JOB CORPS PRACTICUM/INTERNSHIP OVERVIEW

**What is Job Corps?**

Job Corps is America’s largest residental educational and career technical training program for economically challenged youth ages 16-24. Job Corps has been in operation since 1964 and serves approximately 60,000 students annually at over 124 different Job Corps centers all over the country. The program provides housing, academic classes and vocational training, as well as a full range of medical services, including vocational counseling and short-term psychotherapy.

**Who are the Students at Job Corps?**

Job Corps students are a racially and culturally diverse group. Most students have overcome considerable hardships and have chosen to participate in Job Corps in order to better their futures. Younger Job Corps students (16-17 years old) may present with typical adolescent issues; however, most Job Corps students are between 18-24 years old and working through young adult and life transition concerns. There is a wide range of presenting problems, including depression, anxiety, first psychotic breaks, and age-appropriate interpersonal crises. Many Job Corps students also have significant trauma histories (including exposure to community violence, neglect, physical, and/or sexual abuse). The Job Corps practicum requires flexibility, independence, and an ability to get along with all kinds of people while maintaining a sense of humor.

**How does the program work?**

New students enter the Job Corps program each week in a rolling enrollment. All students enter a Career Preparation Period (CPP) for five weeks in which they study wellness, diversity issues, on the job communication and job readiness skills. After this initial period, students are placed in academic classes and soon thereafter, a vocational training program. Most students live on campus and typically remain in the program for approximately one year.

**What are the duties of a practicum trainee?**

The primary objective of the Job Corps Health and Wellness Program is to improve each student’s employability by establishing and maintiaining their optimal health. Practicum trainees work alongside other health staff (nurses, TEAP specialist, physician, dentist, and more) in a collaborative team approach where the importance of prevention and education, as well as intervention, is emphasized. The practicum placement is a rich training ground. After an initial orientation period, practicum trainees carry a substantial caseload of individual, generally short-term, therapy clients and may co-lead groups. Trainees often become involved in preventative health training activities around center and actively collaborate with relevant staff to ensure student success. Individual client sessions are designed to help Job Corps students overcome barriers (mental health or otherwise) that might impact their employability. The focus is typically short-term therapy (EAP model) with flexibility (longer term intervention) as needed. Some Job Corps centers additionally provide practicum trainees the opportunity to complete psychological assessments.