UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Chief Financial Officer
Assistant Secretary for Administration
Washington, D.C. 20230

SEP 30 2015

PROCUREMENT MEMORANDUM 2015-10

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR: BUREAU PROCUREMENT OFFICIALS
HEADS OF CONTRACTING OFFICES

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

SUBJECT: The AbilityOne Program and National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is observed every October to recognize the talents, skills, capabilities and dedication of Americans with disabilities. Not only are people who are blind or have significant disabilities a vital part of the American workforce, but they also provide the Commerce Department nearly $10 million dollars in products and services each year through the AbilityOne Program. Our purchases support the employment of more than 130 people who are blind or have significant disabilities, helping them lead more independent lives through meaningful careers.

In 1938, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Wagner-O'Day Act (now known as the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act) which created the AbilityOne Program. This unique federal procurement program provides employment opportunities to more than 45,000 people who are blind or have significant disabilities who otherwise would be unemployed. It also provides the government a streamlined procurement process to obtain goods and services that fully meet their requirements. In spite of this program, 70% of Americans with disabilities are not able to get employment.

All Americans should have the opportunity to live and work with dignity and independence. As federal procurement professionals, we have the ability to make a difference for people who are blind or have significant disabilities. The Department currently spends less than 0.3% of its procurement dollars on the AbilityOne Program. This program is an ideal way to meet our requirements and obtain quality products and services. We can and should do more.

The AbilityOne Program is implemented via the Code of Federal Regulations (41 CFR Ch. 51) and the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), FAR Subpart 8.7. The AbilityOne Program offers the government a wide variety of products of services http://www.abilityone.gov/, is a mandatory Government source for supplies and services

in accordance with FAR 8.002, and is statutorily exempt from the Competition in Contracting Act (FAR 6.302-5).

October is the start of the new fiscal year and the beginning of NDEAM. Now is an ideal time to revisit our procurement needs for FY-16 and FY-17 and identify requirements that can be met through the AbilityOne Program. I challenge all of us to find new and meaningful contract opportunities to help increase our commitment to the AbilityOne Program in the coming years.

My point of contact for this matter is Nancy Barrere, who may be reached at 202-482-5519 or nbarrere@doc.gov .