



The National Association for the Employment of People who are Blind

NAEPB Board of Directors Teleconference

Monday, December 9, 2013

10:30am – 12:00pm (Eastern)

Dial-in number: 1-877-860-3058

Pass Code: 925356

AGENDA

1. Call to Order Mitchell
2. Roll Call Moneymaker
3. Minutes for Approval Moneymaker
 - a) October 8, Board of Directors Meeting
4. Treasurer's Report Adams
 - a) Balance Sheet, November 30, 2013
 - b) Income Statement, ending November 30, 2013
5. Consent Calendar Reports Mitchell
 - a) G4 Task Force Questionnaire Results - KERLIN and GILLIAM
 - b) NAEPB BSC Conference Call Minutes (November 2013) – GILLIAM
 - c) NAEPB OPERATIONS REPORT 2013-11-30 – KERLIN
 - d) NAEPB Services Committee Report 12-9-13 – STEINER
 - e) NIB BSC Monthly Update (November 2013) – GILLIAM
 - f) VP Report Dec. 2013 - Public Policy and Comm. – HOPF
 - g) NAEPB Public Policy and Communications Committee Update Report - HOPF
 - h) Associated Press Article - Lynch Interview – HOPF
6. Board Election Results Moneymaker
7. Board Evaluation Summary Results Sparkman
8. Code of Ethics Status Sparkman
9. 2014 NAEPB Board and Member CEO Planning Retreat Mitchell
10. Best Practices and Business Growth – Update Taylor
11. ETS Gilliam
12. Agency Reciprocity - Update Kerlin
13. NIB Updates Lynch
 - a) Addressing Business Challenges - CEO Task Force
 - b) GSA/Government business downturn
 - c) Afghan First – Update
 - d) Ability One Commission – Suitability Definition – Update
 - e) Commissary System Threat – Update



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14. Other Business – NAEPB Website updates

All

15. Adjournment

Mitchell

NAEPB G4 TASK FORCE
RECIPROCAL BUYING PRACTICES QUESTIONNAIRE
Please return to Booth # 311

Agency Name 23 of approximately 50 attending agencies completed the survey

Name of Person Completing this Questionnaire _____

PLEASE SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES

What types of buying practices do you currently use in your agency to promote NPA to NPA purchasing of AbilityOne products and services?

- [17] AbilityOne.com office supply purchases
- [7] AbilityOne JanSan (cleaning) supplies
- [6] AbilityOne Building supplies (eg: toilet paper, paper towels, light bulbs, etc)
- [5] AbilityOne Kitchen supplies (eg: coffee, plastic ware, etc)
- [7] Ability One MRO Manufacturing supplies (eg: plastic gloves, tape, entry mats, anti-fatigue mats, ear plugs, etc)
- [12] Direct purchases from AbilityOne producing agencies
- [3] Other:

Have you experienced any barriers to purchasing products and/or services from other AbilityOne agencies? _____

Have you or are you currently collaborating with another AbilityOne agency on a project or service opportunity? _____

15 respondents indicated they are working with either an NIB or SA affiliated agency

PLEASE PROVIDE INFORMATION ON YOUR PRODUCTS AND SERVICE CAPABILITIES

We are developing an expanded AbilityOne catalog which will include not only AbilityOne products, but also service capabilities and commercial products. Please provide contact information for the best person in your agency for us to provide detail on your products and services.

Name _____

Phone _____ Email _____

NAEPB BSC Quarterly Conference Call, 29 Oct 2013

Meeting Notes

The Quarterly NAEPB BSC Conference Call was conducted on 29 October 2013. The following is a summary of the discussion topics and results.

Item #1: BSC Land Lease Update: Tommy Thomas discussed his upcoming meeting in San Antonio on 30 October, where he and Mike Gilliam will negotiate an “in-kind” lease agreement with the Air Force Civil Engineering Command (AFCEC) and Joint Base Fort Sam Houston representatives for the future BSC at the Joint Base. The results of this meeting will provide a litmus test for the newly developed BSC Valuation Methodology, which provides a dollar value to the cost-avoidance and “same day service value” the customer enjoys by having a BSC on the installation. (Update since the call: The meeting went well and there’s an agreement in principle. Lease documents in work.)

