Date Completed
Improve the process for job announcement development by creating a strategy that puts less emphasis on the 5-scale rating in the self-assessment for vacancy announcements.	12/31/2022	09/30/2023	Yes		09/30/2023
Develop recommendations for FWS Leadership to reduce any barriers found after review of basic education requirements for GS-0485.	12/31/2022	06/30/2023	Yes		06/30/2023
ODIWM recommend a standardized process to engage supervisors on national expectations related to DEIA and related topics (for example, via standardized supervisor connect forums).	12/31/2022	04/01/2023	Yes		03/01/2023
Set up a pilot project that will work with HBCUs and investigate the specific barriers they face in being competitive for Institute of Higher Education financial awards.	06/16/2023	06/16/2024	Yes		
Submit final results of Mission Critical Occupations point of selection barrier analysis to DOI for consolidation and review.	11/22/2023	04/18/2024	Yes		
Invest in coordinated recruitment events including the 6th Annual HBCU Week and the Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANNRS) Conference.	10/01/2023	09/30/2024	Yes		

Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
Director, FWS	Martha Williams	Yes

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Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
Deputy Director, FWS	Stephen Guertin	Yes
Deputy Director, FWS	Wendi Weber	Yes
DEIA Committee, Chair	Wendi Weber	Yes
Assistant Director, Management and Administration	Janine Velasco	Yes
EEO Director	Inez Uhl	Yes

Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
09/30/2023	1. HR will implement Executive Order 13932 to improve the process for job announcement development by creating a strategy that puts less emphasis on the OPM 5-scale rating in the self-assessment for vacancy announcements.		09/30/2023
06/30/2023	2. HR will review the basic education requirements for the GS-0485 series and will make recommendations for changes, as needed.		06/30/2023
04/01/2023	3. ODIWM will recommend to the Directorate a standardized process to engage supervisors on national expectations related to DEIA and related topics (for example, via standardized supervisor connect forums).		03/01/2023
06/01/2023	4. Form Supervisor Connect Team to develop an action plan for standardized supervisor connect forums to engage supervisors on national expectations related to DEIA and related topics.		06/01/2023
06/16/2024	5. FWS will conduct a pilot project to work with HBCUs and investigate the specific barriers they face in being competitive for Institute of Higher Education financial awards.		

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Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
09/30/2024	6. Finalize the Supervisor Connect Action Plan and initiate implementation.		
09/30/2024	7. Participate in three recruitment fairs in FY 2024 including the 6 th Annual HBCU Week and the Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANNRS) Conference.		
04/18/2024	8. Submit final results of Mission Critical Occupations point of selection barrier analysis to DOI for consolidation and review		
09/30/2024	9. Invest in coordinated recruitment events including the 6th Annual HBCU Week and the Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANNRS) Conference.		

Report of Accomplishments

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
2023	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> HR implemented Executive Order 13932 to improve the process for job announcement development by creating a strategy that puts less emphasis on the OPM 5-scale rating in the self-assessment for vacancy announcements. Alternatives were provided to the self-assessment: 1) Subject Matter Expert panel; 2) Direct Hire Authorities (exempt from the process); and 3) Assessments are not required when hiring supervisors internally. The HR working group reviewed the basic education requirements for the GS-0485 series and determined that no changes are currently needed. Analysis of the 485 series and 401 series showed there is a higher percentage of diversity in the 485 series. The working group briefed Service Leadership on their findings. ODIWM recommended to the Directorate a standardized process to engage supervisors on national expectations related to DEIA and related topics via standardized supervisor connect forums.

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4. FWS formed a Supervisor Connect Team to develop an action plan for standardized supervisor connect forums to engage supervisors on national expectations related to DEIA and related topics. The action plan was submitted to the FWS Deputies for review on October 26, 2023.

FWS has official MOUs with two HBCUs and two historically Black Greek organizations to foster pathways to careers in the agency. In FY 2022, MOUs were signed with Fort Valley State University and Tuskegee University.

Under the White House Initiative on HBCUs, FWS shares funding and internship and employment opportunities with faculty and staff at HBCUs across the country. FWS participated in 18 recruitment outreach events at HBCUs and participates on the initiative's Interagency Work Group.

FWS in collaboration with DOI participated in the 5th Annual National HBCU Week Career and Recruitment Fair from September 24-28, 2023, in the DC Metro Area, that welcomed over 600 in-person job seekers. FWS recruiters, hiring managers, and HR specialists were on site to promote open job opportunities with prospective applicants, assist with federal resume preparation and review, and conduct mock interviews. FWS plans to implement this framework at three events in FY 2024 including the 6th Annual HBCU Week and the Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANNRS) Conference.

Additional accomplishments:

ODIWM conducted workforce analyses throughout the year and provided monthly reports on hiring success for leadership. ODIWM briefed the Directorate on the status of workforce demographics and provided recommendations for making reasonable progress to meet the Civilian Labor Force benchmarks for low participation groups.

The DOI DEIA Council has directed FWS and other bureaus to conduct a barrier analysis related to hiring selections. ODIWM is overseeing this process in collaboration with the Human Capital team in the JAO. Hiring managers across the Service who filled Mission Critical Occupation (MCO) or Commonly Filled Occupations (CFO) hiring selections in FY 2022 have been asked to provide information through a form developed according to DOI guidance. ODIWM sent a link to the form directly to those hiring managers copying their corresponding Directorate and Deputies Group members in the request. This requirement is in alignment with the annual barrier analysis that is already underway and that is required under the EEOC's Management Directive 715 (MD-715) to ensure equity in our recruitment and hiring actions.

The Deputies Entry Level Hiring Rules were launched in April 2023 to:

- Expedite the hiring process at the entry level

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure consideration of candidates in whom FWS has already invested, including internal employees, interns, fellows, temporary, and terms• Increase the diversity of the workforce through authorities that allow us to more effectively recruit veterans, individuals with disabilities, and candidates from other underrepresented groups. <p>In FY 2023 FWS completed Phase 2 of the work of ‘The Values Project’ an in-depth listening process to engage a critical mass of employees in defining and establishing our shared purpose and organizational core values. The shared purpose and enduring core values were announced at the end of the fiscal year by the Director in an all-employee broadcast. The core values will guide the Service’s work across priorities in meeting our conservation mission.</p> <p>After announcing the core values, FWS offered three 90-minute Values Journey Skill Building Workshops in September 2023 for all employees. The workshops provided frameworks, vocabulary and tools intended to develop and grow skills in building a culture of respect, trust and inclusion. The workshop series will continue into FY 2024.</p>
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MD-715 – Part I
Agency EEO Plan to Eliminate Identified Barrier
Asian Participation

Please describe the status of each plan that the agency implemented to identify possible barriers in policies, procedures, or practices for employees and applicants by race, ethnicity, and gender.

If the agency did not conduct barrier analysis during the reporting period, please check the box.

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

Source of the Trigger	Specific Workforce Data Table	Narrative Description of Trigger
Workforce Data Tables	Table A-1	Low participation of Asian employees in the permanent workforce. Asian employees make up 2.4% of permanent workforce versus the Organizational CLF of 7.0%.
Workforce Data Tables	Table A-1	3.3% (33/989) of hires in the permanent workforce were Asian.
Workforce Data Tables	Table A-6	Asian employees make up 1.8% of the professional biology workforce versus the Occupational CLF of 9.1%.
Workforce Data Tables	Table A-6	2.9% (11/382) of hires in the professional biology workforce were Asian.
Workforce Data Tables	Table A-6	2.2% (5/228) of separations in the professional biology workforce were Asian.
Workforce Data Tables	Table A-7	Asian employees make up 1.9% of the Senior/Executive Permanent Workforce (GS/GM 13-15 & SES).

EEO Group(s) Affected by Trigger

EEO Group
All Men
All Women
Hispanic or Latino Males
Hispanic or Latino Females
White Males
White Females

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EEO Group
Black or African American Males
Black or African American Females
Asian Males X
Asian Females X
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Males
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Females
American Indian or Alaska Native Males
American Indian or Alaska Native Females
Two or More Races Males
Two or More Races Females

Barrier Analysis Process

Sources of Data	Source Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
Workforce Data Tables	Yes	<p>At the beginning of FY2023, Asian men and women were a low participation group. While Asian women saw an increase in participation during the FY, the participation of Asian men declined.</p> <p>During FY 2022, FWS hired 380 professional biologists from outside the agency and competitively selected another 22 from other occupations to fill professional biology positions. Asian men and women representation was significantly below their availability in CLF 2018 for the positions filled.</p>
Complaint Data (Trends)	Yes	There was no complaint activity related to Asian discrimination, filed under the basis of Race.
Grievance Data (Trends)	Yes	<p>There were 58 harassment allegations in FY 2023 for the following protected categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Race – 9 • Sex (Including Pregnancy & Gender Identity) – 20 • Sexual Orientation – 3 • Nation Origin – 3 • Age – 2

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Sources of Data	Source Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability – 8 • Retaliation – 13 <p>Twenty one percent of the allegations in FY 2023 were related to Race and National Origin. From 2017-2023 there were 184 total grievances which highlights need to continue efforts directed towards workplace inclusion.</p>
Findings from Decisions (e.g., EEO, Grievance, MSPB, Anti-Harassment Processes)	Yes	EEO decisions – no findings of discrimination in FY 2023.
Climate Assessment Survey (e.g., FEVS)	Yes	<p>For the FY 2022 Diversity and Inclusion Workplace Assessment Survey employees who identified as a race other than White responded significantly less favorably than respondents who identified as White on 24 climate items. Less favorable items were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “I can disclose a suspected violation of any law, rule or regulation without fear of reprisal.” (-16% difference) ○ FWS senior leaders demonstrate support for equal opportunity, anti-discrimination, diversity and inclusion policies. (-16% difference) ○ FWS leaders are committed to a workforce representative of all segments of society. (-15% difference) ○ Employees are treated fairly in my organization. (-15% difference) ○ I can talk openly with managers and supervisors about concerns relating to issues of diversity and inclusion (-15% difference) ○ Prohibited personnel practices are not tolerated. (-14% difference). <p>FY 2022 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For Q73 (I have similar access to advancement opportunities as others in my work unit.) in the FEVS, Asians employees had a positive response rate of less than 65%. ○ For Q71 (My organization’s management practices promote diversity), Asian employees had a positive response rate of less than 65%.
Exit Interview Data	Yes	Through analyzing exit survey results from FY 2020 to the end of FY 2023, it was found that the top reasons Asian employees separated from FWS were a lack of promotion/career advancement opportunities (39%) and the type of work (26%). Other notable highlights include:

