CJC Implementation Research Protocol:

Center Director (Center Overview)

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

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview today.

My name is_____, and this is _____and we are researchers from MDRC. We are here because MDRC and our partners, Abt Associates, are conducting a five-year study of the Cascades Program on behalf of the United States Department of Labor (DOL).

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, **we** want to thank you for agreeing to participate in this study and remind you that your participation is voluntary. **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. You may also refuse to answer any question. The interview today should last about **60 minutes**. 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.

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 anyone 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. There is a small risk of loss of privacy, but we have many procedures in place to ensure your information does not get lost.

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? Great, once I turn it on, I am going to ask you to state your name and verbal consent to being recorded.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Start recorder.

Do I have your permission to begin and record the interview?

Staff Title: Title
Staff Role:

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

INTERVIEW DATE/TIME:

Staff Background

1. Please describe the major responsibilities of your position. Describe

2. How long have you been at this center? 0.00 years

3. How long have you been in your current role at this center? 0.00 years

4. Have you worked at other Job Corps Centers? For how long? 0.00 years

5. Where did you work prior to Job Corps? Describe

6. What role did you have at your previous employer? Describe

7. What is your educational background? Describe

8. What made you interested in working at this center? Describe

Staffing and Management

9. What is the department structure at this center?

10. Who directly reports to you?

11. How do you supervise the center staff? What is your management approach/style? Describe

12. When hiring new staff, what qualities do you look for? Describe

   a. Do you think the backgrounds, or the qualifications, of your staff differ from those at other Job Corps Centers? How? Why? Describe.

13. Is staff turnover an issue at this center? Describe

   a. If so, are there particular positions for which it has been an issue?

Position (check all that apply)	Description of turnover issues (reasons for turnover)
☐ Management	Describe
☐ Education and training staff	Describe
☐ Counseling staff	Describe
☐ Other staff roles	Describe

14. Have you faced challenges in recruiting qualified staff?

   a. If yes, are there particular positions for which finding qualified staff is more difficult? Describe

15. What professional development opportunities are available to staff? Describe

a. How do you think the training or professional development at this center differs from other centers?

b. Do you think there are higher expectations of the staff at this center?

c. What additional opportunities do you think staff would benefit from? Describe

16. How would you compare the staff at this center to that of other Job Corps centers?

a. Do you think you have higher expectations of the staff at this center?

17. In general, what types of support do you receive from Job Corps' regional and national offices? (probe for a recent example.) Describe

a. Are there challenges to getting support? (Probe for a recent example.) Describe

Center Values, Center Environment, and Relationships

18. How would you describe this Job Corps center's values and philosophy? Describe

a. Do these values and philosophy differ from those of other Job Corps centers? Describe

19. How would you describe the culture and environment at this Job Corps center?

a. What strategies do you use create this environment? Describe

b. Do you think the culture and philosophy of this center is different than other Job Corps centers? Describe

20. [Cascades and Ottumwa only] How would you explain student-centered design?

a. How does this center incorporate a student-centered design? Examples

21. What do staff relationships with the students look like?

a. Do you use any strategies/approaches to help build these relationships? Describe

b. Do you think these relationships at this center differs from other Job Corps centers? Describe

22. What do the relationships between the students look like?

a. Do you use any strategies/approaches to help build these relationships? Describe

b. Do you think these relationships at this center differs from other Job Corps centers? Describe

23. [Cascades Only] What affect, if any, does the cohort system have on students?

a. Does it affect student relationships?

b. Does it affect student progress?

24. How diverse is the student population?

a. Does this have an effect on the center? Culturally, Socially?

b. What are the pros and cons of having older students at the center?

25. [Cascades only] Does the fact that students at Cascades are younger (ages 16-21 only) have any effect on the center? How? Why not? Describe

26. [Cascades only] Does that fact that students at Cascades had additional screening during intake have any effect on the center? How? Why not? Describe

27. How do you think the typical student that attends this Job Corps center compares to the students at other Job Corps centers?

28. [Cascades only] Do you think that Cascades students are better prepared for Job Corps or for college than typical Job Corps students? Why? How? Describe

29. Overall, what, if anything, do you think sets this center apart from other Job Corps centers?

Recruitment, Admissions, and Intake

30. How would you describe the target student for this center Describe

   a. What type of student were/are you looking for? Education level? Motivation? Industry interest?

31. What are the biggest reasons you think students choose this Job Corps center as opposed to other Job Corps centers? Describe

   a. What do you think attracts students to this center? Describe

Education & Training Services

32. Describe the process you use to determine what education and training services are appropriate for an individual student and the process of putting together a plan?

   a. Do you use assessments? When? What kind? Academic assessments? College-readiness assessments? Soft-skills assessments? Describe

   b. Is there one holistic plan or separate plans?

   c. Do students take ownership of the plan or plans and of their future? How? Describe.

   d. Does this differ from the process or plans at other Job Corps centers?

