



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Washington, DC 20415

The Director

November 8, 2010

MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: JOHN BERRY
DIRECTOR

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Berry", is written over the printed name and title.

Subject: Model Strategies for Recruitment and Hiring of People with Disabilities as Required Under Executive Order 13548

On July 26, 2010, President Obama issued Executive Order (EO) 13548, which directs Executive departments and agencies (agencies) to improve their efforts to employ Federal workers with disabilities and targeted disabilities through increased recruitment, hiring, and retention of these individuals. OPM, in consultation with the White House, the Department of Labor (DOL), the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), has developed, as required by the EO, model recruitment and hiring strategies for agencies to use to increase their employment of people with disabilities. That document is attached to this memorandum.

Agencies now have 120 days from the date of this memorandum to submit their plans for increasing employment of people with disabilities to OPM. The model strategies document contains detailed guidance on what agencies should include in their plans.

Executive Order 13548 demonstrates the President's strong commitment to making the Federal Government a welcoming place for people with disabilities where they can thrive and make the most of their talents and abilities. We must all make it a priority to do a better job of recruiting, hiring, and retaining people with disabilities. These attached strategies set us on that path. OPM is committed to helping your agency achieve this important goal.

Please submit your agency plan to John Benison by e-mail at john.benison@opm.gov. For accessibility purposes, please submit your agency's plan in MS Word format. Mr. Benison is available to answer questions regarding the EO and your agency plan.

cc: Chiefs of Staff
Chief Human Capital Officers

MODEL STRATEGIES FOR RECRUITMENT AND HIRING OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

I. Introduction

On July 26, 2010, President Obama issued Executive Order 13548, which provides that the Federal Government, as the Nation's largest employer, must become a model for the employment of individuals with disabilities. The order directs Executive departments and agencies (agencies) to improve their efforts to employ Federal workers with disabilities and targeted disabilities through increased recruitment, hiring, and retention of these individuals. This is not only the right thing to do, but it is also good for the Government, as it increases the potential pool of highly qualified people from which the Federal Government draws its talent.

The Executive Order further instructed the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), in consultation with the Secretary of Labor, the Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), to design model recruitment and hiring strategies for agencies to facilitate their employment of people with disabilities. This document constitutes that guidance.

It provides recruitment, hiring, and retention strategies to assist agencies in increasing the number of individuals with disabilities in the Federal workforce through compliance with Executive Order 13163 and achievement of the goals set forth therein over 5 years, including specific goals for hiring individuals with targeted disabilities.

The Executive Order also required each agency to develop an agency-specific plan for promoting employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Tips for creating agency plans are included in this guidance.

OPM, in consultation with DOL, EEOC, and OMB, is also currently developing mandatory training programs for human resources personnel and hiring managers regarding the employment of persons with disabilities. Further information about these programs will be forthcoming.

In order to meet the goals the President set forth in the Executive Order, commitment is required at all levels of the agency. Accordingly, this document should be reviewed carefully by agency leadership, the senior-level official who is accountable for ensuring the agency meets the requirements of the Executive Order, agency hiring managers, HR staffing specialists, Selective Placement Program Coordinators, Disability Program Managers, and any other staff with responsibility for supporting the hiring and retention of people with disabilities/targeted disabilities.

II. Key Requirements of the Executive Order

- The Executive Order adopts the goal set forth in Executive Order 13163 of hiring 100,000 people with disabilities into the Federal Government over 5 years, including individuals with targeted disabilities.

- It creates a requirement that human resources personnel and hiring managers receive mandatory training on hiring people with disabilities.
- Within 120 days of receiving the model strategies outlined herein, each agency must develop an agency-specific plan for implementing the Executive Order and promoting employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
- The plans are to be developed in consultation with and, as appropriate, subject to approval by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).
- Agency specific plans are to include performance targets and numerical goals for employment of individuals with disabilities and sub-goals for employment of individuals with targeted disabilities, consistent with law. For the list of targeted disabilities, see Standard Form (SF) 256, Self Identification of Disability, which is attached to this document.
- Each agency is required to designate a senior-level agency official to be accountable for enhancing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities and individuals with targeted disabilities. This official, among other things, is accountable for developing and implementing the agency's plan, creating recruitment and training programs for employment of individuals with disabilities and targeted disabilities, and coordinating employment counseling to help match the career aspirations of individuals with disabilities to the needs of the agency.
- In implementing their plans, agencies, to the extent permitted by law, are directed to increase use of the Federal Government's Schedule A excepted service hiring authority for persons with disabilities and increase participation of individuals with disabilities in internships, fellowships, and training and mentoring programs.
- The Director of OPM, in consultation with the Director of OMB, will implement a system for reporting regularly to the President, the heads of agencies, and the public on agencies' progress in implementing their plans and meeting the objectives of the Executive Order. OPM, to the extent permitted by law, will compile and post on its website Government-wide statistics on the hiring of individuals with disabilities.
- The Director of OPM, in consultation with the Secretary of Labor and Chair of the EEOC, will identify and assist agencies in implementing strategies for retaining Federal workers with disabilities in Federal employment including, but not limited to, training, the use of centralized accommodation funds to provide reasonable accommodations, increasing access to appropriate accessible technologies, and ensuring the accessibility of physical and virtual workspaces.
- Agencies are to make special efforts, to the extent permitted by law, to ensure the retention of those who are injured on the job. This includes working to improve, expand, and increase successful return-to-work outcomes for those of their employees who sustain work-related injuries and illnesses as defined under the Federal Employees Compensation

Act (FECA), to increase the availability of job accommodations and light or limited duty jobs, to remove disincentives for FECA claimants to return to work, and to take other appropriate measures.

