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# A. Justification

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This submission requests approval of three primary and two secondary data collection instruments that will be used to collect follow-up data about individuals who are no longer actively participating in Job Corps. These youths either graduated from Job Corps or stayed in the program at least 60 days but left before completing graduation requirements (former enrollees). These data collection activities will be conducted with the following groups of recent Job Corps participants:

- Former enrollees who were placed in a job or school program. This group will be contacted 90 days after separation.
- Graduates who were placed in a job or school program. This group will be contacted 90 days after initial placement.
- Graduates who were placed in a job or school program. This group will be contacted 6 months after initial placement.
- Graduates who were placed in a job or school program. This group will be contacted 12 months after initial placement.

The data collection instrument for graduates 90 to 120 days after their initial placement is called Interim Checkpoint for Eligibility (ICFE). Administration of the ICFE at this time will facilitate the key data collection at 6 and 12 months. The rationale for conducting the ICFE is explained in further detail in Section A6 (Consequences of Less Frequent Data Collection). This submission also requests approval for two brief questionnaires (one for employers and one for schools or training institutions) that will be used to collect re-verification data about initial placement for the subset of placed graduates and former enrollees that cannot be contacted directly.

To maximize the comparability of the data collected from the different subgroups of students, the ICFE, the 90-day follow-up for former enrollees, and the 6-month and 12-month follow-up sections of the data collection instruments use modules with identical sets of questions on the same topics. The questions are designed to obtain:

- Data to re-verify the initial job or school placements of placed graduates and former enrollees (only in the instruments administered at 90 days and the ICFE)
- Information about employment experiences in the previous week
- Information about educational experiences in the previous week
- Summary information about the work, school, and job search activities of those who were neither working nor in school the previous week
- Information about satisfaction with the services provided by Job Corps

An overview of the modules included in the three primary data collection instruments is provided in **Appendix A**. Additionally, scripts used in the administration of all survey modules are provided in **Appendix B**.

## **A1. Circumstances Necessitating the Data Collection**

Job Corps is the nation's largest and most comprehensive residential education and job training program for at-risk youths, ages 16 through 24. Job Corps was originally established by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. The program was transferred from the Office of Economic Opportunity to the Department of Labor in 1969. Job Corps was later authorized as part of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (1978) under Title IV-B, and this authorization continued as part of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) of 1982. Currently, the program is administered federally through the Office of the Secretary, National Office of Job Corps. The Job Corps program comprises 6 regional offices and 122 Job Corps centers nationwide.

Job Corps participants are typically high school dropouts in need of further education and technical training. Most Job Corps participants live on campus, but in some centers, youths from local areas can commute to centers for training. As an open-entry, open-exit program, Job Corps admits and graduates students throughout the year. Generally, these students are economically disadvantaged ethnic minorities who live in communities that do not foster favorable education or employment outcomes. Job Corps offers these youths academic and career technical training, social skills training, personal and career counseling, health care, and other supportive services. During their Job Corps tenure, students can obtain their secondary school credential, learn a business or trade through the vocational training program, and participate in work-related training that is intended to make them marketable in jobs that pay a living wage. Students who obtain their high school diploma (or its equivalent) or complete their career technical training are considered to be program graduates.

Upon graduation from Job Corps, youths are prepared to pursue employment opportunities, additional educational and training experiences, or enter the Armed Forces. Career development specialists at Job Corps are responsible for assisting graduates and former enrollees (students who leave the program after 60 days without a credential and do not violate Job Corps' drug or violence policy) with finding a job or enrolling in a school or training program. Career development specialists also help students create resumes and prepare for interviews. Job Corps has recently enhanced its placement services to graduates by expanding the period of eligibility for placement services to 12 months after they leave the center and by providing more intensive services through the Career Development Service System (CDSS). Former enrollees who leave Job Corps without a credential are eligible for up to 3 months of placement services upon termination from Job Corps.

As a result of recent legislation, the Job Corps program is implementing significant changes in its operations. The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, which is Public Law 105-220 (see **Appendix E**), represents a major reform of the nation's job training system. The reforms

introduced by this legislation are intended to provide workers with the information, advice, job search assistance, and training necessary to get and keep good jobs. Job Corps is identified in this legislative reform as a publicly financed program for providing job training for youths. The WIA mandates additional reporting requirements for certain classes of Job Corps participants.

