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1310 Braddock Place
Alexandria, VA 22314-1691
703-310-0500
www.nib.org

National Industries for the Blind: Working with the Obama Agenda

To Enhance the Opportunities for Economic and Personal Independence for People Who Are Blind

Commitment to President-elect Obama's Disability Agenda

The Obama-Biden Plan states its intention to “*increase the employment rate of workers with disabilities by effectively implementing regulations that require the federal government and its contractors to employ people with disabilities...*”

Just like the Obama-Biden Agenda, NIB is committed to the creation of more and better jobs for people who are blind. Our mission is to increase and enhance employment for people who are blind through the AbilityOne Program by using modern employment models that encourage private/public partnerships and empower people who are blind to become more economically integrated. NIB and its associated agencies serve as the largest program responsible for the employment of people who are blind and our mission is to maximize employment for people who are blind so that we can provide the best jobs available through the Ability One Program.

NIB is committed to helping the Obama-Biden Administration reach this important goal of increasing executive branch hiring of employment for people with disabilities. We remain committed to helping increase the employment rates of the nearly seven in ten people in America who are blind and not employed. NIB serves as the largest employer of people who are blind through a federal procurement program that allows for the provision of products and services to the federal government. If it were not for the federal government's commitment to AbilityOne, many people who are blind would not be employed in our nation and would not be enjoying the fair wages and good benefits they are receiving at one of the 85 associated non-profit agencies in the program.

The AbilityOne Program

National Industries for the Blind (NIB) operates under the Javits-Wagner-O'Day (JWOD) Act and the AbilityOne Program, a federal purchasing program that enables people who are blind and have other severe disabilities to provide products and services to federal and commercial customers at a fair market price. Like other businesses, NIB and our more than 85 associated agencies around the country must deliver quality products on time and at competitive prices.

NIB and its associated agencies supply federal markets with high-quality products and services under the trade name SKILCRAFT. Today, NIB is enhancing its business base by evolving from offering mostly office products and textiles to including top quality services such as government call centers, document conversion and other integrated technology solutions, and even the management of complex federal contracts for large government agencies. In 2008, \$109 million in wages and fringe benefits were paid to people who are blind as the result of the sale of these products and services.

The Future: Our Business Leaders Program

Launched in 2003, NIB's unique Business Leaders Program prepares individuals who are blind for outstanding careers in business. By providing a combination of educational and employment opportunities, we transform high-potential employees into capable leaders and successful business people. Through this proven program, NIB and its network of not-for-profit businesses expand the universe of career choices for people who are blind.