**Job Corps Enrollments and Career Preparation Programming During Distance Learning Status**

**Submitted to**: Debra Carr, National Director, National Office of Job Corps

**Developed by**: Job Corps Operator Community

**References:**

Job Corps Program Instruction Notice No. 19-14: Spring Break March 16 through April 14, 2020

Job Corps Program Instruction Notice No. 19-17: Transition from Spring Break to Virtual Operating Status for COVID-19

JCDC Notice 19-198 Spring Break Transition (Issued Wednesday, May 6, 2020, 4:50 PM)

**Objective:**

To resume the enrollment of new students into Job Corps during the period of virtual operations and to utilize distance learning procedures to provide an effective “Career Preparation” program.

**Background:**

JCPIN 19-14 directed the physical closure of Job Corps centers effective March 16, 2020, sending all students home on Spring Break leave (with the exception of homeless students or those who could not be transported to their homes). The On-Board Strength (OBS) nationally at the start of Spring Break was slightly over 80% and very few student separations occurred during Spring Break. When Spring Break ended on May 11, 2020, a period of distance learning went into effect.

Distance learning is challenging for our Job Corps students. Many students are working; many do not have the technology to participate; many will soon be able to complete the program; and many are in unstable environments or are dealing with significant family issues that will cause them to drop out of the program. Consequently, without enrollments is likely that Job Corps could see a 25% decrease in OBS by the end of June 2020. That would leave Job Corps in the untenable situation of having enrollment at or below 50% of capacity.

It is therefore imperative that Job Corps begins to enroll the applicants that have been awaiting assignment since the center closures. Furthermore, Job Corps must continue to recruit new students, even during the period when centers remain physically closed, so that operations can ramp up quickly after centers are allowed to reopen.

There are currently several thousand applicants awaiting assignment to the Job Corps program. Admissions counselors continued to recruit for the program during Spring Break and now during the distance learning phase. While not all of these applicants will be able or willing to participate in Job Corps’ distance learning programs, many are anxious to begin. Additionally, there are many other young adults desperate for an opportunity to enroll in training that will prepare them for a career and a future. Job Corps can play a part in the economic recovery of the country and should act quickly to begin.

**Recommendation:**

The Job Corps operator community has developed the following recommendations to begin enrolling new students into Job Corps’ distance learning program.

New student enrollments will be to centers in the NEAP that offer the CTT training the students are requesting. Most of the PRH Chapter 1 and 3 requirements related to assignment and the delivery of Career Preparation Period services can be met through the use of technology. The use of the Google G-Suite, Google Meets, Google Hangouts and other applications will allow staff to meet and interact with students face-to-face for a variety of live interactions, thereby creating the personal connections and relationships that are necessary for Job Corps success. Through the use of technology staff will be able to provide both synchronous and asynchronous instruction in most of the required Career Preparation courses. There are several minor PRH items that will require a waiver which can easily be addressed when students physically arrive at their center. We further recommend some additions to the standard Career Preparation Program. Recognizing that centers may not open for several months, the duration of the virtual Career Preparation Period might be extended beyond 60 days, and can be enriched by the addition of Foundation Courses, academic remediation courses, or other content based on the student’s individual needs.

The key to the success of the virtual enrollment process will be the emphasis on consistent and frequent interactions between students and staff. Students must have live contact with one or more staff members each day. This may be in the form of counseling sessions, individual counselor or teacher discussions, or live instructor-delivered content. The utilization of a revised CPP Training Achievement Record, where students can see their progress toward completion of CPP requirements, will be an added incentive for students to continue to participate. The Office of Job Corps might consider a monetary award for completion of all required CPP components.

Some caveats exist for this approach to be successful:

1. New students **must** have access to a computer and internet access that is consistently functional and does not have to be shared with other family members. It is strongly recommended that new enrollees be issued a Chromebook computer with MiFi internet access as a standard component of enrollment. We strongly recommend that center operators be provided with the funding to purchase the computers for their own centers, using approved procurement procedures. Chromebook computers are available from local vendors immediately, without the wait indicated for the National Office purchase. With an outlay of approximately $22,500, centers can purchase 75 Chromebooks, with MiFI, and headphones. We are suggesting bi-weekly inputs of 15 students; therefore the 75 computers would provide necessary technology access for 5 input groups, covering a 10-week period. Students will be required to return the Chromebook computers to the center when they physically arrive.
2. Applicants must be evaluated for their ability to work independently in a virtual environment. It is recommended that Humanitas be tasked to prepare a screening survey to ascertain applicants’ ability and motivation to work independently. This survey would be administered to applicants prior to enrollment by Wellness staff or the Academic Disability Coordinator.
3. The requirement for a “pre-arrival drug screening” must be further defined. While the PRH currently says an initial drug screen must be performed “prior to the student’s arrival on center,” DOL should indicate that applicants will be allowed to enroll in the virtual program, and will take their initial drug screen upon physical arrival at a center.
4. Background checks are currently not happening in many locations. While these conditions are changing in some states, background checks may not be available for some time to come, and there will be a backlog. Since the main purpose of the background checks is to ensure the safety of staff and students at Job Corps centers by preventing the admission of students with a history of violence or other extreme antisocial behaviors, it is recommended that students be conditionally admitted to virtual Job Corps with the understanding that they will not be allowed to arrive physically at a Job Corps center until a clean background check has been received.