- The Secretary of Labor, in consultation with the Director of OPM, is to pursue innovative re-employment strategies and develop policies, procedures, and structures that foster improved return-to-work outcomes, including pursuing overall reform of the FECA system. The Secretary of Labor is also directed to propose specific outcome measures and targets by which each agency's progress in carrying out return-to-work and FECA claims processing efforts can be assessed.
- To view the entire EO go to: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/pdf/2010-18988.pdf>.

III. Agency Specific Plans

As mentioned, the Executive Order requires each agency to develop an agency specific plan for implementing the goals of the Executive Order and promoting employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. OPM and OMB will review the plans. We encourage agencies to be creative and comprehensive in drafting their plans. At a minimum, though, all agency plans should contain the following:

- The name of the agency senior-level official who will be accountable for enhancing employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities and individuals with targeted disabilities within the agency and for meeting the goals of the Executive Order. This individual should be a member of the agency's Senior Executive Service (SES) ranks and should review the agency's plan before submission to OPM and OMB.
- An overview of the agency's strategies to recruit, hire, and retain individuals with disabilities/targeted disabilities including the number of individuals with disabilities/targeted disabilities that the agency will set as a hiring goal for each year over the next five years, beginning with 2011, and a description of how the agency will hire individuals with disabilities at all grade levels and in various job occupations (series).
- A description of the agency's plan for providing participation of appropriate personnel in mandatory training and for assessing and increasing the impact of that training on managers' use of effective tools to recruit, hire, and retain individuals with disabilities.
- A description of how the agency will increase return-to-work outcomes and coordinate with the Department of Labor's Office of Workers' Compensation Programs (OWCP) to make accommodations available to injured Federal employees who sustain serious workplace injuries or illnesses. Agency plans should contain quarterly monitoring of return-to-work successes under the President's Protecting Our Workers and Ensuring Reemployment (POWER) Initiative and identify injured employees, as defined under the Federal Employees' Compensation Act (FECA), who would benefit from accommodations and reassignment. Reemployment of employees injured on the job will assist agencies in improving their disability hiring outcomes. For additional information on retention and re-

employment of Federal employees who are injured on the job go to:
<http://www.dol.gov/owcp/dfec/power>

In addition, Agency Heads shall encourage all agency managers, via letter, email, or other effective means of communication, to recruit, hire, and retain people with disabilities, including the agency's performance goals, describing the agency's obligation to do so under the Executive Order.

IV. Schedule A Appointing Authorities

A. Description

Excepted service appointing authorities are critical tools for increasing employment opportunities for people with disabilities in the Federal Government. Two of these authorities are particularly relevant:

- **Schedule A, 5 CFR 213.3102(u), for hiring people with severe physical disabilities, psychiatric disabilities, and mental retardation.** This excepted authority is used to appoint persons with severe physical disabilities, psychiatric disabilities, and intellectual disabilities. Such individuals may qualify for conversion to permanent status after two years of satisfactory service. Severe physical disabilities include but are not limited to blindness, deafness, paralysis, missing limbs, epilepsy, dwarfism, and more.
- **Schedule A, 5 CFR 213.3102(11) for hiring readers, interpreters, and personal assistants.** This excepted authority is used to appoint readers, interpreters, and personal assistants for employees with severe disabilities as reasonable accommodations.

OPM has developed Bite Size Training on "Using Schedule A to Hire People with Disabilities." It is available at <http://golearn.gov/HiringReform/index.htm>. This 5-minute training provides managers and HR staff with a helpful overview of what they need to know to hire people with disabilities using Schedule A. Also, as mentioned above, OPM is working on further training programs for agencies to use in meeting their obligation to provide mandatory training to human resources personnel and hiring managers. Additional information on these programs will be forthcoming.

B. Documentation and the SF-256

In order to be eligible for employment through the Schedule A non-competitive process, documentation of the disability is required. Such documentation is used to verify that the individual being hired is indeed a person with an intellectual disability, severe physical disability, or psychiatric disability. This documentation must be provided to the hiring agency before an individual can be hired. Documentation of eligibility for employment under Schedule A can be obtained from a licensed medical professional (e.g., a physician or other medical professional certified by a state, the District of Columbia, or a U.S. territory to practice medicine); a licensed

vocational rehabilitation specialist (i.e., state or private); or any Federal agency, state agency, or agency of the District of Columbia or a U.S. territory that issues or provides disability benefits.

In addition, upon hiring, the individual with a disability or the agency Human Resource office should complete the Standard Form 256. The SF-256 includes the legal definition of disability and lists various disabilities, including several that are considered targeted disabilities.

