

***FINAL
REVISED***

FY 2007 – 2009



STRATEGIC PLAN



**Committee for Purchase From People
Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled**

October 2007

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1 Introduction

This section introduces the strategic plan, including background on the AbilityOne (formerly JWOD) Program, the context of both the disability community and the Federal government, delineation of the scope of the strategic plan, and an overview of the Program's stakeholders.

1.1 Background

In 1938, the Wagner-O'Day Act was signed into law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in order to provide employment opportunities for people who are blind by allowing them to manufacture mops and brooms and other commodities to sell to the Federal government. The Javits Amendments of 1971 created the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Act (41 U.S.C. 46-48c) and amended the Act to include providing employment opportunities for people with other severe disabilities and allow the Program to also provide services to the Federal government. The amendments established the Committee for Purchase from People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled (Committee) as an independent Federal agency with a professional civilian staff to administer the JWOD Program.

In 2006, the Committee changed the JWOD Program name to AbilityOne to give a stronger, more unified identity to the program and to show a connection between the program name and the abilities of those who are blind or have other severe disabilities. As you review this strategic plan, you will find JWOD and AbilityOne names used interchangeably throughout the text, but each referring to the same Program.

The Committee accomplishes its mission by working through the AbilityOne Program's two Committee-designated Central Nonprofit Agencies (CNAs), the National Industries for the Blind (NIB) and NISH, a national organization devoted to creating employment opportunities for people with severe disabilities, to identify Government procurement requirements that can generate employment opportunities for individuals who are blind or have other severe disabilities. The Committee places such product and service requirements on its Procurement List and designates state and private nonprofit agencies (NPAs) that employ people who are blind or have other severe disabilities to furnish the requirements. If Federal agencies have a requirement to procure such products and services and the NPA can provide them when the government needs them, the Federal agency must procure such products and services from the NPA designated by the Committee. The Committee has the sole responsibility to set the fair market prices at which the NPAs can sell the products or services to the Federal government.

1.2 Scope

The scope of this strategic plan is the AbilityOne Program, rather than any single organizational entity. The plan addresses the mission, vision, and goals for the program for FY 2007 through FY 2009.

The previous AbilityOne Program Strategic Plan was approved in October 2006 for Fiscal Years 2007 to 2009. In January 2007, GAO Report 07-236 entitled, "Federal Disability Assistance – Stronger Federal Oversight Could Help Assure Multiple Programs' Accountability" was issued and described the Committee's oversight of the AbilityOne

Program as being “uneven.” The report also recommended that the Committee revisit its strategic plan goals and measures to ensure that they are clear, measurable, and capture key aspects of Program performance.

Committee members and key Program stakeholders met in a Strategic Planning Conference on July 18 and 19, 2007 and revised the FY 2007-2009 AbilityOne Program Strategic Plan to limit objectives and measures to the “vital few” while ensuring that metrics were realistic and measurable. The Committee also considered the GAO’s recommendations concerning CNA and NPA “questions of independence” in light of the “delegation of responsibility” for “monitoring and overseeing” the AbilityOne Program by the CNAs. The results of the conference, in the form of a Meeting Summary document, were provided to the Committee members and other participants in the conference for review and comment. The Committee approved the revised Strategic Plan in October 2007.

Each organization participating in the AbilityOne (formerly JWOD) Program should have its own strategic plan that is aligned with the Program’s plan and that shows how the organization supports achievement of the AbilityOne Program goals.

1.3 Disability Community Context

According to *Americans with Disabilities: 2002*, a report published by the US Census Bureau in May 2006 based on their Survey of Income and Program Participation, approximately 18 percent of Americans, or 51.2 million people, reported that they had a disability, and 12 percent or 32.5 million people reported that they had a severe disability. Only 42 percent of people ages 21 to 64 who had a severe disability were employed at some point in the one-year period prior to the interview, which translates to 16.1 million people with severe disabilities who did not work at all during the one-year period.

In 2007, the employment rate of working age people with disabilities remains only half that of people without disabilities (38 percent compared with 78 percent in 2005).

