September 12, 2005

DIRECTIVE:	JOB CORPS INFORMATION NOTICE NO. 05-10

TO: ALL JOB CORPS NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF
                    ALL JOB CORPS REGIONAL DIRECTORS
                    ALL JOB CORPS CENTER DIRECTORS
                    ALL JOB CORPS CENTER OPERATORS
                    ALL NATIONAL TRAINING AND SUPPORT CONTRACTORS
                    ALL OUTREACH, ADMISSIONS AND CTS CONTRACTORS

FROM: GRACE A. KILBANE
                    National Director
                    Office of Job Corps

SUBJECT: Career Success Standards (CSS)

1.   <u>Purpose</u>. To provide information about Career Success Standards (CSS), a new approach to social, employability, and independent living skills training; and present an overview of the initiative's goals, current CSS Pilots, and forthcoming programmatic changes. Career Success Standards is the next step in the development of the Career Development Services System (CDSS).

2.   <u>Goal of the CSS Initiative.</u> A standards-based, student-centered initiative, CSS is designed to take full advantage of the skills and abilities of all Job Corps staff. Emphasizing each person's individual talents and personal motivation, CSS provides a structure for staff to utilize these qualities to assist students in attaining the necessary "soft skills" competencies. The Career Success Standards take social skills to the "next level."

      The goal of the CSS initiative is to increase student success by better preparing them with the soft skills required in the 21st Century workplace. This goal is consistent with the Administration's Youth Agenda, with its emphasis on preparing youth for an ever-changing, demand-driven workplace.

      The Career Success Standards model industry employment practices by focusing on the individual skill needs of each student.   By providing a variety of resources, materials, classes, mentoring sessions, activities and assessments CSS ensures each student has mastered standards needed to get and keep a high quality job.   This standards-based and individualized approach provides each center the

flexibility to help increase a student's workforce accessibility and provides specific feedback on both strengths and challenges. Industry does not take the time or resources to train the entire organization in interpersonal skills when just a number of employees need the help. It focuses on providing specific assistance to those employees in specific areas of need to meet or exceed specific standards. The Career Success Standards model that philosophy. The center has the flexibility to use existing and new resources to ensure that each student is able to "meet or exceed" a specific set of standards.

3.   Background.   In September 2004, a workgroup was convened to review and upgrade the manner in which Job Corps teaches "soft skills." This included:

   a.   identifying industry-based "soft skills" standards, such as those developed by *Equipped for the Future*, **SCANS**, and Job Corps' own **Industry Advisory Groups**;

   b.   reviewing CDSS and current curricula for adequacy in the areas of social skills, employability, and independent-living training;

   c.   conducting focus groups and surveying select centers to gather information, such as best practices; and

   d.   finding resources, such as materials, methods, and staff training.

The result was the creation of "Career Success Standards" (CSS), a new initiative with a set of eight student behavioral standards.

4.   The 8 Career Success Standards.

   a.   **Workplace Relationships and Ethics –** The student will leave Job Corps with the ability to productively interact with co-workers and deal with problems and situations with honesty, integrity, and responsibility.

   b.   **Communications –** The student will leave Job Corps with the ability to listen actively, follow directions, and communicate with others to solve problems and accomplish tasks.

   c.   **Personal Growth and Development –** The student will leave Job Corps with the personal skills, attributes, and behaviors that foster confidence and drive for life-long growth.

   d.   **Interpersonal Skills –** The student will leave Job Corps with the ability to get along with others and adjust to a variety of social and professional situations.

   e.   **Information Management –** The student will leave Job Corps with the ability to interpret and evaluate data, organize and maintain information, and use technology to perform work.

f. **Multicultural Awareness –** The student will leave Job Corps valuing diversity, practicing cultural sensitivity, and being able to work with people of different backgrounds and cultures.

g. **Career and Personal Planning –** The student will leave Job Corps with a personal plan that outlines a step-by-step process for entering and advancing in a fulfilling career.

h. **Independent Living –** The student will leave Job Corps capable of finding, managing, and utilizing the resources needed to maintain employment, satisfy physical and emotional needs, and lead a productive life as an independent adult.

In order for students to master and demonstrate these standards, staff and student leaders will be expected to model, mentor, and monitor appropriate workplace behaviors at all times. Rather than being a set of lessons or Training Achievement Record (TAR) items, the Career Success Standards define what students should know or be able to do and describe how well they should be able to do them.