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Sources of Data	Source Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 65% felt included in their work environment. ○ 56% believed executives/senior leaders were effective in leading the workforce. ○ 69% believed they were provided adequate technology, tools, and equipment to effectively perform their job. ○ 69% believed they could disclose a suspected violation of any law, rule, or regulation without fear of reprisal.
SEP Observance Survey – Barrier Analysis Question		<p>Scope of qualitative analysis was for survey data collected after these events: Hispanic Heritage Month 2022, National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2022, Native American Heritage Month 2022, Veterans Day 2022, Martin Luther King Day 2023, and Black and African American History Month 2023.</p> <p>The following key topics were identified as areas of concern by employees when answering the question: “In your opinion, what at the Service (e.g. policy, practice, or procedure) needs to change in order to provide more access to employment and development opportunities for the celebrated group of this event?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Cultural Competence/Training</u> Increase understanding and awareness about the target groups and increase related training. Provide more DEIA training specifically cultural competencies for supervisors and managers. ● <u>Recruitment/Outreach</u> Increase outreach for recruitment resources and support available to the target groups. ● <u>Hiring</u> Increase career ladder positions to help employees from underrepresented or systematically excluded groups to move up in their career without having to relocate.
Focus Groups	Yes	FWS engaged 35% of the workforce through listening sessions and online surveys for the Values Project to create a shared vision and core values. This included 100 listening sessions and over 1,500 surveys and open houses. The information gathered across these engagement efforts

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Sources of Data	Source Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
		<p>led to the creation of shared purpose, core values, behaviors that embody the values, components of the agency’s voice, and guided the focus of the Service’s systems assessment.</p> <p>The FY 2022 Barrier Analysis Team (BAT) consisted of a sub-team that focused on Asians through discussions and worked through the barrier analysis progress. Barriers identified included: fear of reprisal, lack of fairness in resolving complaints, lack of career advancement and detail opportunities, lack of welcoming and inclusive work environment, lack of fairness in the form of biases, bias in the hiring process, and rigidity in the questionnaires for job announcements. The BAT conducted focus groups with EEO counselors to understand and discover any persistent trends. The focus group discussed employee frustrations with management communication and the subtle nature of discrimination.</p>
Interviews	Yes	<p>A Request for Information on hiring practices and procedures in FY 2022 was sent to all hiring managers to collect information for a barrier analysis at the point of selection. Interviews will be conducted with hiring managers in FY 2024.</p> <p>The FY 2022 BAT conducted interviews with employees from FWS employee resource groups and communities of practice, Joint Administrative Operations and HR, NCTC, ODIWM Complaints Program, and the FWS National Recruitment Team.</p>
Reports (e.g., Congress, EEOC, MSPB, GAO, OPM)	Yes	<p><i>Best Practices for Diversity and Inclusion in STEM Education and Research: A Guide by and For Federal Agencies</i></p> <p><i>EEOC Root Cause Barrier Analysis Tool for Hiring</i></p> <p>FWS Values Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee Engagement Report – November 2023 • Systems Assessment Results and Recommendations to Support Values Implementation – November 2023
Other (Please Describe)	Yes	<p>Analyzed Directorate Resource Assistant Fellows Program (DFP): 11.3% (7) of FY 2023 DFP hires were Asian.</p> <p>A five-year trend analysis was conducted as part of outcome measures related to DOI’s barrier analysis efforts</p>

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Sources of Data	Source Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
		to increase workforce diversity. The analysis showed an increase of +1.07% in the FWS permanent workforce for people of color from FY 2019 to FY 2023.

Status of Barrier Analysis Process

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

Statement of Identified Barrier(s)

Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice
Lack of organization-wide practices for improving retention and wellness in the workplace.
FWS does not have a procedure to engage all supervisors on a regular basis on national expectations related to DEIA and related topics (for example: topics such as accountability, reprisal, and intercultural competencies).
Requirements for Qualification for the 0485 and 0486 Occupational Series are restrictive and hinder minorities from qualifying.

Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan

Objective	Date Initiated (mm/dd/yyyy)	Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Sufficient Funding & Staffing? (Yes or No)	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Date Completed (mm/dd/yyyy)
Encourage managers and supervisors to use Stay Interviews.	12/31/2021	12/31/2022	Yes	3/31/2023	3/31/2023
Implement Executive Order 13932 to improve the process for job announcement development by creating a strategy that puts less emphasis on the 5-scale rating in the self-assessment for vacancy announcements.	12/31/2022	09/30/2023	Yes		09/30/2023
Develop recommendations for FWS Leadership to reduce any	12/31/2022	06/30/2023	Yes		

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Objective	Date Initiated (mm/dd/yyyy)	Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Sufficient Funding & Staffing? (Yes or No)	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Date Completed (mm/dd/yyyy)
barriers found after review of basic education requirements for GS-0485.					06/30/2023
Recommend a standardized process to engage supervisors on national expectations related to DEIA and related topics (for example, via standardized supervisor connect forums).	12/31/2022	04/01/2023	Yes		03/01/2023
Submit final results of Mission Critical Occupations point of selection barrier analysis to DOI for consolidation and review	11/22/2023	04/18/2024	Yes		
Invest in coordinated recruitment events including the Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANNRS) Conference.	10/01/2023	09/30/2024	Yes		

Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
Principal Deputy Director Exercising the Delegated Authority of the Director	Martha Williams	Yes
Deputy Director	Stephen Guertin	Yes
Deputy Director	Wendi Weber	Yes
DEIA Committee Chair	Wendi Weber	Yes
Assistant Director, Management and Administration	Janine Velasco	Yes
EEO Director	Inez Uhl	Yes

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Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective

Target Date	Planned Activities	Modified Date	Completion Date
12/31/2022	1. ODIWM will work with Deputies to incorporate stay interview promising practices.	03/31/2023	03/31/2023
09/30/2023	2. HR will implement Executive Order 13932 to improve the process for job announcement development by creating a strategy that puts less emphasis on the 5-scale rating in the self-assessment for vacancy announcements.		09/30/2023
06/30/2023	3. HR will review the basic education requirements for the GS-0485 series and will develop recommendations for leadership to reduce any barriers found.		06/30/2023
04/01/2023	4. ODIWM recommended to the Directorate a standardized process to engage supervisors on national expectations related to DEIA and related topics (for example, via standardized supervisor connect forums).		03/01/2023
06/01/2023	5. Form Supervisor Connect Team to develop an action plan for standardized supervisor connect forums to engage supervisors on national expectations related to DEIA and related topics.		06/01/2023
09/30/2024	6. Finalize the Supervisor Connect Action Plan and initiate implementation.		
04/18/2024	7. Submit final results of Mission Critical Occupations point of selection barrier analysis to DOI for consolidation and review		
09/30/2024	8. Invest in coordinated recruitment events including the Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANNRS) Conference.		

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Report of Accomplishments

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
FY 2023	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ODIWM worked with Deputies to incorporate stay interview promising practices as outlined in the 'Stay Interview Guide' that was completed and announced in the <i>Wild Weekly</i> for all employees and made available on the FWS Sharepoint site. 2. HR implemented Executive Order 13932 to improve the process for job announcement development by creating a strategy that puts less emphasis on the OPM 5-scale rating in the self-assessment for vacancy announcements. Alternatives were provided to the self-assessment: 1) Subject Matter Expert panel; 2) Direct Hire Authorities (exempt from the process); and 3) Not required when hiring supervisors internally. 3. The HR working group reviewed the basic education requirements for the GS-0485 series and determined that no changes are currently needed. Analysis of the 485 series and 401 series showed there is a higher percentage of diversity in the 485 series. The working group briefed Service Leadership on their findings. 4. ODIWM recommended to the Directorate a standardized process to engage supervisors on national expectations related to DEIA and related topics via standardized supervisor connect forums. 5. FWS formed a Supervisor Connect Team to develop an action plan for standardized supervisor connect forums to engage supervisors on national expectations related to DEIA and related topics. The action plan was submitted to the FWS Deputies for review on October 26, 2023. <p>Additional accomplishments:</p> <p>ODIWM conducted workforce analyses throughout the year and provided monthly reports on hiring success for leadership. ODIWM briefed the Directorate on the status of workforce demographics and provided recommendations for making reasonable progress to meet the Civilian Labor Force benchmarks for low participation groups.</p> <p>The DOI DEIA Council has directed FWS and other bureaus to conduct a barrier analysis related to hiring selections. ODIWM is overseeing this process in collaboration with the Human Capital team in the JAO. Hiring managers across the Service who filled Mission Critical Occupation (MCO) or Commonly Filled Occupations (CFO) hiring selections in FY 2022 have been asked to provide information through a form developed according to DOI guidance. ODIWM sent a link to the form directly to those hiring managers copying their corresponding Directorate and Deputies Group members in the request. This requirement is in alignment with the annual barrier analysis that is already underway and that is required under the EEOC's Management Directive 715 (MD-715) to ensure equity in our recruitment and hiring actions.</p>

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The Deputies Entry Level Hiring Rules were launched in April 2023 to:

- Expedite the hiring process at the entry level
- Ensure consideration of candidates in whom FWS has already invested, including internal employees, interns, fellows, temporary, and terms
- Increase the diversity of the workforce through authorities that allow us to more effectively recruit veterans, individuals with disabilities, and candidates from other underrepresented groups.

In FY 2023 FWS completed Phase 2 of the work of 'The Values Project' an in-depth listening process to engage a critical mass of employees in defining and establishing our shared purpose and organizational core values. The shared purpose and enduring core values were announced at the end of the fiscal year by the Director in an all-employee broadcast. The core values will guide the Service's work across priorities in meeting our conservation mission.

After announcing the core values, FWS offered three 90-minute Values Journey Skill Building Workshops in September 2023 for all employees. The workshops provided frameworks, vocabulary and tools intended to develop and grow skills in building a culture of respect, trust and inclusion. The workshop series will continue into FY 2024.

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Agency EEO Plan to Eliminate Identified Barrier **Hispanic/Latinx Participation**

Please describe the status of each plan that the agency implemented to identify possible barriers in policies, procedures, or practices for employees and applicants by race, ethnicity, and gender.

If the agency did not conduct barrier analysis during the reporting period, please check the box.

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

Source of the Trigger	Specific Workforce Data Table	Narrative Description of Trigger
Workforce Data Tables	Table A-1	Hispanic/Latinx employees make up 7.0% of permanent workforce versus the Organizational CLF of 8.5%.
Workforce Data Tables	Table A-1	4.7% (46/989) of permanent hires in the workforce were Hispanic/Latinx.
Workforce Data Tables	Table A-6	The overall participation of Hispanic/Latinx law enforcement officers in the permanent workforce is 8.2%, which is below their CLF of 14.4%.
Workforce Data Tables	Table A-7	Hispanic/Latinx employees make up 6.0% of the Senior/Executive Permanent Workforce (GS/GM 13-15 & SES).

