

**Committee for Purchase From People
Who are Blind or Severely Disabled**
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Federal employees win Outstanding Contributions Award

Arlington, VA — The Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled announced the selection of two federal employees to receive its Outstanding Contributions Awards. The Outstanding Contributions Award recognizes federal employees for their efforts in creating employment opportunities on federal contracts for people who are blind or have other severe disabilities under the AbilityOne Program.

Award winners are Sean P. Murphy, Contracting Officer, Army RDECOM Acquisition Center, Natick Contracting Division in Natick, Mass, and Nancy Holdaway, Senior Contracting Officer and Small Business Representative with the U.W. Department of Veterans Affairs, Buffalo, N.Y.

“Mr. Murphy and Ms. Holdaway are strong supporters of the AbilityOne Program and most deserving of this award. Through their efforts, they have been able to create stable, meaningful employment for individuals who are blind or have other severe disabilities,” said Andrew D. Houghton, Committee Chairperson

Murphy's oversight for equipment and supplies purchased at the Natick Contracting Division increased AbilityOne opportunities at Natick dramatically from \$5.1 million in fiscal year 2000 to \$65 million in fiscal year 2005. Many of these items were AbilityOne products such as uniforms, helmets, body armor, boots, and Special Operations Forces specialty items.

Due to Murphy's commitment to maximize job opportunities for AbilityOne Program participants over the last six years, contracts awarded under his leadership currently provide employment for more than 450 people who are blind or have other severe disabilities.

In 1995, when the Department of Veterans Affairs experienced a shortage of qualified switchboard operators, Holdaway contacted National Industries for the Blind and was introduced to the local AbilityOne-participating nonprofit agencies. This project continues today, and Holdaway's contagious enthusiasm for working with the AbilityOne Program has resulted in the establishment of several contracts in VA facilities in upstate New York, including additional communication centers, mailroom, janitorial and laundry services. As of last year, she initiated a

network contract with Winston Salem Industries for the Blind to provide all prescription eyeglasses for veterans in upstate New York.

Holdaway also shares her experiences with her colleagues across the nation, which has been a source of encouragement for establishing AbilityOne partnerships in other VA networks. Due to her consistent commitment to maximize job opportunities for people under the AbilityOne Program during the last 16 years, contracts awarded under her leadership currently provide employment for approximately 80 people who are blind or have other severe disabilities.

The Outstanding Contributions Awards was presented to Ms. Holdaway at the NIB Annual Conference held November 14-17, 2007, in Chicago, IL. Mr. Murphy received his award at a separate ceremony.

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The Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled is an independent federal agency that administers the AbilityOne (formerly Javits-Wagner-O'Day or JWOD) Program, which creates employment opportunities for persons who are blind or have other severe disabilities. The Committee's primary means of achieving its employment goal is through orchestrating government purchases of supplies and services from nonprofit agencies employing such individuals.

National Industries for the Blind is one of the two national, nonprofit organizations designated by the Committee to assist in the implementation of the AbilityOne Program. Together, NISH, which serves people with a range of severe disabilities, and NIB assist more than 600 community-based nonprofit agencies in participating in the AbilityOne Program.