33. What types of education & training services are provided?

   a. Trade/Pathway programs?

   b. Basic education, High school diploma, and HSE services?

   c. College-level academic services (such as advanced college-level course work, dual enrollment, early college high school courses)? Describe

      - [Tongue Point only] Can you briefly tell me about the college based Advanced Career Training (ACT) program?

34. [Cascades Only] Since our visit last year how has your education & training services changed? Describe

   a. Why did services change? (Was is staff driven or conceptually driven or market driven?)

35. How does the education & training services offered at this center differ from other Job Corps centers?

   a. How does the level of education & training support services compare?

   b. How are your trade/pathway programs unique?

36. Can you describe the particular strengths and challenges of your education & training program? Describe

a. What non-student related challenges do you face and what is the center doing to mitigate those challenges (Probes: Staffing, facilities, curriculum, etc.)? Describe

Non-Cognitive Social and Workplace Skills Development

37. Can you describe the social and workplace skills services offered by the center (e.g. life skills, career planning, work readiness)? Describe

    a. What kind of social and workplace skills courses are offered? Are they required?

    b. How are these services provided and what staff provide them?

    c. Are these classes contextualized for the student's trade/pathway?

38. Are there any other non-cognitive skills development courses?

39. [Cascades Only] Since our last visit how have these services changed? Describe

    a. Why did services change? (Was is staff driven or conceptually driven or market driven?)

Measures of Academic Progress, Student Challenges, and Support Services

40. What challenges do students face academically? Describe

41. [Cascades only] Are Cascades students better prepared for college-level work because they met the educational threshold level established at program entry [i.e., the level established for the STAR 360 assessment]?

42. What type of supplemental education & training support services, such as on-site tutoring, online classes and evening classes are offered? Describe

43. What other types of extra support or guidance do students receive if they fall behind in their studies? Describe

44. How do you measure academic progress?

45. How do education & training staff coordinate with each other?

46. How do education & training staff coordinate with other departments?

Community Culture and Student Support Systems

47. What are the center's community culture standards?

    a.   [Cascades and Ottumwa only] Was this developed using student-centered design? Describe

48. Other than education & training, what do the students struggle with? Culture issues? Addiction? Mental health? Other? Describe

    a. Are there sufficient supports for these students?

49. How do you think the student support systems available at this center differ from those at other Job Corp centers?

50. Does the center have any kind of student mentor program?

    a.   [Cascades and Ottumwa only] Was this developed using student-centered design? Describe

51. Can you describe the Student Government Association?

a.   [Cascades and Ottumwa only] Was this developed using the student-centered design?

b.   How, if at all, does student government here differ from other centers?

Disciplinary Policies

52. Can you describe the practices you currently use to maintain a safe environment for the students at your center? Describe

53. Please briefly describe the center's behavior management system and disciplinary policy.

a. [Cascades and Ottumwa only] Was this developed using student-centered design? Describe

b. How do you think the behavior management system at this center differs, if at all, from other Job Corps centers?

Student Rewards & Recognitions

54. Does the center have a points or rewards and recognition program?

a. [Cascades and Ottumwa only] Was this developed using student-centered design? Describe

Student Retention and Separations

55. About what percent of students do you think leave the center within 3 months? Within 12 months?
56. About what percent of students do you think stay at the center for more than 24 months? 36 months?

57. What is your sense of why students leave the center early?

a. How does this compare with other Job Corps centers?

58. At what point do students tend to separate? What are the biggest drop-off points?

a. Do students drop-out of the center during orientation? During or before trade? After getting an HSE or GED? After getting an initial credential? After starting college? Other? Describe

59. What are the center's policies with regard to student retention?

a.   How does the center attempt to retain students?

b.   What actions are taken? By what staff?

c.   How are students involved/engaged in this effort?

Career Transition Readiness Services, Career Transition Services, Internships, and other Placement services

60. Can you briefly describe the Career Transition Readiness Services, Career Transition Services, Internships, and other Placement services at this center?

a. How would you compare these services to those at other Job Corps centers? Describe

61. [Cascades only] What are the advantages of having staff do both admissions and placements? What, if any, are the disadvantages? Describe

62. How and when are employers involved in the placement process?

63. Do you currently seek out or get feedback from employers? What are you hearing?

    a. Has that feedback led to any changes? Describe

Partnerships

64. Can you describe your current relationship and partnerships with local school district(s), local colleges, local employers, or other local organizations? [Probes: What are specific examples of interactions? What are the benefits and/or challenges of the relationship?] [This includes service partners, referral partners and other community partners. Please include the names and role partners play]Describe

    a. Can you describe difficulties the center has encountered finding and working with partners? Describe

    b. Are there other ways that you currently involve the community in the implementation of your program? Describe