



April 24, 2020

DIRECTIVE: JOB CORPS PROGRAM INSTRUCTION NOTICE NO. 19-17

TO: ALL JOB CORPS NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF
 ALL JOB CORPS REGIONAL OFFICE STAFF
 ALL JOB CORPS CENTER DIRECTORS
 ALL JOB CORPS CENTER OPERATORS
 ALL FOREST SERVICE CENTER DIRECTORS
 ALL NATIONAL TRAINING AND SUPPORT CONTRACTORS
 ALL OUTREACH AND ADMISSIONS CONTRACTORS
 ALL CAREER TRANSITION SERVICES CONTRACTORS
 ALL CENTER USERS

FROM: DEBRA A. CARR DEBRA CARR Digitally signed by DEBRA CARR
Date: 2020.04.24 17:16:09 -0400
 Acting National Director
 Office of Job Corps

SUBJECT: Transition from Spring Break to Virtual Operating Status for COVID-19

1. Purpose. To convert Job Corps to virtual operations during the remainder of the COVID-19 National Emergency.
2. Background. Job Corps established a spring break for all Job Corps centers on March 16, 2020, in light of COVID-19 concerns and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. Job Corps continues to communicate with contactors and other stakeholders; monitor the activities of the state and local jurisdictions regarding school closures, shelter-in-place orders and other COVID-19 related activities; and review White House Coronavirus Task Force and CDC guidance on responding to COVID-19.

Job Corps has a national footprint and, when spring break was announced, had nearly 30,000 students enrolled in its program from all 50 states. The CDC reports COVID-19 exists in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.¹ Spring break was a measure taken to minimize the potential COVID-19 threat within the Job Corps community even before the disease was widespread and before the existence of at least 44 state shelter-in-place orders. Now, when considering the reopening of Job Corps physical facilities, we must also examine the logistics and health risks associated with safely transporting thousands of students to 121 centers across the U.S., using limited supplies of personal protective equipment, enforcing physical distances at centers with large student bodies, and implementing other precautionary measures in complex school settings. In fact, it is noteworthy that 17 states and 2 U.S. territories have ordered or recommended school

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, cases in the U.S., <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/cases-in-us.html> (last accessed April 9, 2020).

building closures for the rest of the academic year.²

3. Action. Effective April 14, 2020, Job Corps extended spring break through May 10, 2020. Thereafter, on May 11, 2020, Job Corps will transition to virtual operations and move students from the COVID paid leave status used for spring break to a present for duty status with students participating in various aspects of the program virtually. All centers must implement distance learning with programs in place on May 11, 2020. This allows students to remain connected to the program by engaging in distance learning activities that support gains in learning and career skills training. Center operators, in the interim, should continue their existing work providing student enrichment activities.

As required in the contracts, and in Chapter 3 of the Job Corps Policies and Requirements Handbook (PRH), center operators must ensure the efficient and effective delivery of training to students. It is the center operators' responsibility to design and deploy distance learning plans that meet all contract requirements, including ensuring appropriate internal controls are in place. In designing and deploying their distance learning plans, Job Corps looks to center operators to select those products and services and to apply those resources which are needed to achieve satisfactory performance under their contracts. Further, contractors are expected to continually monitor their distance learning plans once deployed and to make necessary adjustments and corrections, including adding resources, to ensure satisfactory performance consistent with contract requirements and Job Corps guidance.

Distance learning can be delivered, for example, through online (web-based) courses, mobile learning, webcasts, podcasts, video learning, computer-based instruction, and other innovative tools. Correspondence courses (i.e., the use of mail) may be used but are not generally preferred. Job Corps students participating in academic studies or technical career skills instruction through distance learning will be placed in either COVID-19 present for duty off center or COVID-19 present for duty on center status based on their current physical location. Each is a paid duty status. The on center duty status should only be used for students currently at a Job Corps center.

Center operators must also ensure that all students with disabilities have the opportunity to request and receive reasonable accommodation to participate in distance learning. In connection with a transition to distance learning, centers must distribute a notice to students informing them that students with disabilities have the right to request and receive reasonable accommodations that allow them to participate in the program. The notice should provide contact information to assist students in making such a request. Centers must engage in an interactive process with each student making a request to determine his or her individual accommodation needs.

I. Academic Instruction

The below is a general overview of some of the areas where distance learning must be provided. Specific operational information and guidance will be issued in a separate

² Coronavirus and School Closures (2020, March 6). Education Week. Retrieved from <https://www.edweek.org/ew/section/multimedia/map-coronavirus-and-school-closures.html> (last accessed April 9, 2020).

notice.