A survey in April 2003 by Rutgers University showed that only one in four companies in the U.S. employ workers who are known to have disabilities. From the survey, only 40% of the employers surveyed provide training of any kind to their employees regarding working with or providing reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities.

Sixty-nine years after the Wagner-O’Day Act was enacted, this nation is still faced with a monumental unemployment problem for people with disabilities. Even with the 1971 Javits Amendment to the Wagner-O’Day Act, the Federal Government continues to face many challenges in helping people with disabilities to get jobs.

As of the end of FY 2006, the Committee authorized the participation in the AbilityOne Program of more than 600 nonprofit agencies located in all fifty States and the District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico. Through the AbilityOne Program, these agencies employ more than 47,000 people who are blind or severely disabled. Some of these nonprofit agencies employ just a few persons with disabilities, while others employ over a thousand people who

are blind or severely disabled. While the AbilityOne Program's efforts are modest relative to the overall unemployment rate for people with disabilities, these efforts are making a difference for thousands of people with disabilities that might never work if it was not for the this Program. In 2006, the AbilityOne Program was the single largest source of employment in the United States of people who are blind or have other severe disabilities.

1.4 Federal Management Context

This strategic plan is being developed in accordance with the Federal framework of:

- ◆ The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), which requires Federal agencies to develop strategic and annual plans, and to report performance against those plans
- ◆ The Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART), a tool developed by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for conducting comprehensive program assessments. OMB staff typically work closely with agency staff to conduct the assessments, which evaluate the following areas: program purpose and design, strategic planning, program management, and program results. OMB has integrated these assessments into the budget process, as part of implementing the Budget and Performance Integration element of the President's five-point Management Agenda.
- ◆ Both GPRA and PART emphasize performance measures that focus on both outcomes and annual progress toward achieving long-term goals. PART emphasizes the importance of both Federal managers and program partners being held accountable for achieving measurable results. This strategic plan cascades down to the organizations that participate in the AbilityOne Program, with each organization committing to goals that align directly to achieving the results identified in this plan for the Program.

The Committee recognizes the importance of having quality data to support decision-making and strategic communications, and the need to establish data collection and analysis processes and tools to better understand the demographics and needs of individuals who are blind or have other severe disabilities, both within and outside the AbilityOne Program.

2 Environmental Scan

The key points of the environmental scan include:

- ◆ According to 2002 data from the Census bureau, 16.1 million working-age people with severe disabilities are not employed, emphasizing the continuing need to address employment.
- ◆ The AbilityOne Program operates in a dynamic Federal procurement environment and must deal with:
 - Contracting changes such as contract consolidation, strategic sourcing, and competing socioeconomic goals. There is increased pressure to meet established procurement goals for defined groups such as small business and service-disabled veteran-owned firms; however, the AbilityOne Program has no corresponding goals of its own which contracting officers must achieve.
 - Balancing reductions in Federal agency budgets and redirection of dollars to

- support the war in Iraq with increased expectations for Program performance.
 - Reconciling the competitive pressures of price, quality, delivery time, and customer service and satisfaction.
 - Challenges inherent in breaking into new markets requiring significant experience.
 - Responding to complex, fast-changing military requirements, including the impacts of reductions in the need for military items supplied through the Program and Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) on AbilityOne Program business.
 - Organizational changes in customer agencies, such as the consolidation to create the Department of Homeland Security, necessitating additional marketing of the AbilityOne Program.
 - Competing in a Federal procurement environment that includes multi-channel distribution of commodities.
- ◆ Congressional interest in the AbilityOne Program has shifted from a procurement focus to an employment focus. This means that Congress may have different expectations of the AbilityOne Program than it has in the past, and that the AbilityOne Program will likely be evaluated in the context of the other disability programs versus the context of a socioeconomic procurement program.
 - ◆ The Administration and the Committee have placed increasing emphasis on governance, effective stewardship, and accountability, resulting from negative media attention and critical scrutiny (to some extent warranted) from Program detractors. In particular, a few participating nonprofit agencies were identified as being in severe non-compliance with the Committee's regulations. Both policy change and remedial public relations are necessary.
 - ◆ The AbilityOne Program must be proactive in managing the unparalleled growth in sales to insure creation of the maximum number of job opportunities. The effects of war surge requirements and the success of the AbilityOne Program in meeting war fighter needs have significantly increased the level of sales and jobs created. It is critical that the program identify proactive strategies to maintain jobs as the war surge requirements begin to diminish. The effects of peaks and valleys in war surge will significantly impact the number of jobs for people who are blind or have other severe disabilities.