Sections 159c1(D), (E), (F), and (G) of the WIA legislation stipulate that the following information about graduates be provided:

- Their average wage on the first day of employment, 6 months after the first day, and 12 months after the first day
- The number who entered and remained in unsubsidized employment 6 months and 12 months after the first day of employment
- The number employed 32 hours per week or more; not less than 20 but less than 32 hours per week; and less than 20 hours per week
- The number who entered postsecondary or advanced training programs

Section 159d of the act mandates that the Job Corps collect and report to the Secretary of Labor specific information about the status of former enrollees. According to the WIA, the National Office of Job Corps must provide information about the performance of each center and about the larger program with respect to the number of former enrollees who:

- Entered the Armed Forces
- Entered postsecondary education
- Entered unsubsidized employment related to the vocational training received through the Job Corps program
- Entered unsubsidized employment not related to the vocational training received through the Job Corps program
- Received a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent

Although the WIA allows for the placement of former enrollees by Job Corps, placement services are required only for students who graduate from the program. Section 159d of the new legislation requires that the Job Corps provide job placement information about former enrollees who may have obtained jobs or admission to educational programs without the assistance of Job Corps.

Besides providing the National Office of Job Corps with information about placed graduates, this data collection will provide similar information about former enrollees 90 days after they separate from Job Corps. This data collection effort also includes re-verification of initial work and school placements of graduates and former enrollees. The effort to re-verify initial work and school placements is consistent with recommendations by the Office of the Inspector General (in *Adopting Best Practices Can Improve Placement Services to Students Terminating From the Job Corps Program* report, 1988) that the Job Corps “monitor the services provided by placement contractors to ensure that contract requirements are being met and students are receiving quality placement services.”

Thus, the objectives of collecting these data are to:

- Provide yearly information to Congress and the Secretary of Labor about the employment and education outcomes of Job Corps graduates and former enrollees according to the WIA reporting requirements;
- Assess graduates' and former enrollees' satisfaction with their Job Corps experience in order to identify aspects of the program that were useful to participants and to identify factors that contributed to decisions to withdraw from the program before graduation

To fulfill these objectives, IMPAQ will use the three primary instruments identified in **Appendix C** and the two secondary instruments identified in **Appendix D** to collect data. Telephone interviews will be conducted with graduates and former enrollees or their employers and educational institutions at specified times (see **Appendix A**). IMPAQ will obtain identifying information about graduates and former enrollees from the Job Corps Data Center (JCDC) and will use this data to identify the initial work or school placement status of graduates and former enrollees after they leave Job Corps and to find out where they can be contacted.

The Office of Job Corps is seeking continued OMB clearance to use these data collection instruments with Job Corps graduates and former enrollees. The draft data collection instruments for review are included in **Appendix C**.

## **A2. How, by Whom, and for What Purposes the Information Is to be Used**

Congress and the Secretary of Labor will use the data collected with these instruments to assess the effectiveness of the Job Corps program in meeting its objectives under the Workforce Investment Act. The National Office of Job Corps will incorporate these data into the Outcome Measurement System to evaluate the short-term postcenter outcomes of graduates and former enrollees and the long-term postcenter outcomes of graduates. The Job Corps program will use the information about student outcomes and the customer feedback about satisfaction with specific services to develop or refine policies in order to improve the delivery of educational and job training services to at-risk youths.

## **A3. Use of Technology to Reduce Burden**

The data collection instruments will be programmed into a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) system for ongoing survey administration. This automated system performs a range of response checks and complex skip patterns, and it also checks for internal consistency. Additionally, CATI provides automated scheduling, callback, and on-line data storage, which make it easier to control the sample, monitor the study, and reduce data entry costs. Automated interviewing reduces burden by speeding up the interviewing process and by reducing the number of interviewer errors that result in callbacks.

#### **A4. Efforts to Identify Duplication**

No existing source of data can meet the specific data reporting requirements of the Workforce Investment Act. Although Section 159e notes that the Secretary of Labor may collect information on former Job Corps students by using quarterly wage records, such records do not include information about wage rates, hours worked, jobs held in a different state, and jobs that are not covered by unemployment insurance (UI). In addition, UI wage records do not provide any information about enrollment in school or training programs, which is a key program outcome. All of the information referred to must be collected to meet the WIA objectives, and currently, no significant or systematic efforts are being made by the National Office of Job Corps to collect the data. The instruments presented in this application have been designed to collect this information.

#### **A5. Methods to Minimize Burden on Small Businesses**

This data collection effort will place minimal burden on small businesses. Businesses will only be contacted when former enrollees and graduates who were initially placed in a job cannot be reached to conduct the Former Enrollee Survey (FES) or the ICFE. To provide comprehensive information about placements, employers will only be contacted to re-verify youths' reported placement status. IMPAQ will follow a similar practice for individuals who are placed in a school or training program but who cannot be reached to complete the FES or the ICFE. In other words, we will contact the educational institutions only to re-verify the initial placement. Because employers and educational institutions will be used only as backup sources for this information and will be asked only those questions related to re-verification, the burden on small businesses will be minimal. The brief re-verification instruments for employers and educational institutions are included in **Appendix D**.

#### **A6. Consequences of Less Frequent Data Collection**

Since the information from former enrollees will be obtained through a single administration of the instrument, the only issue pertaining to the frequency of data collection concerns the plan for placed graduates. Placed graduates will be contacted three times—90 to 120 days (to complete the ICFE), 6 months, and 12 months after their initial placement. The WIA mandates contacts with placed graduates at 6 and 12 months after their initial placement. Thus, only the ICFE for placed graduates at 90 to 120 days is not mandated by legislation.

The ICFE contact at 90 to 120 days with placed graduates is included in the plan for the following reasons:

- The re-verification questions are included only in the ICFE. Attempting to collect re-verification information as part of the 6-month survey would be more difficult and reduce the reliability of the information.
- The ICFE will collect valuable contact information that will enhance the response rates for the critical surveys to be administered at 6 and 12 months.
- Having consistent outcome data for placed graduates at 90 to 120 days that can be compared to the outcome data for placed former enrollees at 90 days will be valuable for the Job Corps.

## **A7. Special Circumstances for Data Collection**

These data collection efforts do not involve any special circumstances.

## **A8. Federal Register Notice and Consultation outside the Agency**

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, the public was given 60 days to review the Federal Register Notice (**FR dated March 12, 2009, Vol. 74, No. 47, Pgs. 10776-10778**.) The National Office received no comments from the public concerning this FRN.

## **A9. Payment or Gifts to Respondents**

To meet the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act, the Job Corps developed the Career Development Services System (CDSS) to provide ongoing services to program graduates for up to one year after their initial placement. A key element of this system involves regular contacts between the student and his or her career transition specialist. To encourage students to maintain contact with Job Corps, the Career Information System (CIS) has been revised to provide graduates with a transitional allowance and post-separation incentives: payments paid upon completion of the ICFE (\$10), the 6-month follow-up survey (\$15), and the 12-month follow-up survey (\$20). Because the system for former enrollees limits placement services to 90 days, no additional incentives are offered for former enrollees to remain in contact with Job Corps.

## **A10. Confidentiality Assurances**

This survey will be conducted in accordance with all relevant regulations and requirements, including the Privacy Act of 1974 (5 USC 552a), the Privacy Act Regulations (34 CFR Part 5b), and the Freedom of Information Act (5 CFR 552) and its related regulations (41 CFR Part 1-1, 45 CFR Part 5b, and 40 CFR 44502). Until May 2007, information was retrieved from respondents, retained in databases, and communicated between Job Corps Data Center (JCDC) and the data collection contractor using individual identifiers. The Job Corps Data Center, IMPAQ, and Battelle maintain systems to manage and protect these databases and data transfers between these entities.

In May 2007, in an effort to proactively support Job Corps's commitment to securing Personal Identifiable Information (PII), the Job Corps National Office proposed a practical solution to address this community-wide security concern. Specifically, in May 2007 all aspects of the data collection process were consolidated under the secure network environment provided and maintained by the JCDC. IMPAQ worked closely with the JCDC to secure the servers that housed respondent survey data and contact information by moving the servers to JCDC's Maine location. The application was modified to be accessible via Citrix, JCDC's preferred secure method.

The JCDC takes several steps to insure the safety and integrity of the student data housed at its facilities in Austin, TX and Limestone, ME. All student data is housed on a central server, in a secured computer room in a locked building on the fenced and guarded facility. There are several layers of system security. First, the server network is a private network. The network is protected from the Internet by a series of layered firewalls, access control lists, and intrusion detection systems.

All Job Corps employees enter data into the system through the private network. All users must have a valid user ID and password (which is changed every 90 days) to enter the system. Additional security is obtained through the use of application level user IDs and passwords and specific permission applied at the database level. The integrity of the data is insured by running daily validation programs that submit the data to a set of pre-approved business rules established by the Job Corps National Office. In order to secure the integrity of the data during transmission to the data collection contractors, the JCDC has established 128 bit encrypted Citrix sessions from the data collection center operators to the JCDC. All of IMPAQ and Battelle survey staff have completed security awareness training and have access to Citrix environment and the CDSS suite of applications.

Additionally, the contractor and subcontractor survey sites are maintained in accordance with the Guide for Developing Security Plans for Information Technology Systems (NIST Special Pub 800-18) posted by The National Institute of Standards and Technology's Computer Security Resource Center. Internal access to individual records within the database and the ability to access data transmissions between the Job Corps Data Center and the data collection contractor are controlled



by all appropriate security measures, including controlled user names, passwords, profile name, host name, firewall security IDs, and crypto cards. Transfer of data occurs only via Citrix, ensuring a secure means of communication for the data collection contractors and the Job Corps Data Center.

Additionally, the personal computers (PCs) in staff offices that are wired to the network are located within the same building as the network drive. The PCs are accessible only after providing individual user passwords that must be changed on a regular basis. Screensavers are installed on all PCs, set to activate after ten minutes, and can only be released through the individual user's password. PC passwords are not physically documented; therefore, loss of access may be recouped only by the reassignment of a password by the information systems staff.

All respondents are told that completing the interview is voluntary and that the information they provide will not be shared with anyone outside of the Job Corps community. Answers to some questions in the instrument will be provided to appropriate agency staff (for example, information that results in questioning the validity of the initial placement will be reported to Job Corps Regional Office staff for follow-up), and answers to other questions will be reported at the individual level in the Job Corps Outcome Measurement System (for example, placement and wage status at 6 and 12 months); therefore, it is not possible to guarantee to respondents that their answers will not be released to anyone. However, respondents will be assured that Job Corps will use the collected data only for program evaluation purposes and that their answers will not be shared with anyone outside of Job Corps.

The policies and procedures maintained at IMPAQ and Battelle are designed to protect the confidentiality of data. IMPAQ and Battelle require all CATI center staff to sign pledges to protect respondents' confidentiality. Additionally, the issues of confidentiality will be addressed in training sessions for all staff involved with the administration of the data collection instruments. Access to sample selection data will be limited to those who have direct responsibility for sample selection. Individual identifying information will be maintained separately from hardcopy collection forms and from computerized data files prepared for conducting the analysis.

To protect the confidentiality of respondents, it is important not to release data into public use files or to present results in reports so that individuals can be identified. Data collected through the instruments presented here will not be made publicly available. Job Corps staff or contractors will analyze data for purposes of program management and quality improvement. Nonetheless, reports that use these data will be handled in a manner that eliminates the possibility of compromising confidentiality. Job Corps staff and contractors will follow commonly accepted guidelines (what the Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology calls the Threshold Rule) and display only aggregated data when there are more than three cases in a cell table. When there are three or fewer cases in a cell table, tabular data will be presented by combining categories or suppressing cells to ensure the elimination of possible individual identities. Given the size of Job Corps centers and the monthly year-to-date aggregation of data, the data presented in any cell table will most likely represent information from at least four observations.

## A11. Additional Justification for Sensitive Questions

For the most part, the data collection instruments submitted for clearance do not include questions of a sensitive or personal nature. In any case, all respondents will be assured of confidentiality at the outset of the interview and will be informed that they do not have to answer questions with which they are uncomfortable. The only questions that may be of a sensitive nature for some respondents pertain to wages and income from employment. Income from employment is an important indicator of economic self-sufficiency, and wage and earnings measures are specifically required by the WIA legislation. IMPAQ and Battelle have found that wage and income questions, when asked in a matter-of-fact manner, are not refused significantly more than other items.

Moreover, all of the questions concerning wages and income have been successfully pretested, and similar questions have been used extensively in previous instruments with no evidence of adverse consequences. Additionally, the survey instrument is equipped to accommodate respondents who are uncomfortable providing a specific wage by allowing their answers to be coded in ranges. Specifically, similar questions about wages and income from employment were used in the "Evaluation of the Impact of the Job Corps Program on Participants' Post-Program Labor Market and Related Behavior" study (OMB 1205-0351 expiration date 10/96).

## A12. Estimates of the Burden of Data Collection

This data collection is envisioned as an annual process that will support the administration of approximately 73,373 Job Corps telephone interviews. The interviews require an average of 10 to 15 minutes. These administration times are based on past experience in using these instruments.

The combined reporting burden for respondents associated with this data collection effort is anticipated to be about 15,593 hours, as shown in Table 1.

*Table 1. Estimates of Respondent Burden*

<b>Respondent Category</b>	<b>Number Of Respondents</b>	<b>Average Time (hours) per Respondent</b>	<b>Estimated Hours</b>
Placed Former Enrollees at 90 days	1,824	0.25	456
Placed Graduates at 90-120 days	21,330	0.25	5,333
Placed Graduates at Six Months	22,420	0.20	4,484
Placed Graduates at 12 Months	19,794	0.20	3,959
Employer/Institution Re-Verification	8,005	0.17	1,361
<b>Total</b>	<b>73,373</b>		<b>15,593</b>

Costs to respondents are limited to the time they will spend being interviewed by telephone. For employer/institution verifications, this also includes time spent faxing responses or completing verifications over the telephone.

Table 2 shows the estimated costs to respondents, based on hourly rate data from follow up surveys conducted in 2008. These hourly rates are the mean wages reported by survey respondents in each category. A standard hourly rate of \$25.00 per hour is used for estimating the costs of responses for employers and educational institutions.

The total estimated cost of the burden for respondents is approximately \$167,419 per year. This burden is offset by the incentive payments totaling approximately \$945,480 (See section A14 for calculation) that will be provided to many of the respondents for remaining in contact with the follow-up system for services and tracking.

**Table 2. Estimated Cost to Respondents**

<b>Respondent Category</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>	<b>Total Number of Hours</b>	<b>Hourly Rate</b>	<b>Estimated Data Collection Cost to Respondents</b>	<b>Estimated Data Collection Cost per Respondent</b>
Placed former enrollees at 90 days	1,824	456	\$8.17	\$3,726	\$2.04
Placed graduates at 90 to 120 days	21,330	5,333	\$9.15	\$48,797	\$2.29
Placed graduates at 6 months	22,420	4,484	\$9.48	\$42,508	\$1.90
Placed graduates at 12 months	19,794	3,959	\$9.69	\$38,363	\$1.94
Employer/Institution Re-Verification	8,005	1,361	\$25.00	\$34,025	\$4.25
<b>Totals</b>	<b>73,373</b>	<b>15,593</b>		<b>\$167,419</b>	

Total Respondent Burden Cost: \$167,419  
 Total Burden Hours: 15,593

### **A13. Estimated Cost of the Survey**

There are no costs to the respondents for participating in this survey. All telephone or postage costs for contacting the respondents are borne by the federal government through the data collection contractors.

#### **A14. Estimates of Annual Costs to the Federal Government**

The estimated cost of funding this data collection effort in 2008 was \$2,712,035 dollars. This estimate includes the ongoing maintenance of the infrastructure needed to administer the CATI system, ongoing data communication to and from the Job Corps Data Center, data collection using telephone interviews from trained staff who are non-Job Corps employees, data processing including coding of occupational and industry information, and preparation of summary data tabulations. Supervision of this total system is also included here. This cost does not include one-time expenditures that will not recur in the future.

Approximately 60% of the cost is budgeted for labor. Approximately 5% of the cost is budgeted for long distance phone service, and approximately 7% of the cost is budgeted for equipment including the CATI facilities.

Additionally, the incentive system used to help ensure that graduates remain in contact with the Job Corps system will cost approximately \$945,480 annually (Table 3). The incentive system allots \$10, \$15, and \$20 payments to graduates for each survey completed. The payments correspond to the 90 to 120 Day survey, the 6 month survey, and the 12 month survey.

*Table 3. Incentive Payments*

<b>Graduate Surveys</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Incentive</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b>Placed graduates at 90 to 120 days</b>	21,330	\$10	\$213,330
<b>Placed graduates at 6 months</b>	22,420	\$15	\$336,300
<b>Placed graduates at 12 months</b>	19,794	\$20	\$395,880
<b>Totals</b>	<b>63,544</b>		<b>\$945,480</b>

Altogether, the total cost per completed interview for this data collection is estimated at approximately \$57.56 for the Job Corps placement re-verification and follow-up system.

#### **A15. Changes in Burden**

The slight adjustment downward in respondents and corresponding burden hours is due to adjustments made since the initial submission. They more accurately reflect the actual surveys conducted to date, since there has been a decline in the number of graduates available to be surveyed in recent years.

Also the cost burden of \$179,000, included in #12 above, was removed from ROCIS, where it was included inadvertently as a cost to respondents (thereby attributed erroneously to #13 above) in the previous submission.

## **A16. Tabulation and Publication Plans and Time Schedules for the Project**

The data collected from the instruments will serve three primary purposes. First, the data will be used to fulfill part of the performance measurement and reporting requirements for the Job Corps program specified in WIA. Second, data will be used for independent verification of contractor-reported outcomes regarding initial and longer-term placement and wages. Such information is used in determining incentive and award fees as part of the performance-based service contracts through which Job Corps operates centers and post-center services. Finally, the information collected will support the continuous program improvement activities regularly conducted by the Office of Job Corps and program operators. Although the same data collection instruments support all the purposes, the analysis plan, reporting plan, and time schedule for each will differ.

Performance measurement results will be calculated and published on a monthly basis at the center, regional, and national levels. These reports will include the following measures:

- the proportion of initially placed graduates who are still placed in a job or schooling program at 6 months
- the average weekly earnings of placed graduates at 6 months
- the proportion of initially placed graduates who are still placed in a job or schooling program at 12 months
- the average weekly earnings of placed graduates at 12 months.

As part each contractor's performance measurement, data from the 90-day surveys of former enrollees and graduates who were identified as placed in a job or school program are used by the National Office of Job Corps to reverify the reports provided by those contractors. Reports of questionable placements (QPs), i.e., those that fail to meet Job Corps' criteria for hours employed or enrolled in school and/or minimum wages, are produced either from the survey data or from employer/school verification mechanisms. QP reports are provided to the Job Corps Regional Offices for follow up with the reporting contractor to determine whether the reported placement will be disallowed for the performance report for that contractor. These QP reports are for internal contractor monitoring and management purposes only and are not published nor made public.

## **A17. Approval Not to Display OMB Expiration Date**

Because instruments will be administered as computer-assisted telephone interviews, no hardcopy instruments will contain the printed expiration date for OMB approval. However, in conducting follow-up activities with employers and schools to re-verify students' initial placement, it is anticipated that respondents will sometimes prefer to complete a hardcopy version of the instrument rather than a telephone interview. In such cases, the questionnaire will be mailed or sent via facsimile to the contact at the employing organization or school for completion.

## **A18. Exceptions to OMB Form 83-I**

No exceptions are requested in the "Certification of Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions."

# **B. Employing Statistical Methods to Collect Information**

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## **B1. Description of the Population and Sampling to Be Used**

### **Goals of the Data Collection**

No statistical methods leading to inferences of larger populations are used. In all reports and other publications and statements resulting from this work, no attempt is made to draw inferences to any population other than the set of participants responding to the data collection effort.

There are three primary goals of the data collected through the instruments and methods described in this request:

- to fulfill performance measurement and reporting requirements for the Job Corps program as specified in the WIA regarding reporting on graduates and former enrollees employment and education outcomes to determine the performance of each center and the larger program
- to independently verify, as specified by the Office of the Inspector General, the placement and wage reports made for individual participants reportedly placed by contractors in order to ensure the integrity and quality of placement services provided by Job Corps centers and career transition service (CTS) agencies

- to enhance the quality of the Job Corps program through collection of information on customer satisfaction of former participants.

### **Populations to be Surveyed**

Two Job Corps populations will be contacted in this data collection effort: graduates and former enrollees. Former enrollees are defined in Section 142 (4) of the WIA as “individual[s] who [have] voluntarily applied for, been selected for, and enrolled in the Job Corps program, but left the program before completing the requirements of a career technical training program, or receiving a secondary school diploma or recognized school equivalent, as a result of participating in the Job Corps program.” The National Office of Job Corps has further refined the definition of former enrollees to apply to those students who were on center 60 days or more. Youths who were on center less than 60 days are categorized as “uncommitted students” by Job Corps and will not be contacted as part of this data collection effort. Graduates are defined in Section 142 (5) of the WIA as “individual[s] who [have] voluntarily applied for, been selected for, and enrolled in the Job Corps program and [have] completed the requirements of a career technical training program, or received a secondary school diploma or recognized equivalent, as a result of participation in the Job Corps program.”

The WIA requires that the Job Corps report “information on the performance of each Job Corps center and the Job Corps program regarding” several employment and educational outcomes. To meet this requirement, a census of placed graduates is conducted by using the ICFE and the 6-month and 12-month surveys. Similarly, a census of placed former enrollees will be conducted by using the FES to reverify their initial job and school placements. With this census information, the Job Corps can satisfy the WIA requirement that the program provide information on “each Job Corps center.”

### **Uses of the Collected Data**

The first two goals for this data collection suggest very strongly that survey results need to be precise at the level of the individual Job Corps center and CTS agency (the contractors responsible for participant placement). Job Corps’ performance-based contracting methodology uses these survey-reported outcomes to determine incentive and award fees for the private contractors that operate the individual centers and the CTS (placement) agencies. Further, Job Corps’ ranking of center and CTS contractor performance uses data collected from the surveys. The relative ranking of centers and CTS agencies provides one of the major criteria used by Job Corps to determine whether a contract option is renewed and in evaluating contractor past performance for new contracts, and the ranking reports are very sensitive to small changes in measured performance. These monitoring and management reasons led to the decision to conduct a census, instead of a sample, of all placed graduates and placed former enrollees leaving each center.

## **B2. Statistical Methodology for Stratification and Sample Selection**

As indicated above, all groups are a census of the population; no sample selection or stratification is applicable.

### **B3. Methods to Maximize Response Rates and Address Nonresponse**

The following strategies are used to maximize response rates:

- The data collection instrument consists primarily of well-tested items.
- The contractors work closely with Job Corps staff to obtain adequate tracking and locating information about all Job Corps graduates and former enrollees. Regular contact between students and career transition specialists following termination, and the enhancements to the Career Information System will significantly improve the quality of available student locating information.
- IMPAQ and Battelle employ sample-locating and refusal-avoidance techniques that have been proven to maximize locating and enlisting the cooperation of youth populations.
- Graduates receive monetary incentives from Job Corps during the 12-month service eligibility period that will likely enhance cooperation with the data collection effort.

Students whom the contractors are unable to contact within the first two weeks will be sent a postcard reminding them of the interview and asking them to call an 800 number to complete the interview. Research suggests that reminders can be the single most important technique for producing high response rates.

To track graduates and former enrollees who have moved since their separation from Job Corps or for whom the contact information is inadequate, IMPAQ and Battelle will employ telephone and in-house searching techniques that have been proven to maximize the location of respondents and the elicitation of their cooperation, including:

- contacting parents, relatives, and neighbors
- sending address-correction letters
- searching on-line nationwide databases (for example, Accurint, White Pages, Directory Assistance, Lexis/Nexis, reverse lookups, among others)
- requesting, where possible, information from public agencies (for example, motor vehicle departments and corrections departments); and
- providing a toll-free line for respondents to call.

IMPAQ and Battelle will use telephone procedures that maximize response rates after respondents have been located and will carefully train interviewers to follow these procedures. The contractors will carefully monitor and retrain interviewers to correct any weaknesses in their contact and interviewing techniques. Two to three weeks after the first contact with a respondent who initially



refused to participate, a senior interviewer will contact the respondent and address the respondent's concerns about completing the interview. The data collection contractors will maintain databases to track survey data, will generate regular reports to identify nonresponders, and will support follow-up efforts. IMPAQ and Battelle have used these procedures successfully in other data collection efforts to achieve response rates consistent with those projected for these follow-up surveys.