EEO Group(s) Affected by Trigger

EEO Group
All Men
All Women
Hispanic or Latino Males X
Hispanic or Latino Females X
White Males
White Females
Black or African American Males
Black or African American Females
Asian Males
Asian Females
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Males

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EEO Group
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Females
American Indian or Alaska Native Males
American Indian or Alaska Native Females
Two or More Races Males
Two or More Races Females

Barrier Analysis Process

Sources of Data	Source Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
Workforce Data Tables	Yes	The FY 2022 Barrier Analysis Team (BAT) identified triggers in MD-715 A tables. See triggers outlined above.
Complaint Data (Trends)	Yes	Two claims were filed alleging discrimination on the basis of National Origin. The issue for both was harassment non-sexual.
Grievance Data (Trends)	Yes	<p>There were 58 harassment allegations in FY 2023 for the following protected categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Race - 9 • Sex (Including Pregnancy & Gender Identity) - 20 • Sexual Orientation - 3 • Nation Origin – 3 • Age – 2 • Disability – 8 • Retaliation - 13 <p>Twenty one percent of the allegations in FY 2023 were related to Race and National Origin. From 2017-2023 there were 184 total grievances which highlights need to continue efforts directed towards workplace inclusion.</p>
Findings from Decisions (e.g., EEO, Grievance, MSPB, Anti-Harassment Processes)	Yes	EEO decisions - no findings of discrimination in FY 2023.
Climate Assessment Survey (e.g., FEVS)	Yes	<p>FY 2022 FEVS Responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For Q71 (My organization's management practices promote diversity), Hispanic employees have a 64.1% positive response rate, 8% lower than FWS overall.

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Sources of Data	Source Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q73 (I have similar access to advancement opportunities as others in my work unit.) had a positive response rate of less than 65% for Hispanic/Latino employees.
Exit Interview Data	Yes	<p>Through analyzing exit survey results from FY 2020 to the end of FY 2023, it was found that the top reasons Hispanic employees separated from FWS were a lack of promotion/career advancement opportunities (28%) and dissatisfaction with their supervisor (18%). Other notable highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 75% felt included in their work environment. ○ 57% believed executives/senior leaders were effective in leading the workforce. ○ 76% believed they were provided adequate technology, tools, and equipment to effectively perform their job. ○ 56% believed they could disclose a suspected violation of any law, rule, or regulation without fear of reprisal.
SEP Observance Survey – Barrier Analysis Question	Yes	<p>Scope of qualitative analysis was for survey data collected after these events: Hispanic Heritage Month 2022, National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2022, Native American Heritage Month 2022, Veterans Day 2022, Martin Luther King Day 2023, and Black and African American History Month 2023.</p> <p>The following key topics were identified as areas of concern by employees when answering the question: “In your opinion, what at the Service (e.g. policy, practice, or procedure) needs to change in order to provide more access to employment and development opportunities for the celebrated group of this event?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Cultural Competence/Training</u> Increase understanding and awareness about the target groups and increase related training. Provide more DEIA training specifically cultural competencies for supervisors and managers. • <u>Recruitment/Outreach</u> Increase outreach for recruitment resources and support available to the target groups.

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Sources of Data	Source Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Hiring</u> Increase career ladder positions to help employees from underrepresented or systematically excluded groups to move up in their career without having to relocate.
Focus Groups	Yes	<p>FWS engaged 35% of the workforce through listening sessions and online surveys for the Values Project to create a shared vision and core values. This included 100 listening sessions and over 1,500 surveys and open houses. The information gathered across these engagement efforts led to the creation of shared purpose, core values, behaviors that embody the values, components of the agency's voice, and guided the focus of the Service's systems assessment.</p> <p>The FY 2022 Barrier Analysis Team (BAT) consisted of a sub-team that focused on Hispanic or Latinx employees through discussions and worked through the barrier analysis progress. Barriers identified included: fear of reprisal, concerns with discussing diversity and inclusion with supervisor, the need for more multi-lingual materials/signage, concerns with lack of family friendly culture, lack of career advancement and detail opportunities, FWS favors those who are willing and able to relocate, and lack of welcoming and inclusive work environment and appreciation of cultural heritage.</p> <p>The FY 2021 BAT conducted focus groups with EEO counselors to understand and discover any persistent trends. The focus group discussed employee frustrations with management communication and the subtle nature of discrimination.</p>
Interviews	Yes	<p>A Request for Information on hiring practices and procedures in FY 2022 was sent to all hiring managers to collect information for a barrier analysis at the point of selection. Interviews will be conducted with hiring managers in FY 2024.</p> <p>The FY 2022 BAT conducted interviews with employees from FWS employee resource groups and communities of practice, Joint Administrative Operations and HR, NCTC, ODIWM Complaints Program, and the FWS National Recruitment Team.</p>

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Sources of Data	Source Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
Reports (e.g., Congress, EEOC, MSPB, GAO, OPM)	Yes	<p><i>Best Practices for Diversity and Inclusion in STEM Education and Research: A Guide by and For Federal Agencies</i></p> <p><i>EEOC Root Cause Barrier Analysis Tool for Hiring</i></p> <p>FWS Values Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee Engagement Report - November 2023 • Systems Assessment Results and Recommendations to Support Values Implementation - November 2023
Other (Please Describe)	Yes	<p>Analyzed Directorate Resource Assistant Fellows Program (DFP): 8.1% (5) of FY 2023 DFP hires were Hispanic/Latinx.</p> <p>A five-year trend analysis was conducted as part of outcome measures related to DOI's barrier analysis efforts to increase workforce diversity. The analysis showed an increase of +1.07% in the FWS permanent workforce for people of color from FY 2019 to FY 2023.</p>

Status of Barrier Analysis Process

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

Statement of Identified Barrier(s)

Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice
Lack of organization-wide practices for improving retention and wellness in the workplace.
Requirements for Qualification for the 0485 and 0486 Occupational Series are restrictive and hinder minorities from qualifying.
FWS does not have a procedure to engage all supervisors on a regular basis on national expectations related to DEIA and related topics (for example: topics such as accountability, reprisal, and intercultural competencies).

Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan

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Objective	Date Initiated	Target Date	Sufficient Funding & Staffing? (Yes or No)	Modified Date	Date Completed
Encourage managers and supervisors to use Stay Interviews.	12/31/2021	12/31/2022	Yes	3/31/2023	3/31/2023
Improve the process for job announcement development by creating a strategy that puts less emphasis on the 5-scale rating in the self-assessment for vacancy announcements.	12/31/2022	09/30/2023	Yes		09/30/2023
Develop recommendations for FWS Leadership to reduce any barriers found after review of basic education requirements for GS-0485.	12/31/2022	06/30/2023	Yes		06/30/2023
Recommend a standardized process to engage supervisors on national expectations related to DEIA and related topics (for example, via standardized supervisor connect forums).	12/31/2022	04/01/2023	Yes		03/01/2023
Submit final results of Mission Critical Occupations point of selection barrier analysis to DOI for consolidation and review	11/22/2023	04/18/2024	Yes		
Invest in coordinated recruitment events including the Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANNRS) Conference.	10/01/2023	09/30/2024	Yes		

Responsible Official(s)

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Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
Director	Martha Williams	Yes
Deputy Director	Stephen Guertin	Yes
Deputy Director	Wendi Weber	Yes
DEIA Committee Chair	Wendi Weber	Yes
Assistant Director, Management and Administration	Janine Velasco	Yes
EEO Director	Inez Uhl	Yes

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Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective

Target Date	Planned Activities	Modified Date	Completion Date
12/31/2022	1. ODIWM will work with Deputies to incorporate stay interview promising practices	3/31/2023	3/31/2023
09/30/2023	2. HR will implement Executive Order 13932 to improve the process for job announcement development by creating a strategy that puts less emphasis on the 5-scale rating in the self-assessment for vacancy announcements.		09/30/2023
06/30/2023	3. HR will review the basic education requirements for the GS-0485 series and will develop recommendations for leadership to reduce any barriers found.		06/30/2023
04/01/2023	4. ODIWM recommended to the Directorate a standardized process to engage supervisors on national expectations related to DEIA and related topics (for example, via standardized supervisor connect forums).		03/01/2023
09/30/2024	5. Finalize the Supervisor Connect Action Plan and initiate implementation.		
04/18/2024	6. Submit final results of Mission Critical Occupations point of selection barrier analysis to DOI for consolidation and review		
09/30/2024	7. Invest in coordinated recruitment events including the Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANNRS) Conference.		

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Report of Accomplishments

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
2023	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ODIWM worked with Deputies to incorporate stay interview promising practices as outlined in the 'Stay Interview Guide' that was completed and announced in the <i>Wild Weekly</i> for all employees and made available on the FWS Sharepoint site. 2. HR implemented Executive Order 13932 to improve the process for job announcement development by creating a strategy that puts less emphasis on the OPM 5-scale rating in the self-assessment for vacancy announcements. Alternatives were provided to the self-assessment: 1) Subject Matter Expert panel; 2) Direct Hire Authorities (exempt from the process); and 3) Not required when hiring supervisors internally. 3. The HR working group reviewed the basic education requirements for the GS-0485 series and determined that no changes are currently needed. Analysis of the 485 series and 401 series showed there is a higher percentage of diversity in the 485 series. The working group briefed Service Leadership on their findings. 4. ODIWM recommended to the Directorate a standardized process to engage supervisors on national expectations related to DEIA and related topics via standardized supervisor connect forums. 5. FWS formed a Supervisor Connect Team to develop an action plan for standardized supervisor connect forums to engage supervisors on national expectations related to DEIA and related topics. The action plan was submitted to the FWS Deputies for review on October 26, 2023. <p>Additional accomplishments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FWS has official MOUs with two hispanic-serving institutions to foster pathways to careers in the agency; New Mexico State University and the University of Texas – San Antonio. • FWS maintained proactive partnerships with organizations such as Corazon Latino, Environment for the Americas, Green Latinos, Greening Youth Foundation, Hispanic Access Foundation, Hispanics Enjoying Camping, Hiking and the Outdoors, Hispanic Prosperity Initiative, Latino Outdoors, League of United Latin American Citizens.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• FWS uses direct hire authority for the Directorate Resource Assistant Fellows Program (DFP) participants after they complete their degree and are now using new Recent Grads and Post-Secondary hiring authorities to announce positions at recruitment outreach events and to source candidates through careers-focused social media accounts. In FY 2022, FWS recruited for the DFP through the Hispanic Access Foundation (HAF), and other minority serving organizations, for targeted outreach to improve minority participation.• ODIWM conducted workforce analyses throughout the year and provided monthly reports on hiring success for leadership. ODIWM briefed the Directorate on the status of workforce demographics and provided recommendations for making reasonable progress to meet the Civilian Labor Force benchmarks for low participation groups.• The DOI DEIA Council has directed FWS and other bureaus to conduct a barrier analysis related to hiring selections. ODIWM is overseeing this process in collaboration with the Human Capital team in the JAO. Hiring managers across the Service who filled Mission Critical Occupation (MCO) or Commonly Filled Occupations (CFO) hiring selections in FY 2022 have been asked to provide information through a form developed according to DOI guidance. ODIWM sent a link to the form directly to those hiring managers copying their corresponding Directorate and Deputies Group members in the request. This requirement is in alignment with the annual barrier analysis that is already underway and that is required under the EEOC's Management Directive 715 (MD-715) to ensure equity in our recruitment and hiring actions.• The Deputies Entry Level Hiring Rules were launched in April 2023 to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Expedite the hiring process at the entry level○ Ensure consideration of candidates in whom FWS has already invested, including internal employees, interns, fellows, temporary, and terms○ Increase the diversity of the workforce through authorities that allow us to more effectively recruit veterans, individuals with disabilities, and candidates from other underrepresented groups.• FWS completed Phase 2 of the work of 'The Values Project' an in-depth listening process to engage a critical mass of employees in defining and establishing our shared purpose and organizational core values. The shared purpose and enduring core values were announced at the end of the fiscal year by the Director in an all-employee broadcast. The core values will guide the Service's work across priorities in meeting our conservation mission.
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Agency EEO Plan to Eliminate Identified Barrier Women Participation

Please describe the status of each plan that the agency implemented to identify possible barriers in policies, procedures, or practices for employees and applicants by race, ethnicity, and gender.

