

U.S. GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION



Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2019

March 25, 2020

Office of Civil Rights

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I. Purpose of Report

The purpose of the Notification and Federal Employee Antidiscrimination and Retaliation Act of 2002 (No FEAR Act), Public Law 107-174, is to reduce the incidence of workplace discrimination within the Federal government by holding Federal agencies accountable for violations of Federal antidiscrimination and whistleblower protection laws.¹ The No FEAR Act requires a Federal agency to—

- notify employees and applicants for employment about their rights under the Federal antidiscrimination and whistleblower laws;
- provide training to its employees, including managers, on the rights and remedies available under antidiscrimination and whistleblower laws; and
- post quarterly on its public website summary statistical data about equal employment opportunity (EEO) complaints filed with the agency.

In addition, Section 203 of the No FEAR Act requires each agency to submit to Congress, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the U.S. Department of Justice, and the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, an annual report that includes the following:²

- The number, status, and disposition of discrimination and whistleblower cases (including Federal court cases) filed against the agency;
- Judgment fund reimbursements and any agency budget adjustments to meet reimbursement requirements;
- The number and type of disciplinary actions related to discrimination, retaliation, harassment, or other prohibited personnel practices and the agency disciplinary policy;
- Year-end summary EEO complaint data; and
- An analysis of trends, causation, and practical knowledge gained through experience, and any actions planned or taken to improve agency complaint or civil rights programs.

The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) submits this No FEAR Act Report for fiscal year 2019 (October 1, 2018, through September 30, 2019).

¹ See Pub. L. No. 107-174, 116 Stat. 566 (2002).

² See Pub. L. No. 107-174, §203(a)(1); see also 5 CFR §724.302(a). Appendix A to this report sets forth the No FEAR Act statutory and regulatory reporting requirements in full.

GSA's No FEAR Act data for the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2019 and for prior fiscal years can be accessed at <https://www.gsa.gov/reference/the-no-fear-act-library>.

II. Background

A. GSA Mission and Structure

GSA's mission is to deliver value and savings in real estate, acquisition, technology, and other mission-support services across government. GSA provides centralized procurement for the Federal Government, offering products, services, and facilities worth billions of dollars that Federal agencies need to serve the American public. GSA's acquisition solutions supply Federal purchasers with cost-effective high-quality products and services from commercial vendors. GSA also helps Federal agencies build and acquire office space, products and other workspace services, and oversees the preservation of historic Federal properties. Its policies covering travel and property management practices promote efficient Government operations. Composed of the Federal Acquisition Service, the Public Buildings Service, the Office of Government-wide Policy, 11 staff offices, and 3 independent offices, GSA services and supports more than 60 Federal departments and agencies.

B. GSA Office of Civil Rights

The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) provides technical and policy advice to GSA leadership on civil rights and civil liberties issues. OCR's vision is to be a premier civil rights program that inspires a culture of equal opportunity within GSA. Its mission is to ensure an inclusive workplace free from unlawful discrimination through active engagement, training, and compliance with civil rights laws, regulations, and other guiding sources.³

III. Results and Data

A. Cases in Federal District Court

In fiscal year 2019, GSA had 11 cases in Federal district court that arose under Federal antidiscrimination and whistleblower protection laws. Of the 11 cases, 4 are closed and 7 are still pending an outcome. Of the 7 cases pending, 4 were filed in fiscal year 2019, and 3 were filed in fiscal year 2018.

³ See generally 29 CFR Part 1614.

B. Reimbursements to the Judgment Fund

The Judgment Fund pays court judgments, awards, and compromise settlements of lawsuits against the Federal Government.⁴ The No FEAR Act requires Federal agencies to reimburse the Judgment Fund for payments made on their behalf to employees, former employees, or applicants for employment due to claims alleging violations of Federal antidiscrimination laws, Federal whistleblower protection laws, and/or reprisal for legally protected activity related to those laws.⁵

During fiscal year 2019, one of the four closed civil action cases against GSA required reimbursement to the Judgment Fund in the amount of \$55,000. No budget adjustments were needed to cover the reimbursement. GSA has reimbursed the Judgment Fund only twice between fiscal years 2015 and 2019 (Table 1.).