- A. *Basic Skills Remediation Instruction:* Students who have not demonstrated basic skills proficiency on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), must continue to receive remedial instruction in reading and/or mathematics. The requirement to provide certified instruction can be through distance learning. While students will not have off campus access to the DRC INSIGHT testing system used by Job Corps, they must be able to show Educational Functioning Level (EFL) gains as soon as they return to campus and can engage in TABE follow-up testing. Centers must, therefore, use teacher-developed assessments, readily available online tests and resources, and/or other tools to support the remediation of basic education skills deficiencies.
- B. *Co-Enrollment:* Job Corps students may be co-enrolled in public schools and community colleges. Public schools and community colleges in many jurisdictions have closed their physical campuses and the students have been sent home. Independent learning or online classes are substituting for classroom time in many, though not all, jurisdictions. Job Corps students attended several of these closed institutions.

Job Corps students participating in such a program at the time of spring break should resume that academic work as distance learning if that is an option provided by the school or community college. Similarly, students now seeking to enroll in a co-enrollment program should do so if that is an option. The students must be able to complete any assigned independent study or online course work assigned to them by the school or college through distance learning.

- C. *High School Diploma and Equivalency:* There are three online high school diploma (HSD) providers and centers are encouraged to partner with local school districts and others to provide their high school program. High school equivalency (HSE) coursework may only continue with an operational HSE partner or in an on campus program if the local testing site remains open.
- D. *MyPACE:* Students enrolled in the Career Preparation Period when spring break began must complete the MyPACE career planning curriculum remotely. Instructors can continue to deliver the curriculum to students as a group through free meeting software or other appropriate means. Students must continue to enact their MyPACE Career Plans for the Career Development Period by completing the items on their Pathway Achievement Records. Centers must assist students in completing these tasks remotely, either individually or in group settings online.

MyPACE is also a part of Career Success/Workplace Skills in Chapter 3, Section 3.4 of the PRH. As such, such centers should remember that completing MyPACE includes the Career Success Standards, Job Search Skills, and other requirements from this chapter in distance learning.

II. Career Technical Skills Instruction

- A. *Work-Based Learning (WBL)*: WBL programs remain suspended due to their off-site nature. WBL involves students in work experiences related to the career field for which they are preparing and occurs off-site at employer work sites. Suspending field work of this type limits student and staff exposure to individuals that may be infected.
- B. *Career Skills Instruction*: Students will not engage in career skills training that involves in-person instruction or contact of any kind. Each Job Corps National Training Contractor (NTC) must provide telework training plans and/or distance learning plans to the national office by April 30, 2020. These plans must ensure that distance learning is delivered that supports performance of their academic and skills training obligations under their contract, including delivering instruction in the competencies listed on official Job Corps Electronic Training Achievement Records (e-TAR) of the career technical training programs approved for the center. As with NTCs, career skills instruction provided directly by Job Corps contractors or by non-NTC sources such as community colleges must also be delivered through distance learning and must align with student e-TARs.

To ensure the efficient and effective training of students, NTCs and center operators must ensure that they have plans in place for troubleshooting and otherwise responding to or addressing operational failures experienced by the distance learning platform they have chosen to use. The goal is to ensure continuity of services to students with contractors promptly and proactively identifying, reporting, and correcting performance problems and failures (i.e., performance that does not meet requirements of the contract and the PRH provisions (incorporated by reference into the contracts)).

III. Outreach and Recruitment (OA) and Career Transitions Services (CTS)

- A. *Outreach and Admissions (OA)*: Center operators and designated OA providers must ensure that actions are being taken that support recruitment and the development of a pipeline of applicants upon the program resuming normal operations. To the extent that new or revised work practices can be used to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on contract performance, contractors should be actively pursuing and adopting such mitigation, in consultation with DOL regional offices and in accordance with their contracts and public health guidance. Chapter 1, Enrollment Services, in the PRH explains the OA requirements. All requirements that can be conducted virtually (i.e., through telework and the use of technology) must resume. This includes, but is not limited to, file reviews; virtual contact with prospects, applicants, and enrollees; outreach to community groups and organizations; and planning. Center operators and other OA providers should refer to their telework plan for more specific guidance.
- B. *Career Transition Services (CTS)*: Center operators and other designated CTS providers must continue providing support even in the virtual space, as appropriate. All requirements that can be conducted virtually must resume. Center operators and other

CTS providers should refer to their telework plan for more specific guidance on which activities can be accomplished through telework and the use of technology.

IV. Information Technology

As a long-term goal, Job Corps is considering investments in information technology (IT) to support distance learning for off campus students through purchases of laptop and tablets, software, and other items to support a national distance learning program. In the interim, Job Corps plans to take some action to support Job Corps' students that lack access to technology when not on campus now as a result of COVID-19. Job Corps may make some limited investments as necessary to support these students. Additional details about the implementation of this interim investment in IT equipment will be provided separately.

The current market demand for IT related to distance learning is extremely heavy across the country. This will impact Job Corps' ability quickly secure and distribute these items.

Job Corps and center operators will continue to work together to determine current student IT readiness or capabilities.

4. Expiration Date. Until rescinded.
5. Inquiries. Inquiries should be directed to the appropriate Job Corps Regional Director.