

Job Corps Annual Report

Program Description

Mission

As a national, primarily residential training program, Job Corps' mission is to attract eligible young adults, teach them the skills they need to become employable and independent, and place them in meaningful jobs or further education.

Purpose

Job Corps is a national residential training and employment program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) to address the multiple barriers to employment faced by disadvantaged youth throughout the United States. Job Corps was originally established by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964; authorization for the program continued under the Comprehensive Employment Training Act, then Title IV-B of the Job Training Partnership Act, and is currently provided for under Title I-C of the Workforce Investment Act.

The purpose of Job Corps is to assist eligible young people who can benefit from an intensive and comprehensive program, operated primarily in the residential setting of a Job Corps center, to become more responsible, employable, and productive citizens. Job Corps provides, in an integrated manner, a comprehensive array of services that address barriers faced by young people. The services provided by Job Corps include:

- Entry diagnostic testing of reading and math levels
- Occupational exploration programs
- A comprehensive academic program, including reading, math, High School Diploma (HSD) training, General Educational Development certificate (GED), and workplace communication
- English as a Second Language (ESL) program
- Competency-based vocational education programs as part of Job Corps' Career Development Services System
- Work-based learning (WBL) at employer work sites
- Inter-group relations/cultural awareness programs
- Social and employability skills development
- Counseling and related support services
- Regular student progress reviews
- Student government and leadership programs
- Driver's education program
- Health care (including medical and dental care, substance abuse programs, and health education, which includes HIV/AIDS education)
- Recreation programs and avocational activities
- Meals, lodging, and clothing

- Incentive-based allowances
- Child care support at some centers
- Post-program placement and transitional support

About the Program

Who is Eligible?

Enrollment in Job Corps is voluntary, with students entering the program at different times and progressing at their own pace. Youth entering the program must be at least 16 and not yet 25 years of age at the time of enrollment. There is no upper age limit for individuals with disabilities who are otherwise eligible. In addition to meeting age requirements, applicants must:

- Be a United States citizen, U. S. national, legal resident, permanent resident alien, or other lawfully admitted alien;
- Meet low-income criteria
- Be a school dropout, or in need of additional education, vocational training, or intensive counseling and related assistance in order to participate successfully in regular schoolwork or to secure and hold employment. They may also be basic skills deficient, homeless, a runaway, a foster child, or a parent
- Have signed consent from a parent or guardian if the applicant is a minor
- Be free of behavior problems that would prohibit self or others from benefiting from the program, and free of face-to-face court or institution supervision or court-imposed fines while in Job Corps
- Not be currently engaged in illegal drug use
- Have a childcare plan if the applicant has a dependent child

The typical Job Corps student is an 18-year-old high school dropout, who reads at slightly above the 7th-grade level, comes from an economically disadvantaged family, belongs to a minority group, and has never held a full-time job. The unique combination of education, training, and support services provided in Job Corps is intended to better prepare these youth to obtain and hold gainful employment, pursue further education or training, or satisfy entrance requirements for careers in the military.

How Does Job Corps Operate?

The Job Corps program operates through the successful partnership of government, labor, private sector, and the local community. Because the residential nature of the program dictates unique space and facility requirements beyond what is required for classrooms, vocational shops and administrative offices, Job Corps center sites are situated on permanent locations. The federal government provides the facilities and equipment for Job Corps centers.

The DOL awards and administers contracts for the recruitment and screening of new students, for center operations, and for placement and transitional support of students who leave Job Corps. When Congress authorizes and provides funding for new centers, a competitive process is initiated to select the sites.

Large and small corporations and nonprofit organizations manage and operate 90 Job Corps centers under contractual agreements with the DOL. These contract center Operators are selected through a competitive procurement process that evaluates potential operators' technical expertise, proposed costs, and other factors in accordance with the Competition in Contracting Act and the Federal Acquisition Regulations. Decisions on the award of new contracts and the exercise of option years are heavily influenced by center performance assessments that take into account

outcomes against numerical performance standards and on-site federal assessments of quality and compliance. The U. S. Departments of Agriculture and Interior, through interagency agreements with the DOL, operate 28 Job Corps centers on public lands throughout the country. These centers are called Civilian Conservation Centers.

