**Form Approved**

**OMB Control No. 1290-XXXX**

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**CJC Implementation Research Protocol: Admission and Placement Director and Placement Officer**

Abt Associates IRB Approval No. XXXX

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I**ntroduction of and Informed Consent for the Study** *(read to all respondents)*

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview today.

My name is **(insert name here),** and I’m a researcher from MDRC, located in **(Oakland CA or New York, NY)**. I’m here because Abt Associates and MDRC, on behalf of the United States Department of Labor (DOL), are conducting a five-year study of the Cascades Program.

We are visiting to conduct in-person interviews with center staff and partners (such as referral partners and employers) to learn what is happening on the ground and what are the challenges of implementing this new program. Interviews will cover the organizational characteristics of the center, as well as its mission and vision, and how it fits within the Job Corps network.

These interviews will provide important qualitative information on the implementation at Cascades. We will use what we learn from these interviews to contribute to a report about the impacts and implementation of the Cascades program. This report will be submitted to DOL to inform the federal government about this new model.

**Privacy Statement** *[Interviewer must read this to all respondents]*

Before beginning the interview, **I (we)** want to thank you for agreeing to participate in this study and remind you that your participation is voluntary. **I (we)** know that you are busy and will try to be as brief as possible. We have many questions and are going to talk to many different people, so please do not feel as though we expect you to be able to answer every question. The interview today should last about **(insert time estimate from the appropriate protocol)**. This interview is *not* part of a Job Corps audit or a compliance review. We are interested in learning about your ideas, experiences, and opinions about Cascades’ implementation. There are no right or wrong answers. We want to know what you think.

You can send comments regarding the time estimate or any other aspect of this interview, including suggestions for reducing the duration, to **(insert contact name and provide address if necessary).**

In addition, before we start, I want to let you know that although we will take notes during these interviews, information is never repeated with the name of the respondent in any reports or in any discussions with supervisors, colleagues, or any one from DOL. When we write our reports and discuss our findings, information from all the people we speak with is compiled and presented so that no one person can be identified.

To help me accurately report on the information you share, it would help if I could tape record this call; of course, I could turn off the recorder at any point if you so desire. I do not have a recorder on now; is it okay with you for me to turn it on?

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Do I have your permission to begin the interview?

**Outreach, Admission and Placement**

* These questions will be asked of the Admission and Placement Director, the staff person who is responsible for outreach and applicant recruitment and will also be asked of one of the Placement Officers.
* Placement Services (asked during the second visit only)
* Text in italics is background information for the interviewer.
* The interview should take around 60 minutes.

Staff Title: Title  
Staff Initials: Initials  
Interviewer: Interviewer last name  
Write-up: Last name of person doing write-up

INTERVIEW DATE/TIME: Date/Time

**Respondent Background [For Admission and Placement Director and Placement Officer]**

*You may use this section to verify information you already know about the interviewee or as a means of rapport building with the interviewee.*

1. Please describe the major responsibilities of your position. Describe
2. How long have you been at Cascades? 0.00 years
3. How long have you been in your current role at Cascades? 0.00 years
4. How long have you worked at other Job Corps Centers? 0.00 years
5. What made you interested in working at Cascades? Describe

**For Placement Officer only:**

1. Where did you work prior to your employment at Cascades? Describe
2. What role did you have at your previous employer? Describe
3. What is your educational background? Describe

**Cascades’ Values and Center Environment [For Admission and Placement Director and Placement Officer]**

*The next questions are designed to learn more about how the values and culture of Cascades are put into action in the day-to-day activities of staff. Listen for how infused is the career and college orientation in staff’s mindsets and actions? Similar, how infused is the teaching of non-cognitive skills in all staff’s interactions with students?*

1. How would you describe Cascades’ values and philosophy? Describe
2. How would you describe the environment that Cascades intends to create for students? [Probes: How do you want students to feel when they are at Cascades? What strategies are used to create this environment? ] Describe

**Recruitment and Referrals [For Admission and Placement Director]**

*The bulk of this interview focuses on ways that students learn about Cascades. Focus on the center’s primary methods of recruitment and their relationships with referral partners.*

1. How would you describe the target student for Cascades? Describe [Probe on the type of student they are looking for, not only in terms of education levels, but also motivation for applying to the Cascades program and the interest in the targeted industry]
2. What do you think attracts students to Cascades? Describe
3. Currently, what are the center’s primary methods of recruitment? [Examples: fliers, word of mouth, referrals from partner organization, tabling]

| **Recruitment Method** | **Description** |
| --- | --- |
| Referrals from partner organizations | Describe |
| Leafleting | Describe |
| Word of mouth | Describe |
| Tabling at community events | Describe |
| Social media | Describe |
| Type of recruitment method | Describe |
| Type of recruitment method | Describe |
| Type of recruitment method | Describe |
| Type of recruitment method | Describe |
| Type of recruitment method | Describe |

1. What are the most useful outreach methods at this time? [Probe: Which methods do the best job of connecting you with students who are appropriate for Cascades?] Describe
2. Who are your main referral partners currently? [Probe: Ask specifically about school districts.]

