



U.S. AbilityOne Commission Update

AbilityOne Response to COVID-19 Crisis

July 9, 2020



AbilityOne is a pivotal part of America's response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Federal customers depend on AbilityOne's proven and reliable employees – 45,000 people who are blind or have significant disabilities – working at the grassroots level to meet the unprecedented and fast-changing demands of this national emergency.

Many AbilityOne employees are designated as essential and serve on the front lines of the COVID-19 crisis.

U.S. AbilityOne Commission – Leading Through the Crisis

AbilityOne is protecting its people, surging nationwide to meet exponential increases in demand, and supporting the national emergency response at all levels of government.

- **Commission immediately created a crisis team – the integrated nerve center for AbilityOne’s COVID-19 response actions.**
 - Contingency Support Operations and Communications (CSOC) Team.
 - Single point of contact for Federal customers, Central Nonprofit Agencies (CNAs), and AbilityOne’s 500 nonprofit agencies.
 - Centralized strategic repository for all AbilityOne COVID-19 response activities. Staffed by Commission, National Industries for the Blind (NIB), SourceAmerica.
 - Provides seamless execution and real-time information to decision-makers at Federal agencies on high-demand stock and raw materials availability / delivery.
 - Crisis response team collaboration between Commission and CNAs – NIB and SourceAmerica – strengthens capacity, accelerates processes and provides solutions that meet key requirements.
- **Commission crisis response is based on transparent and frequent communication with stakeholders – swiftly issued new guidance, decisions and communications to help Federal agencies meet emergency needs:**
 - [Chairperson Robinson letter to Board Chairs of NIB and SourceAmerica](#)
 - [Procurement List Change -- Scope Expanded for Make-To-Order Kits, and Manufacturing and Development Assistance -- Available to All Contracting Activities During National Emergency](#)
 - [AbilityOne Flexibilities Related to the Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Emergency and Recovery for the Duration of Fiscal Year 2020](#)
 - [AbilityOne Contingency Support Operations and Communications \(CSOC\) Team and COVID-19 National Emergency Guidance](#)

Page 1 photo: The USNS Comfort arrived in New York Harbor on March 30, 2020, to support the local healthcare system strained by COVID-19. People with disabilities employed by VersAbility Resources, an AbilityOne-participating nonprofit in Hampton, Virginia, loaded the ship with meals for the 1,000-plus crew members – one of many AbilityOne actions to support the pandemic response at all levels of government. Photo by Kenneth Wilsey, FEMA



Employees at TRDI, in San Antonio, are among those performing essential janitorial services for Federal agencies including GSA and the Dept. of Homeland Security.

AbilityOne Program Highlights

- **Uninterrupted employment continues for vast majority of 45,000 AbilityOne employees – trained, proven, resilient, ready to work.**
- **95 percent of AbilityOne nonprofits have remained open throughout the crisis.**
 - Essential manufacturers in industrial base, producing 14,000 different products.
 - Expertise to train employees, renew national stockpiles, produce Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- **Commission is in continual contact with senior procurement officials** to identify demand for products and services – Army, Air Force, Defense Logistics Agency, GSA, HHS and FEMA.



Industries of the Blind, in Greensboro, N.C., is among the nonprofit agencies manufacturing masks.

- **AbilityOne continues to staff critical, uninterrupted services including:**
 - Dining facilities and switchboard operations at military bases and VA hospitals.
 - Call centers for the Internal Revenue Service and Veterans Affairs, as well as an unemployment call center for the State of Florida.
 - Base Supply Centers, which remain open at most military installations.
 - Now, and as Federal workforce returns, AbilityOne employees sanitize Federal buildings including the Pentagon and 32 hospitals on military bases.



Austin Lighthouse for the Blind met exponential increases in demand for hand sanitizer and soap products, with the help of employees like Brandon Colvin (above).

- **Exponential growth in demand – especially for PPE and sanitizing products.**
 - High-demand products include gloves, masks and gowns.
 - More than 1,000% increase in demand for some items.
 - One distributor said filling 1 month of orders would require 14 years of inventory.
 - Some nonprofits are running production lines 24/7.
- **Nonprofits re-tooling production lines, buying equipment, hiring people, adding shifts – warehouse space is available to accommodate increased production.**
 - Contracts awarded to AbilityOne nonprofit agencies to produce cloth masks for Army, Air Force and U.S Census Bureau. (Census purchased 2.7 million.)
 - Commission working with Army Corps of Engineers and Navy on potential mask orders, and with DLA for gowns.

- **AbilityOne has been a linchpin in major emergency response actions.**
 - USNS Comfort deployment to New York City – Loaded meals for crew of 1,000 before ship sailed to NYC to support overwhelmed healthcare system.
 - At New York City’s Javits Center and other hotspots, provided laundry services for more than 3,000 troops supporting temporary medical facilities.
 - USS Theodore Roosevelt – AbilityOne produced an Expeditionary Medical Facility Medical/Surgical Push Package for a 150-bed facility deployed to Guam to support this aircraft carrier.
 - AbilityOne employees proudly support our warfighters – from providing PPE to making uniforms to making U.S. flags that honor our fallen.

- **AbilityOne is protecting employees.**
 - Commission Chairperson issued [letter](#) to Board Chairs of NIB and SourceAmerica stressing importance of health and safety of AbilityOne employees.
 - CNAs regularly send guidance, best practices, assistance to nonprofit agencies.
 - SourceAmerica launched PPE Resource Order Center, providing PPE to member nonprofit agencies at cost.