Applicants and employees with disabilities may also use the SF-256 to voluntarily identify their particular disability for data collection purposes only, even if they are not seeking to establish eligibility under Schedule A. Data captured from the SF-256 is used to compile the disability demographics of Federal agencies. This data is crucial for agencies to determine how well or poorly they are achieving their disability hiring goals.

In addition, as recommended by EEOC, agencies should use the updated SF 256 as a tool to measure progress by resurveying the workforce at least every other year to request that people with disabilities self-identify. Agencies should include the number of current employees who self identify for the first time through the resurvey process in their overall total number of employees with disabilities/targeted disabilities. Employees should be assured that the information collected through the re-survey is only to be used to determine if the agency is meeting its hiring and retention goals.

OPM recently updated SF-256 to better reflect current definitional language with respect to the disability community. The updated SF-256 and a bridge document that details the differences between it and the form previously used by OPM are attached. Agencies should begin using the updated SF-256 now, if they have not already done so.

Any information that is captured on the SF-256 is protected from improper disclosure under the Privacy Act.

V. Strategies To Increase Employment of People with Disabilities/Targeted Disabilities in the Federal Government

Agencies should employ each of the strategies and actions listed below to support the goals of the Executive Order and become a model employer of people with disabilities/targeted disabilities. The list of strategies and actions is not exhaustive and agencies are encouraged to add to it with their own approaches that will also lead to increased recruitment, hiring, and retention of people with disabilities/targeted disabilities.

A. Develop a Solid Foundation

A solid foundation is necessary to accomplishing the goals set by the President in the Executive Order. The following strategies will help agencies to create the foundation upon which future results will be built.

- Have your agency specific plan for promoting employment opportunities for people with disabilities approved by and implemented under the direction, close supervision, and support of the senior-level agency official and other members of the leadership of the agency as designated by the agency head. Build organizational support for the

plans by implementing them in collaboration and partnership with other relevant program offices, such as the Human Resources, EEO/Civil Rights, and Chief Information Officer's organizations.

- Conduct mandatory training for Senior leadership, hiring managers, and HR staffing and employee relations specialists on the agency's plan to promote employment opportunities for people with disabilities, including use of the Schedule A authority for people with disabilities, other tools available to assist agencies in identifying qualified applicants with disabilities for open agency positions, and the agency's procedures for providing reasonable accommodation to job applicants and employees with disabilities.
- At the agency headquarters level, ensure that a full-time Selective Placement Coordinator is in place to recruit individuals with disabilities. This individual should be sufficiently senior (i.e., GS-13/14) to advise management on disability recruitment, hiring, advancement and retention. Ensure that the Coordinator is trained in Schedule A for people with disabilities and other excepted hiring authorities, the Rehabilitation Act, Reasonable Accommodation requirements and responsibilities, how to conduct workforce representation analysis, developing recruitment strategies, and establishing contacts with external recruitment sources to reach individuals with disabilities. This training is currently offered by EEOC and DOD.
- Organize an agency disability recruitment task force made up of human resources staff, EEO staff, current employees with disabilities, and managers who have hired people with disabilities. Among other things, the taskforce can help the agency establish a network of disability recruitment resources.
- Review and update all employment information and recruitment materials to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities. Ensure that all information posted on the agency's Internet and Intranet sites is reviewed for Section 508 compliance and, in particular, screen-reader compatibility. Employment information should also be made available in alternate formats such as large print, Braille, and CD.

B. Evaluate Your Hiring Process

- When conducting a job analysis, include review of the agency's eligibility criteria and any agency-specific qualification standards for positions. Identify and revise criteria and standards that are unnecessarily restrictive and potentially exclude people with disabilities. Examples of potentially problematic standards may include blanket rules requiring certain levels of unaided hearing or unaided vision.
- Consistent with the President's Hiring Reform initiative, draft clear, understandable job announcements that explain in plain language the required qualifications and the duties of the job. This is key to any successful recruiting effort, as the job announcement itself can be a barrier for any applicant, including applicants with disabilities, who are interested in Federal employment. In addition to being clear and understandable, every job announcement must communicate the agency's intent to make reasonable accommodations for qualified job applicants and employees with

disabilities. All job announcements should also state that the agency is an equal opportunity employer and should encourage candidates with disabilities to apply.

- Proactively use Schedule A for people with disabilities, as well as other excepted service hiring authorities, to hire people with disabilities expeditiously. Make sure job announcements contain information explaining how to apply under Schedule A.
- In accordance with EEOC Management Directive (MD)715 (<http://www.eeoc.gov/federal/directives/index.cfm>), work with your EEO/Civil Rights office to collect, maintain, and analyze applicant flow data and to examine existing recruitment programs and hiring practices to identify and eliminate any barriers to recruiting/hiring individuals with disabilities and, in particular, individuals with targeted disabilities.

