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CJC Implementation Research Protocol:

Career Transition Readiness (CTR) Services, Career Transition Services (CTS), Internships, and Other Placement Services Overview

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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: 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 staff provide Career Transition Readiness Services, Career Transition Services, Internships, and other Placement services?

    a. Are these staff all in one/your department? In other departments?

    b. Are all of these services provided by center staff or are some, such as the CTS services provided by outside Job Corps contractor staff?

10. Please describe this department's staff titles and roles and responsibilities.

Staff title	Roles/Responsibilities
Title	Describe

11. Who do you directly report to?

12. What staff report directly to you?

13. How do you supervise your department's staff? What is your management approach/style? Describe

    a. How often do you meet with them, do you meet as a group or one-on-one, what is discussed in these meetings?

14. When hiring new department staff members, what qualities do you look for? (Experience in the IT/Healthcare field? Certifications? Connections with employers in the region? Experience working with youth?) Describe

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

Center Values, Center Environment, and Relationships

16. 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

21. [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?

22. 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?

23. [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

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

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

26. [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

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

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

28. <mark>[Cascades only]</mark> What are the advantages of having Career Navigators do both admissions and placements?

    a. What, if any, are the disadvantages? Describe

29. Can you describe the Career Transition Readiness Services?

    a. Do these services include **Non-Cognitive Social and Workplace Skills Development** services offered by the center (e.g. life skills, career planning, work readiness)? Describe

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

        - How are these services provided and what staff provide them?

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

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

    a. Who provides these services and how? (Do staff specialize in certain industries?)

    b. When are these services provided? (e.g. do students get placement services to find employment while they are still at the center?)

    c. What are the goals of these services?

31. <mark>[Cascades Only]</mark> 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?)

32. How would you describe the typical Job Corps student that you provide these services to? Describe

    a. How prepared are they to participate in an internship/ be employed?

    b. What are their technical skills like?

    c. What are their non-cognitive social and workplace skills like?

    d. How do you think this compares to the students at other Job Corps centers?

33. When providing employment placement services, how do you determine what is an appropriate job for a particular student? (What are the main factors you consider in determining if it will be a good fit?)

34. What are the biggest challenges in providing these services?

35. 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

36. 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

37. How closely aligned is the skills training and non-cognitive skills training with the workforce needs of employers?

    a. Are students getting trained for the skills employers are seeking? Are the students earning the necessary credentials? Describe

38. How do you identify employers who are hiring for positions in line with the student's trade/pathway? Describe

    a. Are you leveraging external partnerships such as sector partnerships, industry groups, or postsecondary /training providers?] Describe

b. What have you found to be the best strategies for approaching employers?

c. How do you describe the Center's program to employers (i.e., how do you sell your services to them?)? Describe

d. Do you ask employers to come to the program to visit, present and/or interview? Describe

39. How many employers, roughly, would you say you have a relationship with and are in regular contact with?

a. What types of employers are they? [e.g., large, small, local, etc.] Describe

b. Do you initiate contact with these employers or do you they call you when new openings occur? Describe Are you usually able to fulfill/address them?

c. What system do you use to track your contacts and employer specific information? Describe

40. 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?

41. How do you determine what an employer'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

42. What have you found to be the best strategies in getting employers to hire a student and/or perhaps getting them to reconsider their pre-conceived job requirements? Describe

43. Do you work with partner organizations, such as temporary staff agencies, to place participants? Describe

44. Are employers involved in the internship or employment placement process? How? When?

a. Do you or the student approach employers? Or both? Describe

45. Are there other ways that employers collaborate with the center (e.g., conduct tours of their facilities, donate equipment, or funds, conduct mock interviews, provide input on designing curricula)? Describe

46. What are the biggest challenges in working with employers? Does this differ by the type of employer (small, large, family owned)? Describe

47. What does post-placement contact with students look like? Do staff follow up with the students after they are placed (in employment)?

a. How often do they 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

48. Do students call you when they are struggling or confronting issues on the job?

a. 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?

49. Do employers call you when there's a problem with one of their hires from Cascades to have you intervene?

a. 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

50. 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.?)?

a. How do you get feedback? And about how many employers provide feedback? Describe

51. What are you hearing from employers about the center in general?

    a. 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

    b. Has employer feedback led to any changes? Describe

52. How do the Career Transition Readiness Services, Career Transition Services, Internships, and other Placement services staff coordinate with each other? Describe

53. How do the Career Transition Readiness Services, Career Transition Services, Internships, and other Placement services staff work with other center staff, such as the education & training staff, to ensure a smooth transition into employment for each student? Describe

54. How do the Career Transition Readiness Services, Career Transition Services, Internships, and other Placement services staff coordinate with outside Job Corps contractor staff, such as Career Transition Services staff?

    a. If the same services are provided by center staff and outside Job Corps contractor staff, how do the services differ?

55. How would you compare Career Transition Readiness Services, Career Transition Services, Internships, and other Placement services at this center to those at other Job Corps centers? Describe

Partnerships

56. Who are the primary employer partners in your community?

Name of partner	Description of services or resources provided	How is partnership formalized (contract, informal)
Name of partner	Describe	Describe

Student Retention and Separations

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

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

    a. Do students drop-out during trade/pathway services? Describe

    b. About what percentage of students do you think end up dropping-off before completion?

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?