

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 OSDBU 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.

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