

## **Job Corps: Increasing Oversight and Focusing on Quality Assurance**

The safety and security of Job Corps students and employees is a top program priority. Job Corps is committed to serving young people who are overcoming huge challenges, and it was deeply concerned about reports of misconduct at Job Corps centers highlighted in news media reports in 2014. Job Corps has been putting measures in place to strengthen policies and procedures involving student safety, and it is working on additional measures to reform the overall program.

Over the last several months, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA), which oversees the Job Corps program, has moved to strengthen the accountability of center operators. ETA has clearly communicated with Job Corps staff and operators how seriously ETA takes these issues. It also has provided guidance on procedures and tools that will support Job Corps' ability to provide oversight of student safety and to take timely action to address issues when they occur.

In 2014, ETA conducted a broad review of Job Corps oversight and accountability systems and intensively reviewed program quality, student safety, and general center operations at all of the regional offices and at headquarters. Based on the review, Job Corps is taking the following actions:

- The Office of Job Corps is strengthening oversight of safety and security policies at centers to ensure consistent enforcement of Job Corps policies on student safety and consistent reporting of serious student misconduct to the national office.
- Job Corps is modernizing the Policy and Requirements Handbook, which governs centers and contractors, to strengthen personal safety and security, as well as quality controls on centers.
- Job Corps is now piloting an early warning tool that uses key indicators to predict emerging problems at centers. The tool will help Job Corps staff identify centers that potentially need increased monitoring.
- Regional Job Corps offices are increasing the use of unannounced visits to centers to focus on safety and performance issues.
- Job Corps regions have conducted data and file reviews in order to perform a risk assessment of each center. The results identified centers for on-site safety evaluations, which were conducted according to a new Center Safety Site Visit guide. This highly detailed protocol includes on-site data reviews, on-site interviews, and on-site focus groups with students and staff.
- ETA has started the process of centralizing quality assurance in the national Office of Job Corps to coordinate directly with regional offices and develop standardized operating procedures to address these problems. The President's Fiscal Year 2016 budget requests an increase of \$3.5 million to provide staff for this new division.

ETA will continue its emphasis on quality and performance in 2015. In the coming months, Job Corps knows it can count on the program's contractors and center operators. They have been indispensable partners, and their care and dedication to serving young people is inspiring. ETA in partnership with program operators is committed to helping Job Corps improve and expand opportunities for the nation's youth.