

**Committee for Purchase  
From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled**

**Fiscal Year 2025  
Congressional Budget Justification**



An independent Federal Agency responsible for administering the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act (41 U.S.C. §§8501-8506) and the AbilityOne Program

*Operating as the U.S. AbilityOne Commission*





**OFFICE OF THE CHAIRPERSON**

March 11, 2024

Dear Member of Congress,

The U.S. AbilityOne Commission is pleased to submit the Commission's fiscal year (FY) 2025 budget justification for \$14,800,000 including not less than \$3,500,000 for the Office of Inspector General.

With an unwavering commitment to modernizing the AbilityOne Program, the Commission has made substantial progress in enhancing the quality of employment opportunities that the AbilityOne Program makes possible for nearly 37,000 Americans, including approximately 2,500 veterans, who are blind or have significant disabilities.

A further investment will cement the progress made and provide capability to continue executing the agency's FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan while sustaining and advancing opportunity and economic justice for the AbilityOne workforce.

The Commission has already taken significant steps toward implementing the plan's framework for a transformed and modernized Program while directly supporting efforts to rebuild the American industrial base through the Program's role as a trusted source of supply and services for Federal customers.

This budget justification contains major actions taken by the Commission in FY 2023 to continue its focus on modernization while improving stewardship:

***Ending payment of subminimum wages on AbilityOne contracts***

The AbilityOne Program reached a historic milestone in FY 2023 by delivering on a commitment to end use of subminimum wages in the AbilityOne Program. The Commission confirmed that every single person now employed to work on an AbilityOne contract is paid at least the Federal minimum wage, the applicable local or state minimum wage, or the applicable prevailing wage – whichever is highest.

By fully implementing the final rule ending subminimum wages in the Program, the agency demonstrated its resolve to move beyond AbilityOne's legacy culture to a future grounded in today's understanding of the potential of those who are blind or have significant disabilities.

### ***Implementing the Strategic Plan for FY 2022-2026***

Continuing to implement the Strategic Plan for FY 2022-2026 ensures AbilityOne Program modernization. The plan incorporates the recommendations of the 2017 NDAA Section 898 Panel on Department of Defense and AbilityOne Contracting Oversight, Accountability, and Integrity (898 Panel).

In FY 2025, implementing the Strategic Plan will continue the trajectory toward “good jobs” and “optimal jobs” within the Program as well as fostering collaborative efforts with Federal agencies with mission responsibilities to increase employment for people who are blind or have significant disabilities.<sup>1</sup> The new direction of the Program will enable employees who are blind or have significant disabilities to continue their career advancement, both within and outside the Program.

### ***Proposing limited competition for high-dollar contracts in the AbilityOne Program***

Responding to Federal customer priorities, the Commission began a formal rulemaking process to support limited competition in the AbilityOne Program by publishing a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in the Federal Register. The rule is designed to increase transparency, incentivize performance, and ensure that the Program remains a trusted source of supply and services for Federal agencies, while creating and maintaining jobs for people who are blind or have significant disabilities.

Ensuring an effective competition program to achieve best value outcomes for the Department of Defense (DoD) and other Federal agencies will require that the agency have additional resources to re-compete contracts. The budget request reflects these anticipated resources. The small increase here is dwarfed by the increased value this change will provide for DoD and our other customers.

### ***Sending legislative proposals to Congress to amend the Javits-Wagner-O’Day Act***

On April 13, 2023, the Commission transmitted three legislative proposals to Congress to amend the Commission’s authorizing statute – the Javits-Wagner-O’Day (JWOD) Act. The proposals represent steps toward modernizing the JWOD Act by improving efficiency in the Program while aligning it with modern disability thinking.

### ***Modernizing compliance in the AbilityOne Program***

Compliance modernization enhances Commission oversight, ensures good governance within the AbilityOne Program, and addresses recommendations by the 898 Panel and Office of Inspector General.

A major update of compliance policies is underway. Following robust consultation with stakeholders, the Commission recently issued two updated policies that modernize compliance programs by focusing on outcomes. More policies will be issued in the near future.

This budget justification sets forth the minimum resources necessary to maintain a compliance program consistent with the Strategic Plan. However, to fully realize the goals of the Strategic

Plan, a more significant infusion of resources will be necessary in the future as the Commission assists the NPAs with achieving the new direction of the Program.

In addition, the Strategic Plan emphasizes improving the use of data to measure performance and drive decision-making. The Commission is taking a fresh look at the programmatic data both it and the CNAs collect, analyze, and use in determining how to advance the AbilityOne mission.

For these reasons, the Commission needs continued investments in personnel, information technology, and contract support (such as technical expertise to establish standards for job individualization and person-centered employment plans) to improve its administration of the compliance program.

***Responsibly managing growth of “good jobs” and “optimal jobs” while building the AbilityOne Representative (ABOR) program government-wide***

The AbilityOne Representative (ABOR) program, now established across more than 20 Chief Financial Officers (CFO) Act agencies and 7 major DoD components, is increasing awareness and understanding of AbilityOne’s mission and objectives to better support Federal customers and increase use of AbilityOne products and services. The Commission hired an ABOR program manager in FY 2023.

As the Commission advances these goals, it needs to prepare for a multiyear increase in contract actions with, and purchases through, the AbilityOne Program. The Commission is committed to ensuring that all jobs within the Program are “good jobs” and, where possible, are performed in integrated settings (“optimal jobs”).

The Commission believes that many of the associated jobs will directly support the return of “good jobs” to the U.S., particularly in critical areas such as supporting the health care supply chain.

To responsibly manage the growth likely to stem from these initiatives, the Commission will require modest annual budget increases to invest in Program compliance and oversight, as well as agency outreach, communication, and IT.

***Ensuring effective governance and results across the AbilityOne Program***

The requested funding will support the Commission as it works to implement a Strategic Plan objective to ensure effective governance and results across the AbilityOne Program.

Achievements in this area include the agency’s establishment and maturation of an enterprise risk management plan, as well as enhanced financial management and internal controls.

Achieving effective governance and results requires casting a wide net for broad stakeholder engagement. Examples include soliciting public comments on the proposed rule on competition using [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) as well as town halls, listening sessions, and public engagement sessions at our quarterly public meetings. For draft compliance policies, we work closely with a compliance council of CNAs and NPAs, and created a process for obtaining public feedback

from across the Program and stakeholder community. In addition, we briefed numerous Congressional staff on these modernization initiatives.

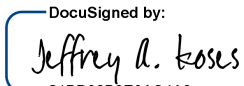
***Maintaining the Pace of Progress***

AbilityOne is an engine of opportunity and economic empowerment for people who are blind or have significant disabilities – a population that historically experiences the lowest employment rate of any segment of U.S. society. AbilityOne also holds the potential for increasing economic opportunities for such individuals by launching them into jobs throughout the American economy.

As the Commission looks ahead to FY 2025, we will continue to work closely with the OIG. Through reports, audits, alerts and other actions, the OIG enhances confidence in the Program, improves economies and efficiencies, and promotes Program growth. The OIG also provides vital oversight to deter and detect bad actors.

On behalf of the U.S. AbilityOne Commission and the individuals employed nationwide through the AbilityOne Program, thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:  
  
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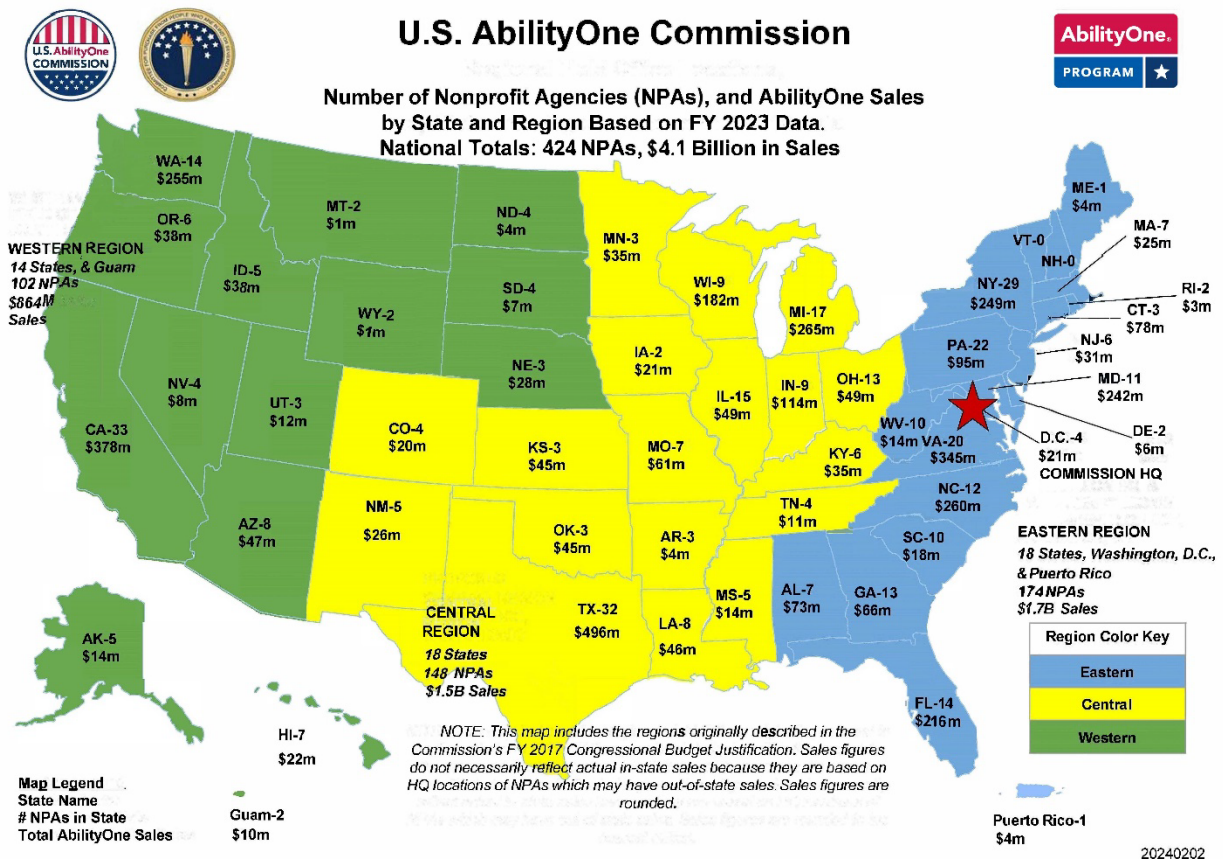
Jeffrey A. Koses  
Chairperson and Presidential Appointee

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### AbilityOne People and Numbers – FY 2023

AbilityOne employees who are blind or have significant disabilities	36,600
AbilityOne wages paid	\$731.9 million
Estimated Health and Welfare Fringe Benefits (in addition to wages)	\$172.9 million
Average hourly wage	\$17.58
Cost per job (Commission FY 2023 \$13.124 million budget ÷ 36,600 jobs)	\$359
Sales of products and services to Federal customers	\$4.15 billion
Wounded, ill, or injured veterans working in AbilityOne direct labor jobs	2,500
Outward placements from AbilityOne contracts	1,610
Upward promotions within AbilityOne contracts	2,476



## 1.0 Program and Budget Justification Summary

### 1.1 Overview

The U.S. AbilityOne Commission FY 2025 budget request funding levels are as follows: <sup>2</sup>

Agency	\$11,300,000
Office of Inspector General (OIG)	\$ 3,500,000
Total	\$14,800,000

**Table 1. FY 2025 Budget Request (in \$ millions)**

Category	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025
Personnel	4.588	4.607	5.215	6.542	6.369
Benefits	1.357	1.444	1.600	2.066	2.117
All Other	2.055	2.299	3.159	3.192	2.814
OIG	2.500	2.650	3.150	3.600	3.500
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.500</b>	<b>11.000</b>	<b>13.124</b>	<b>15.400</b>	<b>14.800</b>

The requested funding is needed for the Commission to fulfill its mission of tapping America's underutilized workforce of individuals who are blind or have significant disabilities to deliver high quality, mission-essential products and services to Federal agencies in quality employment opportunities.