Item #2: Air Force Support: Tommy Thomas briefed that we are still awaiting the revision of Air Force Instruction (AFI) 64-117 to ensure the recommended NIB/NAEPB language on BSCs has been incorporated. Additionally, we are coordinating with SAF IEI to determine if they will release a second clarification message to help eliminate misperceptions about the use of DOD EMALL vs. the BSC.

Item #3: MICC Support Way Forward: Tommy Thomas summarized the recent dealings with BG Vollmecke and his 4 contracting brigade commanders following the decision to rescind the 4 January 2013 MICC Memorandum on utilization of the BSCs. BG Vollmecke does not intend to issue another memorandum, rather he has invited all BSC operators to schedule face-to-face meetings with his installation contracting officers to discuss our recent understanding of the authorized use of the stores. These meetings are now being coordinated, and some have already taken place. (Update since the call: General Vollmecke is leaving his current post 2 December 2013)

Item #4: Agency Credit Card Pooling: Mike Gilliam reminded the participants that the emphasis on this initiative has dropped off since Tom Boyer left IB-Milwaukee. After some discussion, Ken Barnett agreed to take the lead and work with his fellow BSC Operators at their level to shape this possible opportunity and make a recommendation to the CEOs on whether or not it is feasible or which agencies choose to participate.

Item #5: NIB GSA Schedule Sharing: Tommy Thomas announced that there is still no news from GSA on whether they will be re-opening applications for a Schedule 75. In the meantime, Wanda McLeod is putting together an information sheet to serve as a guideline for the steps involved in applying for and managing a GSA Schedule.

Item #6: BSC Pricing Policy: Tommy Thomas reminded the participants that the Commission has mandated pricing audits and asked to see a quarterly report summarizing the findings. Recent compliance visits to the BSCs have uncovered a number of instances where the store had items that were higher than the GSA established maximum prices. This issue will require continued emphasis by all of the agencies to ensure we are staying within the parameters of the agreed to pricing policy. Jim Kerlin asked for help from other agencies on pricing strategy ideas and recommendations, as his agency has recently lost some expertise in that arena.

Item #7: ETS Issue Discussion: Mike Stine and Ken Barnett provided an update on the meeting earlier in the day between Jennifer King, Kristina Parker, Tommy Thomas, Mike Stine, Timothy Dudley and Ken Barnett on the way ahead to resolving persistent issues with the quarterly ETS Scrub Files. Over the next 6 months, we will be working together with GSA, the Commission, and other distributors/vendors to fill in the informational gaps on this file, most predominantly the absence of UPCs. LCI and Beyond Vision are working as part of an integrated project team to gather as much of this information as possible. A-List office products are the first priority, followed by B and C List items. Jim Kerlin and Mike Gilliam complimented Tim Dudley's slide presentation laying out the benefits of using UPCs as part of the ETS list.

New Issues:

BSC Branding: Mike Gilliam led a discussion on the progress of the BSC Branding initiative, reminding everyone that the BSCs all gave their word that the effort was worthwhile and would be supported. It seems most all agencies are on board and have completed at least a portion of the transition. Exterior store signs have been the primary challenge thus far, due partly to some restrictive installation policies on the size, color and content of signage. Each agency is coordinating with their local commands to gain approval for the AbilityOne exterior signs in a format the installation allows. Buddy Sell added that Envision will commit to implement the branding initiative. Ken and Chuck foot-stomped the need to be behind this effort, noting all the work done with policy documents and advocacy letters is in the name of the AbilityOne BSC program. Therefore they said it's in the BSCs best interest to be aligned with that branding, particularly as dollars tighten and competition increases. Mike asked Phil Sanders to provide him a report on the status of LCI's implementation.