Table 1. Reimbursements to the Judgment Fund between FY 2015 and 2019

Judgment Fund Reimbursements	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
Reimbursement Amount	\$0	\$0	\$850	\$0	\$55,000

C. Disciplinary Policy and Actions

A review of fiscal year 2019 disciplinary records shows no GSA employees were disciplined for improper or illegal discrimination, retaliation, harassment, or other infraction prohibited by the No FEAR Act. The GSA policy directing disciplinary action against Federal employees for conduct identified as prohibited personnel practices and consistent with the Federal antidiscrimination and whistleblower protection laws is available at the following hyperlink: [HRM 9751.1 – Maintaining Discipline](#). Included in the policy is the GSA Penalty Guide, which provides guidance on the appropriate penalty for various types of delinquency or misconduct, including discrimination and retaliation against any person for properly exercising their right to file a discrimination complaint or grievance, or for reporting discrimination.

D. Fiscal Year 2019 EEO Complaint Data

See Appendix B to this report for GSA's 2019 year-end data along with comparative data for fiscal years 2015 through 2019.⁶

⁴ See 31 U.S.C. §1304.

⁵ See 31 U.S.C. §201.

⁶ Appendix B report also includes fiscal year 2014 data, consistent with the posting format required by the EEOC.

IV. Analysis of Trends and Causality

A. EEO Complaint Activity

Using data from GSA's information management system for EEO complaint processing, this section highlights trends in EEO cases filed with GSA.⁷ As Table 2 shows, 65 formal complaints were filed in fiscal year 2019, a 21-percent drop from fiscal year 2018's total of 84. Over a longer horizon, the decrease is slightly greater: complaints filed in 2019 were 23 percent below the five-year average of 82.

Between fiscal years 2018 and 2019, GSA's workforce population increased by 2.5 percent, from 11,051 to 11,326 employees. The size of the workforce fluctuated at a similar pace—2.5 percent on average—between fiscal years 2015 and 2019. Even as GSA's workforce reached its third-highest number in the five-year period, the percentage of employees who filed formal complaints in fiscal year 2019 (0.57 percent) was the smallest of any year.

Table 2. Formal complaints filed and GSA workforce between FY 2015 and 2019⁸

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
Formal Complaints Filed	76	96	89	84	65
Number of Complainants	68	84	79	79	58
Repeat Filers	5	9	8	5	7
GSA Total Workforce ⁹	11,170	11,552	11,488	11,051	11,326
Complaints Filed per 100 Employees	0.68	0.83	0.77	0.76	0.57

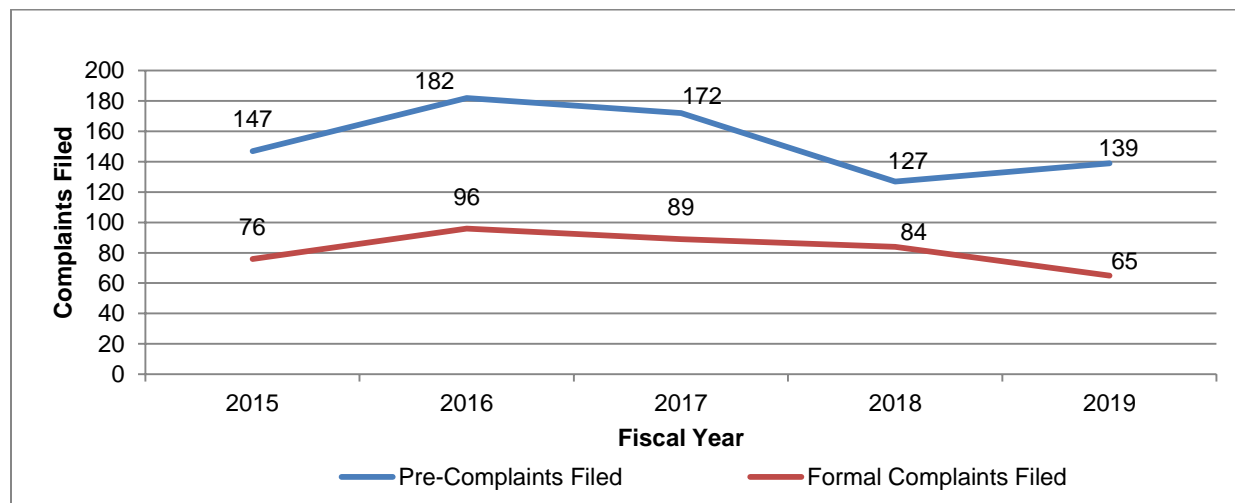
Informal EEO complaints are not reported in No FEAR Act quarterly postings but are included here to show an overall downward trend in EEO complaint activity at GSA (Figure 1.). In fiscal year 2019, 139 informal complaints were filed, a 7.3-percent decline from the five-year average of 150.

