

National Industries for the Blind Marks 5-Year Anniversary of AbilityOne Contract Management Support Services Program

May 11, 2015, ALEXANDRIA, VA — National Industries for the Blind (NIB), the nation's largest employment resource for people who are blind, is recognizing the 5-year anniversary of the AbilityOne® Contract Management Support (CMS) Services program. The program employs people who are blind to close out U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) contracts. Since its inception, CMS program participants have closed out 220,000 contracts and recovered nearly a billion dollars in de-obligated funding.

Launched in 2010, the CMS program provides people who are blind with upwardly mobile career opportunities in areas beyond the manufacturing sector. Working with the DOD, NIB created the CMS program to help fill a critical need for specialists to close out government contracts.

Five years later, the program employs 134 people, 114 of whom are blind or have significant disabilities – including 32 wounded warriors or service-disabled veterans, and provides a significant return on investment for federal customers. Since 2010, the CMS program has processed more than \$830 million in de-obligated funds.

“The program is a classic win-win scenario,” said NIB President and CEO Kevin Lynch. “DOD agencies needed contract closeout specialist to help process thousands of open contracts, and NIB wanted to expand opportunities for career-oriented employment for people who are blind. This partnership is a real testament to the capabilities of people who are blind and the value they deliver to federal customers.”

Jude Lucien started working as a contract closeout specialist in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in February 2011. He advanced in the program every year, eventually becoming a contract closeout supervisor. Lucien recently left the CMS program to fill a contract specialist position with the U.S. Army, making him one of 29 CMS employees hired full-time by the federal government.

“Being hired as a contract closeout specialist through the CMS program opened doors I never could have imagined,” said Lucien. “The program works. I’m a contributor to society now. I have financial security.”

The AbilityOne Program, established by the Javits-Wagner-O’Day Act, is the nation’s largest source of employment for people who are blind or have significant disabilities. The program coordinates its activities with nonprofit organizations throughout the U.S. to employ these individuals and provide products and services to the federal government at fair market prices. The AbilityOne Program operates in nearly 1,000 locations, supporting 40 different government agencies nationwide.

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About National Industries for the Blind

For more than 76 years, National Industries for the Blind (NIB) has focused on enhancing opportunities for economic and personal independence of people who are blind, primarily through creating, sustaining and improving employment. NIB and its nationwide network of associated nonprofit agencies deliver thousands of quality products and services to federal and commercial customers. **NIB delivers *Value that Works*.** For more information about NIB, visit www.NIB.org/value.