Navy Support: Mike Gilliam and Ken Barnett posed questions about working with the Navy to build in some of the favorable language in their policies similar to what we have been able to do with the Army and Air Force. Tommy said that NIB will check on any Assistant Secretary of the Navy (ASN) Research, Development and Acquisition (RDA) policies that may be in effect over and above the most recent NAVSUP Instruction 4200.99B (12 Sep 2012).

There were no other new issues brought forth. **The next scheduled NAEPB BSC Meeting will be January 14, 2014 at 2:30 p.m. EST.**

Operations Report
Jim Kerlin, NAEPB - VP Operations
11-30-2013

AbilityOne Standing Sub-Committees (Chair: Shelly Taylor)

- Shelly Taylor, NAEPB Operations AVP, will report separately on the status of the standing AbilityOne sub-committee activities including Office Products, Jan-San, TAG, MR and Medical Products.

Commercial Business Diversification Sub-Committee (Chair: Mike Gilliam)

- The Commercial Diversification Committee conference call scheduled for Nov 12, 2013 was canceled.
- Mike Gilliam is revisiting the future of this committee at the next NAEPB Board meeting.
- Suggestions and ideas for the way forward and how to increase participation are welcomed.

ETS & Integrated Project Team (led by Jen King)

- I'm continuing to act as the NAEPB representative to the IPT task force assigned to support this effort. The IPT team is comprised of members from NIB, GSA and the AB1 Commission.
- ETS infractions are significantly lower as a result of the efforts of this committee.
- In comparison to FY13 results, FY14 are significantly less due to automated monitoring measures used to identify violations within the MAS channel during in FY13.
- The status of the IPT and other ETS reduction efforts are regularly updated in NIB This Week.

PRICING STRATEGY (Chair: Jim Kerlin)

- Agency Reps: John Thomson, Bill Price, Shelly Taylor, John Mitchell David Wells and Jim Kerlin.
NIB Reps: Scottie Knott, Thomas Milks, Chuck Froemke, and Steve Heinecke.
- Goal: develop a defensible strategy for defending the "Fair Market Price" statute language.
- White Papers were sent to Kim Zeich of the AbilityOne Commission on 9-20-13. Topics included:
 - Recommendations for establishing Fair Market Price using Haystack reports and/or a Statistical method.
 - Mark-up allowance for NPAs when distributors order direct bypassing GSA or MAS wholesalers.
 - Recommendation for Commission to limit distribution channel mark-up of AbilityOne products to a maximum of 50% over FMP to end customer.
- A follow up call was conducted with Kim Zeich and Patricia Briscoe on 11-1-13 and the reception to our recommendations was favorable.
- Draft letters to AbilityOne Distributors and GSA regarding the 50% mark-up ceiling and drop ship allowance are being prepared at NIB to be sent to the Commission.

NAEPB Committee Meeting Notes

December 9, 2013

The following report is taken from the minutes of the 10/11/13 service committee meeting at the annual conference.

Opening Comments- Dennis Steiner, Chairman NAEPB Services Committee:

Dennis Steiner welcomed and thanked all the participants to the meeting. He said that he felt good about his conversation with Kevin Lynch regarding the progress being made in the call center, Contract Management Support (CMS), and supply chain lines of business. He added that Services has been the only area that has seen growth during the past year. Dennis thanked John Qua, his team, and the NPAs that made this growth possible.

John Qua- Vice President, Services:

John notified the group that in addition to services, Niche also achieved goals this year. He thanked Tom Black and his group for doing a great job with Niche. Services has been somewhat sheltered from the effects of sequestration in FY 13 but we are now starting to see some impact. During conversations with Dennis Fields with SourceAmerica, John learned that over 3,000 people had been furloughed at SourceAmerica NPAs. John provided the following updates regarding services.

