

# Advancing Access and Equity

Celebrating 50 years of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

AbilityOne®

PROGRAM



## AbilityOne and NDEAM

America celebrates National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) every October. For 2023, the NDEAM theme is “[Advancing Access and Equity](#).” The theme recognizes the importance of ensuring people with disabilities have equal opportunity to prepare for and succeed in employment.

### What Is the AbilityOne Program?

The AbilityOne® Program taps 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. Established in 1938, the Program is administered by the U.S. AbilityOne Commission®, an independent Federal agency (whose statutory name is the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled). The Commission has designated National Industries for the Blind and SourceAmerica® as central nonprofit agencies that assist in administering the Program.

### AbilityOne at a Glance

- Employs more than 36,000 people who are blind or have significant disabilities, including more than 2,500 veterans. An estimated 25,000 AbilityOne employees work on Department of Defense (DoD) contracts. Many employees are essential workers.
- Approximately 450 nonprofit agencies operate nationwide at more than 1,000 locations representing 40 government agencies.
- Supplied \$3.9 billion in products and services to the Federal Government in FY 2022.
- Supplies more than \$2.3 billion in products and services annually to DoD, the largest customer of the AbilityOne Program.
- AbilityOne is a key part of the U.S. defense industrial base and provides essential and uninterrupted services to ensure continuity of government operations.

### Did You Know?

- AbilityOne employees manufacture vital personal protective equipment (PPE) and clean and sanitize Federal buildings including the Pentagon, military hospitals, and Veterans Affairs medical facilities.
- AbilityOne provides services to the Library of Congress, NASA headquarters, and the National Park Service including memorials and the National Mall.
- Calls to the U.S. Passport Call Center toll-free number are handled by AbilityOne.
- AbilityOne is the secure mailroom “Vendor of Choice” for the Department of Homeland Security and the Internal Revenue Service.
- AbilityOne supplies gloves used by Transportation Security Administration (TSA) agents in airport security.
- 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 closeout services. This support allows Federal agencies to focus on pre-award and award-related actions while achieving timely closeout of their contracts.



***[Kaseza Ruhumbika](#) works as a telecommunication engineer at the Eglin Air Force Base hospital in Florida.***

***Employed by Global Connections to Employment (GCE), the Georgia Tech graduate holds a degree in computer engineering.***

***Outside of work, Ruhumbika is an active member of the National Service Fraternity Alpha Phi Omega, dedicating his time to serving others since 2006. He enjoys running and is an enthusiastic movie buff.***

### More Information

[ABOR@AbilityOne.gov](mailto:ABOR@AbilityOne.gov)

### Key Websites

**U.S. AbilityOne Commission**

[www.AbilityOne.gov](http://www.AbilityOne.gov)

**National Industries for the Blind**

[www.NIB.org](http://www.NIB.org)

**SourceAmerica**

[www.SourceAmerica.org](http://www.SourceAmerica.org)

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## AbilityOne People and Numbers – FY 2022

AbilityOne employees who are blind or have significant disabilities	36,000
AbilityOne wages paid	\$666.4 million
Estimated Health and Welfare Fringe Benefits (in addition to wages)	\$150 million
Average hourly wage	\$16.09
Sales of products and services to Federal customers	\$3.9 billion
Wounded, ill, or injured veterans working in AbilityOne direct labor jobs	2,500
Outward placements from AbilityOne contracts	1,612
Upward promotions within AbilityOne contracts	1,953

## AbilityOne Representatives

- AbilityOne Representatives (ABORs) are designated individuals within Federal agencies who:
  - Advocate Federal buying in accordance with mandatory source contracting procedures.
  - Engage with the workforce to build use of the AbilityOne Program.
  - Offer feedback to the U.S. AbilityOne Commission to improve the value of the AbilityOne Program.
- ABORs create opportunity in the Federal marketplace for people who are blind or have significant disabilities, beginning with increased management focus and greater workforce attention on the AbilityOne Program.
- 21 Federal agencies have appointed ABORs, with an additional 7 ABORs at DoD components including the military services, to increase awareness and understanding of the AbilityOne Program’s mission and objectives.
- ABORs host educational sessions about AbilityOne capabilities and utilization for Federal agencies. DoD, the General Services Administration, NASA, and the Departments of Commerce, Education, Interior, Treasury, and VA have all participated in training conducted by the Commission and central nonprofit agencies.

## Mission Moment

### Scarlet Nishimoto

VisionCorps  
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

[Scarlet Nishimoto](#) is a contract closeout specialist who works on military and other government contracts. Contract closeout involves checking that contracts are complete, all payments received, and any remaining funding returned to the government.

In her spare time, Nishimoto enjoys playing the adaptive sport of goalball. She is a member of the Metro Washington Association of Blind Athletes and the U.S. Association of Blind Athletes. Other favorite activities include travel, hiking, and camping with her family.