3 AbilityOne Program Stakeholders

This section identifies the primary stakeholders in the AbilityOne Program. Figure 1 below shows the entities involved in policy, oversight and administration vertically, and the entities directly involved in providing products and services to customers horizontally.

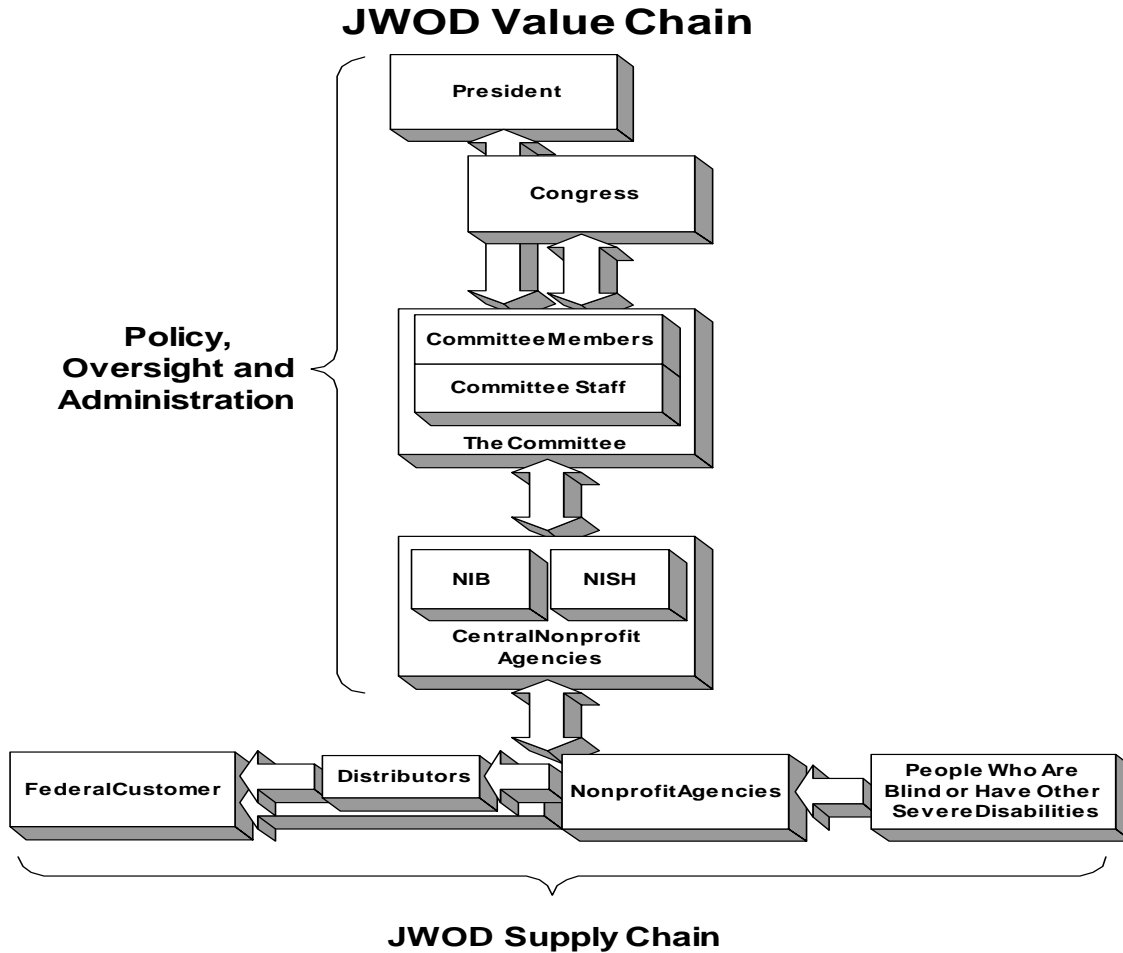


Figure 1. AbilityOne Program Value Chain

4 Program Philosophy

The Committee embraces the philosophy that it can best accomplish its social mission of creating employment opportunities by emphasizing the value of the Program to its Federal customers; this philosophy is simply stated as “social mission via customer value.” Committee members view this philosophy as an important issue of “alignment” for the AbilityOne Program as it strongly endorses the principle that Federal customers define value, and that it is the Program’s responsibility to deliver it.

A recent NISH survey of 300 Government customers revealed the only one-third of the respondents were moved to action by the AbilityOne Program’s social mission. The other two-thirds reported that they were moved by other value propositions like price, speed of delivery, and product quality. This