FY 13 Updates:

- Sales were up 15% through August and could hit \$70 million in FY 13.
- Services created a total of 73 jobs through 25 projects in FY 13, versus a goal of 72 jobs and 15 projects. The higher number of project count is attributable to our focus on commercial as well as AbilityOne work. Project count is higher because there were several small commercial opportunities last year. For example, Fresh Revenues involved six different agencies; therefore, there were six projects associated with this effort.
- Jobs Breakdown: 53 jobs created through AbilityOne and 19 created through commercial opportunities. In FY 13, we had almost 30 jobs in the pipeline because of Organizational Clothing and Individual Equipment repair and warehousing requirement, assigned to Travis Industries. These 30 jobs are part of the 53 total jobs created through the AbilityOne Program. The previous year, we had almost 30 jobs in the pipeline with the supply chain additional FSCs

project. We currently do not have a large jobs project in the pipeline for FY 14 but are seeking such opportunities.

- Commercial business resulted in 19 jobs through a good variety of work. There were a few 508 projects, along with call centers and some work through our GSA schedule.
- Supply chain provided the most blind work years, followed by CMS. Last year, John told everyone there is good opportunity in supply chain as it involves a lot more than warehousing. We should continue to be excited about supply chain as we are just now beginning to take advantage of our collective capability.
- We received some new work through pilot projects for cost-type contract closeout this year in CMS. Until now, we were only doing half of the work associated with CMS and these pilots open up the door to additional work and will help us get the whole closeout pie for DoD.
- Teleservices, administrative services, and 508 contributed to a total of six jobs each. Specifically for 508, we have positions as a subcontractor for two large IT integrators. These positions have resulted in superb professional jobs for our employees. The employees assigned to the Accenture 508 effort have done a great job, as John received positive feedback from the Accenture Project Manager during the conference. According to the Project manager, one of the first documents that 508 specialists produced was a test plan. The employees did a superb job with this effort and really hit it out of the park.
- For administrative services, we received some front desk and scanning work.

Looking Forward

- There are roughly 148 jobs currently in the pipeline for FY 14. However, most are very early in the development stage. Last year, as mentioned, we had some good-size projects well developed at this time. This year, we do not have projects close to the same level of completion as we have had in past years.
- To build business one of our efforts will be to focus on existing relationships with Contracting Officers, who have already been through the process with us. We are really going to focus this year on leveraging these relationships with “sympathetic” KOs.
- We have and will continue to aggressively market in places where we have not marketed in the past. For example, for the first time ever, we marketed services in MarkeTips, and NCMA magazine. NCMA holds an annual conference attended by 800 contracting professionals. NIB provided sponsorship for this event, and as a result, received a mailing list of attendees. We sent a post card to each one

of the attendees in order to provide information about NIB. We will continue to press to get the word out about our services.

- Though we anticipate a difficult year, we are still investing and our strategic look at marketing and selling will be helpful. We will continue to press both commercial and government relationships. We are also always looking for good ideas and will provide feedback, analysis and help wherever possible. We need to be proactive to build business.
- As an example one of our guests, from Accenture, who received an award at the conference, will be fostering a high level meeting between NIB and Accenture senior executives. We do not yet know what opportunities will result from these discussions but we will be working with Accenture to identify areas where NIB can play a role as a partner.
- We check GSA e-Buy every day in order to identify opportunities to bid from our GSA schedule. We have received a few small orders but will continue to bid on work using our schedule.

Ron Ashby added that we need to continue to reach out to new contracting professionals to educate them on the Program as much as possible.

Shelley Sanders (CMS ISG):

Shelley provided an update for the CMS ISG. She indicated that things are going well with CMS.

Program Statistics:

- There are 15 agencies involved in CMS: 7 agencies associated with NIB and 8 associated with SourceAmerica.
- There are 23 different CMS teams working with 79 contracting activities.
- Nearly 200,000 contracts have been delivered to the CMS teams, and 58% of those contracts have been completed.
- As a result of CMS efforts, over \$500 million worth of funds have been de-obligated for the government.
- Approximately 6.3 million documents have been converted to digital format for customers.
- The work has been accomplished with 99.58% accuracy rates.