Job Corps center operators responsible for the Center's management and administration on a 24-hour-a-day, 7-day-a-week basis. Management and administration include: hiring and training staff; providing a safe and secure environment for students; delivering basic education, vocational and employability skills training, WBL, counseling, health care and related support services; student supervision; administering student incentive and discipline systems; maintaining student records and accountability systems; fiscal management; procuring materials and supplies; maintaining center facilities and equipment; and community relations. The residential aspect enables Job Corps to provide a comprehensive array of services in one setting 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Approximately 16 out of 20 students are residential; the remainder commutes to the Center daily.

Job Corps centers do not operate in isolation. One-Stop Career Centers' connectivity has expanded the Job Corps resource network. There is also a network of service providers, including local volunteer service and faith-based organizations, who are involved in Job Corps. Students are recruited and screened for eligibility by outreach and admissions contractors. Eligible applicants are assigned to Job Corps centers under guidelines issued by the DOL. National labor unions, union-affiliated organizations, trade associations, and local providers conduct vocational training at Job Corps centers. Placement contractors provide assistance to students by helping them find a job, return to higher education, or enter the military upon leaving Job Corps. Career transition services (CTS) contractors, utilizing a national network of volunteers, provide assistance to students in locating suitable housing, arranging for transportation, and providing other support. Job Corps center operators must coordinate and work with each component of the Job Corps system to ensure that a full range of quality services is provided to each student.

Where Does Job Corps Operate?

Job Corps centers are located in 46 states with 2 more states (Rhode Island and Delaware) announced to open centers in the future. Two additional sites to be located in Connecticut and Louisiana will bring the total number of centers to 122. Centers are located in urban as well as rural communities and are operated by large and small companies with responsibility for student populations ranging from 200 to 2,000 per center.

What are the Results?

The length of time students are enrolled in Job Corps correlates with post-program success. Students who remain enrolled for longer periods of time are more likely to complete vocational skills training (VST), attain a HSD or GED certificate, and gain long-term employability skills. These students are also more likely to earn higher wages once they are employed, and ultimately remain a part of the labor market.

High School Diploma and GED attainment, vocational completion, and employment or enrollment in full-time advanced education, training, or the military are examples of the positive outcomes recognized by Job Corps in its performance measurement systems during PY 00. Other significant benefits of the program participation include improvements in motivation, attitude, social skills, and other employability skills.

During PY 00, placement agencies reported that 91 percent of all graduates (HSD/GED or vocational completion) and 73 percent of all terminees (separated students) entered employment, enrolled in further schooling, or entered the military. Eighty-four percent of the graduates entered employment at an average hourly wage of \$7.97; 7 percent entered further education. Sixty-five percent of all terminees entered employment at an average hourly wage of \$7.64; and, 8 percent entered further education.

Approximately 21 percent of all new Job Corps students leave the program within the first 60 days of enrollment. These are generally students who cannot adjust to the institutional setting or the disciplined environment, who become homesick, or who have personal or family issues that need to be resolved before they are able to focus on their future. Job Corps provides referral, placement, and support services to these students, where applicable.

How Much Does it Cost?

In PY 00, Job Corps unit costs were as follows:

Cost per student service year:	\$28,826
Cost per new student enrolled:	\$17,007

There are a number of factors contributing to the cost of the program. Job Corps offers a comprehensive array of services in a residential setting. Low student/teacher ratios are required for Job Corps' individualized, self-paced instruction. Moreover, because Job Corps is a residential program, facilities, staff, and services must be available in a safe and secure environment 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Administration and Management

Job Corps is a federally administered national program. The DOL administers the Job Corps program through a National Office and 10 Regional Offices. The Job Corps National Office establishes policy and requirements and oversees major program initiatives. Job Corps Regional Offices procure and administer contracts and perform oversight activities, which include comprehensive annual or bi-annual on-site Job Corps center assessments and ongoing monitoring of centers and outreach/admissions and CTS contractors.

Job Corps Regional Offices award cost-reimbursement plus fixed-fee contracts for the operation of centers for a 2-year base period, with 3 potential additional 1-year option periods. Decisions regarding the award of yearly options are made by Regional Directors based on an assessment of center performance.

Job Corps centers have performance measures for student outcomes, as well as quality/compliance measures related to center operations. Performance against these measures weighs heavily in decisions to award contracts.