The Commission administers and oversees the AbilityOne Program, through which nearly 37,000 people who are blind or have significant disabilities are employed at more than 420 nonprofit agencies (NPAs) from Guam to Maine.

The AbilityOne Program is important to the nation because people who are blind or have significant disabilities have historically experienced the lowest employment rate of any segment of U.S. society.<sup>3</sup> In addition, the Program has the potential and is building its capacity to be a gateway for employees with disabilities to move to jobs throughout the U.S. economy.



## **1.2 Benefits of Investments in the Commission**

Investments in the Commission enabled the agency to make significant progress in FY 2023 priority areas discussed below. Continued investments will sustain and further this progress toward improving results, efficiency, and outcomes aligned with the agency's statutory mission and Strategic Plan, White House priorities, Congressional mandates, Federal Government customer feedback, and input from the disability community and other key stakeholders.

### **Progress During FY 2023**

#### ***Commission Submits Proposed Final Rule to OMB on “Supporting Competition in the AbilityOne Program”***

- The Commission opened a formal rulemaking process to support competition in the AbilityOne Program when it published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) in the Federal Register on March 13, 2023.<sup>4</sup> The Commission subsequently submitted a proposed final rule to OMB for interagency coordination.
- The proposed rule incorporated, in a modified fashion, recommendations from the FY 2017 NDAA Section 898 Panel on Department of Defense and AbilityOne Contracting Oversight, Accountability, and Integrity (898 Panel).<sup>5</sup> The Panel released its fourth and final report to Congress in December 2021.<sup>6</sup>
- The rule introduces limited competition into the AbilityOne Program for high-dollar contracts. Designed to increase transparency and incentivize performance, the rule will help to ensure that the Program remains a trusted source of supply and services for Federal agencies while creating and maintaining jobs for people who are blind or have significant disabilities.
- The Commission has concluded that the significant benefits of the proposed rule to our Federal agency partners outweigh the expected administrative costs involved in NPAs competing with other NPAs.
- Receiving nearly 100 public comments via [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) – all of which the Commission carefully considered – the proposed rule has been the subject of extensive public discussion between the Commission and stakeholders.
- The Commission issued a report on the 2018-2019 competition pilot test for AbilityOne Program nonprofit agencies competing for the Facility Support and Operations Services Contract at Fort Bliss, Texas.<sup>7</sup>
- An extended public engagement session on the competition NPRM was held at the Commission's July 13, 2023, quarterly public meeting.

### ***Ending Payment of Subminimum Wages on AbilityOne Contracts***

Delivering on a 2019 commitment to end its use of subminimum wages across the Program, the Commission confirmed in 2023 that every person working on an AbilityOne contract is now paid at least the Federal minimum wage, the applicable local or state minimum wage, or the applicable prevailing wage – whichever is highest.

The Commission’s process to end subminimum wages in the Program included publishing a proposed rule in 2021 that drew more than 180 public comments.<sup>8</sup> The Commission carefully considered when drafting the final rule published in 2022.<sup>9</sup> The agency also provided extensions of up to one year for certain NPAs to come into compliance.

While payment of subminimum wages had been declining in the Program for years, the Commission recognized that it was past time to ensure that all employees are fairly compensated for their work. Wages send a message of how work is valued, and the work performed by people with disabilities should be valued equally with that of others.

Ending the payment of subminimum wages on AbilityOne contracts was the Commission’s most significant public policy-related action over the past two years, and advances the Program’s alignment with modern disability thinking.

### ***Strategic Plan for FY 2022-2026***

***Commission progress in FY 2023 aligned with the Strategic Plan for FY 2022-2026,***<sup>10</sup> ***which the agency continues to advance via an implementation plan.***<sup>11</sup> The Strategic Plan contains updated mission and vision statements that reinforce the purpose of the AbilityOne Program. It also includes outcome goals, strategies, and performance measures that clearly communicate the Commission’s direction and resource prioritization.<sup>12</sup>

- The Commission developed its Strategic Plan in ways that ensured stakeholder and public input.
  - On March 18, 2022, the Commission posted a draft Strategic Plan on the Federal eRulemaking Portal at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov). The same day, the Commission published a Federal Register notice opening a public comment and review period.
  - The Commission received, and carefully considered, more than 70 written comments submitted in response to the draft Strategic Plan.
  - The Commission also sought feedback on the plan through the following:
    - Listening Session with organizations that advocate for people with disabilities.
    - Listening Session with self-advocates who have intellectual or developmental disabilities.

- Town Hall with AbilityOne-participating nonprofit agencies.
  - Meetings with the Commission’s designated Central Nonprofit Agencies (CNAs).
- The plan builds on the recommendations of the 898 Panel, as well as recommendations that have been made by disability rights advocates over the years.

### ***Legislative proposals sent to Congress to amend Javits-Wagner-O’Day Act***

On April 13, 2023, the Commission sent three legislative proposals to Congress to amend the JWOD Act:

- Authorizing the Commission to conduct pilot tests to require a lower minimum ratio of direct labor hours performed by employees who are blind or have significant disabilities in order to increase integrated workplaces and enhance employment opportunities for such employees, and to provide data that may inform Congress for purposes of modernizing the JWOD Act.
- Promoting efficiency and effectiveness by shortening the required public notice period for Procurement List additions and deletions and providing flexibility to publish the Procurement List in a location other than the Federal Register.
- Changing the outdated name of the “Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled” to the “Commission for the Employment of People Who Are Blind or Have Significant Disabilities” and authorizing the Commission to make updates to the name in the future without further legislative action.

The legislative proposals advance modernization of the AbilityOne Program and align with the FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. The Commission continues to monitor the status of these legislative proposals.

### ***Modernizing Compliance in the AbilityOne Program***

A major update of compliance policies began in January 2023. Drivers of the Commission’s compliance modernization include the agency’s Strategic Plan, enhancing Commission oversight, and ensuring good governance throughout the AbilityOne Program. Goals include:

- Protect the integrity of the AbilityOne Program.
- Ensure that the AbilityOne Program remains a trusted source of supply and services for Federal agencies.
- Create AbilityOne jobs that provide quality employment and serve as a springboard to upward and outward employment for those employees who desire such career advancement.

- Ensure compliance with all other statutory and regulatory requirements.

The agency meets with a compliance council of key stakeholders from the NPAs and CNAs, and shares drafts of each important proposed policy change. Following consultations with these stakeholders, the Commission issued two updated policies in November 2023 that modernize compliance by focusing on outcomes.<sup>13</sup> It also published a Federal Register notice about a proposed Participating Employee Eligibility form.<sup>14</sup> Compliance modernization also addresses recommendations by the 898 Panel and OIG.

### ***Increasing customer satisfaction by emphasizing contract performance***

- Strong contract performance – quality, dependability, consistency, and timely delivery – is the foundation of the Program’s ability to meet Federal customer requirements.
- Throughout 2023, the Commission increased its emphasis on contract performance, including by convening a panel of acquisition professionals from the Office of Federal Procurement Policy and several Federal agencies at its January 31, 2023, public meeting.
- Quality performance showcases the work of AbilityOne in a competitive market, strengthens relationships between Federal agencies and the Program, results in increased customer satisfaction and better mission outcomes, and supports expansion into new markets.
- Enhancing and/or developing mechanisms to monitor contract performance and customer satisfaction is a Commission priority.
- The final rule on competition will be a tangible action by the Commission that underscores the importance of good contract performance.

### ***New emphasis on subcontracting to achieve integrated employment***

- Consistent with the FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, the Commission now considers subcontracting and other approaches to collaborating with industry as ways to increase integration, leading to what the plan defines as “optimal jobs.”
- Our new emphasis on subcontracting reflects modern disability policy in terms of advocating for competitive integrated employment and represents a shift from the Commission’s historical position of minimizing subcontracting of work on AbilityOne contracts so as to maintain job opportunities for AbilityOne employees within the Program.
- Subcontracting and collaborations can help NPAs expand their expertise and capacity. Therefore, the Commission now supports the creative use of subcontracting in a variety of approaches that expand or sustain employment and support our customers’ satisfaction.

- The public engagement section of the Commission’s quarterly public meeting on April 13, 2023, focused on subcontracting. Speakers included a panel of experts who shared ideas about subcontracting and other approaches to collaborating with industry that may be replicated in the AbilityOne Program.

***Nonprofit agencies now required to purchase and use AbilityOne products when performing AbilityOne service contracts***

On October 1, 2022, Commission Policy 51.542 “Nonprofit Agency Use of AbilityOne Products in the Performance of AbilityOne Service Contracts” became effective.<sup>15</sup> This policy will help to create and sustain jobs while affirming that AbilityOne products are reasonably priced and high quality.

***Developing AbilityOne Program Career Planning Support Resources – Contract Awarded***

On Sept. 27, 2023, the Commission awarded a contract to develop and recommend career planning support resources for NPAs including developing the necessary components of the employment supports of job individualizations, employee career plans, and career advancement programs.<sup>16</sup>

This effort will develop substantive content for workforce development activities that will (1) provide the basis for oversight of AbilityOne-participating NPAs and (2) identify resources to assist nonprofit agencies in providing workforce development activities for employees who are blind or have significant disabilities.

***2023 financial statements audit – the Commission received a clean audit for the fourth year in a row, and 31 open recommendations from prior audits were closed by independent financial auditors.***

For details, see the Commission’s FY 2023 Performance and Accountability Report.<sup>17</sup>

***OIG removed three top challenges cited in the 2021 Top Management and Performance Challenges report***

Based on progress by the Commission, the OIG 2022 Top Management and Performance Challenges report removed the following challenges:<sup>18</sup>

- Higher Level of Transparency Needed to Enhance Program Confidence
- Implementation of Cooperative Agreements with CNAs
- Erosion of Statutory Program Authority

OIG also removed “Accessibility,” a Watch Item in the 2021 Top Management and Performance Challenges Report, from the 2022 report.

