

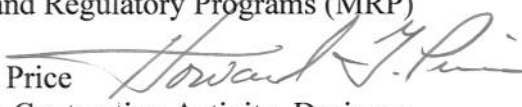


April 18, 2012

United States
Department of
Agriculture

TO: Acquisition Community
Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP)

Animal and
Plant Health
Inspection
Service

FROM: Howard G. Price 
Head of the Contracting Activity, Designee
Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP)

Marketing &
Regulatory
Programs Business
Services

SUBJECT: Increasing Contracting Opportunities with the Ability One Program

Administrative
Services Division

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) continues to support the mandatory use of the AbilityOne Program which employs people who are blind or have severe disabilities in accordance with USDA Departmental Regulation 5080-001.

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During the acquisition phase, the Administrative Services Division (ASD) is responsible for assisting the MRP organizations to meet this requirement. We have a tremendous opportunity to increase employment of people under this program by procuring more quality goods and services from the AbilityOne Program and its national network of nonprofit contractors.

I am challenging the Acquisition Community to find opportunities for AbilityOne vendors. All contracting officials should make a professional commitment to consider, when appropriate, the AbilityOne Program to fulfill procurement needs. The information below provides ways you can increase business opportunities with the AbilityOne Program:

- Review Federal Acquisition Regulation Subpart 8.7, which prescribes policies and procedures with respect to the Government purchases of supplies or services on the Procurement List (<http://www.abilityone.gov>).
- Evaluate and identify areas where opportunities for products and services growth exists such as document management, IT data processing, data gathering, landscaping, uniforms, research and data gathering.
- Take advantage of Ability One Program educational and outreach opportunities that your staff can attend; invite guest speakers to staff meetings or conferences. AbilityOne representatives are available to assist, support and present.
- Increase use of Ability One environmentally-friendly products such as bio-based cleaning products and bio-industrial solvents offered on USDA EMALL and GSA Advantage Websites for services and, the FSSI BPA for office products.



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- Note that USDA prime contractors with negotiated small business subcontracting plans can receive credit if utilizing AbilityOne nonprofit agencies. Include innovative approaches to solicitations to encourage this.
- Procure top of the line AbilityOne services such as: 1) Document Conversion, 2) Records Management, and 3) Document Production Off-site and On-site, through Federal Supply Schedule 36 (Contract GS-25F-0031S).
- Encourage the involvement of Central Non-Profit Agencies (CNAs), National Institute for the Significantly Disabled (NISH) and National Institute for the Blind (NIB) working directly with you and customers to conduct agency assessments and help create efficient acquisition plans that can include the Ability One national network of nonprofit contractors. The CNAs are regarded as “honest brokers and your partners” as they report to the US Ability One Commissions, a federal agency.
- These CNAs should be contacted at the beginning of the market research phase to help assess current systems and satisfy long term contract requirements. Their services are free of charge for planning and procurement as well, as local and national trainings. The National Development contacts are: for NISH, Christy Harrison at charrison@nish.org and for NIB, Jim Bean at jbean@nib.org.

Quarterly reviews from the Federal Procurement Data System- New Generation (FPDS-NG) and, AXOL system for the Purchase Card Program, will be used to monitor MRP business use of the Ability One Program.

If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Estela M. Diaz, MRP AbilityOne Liaison, at 301.851.2537 or Estela.M.Diaz@usda.gov.

Attachment:
DR 5080-001

cc:
Field AbilityOne Liaisons
MRP Cardholders
MRP Warranted Cardholders
MRP FAC-COR

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

DEPARTMENTAL REGULATION		Number: 5080-001
SUBJECT: USDA and the AbilityOne Program: Increasing Achievements and Setting Department Goals	DATE: May 23, 2007	
	OPI: Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization	

1 **PURPOSE**

This regulation establishes the Department-wide goals for increasing the Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) participation in the AbilityOne Program, and outlines procedures, requirements, and performance measurements for meeting them. The AbilityOne Program is authorized by the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act, and was formerly known as the "JWOD" Program.

2 **SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS**

This Directive is effective immediately, and supercedes the previous version, Departmental Directive 4000-1, dated June 3, 2003.

3 **BACKGROUND**

The mission of the AbilityOne Program is to provide employment opportunities for people who are blind or have other severe disabilities in the manufacture and delivery of products and services to the Federal Government. Through meaningful employment, the AbilityOne Program is a cost-effective way to help people who are blind or have other severe disabilities achieve greater independence, enabling many individuals to reduce their dependence on Government support.

4 **REFERENCES**

Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act (41 U.S.C. 46-48(c))

41 CFR 51 – Committee for Purchase from People Who are Blind or Severely Disabled

Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 8.7, Acquisition from Nonprofit Agencies Employing People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled

5 POLICY

It is USDA's policy to support the AbilityOne Program to the maximum extent practicable and to adhere to the goals and procedures outlined in this Departmental Regulation (DR). These goals provide for measurable growth and accomplishments in support of the AbilityOne Program.