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of referral partner** | **Description of referral relationship [how the process works, how active is the relationship]** |
| School District | Describe |
| Name of partner | Describe |
| Name of partner | Describe |
| Name of partner | Describe |
| Name of partner | Describe |
| Name of partner | Describe |
| Name of partner | Describe |

1. How would you describe the qualities of a strong referral partner? [Probe: Which referral partners send you the most appropriate students?] Describe
2. To what extent do you work together with these referral partners to bring a student in? [i.e., are you in direct contact with partners about the status of referrals or are referrals passing on info about Cascades to students and guardians?] Do your partners understand the type of student Cascades is interested in recruiting? How do you communicate, formally and informally, the standards that guide their referrals to you? Describe
3. Who is responsible for monitoring the referrals coming in? Describe
4. To what extent at this point in time, is the task of outreach and recruitment shared among staff? Describe
5. How do you balance your outreach and intake responsibilities currently? Describe
6. What are the biggest challenges to recruitment now? [Probe: competition from other organizations, transportation, lack of visibility in the community, the Cascades eligibility criteria, the study?] Describe
7. Are there additional supports that you think would be helpful to improve recruitment? Describe

**Overview of Intake and Admission Process [For Admission and Placement Director]**

*This set of questions asks the interviewee to outline their intake process. Focus on understanding the steps in the process and where a student might drop off.*

1. Starting with the initial referral to Cascades and ending with eligibility determination, can you please describe the process you use to determine whether a student is appropriate for enrollment in Cascades? [In Round 2: “Starting with the initial referral to Cascades and ending with eligibility determination, has the process changed?”] Describe
2. Currently, at what point would you say students are most likely to drop out of the process? Describe
3. What do you think are the main reasons that students drop out of the intake process now? Describe
4. What steps, if any, do you take to re-engage students who drop out during intake? Describe
5. What are the main factors you now use to determine who is eligible? Describe
6. Is the motivation of the student currently used as a factor in determining eligibility? Describe
7. Have you encountered any challenges in recruiting students who fit your eligibility criteria? At what point in the process are students most likely to be screen out [i.e., cannot pass the STAR 360 assessment at the threshold level, are not interested in being part of the study so they drop out of the enrollment process]? Describe
8. When and how are the parents involved? Describe
9. What are currently the best strategies in identifying students that are a good fit for Cascades? Describe
10. What are the current challenges to identifying students that are appropriate for Cascades services? Describe
11. What do you think are the biggest differences now in the students who end up going to Cascades compared to regular Job Corps students? Describe
12. Since the start of enrollment, have you changed the admissions process or eligibility criteria for Cascades? How has the process changed? What problems were the changes designed to address? What effect have the changes had on the enrollment process? Describe

**Waiting List & Enrollment [For Admission and Placement Director]**

*The center may have a waiting list, and we want to understand how they manage that list. We also want to know when the A&P staff’s responsibilities end.*

1. Do you have a waiting list?  If so, what is it like? [Probe: How many students are typically on it? Are there times of year when it is longer than others?] Describe
2. How do you currently keep students on the waiting list interested in Cascades until a new cohort is enrolled? Describe
3. When do your admission responsibilities end? (e.g., At eligibility? Once students come for their first day on center? After the on-site orientation?) Describe

**Three-Day On-Site Orientation [For Admission and Placement Director]**

1. Describe what currently takes place during the three-day orientation. Describe
2. Why do students drop-out typically at that point? Describe

**Engaging with Employers [For Placement Officer]**

1. What type of information or resources do you use – like labor market information, or other market research – to identify growth opportunities in specific occupational groups? Describe
2. Do you have an advisory group or industry experts who provide you with additional information on industry trends, skill requirements, job leads or connections to area employers? Describe
3. Do you handle placement for all industries or do you specialize in one industry? Describe
4. At the moment, how do you identify employers who are hiring for these and other positions? Describe
5. How do you determine what an employer company’s needs are or what they are looking for? Are you able to determine what they anticipate their future needs to be and, if so, how? Describe
6. How many employers, roughly, would you say you’re in regular contact with? Do you initiate contact with these employers or do you they call you when new openings occur? Describe
7. What types of employers are they? [e.g., large, small, local, etc.] Describe
8. How do you describe the Cascades program to employers (i.e., how do you sell your services to them?)? Describe
9. What system do you use to track your contacts and employer specific information? Describe
10. Do you work with partner organizations, such as temporary staff agencies, to place participants? Describe
11. How do you find new employers? [Probe: Are you leveraging external partnerships such as sector partnerships, industry groups, or postsecondary /training providers?] Describe
12. Do you ask employers to come to the program to visit, present and/or interview? Describe
13. Are there other ways employers partner with you (e.g., conduct tours of their facilities, donate equipment, or funds, conduct mock interviews, provide input on designing curricula)? Describe

