

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION'S

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

**STRATEGIC PLAN for
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM
2005 - 2007**

Working Together to Save Lives



People with Disabilities Employment Program Strategic Plan FY 2005 - FY 2007

People with Disabilities (PWD) represent over 19.3% of the U.S. population or over 49.7 million people, and rank as one of the fastest growing segments of the U.S. population. President George W. Bush announced the New Freedom Initiative in February 2001. The Initiative was designed to eliminate barriers to full integration into American life that many of this Nation's citizens with disabilities still face.

NOAA's National Weather Service is committed to enhancing employment opportunities for people with disabilities. NWS wants to increase the representation of qualified PWD in all levels of its workforce. Six percent of the National Civilian Labor Force (NCLF) and 5% of the NWS workforces are PWDs. NWS goal is to meet and exceed the NCLF. The NWS PWD Employment Program was designed to ensure individuals with disabilities enjoy equal opportunity in all aspects of employment within NWS, including hiring, promotions and reasonable accommodation. This PWD Strategic Plan has been developed as a roadmap to assist in meeting these goals.

PWD can be hired through the traditional competitive hiring process or, if they qualify, noncompetitively through the use of excepted service appointing authorities. Excepted service appointing authorities for hiring individuals with disabilities were developed to provide an opportunity for PWD to show that they can do the job and to circumvent the attitudinal barriers of managers and supervisors.

This PWD Employment Program Strategic Plan (PWDEPSP) is tied to the overall NWS Policy on Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity Management. The Diversity Management Strategic Plan and the PWDEPSP will be institutionalized in all facets of NWS operations. Through this plan, the NWS seeks to build relationships with the disabilities community and engage them in the NWS scientific and technical operations. The plan calls for strengthening the NWS outreach activities in a comprehensive effort to promote partnership opportunities with the disability community in the critical areas: employment, training, and education.

This plan seeks to recruit talented candidates from outside the NWS, retain, promote, develop current employees, create a pipeline for addressing current and future workforce needs, and to make management aware of the barriers to senior level positions.

FY 2007-2008 Goals

Goal	Lead Office	Completion
Develop PWD Employment Program web page and announce completion to NWS family.	OEODM	Quarter III - FY2007 Completed The OEODM website is inclusive of all SEPs; therefore, at the present time there is no need to create a separate webpage. See details below.
Identify college students with disabilities interested in hydrology, meteorology, engineering and physical science at the NWS.	OEODM and DOL - WRP	Quarter III - FY2007 Completed: See details below.
Contact Regions and discuss PWDEPSP.	OEODM	Quarter III - FY2007 Partially completed. See details below.
Initiate dialogue to establish long-term relationships with PWD advocacy groups, professional organizations, colleges and universities.	OEODM	Quarter I - FY2007 Completed: See details below.
Make local high school students with disabilities aware of NWS Intern Programs (i.e. METCON).	OEODM	Quarter II - FY2007 Partially completed: OEODM is in the process of visiting local High Schools as part of the outreach activities to extend this information to area schools that are not aware of these programs.
Identify and assess utilization of current entry-level intern programs to develop diverse groups of professional, administrative, and scientific trainees.	OEODM	Quarter III - FY2007 Not Completed. See details below
Create/monitor PWD informal mentoring program for employees in all occupations.	OEODM	Quarter IV - FY2007 Completed: The current NWS mentoring program is available to all employees. Therefore, OEODM will not create a separate mentoring program for PWDs.

Review GS-13, 14, 15, and SES search and placement procedures and ensure effective outreach tools are utilized to actively recruit qualified PWD candidates for senior-level positions.	OEODM – Workforce Management Office (WFMO)	Quarter II - FY2007 Not Completed: Due to mitigating circumstances, this goal was not completed. OEODM will work with WFMO in addressing this goal by Quarter III – 2009.
Obtain regional reports and monitor PWDEP.	OEODM	Quarter IV - FY2007 Partially completed. OEODM currently receives reports from regional offices who participate in these programs. Efforts will continue to expand participation of this program.

