

**Request for Approval under the “DOL Departmental Generic Clearance for
the Collection of Routine Customer Feedback”
(OMB Control Number: 1225-0088
Expiration Date: 08/31/2017)**

TITLE OF INFORMATION COLLECTION:

Job Corps Field Test of an Observations of Readiness Tool for use by Admissions Staff.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Job Corps program is to provide eligible youth with the opportunity to gain the skills and experience necessary to begin a career or advance to higher education. In order to achieve this end, all students must abide by certain conduct standards, which are consistent with the requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and designed to enhance and protect the academic and residential environment of each Job Corps center. In keeping with these standards, as part of the application process, Admissions Counselors are required to gauge whether each applicant will be able to participate successfully in the program without interfering with either other students’ participation or the maintenance of sound discipline.

The Job Corps Outreach and Admissions (OA) contractor for a particular center or group of centers determines whether an applicant meets each of the Eligibility Requirements—the requirements necessary for participation in the Job Corps program—set out in PRH Exhibit 1-1. The OA contractor's admission staff interview and evaluate applicants to make this determination.

Job Corps is engaged in efforts to revise and improve its applicant screening and admissions practices to improve student safety and security. The Department of Labor is committed to better defining eligibility criteria and the process for evaluating eligibility, with an emphasis on review of an applicant's past behavior in determining whether the applicant is a ready for the demands and structure of the Job Corps residential, educational, and training environment. To this end, Job Corps has developed a simple system for Admissions Staff to make and record aspects of program readiness based on several areas of observation during the application process. This system is based in a tool, the Observations of Readiness tool, which consists of a form to record observations in three key areas essential for success in Job Corps, and an accompanying set of questions that should be asked of each applicant to prompt for answers and observations.

This fast track request seeks approval for Job Corps to conduct a field test of the Observations of Readiness (OR) tool to collect any qualitative feedback offered by users about the usability of the tool and the clarity of the questions, and to assess the time burden associated with the use of the tool compared to standard practices of admissions staff. At the conclusion of the field test, participating contractors will be asked to estimate the time burden associated with use of the tool. If additional feedback is offered, Job Corps staff will review any feedback submitted in writing, and will host a single discussion (in person or by teleconference) about the draft tool with up to three users at each of the participating contractors, up to a total of three group discussions for the field test.

This request is being submitted with a related fast track request entitled *Job Corps Field Test of Revised Appendix 103 to the Policy and Requirements Handbook (PRH)*, under the same generic clearance. Job Corps proposes to include both instruments in the same field test, since they address related aspects of enrollment and would be used by the same staff.

The information collected will be used internally by Job Corps federal National Office staff to refine the questions and the recording form. If the new instrument is found to be useful, then Job Corps will submit an Information Collection Request (ICR) to OMB for approval of the revised final tool.

DESCRIPTION OF RESPONDENTS:

Selection of field test participants will occur in two stages. First, Job Corps National Office (JCNO) staff will recruit three existing Outreach and Admissions (OA) contractors willing to volunteer for the test. JCNO will review ratings for current OA contractors in the Outcome Measurement System to identify contractors in three different performance ranges: high (top 20%), medium (middle 20%), and low (bottom 20%). Using this criterion, JCNO staff will invite one contractor from each performance tier to participate in the field test. If an invited contractor declines to participate, JCNO will invite another contractor from the same performance tier until each tier is represented.

Second, the three participating OA contractors will identify which of their admissions staff will participate in the field test.

Each contractor will use the tool to assess a total of 30 applicants, and will divide those applications among 3 different staff members. The tool will be tested by a total of 9 staff members across 3 contractors over a 30-day period to assess a total of 30 applicants.

Contact information for participating contractor admissions staff will be collected in order to clarify feedback, if needed, for the length of the field test.

TYPE OF COLLECTION: (Check one)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Comment Card/Complaint Form | <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Satisfaction Survey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Usability Testing (e.g., Website or Software) | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Discussion Group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Focus Group | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>Field Test of Admissions Tool</u> |

CERTIFICATION:

I certify the following to be true:

1. The collection is voluntary.
2. The collection is low-burden for respondents and low-cost for the Federal Government.
3. The collection is non-controversial and does not raise issues of concern to other federal agencies.
4. The results are not intended to be disseminated to the public.
5. Information gathered will not be used for the purpose of substantially informing influential policy decisions.
6. The collection is targeted to the solicitation of opinions from respondents who have experience with the program or may have experience with the program in the future.

Name: _____
Robert Pitulej, Deputy Administrator, Office of Job Corps

To assist review, please provide answers to the following question:

Personally Identifiable Information:

1. Is personally identifiable information (PII) collected? Yes No
2. If Yes, is the information that will be collected included in records that are subject to the Privacy Act of 1974? Yes No
3. If Applicable, has a System or Records Notice been published? Yes No

<http://www.dol.gov/sol/privacy/dol-govt-2.htm>

PII to be collected: criminal history, school records, behavioral records from other agencies or institutions; other details related to personal circumstances and/or background.

Gifts or Payments:

Is an incentive (e.g., money or reimbursement of expenses, token of appreciation) provided to participants? Yes No

BURDEN HOURS

Category of Respondent	No. of Respondents	Participation Time	Burden
Private Sector	90	2.0 hrs	180 hrs
Totals			

FEDERAL COST: The estimated cost to the Federal government is \$1,725.30

If you are conducting a focus group, survey, or plan to employ statistical methods, please provide answers to the following questions:

1. Do you have a customer list or something similar that defines the universe of potential respondents and do you have a sampling plan for selecting from this universe?
 Yes No

If the answer is yes, please provide a description of both below (or attach the sampling plan)? If the answer is no, please provide a description of how you plan to identify your potential group of respondents and how you will select them?

The group of contractors who will voluntarily participate will be identified and contacted by the Office of Job Corps to confirm participation. Three Job Corps admissions contractors from three Job Corps regions, for a total of nine contractors across the performance spectrum will participate. This is to ensure participation of a wide distribution of admissions contractors. Contractors will receive substantial training by the National Office of Job Corps,

prior to implementing the field test, for how to administer the instrument and complete the field test. Instruction letters and disclosures will be provided to each admissions counselor administering the field test of the instrument.

The group of applicants who will voluntarily participate will be identified as follows: each admissions office will inform every 5th applicant who has arrived on site in the admissions office for the purpose of completing a Job Corps application that they have been selected to participate in a field test that is being conducted by the National Office of Job Corps, and that participation is voluntary. If the applicant agrees, the applicant will receive the appropriate pre-participation letter, instructions, and disclosures. If the applicant does not agree, the admissions counselor will inquire of the very next applicant, and so on. Training will be provided via webinar to all admissions contractors and admissions counselors who have voluntarily agreed to participate in this field test.

Administration of the Instrument

1. How will you collect the information? (Check all that apply)
 - Web-based or other forms of Social Media
 - Telephone
 - In-person
 - Mail
 - Other, Explain (email)
2. Will interviewers or facilitators be used? Yes No
Interviewers are the admissions counselors themselves. Admissions counselors are a primary group being surveyed through the field test of this instrument.

Please make sure that all instruments, instructions, and scripts are submitted with the request.

Attachment A-2 – OR Tool and Instructions

Attachment A-3 – Questions to Accompany the OR Tool

Attachment B – Information for Job Corps contractors (Admissions Counselors)

Attachment C – Information for Job Corps Applicants

Attachment D-2 – Pre-Participation Letter for Job Corps Admissions Counselors (Observations of Readiness)

Attachment E-2 – Pre-Participation Letter for Job Corps Applicants (Observations of Readiness)