<p style="text-align: center;">Federal Administrative and Oversight Staffing (End of PY 00)</p> <table><tr><td>Number of Job Corps Centers</td><td>118</td></tr><tr><td>Number of Job Corps Center Operators</td><td>26</td></tr></table> <p style="text-align: center;">DOL Federal Job Corps Staff</p> <table><tr><td>National Office</td><td>39</td></tr><tr><td>Regional Offices</td><td>126</td></tr><tr><td>Total DOL Staff</td><td>165</td></tr></table>	Number of Job Corps Centers	118	Number of Job Corps Center Operators	26	National Office	39	Regional Offices	126	Total DOL Staff	165
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National Job Corps Study

A comprehensive evaluation of the Job Corps program was recently completed. In 1993, the DOL commissioned Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., to conduct a 4-year, national longitudinal study to measure Job Corps' impact on participants' employment and other outcomes, and assess whether the value of the program's benefits exceeded its costs. The findings from that study were released in PY 00. The last time a similar study was conducted was in 1982.

The National Job Corps Study evaluated the program's impacts on students who applied to Job Corps between November 1994 and December 1995. Followup interviews were conducted over a 4-year period with youth in the randomly assigned participant and control groups.

The study findings were favorable for Job Corps. One of the most significant findings is that for every dollar spent for Job Corps, the benefit to society is **\$2.02**--a noteworthy increase from \$1.46, from the last impact study in 1982. The benefit to society comes in the form of decreased income maintenance payments, additional earnings, increased taxes paid by former Job Corps students, and reduced incarcerations.

Further, the study reported solid outcomes for the students who participated in Job Corps, such as:

- significant increases in education and training, including much greater attainment of GEDs and vocational certificates;
- positive employment and earning gains;
- higher-paying jobs with slightly more benefits;
- significant reductions in arrests, convictions and incarceration; and
- reduction in the receipt of public assistance.

The study also determined that the residential and non-residential components of Job Corps are each effective for the youths they serve, and the beneficial impacts of Job Corps are broadly distributed across the varied types of Job Corps centers.

American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) Survey

In 1999, the Federal Government selected the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) to be a national measure for citizen satisfaction with federal services. The ACSI is an internationally accepted, objective measurement and diagnostic tool used by over 200 companies in both the public and private sectors. The ACSI is produced by a partnership between the University of Michigan Business School, the American Society for Quality, and the Federal Consulting Group. Approximately 30 federal agencies participated in the 1999 survey, including selected segments within the DOL. The results of the first government-wide customer satisfaction survey were released in December 1999.

In June 2000, the Federal Government expanded its participation from 30 entities to over 100. The Office of Job Corps was among the entities selected to participate. During PY 00, a national sample of parents/guardians of Job Corps graduates were asked their level of satisfaction with the services their children/students had received while enrolled in Job Corps.

Job Corps' results, released in late PY 00, were excellent. Job Corps received a customer satisfaction rating of 80 percent, higher than both the federal government-wide score (68.6 percent) and the private sector comparable score (71.2 percent). Additionally, "parent trust," which measures how confident respondents are that Job Corps will continue to be effective in the future, and how likely they would be to recommend Job Corps to other parents or guardians, rated 86 percent.

The Workforce Investment Act Partnerships

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 establishes the framework for a national workforce preparation and employment system designed to meet the needs of the nation's businesses and the needs of job seekers and individuals who want to further their careers. The law provides for full involvement of business, labor, and community organizations in the design and operation of the new workforce investment system and emphasize accountability at all levels—national, state, and local. The WIA also provides authorization for Job Corps to continue operating as a national program in cooperation with states and communities.

Many benefits have been reported by Job Corps centers as a result of WIA implementation such as the increased coordination between Job Corps and other WIA partners. For example, benefits realized from the Business and Community Liaisons and Industry Councils include:

- Improved community relationships

- Development of new WBL sites for students with local employers
- Better career opportunities for graduates
- Feedback from Industry Council members on ways to enhance or replace vocational training offerings
- Support from Industry Council members in job fairs, staff/student training, job shadowing, mentoring, donation of equipment for center training, WBL opportunities, and job placement
- Development of new partnerships with other service providers and employers
- Development of relationships with employers located in areas students will return to when they leave the program

Job Corps has become a more active partner with other service providers in the employment and training community. In PY 00, Job Corps was represented on almost 100 local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), 29 State boards, 91 Youth Councils, and was included in 99 local workforce investment plans and a number of State plans. Job Corps staff reported that they have benefited from their involvement on WIBs and Youth Councils. These opportunities provide a better understanding of programs and agencies in the community, and provide an opportunity for development of linkages to improve services for youth.

