



## COMMITTEE FOR PURCHASE FROM PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND OR SEVERELY DISABLED


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Requests for Information from NIB and NISH

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### MEMORANDUM FOR FEDERAL ACQUISITION PERSONNEL

FROM: Andrew D. Houghton, Chairperson Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled 

SUBJECT: Requests for Information from National Industries for the Blind (NIB) and NISH

The Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled is a Federal agency charged with implementing a program mandated by Congress through the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Act, 41 U.S.C. § 46-48c. Under the JWOD Program, the Committee selects certain products and services procured by the Federal Government for provision by nonprofit agencies serving people who are blind or have other severe disabilities. Such items, which generate much-needed employment for persons who are blind or have other severe disabilities, are placed on the Committee's Procurement List and must thereafter be purchased from nonprofit agencies authorized by the Committee.

The JWOD Act, at 41 U.S.C. § 46(g) and 47(c), authorizes the Committee to secure information needed to carry out the JWOD Program directly from any Federal entity and allows the Committee to designate one or more central nonprofit agencies to assist it in carrying out the JWOD Program. The Committee, at 41 CFR 51-3.1 and 51-3.2(c), has designated two national nonprofit organizations, National Industries for the Blind (NIB) and NISH, as central nonprofit agencies, and has authorized them to secure information needed to carry out the JWOD Program.

NIB and NISH work closely with the Committee and are required by 41 CFR 51-3.2 to assist nonprofit agencies in obtaining and presenting much of the acquisition and other data the Committee uses in determining which items should be provided in the future by nonprofit agencies. Without this information, the JWOD Program's goal of providing jobs and training for persons who are blind or have other severe disabilities could not be achieved.

Accordingly, it is essential that Federal personnel cooperate by responding as promptly and completely as possible to requests by NIB and NISH staff for detailed acquisition information on specific commodities and services. Because NIB and NISH are exercising the Committee's authority to secure information directly from Federal entities,

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their requests for detailed procurement information should not be handled under Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) procedures, and no fees should be assessed.

Please note, however, that this policy does not preclude individual nonprofit agencies associated with either NIB or NISH and participating under the JWOD Program from requesting information under the FOIA, if they deem it necessary to do so. Such requests should be processed in accordance with the law and charges may be assessed as published in the agency's FOIA fee schedule.

Thank you for your assistance in these matters. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact Stephanie Lesko, the Committee's FOIA Administrator, at [info@jwod.gov](mailto:info@jwod.gov) or (703) 603-7740.