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# PROMISING PRACTICES



## Multidivisional team gives the green light to job placements

“Improving the people’s quality of life through employment.”  
It’s a powerful mission that [Phoenix](#), owned by Huntsville Rehabilitation Foundation, Inc., in Huntsville, Alabama, strives to accomplish in all of its actions.

In partnership with the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Phoenix provides vocational rehabilitation services and manufacturing and service jobs through the AbilityOne® Program. The AbilityOne Program is a federal initiative to help people who are blind or have other significant disabilities find employment by working within a national network of nonprofit agencies that sells products and services to the U.S. government.

Phoenix manufacturing jobs produce burial flags for the Department of Veterans Affairs and parachutist harnesses, air deployment systems, and carrying straps for the U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Command. Government service jobs at nearby Redstone Arsenal include custodial, groundskeeping, security reception, administrative support, and mailroom operations for the U.S. Army and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

A recent [CARE](#) survey report noted that Phoenix’s “commitment to affirmative hiring practices is highly commended. Open service level positions are reserved for the consumers and only posted if there is not a qualified applicant.”

Job openings within Phoenix and commercial employment

Brought to you by the ECS  
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### About the ECS Promising Practices newsletter series

An organization receiving exemplary recognition in its CARF survey report stands out because of its professional and strategic response to a service or business need. CARF presents these ECS Promising Practices articles to encourage dialogue among service providers and to offer examples of creative solutions for improving service quality.

Find current and past issues of ECS Promising Practices at:  
[www.carf.org/ecspromisingpractices](http://www.carf.org/ecspromisingpractices)

Issues are categorized by topic: Business Practices, Community Services, and Employment Services.

openings are sent to a green team to determine which consumer is best suited for the opening. Green team members include vocational rehabilitation staff, human resources, the operational division senior manager, and the project manager or supervisor for the work unit where the opening exists. The survey report said, "The organization's green team, composed of representatives from all divisions, reviews applicants and makes collaborative hiring recommendations."

Duties in job categories might vary a great deal. For example, some security reception positions require good computer skills while others do not use a computer at all. Custodians might perform general cleaning responsibilities, work exclusively as floor technicians, or be assigned to offices that have a light physical performance requirement but demand a high level of independent decision-making skills.

The green team carefully weighs the needs of consumers, including vocational strengths and any accommodations required for them to be successful in the job. Comprehensive skills training in sewing machine operator, custodial, and administrative support tasks provides specific, measureable performance data that are considered in addition to the vocational evaluation report, counselor progress reports, and consumer vocational goals.

The CARF survey report continued, "This effort promotes the mission, transforms lives, and turns beneficiaries of public support into taxpayers. It also provides an opportunity for all divisions to own the mission."

Over the past ten years, Phoenix's comprehensive case management approach has allowed the organization to fill more than 95 percent of internal job openings with persons with significant disabilities. This practice has maintained overall agency AbilityOne ratio above 80 percent for the past three years and, most important, resulted in a 97 percent consumer satisfaction rate.

The CARF survey report extolled "the dramatic impact the organization is having on the lives of the consumers and the community at large. The consumers represent everyday examples of the potential for success within the organization and other governmental entities where some consumers have been hired into positions with superior wages and benefits."



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*Above: James Humphrey reverently folds an American flag. Phoenix manufactures close to 7,000 flags every month, which is about 15 percent of all burial flags that the U.S. government gives to military families.*

*Below: Custodian Brian Sarkasian works for Phoenix through the AbilityOne contract at Redstone Arsenal. Phoenix places more than 200 individuals in community jobs plus it employs close to 800 persons (including nearly 600 persons with disabilities) in AbilityOne jobs.*



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