*For more on Commission progress in FY 2023, see Section 4.0, Performance Goals, Measures, and Indicators.*

### ***AbilityOne returns dollars to the U.S. economy and the U.S. Treasury***

- Economic empowerment of AbilityOne employees through job opportunities increases tax revenues from the Program’s nearly 37,000 people who are blind or have significant disabilities.
  - In 2023, the research and data analytics consultancy Mathematica did a study on the economic impact of the AbilityOne Program.<sup>19</sup> The report estimated that every dollar that Congress and Federal agencies invest in the Program results in a return on investment to the Treasury of \$2.31 due to savings realized by reduced reliance on public programs as well as increased tax revenue from the employment of people who are blind or have significant disabilities. In addition, the study found multiplier effects on the surrounding economies. The study was commissioned by the CNAs.
  - AbilityOne employees earned nearly \$732 million in wages in FY 2023, plus an estimated nearly \$173 million in health and welfare fringe benefits.
  - AbilityOne employees have earned more than \$6 billion in wages since 2011.
  - AbilityOne employees have identified more than \$24 billion for de-obligation from a wide range of Federal customers’ contracts through the Program’s delivery of contract close-out services; this support allows Federal agencies to focus on pre-award and award-related actions while achieving timely close-out of contracts.

### ***Increasing AbilityOne employment opportunities by expanding the AbilityOne Representative (ABOR) program across government***

- The Commission continues to expand the AbilityOne Representative (ABOR) Program in Federal agencies across government to increase awareness and understanding of the Program’s mission and objectives. ABORs have been appointed in more than 20 CFO Act agencies, plus an additional 7 ABORs at DoD components including the military services.
- An ABOR “advocates federal buying in accordance with mandatory source contracting procedures, engages with the workforce to build use of the Program, and offers feedback to the U.S. AbilityOne Commission to improve the value of the Program,” as defined in the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) memorandum on “Increasing the Participation of Americans with Disabilities in Federal Contracting,” which established the program.<sup>20</sup>

- By helping to identify contract requirements that will create “good jobs” and “optimal jobs”, ABORs support the Commission’s Strategic Plan and its call to engage with Federal agencies to increase employment opportunities for people with significant disabilities throughout the economy.
- ABORs have hosted numerous educational sessions for Federal agencies about AbilityOne capabilities and utilization. The departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Education, Interior, Treasury, and VA, as well as the General Services Administration and NASA, have all participated in training conducted by the Commission and CNAs.

***Increasing public trust and confidence in the Commission through greater transparency and expanding public engagement***

The OIG removed “Higher Level of Transparency Needed to Enhance Program Confidence” as a challenge in its FY 2022 Top Management and Performance Challenges Report “because of the progress made by the Commission.” The OIG had cited this as a challenge from FY 2018 through 2021.

Expanded public engagement has significantly boosted participation by, and input from, key stakeholders including advocates from the disability community. Changing from in-person to virtual quarterly public meetings has increased attendance from approximately 50 attendees before the pandemic to approximately 470 at the January 31, 2023, quarterly public meeting. Virtual meetings have placed new demands on Commission staff, as well as additional expenses due to video platforms and Federal Register notices.

Federal Register notices of Commission quarterly public meetings promote greater transparency and public engagement by posing questions for discussion, soliciting written statements to the Commission, and encouraging verbal presentations and exchanges between the public and Commission members.

Quarterly public meetings in FY 2023 and FY 2024 were announced in Federal Register notices that solicited input from attendees about the following public engagement topics:

- October 25, 2022: “The Commission invites public comments or suggestions regarding the scope, requirements, and metrics for the next generation of Cooperative Agreements between the Commission and its designated Central Nonprofit Agencies (CNAs). The Cooperative Agreements cover the roles and responsibilities of the CNAs and the Commission in the administration of the AbilityOne Program.”<sup>21</sup>
- January 31, 2023: “A panel of Federal customers will broadly address, from an overall acquisition perspective, what is important to Federal agencies in terms of contractor performance—whether or not those contracts are awarded under the auspices of the AbilityOne Program. Panelist topics may include but are not limited to quality, timely delivery, best value, innovation, and compliance with cybersecurity and other Federal guidance.

“...The Commission invites public comments and suggestions about the panel topic, including perspectives on contract performance, quality assurance, and measurement of customer satisfaction.”<sup>22</sup>

- April 13, 2023: “The Commission invites public comments and suggestions about subcontracting and other partnerships with industry by or with AbilityOne employers.”<sup>23</sup>
- July 13, 2023: “The Commission will hold a public engagement session on the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) Supporting Competition in the AbilityOne Program (RIN 3037-AA14), published on March 13, 2023. The Commission particularly invites discussion on how the Commission can consider a nonprofit agency’s positive performance in improving employment opportunities for people who are blind or have significant disabilities, both within the AbilityOne workplace and placements outside the AbilityOne Program, in initial Procurement List additions and in any competitive process covered by the NPRM.”<sup>24</sup>
- October 12, 2023: “The public engagement session will address modernizing the guidance for project development assignments and order allocations for nonprofit agencies participating in the AbilityOne Program. This discussion will support the future update of Commission Policy 51.301, ‘Selection of Nonprofit Agencies for Project Assignment and Order Allocation.’ The Commission invites public comments and suggestions on the public engagement topic.”<sup>25</sup>
- January 25, 2024: “The public engagement session will address how the AbilityOne Program supports, and can increasingly support, the Federal Government’s hiring of individuals with disabilities.... The Commission invites public comments and suggestions on the public engagement topic.”<sup>26</sup>

The Commission received valuable responses during these public meetings and has used the input in its decision-making and development of agendas for future public meetings. By continuing this kind of frank and constructive exchange, we can create the shared awareness and understanding that are essential to the success of the Commission and the Program.

To further increase transparency, the Commission uses Facebook and LinkedIn accounts to announce Commission meetings and actions.

***The Commission continues to meet challenges of Congressional and Executive Branch mandates within resource limitations***

- Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2016, requirements for Commission to (1) establish Cooperative Agreements to govern its relationship with the CNAs, and (2) establish an OIG.
- Office of Management and Budget (OMB) requirements for IT and cybersecurity.



- Implementing recommendations of the FY 2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) Section 898 “Panel on Department of Defense and AbilityOne Contracting Oversight, Accountability, and Integrity” (898 Panel).
  - FY 2017 NDAA directed the Secretary of Defense to establish the Panel, whose mission was to address the effectiveness and internal controls of the AbilityOne Program related to DoD contracts.
  - 898 Panel duties included annual reporting to Congress on ways to eliminate waste, fraud and abuse, and recommending changes to business practices and IT systems.
  - Panel sunsetted after issuing its Fourth and Final Report to Congress in December 2021.<sup>27</sup> Report tracked 24 recommendations that the Commission has either implemented or will continue to implement.
  - Under the 2017 NDAA, DoD is authorized to terminate an NPA’s AbilityOne contracts if that NPA does not comply with certain Panel recommendations. Program-wide, failure to implement Panel recommendations could jeopardize approximately 25,000 jobs for people who are blind or have significant disabilities.

*The Commission is modernizing its IT and strengthening cybersecurity (see Section 3.2, Information Technology (IT) Requirements)*

*The Commission continues to enhance financial stewardship and Enterprise Risk Management (see Section 4.3, Strategic Objective 3)*

### 1.3 Current challenges

- Implementing the Strategic Plan for FY 2022-2026, including initiatives related to:
  - Supporting competition in the AbilityOne Program.
  - Increasing “good jobs” and “optimal jobs”.
  - Modernizing oversight of NPA compliance.
- Addressing the OIG’s annual Top Management and Performance Challenges Report.
- Reviewing all agency policies, and renegotiating the Commission’s Cooperative Agreements with the CNAs, to align with the Strategic Plan for FY 2022-2026.
- Bolstering resources to meet mission requirements and increase oversight.
  - FY 2023 AbilityOne sales exceeded \$4 billion for the first time.
  - Additional staffing is essential for the Commission – a micro-agency of 36 FTEs – to increase and effectively manage oversight of Program activities and contracts – particularly given the continuing expansion of the AbilityOne Representative (ABOR) program (*see Section 1.2, Benefits of Investments in the Commission*).
  - The 898 Panel and AbilityOne’s Federal customers cite the need for more funding and staff for the Commission, particularly to support Program stewardship duties.
  - The Commission’s paradigm shift for the AbilityOne Program to become a pathway to careers in upwardly mobile positions both within and outside the AbilityOne employers requires increased funding to develop standards, training, and technical assistance.
  - Increasing operating costs such as inflation and Cost of Living Allowances pay raises.
- Updating the IT infrastructure (*see Section 3.2, Information Technology (IT) Requirements*).
- Addressing FY 2023 OIG FISMA Audit recommendations. The Commission’s Maturity Model score was “Not Effective.” The agency is working to improve this score in FY 2024.
- Meeting the requirements of the increased number of Congressional and Executive Branch mandates (*see above*).

## 2.0 Background

### 2.1 Legal Authority, Mission, and Vision

The legal authority for the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, which operates as the U.S. AbilityOne Commission, is established in the Javits-Wagner-O’Day Act of 1971 (JWOD Act), codified at 41 U.S.C. §§8501-8506, and implemented through 41 C.F.R. Chapter 51.

The Commission is an independent Executive Branch agency, with exclusive responsibility for administering the JWOD Act and the AbilityOne Program, which is responsible for employing nearly 37,000 Americans who are blind or have significant disabilities.

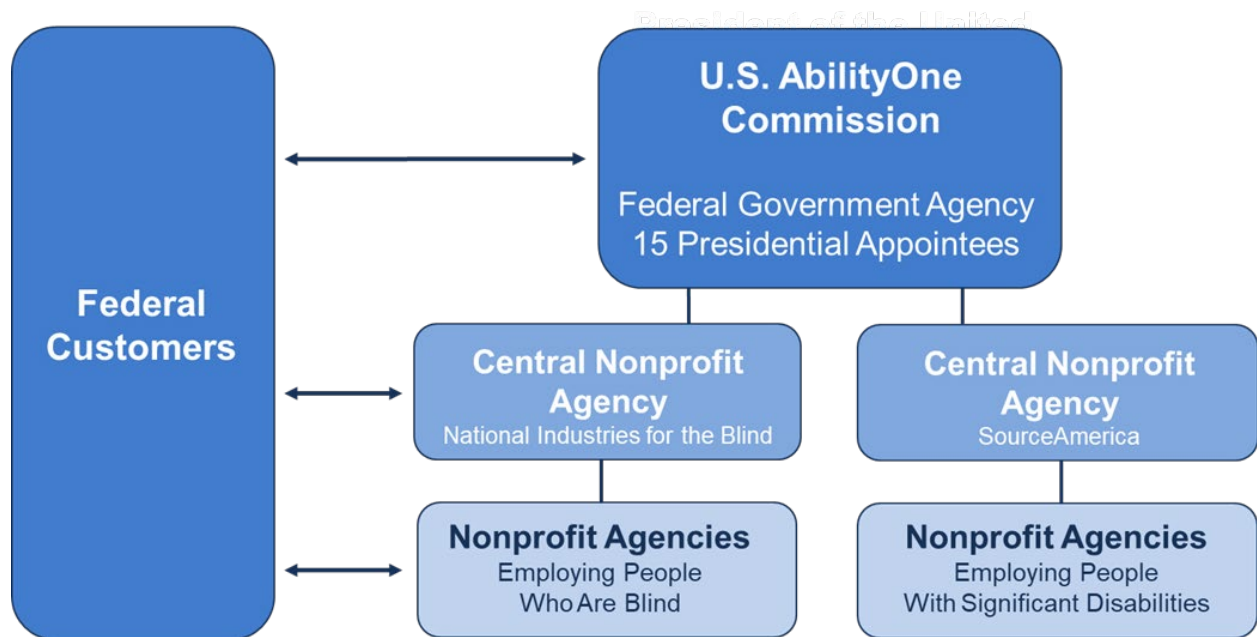
**The mission of the U.S. AbilityOne Commission and the AbilityOne Program is:**

To tap America’s underutilized workforce of individuals who are blind or have significant disabilities to deliver high quality, mission-essential products and services to Federal agencies in quality employment opportunities.