If the agency did not conduct barrier analysis during the reporting period, please check the box.

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

Source of the Trigger	Specific Workforce Data Table	Narrative Description of Trigger
Workforce Data Tables	Table A-1	Women make up 43.5% of permanent workforce versus the Organizational CLF of 46%.
Workforce Data Tables	Table A-6	Women make up 43.6% of biology workforce versus the Occupational CLF of 48.1%.
Workforce Data Tables	Table A-6	The participation rate for women Law Enforcement Officers is 10.5%, which is below the CLF of 25.3%.

EEO Group(s) Affected by Trigger

EEO Group
All Men
All Women X
Hispanic or Latino Males
Hispanic or Latino Females
White Males
White Females
Black or African American Males
Black or African American Females
Asian Males
Asian Females
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Males
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Females
American Indian or Alaska Native Males
American Indian or Alaska Native Females
Two or More Races Males
Two or More Races Females

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Barrier Analysis Process

Sources of Data	Source Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
Workforce Data Tables	Yes	An important FY 2023 milestone is that for the first time in FWS history we closed the participation gap for White women in the permanent workforce as a whole. Although the participation of White women in some mission-critical occupations remains low (e.g. law-enforcement officers and Wildland Firefighters), identifying the RNO of substantial numbers of employees who were previously not-identified eliminated the overall participation shortfall for White women at the beginning of the fiscal year, and hiring substantially increased their participation +0.5 percentage points during FY2023. Additionally, while the hiring of minority women also fell short of the CLF, participation did increase by about .4%.
Complaint Data (Trends)	Yes	Five complaints were filed alleging discrimination on the basis of sex (female). Issues were harassment non-sexual (5), time and attendance (1), other terms/conditions of employment (2).
Grievance Data (Trends)	Yes	<p>There were 58 harassment allegations in FY 23 for the following protected categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Race - 9 • Sex (Including Pregnancy & Gender Identity) - 20 • Sexual Orientation - 3 • Nation Origin – 3 • Age – 2 • Disability – 8 • Retaliation - 13 <p>Forty percent of the allegations in FY 23 were related to Sex and Sexual Orientation. From 2017-2023 there were 184 total grievances which highlights need to continue efforts directed towards workplace inclusion.</p>
Findings from Decisions (e.g., EEO, Grievance, MSPB, Anti-Harassment Processes)	Yes	No findings of discrimination based on sex (female) in FY 2023.
Climate Assessment Survey (e.g., FEVS)	Yes	<p>FY 2022 Diversity and Inclusion Workplace Assessment Survey - Women responded significantly less favorably than men on these climate items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “FWS is a welcoming and inclusive place to work for employees of all races and ethnicities.” (-13% difference) • “FWS offers sufficient training in diversity and inclusion (D&I).” (-11% difference)

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “FWS is a welcoming and inclusive place to work for all employees.” (-10% difference) • “FWS is a welcoming and inclusive place to work for employees of all genders.” (-9% difference) <p>FY 2022 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) for all respondents: There were not significant differences in FEVS responses to the DEIA questions by gender.</p>
Exit Interview Data	Yes	<p>Through analyzing exit survey results from FY 2020 to the end of FY 2023, it was found that the top reasons women separated from FWS were a lack of promotion/career advancement opportunities (31%) and pay (17%). Other notable highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 71% felt included in their work environment. • 52% believed executives/senior leaders were effective in leading the workforce. • 78% believed they were provided adequate technology, tools, and equipment to effectively perform their job. • 51% believed they could disclose a suspected violation of any law, rule, or regulation without fear of reprisal.
SEP Observance Survey – Barrier Analysis Question	Yes	<p>Scope of qualitative analysis was for survey data collected after these events: Hispanic Heritage Month 2022, National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2022, Native American Heritage Month 2022, Veterans Day 2022, Martin Luther King Day 2023, and Black and African American History Month 2023.</p> <p>The following key topics were identified as areas of concern by employees when answering the question: “In your opinion, what at the Service (e.g. policy, practice, or procedure) needs to change in order to provide more access to employment and development opportunities for the celebrated group of this event?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Cultural Competence/Training</u> Increase understanding and awareness about the target groups and increase related training. Provide more DEIA training specifically cultural competencies for supervisors and managers. • <u>Recruitment/Outreach</u> Increase outreach for recruitment resources and support available to the target groups. • <u>Hiring</u> Increase career ladder positions to help employees from underrepresented or

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		systematically excluded groups to move up in their career without having to relocate.
Focus Groups	Yes	<p>FWS engaged 35% of the workforce through listening sessions and online surveys for the Values Project to create a shared vision and core values. This included 100 listening sessions and over 1,500 surveys and open houses. The information gathered across these engagement efforts led to the creation of shared purpose, core values, behaviors that embody the values, components of the agency's voice, and guided the focus of the Service's systems assessment.</p> <p>The FY 2022 BAT consisted of a sub-team that focused on Women through discussions and worked through the barrier analysis progress. Barriers identified included: fear of reprisal, lack of advancement, lack of training and detail opportunities, lack of information on FWS-wide benefits, a rigid hiring process, and the need for consistency of flexible schedules/telework options.</p>
Interviews	Yes	<p>A Request for Information on hiring practices and procedures in FY 2022 was sent to all hiring managers to collect information for a barrier analysis at the point of selection. Interviews will be conducted with hiring managers in FY 2024.</p> <p>The FY 2022 BAT conducted interviews with employees from FWS employee resource groups and communities of practice, Joint Administrative Operations and HR, NCTC, ODIWM Complaints Program, and the FWS National Recruitment Team.</p>
Reports (e.g., Congress, EEOC, MSPB, GAO, OPM)	Yes	<p><i>Best Practices for Diversity and Inclusion in STEM Education and Research: A Guide by and For Federal Agencies</i></p> <p><i>EEOC Root Cause Barrier Analysis Tool for Hiring</i></p> <p>FWS Values Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee Engagement Report - November 2023 • Systems Assessment Results and Recommendations to Support Values Implementation - November 2023
Other (Please Describe)	Yes	<p>Analyzed Directorate Resource Assistant Fellows Program (DFP): 69.4% (43) of FY 2023 DFP hires were identified as female.</p> <p>A five-year trend analysis was conducted as part of outcome measures related to DOI's barrier analysis efforts to increase workforce diversity. The analysis showed an increase of +3.22 % in the FWS permanent workforce for women from FY 2019 to FY 2023.</p>

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Status of Barrier Analysis Process

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

Statement of Identified Barrier(s)

Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice
Lack of organization-wide practices for improving retention and wellness in the workplace.
FWS does not have a procedure to engage all supervisors on a regular basis on national expectations related to DEIA and related topics (for example: topics such as accountability, reprisal, and intercultural competencies).
Requirements for Qualification for the 0485 and 0486 Occupational Series are restrictive and hinder women from qualifying.

Objective(s) and Dates for EEO Plan

Objective	Date Initiated (mm/dd/yyyy)	Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Sufficient Funding & Staffing? (Yes or No)	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Date Completed (mm/dd/yyyy)
Encourage managers and supervisors to use Stay Interviews.	12/31/2021	12/31/2022	Yes	3/31/2023	3/31/2023
Improve the process for job announcement development by creating a strategy that puts less emphasis on the 5-scale rating in the self-assessment for vacancy announcements.	12/31/2022	09/30/2023	Yes		09/30/2023
Develop recommendations for FWS Leadership to reduce any barriers found after review of basic education requirements for GS-0485.	12/31/2022	06/30/2023	Yes		06/30/2023
Recommend a standardized process to engage supervisors on national expectations related to DEIA and related topics (for example, via standardized supervisor connect forums).	12/31/2022	04/01/2023	Yes		03/01/2023
Submit final results of Mission Critical Occupations point of selection barrier analysis to DOI for consolidation and review	11/22/2023	04/18/2024	Yes		

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Responsible Official(s)

Title	Name	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)
Director, FWS	Martha Williams	Yes
Deputy Director, FWS	Stephen Guertin	Yes
Deputy Director, FWS	Wendi Weber	Yes
DEIA Committee Chair	Wendi Weber	Yes
Assistant Director, Management and Administration	Janine Velasco	Yes
EEO Director	Inez Uhl	Yes

Planned Activities Toward Completion of Objective

Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
12/31/2022	1. ODIWM will work with Deputies to incorporate stay interview promising practices	3/31/2022	3/31/2022
09/30/2023	2. HR will implement Executive Order 13932 to improve the process for job announcement development by creating a strategy that puts less emphasis on the 5-scale rating in the self-assessment for vacancy announcements.		09/30/2023
06/30/2023	3. HR will review the basic education requirements for the GS-0485 series and will make recommendations for changes, as needed.		06/30/2023
04/01/2023	4. ODIWM recommend to the Directorate a standardized process to engage supervisors on national expectations related to DEIA and related topics (for example, via standardized supervisor connect forums).		03/01/2023
06/01/2023	5. Form Supervisor Connect Team to develop an action plan for standardized supervisor connect forums to engage supervisors on national expectations related to DEIA and related topics.		06/01/2023
09/30/2024	6. Finalize the Supervisor Connect Action Plan and initiate implementation.		
04/18/2024	7. Submit final results of Mission Critical Occupations point of selection barrier analysis to DOI for consolidation and review		

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Report of Accomplishments

Fiscal Year	Accomplishments
2023	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ODIWM worked with Deputies to incorporate stay interview promising practices as outlined in the 'Stay Interview Guide' that was completed and announced in the <i>Wild Weekly</i> for all employees and made available on the FWS Sharepoint site. 2. HR implemented Executive Order 13932 to improve the process for job announcement development by creating a strategy that puts less emphasis on the OPM 5-scale rating in the self-assessment for vacancy announcements. Alternatives were provided to the self-assessment: 1) Subject Matter Expert panel; 2) Direct Hire Authorities (exempt from the process); and 3) Not required when hiring supervisors internally. 3. The HR working group reviewed the basic education requirements for the GS-0485 series and determined that no changes are currently needed. Analysis of the 485 series and 401 series showed there is a higher percentage of diversity in the 485 series. The working group briefed Service Leadership on their findings. 4. ODIWM recommended to the Directorate a standardized process to engage supervisors on national expectations related to DEIA and related topics via standardized supervisor connect forums. 5. FWS formed a Supervisor Connect Team to develop an action plan for standardized supervisor connect forums to engage supervisors on national expectations related to DEIA and related topics. The action plan was submitted to the FWS Deputies for review on October 26, 2023. <p>Additional accomplishments:</p> <p>ODIWM conducted workforce analyses throughout the year and provided monthly reports on hiring success for leadership. ODIWM briefed the Directorate on the status of workforce demographics and provided recommendations for making reasonable progress to meet the Civilian Labor Force benchmarks for low participation groups.</p> <p>The DOI DEIA Council has directed FWS and other bureaus to conduct a barrier analysis related to hiring selections. ODIWM is overseeing this process in collaboration with the Human Capital team in the JAO. Hiring managers across the Service who filled Mission Critical Occupation (MCO) or Commonly Filled Occupations (CFO) hiring selections in FY 2022 have been asked to provide information through a form developed according to DOI guidance.</p>

