



OCT -5 2017

DIRECTIVE: JOB CORPS PROGRAM INSTRUCTION NOTICE NO. 17-08

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
ALL CENTER USERS

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lenita Jacobs-Simmons".

SUBJECT: Required Program of Study for Job Corps High School Diploma Recipients

1. **Purpose.** To define the minimum coursework requirements for all students to meet Job Corps' definition of having attained a secondary school diploma and the actions required to ensure compliance. This Program Instruction Notice applies to students seeking to obtain a secondary school diploma while enrolled in Job Corps, and high school equivalency programs are unaffected.
2. **Background.** In April 2015, the Office of Job Corps (OJC) began an exploratory analysis of its High School Diploma (HSD) programming. Factors that signaled the need for this analysis included:
 - a dramatic increase in the use of online HSD programs and reports that these increases were likely to continue;
 - new Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) education and training requirements for postsecondary preparation and economic self-sufficiency;
 - an Office of the Inspector General Audit of Academic Testing; and
 - information gleaned during Center Culture and Safety visits.

The completed analysis revealed that the majority of Job Corps' HSD graduates did not complete a program of study that met the graduation requirements of most states. In October 2015, OJC drafted new HSD graduation requirements and solicited comments from regions and centers. Based on systemwide feedback, new coursework requirements for a Job Corps High School Diploma Recipients were developed and announced at the Job Corps National Training Conference held in Arlington, Virginia July 2017. Conference participants were advised that beginning in Program Year 2018, centers would be required to offer HSD coursework that meets minimum graduation requirements in most states (as outlined in Attachment A), and prepares Job Corps' graduates for college and careers.

OJC will provide planning and implementation support through a series of Webinars informed by field input solicited through this notice. In order to provide focused training, OJC needs to know which requirements need clarification, and what do the managers and instructors need to know in order to efficiently and effectively implement the PIN.

One of the statutory purposes of the Job Corps program is to ensure students receive education and training that prepares them to obtain secondary diplomas that lead to “successful careers, in in-demand industry sectors or occupations or the Armed Forces, that will result in economic self-sufficiency and opportunities for advancement; or enrollment in postsecondary education, including an apprenticeship program” as specified in WIOA Sec. 141(1)(A).

WIOA also emphasizes “career pathway programming” that combines training and education to prepare students to enter the workforce or go on to postsecondary education. Therefore, Job Corps must create those pathways that prepare students for careers and further education.

Diploma requirements in almost all states have become more demanding, with increases in the number of coursework credits required, and the rigor of standards within that coursework. States are implementing the rigorous Common Core State Standards (CCSS), or their equivalent, and high school diploma programs used by Job Corps centers report that they are making the transition to CCSS. Job Corps students must hold education credentials equal or comparable to those issued by states and school districts to compete with public education diploma holders for the same jobs and college slots. For reference, the coursework and graduation requirements for public school education are included as Attachment B to this notice.

3. Requirements for a Job Corps High School Diploma Program. Center Operators must offer high school diploma programs that meet current Policy and Requirements Handbook (PRH) qualifications for accreditation, as well as the additional criteria and specific coursework found in PRH Chapter 3.11 and those listed in Attachment A.

4. Requirements to Obtain a Job Corps High School Diploma. To be considered a high school diploma recipient for purposes of Job Corps’ performance management system, all students must complete the following:

- all of the credits described in Attachment A, even if the specific coursework and/or total number of credits are not required by the high school program that issues the diploma. An inspection of center records must show that all students reported as high school diploma recipients completed all of the coursework described in Attachment A either through their high school diploma program or supplemental coursework by an accredited education provider.
- additional graduation requirements set by the state, district, program, and/or Center Operator, e.g., requirements for proficiency demonstration such as a high school exit exam or requirements for a course in state history. An inspection of center records must show evidence that additional requirements were met.

5. Student Support Services. Center Operators should provide the support needed, including reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities, for students to succeed at

this new level of rigor in high school programming. They may offer tutoring, for example, by hiring tutors from local colleges or the community, or by re-allocating instructor hours to allow time to tutor in evenings and on weekends. No-cost online resources are also available.

6. Action.

Centers shall:

- Submit via e-mail requests for clarifications, input on professional development topics, and any other commentary to Josiah Leighton (Leighton.Josiah.T@dol.gov) by **October 27, 2017.**
- Prepare a written plan to implement the requirements specified in this notice. Required plan elements are detailed in the “Job Corps HSD Program of Study Implementation Plan Template” (Attachment C). Please access your center’s copy of this document on the Job Corps Community Web site in your specific Regional Shared Document Folder labeled **“Academics - JC HSD Program of Study Implementation Plan.”** Click on your center folder name and this Word document will be inside. Complete the document and hit “SAVE.” **The due date for submission of completed plans to the Regional Office is February 1, 2018.**
- Use the Job Corps HSD Program of Study Requirements Checklist (Attachment D) to inform implementation plan development. Attachment D does not require submission.
- Ensure that the required program of study for a Job Corps High School Diploma Graduate is in place by **October 1, 2018.**

Regional Offices will:

- Evaluate and approve each center plan for its advancement to the National Office for final review.
- Monitor progress of plan implementation and adherence to these new requirements and stated timelines.

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

7. Expiration Date. Until superseded.

8. Inquiries. Questions about this Program Instruction Notice should be addressed to Curtis Massey (Massey.Curtis@dol.gov), (202) 693-3096; or Josiah Leighton (Leighton.Josiah.T@dol.gov), (202) 693-2871.

Attachments

- A – Coursework Requirements for a Job Corps High School Diploma Recipient
- B – Coursework and Graduation Requirements in Public School Education
- C – Job Corps HSD Program of Study Implementation Plan Template
- D – Job Corps HSD Program of Study Requirements Checklist