

Abstract

Located in the coastal heart of the Florida panhandle, Northwest Florida State College (NWFSC), a two-year public community college accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, proposes to implement the **NWFSC Job Corps Scholars program**. The non-residential program will include, at no cost to the participants: a 12-month career technical training component, with up to 12-month employment placement period following separation from the program, with intensive counseling services to support and facilitate each student's employment and career success throughout. NWFSC's program will comply with all required activities and services stated in the DOL Job Corps Scholars Funding Opportunity Announcement. A total of 80 participants (2 cohorts of 40) will be served over the 39-month project period at an average cost per participant of \$14,406. The NWFSC Job Corps Scholars program will target the following zip codes in Okaloosa and Walton counties (32580, 32579, 32578, 32548, 32539, 32536, 32433, 32435, 32439, 32455) with particular focus on the Opportunity Zone census tracts of 12091021900 in Okaloosa County, and 12131950301 in Walton County. The southern portions of Okaloosa and Walton counties are home to some of the panhandle's most beautiful beaches and heavily reliant on tourism, vacation rentals and low-wage service and retail jobs. When considering countywide data points, the densely populated southern portions of the counties mask pockets of high poverty (14.9%), low educational attainment and unemployment (15.8%) that exist in the northern areas of the counties. An estimated 1,800 Job Corps Scholars eligible youth reside in the target area. The proposed project will take place across NWFSC's three campuses and does not include a residential component.

NWFSC Job Corps Scholars will be able to earn certifications in 12 months or less in the following high-growth career paths: Hospitality Management, Culinary Arts, Early Childhood

Education, Public Safety Management, Engineering Technology, Welding Technology, and Dental Assisting. Academic Programs include: Chef's Apprentice, Food & Beverage Operations, Early Childhood Education Infant/toddler Specialization, Early Childhood Education Preschool Specialization, Emergency Medical Technician, Correctional Officer Basic, Law Enforcement Officer, Firefighter/Emergency Medical Technician (combined), CNC Machinist/Fabricator, Engineering Technology Support Specialist, Welding Technology, and Dental Assisting. The maximum number of hours earned by program completers is 18 credit hours or 1330 clock hours. The total requested amount for the project over 39 months is \$1,152,483.

NWFSC aims to achieve the following outcomes with the Job Corps Scholars Program: 90% of Job Corps Scholars will successfully complete the certification program, with a Qualifying Placement Rate upon separation of at least 95% and an average starting salary/wage of at least \$15 per hour upon separation and \$17 per hour 12 months post separation. At least 65% of Job Corps Scholars will obtain full-time employment upon separation. On average, Job Corps Scholars will earn 12 Academic Credit Hours and 25% will be placed in apprenticeship programs.

While NWFSC has not previously operated a Job Corps program, the College provides technical training programs in a variety of disciplines that lead to positive employment and earnings outcomes and has extensive experience with providing programs to the target population. Last year, 94% of NWFSC graduates found employment or continued education within one year of graduating and wages for NWFSC graduates were 117% of those of non-graduates in the service area. NWFSC operates an integrated student services model, including a Career Resource Center, providing counseling and career supports to remove all barriers to academic and employment success.