



January 20, 2012

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

SUBJECT: Federal Support for the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program

Thousands of Americans who are blind have embraced the entrepreneurial spirit that helps define our Nation as a land of opportunity. Through the Federal Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program administered by the Department of Education, talented and creative individuals who are blind have acquired the management training and business skills necessary to realize the American dream -- a lifetime of economic opportunity, independence, and self-sufficiency for themselves and their families.

For 75 years, blind business managers have successfully operated food services and commercial ventures at Federal, State, and private buildings and locations nationwide. We honor and celebrate this program's historic achievements. We also trust that the Randolph-Sheppard Program will continue to be a leading model for providing high-quality entrepreneurial opportunities for blind individuals. From a simple snack shop, to tourist services at the Hoover Dam, to full food-services operations at military installations, blind entrepreneurs have provided exceptional customer service to Federal and State employees, the Armed Forces, and the general public. With proven ability, they have challenged preconceived notions about disability.

The Randolph-Sheppard Act (20 U.S.C. 107 *et seq.*) created the Vending Facility Program requiring qualified blind individuals be given a priority to operate vending facilities on Federal properties. This program is responsible today for providing entrepreneurial opportunities for over 2,500 individuals who are

blind. In turn, these business managers have hired thousands of workers, many of whom are individuals with disabilities. Every American, including persons with disabilities, deserves the opportunity to succeed without limits, earn equal pay for equal jobs, and aspire to full-time, career-oriented employment.

Continued support and cooperation are needed from executive departments, agencies, and offices (agencies) to extend the Randolph-Sheppard priority to qualified blind managers through the State licensing agencies that implement the program. Therefore, I direct all agencies that have property management responsibilities to ensure that agency officials, when pursuing the establishment and operation of vending facilities (including cafeterias and military dining facilities) as defined in 20 U.S.C. 107e, issue permits and contracts in compliance with the Randolph-Sheppard Program and consistent with existing regulations and law. I further direct the Secretary of Education, through the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration, to submit a report to the President on agencies' implementation of the Randolph-Sheppard Program not later than 1 year from the date of this memorandum.

This memorandum is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

The Secretary of Education is hereby authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

[FR Doc. 2012-01750 Filed 01/24/2012 at 11:15 am; Publication Date: 01/25/2012]