**SourceAmerica**

Dear NPA Leaders,

Over the past few years, within the disability community and Congress, there has been momentum building toward the elimination of "subminimum wages" for people with disabilities (Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act).

In 2016 the U.S. AbilityOne Commission® published a "Declaration in Support of Minimum Wage for All People Who Are Blind or Have Significant Disabilities". In addition, Congress has acted in past (and current) sessions to eliminate 14(c), and several states have already eliminated wages below the federal minimum.

We know that many NPAs have transitioned away from the use of Section 14(c). In July of 2016, 220,000 individuals across the nation were paid using 14(c) certificates. That decreased significantly in July 2017 to 180,000 and again to 129,000 in July of 2018. Just three years ago, 384 SourceAmerica NPAs used Section 14(c) on AbilityOne contracts, and now that number has decreased to 183. There are currently approximately 1,700 individuals on AbilityOne contracts paid less than the federal minimum wage.

During the past few NCSE conferences, I spoke about building momentum for changes to 14(c) and the need for serious discussion. On February 19**,** the U.S. AbilityOne Commission conveyed a specific call to action for SourceAmerica to "provide SourceAmerica's intent for achieving the goal of all SourceAmerica associated nonprofit agencies paying at least the federal minimum wage, or state minimum wage if higher, on AbilityOne contracts". Given all these dynamics, over the course of the last two months, SourceAmerica's board of directors engaged in a thoughtful, robust deliberation relative to the ongoing support of Section 14(c) in the FLSA. SourceAmerica's board assessed current trends, the external environment and the wide range of diverse perspectives within our community and subsequently adopted the following position on Friday, March 15, 2019 at our winter board meeting:

*SourceAmerica is fully committed to maximum pay for people with disabilities and supports the elimination of Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act for all AbilityOne employees. As such, SourceAmerica will leverage the knowledge and experience of its nonprofit network and will invest significant resources toward a transition support program, which will include:*

* *Financial assistance to transitioning non-profits;*
* *Enhanced productivity engineering supports: and*
* *Research and data collection that will inform Congress about the implications of the transition for individuals and communities across the nation.*

Our position is consistent with the U.S. AbilityOne Commission's goal of paying all employees who have significant disabilities working on AbilityOne contracts at least the federal minimum wage, or state minimum wage if higher, within three years.

SourceAmerica's goal is to help expand jobs in the long-term for people with disabilities, while preserving jobs in the short-term. We are in the process of designing our 14(c) transition support plan. It will include comprehensive financial assistance, grants and supports, and enhanced productivity engineering programming. It will leverage our learning on how to use best-in-practice techniques to support individuals as they move into competitive integrated employment. Working together, we can utilize the knowledge and experience of our network to assist transitions, support individuals, and advocate for policy solutions that are data-driven.

Regards,

Steve

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