**Outreach/Admissions Procedures:**

* Provide DOL notice that OA providers are encouraged to conduct online information sessions and can accept electronic signatures. This direction has been inconsistent among Regions.
* Update PRH language to ensure usage of e-folders. Current language does not require e-folders.
* Eliminate the PCDP requirement – it is no longer used and has been replaced by the MyPACE PAR.
* Ensure that all OA providers provide virtual center tours and information.
* Provide temporary DOL waivers for applicants who cannot obtain background checks, medical records, IEPs, Disability Documents, etc. until they can be obtained; it will be understood that these must be received and evaluated prior to allowing students to arrive on centers.
* Provide DOL waivers for recommendations for in-school youth applicants from high schools.
* Reengage with all current applicants to inform them about virtual enrollment and determine if they are still interested in enrollment.
* Create a syllabus and virtual sessions administered by ACs to better prepare applicants for distance learning. It should include the following topics: CDC Guidelines for Workplace/Distance Learning acceptable behavior; MyPACE introduction; TEAP expectations; general center information.
* Prior to official enrollment, center Wellness and Disability Coordinator will conduct individual assessments to determine applicant suitability for distance learning and independent study based on a review of IEPs, motivation, etc., using the assessment developed by Humanitas. If student is not suitable for virtual enrollment, they will be offered enrollment at a future date when the center is re-opened.
* Conduct basic training on the use of the Chromebook and the various DL platforms to be used during enrollment. This will help students to be able to function on the first day of enrollment, using their assigned Chromebook.

**Center Enrollment Procedures:**

* Provision of equipment and supplies: Upon official notice of enrollment, students will be shipped a package from the center containing their Chromebook, a flash drive, headphones, notebook, pencils and pen, a copy of the Student Handbook, a directory of staff contact email and phone numbers, a welcome letter and a schedule of activities for the coming weeks. This will include a complete schedule for the first day of distance learning. Students will also be sent electronic new arrival documents to complete (such as EFT Debit Card Enrollment, W-4, and Designation of Beneficiary Forms) to sign electronically. Center staff will contact each student individually to confirm receipt and to answer questions and welcome the student. Students will be required to sign for the computer and confirm their understanding that it cannot be sold, given away, or damaged, and that it must be returned to the center when the student actually physically arrives on center. When the Records Department receives completed new arrival documents, this date will signify the student’s arrival/enrollment date, and be entered into CIS.
* Cohort enrollment: Students enroll in cohort groups (10-15 students) that meet in Virtual Orientation and Career Preparation groups using Google G-Suite, Google Meets, Google Hangouts or Web-ex sessions. These groups are conducted by center staff, including a welcome session by management, introduction to Counseling, Wellness, and Career Preparation staff, and introduction to other members of the student cohort group. This is an essential step to build a feeling of group affiliation and belonging which will encourage students to stay connected to the center. It is recommended that new cohorts begin no sooner than every two weeks as the scheduling and staff utilization required to conduct the first week effectively will be intensive.
* Assessment of Basic Information Technology Skills: Students will receive group instruction on the use of the Chromebook computers, internet connectivity, various technology delivery platforms, as well as individual instruction for specific issues or problems that arise. Center MIS staff will make the presentation, and his/her contact information will be available to students if they encounter technical issues. Centers must be certain that students are comfortable with the new technology and procedures that the center will use to conduct the program through distance learning before proceeding with any additional instruction.
* Assignment to a student mentor: Centers will assign each new student an experienced student mentor to provide aid and support with any issues that arise, during or after the training day.
* Attendance and participation: Students in the virtual CPP program will be expected to complete all assignments and submit required documents to their CPP or other instructor. It is anticipated that approximately four hours per day will be assigned.

**Career Preparation Program:**

* Introduction to Center Life, Chapter 3.3, R-1: The majority of the requirements of Section R-1 will be conducted via live sessions over the first five days of enrollment. Various center staff will conduct the following required sessions using synchronous instruction: Job Corps’ mission; the Career Development Services System (CDSS); Career Success Standards; Assessment Testing; Evaluation of Student Progress (ESP); Student Rights and Responsibilities; Standards of Conduct; Equal Opportunity, Civil, Legal, and Religious Rights; Sexual Harassment and Anti-Bullying policies; Student Government and Leadership Programs; Student Benefits – Allowances and Allotments; Accountability, Leave, and Absence policies; Health and Wellness services, including Trainee Employee Assistance Program and Disability program (e.g., reasonable accommodation); Safety; and Wellness. NOTE: Required sessions related to dorm life, center dress code, recreation, CDC Guidelines, etc., will not be addressed at this time, but will be conducted when these students are preparing to arrive on center.

