**Provide Reinstatement Rights to Students During COVID-19**

As students across the nation have transitioned to distance learning, schools across the country are struggling with how to address and overcome issues of equity particularly for low-income students that face additional barriers to engaging virtually at this time.[[1]](#footnote-1) In acknowledgement of this, the U.S. Department of Education is offering one year waivers to state requirements related to accountability for chronic absenteeism in public schools.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Job Corps serves among the most disadvantaged students in the country and many are facing numerous challenges related to participation in distance learning. The National Office Management Leave (NOML) currently only applies to students in an unstable living environment, which excludes hundreds of Job Corps students who would are expressing a desire to participate in distance learning but are unable to or are unable to participate at the levels currently required. In addition, NOML only applies for 30 days, at which point students must be separated from the program.

The Policy and Requirements Handbook already includes an existing Administrative Separation With Reinstatement (ASWR) status that applies to this situation: “For temporary or anticipated long-term center closure when designated by the Regional Office of Job Corps.”[[3]](#footnote-3) ASWR enables the expedited reinstatement of these students for up to 12 months. This would allow students who are currently unable to participate in distance learning to return to active duty status once they are able to participate and meet Job Corps’ requirements. For example, a student who is currently facing challenges participating because of a lack of technology could be reinstated once those issues are resolved.

**Recommendation:**

All Job Corps’ active students have already expressed a desire and commitment to be enrolled in normal Job Corps programming when they applied and enrolled in the Job Corps program. As such, we should assume their continued desire to participate in normal on-center Job Corps activities. Students that do not meet current distance learning requirements to remain in PDOF or NOML status, including unauthorized absences and unlocatable students, should be transitioned into ASWR. If students in ASWR status are subsequently able to meet distance learning requirements or return to the center, these students can then be reinstated. Only students who expressly convey a desire to withdraw from Job Corps should be separated.

1. Stein, P. “Low attendance and covid-19 have ravaged D.C.’s poorest schools. Fall will be about reconnecting.” Washington Post. May 10, 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/in-dc-schools-spring-was-ravaged-by-covid-and-disconnection-fall-will-be-about-catching-up/2020/05/10/60ad1774-8b3f-11ea-8ac1-bfb250876b7a_story.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “Fact Sheet: Impact of COVID-19 on Assessments and Accountability under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.” U.S. Department of Education. March, 12, 2020. Retrieved from: <https://oese.ed.gov/files/2020/03/COVID-19-OESE-FINAL-3.12.20.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. PRH Chapter 6.2 Student Enrollments, Transfers, and Separations R4 c.10. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)