C. Identify Qualified People with Disabilities Through Existing Resources

There are a number of resources currently in existence that can help agencies make progress towards the goals set by the President in the Executive Order. Agencies should make full use of these resources to tap into the great potential of people with disabilities:

- Use OPM's Shared Register of Candidates with Disabilities. OPM, in collaboration with the Chief Human Capital Officer (CHCO) Council, established a contract to populate a shared register of individuals with disabilities who have an interest in working for Federal agencies and who satisfy the requirements of positions federal agencies are frequently required to fill. On a monthly basis, the current vendor will recruit, screen, and direct a minimum of 50 individuals with disabilities to the shared register. This register is sent bi-weekly to the CHCO Council, Deputy CHCOs and agency designated contacts. There is no charge for agencies to use the shared register. Agencies that wish to access the register or that have questions should contact their human capital office. In addition, agencies may contact John Benison or Michael LaRosa in the OPM Deputy Director's Office by e-mail at john.benison@opm.gov or michael.larosa@opm.gov
- Partner with State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies and State Disability Service agencies to recruit potential applicants with disabilities. State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies (SVRAs) provide counseling, evaluation, training and other services to individuals with disabilities. These agencies can assist with information regarding accommodations, effective retention strategies, legal compliance, and training for the agency's organizations. SVRAs' are one of several sources that candidates may use to obtain proof of disability and certification of job readiness required under the Schedule A appointing authority for people with disabilities. For more information, go to www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/ras/. In addition, State Disability Service Agencies, such as State mental health agencies, frequently have employment training programs and can be a good recruitment resource.
- Consult, coordinate and establish working partnerships with Ticket-to-Work Employment Networks and Employment One-Stop Career Centers. The Ticket-to-Work Program

provides people receiving Social Security benefits (beneficiaries) choices for receiving employment services. Under this program, the Social Security Administration (SSA) issues tickets to eligible beneficiaries who may assign those tickets to an Employment Network (EN) of their choice to obtain employment services, vocational rehabilitation services, or other support services necessary to achieve a vocational (work) goal. One-Stop Career Centers (One-Stops) were established under the federal Workforce Investment Act to provide a full range of job seeker assistance under one roof. One-Stops are located at a variety of locations in each state, with more than 3,200 centers across the country. The One-Stop system is required to be "universally accessible;" any member of the general public (including those with disabilities) can access the system and use the basic, or "core," One-Stop services. More information is available at www.yourtickettowork.com, www.socialsecurity.gov/work and www.servicelocator.org.

- Consult with the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), a component of the Department of Education that provides Federal funds in support of the Projects with Industry (PWI) program, the Centers for Independent Living (CIL) program, and the Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFW) program. Individuals receiving services from these programs are not always clients of state Vocational Rehabilitation Services programs. Often times, through the provision of independent living services, individuals with severe disabilities can reach a level of employment. Agencies should explore opportunities for outreach and collaboration with RSA-supported organizations, including rehabilitation programs for Native Americans, to develop additional recruiting resources to improve employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. For this collaboration to be successful, agencies should ensure that RSA state agencies understand the types of jobs for which it is recruiting and that they receive timely information on job openings. Information on RSA can be found at www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/.
- Use the Internet and social media such as Face Book and Twitter to help recruit individuals with disabilities and raise awareness of the agency as an employer.
- Develop an electronic mailing list of disability advocacy groups in the local geographic area. Remember to send regular email notices to these organizations with all job openings and include a description of the Schedule A authority for people with disabilities and basic instructions on how to apply for a Federal job using this Schedule A authority. The notice is a great opportunity to reinforce the agency's commitment to become a model employer of people with disabilities. The human resources offices in field facilities should establish similar links with local disability advocacy groups. Rely on the support of your Selective Placement Coordinator, Disability Program Manager, and other HR and EEO staff to help with developing the list.
- Seek collaborative recruiting relationships with community and governmental groups to improve outreach and access to employment opportunities for minority individuals with disabilities.

D. Focus on Student Programs

Agencies should also look to students as a viable source of qualified people with disabilities. Specifically, when recruiting for internship programs, ensure that you include students with disabilities. Effective outreach to students with disabilities is a great way to tap into the enormous potential offered by this segment of society. Here are some strategies to keep in mind that will assist you in tapping into that resource.

- The Workforce Recruitment Program for College Students with Disabilities (WRP) is a source of candidates for Federal employment jointly managed by the Office of Disability Employment Policy and the Department of Defense. The program helps connect Federal agencies nationwide with highly motivated post-secondary students and recent graduates with disabilities. The WRP seeks: (1) to provide college students with disabilities the opportunity to obtain summer employment that may lead to permanent employment in the Federal or private sector; and (2) to break down attitudinal barriers held by employers and co-workers by demonstrating that people with disabilities can work successfully in a variety of jobs. Agencies can employ summer interns through the WRP and also use WRP as a source of candidates for both temporary and permanent positions. Information on using the WRP as a recruitment resource can be found at www.dol.gov/odep/programs/workforc.htm. Agencies can also send job announcements via mass e-mails to students with disabilities who are listed in the WRP database.
- Improve outreach efforts through campus visits and partnerships both with the career placement offices and the campus organizations and other networks providing services to students with disabilities. Encourage staff members (particularly those with disabilities) to participate in campus visits to recruit students with disabilities through the WRP.
- Target professional organizations and publications directed to student with disabilities. Such organizations can be found by contacting disability student service offices at colleges and universities, and Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies.
- Use student internship programs (currently the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) and the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP)) to offer employment opportunities to students with disabilities, including students from the WRP database, and to complement disability recruitment efforts. (Note: Improvements that are intended to consolidate and enhance the STEP and SCEP programs are expected in the near future.)
- Identify and participate in special college and university recruiting initiatives and other events. These are opportunities to recruit qualified candidates with disabilities who can be hired immediately using the Schedule A appointing authority.

