



## Disability Program Strategic Project Plan FY 2019 – FY 2024

*For the improvement and increase of employment of individuals with disabilities within the  
United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission as required by Executive Order 13548*

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## Background

In 2010 Executive Order 13548 was signed which required Federal agencies to improve their efforts to employ individuals with disabilities through the development of a strategic five-year plan that identifies specific methods to increase recruitment, hiring, and retention of individuals with disabilities within those agencies. Its aim is to increase the population of persons with disabilities within the Federal workplace to 100,000 over the next five years with the focus being on recruitment, hiring, and retention. This document updates the Agency's Strategic Disability Program Plan of 2011.

The United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) previous Disability Program Strategic Program Plan (DPSP) named the Associate Director for Human Resources Operations and Policy as the Senior Level champion and official accountable for this program. In addition, the plan focuses on five (5) specific goals to: (1) develop targeted recruitment strategies to attract qualified applicants with disabilities; (2) increase the population of persons with disabilities employed by the NRC to 2% by 2016; (3) improve reasonable accommodation efforts to enable employees who become disabled after being hired to continue to make valuable contributions to the agency; (4) increase training and developmental activities for persons with disabilities in order to better prepare them for more challenging work and to advancement throughout the agency; and (5) improve demonstrated commitment to support the needs of the disabled employees.

In July 2018, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) published a Final Rule related to Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act. In this Final Rule there were specific requirements one of which was to develop an Affirmative Action Disability Plan (AADP) for Hiring, Placement, and Advancement of People with Disabilities.

## Introduction

The NRC's DPSP focuses on the key requirements of EEOC Final Rule of Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act, and establishes a hiring goal of 12% of people with disabilities at the GS-11 or higher to include Senior Executive Service (SES) positions, and the GS-10 and lower. In addition, of the 12%, two percent will represent people with targeted disabilities. We also commit to providing Personal Assistance Services (PAS) for people with targeted disabilities who are unable to perform activities of daily living which cause a barrier to employment.

## NRC Disability Program Strategic Project Plan Goals Overview for FY 2019 – FY 2024

### **Target Area #1: Recruitment**

**Goal:** *Identify and mitigate barriers to recruitment of applicants with targeted disabilities for mission critical occupations within the NRC.*

The following mission critical occupational series have been identified for the NRC: 0801, 0840, 1306, 1301 and 0905. The agency will focus on targeted recruitment efforts to afford individuals with disabilities opportunities to fill these positions. Students, interns, and other potential employees represent substantial recruitment potential for the NRC. These opportunities will be made public and will affirm the NRC's commitment to promoting all forms of diversity, including persons who have disabilities. Recruitment and selection materials will identify accommodations and other special programs that may set the NRC apart from other employers. Targeted advertising and outreach to individuals with disabilities will be conducted and where possible will depict individuals with disabilities.

### **Recruitment**

#### **Action Items**

- Increase use and awareness of recruitment tools and programs such as Schedule A or equivalent hiring authority, Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP), student employment, Wounded Warriors, and Operation War Fighter.
- Increase management and Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO) staff training regarding Schedule A hiring or equivalent hiring authority and reasonable accommodations during the hiring and interviewing process.
- Increase agency efforts to match applicants with targeted disabilities with Agency needs especially in mission critical occupations.
- Develop and maintain partnerships and contacts with organizations that specialize in the employment of individuals with disabilities.
- Continue agency and management participation in targeted recruitment events, especially those for disabled veterans and college students.
- Conduct additional outreach and recruitment efforts for people with targeted disabilities (PWTD) when recruiting for all grade levels.
- Ensure the applicant process is accessible.
- Ensure vacancy announcements include sufficient information regarding the use of reasonable accommodations through the application and hiring process.
- Ensure job requirements do not pose barriers to employment for people with disabilities.

### **Area of Focus #2: Hiring**

**Goal:** *Increase the population of persons with disabilities to 12% overall and 2% with targeted disabilities employed at the NRC.*

The NRC has adopted the EEOC's regulatory goals of 12% of the NRC workforce represent people with disabilities (PWD) at the GS-11 and above grade level to include SES, and at the GS-10 level and below. A focus will be on the 2% goals for people with targeted disabilities. These numbers include permanent employees, both veterans, non-veterans, and those individuals deemed to have a disability through the agency's reasonable accommodations process. The NRC will also continue to look to fill positions at any grade level for any position

for which an individual with a disability meets the qualification standards and high-performance expectations of this agency.