⁷ The data is current as of January 2020 and encompasses complaints filed between Oct. 1, 2015, and Sept. 30, 2019.

⁸ GSA's No FEAR Act Annual Report for fiscal year 2019 shows EEO data for other fiscal years that is slightly different from that in prior No FEAR Act reports. Variations are due to ongoing reconciliation of data in GSA's EEO complaints database.

⁹ Workforce numbers for fiscal year 2019 as reported by GSA in its fiscal year 2019 Annual Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Statistical Report of Discrimination, Form 462.

Figure 1. Informal and formal complaints filed between FY 2015 and 2019



One reason the number of formal complaints declined in fiscal year 2019 is the informal resolution rate increased, resulting in fewer complaints proceeding to the formal complaint stage.¹⁰ In fiscal year 2019, the resolution rate was 53 percent as compared to 39 percent in fiscal year 2018.

Table 3. Informal complaints closed and complaints resolved in FY 2018 and in FY 2019

	FY 2018	FY 2019
Informal Complaints Closed	132	134
Complaints Resolved	52	70
Informal Resolution Rate	39%	53%

B. Bases of Discrimination in EEO Complaints

In fiscal year 2019, the most commonly alleged bases of discrimination were reprisal/retaliation (29), race (27), age (22) and sex (21).¹¹ For reasons unknown, allegations of reprisal/retaliation, the top basis, dropped—from 52 to 29—between fiscal years 2015 and 2019.

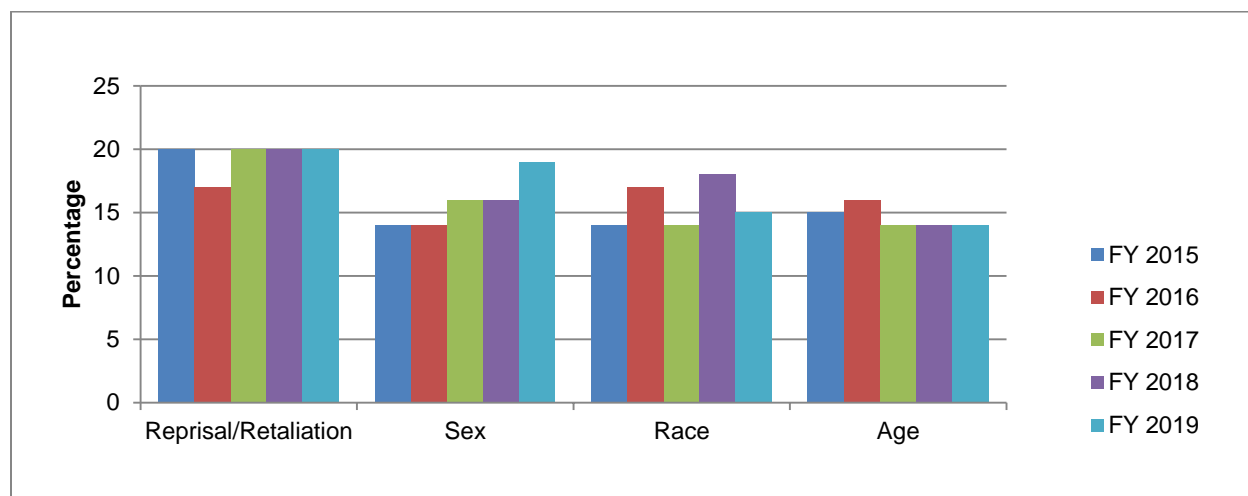
¹⁰ These are cases resolved by settlement agreement, being withdrawn or not being pursued as formal complaints.