People:

- There is a significant pipeline of candidates for CMS. There are 365 candidates who have completed CON 100 courses. There have been a total of 141 direct labor positions created (91 for NIB and 50 for SourceAmerica).

- There is a continued focus of hiring wounded warriors and service disabled veterans. There are currently 27 wounded warriors/veterans in the program.
- CMS only has 12% turnover. Most of this turnover is a result of employees' promotions to federal and commercial jobs. A total of 12 people have been hired by the government through our CMS program.
- There were 25 new positions created in FY 13. Additionally, the ISG developed a CMS recruitment webinar with Billy Parker, to be used as a template for vocational rehabilitation agencies. There have been a number of webinars conducted this year with some success.
- CMS program had its first legally blind person promoted to site supervisor this year, who has a master's degree and is doing a great job.
- Shelly also had a training conference call to develop additional training that will be provided to existing and future CMS employees. The group is looking to do more with this talent.

Technology

Shelley provided an update in the technology area for CMS. She said that there had been a major breakthrough on DISA and DFAS access issues. In the past, the offsite teams have had challenges in getting payment information for contracts. They typically have to go manually through DFAS for this. However, significant progress has now been made in this area. Government issued laptops will be provided to offsite employees to be able to pull information on their own for Air Force and Army requirements.

Marketing

The CMS group had a meeting and feedback session with Karen Cline, the ACO for the CMS program. During the meeting, there was a discussion of how to make the program better and the potential changes to the IDIQ in terms of option renewals and looking forward to the second generation of this contract. Karen was also interested in hearing from CMS employees and getting their feedback.

The first annual CMS site supervisor meeting was also held this year. Additionally, there were two successful CMS pilots done in FY 13. The first pilot was focused on cost-type contracts and the other on researching contracts that are past due (logistical research with problem contracts). These successful efforts demonstrated the capabilities of CMS AbilityOne employees to get the work done and will provide more opportunities in the future. Shelley also thanked John Farrar for his support.

Jason Tawil - Teleservices Working Group (TWG) Update

Jason Tawil provided an update for the TWG. TWG is a collection of NPAs who are interested in doing call center work. It provides a great forum for NPAs to share information, ideas and develop best practices. He thanked Robert Harris from NIB for all of his help. TWG has made substantial progress over the past year.

- Member roster has been cleaned up. There are now 80 people who are interested in the teleservices work. TWG holds regular monthly meetings with a great turn out, with 20-25 people regularly participating in the meetings. During TWG calls, NPAs take the lead and showcase the good work they are doing.
- Over the past year, NIB has hired a consultant, Ruth O'Brien, who did a great job in developing a benchmarking report. The benchmarking report provides a benchmark for agencies to measure their call center versus typical successful call centers.
- NIB also hired Federal Management Partners (FMP), who produced a hiring and training toolkit in order to foster pipeline development. FMP, in partnership with our agencies, developed best practices to recruit, hire, and train future call center employees. TWG was the forum where these toolkits were presented.
- For the first time ever, TWG captured data about call center work throughout the network. A capability and readiness survey was distributed, with over 60 specific questions about operations, types of services provided, people, and technology aspects of call centers. We now have concrete, specific data about the type of work agencies are doing. A total of 18 agencies participated in the survey. Of those, 14 already have call center work and 4 agencies want to get involved in call center projects.

Jason said that there is a lot of interest in call center work and the TWG is a great forum to get involved. Jason wants agencies to think about the following: how are we using FMP toolkits? How can we benchmark our own operations against the readiness benchmark/matrix? How do we compare other organizations in the call center business? Jason also thanked TWG participating agency representatives for attending the morning breakfast meeting.

Jim Kerlin asked Jason to summarize the results of the survey and asked about NIB's plans to use the results of the survey.

Jason responded that the complete results have yet to be digested. However, one take away would be that there is a lot of work being done at the state use level and the commercial level. The data also raises important question on how NIB can leverage agencies' collective capabilities.

John Qua added that this data call provides us information about technology in use around the agencies and makes us more effective in articulating a solution. It is very helpful for NIB

to know what is out there when putting together solutions for customers. He also noted we still need past performance information for discussion with customers.