While portions of the current Job Corps Social Skills Curriculum may still be of value in helping some students meet these standards, the Social Skills Curriculum, as a training strategy, differs from the Career Success Standards initiative in the following ways:

	Career Success Standards	**Social Skills Training Curriculum**
Emphasis	A process for the attainment of skills	Lessons, classes, schedules
Content	Social employability and independent living skills	Social Skills
Measures	Standardized: pre and post knowledge-based assessment, informal and formal evaluations, e-Portfolio, PCDP, ESP, CIS	Discretionary: assessment and documentation left up to centers
Scheduling	Based on individual evaluation, as needed until the Standard(s) has/have been met	Assigned day of the week, all students take same class, no individual assessment
Delivery	Hands-on and group activities, games, workshops, WBL, field trips, and other methods	Facilitated classroom sessions
Materials	Commercial videos, DVDs, interactive web activities, workbooks, CD-ROMs, and other materials.	Job Corps Social Skills Curriculum Trainer's Guide and materials

5.   Career Success Standards Pilot.   The CSS Pilot was launched on May 24–25, 2005, in Washington, D.C., with a Pilot Participant Orientation. Attendees included pilot center representatives, CSS workgroup members, technical assistance and student material providers, and the National Office of Job Corps' CSS Development Team.

Pilot centers have been pivotal in the early stages of the CSS initiative. They are participating on conference calls and providing feedback to the National Office of Job Corps on a regular basis.   Their feedback will be incorporated into CSS initiative requirements and will shape the design of the national CSS rollout.   The pilot centers are:

a.	Timberlake	e.	Oneonta
b.	New Orleans	f.	Turner
c.	Detroit	g.	Collbran
d.	Red Rock	h.	Sacramento

The CSS Pilot consists of two phases: the Staff Preparation Phase and the Student Achievement Phase. Each phase will last approximately 4 months.

The first pilot phase is the Staff Preparation Phase. During this phase, Job Corps center staff are expected to analyze their skills in relation to the CSS and evaluate how they work together as a team in light of the standards.   This self-examination process will highlight the promising practices taking place on the center already, and will help guide the staff in transitioning from the old way of operating to the new. This phase begins with one week of staff training in organization development and the Career Success Standards.   The training is lead by field experts who help organizations function at a higher level by teaching how to accelerate individual and organizational potential. In this way, the staff training lays the foundation for the center to develop a CSS Plan. The plan will describe how the center will train all staff to implement CSS, incorporate CSS into the existing CDSS student life cycle, and assess and prepare students to meet all eight Career Success Standards.

The National Office of Job Corps has provided each pilot center with a CSS Implementation Guide and at least a dozen commercial student materials.   The materials include both traditional and innovative approaches to learning, with an emphasis on hands-on and interactive methods to ensure longer-lasting skill acquisition. These methods include interactive technology, guides for community partnership, group activities, and experiential learning. Centers will use the materials to develop activities and learning experiences for students to be implemented in the second phase of the pilot.

The Student Achievement Phase is when each pilot center will implement its CSS Plan. New assessment tools, materials, and methods will be used during this period to ensure every student receives an individualized learning plan.

The pilot will run through January 2006, with a national rollout planned for late spring 2006. The national rollout will begin with three regional conferences where center representatives will be: (1) trained on the Career Success Standards and how they support CDSS; (2) learn how organizational development experts may support the transition; and (3) meet various student material providers. A CSS Implementation Guide will direct the conference activities and will serve as the main tool for center implementation.

6. <u>Pilot Tools</u>. The implementation of the CSS Pilot will necessitate the use of new assessments, instructional methods, materials, and tracking systems. The pilot centers will test the following new resources or additions to existing tools:

a. **Evaluation of Student Progress (ESP)** – The ESP will include a CSS Evaluation Screen that pilot centers will use to assess a student's performance level for each standard.

b. **Personal Career Development Plan (PCDP)** – The PCDP has been newly redesigned to streamline the student planning process. These improvements promise to increase usability, consolidate similar information, and produce goal-oriented plans and function-centered reports. The CSS Pilot will test the revised PCDP.

c. **Assessment** – A knowledge-based assessment that attempts to measure what a student knows about social, employability, and independent living skills will assist staff in evaluating a student's competency level. Pilot centers will document the tool's usability and content adequacy.

d. **Online Portfolio** – An Online Portfolio will be piloted by participating centers. The Online Portfolio will not only store a student's accomplishments (i.e., resume, cover letters, and certificates), but will also be used as an evaluation tool. The Online Portfolio will be built by the student and monitored and published live on the Web by designated center staff.

7. <u>Action</u>. Addressees are to ensure that a copy of this Notice is distributed to appropriate staff.

8. <u>Expiration Date</u>. Until superseded.

9. <u>Inquiries</u>. Inquiries should be directed to John Chowning at (202) 693-3102, or e-mailed to chowning.john@dol.gov. The JCCDRC Web site located at www.jccdrc.org provides an overview of CSS.