



**Action Plan to Increase  
Employment Opportunities for  
Individuals with Disabilities  
2023-2028**

Office of Administration

## **INTRODUCTION**

The United States Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) is fully committed to improving our efforts to employ individuals with targeted and non-targeted disabilities into agency positions. This “Action Plan to Increase Employment Opportunities for Individuals with Disabilities for FY 2023-2028” identifies strategic goals and objectives along with options and resources to facilitate the recruiting, hiring, and retention of people with disabilities. This plan is in accordance with Executive Order 13548 "Increasing Federal Employment of Individuals with Disabilities" and is consistent with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the EEOC Management Directive 715.

## **AGENCY OVERVIEW**

USTDA helps companies create U.S. jobs through the export of U.S. goods and services for priority infrastructure projects in emerging economies. USTDA links U.S. businesses to export opportunities by funding project preparation and partnership building activities that develop sustainable infrastructure and foster economic growth in partner countries.

Positions at USTDA include work in the following areas: International Trade Programs, Management Operations, Information Technology (IT), Office of the General Counsel, Program Monitoring and Evaluation, and Public Affairs.

## **INTERNATIONAL TRADE SPECIALISTS**

Positions that promote economic development in an assigned geographic region by identifying, recommending, and managing project preparation and partnership building activities.

## **MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS**

Positions that perform general administrative services and support, financial operations and budgeting, acquisitions and contracting, and human resources management.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)**

Positions responsible for developing, implementing, maintaining, and administering the information technology (IT) program for the agency.

## **OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL**

Positions responsible for providing legal advice on international contracts and grants as prescribed by USTDA's authorizing legislation, and the full range of administrative law subjects, including procurement, FOIA and Privacy Act, and personnel law.

## **PROGRAM MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Positions are responsible for monitoring programs for compliance, recommending corrective actions and overseeing the close-out procedures for funding activities. The M&E Office tracks and analyzes the outcomes of the agency's activities to determine their overall effectiveness, inform evidence-based funding decisions and ensure oversight and accountability with stakeholders.

## **PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

Positions with responsibility for developing strategic communications plans highlighting Agency programs, milestones, deliverables, and for identifying new and innovative ways to provide important information on agency objectives and initiatives to the public and key national and international stakeholders.

## **AGENCY GOALS TO PROMOTE RECRUITMENT, HIRING, AND RETENTION OF QUALIFIED PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (PWD) AND PERSONS WITH TARGETED DISABILITIES (PWTD)**

- Maintain a workforce comprised of 12% PWD and 2% PWTD
- Increase recruitment and hiring of qualified individuals with disabilities at all grade levels and occupational series.
- Ensure that employees with disabilities have opportunities to participate in career development, promotion, training, awards, and other benefits and activities that are currently available to all USTDA employees.
- Make reasonable accommodations to the known physical and mental limitations of qualified applicants and employees.

## **STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES**

### **RECRUITMENT**

- Ensure there are no inadvertent impediments to the hiring of individuals with disabilities, as well as research best practices published by the EEOC and OPM for possible ways to enhance success under this plan.

- Periodically, and as the need arises, review the [OPM Shared List](#) database of candidates with disabilities who are Schedule A eligible.
- Consider, subject to funding availability, advertising job opportunities on disabled centric web sites such as abilityjobs.com, jobs.aapd.com, abilitylinks.org, disabledperson.com, disabilityjobs.org, workability.one, etc.
- Review and enhance outreach to organizations that work with disabled individuals on a regular basis. Focus on building institutional relationships with organizations such as:
  - Department of Labor’s Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP)
  - State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies (SVRAs)
  - One-Stop Career Centers, which were established under the Federal Workforce Investment Act to provide a full range of job seeker assistance
  - Rehabilitation Service Administration (RSA), a component of the Department of Education
  - Disabled Veteran's Outreach Programs (DVOPs)
  - Social Security Administration's Employment Network providers
- Cultivate and establish a database of contacts at universities, colleges and placement offices to ensure that a diverse cadre of potential applicants are made aware of the announcements.
- Make USTDA hiring managers aware of the options for hiring qualified individuals with disabilities through increased recruitment, hiring, and retention strategies, including the use of the Schedule A hiring authority and other flexibilities. Training and information-sharing are necessary to promote buy-in, awareness, and engagement in achieving our goal of becoming a model employer of people with disabilities.
- Ensure that supervisors and managers receive information on the options available to advance the spirit and goals of this plan. Distribute OPM and EEOC publications on the employment of people with disabilities through the Agency’s SharePoint site.

- Ensure that all vacancy announcements provide reasonable accommodation information in plain and understandable language.

## **RETENTION**

USTDA will assist employees with disabilities to perform their duties by providing:

- ***Training***: make appropriate training available.
- ***Mentoring*** all new hires under this Plan.
- ***Career Development***: provide counseling on available training and development opportunities.
- ***Schedule A Non-Competitive Conversions***: process conversions, as appropriate, to employees after two years of satisfactory performance.
- ***Conduct Exit Interviews*** with disabled employees who leave Federal employment.
- ***Reasonable Accommodation***: ensure that the reasonable accommodation needs of all employees are met.

## **SCHEDULE A HIRING AUTHORITY**

Schedule A (5 CFR 213.3102(u)) is an excepted service hiring authority available to federal agencies to hire and/or promote individuals with disabilities non-competitively. Eligible candidates for Schedule A appointments include: Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities, Severe Physical Disabilities, or Psychiatric Disabilities and others who have documentation 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); any Federal agency, state agency, agency of the District of Columbia, or a U.S. territory that issues or provides disability benefits may apply for non-competitive appointment through the Schedule A. They may qualify for conversion to permanent status after two years of satisfactory service.

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.