survey reinforces that the Committee’s approach is the more appropriate one -- by not addressing the AbilityOne Program as a value proposition in terms of price, delivery, and quality, a majority of potential customers are simply ignored.

While customer satisfaction is the measure, Committee members see this as a “leadership” issue and have addressed it in this revised Strategic Plan. The success of key stakeholders’ leadership to inculcate the Committee’s customer value philosophy in their organizations will be a conclusion drawn from customer satisfaction rates.

As Figure 2 illustrates, delivering value to customers earns their loyalty and results in more work which creates additional employment opportunities. Increased revenues can be used to improve the quality of the work environment for people with severe disabilities.

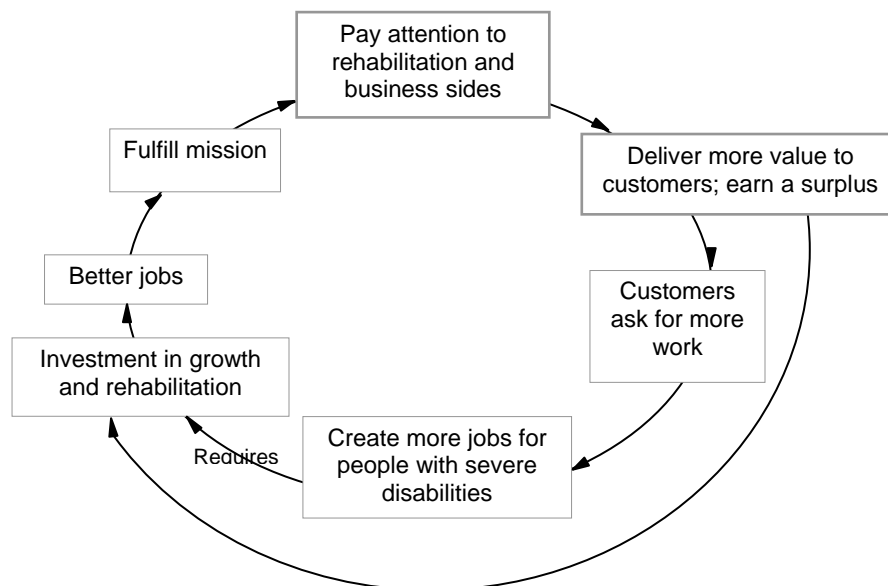


Figure 2. Linkage between Customer Value and Mission

5 Mission and Vision

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.

The vision of the AbilityOne Program is:

The AbilityOne Program enables all people who are blind or have other severe disabilities to achieve their maximum employment potential.