¹¹ One case can include allegations of various bases of discrimination.

Table 4. Top bases alleged in formal complaints filed between FY 2015 and 2019

Basis	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
Reprisal/Retaliation	52	51	45	50	29
Age	38	41	35	40	22
Sex	38	50	32	44	21
Race	41	49	32	35	27

Figure 2. Top bases alleged in formal complaints filed between FY 2015 and 2019 by percentage



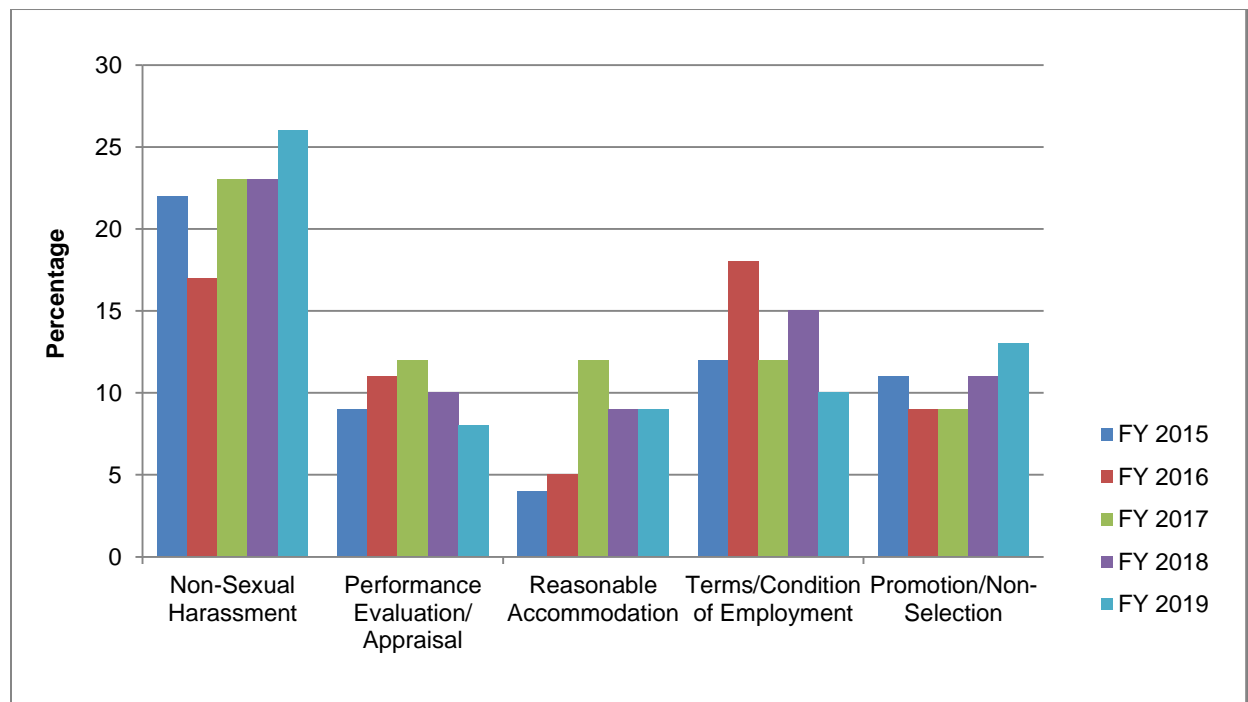
C. Issues in EEO Complaints

In fiscal year 2019, non-sexual harassment (21) was the most commonly alleged issue, followed by promotion/non-selection (11), terms/conditions of employment (8), and termination (8). By comparison, fiscal year 2018's most common issue was non-sexual harassment (24), followed by promotion/non-selection (16), terms/conditions of employment (12), and performance evaluation/appraisal (11).