Job Corps has also become more involved with local One-Stops. Activities such as cross-program referrals, co-enrollment of youth, and electronic access to job listings have been very beneficial for Job Corps. Another benefit has been the opportunity for Job Corps centers to collaborate with a multitude of One-Stop partners such as school districts, local and community colleges, employers, Head Start, and vocational rehabilitation agencies.

National Employer Partnerships

Job Corps is uniquely positioned to work with National Employer Partners (NEPs). Job Corps offers employers "one-stop shopping" on a national basis and across regional boundaries to help fill the ranks of their entry-level workforce. Employers offer Job Corps insight and input in tracking critical labor market trends, responding to new technology and industry requirements, and maintaining meaningful and relevant vocational offerings and curriculum. These partnerships begin at the local center and Regional levels and may evolve into an NEP to meet the needs of the employer and Job Corps.

To date, Job Corps has entered into NEP agreements with AAMCO Transmissions, American Fence Association, HCR Manor Care, Jiffy Lube International, Penske Auto Centers, Roto-Rooter Service Corp., Sears, Roebuck & Co., Walgreens & Co., and the United States Army. Collectively these companies represent 700,000 employees in all 50 states, as well as career opportunities with the potential for long-term attachment to the workforce. In the past year, the NEPs collectively hired and participated in WBL with more than 2,015 Job Corps students and graduates. Job Corps also has developed local and regional agreements with other leading companies, such as Roadway Express, CVS pharmacies, American Commercial Barge Lines, Cisco Systems, and Sun Microsystems.

PY 00 marked the third year of the Information Technology Scholarship Fund that was established by the Industry Advisory Council (IAC) of the Federation of Government Information Processing Councils to help Job Corps students and graduates pursue advanced degrees or certifications for careers in information technology fields. To date, the information technology companies of IAC have raised over \$150,000 to benefit Job Corps students and graduates.

Job Corps Small Business Initiative

During PY 00, Job Corps continued to implement a multi-year small business initiative to increase the participation and success of small businesses as prime contractors in Job Corps. Job Corps' strategy to increase small business participation includes procurement set-asides, capacity-building efforts, and aggressive outreach.

One-Stop Career Center Connectivity

Job Corps centers and outreach/admissions and career transition contractors have developed working relationships with One-Stop Career Centers and WIA partners for referrals of youth to Job Corps, access to on-line job banks, and transitional assistance. Job Corps is well represented on One-Stop system governing boards, including local and state WIB and Youth Councils. In several states, Job Corps admissions counselors or career development specialists are located at One-Stop Centers and some Job Corps centers have established One-Stop satellite locations at their centers.

Career Development Services System (CDSS)

The CDSS is Job Corps' approach for providing Job Corps students with the guidance and support that will lead them to long-term employment, earnings growth, and continued educational attainment. The system is designed to enhance all aspects of the Job Corps experience, which includes: Outreach and Admissions; the Career Preparation Period (CPP); the Career Development Period (CDP); and the Career Transition Period (CTP).

Outreach and Admissions (OA) – During the OA process, prospective students learn about Job Corps and the opportunities available to them. They are informed about the responsibilities of being a Job Corps student and learn about the connection between their Job Corps experience and achievement of their long-term career goals. To qualify for admission, a prospective student must meet certain eligibility requirements. Based upon an initial assessment of each student's career goals, aptitude, and the availability of vocational offerings, the student is referred to the appropriate center.

Career Preparation Period (CPP) – As new students are welcomed to Job Corps and begin the CPP, they are given an introduction to center life and resources. Students learn about the Center's academic programs, vocational offerings, job placement system, counseling services, community and extracurricular activities, and rules and regulations. Students also learn about the wide range of wellness services available at the Center, including basic medical, mental health, and dental care provided by qualified health professionals. The students learn personal development skills, how to conduct a job search, employability skills, and basic information technology skills designed to equip them with the fundamental tools necessary to obtain employment. During this period, students are also assessed by center staff to accurately identify training needs. Using a career management approach, students and staff work together to create student Personal Career Development Plans (PCDPs). The PCDP reflects the student's career goals and determines the academic and vocational training strategy and support needs that will enable them to successfully complete the program and work toward their career.