This vision will be realized when:

- ◆ Every person who is blind or severely disabled and who wants to work is provided an opportunity to be employed productively.
- ◆ Every AbilityOne employee earns not only the Federal minimum wage (or higher applicable state or local minimum wage) but also a living wage and benefits package appropriate to his or her geographic locality.
- ◆ AbilityOne employees are provided the training and development they need to be successful in their current positions, and ultimately achieve their maximum employment potential.
- ◆ Every AbilityOne employee is provided the opportunity, with or without accommodations, to advance to his or her maximum employment potential, including internal or external competitive placement or management and administrative positions.
- ◆ All AbilityOne products and services provide best value to Federal customers, thus earning their continued support and loyalty.

6 Strategic Goals and Objectives

This section documents the AbilityOne Program’s revised high-level strategic goals for FY 2007 through FY 2009. Specific objectives and measures are identified under each goal. The activities to achieve the objectives will be incorporated into specific Action Plans.

6.1 Goal 1. Employment for People Who Are Blind Or Have Other Severe Disabilities

Increase employment opportunities provided through the AbilityOne Program for people who are blind or have other severe disabilities.

6.1.1 Objective 1. Increase employment opportunities for people who are blind or have other severe disabilities.

Measure 1. Percentage increase in jobs and direct labor hours performed by people who are blind or have other severe disabilities.

<u>Targets</u>	NIB			<u>NISH</u>		
Jobs						
FY 2008	2.5%			5.0%		
<u>Targets</u>	NIB			NISH		
DLH	<u>Realistic</u>	<u>Stretch</u>	<u>BHAG</u>	<u>Success</u>	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Exceptional</u>
FY 2008	4%	9%	12%	-	-	9%

6.2 Goal 2. Stewardship, Program Integrity, and Leadership

Promote effective stewardship, program integrity, and leadership.

6.2.1 Objective 2a. Achieve NPA compliance with the statutory direct labor ratio requirement.

Measure 2a. Percentage of NPAs in compliance.

<u>Targets</u>	NIB		<u>NISH</u>	
FY 2008	100%		100%	

6.2.2 Objective 2b. Implement effective oversight of CNA roles and responsibilities to ensure program integrity.

Measure 2b. Issuance of new regulations in relationship to CNA roles and responsibilities to ensure program integrity.

6.2.3 Objective 2c. Establish and implement “customer value” philosophy among CNAs and NPAs.

Measure 2c. Increased customer satisfaction.

<u>Targets</u>	NIB	NISH
Satisfaction	<u>Quality</u> <u>Timeliness</u> <u>Price</u>	<u>Quality</u> <u>Timeliness</u> <u>Price</u>
Baseline		
FY 2008		
FY 2009		

6.2.4 Objective 2d. Promote employment quality through NPA adoption of activities that address and/or improve quality of work environment.

Measure 2d. By 2010, self-certification of all NPAs demonstrating best practices for increasing the quality of work environment, to be reviewed in compliance visits.

6.3 Goal 3. Market Development

Develop new markets and expand existing markets in which the AbilityOne Program can provide best value products and services to Federal customers in order to expand employment opportunities that meet the needs of people who are blind or have other severe disabilities.

6.3.1 Objective 3a. Establish AbilityOne preference goals within Federal procuring agencies.

Measure 3a. Number of additional Federal agency AbilityOne preference goal(s) created annually.

<u>Targets</u>	<u>Preference Goal</u>
FY 2008	1
FY 2009	1

6.3.2 Objective 3b. Establish CNA new market and market penetration goals.

Measure 3b. Prior to each new fiscal year, CNAs will submit new market and new market penetration plans with identifiable goals (including revenues and jobs). By 2010, Committee to evaluate outcomes in terms of jobs created and revenues.

6.4 Goal 4. Customer Satisfaction

Partner with Federal customers to increase satisfaction and loyalty so the AbilityOne Program becomes their preferred source for products and services.

6.4.1 Objective 4. Achieve satisfaction with the AbilityOne Program, including consistent delivery of products and services that meet customer requirements for quality, timeliness, and price.

Measure 4. Increased customer satisfaction with quality, timeliness, and price based on customer surveys.