### **Hiring**

#### **Action Items**

- Provide training to hiring managers, supervisors, and HR professionals on Special Hiring Authorities through workshops, or other training activities.
- Continue to increase communication between the Agency's Disability Program Coordinator, the Selective Placement Coordinator, the Disability Veteran's Coordinator, hiring managers, and staffing and recruitment HR Specialists when bringing disabled individuals on-board to ensure that accommodation needs are known and met during the interview process and when employees report for duty.
- Continue to revise letters offering employment to include information regarding requesting reasonable accommodations so that accommodation needs can be addressed before employees report for duty.
- Continue to solicit self-identification (Form SF-256) during New Employee Orientation so that employees entering on duty clearly understand the importance, purpose, and need of self-identification.
- Re-survey NRC employees annually for self-identification (Form SF-256) certifications and updates.
- Develop a Focus Group of current PWD and PWTD to understand their experiences with the hiring process; how accommodations are requested and received throughout the agency; whether hiring officials understand the hiring process; if barriers exist in the hiring process.

### ***Area of Focus #3: Retention***

***Goal: Improve accommodation efforts and strategies to support PWD and PWTD at the NRC.***

As the NRC seeks to attract and retain talented employees, this plan strives to take into consideration the variety of accommodations that might be necessary for the newly disabled or the aging workforce especially those with targeted disabilities. The NRC will achieve its retention goal through providing effective accommodations where applicable and more return-to-work opportunities in an effort to help to extend careers for PWD and PWTD and also demonstrate NRC's commitment to retaining valuable employees over a lifetime of service.

### **Retention**

#### **Action Items**

- Continue to educate and train NRC employees (including senior leaders, managers and supervisors, HR professionals and employees) on the NRC's Reasonable Accommodations Procedures and areas of overlap such as worker's compensation, Family Medical Leave Act, telework, ergonomics, accessibility issues, information technology, and modifications of the physical environment.
- Continue to increase communication and collaboration among key internal stakeholders to ensure that processes are standardized so that accommodations are effectively and expeditiously provided especially when there is a need for installation of new equipment, technology, or other services to ensure timely implementation, and to ensure appropriate security plans and/or waivers are obtained in advance of employee use.
- Continue to increase employee awareness and encourage use of accommodation

resources such as the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), the Computer and Electronic Accommodation Program (CAPS), State Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and the Interagency Disability Educational Awareness Showcase (IDEAS) to support reasonable accommodations and return-to-work needs.

- Continue to collaborate and communicate with other professionals within and outside of the agency to coordinate strategies for employee reasonable accommodations, retention, and return-to-work opportunities.
- Develop a comprehensive retention strategy to include established time tables, schedules, and applicant flow data in order to track and analyze hiring practices and career development progression of PWD and PWTD within the NRC.
- Develop a process to monitor the conversion of PWD and PWTD from NRC's Schedule A equivalent to permanent. competitive service.

#### ***Area of Focus #4: Development and Career Progression***

***Goal: Develop a system to promote the development and career progression of PWD and PWTD.***

The NRC continues to provide several educational and learning opportunities to students and interns that bring them into contact with the NRC facilities and employees. Increased awareness and access to these programs will allow individuals with disabilities to learn of opportunities to develop valuable skills for career growth and advancement. We plan to continue to encourage and support persons with disabilities to take advantage of all developmental and career advancement opportunities available at the NRC.

#### **Development & Career Progression**

##### **Action Items**

- Establish partnership with NRC's Professional Development Center (PDC) to better support and implement training accommodation needs for employees with disabilities.
- Establish a system to track the training progression and professional development of employees with disabilities.
- Increase awareness and participation of employees with disabilities in NRC's Career Development programs, such as the Leader's Academy or Toastmasters.
- Increase awareness, participation, and tracking of disabled employees in the Agency's mentoring program.
- Work with CAP to obtain assistive technology to support employees participating in training at the Agency training centers at Headquarters and Tennessee.

#### ***Area of Focus #5: Cultural Change***

***Goal: Demonstrate greater commitment of support of the hiring, retention, and advancement of PWD and PWTD at the NRC.***

An on-going assessment of NRC's disability initiatives has and will continue to determine cultural barriers that impact the recruitment and selection of disabled individuals (i.e., management and employee concerns); evaluate current Agency policies and procedures related to disability employment; evaluate current workplace accessibility to include information, technology, and facility issues; and evaluate the current workplace climate related to disability employment continues at the NRC. To further those efforts, it has been determined that the

following actions will assist the agency to successfully effectuate a cultural change within the NRC that would demonstrate continued commitment to disability employment.

**Culture Change**

- Partner with the Advisory Committee of Employees with Disabilities (ACED) to develop a strategy to provide support to assist individuals with disabilities successfully seek out advancement opportunities.
- Utilize PWD and PWTD within the agency on ranking panels.
- Establish a tracking system to capture training and career development.
- Encourage PWD and PWTD to develop Individual Development Plans (IDP).
- Continue to prohibit disability discrimination and/or harassment through agency policies.