6 USDA ABILITYONE PROGRAM GOALS

USDA's AbilityOne Program goals are listed below. These goals provide USDA's direction for increasing participation in the AbilityOne Program, and to provide much-needed jobs for people who are blind or have severe disabilities.

Goal 1

Agencies will strive to increase their AbilityOne Program acquisitions annually by at least ½ percent of the total AbilityOne Program procurement dollar amount reported the previous fiscal year. To meet this goal, attention must be given to the products and services on the AbilityOne Program Procurement List, as well as the addition of new products and services.

Agency AbilityOne Liaisons and contracting officials should work with representatives from the AbilityOne Program Central Nonprofit Agencies (NPA), NISH (serving people with severe disabilities) and NIB (National Industries for the Blind), to identify suitable products and services for addition to the Procurement List.

These additions and increased AbilityOne Program products and services usage are important to creating meaningful employment for individuals who might otherwise be unemployable.

Based on total AbilityOne Program dollars spent the previous year, each Agency will establish an annual baseline for measuring Goal 1. This total will represent dollars spent on products and services found on the AbilityOne Program Procurement List, including office supplies.

Contracting officials and credit card holders can access the Procurement List to find products and services, as well as a list of approved AbilityOne Program product distributors through the USDA OSDBU website at www.usda.gov/osdbu or directly on the Committee's website, www.abilityone.gov.

Goal 2

Promote USDA's successes in the AbilityOne Program by supporting USDA's National Disability Employment Awareness Month celebrations, and recognizing achievements by participating in the annual OSDBU sponsored USDA Small Business and AbilityOne Awards Program.

7 RESPONSIBILITIES

- a **USDA Member on the President's Committee for Purchase from People Who are Blind or Severely Disabled – Committee Member.** At USDA, the AbilityOne Program is led by the USDA Member on the President's Committee For Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled (Committee). The Director of the OSDBU is the USDA Committee Member. An OSDBU staff member will serve as the USDA AbilityOne Program Liaison between the Committee, NISH, NIB and USDA's agencies.
- b **Under Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries, and Agency Heads** will take actions to meet the Agency AbilityOne Program goals and to increase USDA's participation in the AbilityOne Program through contracting opportunities and program support.

Additionally, **Agency Heads** will identify at least one Agency AbilityOne Program Liaison(s), and submit the Liaison names and contact information to the USDA AbilityOne Program Liaison annually, and update as needed. The Agency AbilityOne Program Liaison may be a program or acquisition staff member.

- c **Agency AbilityOne Program Liaisons** will:
- (1) Serve as their agency's AbilityOne Program expert, guiding efforts to meet the goals and increase USDA's participation in the AbilityOne Program through contracting opportunities.
 - (2) Notify the USDA AbilityOne Program Liaison of all issues that may require the attention of the USDA Committee Member. These issues would include disputes or problems, in addition to the identification of new products and services to the Procurement List.
 - (3) Under the direction of the USDA Committee Member (Director of OSDBU) and USDA AbilityOne Program Liaison, attend meetings to discuss Program issues, agency performance, successes, and other activities.

- (4) Work together with other Agency AbilityOne Program Liaisons, and the USDA AbilityOne Program Liaison to develop more efficient data collection techniques and report formats.

d **Deputy Administrators for Management or equivalent, Heads of Contracting Activity or Designee, Contracting Officers, and Purchase Cardholders** will ensure that purchases comply with the requirements of the FAR Part 8.7, the JWOD Act, and this directive.

8 ABILITYONE PROGRAM PERFORMANCE PLAN

As requested, each Agency will submit an annual AbilityOne Program Performance Plan to the OSDDBU office. The plan will address the goals, and include how the Agency supported USDA's efforts to increase participation in the AbilityOne Program.

The Plan should include the previous year's accomplishments by number and dollar amount of contracts awarded, and if possible the number of jobs created, increased or maintained for people who are blind or have severe disabilities. Agencies should also include in the AbilityOne Program Performance Plan, the mechanisms used to obtain the information provided, such as from an approved AbilityOne Program Distributor, NISH and/or NIB officials, the Federal Procurement Data System-Next Generation, and other internal procurement dollar tracking systems.

Although USDA contract officials and purchase card holders are encouraged to purchase products not currently on the AbilityOne Program Procurement List from AbilityOne Program participating non-profit agencies, these purchase totals cannot be included as part of Goal 1 dollar achievements.

If an Agency elects to assist AbilityOne Program non-profit agencies by purchasing items not on the Procurement List, a report of the dollar totals, jobs created (if available), products purchased, and the name of the non-profit agencies should be included in the annual AbilityOne Program Performance Plan as an additional agency accomplishment.

-END-