Jim Kerlin informed the group that he is adding a second call center to his agency. He said that this work takes time and that agencies who want to be involved in call centers need to hang in there and be patient. It took Jim four years to progress from 1 person call center to a 7 seat call center.

John Qua echoed this sentiment and said typically it takes 1 to 3 years to build call center business. John also provided the example of Mike Chew, who is about to sign a contract with the State to provide a 10 agent call center. He said that Chew has been persistent with the State and has now gone from 1 person call center to signing a contract for a 10 person call center next week.

Johnette Lee – Supply Chain Management Subcommittee Update

Johnette Lee provided an update for the supply chain management subcommittee. She said that most agencies are already in this business; i.e., BSCs, distribution centers, warehouses. She said that manufacturing plants have supply chain services as well. She indicated that there are great opportunities in this field because of adaptive technology and that this field can employ a lot of blind labor and totally blind individuals. In the future, there will be a lot of government outsourcing, which will provide additional opportunities. There are opportunities in the commercial sector as well, (i.e., Zappos). This committee is dividing its work into 3 different areas: technology, people, and marketing.

Technology: We are looking at existing capabilities in the field in order to showcase what we have today and what we are doing effectively. We are looking at existing technology and also branching out and looking at low start-up cost technology and more advanced technology. This will allow us to provide information to agencies about the type of technology available today.

People: We are looking at and gathering job descriptions from agencies that are already providing this service. This information will be used for recruiting and hiring.

Sales & Marketing: We want to keep high level contacts with the military to ensure they are thinking of us and providing us opportunities whenever possible. In the commercial world, many of us at agencies have relationships with commercial corporations, where we can share ideas and showcase our capabilities. Once we have all of the technology information and capabilities, we'll put together a marketing strategy and other information to showcase what we are doing and provide the

agencies relevant information about technologies. She'll be sending out notes from the meeting she had yesterday.

Steve Fredwell- Strategic Initiatives Group

Steve Fredwell Provided an update for the Strategic Initiatives Groups. He said that the Strategic Initiatives Committee developed a proposed grant that NPAs can use as a vehicle to help fund preparation and skill development for people who would be working on different services projects. A final draft is in front of NIB grant department for approval and he hopes to have feedback on the grant soon. The ISGs next step is to look at the inclusion and development of AT and how it plays into skill development for those who are blind or visually impaired. This also includes working through university diversity offices to help develop a better understanding of what they need to provide for people who are blind to help ensure success.

Questions & Answers

Question: Do the CMS projects come from SourceAmerica or can NIB go on its own to get these projects. Are CMS projects only assigned to SourceAmerica?

Answer (John Qua): No. NIB created 25 jobs this year through CMS and all were assigned to NIB NPAs. As some background, the original program started under a lead agency concept and the goal was to share work 50/50. The lead agency concept went away. **Question:** Would IRS mailroom projects come through SourceAmerica?

Answer (John Qua): Yes, in most cases. SourceAmerica has the prime contract for IRS for this work, so it will come through them. We get about 10% of the work right now.

Closing Comments

John Qua said that the single biggest thing agencies can do right now is to stay in touch with their Contracting Officers, since they'll provide the way ahead about starting/stopping work in this uncertain budget environment. We do not want to be caught off guard. Therefore, it is extremely important to stay in touch with them.

Jim Kerlin added that the agency capabilities can be combined with other agencies capabilities. He said that his agency partnered with ABVI to provide state use call center in Wisconsin. It was due to this partnership that they were able to get this contract, as ABVI is able to provide after-hours service. He believes that this provided credibility to them and is a major reason why they got the contract in the first place.

Dennis Steiner thanked everyone for attending the call.