E. Become A Model Employer of People with Disabilities/Targeted Disabilities

Getting people with disabilities to apply for jobs at your agency and selecting them if they are qualified is only part of the goal of the Executive Order. The President also directed agencies to make the Federal Government the model employer of people with disabilities. By becoming a model employer, agencies will also improve their retention of people with disabilities. Currently, people with disabilities/targeted disabilities leave the Federal Government at three times the rate of those without a disability. Retention is essential to making the investment you are making to identify and hire qualified people with disabilities pay off. Agencies should use the strategies and actions listed in this section to create an accessible, positive, and welcoming environment for job applicants and employees with disabilities.

- Strive to make every aspect of the agency employment experience accessible to people with disabilities. This includes facilities, programs, technology, websites, and the benefits and privileges of employment. Set targets and measure progress in meeting them.
- Ensure employees with disabilities are provided training opportunities at the beginning and throughout their careers. Agencies must provide reasonable accommodations in a timely manner to ensure all training programs are accessible.
- Use and publicize workplace flexibility strategies such as telework, flexiplace, and flextime, including the availability of these flexibilities for people requiring reasonable accommodations, to enhance employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
- Agency leadership should encourage and participate in agency-wide events that publicize successful efforts to recruit and hire people with disabilities/targeted disabilities. Leaders should also promote the formation of an employee affinity group for employees with disabilities. Regular meetings with this group will provide leadership with the information they need to address issues impacting this community in the workplace. Both actions will demonstrate the agency's commitment to become a model employer of people with disabilities.
- Conduct exit interviews of any person with a disability leaving Federal employment to collect information and develop data necessary to determine and eliminate barriers to retention.
- As a means of helping injured and ill employees return to work, engage in an interactive process to determine the availability and appropriateness of reasonable accommodations. Such accommodations could include but are not limited to telework, temporary light duty assignments, and job reassignment.
- Conduct appropriate succession planning that includes a strategy to recruit and retain people with disabilities for positions and career paths in which they are interested. Where staff input is sought, provide entry- and mid-level employees with disabilities an opportunity to be included when planning for the agency's future management and leadership.

- Share successful approaches for recruitment and hiring of people with disabilities through the CHCO Council and EEO Director Meetings as well as other venues, so that other agencies may benefit from this information.

F. Use Innovative Approaches To Provide Reasonable Accommodations

Agencies have a legal obligation to provide reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities. In order to meet these obligations, agencies should think creatively about ways to make their workplace more accessible and create an environment where their employees who have disabilities can thrive. Here are some suggestions that relate specifically to reasonable accommodation issues.

- Review your reasonable accommodation procedures and update them if necessary. Consistent with Executive Order 13164 (Requiring Federal Agencies to Establish Procedures to Facilitate the Provision of Reasonable Accommodations), agencies should submit to the EEOC any modifications to their reasonable accommodation procedures at the time that those modifications are adopted. To view Executive Order 13164, go to http://frwebgate.access.gpo.gov/cgi-bin/getdoc.cgi?dbname=2000_register&docid=fr28jy00-140.pdf.
- Establish/continue partnership with DOD Computer/Electronic Accommodations Program (CAP), a program that provides technology-based accommodations to interns and employees with disabilities at no charge to the agency. Information on establishing partnerships with CAP can be found on the CAP website at www.tricare.mil/CAP/.
- Establish a centralized fund to cover accommodation costs for which the agency is financially responsible. Further, make clear to management and staff that the determination of whether the cost of a particular accommodation represents an undue hardship is based, as a matter of law, on the agencies' overall budget, not the specific budget of the program office where the accommodation is needed. Therefore, when making a determination on whether a reasonable accommodation can be provided, the decision-maker should not consider just the budget in the office where the employee works but consider the budget of the entire agency. For this reason, denial of a reasonable accommodation request based on a financial undue hardship determination should be extremely rare.
- Consult with the Job Accommodation Network (JAN), a service offered through the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy. JAN provides expert accommodation information before, during, and after the recruitment and hiring process. It is a confidential service that allows any manager, applicant or employee to receive individualized information on his or her accommodation issue. JAN may be reached at (800) 526-7234 or on-line at www.askjan.org.
- In addition, the EEOC recently issued updated procedures for processing reasonable accommodation requests at their agency. Other Federal agencies should use these procedures as a model when developing and updating their own reasonable

accommodation procedures. EEOC updated procedures can be found at http://www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/internal/reasonable_accommodation.cfm

