



4/12/21

DIRECTIVES:	JOB CORPS PROGRAM INSTRUCTION NOTICE NO. 20-17
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TO: ALL JOB CORPS NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF  
ALL JOB CORPS REGIONAL OFFICE STAFF  
ALL USDA FOREST SERVICE CENTER DIRECTORS  
ALL JOB CORPS CENTER DIRECTORS  
ALL JOB CORPS CENTER OPERATORS  
ALL JOB CORPS CENTER STAFF  
ALL NATIONAL TRAINING AND SUPPORT CONTRACTORS  
ALL OUTREACH AND ADMISSIONS CONTRACTORS  
ALL CAREER TRANSITION SERVICES CONTRACTORS

FROM: DEBRA A. CARR  
Acting National Director  
Office of Job Corps

Debra Carr

Digitally signed by Debra Carr  
Date: 2021.04.12 13:06:54 -04'00'

SUBJECT: Weekly Distance Learning Participation Requirement

1. Purpose. This notice is to revise the weekly participation hours requirement for students participating in distance learning.
2. Background. Program Instruction Notice (PIN) 20-04, "Providing Online and Correspondence Distance Learning," notified center operators that they must ensure that the average student participates in distance learning activities for approximately 30 hours per week or six hours a day.<sup>1</sup> This requirement replicates the typical Job Corps training day for student on-campus participation. Some studies on distance learning have found that since the pandemic, schools have expected high school-age students to spend an average of 3.9 hours per day or about 19.5 hours a week on instructional activities.<sup>2</sup>

Job Corps' administrative data, collected by the Job Corps Data Center from center staff from October 12 through December 28, 2020, show a median of 14 hours per week is spent in distance learning by students. An earlier informal survey of center operators conducted by Job Corps found that students logged, on average,

<sup>1</sup> PIN 20-17, *Transition from Spring Break to Virtual Operating Status for COVID-19*, specified that center operators shall be responsible for designing and deploying their own distance learning plans and components that meet all contract requirements. In designing and deploying their distance learning plans, center operators are to select those products and services and apply those resources which are needed to achieve satisfactory performance under their contracts.

<sup>2</sup> Garret, M., Rickles, J., Bowdon, J. & Heppen, J., American Institutes for Research, "National Survey on Public Education's Coronavirus Pandemic Response," July 2020 <https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/National-Survey-on-Public-Educations-Coronavirus-Pandemic-Response-First-Look-July-2020.pdf>. This study reviewed distance learning hours and found that the average number of instructional hours expected of high school students was 3.87 hours per day. The high school sample size in this report included 432 districts for Grades 9–12 (151 high-poverty and 110 low-poverty, 158 rural and 274 urban).

approximately 17 hours of distance learning per week. Therefore, to provide greater flexibility in meeting distance learning requirements, Job Corps is reducing the minimum required number of hours for participation in distance learning from 30 hours to 20 hours per week. The 20-hour minimum is consistent with the required number of weekly hours in other school settings. It also supports differences in the Job Corps student population when compared to the typical high school population. For example, Job Corps serves a wider age range of students with an average student age of 18 years, and current Job Corps students engaging in distance learning are confronted by family, financial, and other challenges as a result of the continuing COVID-19 pandemic that would otherwise have been mitigated through their enrollment in a full-time residential program.

Center operators are reminded that meeting the minimum weekly distance learning hours is only one element of their contracts' instructional requirement. Operators must continually improve the overall quality and effectiveness of their instructional activities for distance learning. Operators must provide other instructional activities that support students' educational progress, whether these activities are delivered in classrooms on-campus, virtually (i.e., online), using supplemental learning packets, or through a hybrid learning approach using a combination of instructional delivery methods.

3. Action. The minimum number of weekly hours required for distance learning participation is reduced from 30 hours to 20 hours weekly. This increase in instructional flexibilities does not change center operator academic instruction requirements, including requirements for demonstrating student gains in literacy and numeracy, and skills training.

Centers must also continue to engage with students to identify and appropriately address their academic needs while off-campus. Center operators must continue to provide sufficient quality distance learning content and ensure that students who can participate for more hours of distance learning are encouraged to do so. Center operators must continue to report the planned and actual hours each student spends in distance learning using the Center Information System and other tracking systems provided by Job Corps for this purpose.

The Job Corps Data Center will make system changes, as needed, to reflect this change in requirements for Job Corps students' minimum weekly hours for distance learning.

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

4. Effective Date. Effective immediately until superseded or rescinded. The Office of the Senior Procurement Executive will issue a Change Order simultaneously with this Job Corps PIN to contractually implement the PIN.
5. Inquiries. Questions about this Instruction Notice should be addressed to [covid19@jobcorps.org](mailto:covid19@jobcorps.org).