**The vision of the U.S. AbilityOne Commission and the AbilityOne Program is:**

Remain a trusted source of supply and services for Federal agencies while creating quality employment opportunities across all economic sectors for people who are blind or have significant disabilities.

### 2.2 Program Structure and Responsibilities



### ***Presidential Appointees***

In FY 2023, the Commission achieved its full statutory complement of 15 Presidential appointees as the result of President Biden appointing eight Federal agency members.

The most recent appointment was the Air Force representative in July 2023.<sup>28</sup> In October 2022, the President appointed seven Federal agency members.<sup>29</sup> In August 2021, the President appointed four private citizens.<sup>30</sup>

The Commission consists of 11 Federal agency members, as well as four private citizen members who represent the employment concerns of people who are blind or have significant disabilities.

Presidential appointees on the Commission bring extensive expertise and tested judgement that promote the effective implementation of the JWOD Act, the operational efficiency of the Commission and AbilityOne Program, and the interests of people who are blind or have significant disabilities.

Each appointee representing a Federal government agency is a senior procurement official with decades of experience in acquisition and procurement, a senior official knowledgeable on personnel issues, or a disability employment policy expert responsible for related programs in their own agency. Each private citizen appointee is an individual with broad knowledge of the employment problems facing people who are blind or have significant disabilities.

Commission members convene monthly, hold public meetings quarterly, and visit and engage with AbilityOne NPAs to promote an ongoing dialogue with stakeholders and ensure a current understanding of Program issues. They also participate in Commission subcommittees on Regulations and Policy, Enterprise Risk Management, and Performance Management.

### ***Commission Staff***

The Commission staff (36 FTEs as of December 31, 2023) maintains agency operations and prepares materials required by law, regulation, and policy to inform the decisions made by the Presidential appointees. The Commission also has an OIG (currently 8 FTEs).

### ***Central Nonprofit Agencies***

The Commission has designated two Central Nonprofit Agencies (CNAs) – National Industries for the Blind (NIB) and SourceAmerica – to facilitate the distribution of orders and assist the more than 420 NPAs participating in the AbilityOne Program.

### 3.0 Analysis of Resources Required

#### 3.1 Personnel Requirements

**Table 2. FY 2025 Additional Requested Personnel (5)**

Position Requested	FTEs	Source of Requirement / Justification
Workforce Data Analyst	2	Strategic Plan FY 2022-2026 implementation to support job individualizations, employee career plans, and career advancement programs.
Workforce Development Specialist	2	Strategic Plan FY 2022-2026 implementation to support job individualizations, employee career plans, and career advancement programs.
Competition Manager	1	Strategic Plan FY 2022-2026 implementation to support performance and evaluation of pilot studies on competition among NPAs, ensuring best value to Federal customers.

This budget justification includes funding for five (5) additional requested personnel as listed in Table 2. The agency’s current personnel are described in Table 3. (For OIG, see Section 5.0.)

Additional requested personnel in FY 2025 are required to sustain the Commission’s progress, (see Section 1.2, Benefits of Investments in the Commission); to meet increasing mission requirements (see Section 1.3, Current Challenges); and to support priorities, including implementing the FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. Position responsibilities will include:

- Two (2) Workforce Data Analysts to support the Commission’s NPA oversight as well as to support research, analysis, and the presentation of data facilitating assessment of the CNAs’ and NPAs’ implementation of the Commission’s Strategic Plan objectives in the areas of job individualizations, employee career plans, and career advancement plans. The Strategic Plan emphasizes improving the use of data to measure performance, drive decision-making, and advance the AbilityOne mission. (See Table 2.)
- Two (2) Workforce Development Specialists to support the Strategic Plan’s Strategic Objective 2 (Identify, publicize, and support the increase of “good jobs” and optimal jobs in the AbilityOne Program). Responsibilities include developing best practices and metrics for AbilityOne employers to demonstrate they are developing and providing jobs that meet the Commission’s criteria for “good jobs” and/or “optimal jobs” in terms of wages, benefits, legal protections, job individualization, career advancement, and integration. This will allow the Commission to direct and, as needed, provide technical assistance to NPAs participating in the AbilityOne Program. Responsibilities also include assessing and measuring AbilityOne employers’ use of best practices and providing technical assistance to AbilityOne employers

and AbilityOne CNAs to align with the Commission’s priorities. *(See Table 2 and Section 1.2, Benefits of Investments in the Commission.)*

- One (1) Competition Manager to support Strategic Objective 3 (Ensure effective governance and results across the AbilityOne Program). Responsibilities include performing and evaluating pilot studies on competition among NPAs and supporting Commission suitability determinations regarding AbilityOne contracts that are appropriate for competition or re-competition to ensure the best value to Federal customers and to ensure “good jobs” and “optimal jobs” in the AbilityOne Program. *(See Table 2.)*

**Table 3. Agency FTE Positions (as of December 31, 2023)**

<b>Role / Responsibility</b>	<b>FTEs</b>	<b>Mission / Value</b>
Program Oversight (includes and aligns NPA compliance, Cooperative Agreements between the Commission and CNAs, and Federal customer satisfaction)	7*	Promotes oversight and integrity across AbilityOne Program by ensuring compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and policies. Includes NPA compliance with all AbilityOne requirements, including Workforce Development; routine administration of Cooperative Agreements that govern the relationship between the Commission and CNAs; AbilityOne Representatives support; and customer experience with AbilityOne contract performance.
Business Operations	8	Manages Procurement List’s approximately 15,000 products and 4,000 services that create employment for people who are blind or have significant disabilities. Manages Fair Market Prices for AbilityOne products and services. Responsible for upgrades to the Procurement List Information Management System (PLIMS).
Veterans Employment and Initiatives	1	Provides oversight, programming, and strategic planning to maximize AbilityOne employment opportunities for transitioning service members and veterans who are blind or have significant disabilities.
Information Technology	4	Supports agency and OIG operations and mission through modernizing data platforms and cybersecurity, and providing Federal customers, CNAs, and NPAs with enhanced user experience for Commission’s digital backbone – the Procurement List Information Management System (PLIMS).
Western U.S. Field Office	1*	Promotes integrity and efficiency in AbilityOne Program through effective oversight and advocacy. Supports Federal customers and Commission compliance activities.
Office of the General Counsel	4	Provides statutory and regulatory interpretation and advice; provides legal review and advice for Commission’s business decisions; supports agency’s defense in litigation; and manages agency Ethics Program.

<b>Role / Responsibility</b>	<b>FTEs</b>	<b>Mission / Value</b>
Contracting, Purchase Card, and Travel Program Support	2	Provides guidance and support services to agency employees; serves as business advisor to fulfill the agency's contract requirements; also provides Program customers with technical assistance related to contract administration.
Office of the Chief Financial Officer	2	Manages Commission's budget formulation, financial management, audit liaison functions, Management Internal Controls Program, and Enterprise Risk Management Plan.
Executive Leadership Team	7*	Provides agency leadership and strategy. Executive Director; Acting Deputy Executive Director; Chief of Staff; Senior Advisor, Communications and Government Affairs; and support staff.
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>*Indicates areas with 2 FTEs who are dual-hatted, and 2 FTE positions to be backfilled.</b>

### 3.2 Information Technology (IT) Requirements

**Table 4. Information Technology (IT) Summary Table**

<b>Category</b>	<b>(BY) FY 2021 Enacted</b>	<b>(BY) FY 2022 Enacted</b>	<b>(BY) FY 2023 Enacted</b>	<b>(BY) FY 2024 Request</b>	<b>(BY) FY 2025 Request</b>
Personnel and Contractors	5 FTE	8 FTE	8 FTE	7 FTE	7 FTE
IT Management		\$237,000	\$225,823	\$242,475	\$249,551
Network Maintenance and Help Desk Support	\$225,000	\$411,000	\$386,264	\$396,000	\$399,374
PLIMS 1.0 Operations and Maintenance*	\$220,000	\$98,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Cyber Support	\$400,000	\$304,000	\$348,000	\$506,483	\$544,017
Hardware**	\$15,000	\$22,000	\$89,705	\$99,447	\$55,825
Software	\$45,000	\$30,000	\$28,788	\$32,690	\$134,820
New Investments, including TMF payback and future PLIMS 2.0 support	\$0	\$600,000	\$125,000	\$149,000	\$349,000
Communications (Data & Internet)***	\$150,753	\$106,795	\$85,400	100,851	\$100,851
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 FTE \$1,055,753</b>	<b>8 FTE \$1,808,795</b>	<b>8 FTE \$1,288,970</b>	<b>7 FTE \$1,530,946</b>	<b>7 FTE \$1,833,438</b>

PLIMS 1.0 refers to the current state of the Procurement List Information Management System. PLIMS 2.0 refers to the future-state system, which will be an upgrade from PLIMS 1.0, and funded by the Technology Modernization Fund (TMF) investment.<sup>31</sup>

\*New IT Support Contract awarded in FY 2022 covers network maintenance, help desk support, and PLIMS operations and maintenance. Thereafter, PLIMS 1.0 operations and maintenance are no longer separately reflected as a contract expense.

\*\*Hardware numbers include a mandatory third-party enterprise software and hardware licensing agreement that is included with the purchase of the hardware.



\*\*\* Table 4 reflects a new line – “Communications (Data and Internet)” – to provide an additional level of detail and transparency in reflecting the IT portfolio. Expenses in this line are accounted for in the “Rent and Communications” budget object class.

Table 4 does not reflect the initial PLIMS 2.0 software funding because the source of funds was secured from the Technology Modernization Fund (TMF) appropriation.

### ***Information Technology Requirements***

The Commission continues to modernize its IT infrastructure, primarily focusing on:

- Applying the \$1.8 million TMF investment received in October 2022 to support updating the Commission’s antiquated Procurement List Information Management System (PLIMS).
- Cloud migration of key services, databases, IT resources, and applications to align with the Administration’s strategy to accelerate agency adoption of cloud-based solutions (Cloud Smart), as well as enhance capabilities related to disaster recovery and continuity of operations. (See IT and Cybersecurity section, below.)