VI. Conclusion

Executive Order 13548 demonstrates the President's strong commitment to making the Federal Government a welcoming place for people with disabilities where they can thrive and make the most of their talents and abilities. We must all make it a priority to do a better job of recruiting, selecting, accommodating, and retaining people with disabilities. These strategies are intended to get you started on that path. As new successful strategies come to light, we will communicate them to you so that the Federal Government leads the way on this important issue. Questions about this guidance should be directed to john.benison@opm.gov or michael.larosa@opm.gov

SELF-IDENTIFICATION OF DISABILITY
(see instructions and Privacy Act information on reverse)

Last Name, First Name, and MI	Date of Birth (mm/yy)	Social Security Number	ENTER CODE HERE _____ > <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/>
Definition: An Individual with a disability: A person who (1) has a physical impairment or mental impairment (psychiatric disability) that substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities; (2) has a record of such impairment; or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment. This definition is provided by the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 701 et. seq., as amended.		Purpose: Self-identification of disability status is essential for effective data collection and analysis. The information you provide will be used for statistical purposes only and will not in any way affect you individually. While self-identification is voluntary, your cooperation in providing accurate information is critical.	
Part I. Targeted/Severe Disabilities Hearing 18 - Total deafness in both ears (with or without understandable speech) Vision 21 - Blind (inability to read ordinary size print, not correctable by glasses, or no usable vision, beyond light perception) Missing Extremities 30 - Missing extremities (missing one arm or leg, both hands or arms, both feet or legs, one hand or arm and one foot or leg, one hand or arm and both feet or legs, both hands or arms and one foot or leg, or both hands or arms and both feet or legs) Partial Paralysis 69 - Partial paralysis (because of a brain, nerve or muscle impairment, including palsy and cerebral palsy, there is some loss of ability to move or use a part of the body, including both hands; any part of both arms or legs; one side of the body, including one arm and one leg; and/or three or more major body parts) Complete Paralysis 79 - Because of a brain, nerve or muscle impairment, including palsy and cerebral palsy, there is a complete loss of ability to move or use a part of the body, including both hands; one or both arms or legs; the lower half of the body; one side of the body, including one arm and one leg; and/or three or more major body parts Other Impairments 82 - Epilepsy 90 - Severe intellectual disability 91 - Psychiatric disability 92 - Dwarfism		Part II. Other Disabilities Hearing Conditions 15 - Hearing impairment/hard of hearing Vision Conditions 22 - Visual impairments (e.g., tunnel or monocular vision or blind in one eye) Physical Conditions 26 - Missing extremities (one hand or one foot) 40 - Mobility impairment (e.g., cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, congenital hip defects, etc.) 41 - Spinal abnormalities (e.g., spina bifida, scoliosis) 44 - Non-paralytic orthopedic impairments: chronic pain, stiffness, weakness in bones or joints, some loss of ability to use part or parts of the body 51 - HIV Positive/AIDS 52 - Morbid obesity 61 - Partial paralysis of one hand, arm, foot, leg, or any part thereof 70 - Complete paralysis of one hand 80 - Cardiovascular/heart disease with or without restriction or limitation on activity; a history of heart problems w/complete recovery 83 - Blood diseases (e.g., sickle cell anemia, hemophilia) 84 - Diabetes 86 - Pulmonary or respiratory conditions (e.g., tuberculosis, asthma, emphysema, etc.) 87 - Kidney dysfunction (e.g., required dialysis) 88 - Cancer (present or past history) 93 - Disfigurement of face, hands, or feet (such as those caused by burns or gunshot wounds) and noticeable gross facial birthmarks 95 - Gastrointestinal disorders (e.g., Crohn's Disease, irritable bowel syndrome, colitis, celiac disease, dysphexia, etc.) 98 - History of alcoholism Speech/Language/Learning Conditions 13 - Speech impairment - includes impairments of articulation (unclear language sounds), fluency (stuttering), voice (with normal hearing), dysphasia, or history of laryngectomy 94 - Learning disability - a disorder in one or more of the processes involved in understanding, perceiving, or using language or concepts (spoken or written) (e.g., dyslexia, ADD/ADHD) Other Options 01 - I do not wish to identify my disability status. (Please read the notes on the next page.) (Note: Your personnel officer may use this code if, in his or her judgment, you used an incorrect code.) 05 - I do not have a disability. 06 - I have a disability, but it is not listed on this form.	

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-112) requires each agency in the executive branch of the Federal Government to establish programs that will facilitate the hiring, placement, and advancement of individuals with disabilities. The best means of determining agency progress in this respect is through the production of reports at certain intervals showing such things as the number of employees with disabilities who are hired, promoted, trained, or reassigned over a given time period; the percentage of employees with disabilities in the workforce and in various grades and occupations; etc. Such reports bring to the attention of agency top management, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and the Congress deficiencies within specific agencies or the Federal Government as a whole in the hiring, placement, and advancement of individuals with disabilities and, therefore, are the essential first step in improving these conditions and consequently meeting the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act.