- **Nationwide news media coverage and key Commission information** are on the [AbilityOne COVID-19 web page](#). [NIB](#) and [SourceAmerica](#) also have COVID-19 web pages.

About the AbilityOne Program

The AbilityOne Program is one of the largest sources of employment in the United States for people who are blind or have significant disabilities. Approximately 45,000 people who are blind or have significant disabilities, including approximately 3,000 veterans, are employed at approximately 500 nonprofit agencies nationwide, across 15 time zones, from Maine to Guam.

In FY 2019, AbilityOne provided nearly \$4 billion in products and services to the Federal government. The Program operates at more than 1,000 locations, representing 40 government agencies. It operates more than 150 Base Supply Centers at military installations and government facilities.

Over the past 10 years, AbilityOne employees:

- Earned nearly \$6 billion in wages.
- Received more than 3,800 promotions.
- On contract closeout projects, identified \$2.7 billion for de-obligation.

About the U.S. AbilityOne Commission

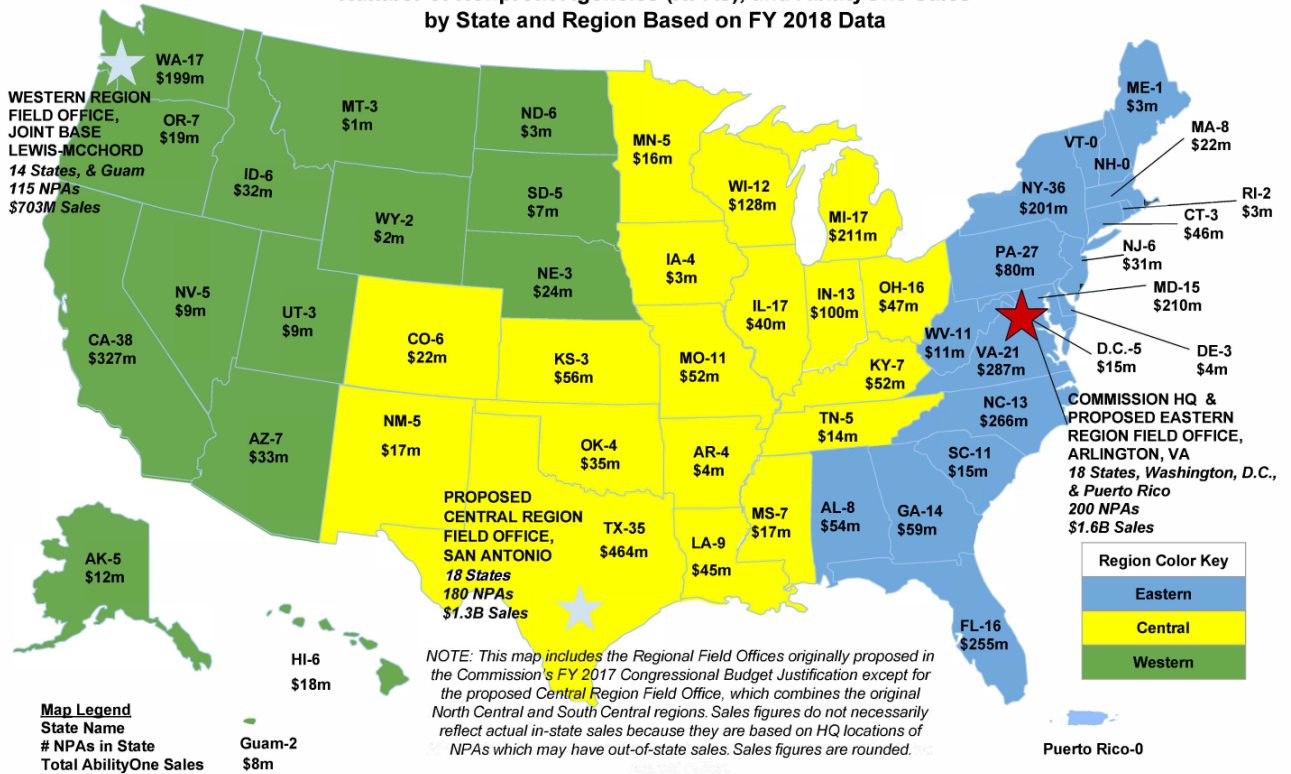
The AbilityOne Program is administered by the [U.S. AbilityOne Commission](#), the operating name of the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled. The Commission is an independent Federal agency comprised of 15 Presidential appointees: 11 represent Federal agencies, and four serve as private citizens who are knowledgeable about employment barriers facing people who are blind or have significant disabilities.

The Commission designates Central Nonprofit Agencies (CNAs) to facilitate the employment of people who are blind or have significant disabilities. CNA cooperative agreements with the Commission include performance work statements, quality assurance surveillance plan deliverables, and agreement clauses. The Commission currently executes the AbilityOne Program based on cooperative agreements with three CNAs: National Industries for the Blind, SourceAmerica and the American Foundation for the Blind. CNAs are private sector organizations. (American Foundation for the Blind is currently in a research phase.)



U.S. AbilityOne Commission

Regional Field Office Locations, Number of Nonprofit Agencies (NPAs), and AbilityOne Sales by State and Region Based on FY 2018 Data



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