



Press Release

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EEOC Report Analyzes Situation of Workers with Disabilities in the Federal Workforce

WASHINGTON – In a newly issued **report (<https://www.eeoc.gov/federal-sector/reports/eo-status-workers-disabilities-federal-sector>)**, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) shows that opportunities for persons with disabilities in the federal workforce are improving, but that further progress is needed on retention and representation in leadership positions.

The study examined federal workers with disabilities' demographics, their hiring, advancement, and separation from employment at federal agencies, discrimination complaints based on disability, and ways that federal agencies are improving accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Representing 9.4% of federal employees, the participation by people with disabilities in the federal workforce is increasing. In FY 2014, persons with disabilities represented 8.68% of federal workers. This increased by more than 8% to 9.42% in 2018. Accordingly, federal agencies are raising awareness of accessibility for persons with disabilities and are improving their technological resources to make their workplaces more accessible to people with disabilities.

The study also found that persons with disabilities are promoted at a rate similar to what would be expected based on their governmentwide participation rate.

“The EEOC is delighted to see that our support of people with disabilities has borne fruit in so many ways,” said Carlton Hadden, director of the EEOC’s Office of Federal Operations. “Clearly, though, more progress is needed. The EEOC will continue to work to advance the opportunities and well-being for this still too underutilized and underappreciated segment of our population.”

The report other findings include the fact that persons with disabilities are still underrepresented in federal sector leadership. Among persons with targeted disabilities, 10.7% are in leadership positions and 89.3% are in non-leadership positions. Among persons without disabilities, 16.4% are in leadership positions, and 85.6% are in non-leadership positions.

Targeted disabilities are the most severe ones, including blindness, deafness, partial and full paralysis, missing extremities, dwarfism, epilepsy, intellectual disabilities, and psychiatric disabilities. Individuals with these disabilities typically have the greatest difficulty finding employment. As a matter of policy, the federal government has a special emphasis on recruiting, hiring, and retaining people with targeted disabilities.

Further, the report illustrates that people with targeted disabilities involuntarily left federal employers at more than twice the rate of people without disabilities, and people with any disability were 53% more likely to involuntarily leave than persons without disabilities. Similarly, persons with disabilities and targeted disabilities were more likely to voluntarily leave federal employers than persons without disabilities.

“There’s something wrong with this picture when so many more people with disabilities leave the government than those without,” Hadden said. “Our government needs to be the best workplace it can be for everyone. Federal managers and policymakers need to take a good look at this situation and figure out ways to improve this picture.”

The report also reveals that over a five-year period, federal sector physical disability-based complaints increased by 22% and mental disability-based complaints increased by 72%, outpacing the overall increase in federal sector EEO complaints. This may be due to increased discrimination against persons with disabilities or increased comfort with filing an EEO complaint among persons with disabilities, the report said.

By using 2018 data, this report provides a baseline to measure the impact of EEOC's final rule, "**[Affirmative Action for Individuals With Disabilities in the Federal Government \(https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/01/03/2016-31397/affirmative-action-for-individuals-with-disabilities-in-federal-employment\)](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2017/01/03/2016-31397/affirmative-action-for-individuals-with-disabilities-in-federal-employment)**," which clarified that federal employers must take proactive steps to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities.

For more information on disability discrimination, please visit **<https://www.eeoc.gov/disability-discrimination>** (**<https://www.eeoc.gov/disability-discrimination>**).

The EEOC advances opportunity in the workplace by enforcing federal laws prohibiting employment discrimination. More information is available at **[www.eeoc.gov \(http://www.eeoc.gov\)](http://www.eeoc.gov)**. Stay connected with the latest EEOC news by subscribing to our **[email updates](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/subscriber/new)** (**<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEEOC/subscriber/new>**).