

# National Disability Employment Awareness Month – October 2026

## Celebrating Value and Talent



### The AbilityOne Program and NDEAM

America celebrates National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) every October, recognizing the positive impact of people with disabilities in the American workforce. This year's NDEAM theme, "[Celebrating Value and Talent](#)," resonates with the AbilityOne Program.

**Creating quality private sector jobs in every state for 41,000 Americans who are blind or have significant disabilities, the AbilityOne Program bolsters domestic manufacturing, military readiness, and national security by delivering mission-critical products and services to Federal customers.**

**Made in America products and services are the foundation of AbilityOne, strengthening the U.S. industrial base and increasing resilience during times of crisis.**

Overseeing the AbilityOne Program is the U.S. AbilityOne Commission, the independent Federal agency whose statutory name is the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled.

### AbilityOne Support for Administration Priorities

On Day 1 of his Administration, President Donald J. Trump directed Federal agencies to "create employment opportunities for American workers, including drawing discouraged workers into the labor force."\*

The President's guidance directly aligns with the AbilityOne Program mission of creating jobs in the private sector for Americans with disabilities – a historically discouraged and underutilized workforce with the lowest employment rate of any segment of U.S. society.

AbilityOne increases private sector labor force participation by providing Americans with jobs as well as serving as a springboard to the broader economy.

Approximately 400 AbilityOne employers operate at 1,000+ locations, representing 40 Federal agencies, in all 50 states, Guam and Puerto Rico. AbilityOne provides a range of uninterrupted services to ensure continuity of government operations.

The Commission has designated National Industries for the Blind and SourceAmerica as central nonprofit agencies that facilitate the Program.

\* *Presidential Memorandum "Delivering Emergency Price Relief for American Families and Defeating the Cost-of-Living Crisis," January 20, 2025*



### Mission Moment

**Megan Sinks**

**Beyond Vision**

**Naval Station Great Lakes, IL**

Megan Sinks, [National Industries for the Blind's 2026 Peter J. Salmon Employee of the Year](#), supports the Naval Station Great Lakes AbilityOne Base Supply Center (BSC) as a buyer in the purchasing department.

An alumna of the University of Southern Indiana, where she majored in philosophy, Sinks experienced vision loss as an adult. She started at the BSC as a cashier, then worked in the warehouse and as a customer care specialist before being promoted to her current position.

"There was a time when I wasn't sure I'd ever work again," she recalls. "Today, I'm proud to show what's possible when people are given opportunity instead of limitations and are empowered to succeed."

### 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 Key Metrics – FY 2025

|                                                                                                                               |                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Private sector AbilityOne employees who are blind or have significant disabilities                                            | 40,663          |
| AbilityOne wages paid to private sector employees                                                                             | \$893.7 million |
| Average hourly wage paid to private sector employees                                                                          | \$18.71         |
| Cost per AbilityOne job based on AbilityOne Commission budget<br>(Federal agency & OIG \$13.124 million budget ÷ 40,663 jobs) | \$323           |
| Sales of products and services to Federal customers                                                                           | \$4.7 billion   |
| Wounded, ill, or injured veterans in AbilityOne direct labor jobs                                                             | 2,768           |
| Outward placements from AbilityOne contracts                                                                                  | 1,524           |
| Upward promotions within AbilityOne contracts                                                                                 | 2,322           |

### AbilityOne Impact

- Delivers mission-essential products and services to Federal customers, including:
  - Military equipment and uniforms, including chemical and biological warfare protection
  - Onshore contact centers that support citizen needs, including U.S. passport applicants
  - 24/7 call centers for Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs
  - Sanitizing hospitals and medical facilities
  - Services to iconic American landmarks and agencies including the Statue of Liberty, Library of Congress, NASA, National Park Service memorials and the National Mall, and four Presidential libraries
  - Department of Homeland Security secure mail
- Largest customer is the Department of Defense – \$2.7 billion in contracts and more than 18,000 AbilityOne employees

### Mission Moment

#### Italy Turner

Goodwill Industries of North Georgia, Decatur, GA

Italy Turner, the [2026 winner of SourceAmerica's Evelyne Villines Award](#), is an alternate project manager at a U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warehouse.

"I ensure that all the drivers get all the packages out, whether it's equipment, specimens, blood samples, cold packs, anything that you can name," she says. "It's very important, because everything we get in here, it helps save someone's life."

She adds, "I've advanced from a forklift operator to management, and my journey is proof that when people with disabilities are given the opportunity to succeed, there is no limit to what we can accomplish."

When not at work or with her family, Turner studies business management and logistics at Georgia Gwinnett College.