The disability data collected on employees will be used only in the production of reports such as those previously mentioned and not for any purpose that will affect them individually. The only exception to this rule is that the records may be used for selective placement purposes and selecting special populations for mailing of voluntary personnel research surveys. In addition, every precaution will be taken to ensure that the information provided by each employee is kept to the strictest confidence and is known only to those individuals in the agency Personnel Office who obtain and record the information for entry into the agency's and OPM's personnel systems. You should also be aware that participation in the disability reporting system is entirely voluntary, **with the exception of employees appointed under Schedule A, SECTION 213.3102(u) (Severely Physically Handicapped); and Schedule B, section 213.3202(k) (Mentally Recovered)**. These employees will be requested to identify their disability status and if they decline to do so, their correct disability code will be obtained from medical documentation used to support their appointment. No other employees will be required to identify their disability status if they feel for any reason it is not in their best interest to have this information officially recorded outside of medical records. We request only that anyone wishing to have this information entered in the agency's and OPM's personnel systems indicate this to their personnel office, rather than intentionally miscoding themselves, since false responses will seriously damage the statistical value of the reporting system.

In those instances where the employee is or was hired under Schedule A, section 213.3102(t) (Mental Retardation), the Personnel Director or his/her designee (a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor may also be helpful) **will assist the individual in completing this form and ensure that the employee fully understands the meaning of the form and the options available to him/her, as noted above.**

Employees will be given every opportunity to ensure that the disability code carried in their agency's and OPM's personnel systems is accurate and is kept current. They may exercise this opportunity by asking their Personnel Officer to see a printout of the code and definition from their records. The code carried on employees in the agency's system will be identical to that carried in OPM's system.

Your cooperation and assistance in establishing and maintaining an accurate and up-to-date disability report system is sincerely appreciated.

Privacy Act Statement

Collection of the requested information is authorized by the Rehabilitation Act as amended (P.L. 93-112). Solicitation of your Social Security Number (SSN) is authorized by Executive Order 9397, which permits agencies to use the SSN as the means for identifying persons with disabilities in personnel information systems. Your SSN will only be used to ensure that your correct disability code is recorded along with other employee information that your agency and OPM maintain on you. Furnishing your SSN or any other data requested for this collection effort is voluntary and failure to do so will have no effect on you. It should be noted, however, that where individuals decline to furnish their SSN, the SSN will be obtained from other records in order to ensure accurate and complete data. Employees appointed under Schedule A, section 213.3102 (t) (Severe Intellectual Disorder), Schedule A, Section 213.3102 (u) (Severely Physically Handicapped) or Schedule A, section 213.3202 (gg) (Persons with psychiatric disabilities) are requested to furnish an accurate disability code, but failure to do so will not affect them. Where employees hired under one of these appointing authorities fail to disclose their disability(ies), however, the appropriate code will be determined from the employee's existing records or medical documentation physically submitted upon appointment.

Rollups, Redefinitions, and Additions to Disability Codes

Type	New SF 256 Category	Old SF 256 Category	New Code & Definition	Previous Code & Definition
Targeted Disabilities (Severe)				
TARGETED	Hearing	Hearing Impairments	18- Total deafness in both ears (with or without understandable speech)	16- Total deafness in both ears, with understandable speech. 17- Total deafness in both ears, and unable to speak clearly.
	Vision	Vision Impairments	21- Blind (inability to read ordinary size print, not correctable by glasses, or no usable vision, beyond light perception)	23- Inability to read ordinary size print, not correctable by glasses (Can read oversized print or use assisting devices such as glass or projector modifier). 25- Blind in both eyes (No usable vision, but may have some light perception)
	Missing Extremities	Missing Extremities	30- Missing extremities (missing one arm or leg, both hands or arms, both feet or legs, one hand or arm and both feet or legs, both hands or arms and one foot or leg, or both hands or arms and both feet or legs)	28- One arm 32- One leg 33- Both hands or arms 34- Both feet or legs 35- One hand or arm and one foot or leg 36- One hand or arm and both feet or legs 37- Both hands or arms and one foot or leg 38- Both hands or arms and both feet or legs
	Partial Paralysis	Partial Paralysis	69- Partial paralysis (because of a brain, nerve or muscle impairment, including palsy and cerebral palsy, there is some loss of ability to move or use a part of the body, including both hands; any part of both arms or legs; one side of the body, including one arm and one leg; and/or three or more major body parts)	64- Both hands 65- Both legs, any part 66- Both arms, any part 67- One side of body, including one arm and one leg 68- Three or more major parts of the body (arms and legs)

	Complete Paralysis	Complete Paralysis	79- because of a brain, nerve or muscle impairment, including palsy and cerebral palsy, there is a complete loss of ability to move or use a part of the body, including both hands; one or both arms or legs; the lower half of the body; one side of the body, including one arm and one leg; and/or three or more major body parts	71- Both hands 72- One arm 73- Both arms 74- One leg 75- Both legs 76- Lower half of body, including legs 77- One side of body, including one arm and one leg 78- Three or more major parts of the body (arms and legs)
	Other Impairments	Other Impairments	82- Epilepsy	82- Convulsive disorder (e.g. epilepsy)
			90- Severe intellectual disability	90- Mental retardation (A chronic and lifelong condition involving a limited ability to learn, to be educated, and to be trained for useful productive employment as certified by a State Vocational Rehabilitation agency under section 213.3102(t) of Schedule A)
			91- Psychiatric disability	91- Mental or emotional illness (A history of treatment for mental or emotional problems)
			92- Dwarfism	92- Severe distortion of limbs and/or spine (e.g. dwarfism, kyphosis [severe distortion of back])
Non-targeted Disabilities				
NON-TARGET	Hearing Conditions	Hearing Impairments	15- Hearing impairment/hard of hearing	15- Hard of hearing (Total deafness in one ear or inability to hear ordinary conversation, correctable with a hearing aid)

