



Dear SourceAmerica Conference Attendees,

On behalf of the U.S. AbilityOne Commission, I regret that we are unable to join you for the 2017 SourceAmerica National Training and Achievement Conference.

Our tradition of holding a Commission meeting at the conference is interrupted this year by the Continuing Resolution affecting funding of the federal government. Unfortunately, the associated budget limitations and uncertainties precluded us from being in New Orleans with you.

SourceAmerica's conference theme of "Focus on the Future" is well chosen. Today more than ever, the future of the AbilityOne Program is in our hands. The best way to predict that future is to create it, and to that end we must all continue to build the conditions for exploring and pursuing opportunities to reimagine and strengthen the Program.

For 2017, the Commission's focus includes three major areas:

1. Cooperative Agreement

June 15 will mark the first anniversary of the Commission and SourceAmerica signing the Cooperative Agreement. Both organizations now have active program management offices meeting frequently to address agreement specifics. As a mechanism for enhancing performance and accountability in the Program, the Cooperative Agreement is producing steady progress and clarifying the way ahead.

2. Panel on Department of Defense and AbilityOne Contracting Oversight, Accountability, and Integrity

Created by the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act, this Panel will send progress reports to the Secretary of Defense, the U.S. AbilityOne Commission Chairperson, and Congressional defense committees and oversight committees.

This legislation requires several Commission representatives to serve on the Panel. SourceAmerica is providing the Commission with information to help support the Commission's participation on the Panel, which is scheduled to hold its first meeting in late May.

Within its scope, the legislation directs the Panel to address a variety of areas, and recommend actions that DOD and the Commission may take to:

- "...eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse..."
- "...ensure opportunities for the employment of significantly disabled veterans," as well as for individuals who are blind or have significant disabilities
- Change "...law, regulations, and policy...necessary to eliminate vulnerability to waste, fraud and abuse...."

The legislation also states that the Panel shall recommend ways to "explore opportunities for competition among qualified nonprofit agencies or central nonprofit agencies and ensure an equitable selection and allocation of work to qualified nonprofit agencies."

In addition, the Panel will suggest milestone dates for implementing recommendations.

3. Budget

As you know, various government agencies are facing significant funding reductions. The Commission will continue to closely monitor any potential and actual impact of these reductions on the Program.

I want to express the Commission's thanks for the leadership shown by numerous nonprofit agencies. Many CEOs provided invaluable feedback across a wide range of important issues over the past year. We considered that input very seriously, and have incorporated much of it into our thinking.

The Commission will continue to directly engage with nonprofit agencies to further our goal of positive, constructive and transparent relationships. We appreciate the benefit of your views and your role in helping to chart a new future for the Program.

As always, the people we serve are the heart of our mission.

Sincerely,

James M. Kesteloot
Chairperson, U.S. AbilityOne Commission