

# AbilityOne Employees Perform Award-Winning Mail Services Work for Federal Agencies

By Lynne Harris, director, Corporate Communications, NISH National

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AbilityOne Program employees have been supporting the business of managing federal government mail centers for 26 years. More than 100 million pieces of mail are handled annually for more than 125 civilian and military mail centers, including award-winning services provided at several locations. People with disabilities have been consistently recognized for their high quality standards of work in mail center

locations across the country. They offer services from full mail center operations to secure mail centers, digital mail/records, supply chain logistics, multi-location pick-up/delivery, national consolidated services, basewide operations and many other services. Working through a network of more than 600 nonprofit agencies located across the country, the AbilityOne Program provides employment opportunities for people who are blind or have other severe disabilities by procuring federal contracts for products and services at a fair market price.

The AbilityOne Program, which currently provides employment opportunities for more than 40,000 employees, is the largest single source of employment of people who are blind or have severe disabilities. The program is administered by the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled and facilitated by two national nonprofit agencies – NISH—Creating Employment Opportunities for People with Severe Disabilities and the National Industries for the Blind.



Willie Coleman celebrates his receipt of the MSMA Manager of the Year Award with ServiceSource colleagues Eliska Goins, Chris Dean, Bertha Ngenge and John Parker.

AbilityOne federal agency champions, AbilityOne-affiliated nonprofit agencies and AbilityOne employees working through nonprofit agencies — ServiceSource, Inc. and Didlake, Inc., both located in Virginia — have provided exemplary mail management services that have resulted in numerous awards and recognition for their outstanding work.

“ServiceSource’s first AbilityOne mail center management contract began in 1981 with the Environmental Protection Agency. After more than 26 years of experience in managing mail centers for the federal government, we have been able to polish our systems and processes and have established strong, skillful management teams,” said Janet Samuelson, ServiceSource president and CEO.

Willie Coleman, vice president, Mail and Logistics Service at ServiceSource, received the Mail Systems Management Association “Manager of the Year” Award at MAILCOM in 2007. Working in concert with Internal Revenue Service representatives Cindy Moline and Penny White, ServiceSource and a national team of nonprofit contractors across the country provide consolidated mail services for the IRS at 54 mail centers as well as DC Metro Area sites, processing and delivering approximately one million pieces of mail per month.

Currently, hundreds of people with disabilities are working in mail center operations affiliated with ServiceSource projects. In addition, approximately 10 people are certified as Executive Mail Center Postal Managers and one person is a Certified Mail and Distribution Systems Manager. The U.S. Department of Agriculture recognized ServiceSource as the AbilityOne Contractor of the Year in 2007 and 2008. As an AbilityOne-affiliated agency, ServiceSource relies on the program to



*Todd Walker is one of 14 people with disabilities who deliver more than 20,000 pieces of mail every day to 6,000 employees at the FBI Headquarters in Washington, D.C. through the AbilityOne Program.*

help carry out an important aspect of fulfilling its mission to employ people with disabilities in meaningful jobs.

“Our employees who work in our mail centers take a great deal of pride in providing quality services to our federal government customers. Being named AbilityOne Contractor of the Year for two straight years is a wonderful achievement and recognition of the hard work and dedication of all our employees,” Samuelson stated.

Likewise, AbilityOne-affiliated nonprofit agency Didlake is a social enterprise dedicated to enriching the lives of people with disabilities. AbilityOne employees who work through the agency provide a variety of services, including mail center services. People with disabilities work in mail centers in various federal government agencies through AbilityOne contracts. Employees deliver the mail and provide direct mailing support throughout the buildings at Department of Energy, Peace Corps, General Services

Administration and the Federal Bureau Investigation (FBI), all of which have recognized Didlake and AbilityOne employees for outstanding services they have provided. Didlake’s other federal mail center customers include the Army National Guard, Housing and Urban Development and Health and Human Services and D.C. Pretrial Services Agency.

Several federal government customers in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area rely on Didlake/AbilityOne employees to handle tens of thousands of pieces of mail every day on site, delivering the mail throughout the federal buildings and providing direct mail support. They process all classes of mail, including classified, accountable, certified, registered and express. Todd Walker, who was born with several disabilities, has been working at the FBI Headquarters in Washington, D.C. since 2001. In 1997, he earned a special education high school diploma and now lives independently in Woodbridge, Va..

Walker is one of 14 people with disabilities who deliver more than 20,000 pieces of mail every day to 6,000 employees at FBI. With a top secret clearance, Walker makes six mail runs each day. He continuously encourages other employers to hire employees with disabilities.

In a speech that Walker delivered at the National Postal Forum last year, he said, "This [AbilityOne] program gave me a place to use my talents and creativity. But there are still thousands of people out there who need a job, too. So I ask you to call on the AbilityOne Program for your next mail center contract."

The work done through Didlake's AbilityOne mail centers at the FBI Headquarters, Peace Corps and Department of Energy was recognized with GSA Excellence Awards. The GSA 2001 Federal Mail Center

Excellence Award was presented to the FBI for demonstrating that "they have successfully implemented mail-related innovations that have improved customer service or reduced costs for the agency." AbilityOne Champion and FBI mail supervisor Alice H. Roberson was recognized for "bringing a wealth of information to the FBI's mail operation," which has been an important factor in the FBI's "overall success to communicate effectively throughout the world." FBI mail supervisor Dolores A. Gibbs, now serving as assistant unit chief, Warehousing and Supply Logistics, was also recognized. Both women were noted as having "managed the mail center with excellent service."

The FBI pointed out in 2001 that, "Mrs. Roberson and Ms. Gibbs' insightful approach of hiring people with disabilities eliminated the

problem of hiring and retaining employees. It also improved mail service and the morale for both customers and employees." In 2007, the FBI team of Logistics Unit Chief Doug Jones and Mail Supervisors Alice Roberson and Deborah Stanfield received AbilityOne Champion designations for their ongoing work in support of program goals and mission.

The AbilityOne Program's longevity and demonstrated success in providing superior services to federal government agencies has produced award-winning work. AbilityOne employees have proven that they can do the work and meet high quality standards. Their awards and recognition speak loudly for them. For more information on AbilityOne mail and related services for military and civilian agencies, contact Christine Tyson Harrison at [charrison@nish.org](mailto:charrison@nish.org).

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