### **TMF Investment – Facts and Benefits**

PLIMS modernization supported by TMF will:

- Advance acquisition transparency and effective planning by ensuring that Federal customers have the right information at the right time.
- Improve workflow to allow the Commission to process business transactions and more efficiently make business decisions, such as PL additions and price changes.
- Improve the Commission’s ability to display up-to-the-moment Procurement List (PL) information in a user-friendly format.
- Improve search capability that is web-based and public-facing for PL products and services.
- Provide web-based report viewing capabilities (to include PL).
- Enable Federal customers to easily learn the scope of requirements on the PL, as well as easily view see the fair market prices set by the Commission to comply with FAR 8.7.
- Facilitate interoperability with the systems of Federal and non-Federal customers and stakeholders.
- Ensure that the process of adding requirements to the PL is completed in a timely fashion.

- Create a more secure system while increasing the Commission’s ability to execute Program oversight.
- Create a data system that can receive data on provision by the NPAs of job individualizations, employee career plans, and career advancement programs.

#### Why PLIMS Modernization Is Needed

- PLIMS is the digital backbone of the Commission – the core software connecting NPAs with Federal agency customers.
- All AbilityOne products, services, and prices are managed through PLIMS – approximately 2,000 business transactions every year.
- PLIMS provides real-time customer-facing information and a distributed workflow for business transactions to maintain the PL. It also serves as an official records repository.
- However, the 15-year-old PLIMS has multiple material deficiencies in capability and functionality, interoperability with other Federal acquisition platforms, and user interfaces.
- PLIMS has been enhanced several times but needs large-scale modernization.
- PLIMS provides little to no interoperability between the Commission, Federal customers, and the nonprofits. PLIMS no longer has original equipment manufacturer support.
- Due to PLIMS deficiencies, the Commission has difficulty in executing a critical aspect of our work – clearly communicating to Federal customers and industry about which products and services are on the PL and are therefore mandatory source items. That communication is essential to transparency in the acquisition process.
- The Commission will now be seeking additional data from NPAs with regard to their provision of job individualizations, employee career plans, and career advancement programs.

#### Example of how PLIMS deficiencies negatively impact acquisition transparency

- The Department of Veterans Affairs Contracting Preference Consistency Act of 2020 requires the VA to buy AbilityOne items that were on the Procurement List prior to 2006.
- But VA cannot readily comply because PLIMS lacks the functionality to facilitate the necessary data exchange.
- The TMF investment will enable the Commission to address these issues.

## **IT and Cybersecurity**

Commission IT and cybersecurity priorities are:

1. Enhance cybersecurity continuous monitoring and vulnerability assessment software tools to monitor protection controls (see costs in Table 4 for details).
2. Protect and modernize Procurement List Information Management System (PLIMS) application.
3. Cloud Service Provider (CSP) to support off-site contingency operations (FISMA alternative work-site requirement), data back-up and recovery activities, and Office 365 email services (contractor support).
4. FISMA-required IT and cybersecurity training for key personnel to identify, protect, detect, respond and recover from cybersecurity incidents.
5. Hire FISMA Annual Assessment Provider (contractor).
6. “Remote Equipment Initiative” funding to provide hardware and software to enable Compliance inspectors conducting on-site NPA assessments to enter data directly into handheld devices.
7. Invest in scheduled enterprise computer hardware and software refresh in order to improve reliability and reduce the risk of equipment and mission failure.
8. Commercial-Off-The-Shelf (COTS) application for records management for the Directorate of Oversight and Compliance.
9. Provide total IT and cyber support to the OIG and ensure OIG-unique hard and software requirements are fully integrated and operational.

The Commission currently operates in a hybrid environment of cloud and on-premises IT resources. It maintains an IT infrastructure including a local area network and components, a Virtual Private Network (VPN), firewall, and web server. The Commission intends to fully transition to the cloud in FY 2024.

The Commission continues to conduct a broad IT system assessment to identify weaknesses, and necessary investments and opportunities for greater efficiencies. For example, the Commission’s Oversight and Compliance team may be more efficient when conducting on-site inspections if they are able to use mobile devices or applications that streamline data entry and other information. Such recommendations continue to be researched and documented for proposal in future budget cycles. Table 4 reflects the current IT enterprise.

### *IT Resource Statements*

The Commission's CIO has reviewed and contributed to the agency's IT investments as described in this budget request. The CIO routinely reviews and submits the planned IT support for AbilityOne Program objectives, as does the Chief of Staff. The statement attesting to these facts is at Appendix II.

### *Cybersecurity*

The Commission has an interagency agreement with the Department of Homeland Security, Cybersecurity Division. Under this agreement, DHS provides consolidated intrusion detection, incident analysis, and cyber response capabilities in the protection and defense of the Commission's external access points and network.

## 3.3 Budget Request by Object Class

**Table 5. FY 2025 Budget Request by Object Class (in \$ thousands)**

	<b>FY 2021 Enacted</b>	<b>FY 2022 Enacted</b>	<b>FY 2023 Enacted</b>	<b>FY 2024 Request</b>	<b>FY2025 Request</b>
Salaries	\$4,558	\$4,607	\$5,215	\$6,542	\$6,369
Benefits	1,357	1,444	1,600	2,066	2,117
Travel	20	150	120	120	100
Rent & Communications	406	303	444	462	494
Printing	41	45	55	45	45
Services	1,519	1,608	2,388	2,316	1,934
Supplies	41	50	50	50	50
Equipment	28	143	102	199	191
Losses & Claims	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL AGENCY</b>	<b>\$8,000</b>	<b>\$8,350</b>	<b>\$9,974</b>	<b>\$11,800</b>	<b>\$11,300</b>
Office of Inspector General	2,500	2,650	3,150	3,600	3,500
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$10,500</b>	<b>\$11,000</b>	<b>\$13,124</b>	<b>\$15,400</b>	<b>\$14,800</b>

### **Object Class Narrative for FY 2025 Request**

**Salaries and Benefits - \$8,486,000.** Salary and benefits represent approximately 75% of the agency budget, excluding OIG funding. Personnel and benefits costs include:

- Amount primarily funds a total of 41 agency FTEs – consisting of the current 36 FTEs listed in Table 3, plus the FY 2025 agency planned staffing increase of five (5) new government FTEs (approximately \$891,000). *See Table 2.*

- The salaries and benefits total accommodates four (4) private citizen Commission members who are appointed by the President to represent the interests of individuals who are blind or who have other significant disabilities. As Special Government Employees, they are paid at the Executive Level IV rate on a per-diem basis when conducting Commission business.

**Travel - \$100,000.** The Commission's travel-related resources support information-gathering of NPA activities; oversight visits that include audits of compliance reviews conducted by the CNAs and independent inspections, as needed; and mission-essential conferences and training.

The Commission continues to conserve meeting-related travel dollars wherever possible and will continue to leverage the use of telephonic or video conferencing for training and other subject matter expertise requirements. This budget line also includes travel by the private citizen Presidential Appointees serving as Commission members, and any travel support required as reasonable accommodations for appointed private citizens with disabilities.

**Rent and Communications - \$494,000.** The Commission has programmed approximately \$350,000 for the cost of leasing office space. The Washington, D.C., headquarters lease accommodates both the Commission and OIG staff for collaborative work.

This category also includes \$142,000 in annual charges for IT and telecommunications services. The Commission uses strategic sourcing vehicles to obtain discount pricing for requirements such as its wireless phone service. Commission expenses for high-speed web connectivity and remote access Internet service provider accounts have increased commensurate with the agency's increased reliance on telework.

Additionally, a small portion of this category includes standard business expenses for postage, domestic package delivery, and teleconference bridge lines.

**Printing - \$45,000.** In accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act, the agency continues to have printing costs associated with publishing Federal Register notices. This fulfills legal requirements and promotes transparency. In FY 2025, the Commission will continue its routine publishing cycle for announcing its quarterly public meetings as well as Procurement List additions and deletions, and anticipates increased publishing for proposed updates to the Code of Federal Regulations. Based on recent years' billing, we anticipate that \$45,000 will cover these costs. The Commission does not intend to use such funding to print informational materials or collateral that can be disseminated electronically.

**Services - \$1,934,000.** The Commission's request for resources in this budget object class reflects \$290,000 allocated for intragovernmental agreements with Federal government agencies for force protection, financial management and payroll, human resources, employee assistance program, background checks, and travel system support. Furthermore, to maximize its productivity, the agency anticipates spending \$870,000 on service contracts to provide agency support for personnel and communications, and IT support for network maintenance and Help

Desk support. \$336,000 is added for the ongoing contract for developing AbilityOne Program Career Planning Support Resources to continue implementation of Strategic Plan objectives. \$349,000 is included for PLIMS modernization and maintenance, and \$50,000 for staff training and professional development.

**Supplies and Materials - \$50,000.** The Commission continues to minimize expenses for office supplies and operating materials. However, the agency must continue routine purchases of subscriptions for essential technical references such as Westlaw, technical manuals, and other publications that enable employees' performance of official duties. Additionally, funding in this object class covers replacement of peripheral IT components to keep laptops and desktops operational and connected.

**Equipment - \$191,000.** The Commission uses government-wide contract vehicles or other government discounts to obtain the lowest available prices in this category for hardware purchases, software, and furniture. The agency anticipates an annual cost of \$96,000 based on expected cloud usage. Migrating to the cloud eliminates capital asset refresh costs for network servers, and significantly improves disaster preparedness capability. Funding is also allocated to support network operating system licenses and hardware for new employees.

#### **4.0 Performance Goals, Measures, and Indicators**

Information on agency priority initiatives and programs are contained in this section, as required by OMB Circular A-11, and organized according to the agency's Strategic Plan. This section also refers to related topics and/or additional details contained in Section 1.2, Benefits of Investments in the Commission, and Section 1.3, Current Challenges.

The Commission continues to modernize and transform the AbilityOne Program to align with the Commission's FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan.<sup>32</sup>

Four overarching Strategic Objectives anchor the plan:

1. Transform the AbilityOne Program to expand competitive integrated employment (CIE) for people who are blind or have significant disabilities.
2. Identify, publicize, and support the increase of good jobs and optimal jobs in the AbilityOne Program.
3. Ensure effective governance and results across the AbilityOne Program.
4. Engage in partnerships to increase employment for people who are blind or have significant disabilities within and beyond the AbilityOne Program.

The plan also includes outcome goals, strategies and performance measures that clearly communicate the Commission’s direction and resource prioritization.<sup>33</sup> The Commission has developed a plan to implement the Strategic Plan.<sup>34</sup> More information on agency performance can be found in the FY 2023 Performance and Accountability Report.<sup>35</sup>

#### **4.1 Strategic Objective 1: Transform the AbilityOne Program to expand competitive integrated employment (CIE) for people who are blind or have significant disabilities.**

The Commission sent three legislative proposals to Congress on April 13, 2023, to amend the JWOD Act – the most important action supporting this strategic objective in FY 2023.