Goal A: Enhance/Develop Employee Potential

1. Develop PWDEP webpage and announce completion to NWS family.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Review current web page and update to reflect goals of PDEPOP by end of Quarter III - FY2007.

Status: There isn't a separate PWDEP, however; included on OEODM's webpage is a current listing of special employment programs which includes People with Disabilities.

2. Identify college students with disabilities interested in hydrology, meteorology, engineering and physical science at the NWS.

Lead Office: DOL, WFMO and OEODM

Completion: Review DOL WRP database and make data available to NWS managers at all levels by end of Quarter III - FY2007.

Status: Students were hired from Entry Point, ADL and HS/HT programs to fill summer positions in various scientific areas throughout Headquarters and Regional offices. OEODM will request access to DOL and the WRP data to obtain available information for NWS managers on the number of interested students. This goal will be addressed during FY2008-2009 Plan.

3. Ensure that the requirements in vacancy announcements and the language in ranking factors are not restrictive or biased in nature; areas of consideration are broadened, where possible and review “status only” requirement.

Lead Office: WFMO and OEODM

Completion: Review vacancy announcement language and procedures by end of Quarter III - FY2008.

Status: Due to immediate obligations, OEODM was not able to complete this task by the requested timeframe. This milestone will be addressed during the FY2008-2009 Plan.

4. Contact regions and discuss PWDEPSP.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Receive regions input on how each region will implement plan to fit their needs by end of Quarter III - FY2008.

Status: During FY2007, site visits were made to CR and ER offices to discuss hiring adults and students with disabilities. OEODM will conduct future meetings to continue this effort in placing PWD's in each Regional facility.

5. Initiate dialogue to establish long-term relationships with PWD advocacy groups and organizations.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Initiate dialogue with a minimum of three People with Disabilities organizations by end of Quarter I - FY2008.

Status: Established relationships with various PWD advocacy groups such as: Entry Point Programs, HS/HT and DOL/WRP program coordinators. Future goals are to expand relationships with educational institutions coordinators. Outreach activities are planned for FY2008-2009 to visit area schools to make students aware of opportunities within the NWS scientific areas.

6. Identify and target institutions that graduate a significant number of students with disabilities with degrees that meet NWS job needs. Partner with these institutions to identify students interested in the NWS.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Develop list of viable candidates by end of Quarter I - FY2007.

Status: Entry Point identified several universities which graduate a significant number of students with disabilities. OEODM hired and placed two students in summer internship positions. Futures plans are place to strengthen this partnership to expand these opportunities. OEODM contact participating institutions to develop a list of candidates by Quarter IV – FY2009.

7. Research NWS recruitment strategies used to target PWD through professional organizations, colleges, and universities.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Create a PWD employment communications plan and initiate dialogue with a minimum of four major PWD publications and organizations by end of Quarter I - FY2007.

Status: Further coordination will go into planning this goal by coordinating meetings with WFMO and other agencies to research and implement recruitment strategies for individuals with disabilities, and will contact Entry Point, HS/HT, and DOL to review current strategies for recruitment. OEODM will address this milestone during the FY2008-2009 plan.

8. Identify existing High School Intern Programs that prepare students for jobs and careers in the NWS and create awareness of these programs among local school systems.

Lead Office: OEODM in coordination with local school districts

Completion: Develop partnerships with three local school systems and secure their participation in existing NWS internship programs by end of Quarter II - FY2007.

Status: During FY2007, high schools were identified through ORISE and METCON student programs for internships. OEODM is in the process of identifying local area high schools offering math and science curriculums.

9. Identify and assess utilization of current entry-level intern programs to develop diverse groups of professional, administrative, and scientific trainees.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: Review and assess intern programs statistical data by end of Quarter III - FY2007.

Status: Due to mitigating circumstances, this milestone was not completed. Milestone will be addressed in FY - 2008-2009 Plan.

