

**Committee for Purchase From People
Who are Blind or Severely Disabled**
Contact: LaWanda York
Public Affairs
Phone: (703) 603-2128
Fax: (703) 603-0655
Email: Lyork@abilityone.gov



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Committee announces new Executive Director to lead AbilityOne Program

Arlington, VA — The Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled, an independent federal agency, announces its selection of Earnestine (Tina) Ballard as its new Executive Director. Ballard will lead all staff and administration in support of the 15 Presidentially-appointed Committee members who oversee the AbilityOne Program beginning March 3, 2008.

Enabled by the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act, the AbilityOne Program leverages the federal acquisition system to create jobs for people who are blind or who have other severe disabilities in the manufacture and delivery of products and services. The AbilityOne Program is the single largest employer of people who are blind or severely disabled in the United States, with a national scope and workforce of more than 40,000 individuals.

Ballard comes to the Committee from the position of Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Policy and Procurement), where she directly supports the Army Acquisition Executive and the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics and Technology). As the Army's principal acquisition and procurement policy authority, she is responsible for the management and execution of the Army's contracting worldwide. She also serves as the Functional Chief's Representation for the Army Contracting and Acquisition Career Program. In this capacity, she is responsible for the recruitment, training, education and professional development of contracting professionals who are part of the Army's acquisition workforce. Ballard also has responsibility for the Army's industrial base policy.

"The AbilityOne Program has a history that dates back to President Roosevelt; its purpose remains clear. It serves both civilians and those who have fought and sacrificed for our freedom by providing jobs and a slice of the American dream. This is a wonderful opportunity to join another organization with a strong history and purpose," said Ballard.

During her 30 years of federal experience, Ballard has become an established leader, able to conduct business in a global environment and oversee complex, worldwide procurements. She is known for fusing diverse organizations to achieve common objectives, while also focusing on professional development and capacity building within her own organization.

“Ms. Ballard possesses the outstanding leadership qualities the Committee was seeking for its Executive Director,” Andrew D. Houghton, Committee Chairperson, said. “She has the experience and ability to successfully lead this agency and the AbilityOne Program through both challenges and opportunities in the future.”

Other key positions Ballard held within the Department of Defense include Deputy Executive Director of Contract Management Operations for the Defense Contract Management Agency and Special Assistant for Defense Reform in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Office of the Secretary of Defense Award for Excellence, the Office of the Secretary of Defense Award for Leadership, two Meritorious Civilian Service Awards and the Federal Executive Association Unsung Heroine Award.

Ballard received her Bachelor of Arts Degree in English (1980), a Master of Science Degree in Management (1989), and a Master of Science Degree in National Resource Strategy (2001). She has completed the Industrial College of the Armed Forces Senior Acquisition Course and Leadership for a Democratic Society at the Federal Executive Institute.

Ballard’s predecessor, Leon A. Wilson, Jr., led the agency for over seven years prior to his retirement in August 2007.

###

The Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled is an independent federal agency that administers the AbilityOne Program, creating job opportunities for persons who are blind or have other severe disabilities. The Committee’s primary means of achieving its employment goal is through government purchases of supplies and services from nonprofit agencies employing such individuals. For more information, visit AbilityOne.gov