Career Development Period (CDP) – The CDP is the next phase in a student's preparation for a career. During this period, center staff and employers provide students with intensive instruction in academic and vocational curricula, interpersonal communications and problem-solving skills, and practice in social and personal management skills. The CDP cannot be fully successful without ensuring that all student training and services are grounded in principles that include fostering career awareness, establishing high academic and skill standards, integrating academic and vocational training, and incorporating all aspects of an industry into the training program. Students also begin the process of searching for a job and planning for independent living.

Career Transition Period (CTP) – The CTP is the time when students leave Job Corps and enter the workplace or educational environment. Center staff and Career Transition Service Providers assist with employment placement and coordination of transitional support services, which may include living accommodations, transportation, and the family support resources needed to retain employment.

Training and Curriculum Development

At the heart of Job Corps center operations are its training programs to help students meet their career development goals. The Job Corps system offers training in core content areas, each having a required set of competencies. These content areas can be loosely clustered under the headings of basic academics, HSD and GED training, vocational training, safety and health skills development, and social and employability skills training.

Job Corps centers prepare CDSS Plans that identify how centers will meet the training needs of students as well as national and center training objectives. Instructors have the flexibility to modify courses and lessons and integrate competencies from academic, vocational, and employability and other skills content areas to provide contextual learning experiences for students. Teachers select and apply a variety of appropriate instructional approaches and materials to address different student learning styles and capabilities.

The principles of applied academics comprise Job Corps' strategy for student learning. During PY 00, Job Corps centers have continued to implement learning systems comprised of center-based training, WBL opportunities and connecting activities that encourage active participation of employers in Job Corps programs.

Job Corps has developed the Job Corps Career Development Resource Center web site (www.jccdr.org) to assist administrators, teachers, and other Job Corps staff in developing training programs and providing student services. The site offers CDSS training modules for staff and gives them on-line access to other materials such as career development tools for students, instructional materials, effective teaching practices, professional development resources, and a discussion forum with each other.

Information Technology

In PY 00, the Job Corps Wide Area Network was upgraded. The new technology provides for the integration of e-mail, word processing, network printing/sharing printing services, Internet access, video conferencing, and the future deployment of voice-over data technology. The continued flexibility of Job Corps' network design will allow for the implementation of newer technologies as the Job Corps program evolves.

PY 00 also marked the third year of the Information Technology Scholarship Fund, established by the Industry Advisory Council of the Federation of Government Information Processing Councils. The scholarship fund helps Job Corps students and graduates pursue college degrees or certified advanced training for careers in information technology fields.

Accountability

The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) requires all government agencies to establish outcome-oriented goals that assess effectiveness of strategic initiatives, inspire continuous improvement, and are tied to appropriations. Job Corps' GPRA goals reflect efforts to improve youths' successful transition to the workforce. Clear, measurable expectations have been set in the areas of placements and wages for Job Corps graduates.

Within the Job Corps system, the performance of center operators, outreach and admissions contractors, vocational training programs, and career transition service providers are measured through an extensive and integrated performance measurement system. Together, these measurement systems provide a comprehensive picture of performance throughout all phases of a student's Job Corps experience.

Performance measures in PY 00 reflect areas of emphasis established by the Workforce Investment Act, particularly with respect to long-term student outcomes. Similarly, Job Corps is implementing systemic improvements to foster students' successful transition to and continued participation in the workforce. Further, Job Corps has begun to revise its Program Assessment Guide (PAG), which is used by Job Corps Regional offices to evaluate the effectiveness of Job Corps center operations. Determinations from these center reviews are also key factors in Job Corps' accountability system.

Meetings have been held during the past year to assess current accountability systems and determine what revisions are warranted to keep these systems aligned with Job Corps program priorities and intended results.

Continuous Improvement

As part of its mission to remain successful and effective, Job Corps regularly addresses issues surrounding program performance. Further, Job Corps seeks new ways to both inspire and keep abreast of continuous improvement efforts throughout the Job Corps community.