10. Ensure that EEO Managers report their participation on NWS administered Selection Review Boards and SES Selection Panels.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: **Status:** Due to more immediate obligations, this goal was not addressed. Milestone will be addressed in FY - 2008-2009 Plan.

11. Create awareness among NWS recruitment personnel about the wide variety of PWD recruitment sources that can yield potential GS-13, 14, 15, and SES applicants.

Lead Office: OEODM and WFMO

Completion: **Status:** OEODM was not able to address this milestone because of other obligations. Efforts will be made during FY - 2008-2009 to address this milestone by partnering with WFMO to review ways to create awareness among NWS recruitment personnel.

12. Create awareness among NWS PWD employees of existing executive/leadership training programs.

Lead Office: WFMO and OEODM

Completion: **Status:** Milestone will continue into FY - 2008-2009.

OEODM will continue to work with WFMO to provide information to NWS employees with disabilities about available leadership training opportunities. OEODM has posted information in its webpage listing the various training and development programs available to all employees.

13. Identify and promote awareness of government-wide and NWS executive development training programs among high-potential PWD candidates in order to increase opportunities for inclusion in GS-13, 14, 15 and SES selection pools.

Lead Office: OEODM and WFMO

Completion: Status: Due to immediate obligations of OEODM, this milestone was not addressed. Milestone will be addressed during FY – 2008-2009 Plan.

Goal B: Improve Retention

1. Review exit interview procedures, questionnaires, and data for PWD employees and make recommendations for improvement.

Lead Office: WFMO and OEODM

Completion: Review existing procedures, questionnaires, and data continuously.

Status: OEODM has reviewed the data from the exit interviews and there has been no report of discrepancies. There is not a separate exit interview for PWD's at this time.

2. Review internal employment practices undertaken to retain PWD employees (e.g., use of retention bonuses, awards, promotions, etc.).

Lead Office: WFMO and OEODM

Completion: Review retention data and make suggestions to correct any deficiencies by end of Quarter II - FY2007. Milestone will be addressed in FY2008-2009.

During FY2009, OEODM will meet with WFMO and review current internal practices.

Goal C: Disseminate Accurate and Compelling Information about Training and Development Opportunities.

1. Review NWS PWD employee participation in existing skill-building training programs, conferences, and seminars.

Lead Office: WFMO and OEODM

Completion: Status: Due to mitigating circumstances, this goal will be reached by Quarter II of FY2009. As OEODM continues to sponsor skill-building training seminars, we can more effectively begin to track and monitor this data, and also obtain additional from WFMO from use of training forms that managers requested to provide and maintain.

2. Promote awareness among NWS PWD employees of opportunities to compete for managerial, executive and upward mobility training.

Lead Office: WFMO and OEODM

Completion: Status: Efforts were made to promote the PWD opportunities. As the mentoring program flourishes, employees with disabilities will have a better knowledge of the opportunities offered. Through consistent training provided by OEODM, this information will expand throughout the NWS. OEODM will continue to conduct and host training sessions to promote opportunities for PWD at the National Weather Service.

3. Review NWS nomination process among PWD and other employees (GS-6 through GS-13) for participation in leadership, and executive potential programs and other developmental programs.

Lead Office: WFMO and OEODM

Completion: Status: OEODM was not able to meet this milestone because of more immediate obligations. This milestone will be addressed during the FY 2008-2009 Plan.

Goal D: Monitor and Ensure Accountability

The NWS senior-level management is primarily responsible for ensuring and emphasizing efforts to achieve a fully diverse workforce, inclusive of PWD. OEODM, through existing tracking and reporting mechanisms will assist the NWS Assistant Administrator, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Region Directors, Headquarters Directors, Staff Officers, managers and supervisors in accomplishing workforce diversity by implementing and monitoring workforce profiles and measures. The NWS will use the following action items to promote accountability and results with respect to PWD employment.

1. Periodically update and review organizational PWD workforce goals and achievements.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion:

2. Submit Annual Status Reports to the OEODM Director on NWS progress towards improving the promotion potential of People with Disabilities.

Lead Office: OEODM

Completion: