



# **Job Training: Addendum 1**

## **AFL-CIO 2008 Transition Project**

### **Recommendations for the Obama Administration**

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#### **Job Corps**

##### **Description**

The **Job Corps** is a job training and education program for disadvantaged youth, between the ages of 16 and 24, that operates through 122 residential centers in the US and Puerto Rico. Authorized by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the Job Corps serves approximately 62,000 persons annually, providing a combination of career development services, training in more than 100 occupational areas, classroom education, income support and post-graduation placement services. Job Corps centers are operated by private contractors, including non-profit organizations and profit-making enterprises.

Vocational and technical training programs at nearly all of the Job Corps centers nationwide are provided by a network of National Training Contractors (NTCs). The NTCs are an integral part of Jobs Corps history, having sustained these partnership for 40 years. The NTCs have built a skilled workforce for the construction and transportation trades by providing students with pre-apprenticeship training leading to productive careers at family-sustaining wages and benefits. The NTCs include the Masonry Institute, the Operating Engineers National Training Fund, the Painters union, the Plasterers' Joint Apprenticeship Trust, the Transportation-Communications Union, the Carpenters Training Fund, and the UAW/Labor, Employment and Training Corp. These seven labor-related organizations receive as much as \$50 million per year (by sole source contract) to deliver these services.

NTC programs have been highly successful in placing participants. For Program Year 2007 (July 1, 2007, through June 30, 2008), the most recently completed Program Year for which Government data is available, NTC-operated programs far out-performed Center-operated programs in every category measured by the U.S. Department of Labor. This includes perhaps the most important measure: the number of graduates that continued to be employed six months following initial placement and their weekly earnings. The greatest disparity in performance is the percentage of graduates placed in registered Apprenticeship, the most promising career path for graduates. For this measure, the NTCs outperform Center-operated vocational programs by more than 90 percent.

The Office of Job Corps is currently administered by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of the Secretary. For more than 40 years, this \$1.6 billion residential education and training program for at-risk youth was administered by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA). A provision in a Congressional appropriations bill moved the Office of the Job Corps out of ETA.

##### **Key Priorities for a New Administration**



a. Priorities for Day 1 – None

b. Priorities for First Hundred Days

**1. Leadership: Replace the Current National Director, Office of Job Corps**

Job Corps Program is in need of new leadership that can redirect the Program to achieving its statutory mission of preparing at risk youth for entry-level jobs. The Program design promoted by the incumbent National Director, and currently being implemented, emphasizes academic preparation over vocational training, and college enrollment over job placement. This philosophy and operating approach, labeled “The New Vision,” distorts the long-standing Congressional purpose of the Program, ignores the interests and capabilities of most enrollees, and duplicates Federal, State and local programs whose purpose is to assist young persons to gain entrance into institutions of higher learning.

c. Priorities for First Year

**1. Return Program to the Employment and Training Administration, DOL**

The great majority of workforce development programs funded by Congress operate within DOL’s ETA, which has direct oversight for the administration of federal job training programs, including programs that serve youth. We understand that President-elect Obama is committed to enhancing youth programs to address the crisis of our nation’s rising high school dropout rate and the need for skilled entry-level workers who are equipped to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. There is also discussion regarding increased collaboration among federal youth education and training programs. The realignment of Job Corps to ETA would be a critical step to accomplish this goal.

The financial and contractual aspects of administering this comprehensive program would be streamlined with the return to ETA oversight. When the Office of Job Corps was relocated, key administrative functions, including budget, procurement, human resources, and public relations were divided among several departments, including the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration and Management (OASAM). This arrangement has resulted in significant delays and confusion in the contracting process and the allocation of funds. It has severely limited the coordination of employment and training programs at the National, State and local level.

Although the Office of the Secretary assigned staff to manage various components of the Job Corps program, unintended consequences for Job Corps has included a significant backlog in critical administrative oversight and approval processes. This has severely impacted the efficient operation of this \$1.6 billion program on a national scale that has, in turn, impacted every single Job Corps center and every young man and woman served by this program. Restoring the Office of the Job Corps to the ETA would promote the efficient operation of the program.