

May 6, 2014

DIRECTIVE: JOB CORPS PROGRAM INSTRUCTION NO. 13-32
--

TO: ALL JOB CORPS NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF
 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: GRACE A. KILBANE
 National Director
 Office of Job Corps

SUBJECT: Increasing New Students/On-board Strength (OBS) Capacity

1. Purpose. To provide guidance to Job Corps center operators and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service (FS) Job Corps program for electronically submitting proposals to increase On-board Strength (OBS) at high-performing centers.

2. Background. Since the temporary new enrollment suspension was lifted in April 2013, the Office of Job Corps, in consultation with the Job Corps community, has focused on reaching and maintaining the maximum affordable Program Year (PY) 2013 OBS level of 35,675 as rapidly as possible. We have also engaged the Job Corps community on how to maximize and optimize our student enrollment capacity within the resources available under our appropriation.

The Fiscal Year 2014 Job Corps Operations budget provides a funding increase that allows the Office of Job Corps to allocate additional student slots. Given the significant change in enrollment numbers over the past 12 months, Job Corps took the additional step of conducting a conference call on February 21, 2014, to invite comments on our proposal to allocate additional student slots to high-performing Job Corps centers. We initially proposed to distribute the additional student slots based on three criteria: (1) selecting centers in the top half of performance based on the results of the PY 2012 Outcome Measurement System (OMS); (2) rewarding centers that were at or above 95 percent of their OBS levels by the end of calendar year 2013; and (3) focusing on high-performing Career Technical Training (CTT) programs at those centers. Multiple comments were received on the following topics: (1) the performance period should include more than 1 year; (2) concerns were raised about using OBS levels as of the end of calendar year 2013; and (3) it was suggested that OBS could be increased more within the available resources, which would result in a reduced cost per student.

Taking into account the comments, the Office of Job Corps revised the criteria used to determine which centers would receive an increase in OBS. The use of OBS levels at the end of calendar year 2013 was dropped as a criterion. The criteria that the Office of Job Corps will use are as follows:

- Centers ranked in the top half of performance based on the 3-year average of PY 2010, PY 2011, and PY 2012 outcome measures (OMS) will be eligible for an increase.
 - Note: Denison and Pinellas Job Corps Centers served as pilot centers for part of this period, and cannot be fully ranked. However, these centers have been added to the 63 centers in the top half of performance, making the total number of centers eligible for an increase 65.
- Among the 65 centers eligible for an increase under this criterion, increases will be targeted to expand high-performing CTT programs (as defined by their CTT report card ratings) in centers that have the space and facilities to do so.

Based on the allocation methodology described above, the Office of Job Corps has identified centers that are eligible for OBS increases and a high-performing CTT program in each center that we believe could be expanded.

3. Reference. Program Instruction Notice 12-28, New Student Enrollments: Lifting of Suspension; and Program Instruction Notice 13-13, Achieving Job Corps Student On-board Strength (OBS).

4. Action. The attachment contains the list of centers eligible for an OBS increase under the revised criteria. In addition, the attachment includes the Office of Job Corps plan for increasing the OBS allocation for each listed center, including the high-performing CTT program identified as a target program to expand or reinstate.

Process

Based on the additional funding available, we have developed a potential two-step process for allocating additional slots to the centers in the top half of performance. The first step is that Job Corps has identified a high performing CTT program at each of the eligible centers, identified on the attachment. Operators shall provide a proposal reflecting the number of students needed to expand the suggested high-performing CTT program at the center. To the extent that the operator disagrees with the suggested CTT program and believes there is an alternative trade that would better meet employer needs, or believes the increase to the CTT program listed in the attachment will require excessive capital equipment funds and space, then, the operator may propose to reinstate a prior trade or expand an alternative existing trade to utilize the additional OBS. If opting to re-establish a trade we also encourage you to focus on programs that reach underserved populations, including women.

Assuming that funds remain after the allocation described in Step 1, operators may take the second step of submitting a separate proposal to request additional OBS slots that would optimize student levels. This process is based on suggestions from contractors that additional OBS slots could be supported within the current resource levels or with a minor budget increase, resulting in a lower cost per student.

Step 1- Proposal Template for Requesting OBS

Required for those centers listed on the attachment, please review the planned increase in OBS for each center, which is represented via proxy by student slots needed for a new/expanded CTT program to add, and provide the following information using the attached Excel template:

- Name of operator, contractor, or USDA/FS;
- Name and location of center;
- Current contracted OBS level;
- Proposed PY2014 new student/OBS level you can serve based on your current contract value and using the student slots needed for a new/expanded CTT program as a proxy for OBS;
- Concurrence with the CTT program and increased OBS/class size recommended. You may propose a different CTT program based on employer needs for skilled workers. If doing so, please immediately contact your Regional Office to expedite a discussion;
- Specify any needed increase by budget line from the 2110, as a result of the increase in student/OBS; and
- Explain how the additional students will be absorbed into your current operations.

Step 2- Proposal Template for Requesting Additional OBS

This step is optional and, also, is only for those centers listed on the attachment. Many contractors have indicated that additional OBS slots could be added within current resource levels or with a minor budget increase. We are interested in your ideas about how to optimize the number of students Job Corps serves within the current appropriation. Please note we will not consider requests for OBS increases that exceed the former center OBS levels that were in place before April 22, 2013. You may submit a proposal to increase OBS above the number proposed in step 1 using the attached Excel template that includes:

- Name of operator, contractor, or USDA/FS;
- Name and location of center;
- Current contracted OBS level (not your surge level);
- Proposed PY2014 new student/OBS level you can serve under your existing contract;
- Proposed CTT program(s) that will be impacted by the OBS increase, to include an explanation of the increase in class size or other training approach that you would recommend;
- Specify any needed increases by budget line from the 2110, as a result of the increase in student/OBS. Please describe how an additional investment could optimize or leverage the total existing center contract amount to serve more students more efficiently, including a lower cost per student.; and
- Explain how the additional students will be absorbed into your current operations.

Submission Process and Deadline

Please submit the requested information via e-mail **no later than close of business May 9, 2014** to the Job Corps Regional office for your center.

Review Process

Proposals will be reviewed by the Employment and Training Administration's Offices of Job Corps, Contract Management, and Financial Administration. Final decisions for adding new student slots to high-performing centers will be implemented via contract modifications for operator/contractor-run centers, and by memorandum for USDA/FS-run centers.

Limitation on Funding

This increase will become effective for the center contract when finalized and will be supported through funding from the remainder of PY2013 and the PY2014 budget. Therefore, the total change in estimated cost that will be negotiated for each contract as a result of the OBS increase will be driven by the funds available for Center operations as appropriated in the 2014 budget. If the first step of the process described above results in proposals that exceed the available funds under the 2014 appropriation, we may change the methodology.

Center Directors are to ensure this Program Instruction Notice (PIN) is distributed to all appropriate staff.

5. Effective Date. Immediately.
6. Expiration Date. The expiration date for this PIN is indefinite, or until it is superseded.
7. Inquiries. Inquiries about this PIN should be directed to your Regional Director or Grace A. Kilbane at (202) 693-3000 or Kilbane.Grace@dol.gov. Thank you for your continued support and commitment to our program and to our students.

Attachment

Excel template – Increasing New Students/On-Board Strength (OBS) Step 1