Overview

The Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled is an independent federal agency (U.S. AbilityOne Commission) responsible for administering the Javits-Wagner-O Day Act (41 U.S.C. 8501-8506). The AbilityOne Program provides employment opportunities for people who are blind or have significant disabilities, in the manufacture and delivery of products and services to the Federal Government. Federal agencies purchased over $3 billion of goods and services through the AbilityOne Program in FY2015. The AbilityOne Program has a national footprint, with over 500 nonprofit agencies employing nearly 47,000 people (3,000 veterans) who are blind or significantly disabled. The program generates over $500 million in wages annually. The AbilityOne Program is one of many federal programs designed to help people with disabilities find employment. It is the single largest source of employment for the blind and others with severe disabilities in the United States. Billions of federal procurement dollar flow through the program every year and tens of thousands of people who are blind or have severe disabilities are employed.

The Office of Investigations intends to carry out a comprehensive nationwide program for the prevention, detection, and investigation of criminal or prohibited activity that may harm or threaten to harm the operations or integrity of the AbilityOne Program. The Office of Investigations is committed to detecting and preventing Fraud, Waste and Abuse in the AbilityOne. The OIG is pleased to present the first investigative priorities report to help in the oversight of the AbilityOne Program.

Potential Investigative Focus

The Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) Quality Standards for Federal Offices of Inspector General and the Quality Standards for Investigations, directs OIGs to develop a methodology and process for identifying and prioritizing agency programs and operations that identify activities to investigate. As resources are rarely sufficient to meet all requirements, OIG planning should include an assessment of risk and an assignment of priorities to help ensure the optimum use of OIG resources. Investigative plans should be flexible enough to accommodate individual agency needs and the shifting of investigative priorities and
staff resources, as circumstances dictate. The following investigative topical areas are proposed for FY2018-FY2019.

**I. Fraud Awareness**

A campaign/program will maintain a hotline reporting infrastructure (email, website, phone, call, etc) for individuals to report fraud, waste, abuse, and mismanagement.

A campaign/program will inform the public by encouraging fraud detection, fraud prevention and understanding of fraud reporting. The Office of Investigations will become a leader in providing fraud awareness understanding for employees and individuals associated with the AbilityOne Program.

**What should you do if you suspect fraud?**

Call our Hotline at (844) 496-1536, or email the Office of Inspector General at hotline@oig.abilityone.gov. You will be asked to provide complete, accurate, and truthful information. Furthermore, all callers may remain anonymous and are protected with confidentiality.

**II. Financial Fraud Investigations**

Investigations will focus on violations related to agency/program funds, agreements (cooperative agreement), and agency compliance forms.

**III. Collective and Joint Investigations**

A priority for the Office of Investigations is working jointly with partners and other law enforcement agencies on cases involving the AbilityOne Program.

We anticipate that the Office of Investigations in participating with other agencies in Task Forces and Joint Investigation will enhance oversight. This includes conducting investigations or working with the Department of Justice (DOJ) Criminal Division or Civil Fraud Division on False Claims Act investigations. It also includes working with DOJ on qui tam lawsuit investigations and referral investigations involving fraud within the AbilityOne Program that may lead to the recouping of government funds. The Office of Investigations will also participate in investigations involving the AbilityOne Program being conducted by other federal agency Inspector General Offices.
IV. Program Integrity Investigations

Investigations will focus on activities that could undermine the integrity of agency programs and erode confidence in the agency pursuing its mission by not following laws, rules or administrative processes of the program. This includes lying to federal government agents during the course of an investigation.

V. Protected Disclosure Investigations

Investigations will focus on Federal whistleblower protection law (as explained by the U.S. Office of Special Counsel). These investigations deal with retaliation towards employees, job applicants, contractors, subcontractors, and grantees for disclosing information they reasonably believe evidences of fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement, or substantial and specific danger to public safety or health.