Targets	NIB			NISH		
Satisfaction	<u>Quality</u>	<u>Timeliness</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Quality</u>	<u>Timeliness</u>	<u>Price</u>
Baseline						
FY 2008	TO BE DETERMINED					
FY 2009						

6.5 Goal 5. Communications and Information Sharing

Expand awareness, understanding, and preference for the AbilityOne Program among key stakeholders through effective communications and information sharing.

6.5.1 Objective 5. Increase awareness, understanding, and preference for the AbilityOne Program.

Measure 5. Effectiveness of communication and information sharing measured by increased percentages of awareness, understanding, and preference for the AbilityOne Program.

<u>Awareness</u>	<u>Federal</u>	<u>NPA</u>	<u>Disability Community</u>
Baseline	56%	75%	12%
FY 2007	61% (10% delta)	82% (10% delta)	14% (15% delta)
FY 2009	65% (5% delta)	87% (5% delta)	16% (15% delta)
<u>Understanding</u>	<u>Federal</u>	<u>NPA</u>	<u>Disability Community</u>
Baseline	49%	31%	38%
FY 2007	52% (5% delta)	34% (10% delta)	40% (5% delta)
FY 2009	56% (10% delta)	39% (15% delta)	44% (10% delta)
<u>Preference</u>	<u>Federal</u>	<u>NPA</u>	<u>Disability Community</u>
Baseline	30%	59%	8%
FY 2007	32% (5% delta)	62% (5% delta)	9% (10% delta)
FY 2009	35% (10% delta)	68% (10% delta)	10% (10% delta)

Appendix A

FY 2007 Targets

This section documents those goals, objectives, measures, and targets that were established prior to revision of the strategic plan in July 2007.

Goal 1. Employment for People Who Are Blind Or Have Other Severe Disabilities

Objective 1a. Significantly increase the number of employment opportunities for people who are blind or have other severe disabilities.

Measure 1. Percentage increase in direct labor hours performed by people who are blind or have other severe disabilities.

DLH	<u>NIB</u>			<u>NISH</u>		
	Realistic	Stretch	BHAG	Success	Excellent	Exceptional
	3%	8%	10%	3%	4.5%	6%

Measure 2. Percentage increase in the number of people who are blind or have other severe disabilities employed in direct-labor positions.

People	<u>NIB</u>	<u>NISH</u>
	2.5%	4.2%

Objective 1c. Provide career advancement and upward mobility opportunities to people who are blind or have other severe disabilities who are employed through the JWOD Program, either within or outside the Program.

Measure 1. The number of employees who are blind or have other severe disabilities who are promoted into a direct labor job, other than supervisory or management positions, which includes increased wages and/or fringe benefits, not attributed to cost of living or productivity increases of less than 20%. Promotions can be movement between JWOD and non-JWOD jobs.

People	<u>NIB</u>	<u>NISH</u>
	50	1300

Measure 2. The number of employees who are blind or have other severe disabilities who are promoted into an indirect labor job requiring supervisory, management, or technical skills, that included increased wages and/or fringe benefits, not attributed to cost of living raises.

People	<u>NIB</u>	<u>NISH</u>
	20	275

Measure 3. The number of employees who are blind or have other severe disabilities who leave the nonprofit agency through competitive or supported employment placements.

People	<u>NIB</u> 70	<u>NISH</u> 2600
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Goal 4. Communications and Information Sharing

Measure 1. Effectiveness of communication and information sharing measured by increased percentages in awareness, familiarity (understanding), and preference segmented by key stakeholders.

<u>Awareness</u>	<u>Federal</u>	<u>NPA</u>	<u>Disability Community</u>
Baseline	56%	75%	12%
	61% (10% delta)	82% (10% delta)	14% (15% delta)
<u>Understanding</u>	<u>Federal</u>	<u>NPA</u>	<u>Disability Community</u>
Baseline	49%	31%	38%
	52% (5% delta)	34% (10% delta)	40% (5% delta)
<u>Preference</u>	<u>Federal</u>	<u>NPA</u>	<u>Disability Community</u>
Baseline	30%	59%	8%
	32% (5% delta)	62% (5% delta)	9% (10% delta)