



PROCUREMENT MEMORANDUM 2021-04

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR: Senior Bureau Procurement Officials

FROM: Barry E. Berkowitz
Senior Procurement Executive
and Director for Acquisition Management

SUBJECT: Increasing Federal Contracting Opportunities for Americans with Disabilities

Background

The AbilityOne Program is one of the United States largest sources of employment for people who are blind or have significant disabilities, employing more than 45,000 individuals, including approximately 3,000 veterans. Approximately 500 nonprofit organizations employ these individuals who provide quality products and services to the Federal Government totaling nearly \$4 billion each year. By contracting with AbilityOne nonprofit organizations, veterans and individuals who are blind or have significant disabilities have a greater opportunity to work, lead independent lives, serve in their communities and contribute to the strength of our Nation's economy.

The contracting workforce supports the Department's mission through the procurement of products and services on the AbilityOne Procurement List in compliance with the Federal Acquisition Regulation Subpart 8.7. AbilityOne employees are a vital part of the Department's mission support and proudly contribute to our mission in many ways to include manufacturing office products, operating Base Supply Centers, providing janitorial services, providing mail management services and performing contract closeout services.

In response to the Coronavirus pandemic, AbilityOne nonprofit organizations have provided mission-essential support, increasing surge capacity to manufacture and deliver critical products and to maintain critical services. AbilityOne employees have been on the frontlines to keep our workforce safe and buildings operational by sewing and delivering high-demand items such as: masks and gowns; producing hand sanitizers and personal protective equipment; and providing deep-cleaning disinfecting services for buildings. In addition to these core products and services, AbilityOne is building the next generation of jobs in knowledge-based service areas such as: administrative and technology services; contract and financial support; and contact center support.

During fiscal year 2020, the Department of Commerce spent approximately \$49.7 million (.086%) through federal contracts under the AbilityOne program. While these efforts are commendable, this amount represents less than 1% of the Department's total spend.

In an effort to increase participation of persons with disability in federal contracting, the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP) recently issued guidance¹ outlining five key actions that agencies can take to increase Federal contracting opportunities within the AbilityOne Program and other Federal resources that support employing people with disabilities. One important action item outlined in the guidance is for agencies to re-prioritize contract spend by pledging to increase the amount spent on products and services from the AbilityOne Program.

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to outline actions the Department plans to take to increase opportunities within the AbilityOne Program.

Actions

1. The Department has designated an AbilityOne Representative (ABOR) who will develop an action plan to help promote the AbilityOne Program and represent the Department as a member of the government-wide ABOR team.
2. The Department has established an AbilityOne pledge of 1% of total spend for fiscal year 2021 and 1.5% in fiscal year 2022.
3. Contracting professionals and program officials are encouraged to take the Defense Acquisition University's (DAU) Continuous Learning Module 023, "DAU AbilityOne Training," to meet continuous learning requirements.
4. Contracting professionals should identify requirements that can be met through the AbilityOne Program and find new and meaningful contract opportunities to help increase opportunities under the AbilityOne Program.
5. Contracting professionals should consider using innovative approaches to increase opportunities under the AbilityOne Program, such as:
 - a. Establishing time-limited Procurement List additions
 - b. Using FAR 8.713 to invite AbilityOne contractors to participate in competitive actions
 - c. Establishing indefinite-delivery-indefinite-quantity contracts for AbilityOne products and services

¹ The guidance can be found on OFPP's home-page at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Increasing-the-Participation-of-Americans-with-Disabilities-in-Federal-Contracting.pdf>.

Effective Date

This Procurement Memorandum is effective immediately and remains in effect until rescinded or modified.

Questions

Please direct any questions regarding this Procurement Memorandum OAM_Mailbox@doc.gov.