



Dear Future NIB Associated Agency:

Thank you for your interest in associating your non-profit organization with National Industries for the Blind (NIB). Together, our commitment to create employment opportunities for the nearly 70 percent of Americans who are blind and unemployed will generate benefits for:

- Americans who are blind, by giving them the opportunity to sustain employment, thereby gaining personal and economic independence
- Customers, through the creation of quality solutions on time and at a fair market price
- American tax-payers, by moving individuals who are blind off federal and state assistance programs and creating more income generating tax payers.

NIB created this guide to provide assistance in:

- Recognizing the benefits of associating your organization with NIB as part of the [AbilityOne Program](#) and the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Act.
- Associating your agency with National Industries for the Blind (NIB)

I, and all of the members of the NIB team, look forward to building a long-term, outstanding relationship with you and your stakeholders. Together, we will innovate to achieve our shared vision.

Sincerely,

Steve Beres
Community Program Development Manager
National Industries for the Blind (NIB)
703-310-0327
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The Benefits of NIB Association

Helping people help themselves....

Incorporated as a 501(C)3 not-for-profit organization, [NIB](#) enhances the opportunities for economic and personal independence of persons who are blind, primarily through creating, sustaining and improving employment. NIB operates under the [JWOD Act](#), a mandatory federal purchasing program, enabling people who are blind to work and provide products and services to federal and commercial customers. By harnessing the demand and purchasing power of the federal government, NIB and our [associated agencies](#) supply federal markets with a selection of more than 3,000 quality products and services under the trade name [SKILCRAFT®](#). These products are manufactured by people who are blind at more than 85 associated agencies nationwide.

NIB and our associated agencies accomplish the following activities annually:

- Employ more than 5,000 people who are blind per year
- Pay more than 60 million dollars per year in wages and benefits for full- and part-time employees
- Offer rehabilitative services to nearly 125,000 children and adults
- Operate more than 126 retail stores on military bases and in federal buildings nationwide
- Deliver more than 400 million dollars worth of products and services to federal, state and commercial markets

Like other businesses, NIB and our associated agencies must deliver quality products on time at competitive rates. To accomplish this, NIB mentors and supports our agencies with:

- Business development services
- Product and service research, development and engineering support
- Distribution channel development and support
- Brand management and marketing communications
- Product and service sales support



- Contract administration
- Leadership training for employees at all levels
- Public policy/advocacy support
- Workforce development and expansion funding

Unlike other businesses, NIB associated agencies must generate at least 75 percent of their direct labor hours by persons who are blind under the AbilityOne Program. The engineering arm of NIB consults with agencies to recommend workplace accommodations and adaptive technologies, manufacturing processes, job reengineering, feasibility studies, quality control, and training. This enables NIB associated agencies to modify jobs, equipment, processes and workflow to create more employment opportunities for people who are blind.

Similar to all government contractors, NIB associated agencies must meet the quality and contract performance provisions just as any other commercial firm. NIB associated agencies offer good wages and fringe benefits, meet Department of Labor and other workplace regulations and present promotional opportunities. All NIB associated agencies are committed to the NIB Board policy to pay employees, whose only disability is blindness, at or above the federal minimum wage or their state minimum wage, whichever is highest. In addition to employment opportunities, many NIB associated agencies provide people who are blind with rehabilitative services, such as early childhood intervention, adult literacy, low vision examinations and aids, Braille literacy, nutritional/health services, occupational/physical therapy, personal and career counseling, recreation, transportation, mobility, daily living skills and employment training.

NIB's strategy for assisting our agencies to move forward includes:

- Diversifying the types of jobs available to people who are blind
- Creating greater product and service awareness within government agencies
- Marketing products and services produced or performed by our associated agencies
- Generating more public and private partnerships
- Providing technical and financial services to our associated agencies



As the service industry rapidly expands in the U.S. and new technologies continue to emerge, NIB will continue to collaborate with our agencies to be ahead of the curve in delivering new and exciting career opportunities for Americans who are blind.

How to Become Associated with NIB

There is no cost to a non-profit agency for associating with NIB. Organizations that wish to become an NIB associated agency must adhere to the federal [JWOD Act](#), which requires:

- The participating organization be structured to "preclude the inurement of the net earnings of the corporation to any individual."
- At least 75 percent of the non-profit agency's total direct labor hours must be performed by persons who meet the legal definition of blindness
- The organization's work on federal contracts may be facility-based, such as our current multi-million dollar contract to manufacture the U.S. Army Battle Dress Uniform. Contracts may also be community-based, such as our current call center service contract with the Environmental Protection agency that assists consumers with questions about the harmful effects of lead.

After you have reviewed the JWOD Act requirements, the first step to becoming an NIB associated agency requires submission of the following items to Steve Beres, Community Program Development Manager"

- Articles of incorporation
- By-Laws
- 401 Form
- Certificate of training
- Letter of transmittal

Once these materials have been received and approved, the next step to become an NIB associated agency is approval by the [Committee for Purchase from People who are Blind or Severely Disabled \(Committee\)](#). NIB will facilitate all communication between the Committee and its current and/or potential associated agencies. Likewise, NIB will inform the applying agency of the Committee's decision.



Upon final approval to become an NIB associated agency, your agency may bid for federal contracts. When you begin to receive revenue from your contract, NIB will receive a small percentage of your contract revenue to help cover the costs of AbilityOne Program administration and NIB business operations.

For more information about the NIB association process and/or for assistance in starting your association, please contact:

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