Table 5. Top issues alleged in formal complaints filed between FY 2015 and 2019

Issue	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
Harassment - Non-Sexual	32	26	33	24	21
Performance Evaluation/Appraisal	13	17	17	11	7
Reasonable Accommodation/Disability	6	8	17	10	7
Promotion/Non-Selection	18	27	17	16	11
Terms/Conditions of Employment	17	13	13	12	8

Figure 3. Top issues alleged in formal complaints filed between FY 2015 and 2019 by percentage



The top bases and issues in GSA’s formal complaint filings in fiscal year 2019 were consistent with Government-wide statistics as reported by the EEOC.¹² According to the EEOC, Government-wide in fiscal year 2018, reprisal was the most frequently alleged basis followed by sex, race, and age. The EEOC also reported that in fiscal year 2018 the most frequently alleged issue was non-sexual harassment, followed by

¹² See EEOC FY 2018 Annual Report on the Federal Workforce, Table B-8, at <https://www.eeoc.gov/federal/reports/tables.cfm>.

disciplinary action, terms and conditions of employment, promotion/non-selection, and reasonable accommodation.

D. Findings of Discrimination

GSA’s EEO complaints where there were findings of discrimination in fiscal years 2015 through 2019 are summarized in Table 6. GSA had zero findings of discrimination in fiscal year 2019. Besides the overall decline in formal complaints filed, the reason for the decline in findings between 2019 and 2018 is unknown.

Table 6. GSA findings of discrimination between FY 2015 and 2019

	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019
Findings	2	1	0	4	0
Bases	Disability	Disability		Disability	
	Reprisal	Age		Race	
	Reprisal	Age		Sex	
	Sex	Sex		Reprisal	
	Harassment				
Issues	Reasonable Accommodation	Promotion/Non-selection		Appointment/Hire	
	Performance Evaluation/Appraisal	Time & Attendance		Disciplinary Action/Removal	
		Trainings		Harassment	
				Terms/Conditions	
				Assignment of Duties	

Appendix A – Legislative and Regulatory Requirements

Section 203 (a) of the No FEAR Act (Pub. Law 107-174) provides, in pertinent part:

(a) Annual Report. — Subject to subsection (b), not later than 180 days after the end of each fiscal year, each Federal agency shall submit to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the President pro tempore of the Senate, the Committee on Governmental Affairs of the Senate, the Committee on Government Reform of the House of Representatives, each committee of Congress with jurisdiction relating to the agency, the Chair, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the Attorney General an annual report which shall include, with respect to the fiscal year.

(1) the number of cases arising under each of the respective provisions of law covered by paragraphs (1) and (2) of section 201(a) in which discrimination on the part of such agency was alleged;

(2) the status or disposition of cases described in paragraph (1);

(3) the amount of money required to be reimbursed by such agency under section 201 in connection with each of such cases, separately identifying the aggregate amount of such reimbursements attributable to the payment of attorneys' fees, if any;

(4) the number of employees disciplined for discrimination, retaliation, harassment, or any other infraction of any provision of law referred to in paragraph (1);

(5) the final year-end data posted under section 301(c)(1)(B) for such fiscal year (without regard to section 301(c)(2));

(6) a detailed description of —

(A) the policy implemented by that agency relating to appropriate disciplinary actions against a Federal employee who — (i) discriminated against any individual in violation of any of the laws cited under section 201(a)(1) or (2); or (ii) committed another prohibited personnel practice that was revealed in the investigation of a complaint alleging a violation of any of the laws cited under section 201(a)(1) or (2); and

(B) with respect to each of such laws, the number of employees who are disciplined in accordance with such policy and the specific nature of the disciplinary action taken;

Appendix B – GSA No FEAR Act Data FY 2014-2019

EEO Data Posted Pursuant to the No FEAR Act
For 4th Quarter 2019 for Period Ending September 30, 2019

Complaint Activity	Comparative Data					
	Previous Fiscal Year Data					2019
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
Number of Complaints Filed	79	76	96	89	84	65
Number of Complainants	61	68	84	79	79	58
Repeat Filers	8	5	9	8	5	7