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	<p>ODIWM sent a link to the form directly to those hiring managers copying their corresponding Directorate and Deputies Group members in the request. This requirement is in alignment with the annual barrier analysis that is already underway and that is required under the EEOC's Management Directive 715 (MD-715) to ensure equity in our recruitment and hiring actions.</p> <p>The Deputies Entry Level Hiring Rules were launched in April 2023 to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expedite the hiring process at the entry level• Ensure consideration of candidates in whom FWS has already invested, including internal employees, interns, fellows, temporary, and terms• Increase the diversity of the workforce through authorities that allow us to more effectively recruit veterans, individuals with disabilities, and candidates from other underrepresented groups. <p>In FY 2023 FWS completed Phase 2 of the work of 'The Values Project' an in-depth listening process to engage a critical mass of employees in defining and establishing our shared purpose and organizational core values. The shared purpose and enduring core values were announced at the end of the fiscal year by the Director in an all-employee broadcast. The core values will guide the Service's work across priorities in meeting our conservation mission.</p> <p>After announcing the core values, FWS offered three 90-minute Values Journey Skill Building Workshops in September 2023 for all employees. The workshops provided frameworks, vocabulary and tools intended to develop and grow skills in building a culture of respect, trust and inclusion. The workshop series will continue into FY 2024.</p>
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Affirmative Action Plan (MD-715 – Part J)

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

To capture agencies' affirmative action plan for persons with disabilities (PWD) and persons with targeted disabilities (PWTD), Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) regulations (29 C.F.R. § 1614.203(e)) and MD-715 require agencies to describe how their plans will improve the recruitment, hiring, advancement, and retention of applicants and employees with disabilities. All agencies, regardless of size, must complete this part of the MD-715 report.

Section I: Efforts to Reach Regulatory Goals

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

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) currently has an annual goal of hiring 27 PWD and/or PWTD (three per region). In Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 FWS continued to exceed this goal by hiring 156 PWD, including 35 PWTD, from outside the organization.

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

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|-------|------|
| a. Cluster GS-1 to GS-10 (PWD) | Yes 0 | No X |
| b. Cluster GS-11 to SES (PWD) | Yes X | No 0 |

The percentage of PWD in FY 2023 for the GS-1 to GS-10 cluster is 14.8%. The percentage has increased by 0.1% from FY 2022.

The percentage of PWD in FY 2023 for the GS-11 to Senior Executive Service (SES) cluster is 10.1%. The percentage has increased by 0.6% since FY 2022.

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

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------|------|
| a. Cluster GS-1 to GS-10 (PWTD) | Yes 0 | No X |
| b. Cluster GS-11 to SES (PWTD) | Yes 0 | No X |

The percentage of PWTD in FY 2023 for the GS-1 to GS-10 cluster is 3.9%. The percentage is unchanged from FY 2022.

The percentage of PWTD in FY 2023 for the GS-11 to SES cluster is 2.2%. The percentage has increased by 0.1% from FY 2022.

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

FWS Directorate members and their respective leadership teams received monthly progress reports on the changes in workforce participation rates. The Office of Diversity and Inclusive Workforce Management (ODIWM) is working to ensure that agency leadership remains aware of goals and objectives for the advancement of PWD and PWTD outlined under the MD-715 and the FWS Diversity and Inclusion Implementation Plan (DIIP).

Section II: Model Disability Program

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

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

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

Yes X No 0

- 4. Identify all staff responsible for implementing the agency’s disability employment program by the office, staff employment status, and responsible official.**

Disability Program Task	# of FTE Staff by Employment Status			Responsible Official (Name, Title, Office, Email)
	Full Time	Part Time	Collateral Duty	
Processing applications from PWD and PWTD		36		Human Resources Specialists, Division of Human Resources Phone: (703) 358-1743
Answering questions from the public about hiring authorities that take disability into account		45	1	Erin Pilitowski, Deputy Chief, Talent and Acquisition Officer/Human Resources Specialist, Erin_Pilitowski@fws.gov
Processing reasonable accommodation requests from applicants and employees			13	Rick Greenblat, Employee- Management Relations Chief, Joint Administrative Operations (JAO), Rick_Greenblat@fws.gov
Section 508 Compliance	1		12	Keon Sheffield, National Section 508 Program Manager, Keon_Sheffield@fws.gov
Architectural Barriers Act Compliance	9			Bobbea Burnette Cadena, Public Civil Rights Manager, Office of Diversity and Inclusive Workforce Management (ODIWM), Bobbea_Cadena@fws.gov
Special Emphasis Program for PWD and PWTD		5		Bobbea Burnette Cadena, Disability Program Manager, ODIWM, Bobbea_Cadena@fws.gov

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

Yes X No 0

- In FY 2023, FWS delivered live required training to the entire workforce that focused on reasonable accommodations and DEIA. In addition to meeting annual DEIA and EEO training requirements, employees gained foundational knowledge about the DIIP, DEIA and EEO best practices, and other information to support inclusion in the workplace.
- Members of ODIWM completed the DOI Special Emphasis Training coordinated by the DOI, Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Civil Rights (ODICR).
- In FY 2023, FWS hosted a virtual panel discussion for all employees during National Disability Employment Awareness Month titled ‘Flipping the Script on Disability.’ The live event emphasized the importance of ensuring that PWD - seen and unseen - have full access to employment, FWS facilities, and services. The event highlighted employee experiences, allyship, and the establishment of the FWS People with Disabilities Employee Resource Group (ERG).
- In FY 2023, employees had access to training on retention and mentoring for federal employees with disabilities through the FWS People with Disabilities ERG, ODIWM and Division of Human Resources (HR). The trainings explored successful practices for retaining diverse talent and mentoring as a disability inclusion strategy. HR provided training on reasonable accommodations. The training reviewed a framework for adopting a mentoring culture, tips for successful implementation of a mentoring program and resources for partnering with disability mentoring initiatives. In FWS annual DEIA training, there was an emphasis on the importance of retention for people with disabilities and invisible disabilities.
- There was a strong focus on reasonable accommodation and safety within the workplace during the mandatory DEIA training and trainings/discussions within the People with Disabilities ERG, which meets monthly with presentations geared towards people with disabilities. Additionally, the ERG has grown from eight members to 193 during FY 2023.
- In FY 2023, FWS hosted a workshop for Employee Management Relations (EMR) Specialists to discuss the Reasonable Accommodation Policy and procedures. EMR Specialists were provided an opportunity to gain valuable insight on types of accommodations that have been provided, what is and is not reasonable, and discuss current requests for reasonable accommodations.
- FWS provided training on the Reasonable Accommodation Policy, including Personal Assistance Services (PAS), to the Region 2 managers and supervisors. The training provided a step-by-step process on roles and responsibilities throughout the reasonable accommodation process. Managers and supervisors were provided an opportunity to explore their knowledge using scenarios.

B. Plan to Ensure Sufficient Funding for the Disability Program

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

Yes X No 0

Section III: Plan to Recruit and Hire Individuals with Disabilities

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

A. Plan to Identify Job Applicants with Disabilities

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

The FWS National Recruitment Team continuously works to develop:

- Contacts at the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services, Non-Paid Work Experience Program, to provide experience and potential job opportunities to PWTD.
- Recruiting partnerships with community, academic, and governmental groups that reach PWTD to maximize recruiting from all sources when filling positions at grade GS-11 and above, including managerial and supervisory positions at grades GS-13 to GS-15 and SES.
- Contacts at more than 455 organizations representing military/Veteran, women, minority, and disability affinity interests at institutions of higher education, American Job Centers, state vocational rehabilitation agencies, Centers for Independent Living, and employment network service providers.
- Contacts through the Workforce Recruitment Program annual online recruitment list to identify and contact students and graduates with targeted disabilities about potential opportunities for positions before they are advertised.
- The FWS National Recruitment Team utilized the *HireVeteran.com* website to post position vacancies targeting Veterans eligible for noncompetitive hiring authority (e.g., 30% Veteran, Veterans Readjustment Appointment or VRA).
- Upon inquiry from hiring officials, the Recruitment Team reaches out to sources identified above for potential candidates eligible for noncompetitive special hiring (e.g., 30% Veterans, VRA, Schedule A) to be considered for an identified vacancy.

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

The Directorate's Deputies group (Deputies) continued to take steps to increase use of special hiring authorities (SHA), including Schedule A, for all permanent, entry-level professional 400 Series jobs (GS 5/7/9). FWS a hiring manager toolkit including a hiring authorities' at-a-glance guide, as well as other educational material on the hiring process and hiring pathways.

The Division of Human Resources (HR) and ODIWM use the Schedule A and eligible 30%-or-more disabled Veterans hiring authorities to identify and hire qualified PWD and PWTD professionals for positions in the permanent workforce.

FWS recruited PWD and PWTD under the 30%-or-more disabled Veterans hiring authority at Veteran career fairs sponsored by the U.S. Departments of Defense and Veterans Administration at several venues across the country. Vacancy announcements included statements indicating that FWS encourages and will accept applications from Veterans with compensable disabilities or 30%-or-more disabled Veterans.

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

HR specialists determine if applicants are eligible for appointment under SHAs in 5 CFR §213.31.02(u). They ensure that the application packages from PWD or PWTD applicants include the following:

For Schedule A eligible candidates:

- Current resume with places and dates of employment, including month/year to month/year, and number of hours worked per week (e.g., 40 hours, 32 hours, etc.)
- Schedule A letter from a licensed medical professional (e.g., a physician or other medical professional duly certified by U.S. State, District of Columbia, or a U.S. territory, to practice medicine); a licensed vocational rehabilitation specialist (state or private); or any federal agency, state agency, or an agency of the District of Columbia or a U.S. territory that issues or provides disability benefits as described in 5 CFR §213.3102 (3) (ii)

For eligible disabled Veteran candidates:

- Current resume with places and dates of employment, including month/year to month/year, and number of hours worked per week (e.g., 40 hours, 32 hours, etc.)
- Copy of DD-214, Record of Military Service (member copy 4) to determine eligibility for Veterans' preference and honorable discharge
- Copy of SF-15 stating candidate has a 30%-or-more disability rating and can perform the duties of the position for which they are applying
- Department of Veterans Affairs rating letter that identifies the disability percentage for the applicant

HR forwards applications to hiring officials and meets with them to explain the hiring flexibilities and how and when an applicant can be non-competitively appointed. PWD and PWTD can apply for vacancies advertised on USAJobs.gov even after they have closed. In these cases, HR specialists provide applicants' information to the hiring officials and meet with them to provide guidance on the hiring authorities.

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

Yes X No 0 N/A

FWS developed a hiring manager toolkit including a hiring authorities' at-a-glance guide, as well as other educational material on the hiring process and hiring pathways. The Deputies took steps to increase use of SHAs, including Schedule A, for all permanent, entry-level professional 400 series jobs (GS 5/7/9). The rate at which employees first onboarded through a Schedule A appointment are in career ladder positions is similar to that of employees in the overall permanent workforce. Both HR and workforce recruiters provided guidance to managers and hiring officials on the use of SHAs to directly appoint PWD and PWTD.

B. Plan to Establish Contacts with Disability Employment Organizations

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

FWS recruited at career fairs at institutions of higher education, as well as professional and military sponsored events to reach out to qualified PWD and PWTD for employment. FWS maintains a database of contacts representing U.S. military installations, Veterans Employment Service offices, state job offices, and Veterans' assistance centers. Contacts include various disabled Veterans' organizations, centralized Veterans' applicant referral services on military bases, and the Disabled American Veterans National Service offices.

C. PROGRESSION TOWARDS GOALS (RECRUITMENT AND HIRING)

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

a. New Hires for Permanent Workforce (PWD) Yes X No 0

b. New Hires for Permanent Workforce (PWTD) Yes 0 No X

The percentage of PWD in FY 2023 among the new hires in the permanent workforce was 11.6%.

The percentage of PWTD in FY 2023 among the new hires in the permanent workforce was 2.4%.

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

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

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

3. **Using the relevant applicant pool as the benchmark, do triggers exist for PWD and/or PWTD among the qualified *internal* applicants for any of the mission-critical occupations (MCO)? If “yes”, please describe the triggers below.**

a. Qualified Applicants for MCO (PWD) Yes 0 No X

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

4. **Using the qualified applicant pool as the benchmark, do triggers exist for PWD and/or PWTD among employees promoted to any of the mission-critical occupations (MCO)? If “yes”, please describe the triggers below.**

a. Promotions for MCO (PWD) Yes 0 No X

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

Section IV: Plan to Ensure Advancement Opportunities for Employees with Disabilities

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

A. Advancement Program Plan

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

The following activities are part of efforts to ensure sufficient opportunities for advancement:

- Managers and supervisors are required to adhere to the policy on the development and establishment of individual development plans (IDP) for each employee, supervisor, and manager.
- The National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) and the Division of Human Resources send periodic reminders and resources to all employees regarding their IDPs.
- IDPs at FWS include formal and informal training and mentoring programs, career development opportunities, details to promotions, and similar programs that address advancement.
- FWS develops one-year training plans for eligible Veterans with a 30%-or-more disability rating who were hired under the VRA.

B. Career Development Opportunities

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

FWS promotes two formal career development programs nationwide to develop its next cadre of leaders: (1) Stepping Up to Leadership Program (SUTL) for GS-11/12, and (2) Advanced Leadership Development Program (ALDP) for GS/GM 13/14. The employees participating in these programs compete through a merit selection process.

In addition, FWS provides opportunities for employees to participate in various mentoring and training programs. The Department of the Interior (DOI) also solicited applications for a DOI-level SES candidate development program.

The following activities are part of efforts to ensure career development opportunities:

- An intranet page is a comprehensive resource promoting temporary job details within FWS to enhance career paths.
- Employees are encouraged to participate in available training, coaching, and mentoring opportunities in their regions and programs.
- Managers and supervisors are required to adhere to the policy on the development and establishment of IDPs for each employee, supervisor, and manager.
- NCTC offers a comprehensive course catalog that offers both technical and leadership training aimed at increasing employee competency in accomplishing the mission under the agency's Leadership Competency Model. This approach enhances employee readiness for positions of greater responsibility, complementing the scientific and natural resources management knowledge and skills that remain critical to employee performance and success in conservation leadership.

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

Career Development Opportunities	Total Participants		PWD		PWTD	
	Applicants	Selectees	Applicants	Selectees	Applicants	Selectees
	(#)	(#)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Advanced Leadership Development Program (ALDP)	37	24	3	0	2	0
Stepping Up to Leadership Program (SUTL)	191	48	23	3	5	0

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

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

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

- a. ALDP Applicants (PWTD) Yes 0 No X
- b. ALDP Selections (PWTD) Yes X No 0
- c. SUTL Applicants (PWTD) Yes 0 No X
- d. SUTL Selections (PWTD) Yes X No 0

C. Awards

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

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

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

- a. Pay Increases (PWD) Yes 0 No X
- b. Pay Increases (PWTD) Yes 0 No X

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

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

D. Promotions

1. Does your agency have a trigger involving PWD among the qualified *internal* applicants and/or selectees for promotions to the senior grade levels? (The appropriate benchmarks are the relevant applicant pool for qualified internal applicants and the qualified applicant pool for selectees.) For non-GS pay plans, please use the approximate senior grade levels. If “yes”, describe the trigger(s) in the text box.

a. SES

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Yes 0 No X

ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Yes 0 No X

b. Grade GS-15

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Yes 0 No X

ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Yes 0 No X

c. Grade GS-14

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Yes 0 No X

ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Yes 0 No X

d. Grade GS-13

i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Yes 0 No X

ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Yes 0 No X

2. Using the qualified applicant pool as the benchmark, does your agency have a trigger involving PWTD among the new hires to the senior grade levels? For non-GS pay plans, please use the approximate senior grade levels. If “yes”, describe the trigger(s) in the text box.

a. New Hires to SES (PWTD) Yes 0 No X

b. New Hires to GS-15 (PWTD) Yes 0 No X

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

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

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

- a. Executives
 - i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Yes 0 No X
 - ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Yes 0 No X
- b. Managers
 - i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Yes 0 No X
 - ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Yes 0 No X
- c. Supervisors
 - i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWD) Yes 0 No X
 - ii. Internal Selections (PWD) Yes 0 No X

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

- a. Executives
 - i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD) Yes 0 No X
 - ii. Internal Selections (PWTD) Yes 0 No X
- b. Managers
 - i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD) Yes 0 No X
 - ii. Internal Selections (PWTD) Yes 0 No X
- c. Supervisors
 - i. Qualified Internal Applicants (PWTD) Yes 0 No X
 - ii. Internal Selections (PWTD) Yes 0 No X

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

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

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

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

Section V: Plan to Improve Retention of Persons with Disabilities

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

A. Voluntary and Involuntary Separations

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

Yes X No 0 N/A 0

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

a. Voluntary Separations (PWD)	Yes X	No 0
b. Involuntary Separations (PWD)	Yes 0	No X

Voluntary resignations were higher than expected: 25% of employees who resigned from the permanent workforce during FY 2023 had reportable disabilities. This was high in comparison to the percentage of employees with disabilities in the permanent workforce (11.1%).

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

a. Voluntary Separations (PWTD)	Yes X	No 0
b. Involuntary Separations (PWTD)	Yes 0	No X

Voluntary resignations were higher than expected: 8.3% of employees who resigned from the permanent workforce during FY 2023 had targeted disabilities. This was high in comparison to the percentage of employees with targeted disabilities in the permanent workforce (2.75%).

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

There were 493 exit survey responses in FY 2023, of which 83 were from PWD. According to FWS employee exit responses:

- 39% of PWD indicated that a lack of promotion/career advancement opportunity was a primary reason for separating. 26% of PWD indicated lack of recognition was a primary reason for separating, and 25% indicated dissatisfaction with their supervisor as a reason for separating.
- 43% of PWD felt executives/senior leaders were effective in motivating and leading the workforce.
- 73% of PWD felt they were provided adequate technology, tools, and equipment to effectively perform their job.

B. Accessibility of Technology and Facilities

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

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

Link to DOI's Section 508 policies and guidelines: <https://www.doi.gov/ocio/section508>

If an individual with a disability believes that a bureau or office has failed to procure Electronic and Information Technology (EIT) conforming to Section 508, that individual has the right to file a complaint with the DOI Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Civil Rights (ODICR). ODICR shall apply the complaint procedures outlined in 43 CFR Part 17, Subpart E, which are established to implement Section 504 for resolving allegations of discrimination in a federally conducted program or activity.

Complaints must be submitted in writing to ODICR at the following address:

U.S. Department of the Interior
Attn: Director, Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Civil Rights
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

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

Link to DOI's Public Civil Rights (PCR) website: <https://www.doi.gov/pmb/eeo/Public-Civil-Rights>

How to file a PCR complaint:

- *Within 180 days of the date of the alleged discrimination, a signed, written complaint should be filed with the Director, Office of Civil Rights, Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, NW Washington, DC, 20240.*
- *The complaint should include your name, address, zip code, and telephone number; the name and address of the alleged discriminatory official(s) and/or public entity; the nature of the complaint, the basis of the complaint (race, color, national origin, gender, age, sex and/or disability), and the date the alleged discrimination occurred.*

- *If the alleged discrimination occurred outside DOI jurisdiction, we would forward your complaint to the state or federal agency that has jurisdiction. You can read more about the PCR complaint process in [Civil Rights Directive 2011-01](#).*

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

In FY 2023, the PCR Team:

- Conducted and completed a total of 12 (six on-site and six remote) Federally Assisted Program (FAP) civil rights compliance reviews. The team worked with state recipients of federal funding to complete 100% of the scheduled reviews and issue Reports of Findings before the close of the fiscal year.
- Coordinated and collaborated with Deputies group to Develop four options to conduct self-evaluations of all Service occupied facilities (954) on a recurring schedule. Conducted and completed a total of 26 Federally Conducted Program (FCP) self-evaluations. The team worked with regional leadership to complete 100% of scheduled self-evaluations.
- Conducted two pilot FCP self-evaluations for Service leadership at the Lower Suwannee/Cedar Keys NWR and the San Luis NWR Complex.
- Developed a process to highlight FWS facilities that are increasing access. An article was written on the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge and featured on intranet news feeds and shared in FWS all-employee email digest (FWS Wild Weekly).

C. Reasonable Accommodation Program

Pursuant to 29 C.F.R. § 1614.203(d)(3), agencies must adopt, post on their public website, and make available to all job applicants and employees, reasonable accommodation procedures.

1. Please provide the average period for processing initial requests for reasonable accommodations during the reporting period. (Please do not include previously approved requests with repetitive accommodations, such as interpreting services.)

FWS abides by the DOI Reasonable Accommodations/Personal Assistance Services Policy that establishes a 15-business day limit to provide a decision memo to a requester (when no medical documents are required) and a 20-business day limit, from the date of the decision memo, for providing an approved accommodation (unless notification of delayed implementation is issued to extend that period by 10 days). In FY 2023, there were 61 reasonable accommodation requests. The average period for approving a request was below the 15-business day limit and the average period for processing an accommodation was estimated at 15-20 days.

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

- FWS is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to our employees and to applicants for employment to assure that PWD enjoy equal employment opportunity, unless to do so would cause undue hardship.
- The EMR team provides advisory services for employees and managers in the implementation of the reasonable accommodations policy. Each FWS region and program has been assigned a servicing EMR specialist to ensure prompt response to inquiries.
- FWS follows the DOI policies that direct bureaus and offices: (1) Personnel Bulletin 14-01, Reasonable Accommodation for Individuals with Disabilities; (2) Personnel Bulletin 08-09, Procedures for Conducting a DOI-wide Search and Position Reassignment for Cases Involving Reasonable Accommodations; and (3) Personnel Bulletin 17-18, PAS Procedures.

- FWS Director and Directorate members are responsible for implementing DOI policy and procedures for reasonable accommodations and PAS within their respective regions/programs and for ensuring that sufficient resources are available for providing reasonable accommodations to PWD and PAS for PWTDD.
- The DOI's reasonable accommodations/PAS policy establishes a 15-business day limit to provide a decision memo to a requester (when no medical documents are required) and a 20-business day limit from date of decision for providing an approved accommodation (unless notification of delayed implementation is issued to extend that period by 10 days).
- In FY 2023, ODIWM hosted a workshop for EMR specialists to discuss the reasonable accommodations policy and procedures in effect at that time. EMR specialists were provided an opportunity to gain valuable insight on types of reasonable accommodations that have been provided, what is and is not reasonable, and discuss pending requests for reasonable accommodations.
- FWS provided training on the policy, including PAS, to managers and supervisors in the FWS Southwest Region. The training provided a step-by-step process on roles and responsibilities throughout the reasonable accommodation process. Managers and supervisors were provided an opportunity to explore their knowledge using training scenarios.

D. Personal Assistance Services Allowing Employees to Participate in the Workplace

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

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

Requests for PAS follow the same process as requests for reasonable accommodations and include timely processing of approved services, conducting training for managers and supervisors, and monitoring requests to identify trends. FWS is regulated by the DOI Reasonable Accommodations/Personal Assistance Services Policy, which has been sent to the EEOC. The policy is posted on the DOI website and a link to it is provided on the FWS website. The fact sheet for PAS procedures has been posted on the FWS website as well as on its intranet site.

Section VI: EEO Complaint and Findings Data

A. EEO Complaint data involving Harassment

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

Yes 0 No X N/A

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

Yes 0 No X N/A

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

B. EEO Complaint Data involving Reasonable Accommodation

- During the last fiscal year, did a higher percentage of PWD file a formal EEO complaint alleging failure to provide a reasonable accommodation, as compared to the government-wide average?
 Yes 0 No X N/A
- During the last fiscal year, did any complaints alleging failure to provide reasonable accommodation result in a finding of discrimination or a settlement agreement?
 Yes 0 No X N/A
- If the agency had one or more findings of discrimination involving the failure to provide a reasonable accommodation during the last fiscal year, please describe the corrective measures taken by the agency.

Section VII: Identification and Removal of Barriers

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

- Has the agency identified any barriers (policies, procedures, and/or practices) that affect employment opportunities for PWD and/or PWTD?
 Yes X No 0
- Has the agency established a plan to correct the barrier(s) involving PWD and/or PWTD?
 Yes X No 0 N/A
- Identify each trigger and plan to remove the barrier(s), including the identified barrier(s), objective(s), responsible official(s), planned activities, and, where applicable, accomplishments.

Triggers Workforce Data	<p>Inclusion rate in the GS-11 to SES cluster: The percentage of PWD in FY 2023 for the GS-11 to Senior Executive Service (SES) cluster is 10.1%.</p> <p>Low participation of PWD in the Professional Biology series: PWD make up 8.0% of permanent professional biologists versus the EEOC goal of 12%.</p> <p>Voluntary separations: Voluntary resignations were higher than expected: 25% of employees who resigned from the permanent workforce during FY 2023 had reportable disabilities, while only 16.7% of the permanent workforce had reportable disabilities. Voluntary resignations were higher than expected: 8.3% of employees who resigned from the permanent workforce during FY 2023 had targeted disabilities, while only 4.17% of the permanent workforce had targeted disabilities.</p> <p>Career development applicants and selections based on FY 2023 data for SUTL and ALDP: 0% of SUTL selectees were PWTD compared to the applicant benchmark of 2.6% 6.8% of SUTL selectees were PWD compared to the applicant pool of 9.4% No employees with disabilities were selected for ALDP</p>
Barrier(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion of non-inclusive and restrictive language on job vacancies is prohibitive for PWD and fails to account for possible accommodations. Lack of supervisor awareness about reasonable accommodations resources and options prevents employees from fully accessing accommodations.
Objective(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct focus group to identify any potential barriers faced by PWD and PWTD in applying and being selected for leadership programs. Adopt inclusive language for physical requirements, and remove driver’s license requirements when applicable, in job vacancy announcements

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop additional training resources for managers and supervisors to increase awareness of reasonable accommodations rights and responsibilities, including information on funding sources • Develop focused reasonable accommodation training and engagement sessions for managers, supervisors, and employees that is in addition to the annual mandatory EEO/Diversity Training. • Develop templates for reasonable accommodation related documents that will help to provide consistency and expedite communications. • Add the request for reasonable accommodation higher up in FWS job announcements to make it easier for applicants to find. 	
Responsible Official(s)	Performance Standards Address the Plan? (Yes or No)	
FWS Director FWS Deputy Director DEIA Committee Chairperson EEO Director Diversity Program Manager Employee Relations Manager Assistant Director, Management and Administration	Yes	
Barrier Analysis Process Completed? (Yes or No)	Barrier(s) Identified? (Yes or No)	
Yes	Yes	
Statement of Identified Barrier: Description of Policy, Procedure, or Practice		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion of non-inclusive and restrictive language on job vacancies is prohibitive for PWD and fails to account for possible accommodations. • Lack of supervisor awareness for reasonable accommodations resources and options prevents employees from fully accessing accommodations. 		
Sources of Data	Sources Reviewed? (Yes or No)	Identify Information Collected
Workforce Data Tables	Yes	FY 2023 MD-715 B Tables. See triggers outlined above.
Complaint Data (Trends)	Yes	<p>Informal and Formal Complaints data and trends from <i>iComplaints</i> platform, internal tracking systems, and Annual Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Statistical Report of Discrimination Complaints - 462 Report (EEOC Form 462). Disability was the second most common basis of discrimination reported during FY 2023 (reprisal was first with 16 complaints). There were 12 disability-based complaints in FY2023.</p> <p>Disability Mental - 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appt/Hire - 2 • Disciplinary action - 2 • Perf. Eval/appraisal - 1 • Harassment-non-sexual - 4 • Reasonable accommodation disability - 1 • Other terms/conditions of employment - 1 <p>Disability Physical - 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perf. Eval/appraisal - 1 • Harassment-non-sexual - 5 • Promotion/non-selection - 1 • Reasonable accommodation disability - 3 • Termination - 1

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time and Attendance - 1 • Training - 2 • Other terms/conditions of employment - 3
Grievance Data (Trends)	Yes	<p>There were 58 harassment allegations in FY 23 for the following protected categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sex (Including Pregnancy & Gender Identity) – 20 • Race - 9 • Sexual Orientation - 3 • Nation Origin – 3 • Age – 2 • Disability – 8 • Retaliation - 13 <p>Fourteen percent of the allegations in FY 2023 were related to Disability. From 2017-2023 there were 184 total grievances which highlights the need to continue efforts directed towards workplace inclusion.</p>
Findings from Decisions (e.g., EEO, Grievance, MSPB, Anti-Harassment Processes)	Yes	No findings of discrimination
Climate Assessment Survey (e.g., FEVS)	Yes	Analyzed the FY 2022 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) and FY 2022 FWS Diversity & Inclusion Workplace Assessment Survey
Exit Interview Data	Yes	<p>According to FY 2023 FWS employee exit responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 39% of PWD indicated that a lack of promotion/career advancement opportunities was the primary reason for separating • 73% of PWD felt they were provided adequate technology, tools, and equipment to effectively perform their job • 43% of PWD felt executives/senior leaders were effective in motivating and leading the workforce
SEP Observance Survey – Barrier Analysis Question	Yes	<p>Scope of qualitative analysis was for survey data collected after these events: Hispanic Heritage Month 2022, National Disability Employment Awareness Month 2022, Native American Heritage Month 2022, Veterans Day 2022, Martin Luther King Day 2023, and Black and African American History Month 2023. The following key topics were identified as areas of concern by employees when answering the question: “In your opinion, what at the Service (e.g. policy, practice, or procedure) needs to change in order to provide more access to employment and development opportunities for the celebrated group of this event?”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Cultural Competence/Training</u> Increase understanding and awareness about the target groups and increase related training. Provide more DEIA training specifically cultural competencies for supervisors and managers.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Recruitment/Outreach</u> Increase outreach for recruitment resources and support available to the target groups. • <u>Hiring</u> Increase career ladder positions to help employees from underrepresented or systematically excluded groups to move up in their career without having to relocate.
Focus Groups	Yes	<p>FWS engaged 35% of the workforce through listening sessions and online surveys for the Values Project to create a shared vision and core values. This included 100 listening sessions and over 1,500 surveys and open houses. The information gathered across these engagement efforts led to the creation of shared purpose, core values, behaviors that embody the values, components of the agency's voice, and guided the focus of the Service's systems assessment.</p> <p>The FWS PWD ERG meets on a monthly basis as a forum for employees who identify as PWD. Participants discussed numerous factors that contribute to their success and wellbeing within the agency including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arbitrary physical requirements preventing PWD from applying for jobs • Pervasive stigma creating an unwelcome environment • Lack of awareness and resources available for reasonable accommodations • Safety within the workplace • Ensuring full access to employment and community involvement.
Interviews	Yes	<p>In FY 2023, met with Disability ERG to discuss potential barriers faced by PWD in applying and being selected for leadership programs.</p> <p>A Request for Information on hiring practices and procedures in FY 2022 was sent to all hiring managers to collect information for a barrier analysis at the point of selection. Interviews will be conducted with hiring managers in FY 2024.</p>
Reports (e.g., Congress, EEOC, MSPB, GAO, OPM)	Yes	<p>EEOC Report - <i>The EEO Status of Workers with Disabilities in the Federal Sector</i></p> <p>EEOC Root Cause Barrier Analysis Tool for Hiring</p> <p>FWS Values Project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee Engagement Report - November 2023 • Systems Assessment Results and Recommendations to Support Values Implementation - November 2023
Other (Please Describe)	Yes	<p>A five-year trend analysis was conducted as part of outcome measures related to DOI's barrier analysis efforts to increase workforce diversity. The analysis</p>