The Commission is committed to working effectively with Congress to amend the JWOD Act to support CIE for people who are blind or have significant disabilities. However, to achieve that goal fully, Congress must amend the JWOD Act to enable all NPAs to offer CIE to their employees.

*(For more details, see “Legislative proposals to amend Javits-Wagner-O’Day Act sent to Congress” in Section 1.2)*

#### **4.2 Strategic Objective 2: Identify, publicize, and support the increase of good jobs and optimal jobs in the AbilityOne Program.**

The Commission defines a “good job” in the AbilityOne Program as having four attributes:

1. Individuals with disabilities are paid competitive wages and benefits.
2. The job matches the individual’s interests and skills (“job individualization”).
3. Individuals with disabilities are provided with opportunities for employment advancement comparable to those provided to individuals without disabilities.
4. Individuals are covered under employment laws.

The Commission believes there are such jobs currently within the AbilityOne Program and that the number of such jobs should be increased.

The Commission defines an “optimal job” as one that includes the four attributes of a “good job,” but also allows AbilityOne employees to work side-by-side with employees without disabilities doing the same or similar work. That is obviously harder, and frequently not possible, to achieve given the direct labor hour ratio mandated by the JWOD Act. Nevertheless, the Commission is aware of several examples in which such workplaces have been achieved in the AbilityOne Program.

As ways to increase integration leading to “optimal jobs,” the Commission has recently emphasized subcontracting, as well as other approaches to collaborating with industry.

*(For more details, see “New emphasis on subcontracting to achieve integrated employment” in Section 1.2.)*

### **4.3 Strategic Objective 3: Ensure effective governance and results across the AbilityOne Program.**

#### ***Commission commitment to closing open audit recommendations***

Closing open audit recommendations is a high priority for the Commission. The OIG or an independent auditor has sole responsibility for closing open audit recommendations, not the agency. The Commission has corrective action plans in place for all open recommendations and continues to implement those plans. As of December 31, 2023, the agency is tracking 51 unique open audit recommendations.

- Of those 51 recommendations, 12 are awaiting review by the independent financial auditor of record for a determination regarding closure, including three (3) related to human resources (HR) processes. Seven (7) are awaiting review by the independent FISMA auditor. The Commission will receive the results of these audits on or before November 15, 2024.
- The remaining 32 recommendations with corrective action plans are related to compliance, business operations, and Cooperative Agreements and/or Program Fees. The actions taken in response to these recommendations will be shaped by the new strategic direction of the Commission, which is currently being implemented. For that reason, the Commission anticipates completing work on these recommendations in the coming year.

#### ***Chief Financial Officer advancing effective stewardship***

- Maintains financial processes and controls for funds management, obligations, and payments.
- Completed Management Internal Control Program in accordance with the Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act (FMFIA); submitted FY 2023 Annual Statement of Assurance.
- Conducted an FY 2023 Management Control Review of 99 Agency controls – one-third of the total 336 controls – and determined Agency internal controls were moderately effective.
- Responsiveness to audits: Closed 31 financial audit recommendations during FY 2023.
- Conducts quarterly enterprise risk management assessments of risk mitigation plans; closed 6 of 32 risk mitigation plans to date.



### ***Compliance modernization***

Modernizing NPA compliance to align with Program requirements is central to the FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan.

*For details, see Section 1.2, Benefits of Investments in the Commission.*

**Table 6. NPAs in Compliance with 75% Overall Direct Labor Hour Ratio Requirement\***

	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
NPAs in Compliance / Total NPAs	461/480	402/469	353/450	313/443	344/424
Percentage of NPAs in Compliance	96%	86% <sup>36</sup>	78% <sup>37</sup>	71% <sup>38</sup>	81% <sup>39</sup>

\* While undertaking significant steps to modernize the oversight of NPA compliance, the Commission began a pause in routine traditional compliance reviews on February 1, 2023, to consider public feedback, retrain staff, develop updated compliance materials for the NPA community, and ensure that the Commission, the NPAs, and the CNAs are in full alignment in the area of compliance.

- A key AbilityOne Program compliance metric is that people who are blind or have significant disabilities must provide at least 75% of an NPA’s overall direct labor hours worked during the fiscal year (referred to as the 75% Overall Direct Labor Hour Ratio Requirement).
- In both FY 2021 and FY 2022, NPA compliance with this key requirement was lower than in previous years due to COVID-19 pandemic impacts that included staffing shortages, supply chain issues, and employees needing to quarantine if affected by or infected with COVID-19.
- Responding to the unique circumstances presented by COVID-19, and consistent with agency practice relating to emergency responses, the agency expanded exceptions to its Direct Labor Ratio Requirements for FY 2020, FY 2021, and FY 2022.<sup>40</sup> These exceptions included flexibilities to allow NPAs to notify the Commission if, due to or in support of the COVID-19 emergency response or recovery period, they will operate at a ratio below 75 percent.

### ***Improving customer satisfaction***

Increasing Federal customer satisfaction with AbilityOne products and services is a Commission priority, reflected in the Strategic Plan – i.e., “Support the mission of the Federal customer by providing best value through contract performance.”

Customer satisfaction is also highlighted in the Commission’s vision, which refers to remaining “a trusted source of supply and services for Federal agencies.” In FY 2023, the Commission strengthened its emphasis on customer satisfaction, including through the following initiatives:

Proposed rule “Supporting Competition in the AbilityOne Program”

The Commission’s proposed rule on competition is a key step toward implementing the agency’s Strategic Plan.<sup>41</sup>

*(For details, see Section 1.2, Benefits of Investments in the Commission.)*

As discussed in Section 3.1, Personnel Requirements, the Commission seeks a competition manager to provide capacity and technical expertise to support the competition initiative as part of advancing Strategic Objective 3, Ensure Effective Governance and Results Across the AbilityOne Program.

Strengthening contract performance

Good contract performance is essential to customer satisfaction – an area the Commission has repeatedly emphasized to the CNAs and NPAs throughout FY 2023.

*(For more details, see “Increasing customer satisfaction by emphasizing contract performance” in Section 1.2)*

Supporting AbilityOne Representatives (ABORs)

ABORs play a key role in ensuring Federal agency customer satisfaction with the AbilityOne Program by serving as an essential communication channel between their agencies and the Commission and CNAs. Each ABOR advocates for utilization of AbilityOne products and services in accordance with mandatory source contracting procedures, engages with the workforce to build use of the Program, and offers feedback to the Commission to improve the value of the Program.

*(For more details, see “Expanding the AbilityOne Representative (ABOR) program across government to increase AbilityOne employment opportunities” in Section 1.2.)*

Implementing 898 Panel Recommendations

Achieving customer satisfaction through improved contract performance was part of every 898 Panel Annual Report to Congress from 2017 through 2021. Many Panel recommendations are reflected in the FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan.

The Panel’s scope of work included a focus on recommending updates to legislation, regulations, and policy to improve contracting between the AbilityOne Program and DoD as well as other Federal agencies. Improving contract performance is central to the Commission’s priorities and engagement with the ABORs.

Aligned with the 898 Panel recommendations, as well as the Strategic Plan, the Commission recognizes that its Program oversight responsibilities include ensuring customer satisfaction with NPA contract performance.

#### **4.4 Strategic Objective 4: Engage in partnerships to increase employment for people who are blind or have significant disabilities within and beyond the AbilityOne Program.**

##### ***Employment Growth***

The Commission’s FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan includes initiatives for expanding business lines within the Program, with the outcome of new “good jobs” and “optimal jobs” within the Program.

The Strategic Plan also includes initiatives for increasing employment for people who are blind or have significant disabilities beyond the AbilityOne Program. The attributes of a “good job” in an AbilityOne contract will include employee career plans that can support the outward mobility of employees to other jobs in the economy.

In addition, the Commission intends to collaborate with other Federal agencies to increase employment opportunities in Federal agencies and with other Federal contractors for people who are blind or have significant disabilities.

**Table 7. AbilityOne Program Key Metrics**

	<b>FY 2022</b>	<b>FY 2023</b>	<b>Change</b>
Direct Labor Hours	41.40 million	41.63 million	.55 %
Employees	36,377	36,597	.60%
Promotions	1,953	2,476	26.78%
Wages	\$666.36 million	\$731.94 million	9.84%
Average Hourly Wage	\$16.09	\$17.58	9.26%
Sales	\$3.883 billion	\$4.146 billion	6.79%

As shown in Table 7, employment on AbilityOne contracts increased slightly from FY 2022 to FY 2023. Declining employment in previous years reflected factors including the following:

- COVID-19 pandemic, which caused significant disruption in manufacturing and service delivery schedules, and drastically impacted demand for certain supplies and services.
- VA’s “Rule of Two” contracting preference program, which prioritizes veteran-owned and service-disabled veteran-owned companies over AbilityOne NPAs, resulting in the loss of some AbilityOne contracts and jobs.

***New emphasis on subcontracting to achieve integrated employment***

Consistent with the FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, the Commission now considers subcontracting and other approaches to collaborating with industry as ways to increase integration, leading to what the plan defines as “optimal jobs”.

*(For details, see Section 1.2, Benefits of Investments in the Commission.)*

***Implementing guidance in the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) memorandum “Increasing the Participation of Americans with Disabilities in Federal Contracting”<sup>42</sup>***

*(For details, see Section 1.2, Benefits of Investments in the Commission.)*

## 5.0 Office of Inspector General's Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request

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The Inspector General Reform Act (Pub. L. 110-409) was signed by the President on October 14, 2008. Section 6(f)(1) of the Inspector General Act of 1978, 5 U.S.C. app., was amended to require certain specifications concerning Office of Inspector General (OIG) budget submissions each fiscal year.

Each Inspector General (IG) is required to transmit a budget request to the head of the establishment or designated Federal entity to which the IG reports specifying:

- the aggregate amount of funds requested for the operations of the OIG;
- the portion of this amount requested for OIG training, including a certification from the IG that the amount requested satisfies all OIG training requirements for that fiscal year; and
- the portion of this amount necessary to support the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE).

The head of each establishment or designated Federal entity, in transmitting a proposed budget to the President for approval, shall include:

- an aggregate request for the OIG;
- the portion of this aggregate request for OIG training;
- the portion of this aggregate request for support of the CIGIE; and
- any comments of the affected IG with respect to the proposal.

The President shall include in each budget of the U.S. Government submitted to Congress:

- a separate statement of the budget estimate submitted by each IG;
- the amount requested by the President for each OIG;
- the amount requested by the President for training of OIGs;
- the amount requested by the President for support of the CIGIE; and
- any comments of the affected IG with respect to the proposal if the IG concludes that the budget submitted by the President would substantially inhibit the IG from performing the duties of the OIG.

Accordingly, **the U.S. AbilityOne OIG requests an appropriation of not less than \$3,500,000 for fiscal year 2025 within the U.S. AbilityOne Commission**, including:

- \$3,383,000 in the aggregate for the operations of the OIG;
- \$103,000 of that amount for OIG training; and
- \$14,000 of that amount to support the CIGIE.