**Overview of Placement Process [For Placement Officer]**

*This set of questions asks the interviewee to outline their placement process.*

1. How would you describe the typical student you work with to place? (Probe: How prepare are they to be employed? What are their technical skills like? What are their non-cognitive skills like?) Describe
2. When and how do students start the placement process? Describe
3. Please describe the process you use to determine what is an appropriate job for a particular student. (Probe: What are the main factors you considered to determine if it will be a good fit?) Describe
4. How do you or the student approach the employer then? Do the students interview? Describe
5. What have you found to be the best strategies for approaching employers to take a student and/or perhaps getting to reconsider their pre-conceived job requirements? Describe
6. In thinking about your interactions with employers, about how often would you say you are actively trying to identify new job openings, compared to how often you are responding to an employer coming to you seeking qualified candidates? In short, do employers come to you with job needs/openings? Are you usually able to fulfill/address them?
7. What are the biggest challenges in making placements? Describe
8. Do employers conduct drug screening? Does Cascades conduct their own drug screening prior to referring qualified candidates to employers? Describe
9. What are the biggest challenges in working with employers? Does this differ by the type of employer (small, large, family owned)? Describe
10. What do you think are the biggest differences in placing students who go through Cascades compared to regular Job Corps students? Describe

**Placement [For Admission and Placement Director]**

1. Describe how your Placement Officers currently work with the Grad-90 coordinators in each Pathway to ensure a smooth transition into employment for each student. (Probe: If Placement Officers are not yet placing students in jobs, how are they preparing for that phase of the program?) Describe
2. How would you compare the work of the Placement Officers to job developers or placement officers at other Job Corps programs? (Probe: If they don’t know other centers, ask about other E&T programs but note the reference group) Describe
3. What are the advantages of having the Placement Officers in the same department as Admissions staff? Do they interact? What, if any, are the disadvantages?   
   Describe advantage  
   Describe disadvantage
4. What do you look for in hiring a Placement Officer? (Probe: Experience in job development, in working with youth, in the IT or healthcare sector?) Describe

**Post-Placement Contact [For Placement Officer]**

1. Do you currently follow up with the program graduates that you’ve placed to see how they’re doing on the job? How often are you follow up with newly placed individuals? Are there set times when you follow up (e.g. within a week after placement, more intensely within the first 60 days)? Do they ever have issues? If so, how do you handle those? Describe
2. Do program graduates call you when they are struggling or confronting issues on the job? How do you handle these issues? Do they call you before quitting or after they quit? Do you seek to replace graduates who have quit or have been dismissed?
3. Do you currently seek out or get feedback from employers about how their hires from this program are doing and whether these workers meet their needs (did they have the skills required, do they have the soft skills needed, etc.?)? How do you get feedback? And about how many employers provide feedback? Describe
4. Do employers call you when there’s a problem with one of their hires from Cascades to have you intervene? Do they call you before making a decision to dismiss a Cascades hire due to poor performance of another problem they are having on the job? Describe
5. What are you hearing from employers? Are they satisfied with your services? Are there gaps or issues with the candidates you send them? What do you typically do with that information? Describe
6. How closely aligned is the skills training and non-cognitive skills training with the workforce needs of employers? Are Cascades students getting trained for the skills employers are seeking in their new hires? Describe
7. Did you ever receive feedback from employers that led you to suggest changes to the skills training curriculum or topics covered in the skills training classes? If so, can you give me an example of feedback you received, and the corresponding changes that were made? Describe
8. Are you currently, or do you have future plans for, running additional programming for graduates of the program? Describe

**Random Assignment [Admission and Placement Director and Placement Officer]**

*Here we would like to learn how random assignment was implemented and how it may have affected the way that Cascades operates.*

**Placement Officer Only:**

1. Did random assignment have an impact on how you placed students? Describe

**Admission and Placement Director Only:**

1. How have the research procedures been incorporated into the intake process? Describe
2. What challenges have you encountered implementing the research procedures? Describe
3. Have you made any changes to your eligibility requirements to meet the recruitment demands of the study? (select one)   
   Eligibility changes: Describe changes to eligibility