To energize and sustain a strong continuous improvement philosophy and produce results, a National Strategy Plan will be introduced in PY 01 that outlines the vision and priorities for the system, and provides a "blueprint" for meeting program objectives over the next several years. Further, Job Corps continues to explore a variety of mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of program elements, and appropriately address challenges that may arise as new initiatives are implemented and refined.

Job Corps also works collaboratively with the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and the General Accounting Office (GAO) to identify needed areas of improvement and strategies for overcoming them. The Office of Job Corps will continue to request the assistance of the OIG to conduct investigations related to data integrity when appropriate.

In PY 01, Job Corps will explore the use of data to provide system-wide feedback in order to improve program performance. This activity will help to support Job Corps' commitment to remain a successful and viable program that facilitates students' entry to long-term career success.

Program Components and Services

The Enrollment Process

Young people who want to enroll in Job Corps must submit applications through outreach and admissions contractors. Outreach and admissions contractors make a determination of eligibility based on information received from the applicant and documentation from other sources, such as schools and courts. Because of the residential nature of the program, decisions regarding enrollment of applicants with previous behavioral problems must be made in accordance with procedures established by the DOL.

Once an applicant has been determined to be eligible for Job Corps and has signed a commitment to remain free from drugs and violence, the applicant is assigned to a center and provided with a date for enrollment. Applicants are assigned to the Center nearest their home, but waivers to this requirement may occur under certain conditions. Transportation is provided for the eligible applicant to the assigned Job Corps center.

Social Skills Training, Residential Living, and Support Services

The personal development skills component of the Job Corps program distinguishes Job Corps from other Federal employment and training programs. The residential living component is essential to the program because most students come from extremely disadvantaged environments and can best be served in the structured and safe environment of a Job Corps center, where a variety of support services are available around the clock, 7 days a week.

The purpose of the residential program is threefold:

- To help students learn to get along with people who are different from themselves;
- To teach students to accept responsibility for their own actions; and
- To help students understand and practice good citizenship.

All students participate in the Job Corps Social Skills Training (SST) program. SST is a structured program consisting of 45 topics that students must master. Topics include respecting diversity, listening, expressing anger constructively, workplace relationships, teamwork, prioritizing, responsibility to self and others, and money matters. Center staff are trained to work with students on social skills competencies.

Dormitories on Job Corps center campuses are designed to promote a safe, comfortable environment for students. Residential students, who comprise about 80 percent of Job Corps enrollment, are assigned to specific dormitory rooms. The dormitories are staffed and supervised during all non-class hours. As part of the social development program, students must participate in dormitory meetings and group counseling sessions; be responsible for cleaning their own rooms; assist in cleaning the “common” living areas, such as lounges and television rooms; and adhere to center rules regarding curfews and “lights out” times.

Job Corps offers a variety of activities and support services, including health care, nutritious meals, sports and recreation, counseling, support in group living, arts and crafts, student government, leadership, and incentive programs. Students are provided a modest living allowance to cover personal expenses while they are enrolled.

These services and related activities are integrated to provide a comprehensive social development program designed to motivate and support students in a safe and drug-free environment. The seriousness of Job Corps’ commitment to ensure such an environment is demonstrated by the program’s Zero Tolerance Policy, which requires dismissal of students for drug violations and serious violence offenses.

Approximately 20 percent of all Job Corps students are non-residential and live off-center. These students receive the same education and training opportunities and support services as residential students, with the exception of sleeping accommodations.

Academic Training

Job Corps uses a competency-based education program to assist students with improving their academic and other basic skills. The pursuit of a basic education is an essential complement to vocational, social, and employability skills development. Students are assigned to education classes based on the results of diagnostic tests administered after students first arrive on the Center during the Career Preparation Period.

Within the basic education program, Job Corps offers academic training, including basic computer and Internet skills development. Each student has individualized goals, objectives, and proficiencies based upon his/her Personal Career Development Plan. The academic training is comprised of four core content areas—reading, math, information technology and workplace communications, and GED and high school diploma preparation. In addition, centers that enroll a large number of students with limited English proficiency also offer ESL instruction.