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## OIG Summary of Outstanding Audit Recommendations

The Good Accounting Obligation in Government Act requires each agency to include, in its annual budget justification, a report that identifies each public recommendation issued by the agency's inspectors general (IGs) which has remained unimplemented for **one year or more** from the annual budget justification submission date. Accordingly, the OIG reports a total of 88 open recommendations with the FY25 budget justification.

In FY 2023, the OIG issued two semiannual reports to Congress, in accordance with the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended.

In fiscal year 2023, the Commission took corrective actions to implement 18 recommendations. The OIG verified these actions met the intent of the recommendations and “closed”<sup>1</sup> them, bringing the number of open audit recommendations to 80 as of September 30, 2023. The Commission reported 36 of the 80 recommendations as implemented,<sup>2</sup> and the remaining 44 recommendations were categorized as “CAP in Place.”<sup>3</sup> The following dashboard provides an overview of the recommendations status as of fiscal year end, September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023.<sup>4</sup>

After the end of the fiscal year, OIG closed more recommendations as a result of actions taken by the Commission. A listing of the current open recommendation status for the AbilityOne Commission can be found online at <https://www.oversight.gov/recommendations>.

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<sup>1</sup> OIG considers a recommendation “Closed” when: 1) the responsible office completes actions necessary to implement the recommendation and provides OIG with evidence of the final completed actions or other justifications; and 2) OIG or the delegated IPA reviews the evidence provided and determines that no additional action is required.

<sup>2</sup> “Implemented” is defined as an open recommendation reported as “Implemented” by management but remains open pending OIG or Independent Public Accounting firm (IPA) final determination.

<sup>3</sup> OIG categorized a recommendation as “CAP in Place” when the Commission has a corrective action plan in place that meets the intent of the recommendation.

<sup>4</sup> Legend for Offices of Primary Responsibility is as follows:

BOP – Business Operations Office

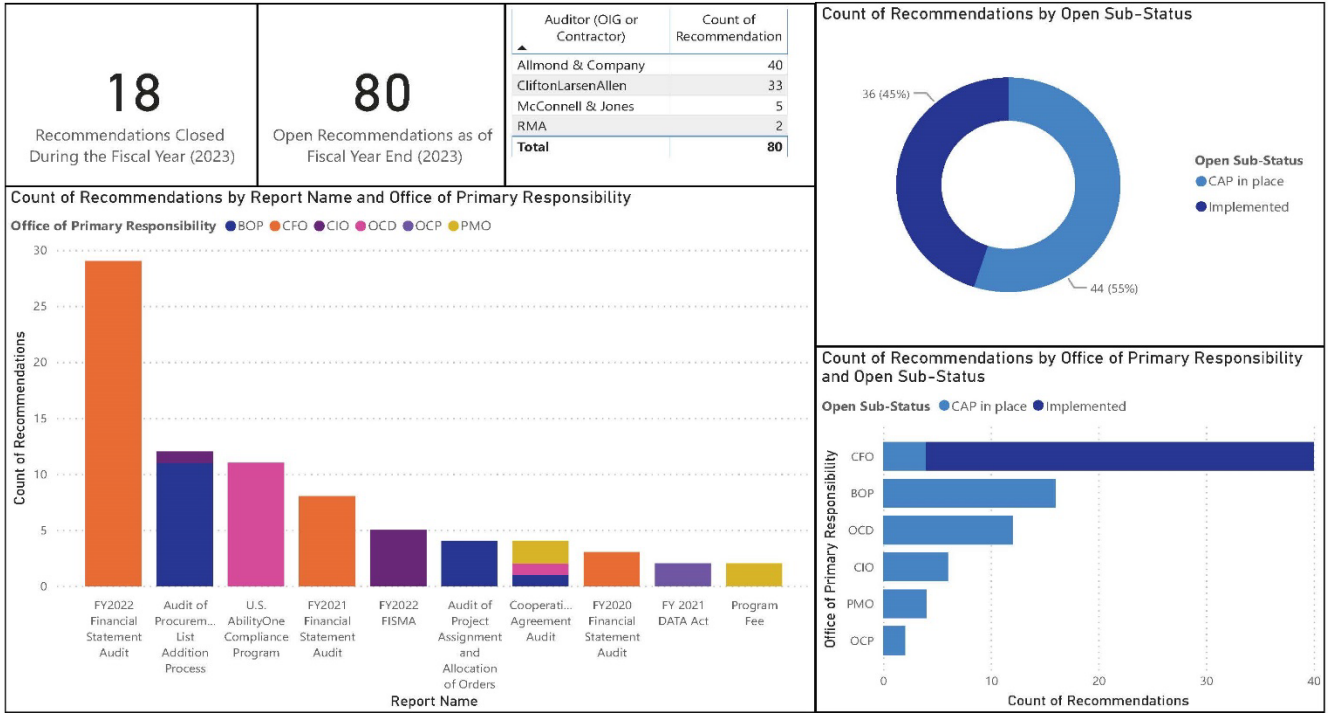
CFO – Office of the Chief Financial Officer

CIO – Office of the Chief Information Officer

OCD – Oversight and Compliance Directorate

OCP – Office of Contracting

PMO – Program Management Office



## **6.0 Combined Agency-Related Appropriation Language (including OIG)**

### *SALARIES AND EXPENSES*

*For expenses necessary for the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled (referred to in this title as "the Committee") established under section 8502 of title 41, United States Code, \$14,800,000:*

*Provided, That in order to authorize any central nonprofit agency designated pursuant to section 8503(c) of title 41, United States Code, to perform requirements of the Committee as prescribed under section 51-3.2 of title 41, Code of Federal Regulations, the Committee shall enter into a written agreement with any such central nonprofit agency:*

*Provided further, That such agreement shall contain such auditing, oversight, and reporting provisions as necessary to implement chapter 85 of title 41, United States Code:*

*Provided further, That such agreement shall include the elements listed under the heading "Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled-Written Agreement Elements" in the explanatory statement described in section 4 of Public Law 114-113 (in the matter preceding division A of that consolidated Act):*

*Provided further, That any such central nonprofit agency may not charge a fee under section 51-3.5 of title 41, Code of Federal Regulations, prior to executing a written agreement with the Committee:*

*Provided further, no less than \$3,500,000 shall be available for the Office of Inspector General.*

(Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2025)



## **Appendix I. Financial Management Summary**

Though it is a small independent agency, the Commission accomplishes an important mission that is national in scope – touching the lives of nearly 37,000 people who are blind or have significant disabilities. It does so with very limited appropriated funds. The Commission’s FY 2023 budget was \$13,124,000, with no less than \$3,150,000 for the Office of Inspector General (OIG). This budget was primarily used to fund salaries and benefits for the Commission’s civil service staff and private citizen members, and to pay for rent and communications, intragovernmental support services, information technology support, and other general expenses.

The Commission’s goals, objectives, targets, and measures are focused on oversight of the AbilityOne Program. Financial efficiencies are achieved to support the Commission’s mission by leveraging financial system shared services under an interagency agreement with the Financial Information and Operations Division, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Chief Financial Officer. These services include financial management and systems, financial reporting and accounting, budgeting and analysis, and personnel and payroll systems.

The Commission’s FY 2019 and FY 2020 financial audits – including the agency’s management response to the findings – are posted on the Commission and OIG webpages. In both audit periods, the independent auditors disclosed instances of noncompliance with laws or regulations. In response, the Commission appointed an investigation officer from the General Services Administration. The investigation determined that the instances of noncompliance were violations of the Anti-Deficiency Act (ADA).

The Commission took the appropriate steps for reporting ADA violations to OMB in accordance with OMB Circular A-11, Section 145. To prevent a recurrence of ADA violations, the Commission hired a Chief Financial Officer who is an experienced subject matter expert in financial management. Subsequently, the Commission implemented a corrective action plan, improved separation of financial duties within the agency staff, and implemented a funds control policy with appropriate authority levels and procedures for funds management, obligation, and invoice payment. These actions, combined with internal controls and annual leadership training, addressed the root cause of the violations and the audit recommendations.

### **Improper Payments Reductions**

In accordance with the Improper Payments Information Act of 2002, the Commission reports that it had improper or erroneous payments in FY 2019 and FY 2020. The Commission’s FY 2019 and FY 2020 financial audit included findings regarding potential Anti-Deficiency Act violations.

As indicated above, the investigation of the findings determined that the improper payments were ADA violations. The Commission took required actions in accordance with OMB directives for reporting ADA violations to OMB and applied corrective actions to address the root cause of violations.

The Commission has no grant-making authority, makes no payments to beneficiaries, has no unneeded real property, and has no debt-collection program. Nearly all of the agency's resources are dedicated to personnel, rent and communications, intragovernmental support services, and information technology support. The agency conducts recurring reconciliation of all spending, including payroll.



## Appendix II. Statement of Chief Information Officer

February 1, 2024

I affirm that as the Chief Information Officer of the U.S. AbilityOne Commission, I played a significant role in reviewing and recommending planned IT support and increases in IT resources for the agency for the submission of the FY 2025 budget request. There have been limited IT investments in equipment and cloud storage. The Commission has received Technology Modernization Fund support to upgrade the agency's Procurement List Information Management System (PLIMS), and will identify internal funding to buy IT equipment and software licenses for new employees.

  
Shang-iong (Edward) Yang, CIO

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> The Commission defines a “good job” in the AbilityOne Program as having four attributes: (1) Individuals with disabilities are paid competitive wages and benefits; (2) The job matches the individual’s interests and skills; (3) Individuals with disabilities are provided with opportunities for employment advancement comparable to those provided to individuals without disabilities; and (4) Individuals are covered under employment laws. The Commission defines an “optimal job” as one that includes the four attributes of a “good job,” but also allows AbilityOne employees to work side-by-side with employees without disabilities doing the same or similar work. For more details, see the Commission’s FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan at <https://www.abilityone.gov/commission/strategicplan.html>.

<sup>2</sup> The U.S. AbilityOne Commission is the operating name of the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, an independent Federal agency hereafter referred to as “Commission.”

<sup>3</sup> For recent data see Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, “Persons with a Disability: Labor Force Characteristics – 2023” <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/disabl.pdf> (retrieved February 26, 2024). See also Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, Disability Employment Statistics <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/research-evaluation/statistics> (retrieved February 26, 2024).

<sup>4</sup> See Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, “Supporting Competition in the AbilityOne Program,” Federal Register, 88 FR 15360, March 13, 2023, at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/03/13/2023-04939/supporting-competition-in-the-abilityone-program>

<sup>5</sup> See “FY 2017 NDAA Section 898 Panel on Department of Defense and AbilityOne Contracting Oversight, Accountability, and Integrity” section, Defense Pricing and Contracting, Assistant Secretary of Defense (Acquisition), at <https://www.acq.osd.mil/asda/dpc/cp/policy/abilityone.html>.