Complaints by Basis	Comparative Data					
	Previous Fiscal Year Data					2019
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
<i>Note: Complaints can be filed alleging multiple bases. The sum of the bases may not equal total complaints filed.</i>						
Race	35	41	49	32	35	27
Color	19	23	34	17	17	8
Religion	9	8	12	4	8	2
Reprisal	40	52	51	45	50	29
Sex	35	38	50	32	44	21
Pregnancy Discrimination Act (PDA)	0	0	0	0	0	0
National Origin	17	23	25	10	13	3
Equal Pay Act	4	5	0	0	1	1
Age	38	38	41	35	40	22
Disability	21	31	35	41	33	32
Genetics	0	1	0	0	0	0
Non-EEO	5	6	4	4	3	1

Complaints by Issue	Comparative Data					
	Previous Fiscal Year Data					2019
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
<i>Note: Complaints can be filed alleging multiple bases. The sum of the bases may not equal total complaints filed.</i>						
Appointment/Hire	3	4	6	3	0	1
Assignment of Duties	8	10	12	9	6	3
Awards	0	0	0	0	0	0
Conversion to Full Time/Perm Status	1	1	0	0	0	0
Disciplinary Action						
Demotion	3	0	3	2	0	0
Reprimand	4	11	3	4	4	0
Suspension	3	3	1	3	3	2

Findings of Discrimination Rendered by Issue	Comparative Data												
	Previous Fiscal Year Data										2019		
	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		#	%	
#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%				
<i>Findings After Hearing, Continued</i>													
Harassment													
Non-Sexual	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sexual	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	33	0	0	0
Medical Examination	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pay including overtime	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Promotion/Non-Selection	0	0	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reassignment													
Denied	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Directed	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reasonable Accommodation Disability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reinstatement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Religious Accommodation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Retirement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sex-Stereotyping	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Telework	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Termination	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Terms/Conditions of Employment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	33	0	0	0
Time and Attendance	0	0	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Training	0	0	0	0	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other - User Define													
User Defined - Right of First Refusal - RIF	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
User Defined - Suspension #2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
User-Defined - 3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
User Defined - Other 4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Findings of Discrimination Rendered by Issue	Comparative Data											
	Previous Fiscal Year Data										2019	
	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018			
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Findings Without Hearing	1		1		0		0		1		0	
Appointment/Hire	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	100	0	0
Assignment of Duties	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Awards	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Conversion to Full Time/Perm Status	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disciplinary Action												
Demotion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reprimand	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Suspension	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Removal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Duty Hours	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Perf. Eval./ Appraisal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Examination/Test	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Harassment												
Non-Sexual	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sexual	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Medical Examination	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pay including overtime	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Promotion/Non-Selection	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reassignment												
Denied	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Directed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reasonable Accommodation Disability	1	100	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reinstatement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Religious Accommodation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Retirement	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sex-Stereotyping	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Telework	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Termination	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Findings of Discrimination Rendered by Issue	Comparative Data											
	Previous Fiscal Year Data										2019	
	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018			
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<i>Findings Without Hearing, Continued</i>												
Terms/Conditions of Employment	1	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Time and Attendance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Training	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other - User Define												
User Defined - Right of First Refusal - RIF	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
User Defined - Suspension #2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
User-Defined - 3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
User Defined - Other 4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Pending Complaints Filed in Previous Fiscal Years by Status	Comparative Data					
	Previous Fiscal Year Data					2019
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
Total complaints from previous Fiscal Years	78	85	62	56	66	65
Total Complainants	67	70	51	49	60	56
Number complaints pending						
Investigation	0	0	0	1	1	1
ROI issued, pending Complainant's action	0	0	1	0	0	1
Hearing	76	81	60	53	62	53
Final Agency Action	3	4	2	2	2	2
Appeal with EEOC Office of Federal Operations	25	34	47	58	57	22

Complaint Investigations	Comparative Data					
	Previous Fiscal Year Data					2019
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	
Pending Complaints Where Investigations Exceed Required Time Frames	0	2	1	0	0	0