		<p>showed an increase in the FWS permanent workforce for PWD (+1.18%) and PWT (+0.57%) from FY 2019 to FY 2023.</p> <p>Analyzed Directorate Resource Assistant Fellows Program (DRFP): 17.7% (11) of FY 2023 DRFP hires were individuals with a disability. Two had targeted disabilities.</p> <p>The Barrier Analysis Team identified these key barriers for PWD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of supervisory knowledge on reasonable accommodations • Lack of professional development • Ability to remote work • A specific barrier was the driver's license requirement for positions. 		
Target Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Planned Activities	Sufficient Staffing & Funding (Yes or No)	Modified Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Completion Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
12/31/2021	1. Recommend NCTC clarify selection process (e.g., requirements, evaluation criteria, timelines, deciding officials) for SUTL and ALDP to employees during the launch of the two programs in FY 2021.	Yes	12/31/2022	09/30/2022
12/31/2022	2. ODIWM will brief the DEIA Committee and Directorate on the results of the 2021 FWS Diversity and Inclusion Workplace Assessment.	Yes		04/27/2022
12/31/2022	3. ODIWM will conduct equity training for entire FWS workforce on disabilities in the workplace and reasonable accommodations.	Yes		09/30/2022
12/31/2022	4. ODIWM will establish a central process to track and fulfill regional and program requests for facilitation of conversations related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.	Yes		12/01/2022
12/31/2022	5. ODIWM will recommend the JAO develop a project plan to conduct full review of driver's license requirements to determine business need and develop a process for determining the necessity for each announcement.	Yes		12/31/2022
12/31/2022	6. ODIWM will evaluate previous FY quarter's hiring success and brief the DEIA Committee on needed adjustments.	Yes		09/21/2022

12/31/2022	7. ODIWM will create an action plan to increase communication on Schedule A hiring authority to managers and employees.	Yes		09/30/2022
12/31/2022	8. ODIWM will recommend Regional Directors employ employee engagement and leadership (EELD) coordinators and include them on their regional leadership teams.	Yes		10/29/2021
09/30/2023	9. JAO will add the request for reasonable accommodation higher up in FWS job announcements to make it easier for applicants to find.	Yes		09/30/2023
09/30/2023	10. EMR will develop templates for reasonable accommodation related documents that will help to provide consistency and expedite communications.	Yes		09/30/2023
03/15/2023	11.FWS will develop focused reasonable accommodation training and engagement sessions for managers, supervisors, and employees that is in addition to the mandatory EEO/Diversity Training for FY 2023.	Yes		03/15/2023
10/01/2023	12. Initiate meetings with ODIWM, NCTC, and interviews with employees to identify next steps for analysis based on the triggers that exist for PWD applicants and selectees for leadership programs.	Yes		10/01/2023
04/30/2024	13. Conduct a listening session with a focus group to identify any barriers that exist for PWD applicants and/or selectees for the SUTL and ALDP career development programs.	Yes		
12/01/2023	14. EMR and ODIWM meet to coordinate on automating tracking of the RA timelines.	Yes		12/01/2023
03/29/2023	15. EMR develop automated tracker to improve current process for tracking RA timelines.	Yes		
Fiscal Year 2023	Accomplishments			
	<p>9. JAO added the request for reasonable accommodation higher up in FWS job announcements to make it easier for applicants to find.</p> <p>10. EMR developed templates for reasonable accommodation related documents that provide consistency and expedite communications.</p> <p>11. FWS developed focused reasonable accommodation training and engagement sessions for managers, supervisors, and employees that was in addition to the mandatory EEO/Diversity Training for FY 2023.</p>			

12. Meetings were initiated with ODIWM, NCTC, and interviews with employees to identify next steps for analysis based on the triggers that exist for PWD applicants and selectees for leadership programs and resulted in a plan for a focus group to be conducted in FY 2024.

14. EMR and ODIWM met to coordinate on improving the tracking of RA timelines. The specific steps in the RA process to track were identified and an automated tracker is in the process of being developed.

Additional accomplishments in FY 2023 related to PWD and PWTD:

- FWS transitioned to a new process for entry-level positions to require non-competitive candidate solicitation and consideration to (1) expedite the hiring process at the entry level, (2) to ensure hiring managers are considering the candidates in whom FWS has already invested, including our internal employees, interns, fellows, temps, and terms, and (3) to increase the diversity of the workforce through authorities that allow us to more effectively recruit veterans, individuals with disabilities, and candidates from other underrepresented groups.
- ODIWM continued to regularly brief leadership on workforce participation and recruitment numbers for PWD and PWTD. A workforce demographics dashboard was developed to provide a visual presentation of workforce demographic data available in the FWS MD-715 report. Statisticians showcased the dashboard to leadership and did a demonstration and Q&A during a session open to all employees in February 2023.
- FWS conducted reasonable accommodations training for employees and supervisors. The training focused on DOI's *Personnel Bulletin 21-03, Processing Requests for Reasonable Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities* and provided an opportunity for participants to learn about their role in the reasonable accommodation process and to be aware of their rights and responsibilities.
- FWS developed and launched the 2023 DEIA and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) training course that builds on content from previous years' courses, fulfills training requirements, and addresses identified attitudinal barriers.
- In FY 2023, the FWS Unconscious Bias Team delivered over 45 training sessions, primarily with Hiring Panels.
- FWS provided information on mentoring programs and trainings to all new employees during the onboarding process. In addition, the Mentoring SharePoint was integrated into various onboarding communication tools.
- FWS provided leadership messages to report progress on DIIP actions to all employees. The objective of these regular reports is to bolster and coalesce the DEIA message and engage employees at all levels to take specific actions.
- To support communicators in the FWS who ensure that news, digital content, and stories are inclusive, welcoming, and accessible to diverse audiences, a cross-programmatic team led *Transforming Change!* a webinar in a series focusing on the FWS Digital Communications Standards of Excellence. Subject matter experts presented on culturally sensitive, values-based, and 508-compliant communication.
- FWS enhanced its online internal presence by launching the New Welcoming Workplace standalone SharePoint site that houses DEIA and DIIP resources, policies, guidance, FWS work culture information, and progress in a one-stop shop that is

accessible to all employees.

- FWS hosted a live event for National Disability Employment Awareness Month titled *'Flipping the Script on Disability'*, that focused on FWS' commitment to accessible opportunities, facilities, and services for employees and those it partners with and serves.
- FWS hosted three live events for the IDEA Conversation series *It Starts with Us: An IDEA Conversation Series for Building an Inclusive Workplace*, which focused on the "I" in IDEA – Inclusion. These conversations focused on areas that helped us recognize and dismantle barriers to inclusion, build relationships and trust with one another, and turn our good intent into best practices.

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

N/A

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

Based on a five-year trend analysis there was an increase in the FWS permanent workforce for PWD (+1.18%) and PWTD (+0.57%) from FY 2019 to FY 2023. In FY 2023, FWS also exceeded the hiring of goal of 27 PWD and/or PWTD by hiring 156 PWD, including 35 PWTD, from outside the organization.

In FY 2023, 121 requests for noncompetitive candidates (including those eligible for Schedule A and 30% or more disabled Veterans) were processed with over 379 noncompetitive applicants. This was a result of FWS nationally encouraging the use of direct hiring authorities and providing tools to set this practice as an expectation for hiring managers through the Deputies Entry Level Hiring Rules (ELHR).

The ELHR are a result of selection data analysis showing that the use of Special Hiring Authorities (SHAs) for Veterans, Schedule A for individuals with disabilities, Pathways Conversions, and Public Land Corps Authority Conversions were resulting in higher representation of selections of people of color than the use of DEU. Through a yearlong process development, the ELHR were developed and launched in April 2023. The purpose of the Deputies Entry Level Hiring process is to:

- Expedite the hiring process at the entry level
- Ensure consideration of candidates in whom FWS has already invested, including internal employees, interns, fellows, temporary, and terms
- Increase the diversity of the workforce through authorities that allow us to more effectively recruit veterans, individuals with disabilities, and candidates from other underrepresented groups.

Hiring Managers must consult with HR about the rules and consider noncompetitive candidates with Veterans Recruitment Appointment (VRA), 30% or more disabled Veterans, Individuals with Schedule A Disability letters, former Pathways candidates eligible for conversion, and former Public Land Corps candidates before an entry-level (i.e., starting at GS-9 or below in most professional and administrative job series) position will post on USAJobs. Since the launch of the rules, 43 candidates have been selected using the rules.

FWS uses the following sources to identify candidates who are eligible for the special hiring authorities:

- Sourcing candidates (including former FWS interns with Pathways appointment eligibility & Public Land Corps hiring authority; Veterans; Schedule A candidates with a disability) with a searchable resume on USAJobs who have relevant skills or experience and who currently live near the duty station or have expressed a desire to relocate there

- Sourcing candidates from Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) for students and recent graduates with disabilities
- Sourcing LinkedIn Recruiter for Veterans near the duty station with relevant skills or experience
- Sending the position description to local Veterans Affairs (VA) and Vocational Rehabilitation contacts for any candidates they are working with to find employment.

In FY 2023, leadership also received more support for reasonable accommodations through the onboarding of a specialist that works as a consultant to leadership on the process of providing reasonable accommodations for employees.

The planned activity for meetings with ODIWM, NCTC, and interviews with employees to discuss the triggers that exist for PWD applicants or selectees for leadership programs, resulted in the decision to conduct a focus group in FY 2024 to collect more information on potential barriers.

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

In FY 2024, FWS will take the following actions to continue to address the barriers outlined above for PWD and PWTD: 1) ODIWM will continue to work with the Deputies Team to encourage the use of the special hiring authorities, 2) ODIWM and NCTC will conduct listening session with a focus group to identify any barriers that exist for PWD applicants and/or selectees for the SUTL and ALDP career development program 3) FWS will implement a tracker to automate monitoring timelines for reasonable accommodations requests.

Additionally, the Regions and Headquarters will continue to provide capacity to coordinate programs and special hiring authorities to attract current students, recent graduates, and other eligible talent to careers within government service. The FWS Unconscious Bias Team will also continue to deliver training sessions with Hiring Panels.

In FY 2024, FWS is conducting a comprehensive needs assessment that includes DEIA-related training which will assist in identifying what training already exists within the bureau and how to leverage existing knowledge and communities, including identifying current skill gaps for competencies to advance DEIA. All employees will be asked to voluntarily participate in focus groups for this effort.

FWS will continue to encourage the use of the Stay Interview Guide, a new tool for managers and supervisors to help foster relationships and build trust with employees. The tool is intended to serve as an adaptable and optional resource to support inclusive and welcoming workplaces and encourage employee retention.

FWS will continue to provide increased coordination and resources to support employee groups and grassroots activities that advance welcoming workplaces. FWS leaders are actively engaging leaders from employee groups in assessing and addressing their needs. Each ERG has an executive sponsor who advocates for their goals and objectives. Groups include the People with Disabilities ERG; Pride ERG; Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) ERG; Veterans ERG; and the Women's+ ERG.

FWS will continue to provide leadership messages to report progress on DIIP actions to all employees. The objective of these regular reports is to bolster and coalesce the DEIA message and engage employees at all levels to take specific actions. Under the DIIP, FWS annually commits to a consistent set

of expectations across the organization for messaging, coordinated action, adaptive management, and accountability. Leadership will continue to listen to employee feedback through surveys, exit interviews, and focus groups to refine the DIIP annual action plan.

FWS will conduct a third Diversity and Inclusion Workplace Assessment in partnership with OPM. The survey results will be shared with all employees and assessment results will be paired with those from FEVS and Gallup surveys to provide essential employee feedback to inform the annual DIIP work plan action to advance DEIA.