Students achieve basic literacy and numeracy fluency standards through the reading and math training. High school equivalency classes are available at some centers to assist students lacking high school diplomas or obtaining GED certificates. Some Job Corps centers that have been accredited by school boards as alternative high schools, or have partnerships with high schools, also offer programs leading to a high school diploma. Throughout the education program, courses stress problem-solving and high-level cognitive skills.

Training in basic computer and Internet skills allows students to produce workplace documents, use e-mail, and navigate labor market and job search information on-line. Training in workplace communications helps Job Corps students develop academic skills in spelling, grammar, writing, and verbal communication within the context of workplace assignments. Students learn how to prepare resumes, job applications, cover letters, memos, and follow instructions to prepare themselves for work.

The Job Corps academic program is complemented by additional student training in driver’s education, diversity training, health and wellness, employability and social skills. Employability and social skills include such areas as dressing appropriately for work, being on time, satisfying customers, working in teams, trouble-shooting and problem-solving.

Approximately 80 percent of Job Corps students have dropped out of high school. The Job Corps education program is flexible enough to accommodate students with a wide range of knowledge and skills, from non-readers to high school equivalency levels. Since most students have experienced failure in public schools, Job Corps uses a variety of teaching approaches to engage students in the curriculum and provide contextual learning experiences. These

methods can include: large and small group activities; direct instruction; individualized learning; project-based learning; field trips; job shadowing; internships and other work-based learning activities.

Vocational Training

During the Career Preparation Period, students, with the assistance of center staff, determine an appropriate vocational training program. A student's individual training program is based upon a formal assessment of his or her interests, values, and aptitudes. This information is then matched as closely as possible with vocational training offered at the Center. This information is incorporated into the student's PCDP, which directs his or her career training during and beyond Job Corps.

The majority of Job Corps students have never been employed full-time. Job Corps vocational programs are designed to offer individualized, self-paced and open-entry/open-exit instruction, providing flexibility for students to enroll and progress at their own pace. The program emphasizes "hands-on" learning and "learning by doing" in all occupational areas. Each Job Corps center offers training in a wide variety of vocational areas, including: business technologies, health occupations, automotive trades, construction trades, culinary arts, and computer-related occupations. Many centers have established linkages with local trade schools and community colleges to provide vocational offerings not available at the Center or to enroll students in more advanced training programs.

The WIA requires that all centers form Industry Councils. The Industry Councils are comprised of employers who recommend appropriate vocational offerings and training for the Center to meet local labor market needs. Centers are strongly encouraged to enhance or change their vocational offerings based upon employers' needs and input.

Competency-based curricula provide the basis for the vocational training programs. All programs contain a series of skills or competencies that students must acquire. In order to guide student instruction and assess student progress, Job Corps develops a Training Achievement Record (TAR). The TAR is a list of competencies or skills for each major vocational program offered at a Job Corps center. Centers often enhance TARs with employer-specific or region-specific skills.

Most vocational programs offered at a center consist of an Industry Fundamentals or Foundations TAR, which is a core set of competencies, and Career Enhancement TARs, which provide more intensive training. Job titles provided by the TAR represent occupations in which students can earn livable wages and maintain long-term employment. Students are encouraged to complete the maximum number of levels available in the training program so that they may achieve a diverse and high level of proficiency.

National labor and business organizations play an important role in Job Corps vocational training. Through their participation in curriculum development, providing vocational training at many centers, and placement and follow-up services, they help to create a stronger program. These organizations also supervise Vocational Skills Training projects, which offer students, particularly in the construction trades, an opportunity to work on construction and rehabilitation projects both on the Center and in neighboring communities. These projects offer students the opportunity to make valuable contributions to their communities through conservation and community service projects.

A key component of Job Corps' vocational training is hands-on experience. The classroom and workstation environment replicates that of the workplace as much as possible, and instruction includes practice exercises and demonstrations. As students progress in their vocational training, they receive further hands-on training through assignment to work-based learning opportunities. These structured activities provide an opportunity for students to observe the actual work site early in their training, and to apply their skills and knowledge in actual work settings as their training advances. The work-based learning coordinator, instructor, and employer monitor and assess the performance of these students, and recommend additional training, work experience, or vocational course completion, as appropriate. Another key concept being consolidated within training is Applied Academics. This approach relates to connecting what students learn in the classroom with the world they experience around them.