**Student Assessments** (Chapter 3.3, R7)**:**

* Student Initial Counseling Sessions: Social Intakes will be conducted within the first two days of enrollment through an individual virtual meeting between a student and his/her counselor. Counselors will assess student issues as required in Chapter 3.3, R-7.
* Wellness Assessment: Medical status (entrance physical and dental examinations) per Chapter 2, Section 2.3, R2-R4 will be conducted via virtual meeting between the center’s Wellness Manager, Dentist and the student, using a format developed by Humanitas. Any issues that are uncovered will result in the student being referred to a local walk-in clinic or to their personal physician.
* Assessment of Level of Academic Achievement: Student’s academic achievement will be determined by a review of High School transcripts, IEPs, and scores from the initial TABE test. TABE testing, including the locator test, is available on-line and is provided by DRC Insights. Students will take the TABE locator test on line during the first week of enrollment. DRC has the ability for virtual proctoring of these tests. Information for staff training and procedures can be found at: <https://tabetest.com/> .

**Career Exploration** (Chapter 3.3, R9):

* The student and staff features of the MyPACE Career Development program have been revamped for delivery through the distance learning approach. A full explanation of the system and its features within the digital environment can be found on the Job Corps Community Website as well as within the MyPACE program. Through completing the 30 lessons within the MyPACE platform, students are directed through an extensive plan for personal and career exploration. All required components are developed for synchronous and asynchronous learning, which is ideal for the distance learning environment. Many video conferencing platforms and the Google classroom allow users to record sessions, making it more accessible to students who have scheduling conflicts. Instructors can set aside virtual office hours for students who cannot make it to the synchronous class or who need further instruction to support their learning. A MyPACE Message inbox is provided for student communication. As all elements of MyPACE are accessible online for all students, it is the ideal program to guide students through career exploration.
* Students will complete the 30 MyPACE lessons on line, with live interaction with the CPP instructors, during the first five weeks of the CPP program. These lessons will assist the student to focus on a long-range career goal which will be the basis of their Job Corps enrollment.
* The results of all of the student assessments are compiled and provided to the student by the Counselor. At this point an individual virtual meeting is initiated between the student and his/her Career Management Team to assist the student to develop a Pathway Achievement Record to guide all subsequent activities, including selection of a Career Pathway, development of short, medium, and long-range goals, selection of a vocational offering, and development of an appropriate academic program.
* Overview of CTT offerings: CTT instructors will provide an overview of the CTT offerings at the assigned center through virtual meetings, and students will be offered a virtual tour of the classrooms and equipment in the student’s top three trades. Students will then be assigned an independent project to research their career choice using the DOL Career One Stop website (https://www.careeronestop.org/).
* Registration at Local One-Stop: Staff will guide students through the process to register virtually at their local One Stop. If these offices are physically open, students will be advised to visit the One Stop in person, with strong recommendations related to following CDC guidelines.

**Other Career Preparation Required Courses:**

* Financial Literacy: Students will learn about banking, credit, savings, loans, etc. in a self-paced on-line program that offers tests and completion certificates after each unit. <https://moneysmartcbi.fdic.gov/student/> and <https://protect-us.mimecast.com/s/htMBCKrBJ7I2LVlnT30CMK?domain=fdic.gov>
* Career Success Standards (Chapter 3.3 R11): Centers will provide each student with an introduction to all eight Career Success Standards and an overview of the standards of conduct for the center. Each center will use its current Career Success materials to teach each of the skills to the cohort group, covering one lesson a day using synchronous instruction.
* Customer Service (Chapter 3.3, R14): Staff will guide students through the concept of customer service using current center materials or a series of videos that are available on YouTube (<https://www.insightsquared.com/blog/the-top-10-customer-service-videos-on-youtube/>).
* Conflict Resolution (Chapter 3.3, R15): Centers have the option of teaching their current material through virtual classes or can choose from a number of online courses for student self-study and certification (e.g. <https://www.online.colostate.edu/free-online-courses/conflict-management/>).
* Introduction to Information Technology (Chapter 3.3, R16): Centers will use their current curricula to expand on the initial IT training provided during week 1 of CPP.
* Driver’s License (Chapter 3.3, R 22): For those students who do not already possess a license or driver’s permit, centers will provide the student with a copy of the “Rules of the Road” manual for the student’s home state or may direct them to the online version for the state of residence. If a number of students are from the same state, the center could set up a virtual study group to prepare for the permit exam. Behind-the wheel instruction will occur once the student arrives on center.

**Transition to CDP:**

It is uncertain when centers will be able to physically re-open and there will most likely be a staggered approach based upon the health department guidance in the state where each center is located. Knowing that some centers will not be physically open when the initial input groups of students begin to complete CPP, centers will have several options based on the student’s CTT choices and willingness/ability to continue in the virtual environment:

**Option 1**. Centers can assign students to virtual “foundation courses.” There are currently foundation courses for Construction, Health Care and Service Sectors available. Depending on the student’s CTT choice, they could be assigned to complete on line course work for Serv-Safe, OSHA, CPR or other secondary certification courses. These courses include the foundational academic skills that are required for success in each CTT offering.

**Option 2.** Centers can move students into the CDP phase virtually, where they can participate in the same manner as current students, and begin their academic coursework and CTT TAR. This will prepare them to hit the ground running when centers physically reopen.