

October 10, 2014

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| DIRECTIVE: | JOB CORPS INFORMATION NOTICE NO. 14-20 |
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TO: ALL JOB CORPS REGIONAL OFFICE STAFF  
ALL JOB CORPS CENTER DIRECTORS  
ALL JOB CORPS CENTER OPERATORS  
ALL NATIONAL TRAINING AND SUPPORT CONTRACTORS  
ALL OUTREACH, ADMISSIONS, AND CTS CONTRACTORS

FROM: LENITA JACOBS-SIMMONS  
Acting National Director  
Office of Job Corps

SUBJECT: Policy and Requirements Handbook (PRH) Appendix 304,  
Guidelines for the Accreditation of Job Corps High School Programs

1. Purpose. To clarify guidelines for the accreditation of Job Corps high school programs.
2. Background. It has been brought to the attention of the National Office of Job Corps that centers are using high school diploma program providers that do not meet the accrediting requirements specified in Appendix 304 of the PRH. Understanding Appendix 304 requirements is critical to program quality and student success. Accreditation by reliable authorities helps to ensure educational quality, and provides Job Corps graduates with access to institutions of higher education.
3. Clarification. Appendix 304, Item 1 requires that the high school program offered to students at Job Corps centers be *authorized by the state to issue diplomas*. Depending on the state, a certificate, license or similar document is issued by the regulatory agency responsible for academic learning at the secondary level. The approval to operate in a state may require compliance with items such as health and safety, instructional hours, teacher certification, and length of school year.

However, state approval to operate a high school program is not evidence of program quality. Program quality is best assessed through a credible, recognized accrediting body, such as the six regional accrediting bodies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and listed in Appendix 304. These six boards accredit virtually all secondary programs that are academic in nature and seek accreditation.

Many colleges and some employers will not accept a diploma from a high school program that is not regionally accredited. Therefore, Appendix 304, Item 1 continues with an *and* statement, that is, all Job Corps high school diploma programs must be state approved AND must be accredited by one of the six regional accrediting agencies listed in Item 2 *if the state*

*defers to a regional accreditation process.* This statement relating to deferment is not to be interpreted to mean that if the state does not defer to a regional accreditation process, then the high school program provider is not required to hold regional accreditation. The deferment statement applies to states that use their own accreditation process rather than deferring to one of the six regional accreditation agencies. These states have set their own process and/or performance standards to assess program quality and formally accredit high schools. Non-public schools approved to operate in these states must participate in the performance and process standards for accreditation set by the states in order to meet the Appendix 304 guidelines for accreditation.

Appendix 304 requires that all high school diploma programs offered to students at Job Corps centers be both state approved and accredited by one of the six regional accrediting bodies or through full participation in their states' formal accreditation process. If a state does not require its approved high school diploma programs to be accredited, or does not offer a state accreditation process, or offers but does not allow full participation, the high school program seeking to provide services to Job Corps students must secure an accreditation from one of the regional accrediting bodies listed in Appendix 304, Items 2a. through 2f.

In order to ensure a high standard of educational quality in online high school diploma programs offered to students at Job Corps centers, Appendix 304, Item 3 requires that all online programs and all programs with 51 percent or more of delivery online meet the Item 1 or 2 requirements and be accredited by the Distance Education Training Council (DETC).

4. Action. Regional Office staff, Center Operators and Center Directors should examine their high school program offerings to be sure they are in compliance with Appendix 304.

Addressees are to ensure this Information Notice is distributed to all appropriate staff.

5. Expiration Date. Until superseded.

6. Inquiries. Questions about this Information Notice should be addressed to John Chowning at (202) 693-3102, [chowning.john@dol.gov](mailto:chowning.john@dol.gov); or Lynne Fry at (202) 693-3101, [fry.lynne@dol.gov](mailto:fry.lynne@dol.gov).