Upon completion of their vocational training, students and staff work together to address areas critical to a students' career success. Students who have not secured employment receive additional assistance in resume writing, interviewing, and job search techniques. All students are provided with references for housing, transportation,

childcare, and other areas identified in their PCDP. At the end of their vocational training experience, students recognize that the training is an important step in their career path.

Health and Wellness Program

Staying healthy and physically fit are basic requirements for any successful career. The Job Corps Health and Wellness Program helps students:

- increase their knowledge of health-related issues
- learn self-management skills
- understand responsible use of healthcare services
- develop a healthy life style based on healthy lifestyle choices and
- learn how to access health care in the community

Within the first 48 hours of arrival at the Center, every student receives a cursory exam, dental inspection, lab and drug testing, and immunizations, followed by a more complete medical examination within 14 days.

During the Career Preparation Period, students also receive an overview of health and wellness services, register for health insurance (if applicable), and participate in wellness classes. Activities that continue during Career Development and Career Transition Periods include health maintenance, self-care management, and community networking.

Beginning with the Career Preparation Period and throughout their stay at Job Corps, students receive essential training in a variety of wellness and safety topics. Safety skills relative to each student's vocational training are an integral part of their daily learning experience and are built into each vocational training program. In many trades, students acquire valuable occupational health and safety competencies. Such competencies are often highly valued by employers, increasing student employability. Additionally, students and staff work together in center dormitories, classrooms, and recreational areas to minimize hazards and promote safe practices. All Job Corps staff are required to receive training in specific wellness and safety areas and to integrate these principles and practices into center living. Safety committees, consisting of staff and students, develop and guide safety initiatives while working to improve safety and health at each center.

Job Corps has developed a Model Safety and Occupational Health Program that can be found in Job Corps' Policy and Requirements Handbook as Appendix 505. This model is being used by centers to help them protect the safety and health of all students and staff engaged in all aspects of the Job Corps Program.

Student Government Association

The Student Government Association (SGA) is a leadership program that encourages center staff to mentor aspiring students. The SGA is a sanctioned and recognized body that functions as a liaison between staff and students, combining efforts to enhance all areas of center life. Each SGA is unique in structure, but is usually comprised of students who are elected by their peers to serve in executive positions of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Chief Justice. Additional SGA positions and committees are established as needed to address and resolve specific needs of the Center. SGA members have met stringent performance requirements and serve as positive role models for others. A major priority of the SGA is to sponsor humanitarian activities that solicit all staff and students to volunteer for community-related projects and events. These activities promote good citizenship through civic volunteer opportunities.

Evaluation of Student Progress

Within the Career Development Services System (CDSS), staff in collaboration with the student, discuss the student's progress on an ongoing basis. A strong emphasis is placed on employability skills that encompass the intent and directives of the WIA and principles of applied academics.

The Job Corps definition of a program graduate is the same as described by WIA (attainment of either a GED certificate/HSD or completion of a vocational trade). A category called "combination program graduate" has been created to identify those students who achieve both a GED certificate/HSD and vocational completion.

Student Results

Placement Rates

Job Corps continues to place a high proportion of their students in jobs, full-time advanced education or training, or the military. For example, in PY 00, 91 percent of Job Corps graduates were placed. Over 73 percent of all student trainees were placed.

The average hourly wage for Job Corps graduates in PY 00 was \$7.97, up from \$7.49 in PY 99. The average hourly wage for all student trainees placed in PY 00 was \$7.64, up from \$7.16 in PY 99. This reflects a 6.4 percent increase for graduates and a 6.7 percent increase for all student trainees over the previous year.

Training-Related Placement Wages

A Job Training Match (JTM) is a job placement that directly or closely correlates to a student's vocational training program. JTM placement wages for graduates in PY 00 averaged \$8.44, an increase of 6.4 percent over the preceding year. For all trainees the average was \$8.28, an increase of 7.3 percent.

Vocational Training

In PY 00, 51.6 percent of all students completed one or more levels within their chosen vocational area of training, achieving the competencies specified for the vocation.

High School Diplomas/GED Certificates

In PY 00, 18,050 students received HSD/GED certificates, up from 16,461 in PY 99.

Average Length of Stay

The PY 00 average length of stay for graduates in Job Corps was 10.6 months. For all trainees the average length of stay was 7.1 months.