<sup>6</sup> See “FY 2017 NDAA Section 898 Panel on Department of Defense and AbilityOne Contracting Oversight, Accountability, and Integrity, Fourth and Final Report to Congress” at [https://www.acq.osd.mil/asda/dpc/cp/policy/docs/a1/4%20-%20Fourth%20and%20Final%20Sec%20898%20Panel%20RTC%20\(Dec%202021\).pdf](https://www.acq.osd.mil/asda/dpc/cp/policy/docs/a1/4%20-%20Fourth%20and%20Final%20Sec%20898%20Panel%20RTC%20(Dec%202021).pdf).

<sup>7</sup> See “U.S. AbilityOne Commission Report on the 2018-2019 Competition Pilot Test for AbilityOne Program Nonprofit Agencies, Facility Support and Operations Services Contract, Fort Bliss, Texas,” May 11, 2023, [https://www.abilityone.gov/laws\\_regulations\\_and\\_policy/documents/AbilityOne%20Commission%20Report%20on%202018-2019%20Fort%20Bliss%20Competition%20Pilot%20Test%2020230511%20accessible.pdf](https://www.abilityone.gov/laws_regulations_and_policy/documents/AbilityOne%20Commission%20Report%20on%202018-2019%20Fort%20Bliss%20Competition%20Pilot%20Test%2020230511%20accessible.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> See Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, notice of proposed rulemaking and request for comments. “Prohibition on the Payment of Subminimum Wages Under 14(c) Certificates as a Qualification for Participation as a Nonprofit Agency Under the Javits Wagner O’Day Program,” Federal Register, 86 FR 56679, October 12, 2021, at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/10/12/2021-22118/prohibition-on-the-payment-of-subminimum-wages-under-14c-certificates-as-a-qualification-for>.

<sup>9</sup> See Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, final rule. “Prohibition on the Payment of Subminimum Wages Under 14(c) Certificates as a Qualification for Participation as a Nonprofit Agency Under the Javits Wagner O’Day Act,” Federal Register, 87 FR 43427, July 21, 2022, at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/07/21/2022-15561/prohibition-on-the-payment-of-subminimum-wages-under-14c-certificates-as-a-qualification-for>.

<sup>10</sup> See U.S. AbilityOne Commission FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan at <https://www.abilityone.gov/commission/strategicplan.html>.

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- <sup>11</sup> See U.S. AbilityOne Commission “Strategic Plan Implementation” briefing, October 25, 2022, at <https://www.abilityone.gov/commission/documents/Strategic%20Implementation%20Plan%20Slides%20-%20Public%20Meeting%20Oct%2025%202022%20as%20delivered.pdf>.
- <sup>12</sup> See “U.S. AbilityOne Commission FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan Highlights: Strategic Objectives, Outcome Goals, Strategies, and Performance Measures” at <https://www.abilityone.gov/commission/documents/Highlights%20of%20AbilityOne%20Strategic%20Plan%20FY%202022-2026%20Final.pdf>.
- <sup>13</sup> See “U.S. AbilityOne Commission Issues Two Compliance Policies, Invites Feedback on Proposed Participating Employee Eligibility Form,” November 17, 2023, at <https://www.abilityone.gov/documents/Commission%20Issues%20Two%20Compliance%20Policies,%20Proposed%20Participating%20Employee%20Eligibility%20Form-20231117-1728%20-%20508.pdf>.
- <sup>14</sup> See “Agency Information Collection Activities; Proposals, Submissions, and Approvals,” Federal Register, 88 FR 80282, November 17, 2023, at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/11/17/2023-25499/agency-information-collection-activities-proposals-submissions-and-approvals>.
- <sup>15</sup> See U.S. AbilityOne Commission Policy 51.542 “Nonprofit Agency Use of AbilityOne Products in the Performance of AbilityOne Service Contracts,” October 1, 2022, at [https://www.abilityone.gov/laws%2C\\_regulations\\_and\\_policy/documents/Policy%2051.542%20\(final%20version\).pdf](https://www.abilityone.gov/laws%2C_regulations_and_policy/documents/Policy%2051.542%20(final%20version).pdf).
- <sup>16</sup> See “U.S. AbilityOne Commission Awards Contract for Developing AbilityOne Program Career Planning Support Resources, Celebrates 50th Anniversary of Rehabilitation Act of 1973,” September 27, 2023, at <https://www.abilityone.gov/documents/U.S.%20AbilityOne%20Commission%20Statement%20-%20Career%20Planning%20Support%20Resources%20Contract%20Award%2020230927-1742%20508%20compliant.pdf>.
- <sup>17</sup> See U.S. AbilityOne Commission FY 2023 Performance and Accountability Report, November 15, 2023, at <https://www.abilityone.gov/commission/documents/U.S.%20AbilityOne%20Commission%20FY2023%20PAR%2015Nov2023%20signed%20508.pdf>.
- <sup>18</sup> See U.S. AbilityOne Commission Office of Inspector General FY 2022 “Top Management and Performance Challenges Report,” at <https://www.oversight.gov/sites/default/files/oig-reports/CPPBSD/AbilityOne-OIG-2022-TMPC-Report-2022-11-15Final.pdf>.
- <sup>19</sup> See “Socioeconomic Impact Analysis Evaluation Report,” Mathematica, June 15, 2023, at <https://www.sourceamerica.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/socioeconomic-impact-analysis-evaluation-report.pdf>
- <sup>20</sup> See Office of Management and Budget, Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) memorandum “Increasing the Participation of Americans with Disabilities in Federal Contracting,” October 30, 2020, at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Increasing-the-Participation-of-Americans-with-Disabilities-in-Federal-Contracting.pdf>.
- <sup>21</sup> See Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, “Quarterly Public Meeting,” Federal Register, 87 FR 58073, September 23, 2022, at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/09/23/2022-20681/quarterly-public-meeting>.
- <sup>22</sup> See Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, “Quarterly Public Meeting,” Federal Register, 87 FR 78091, December 21, 2022, at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/12/21/2022-27712/quarterly-public-meeting>.

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<sup>23</sup> See Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, “Quarterly Public Meeting,” Federal Register, 88 FR 16415, March 17, 2023, at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/03/17/2023-05495/quarterly-public-meeting>.

<sup>24</sup> See Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, “Quarterly Public Meeting,” Federal Register, 88 FR 39409, June 16, 2023, at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/06/16/2023-12973/quarterly-public-meeting>.

<sup>25</sup> See Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, “Quarterly Public Meeting,” Federal Register, 88 FR 62774, September 13, 2023, at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/09/13/2023-19783/quarterly-public-meeting>.

<sup>26</sup> See Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, “Quarterly Public Meeting,” Federal Register, 88 FR 85607, December 8, 2023, at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/12/08/2023-27023/quarterly-public-meeting>.

<sup>27</sup> See “FY 2017 NDAA Section 898 Panel on Department of Defense and AbilityOne Contracting Oversight, Accountability, and Integrity, Fourth and Final Report to Congress” at [https://www.acq.osd.mil/asda/dpc/cp/policy/docs/a1/4%20-%20Fourth%20and%20Final%20Sec%20898%20Panel%20RTC%20\(Dec%202021\).pdf](https://www.acq.osd.mil/asda/dpc/cp/policy/docs/a1/4%20-%20Fourth%20and%20Final%20Sec%20898%20Panel%20RTC%20(Dec%202021).pdf).

<sup>28</sup> See “President Biden Appoints Scott R. Calisti to U.S. AbilityOne Commission,” July 21, 2023, at <https://www.abilityone.gov/documents/Statement%20-%20President%20Biden%20Appoints%20Scott%20R.%20Calisti%20to%20AbilityOne%20Commission%20-a.pdf>.

<sup>29</sup> See “President Biden Appoints Seven Federal Members to U.S. AbilityOne Commission,” October 19, 2022, at <https://www.abilityone.gov/documents/Statement%20-%20President%20Biden%20Appoints%207%20Federal%20Members%20to%20Commission%2020221019.pdf>.

<sup>30</sup> See “President Biden Appoints Four Private Citizen Members to U.S. AbilityOne Commission,” August 13, 2021, [https://www.abilityone.gov/media\\_room/documents/President%20Biden%20Appoints%20Four%20New%20Private%20Citizens%20to%20U.S.%20AbilityOne%20Commission%20-%20Final%2020210813-1210.pdf](https://www.abilityone.gov/media_room/documents/President%20Biden%20Appoints%20Four%20New%20Private%20Citizens%20to%20U.S.%20AbilityOne%20Commission%20-%20Final%2020210813-1210.pdf).

<sup>31</sup> See “Technology Modernization Fund Announces Investment in Supporting Jobs for People with Disabilities,” October 31, 2022, at <https://www.gsa.gov/about-us/newsroom/news-releases/technology-modernization-fund-announces-investment-in-supporting-jobs-for-people-with-disabilities-10312022>.

<sup>32</sup> See U.S. AbilityOne Commission FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan at <https://www.abilityone.gov/commission/strategicplan.html>.

<sup>33</sup> See “U.S. AbilityOne Commission FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan Highlights: Strategic Objectives, Outcome Goals, Strategies, and Performance Measures” at <https://www.abilityone.gov/commission/documents/Highlights%20of%20AbilityOne%20Strategic%20Plan%20FY%202022-2026%20Final.pdf>.

<sup>34</sup> See U.S. AbilityOne Commission “Strategic Plan Implementation” briefing, October 25, 2022, at <https://www.abilityone.gov/commission/documents/Strategic%20Implementation%20Plan%20Slides%20-%20Public%20Meeting%20Oct%2025%202022%20as%20delivered.pdf>.

<sup>35</sup> See U.S. AbilityOne Commission FY 2023 Performance and Accountability Report, November 15, 2023, at <https://www.abilityone.gov/commission/documents/U.S.%20AbilityOne%20Commission%20FY2023%20PAR%2015Nov2023%20signed%20508.pdf>.

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<sup>36</sup> This FY 2020 percentage is lower than previous years due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

<sup>37</sup> This FY 2021 percentage is lower than previous years due to the full-year impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

<sup>38</sup> This FY 2022 percentage is lower than in many previous years due to the full-year impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

<sup>39</sup> This FY 2023 percentage is lower than in many previous years due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

<sup>40</sup> See “AbilityOne Flexibilities Related to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Emergency and Recovery for the Duration of Fiscal Year 2022” at <https://www.abilityone.gov/commission/documents/FY22%20ODLH%20Exception%20Memo%20Signed%20Apr%202022.pdf>. See also earlier memos on this subject on the COVID-19 page of the Commission website at <https://www.abilityone.gov/covid19.html>.

<sup>41</sup> See Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, notice of proposed rulemaking and request for comments. “Supporting Competition in the AbilityOne Program,” Federal Register, 88 FR 15360, March 13, 2023, at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2023/03/13/2023-04939/supporting-competition-in-the-abilityone-program>

<sup>42</sup> See Office of Management and Budget, Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP), Memorandum on “Increasing the Participation of Americans with Disabilities in Federal Contracting,” October 30, 2020, at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Increasing-the-Participation-of-Americans-with-Disabilities-in-Federal-Contracting.pdf>.