NON-TARGET

	Vision Conditions	Vision Impairments	22- Visual impairments (e.g., tunnel or monocular vision or blind in one eye)	22- Ability to read ordinary size print with glasses, but with loss of peripheral (side) vision (Restriction of the visual field to the extent that mobility is affected-"Tunnel vision") 24- Blind in one eye
	Physical Conditions	Missing Extremities	26- Missing Extremities (one hand, one foot, or one hand and one foot)	27- One hand 29- One foot
		[New code: no corresponding old category name.]	40- Mobility impairment	[New code: no corresponding old code.]
			41- Spinal abnormalities (e.g., spina bifida, scoliosis)	[New code: no corresponding old code.]
			51- HIV Positive/AIDS	[New code: no corresponding old code.]
			52- Morbid obesity	[New code: no corresponding old code.]
			95 - Gastrointestinal disorders (e.g., Crohn's Disease, irritable bowel syndrome, colitis, celiac disease, dysphexia, etc.)	[New code: no corresponding old code.]
			98 - History of alcoholism	[New code: no corresponding old code.]
		Non-paralytic Orthopedic Impairments (Because of chronic pain, stiffness, or weakness in bones or joints, there is some loss of ability to move or use a part or parts of the body)	44- Non-paralytic orthopedic impairments: chronic pain, stiffness, weakness in bones or joints, some loss of ability to use part or parts of the body	44- One or both hands 45- One or both feet 46- One or both arms 47- One or both legs 48- Hip or pelvis 49- Back 57- Any combination of two or more parts of the body
		Partial Paralysis	61- Partial paralysis of one hand, arm, foot, leg, or any part thereof	61- One hand 62- One arm, any part 63- One leg, any part

	Complete Paralysis	70- Complete paralysis of one hand	70- One hand
	Other Impairments	80- Cardiovascular/heart disease with or without restrictions or limitation on activity; a history of heart problems w/ complete recovery	80- Heart disease with no restriction or limitation of activity (History of heart problems with complete recovery) 81- Heart disease with restriction of limitation of activity
		83 - Blood diseases (e.g., sickle cell anemia, hemophilia)	<i>[Roughly same as new code. Inserted for reference.]</i>
		84 - Diabetes	<i>[Roughly same as new code. Inserted for reference.]</i>
		86 - Pulmonary or respiratory conditions (e.g., tuberculosis, asthma, emphysema, etc.)	<i>[Roughly same as new code. Inserted for reference.]</i>
		87 - Kidney dysfunction (e.g., required dialysis)	<i>[Roughly same as new code. Inserted for reference.]</i>
		88- Cancer (Present or past history)	88- Cancer- a history of cancer with complete recovery 89- Cancer- undergoing surgical and/or medical treatment
		93 - Disfigurement of face, hands, or feet (such as those caused by burns or gunshot wounds) and noticeable gross facial birthmarks	<i>[Roughly same as new code. Inserted for reference.]</i>
	Speech/Language/Learning Conditions	Speech Impairments	13 - Speech impairment - includes impairments of articulation (unclear language sounds), fluency (stuttering), voice (with normal hearing), dysphasia, or history of laryngectomy <i>[Roughly same as new code. Inserted for reference.]</i>

OTHER		Other Impairments	94 - Learning disability - a disorder in one or more of the processes involved in understanding, perceiving, or using language or concepts (spoken or written) (e.g., dyslexia, ADD/ADHD)	<i>[Roughly same as new code. Inserted for reference.]</i>
	Other Options			
	Other Options	<i>[No old title.]</i>	01 - I do not wish to identify my disability status. (Please read the notes on the next page.) (Note: Your personnel officer may use this code if, in his or her judgment, you used an incorrect code.)	<i>[Roughly same as new code. Inserted for reference.]</i>
			05 - I do not have a disability.	<i>[Roughly same as new code. Inserted for reference.]</i>
			06 - I have a disability, but it is not listed on this form.	<i>[Roughly same as new code. Inserted for reference.]</i>

Notes:

- Beginning 09/26/2010, new hires will complete the new SF 256. Agencies may, but are not required to, resurvey their current employees with the new SF 256.
- Every code on the new SF 256 appears on the table above.
- Combining new (bolded) and old codes, the following common definitions apply:
 - Targeted disability** = 16 – 18, 21, 23, 25, 28, 30, 32 – 38, 64 – 69, 71 – 79, 82, 90 – 92
 - Non-targeted disability** = 06, 13, 15, 22, 26, 27, 29, 40, 41, 44 – 49, 51, 52, 57, 61 – 63, 70, 80, 83 – 89, 93 – 95, 96 – 98
 - No disability** = 04, 05
 - Disability status unknown** = 01, **