NIB BSC PROGRAM MONTHLY UPDATE

6 November 2013

SUBJECT #1: MICC Way Ahead

LEAD: Tommy Thomas

STATUS: BG Vollmecke informed his regional contracting brigade commanders that BSC operating agencies will be reaching out to the installation contracting officers to schedule face-to-face meetings to ensure the agreed to 3 main points of our position are understood and to address any other local issues. (As a reminder the 3 points are: 1. BSCs are authorized to sell both AbilityOne and Non-AbilityOne commercial items, 2. BSCs are considered an authorized source of supply on the same level as EMALL, FSSI, etc, prior to going to the SSA; and 3. BSCs can be considered as a source of supply for appropriate items when a requirement exceeds micro-purchase levels.) At BG Vollmecke's request, Tommy Thomas and Mike Stine contacted the 4 regional contracting brigade commanders, and each acknowledged the understanding and that their installation contracting officers will welcome direct discussions with our agency representatives. Agencies should now be scheduling these meetings on all Army installations. Feedback on these meetings is requested. **Target date: November.**

SUBJECT #2: AbilityOne Commission Letter of Support

LEAD: Mike Gilliam

STATUS: The Commission completed distribution of Tina Ballard's letter to all contracting officials who manage BSC contracts on 29 October. **Target date: Completed**

SUBJECT #3: BSC land lease payment requests (Fort Sam Houston, Fort Bliss, Kirtland AFB and Randolph AFB---and now Luke AFB) for both new and existing facilities

LEAD: Tommy Thomas

STATUS: NIB and SAL met with AFCEC in San Antonio on 30 October to negotiate the in-kind land lease for Joint Base Fort Sam Houston. Agreement was reached on the in kind solution. NIB will provide back-up for the dollar value discussed and the appropriate lease documentation is being drafted for signature. **Target date: November**

SUBJECT #4: Air Force GPC Policy Revision

LEAD: Tommy Thomas

STATUS: No change. We anticipate accepted changes appearing in the updated publication when staffed and released in early FY 2014. **Target date: Action complete pending publication of AFI 64-117.**

SUBJECT #5: BSC Schedules

LEAD: Tommy Thomas

STATUS: No change. Whether GSA re-opens Schedule 75 is still very much unclear. NIB is preparing information on the process for obtaining a GSA schedule and expects to have the information out this month. **Target Date for GSA decision: November.**

SUBJECT: #6 Requirements for BSC PL Addition Package

LEAD: Mike Stine

STATUS: The standard operating procedure (SOP) for timely and complete BSC PL package submission slipped again because of priorities. It will be distributed this month. **Target Date: November.**

SUBJECT #7: ETS Scrub List

LEAD: Tommy Thomas

STATUS: The NIB BSC Directorate, ETS Compliance Office, Operations Planning and Analysis office, and Ken Barnett are exploring solutions to the longstanding issues surrounding the ETS Scrub List. The goal is to develop a get well plan that seeks to address low hanging fruit while longer term improvements are pursued. An initial planning meeting held on 29 October. Minutes of that meeting will be available on one week. **Target Date: November.**

Public Policy Update (12/3/13) Per Rick Webster

There continues to be a significant amount of frustration among Members of Congress around the lack of progress being made on key legislation, including the Budget, Farm Bill, and Tax Reform. Both partisanship and concerns around the 2014 elections have contributed to the lack of movement on these priority issues. Additionally, Republican messaging around the problems associated with the roll-out of healthcare reform has only increased partisanship recently and has reduced potential for moving legislation in the near-term.

Specific to the budget, there continues to be strong support for providing a solution for a path forward. However, both sides have indicated that progress has been slow, at best, despite a bipartisan desire to complete work before the end of 2013 among key negotiators.

Fortunately, Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle want to avoid the opportunity costs for not passing a budget, including the impacts of additional sequestration. At this point, rank-and-file Members are waiting for further guidance from those negotiating a final deal and are hopeful there will be bipartisan support even if progress is limited. They are not, however, deeply involved in the day-to-day negotiations and are weighing-in on key priorities as negotiations continue.

NIB and McBee teams have gone up together and conducted over two dozen meetings in the Senate and House over the past few months to share concerns with offices over the impact of budget cuts and budget uncertainty and how that has led to reduced contracts or loss of contracts with federal agencies, and resulted in layoffs at several agencies (NPA's). We have also pointed specifically to the anticipated \$19 billion cut at the Department of Defense that is required under sequestration in January 2014 unless Congress acts to stop this, and cited this as a priority for our associated agencies as well.

In these meetings, we have also raised concerns over the lack of compliance by federal agencies with the requirements of AbilityOne. And over the last month or so, have reached out to several dozen Senate/House offices (either in person or via email to offices we have met with previously and know well) asking they do "one minute" speeches on the floor – or submit for the record – recognizing NIB's 75th Anniversary and the great work of individual NPA's within their states/districts. Those are just now beginning to be done on the floor of the House and appearing in the Congressional Record.

A possible threat to the military commissary system has resurfaced again just last week since the Pentagon is under serious threat due to the upcoming additional cuts under sequestration, and we are working to determine if the option to reduce or end this important benefit is really being considered, or just being used to get troops, their families and retirees upset and lobbying calls and letters into Congress to help blunt any further DoD cuts. Around 20 NIB agencies make items for military resale, and at least a few hundred jobs for persons who are blind depend on the sale of these products at commissaries, so this remains a priority.

Rick Webster

NAEPB Public Policy and Communications Committee Update Report

Media Relations

- **Hiring Manager's Survey:** Continue to garner nice coverage on the results of our hiring manager's survey:
 - See attached email re: associated Press interview/coverage.
 - **AFB's Journal of Visual Impairment & Blindness:** Op-ed on hiring manager survey published
 - **Diversity Journal:** Secured article Enhancing Independence for People Who Are Blind in December issue.
- **NAPS (Nationally syndicated) Article:** Developed and issued NAPS article on NIB's support to military and veterans. Previous NAPS article on capabilities of people who are blind generated 2,184 news articles in 50 states with a readership of 8M+.
- **Sequestration National Media Pitch:** Finalized messaging and integrated GR/PR plan; Identified and prepped agency employees for participation in interview; Pitched USA Today reporter – awaiting his response.

Publications:

- **NIB Annual Report:** 2013 theme is "New Directions: Leading the Way"; copies made public at January's NIB board meeting.
- **Opportunity magazine:** Delivered fall issue and sending framed copy to agency with letter from Mitchell and Lynch.

AbilityOne Commission

- Began work on 2013 AbilityOne Annual Report. NIB is project manager.
- AbilityOne magazine and GSA MarkeTips special 75 Anniversary issues are available online.

From: Reimers, Laura

Sent: Tuesday, November 05, 2013 9:08 AM

To: Lynch, Kevin; Hartley, Angela; Brice, Steve; Qua, John; Laney, Carrie; Vareilles, Marie-France; Panek, Thomas

Cc: Russell, Laura; Hobby, Michelle

Subject: Associated Press Article - - Lynch Interview

Executive Team,

Below, please find a link to an article that the communications team worked with Associated Press reporter David Crary on regarding the challenges people who are blind face in finding jobs. Crary found the results of our hiring managers survey on our website (a nice indication that our search engine optimization efforts are working) and contacted us as a resource for his story. We shared with him the full survey results, and Crary interviewed Kevin about the survey. Crary also visited one of our associated agencies, Carroll Center for the Blind in Newton, Massachusetts, where they were having a job fair for people who are blind.

It is important to note that the story is not about NIB per se; instead it portrays NIB as an industry leader and "go-to" source on the chronic problem people who are blind face when trying to build a career.

Since it hit the wire yesterday, the story has been picked up by more than 110 media outlets (including The Huffington Post, NY Daily News and ABCnews.com) and we expect this number to grow. We also plan to leverage this story by pitching it to a couple of key national broadcast outlets.

Here is a link to the story on AP's website: <http://bigstory.ap.org/article/employers-wariness-thwarts-many-blind-jobseekers>.

Thanks, and please let me know if you have any questions.

Laura

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