



# Job Corps Impact Study

## SUMMARY

In 2016, the Chief Evaluation Office (CEO) partnered with the [Employment and Training Administration](#) and funded contractor Abt Associates to conduct the *Evaluation of the Cascades Job Corps College and Career Academy (CCCA) Pilot*. The program evaluation aims to document the implementation and assess the impact of the CCCA pilot program.

The CCCA pilot program, located in Washington State, served Job Corps students aged 16–21 and recruited from Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. Like the conventional Job Corps model, CCCA was a residential program that met participants' basic needs, such as food and healthcare, allowing them to concentrate on their education or training. The CCCA pilot partnered with a local community college to provide career pathways programs in the healthcare and information technology industries, connecting academic, career training, and social skills training with industry-recognized credentials, a secure job, and/or advances into community college and employment.

This Department of Labor-funded study was a result of the annual process to determine the Department's research priorities for the upcoming year. It contributes to the labor evidence-base to inform [employment and training](#) programs and policies and addresses Departmental strategic goals and priorities.

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **CCCA operators successfully implemented most of the program vision.** At the end of the three-year pilot term, most program components were successfully in place. Employment and transition services, however, were not developed or staffed until later in the pilot term. As a result, participants did not receive robust support in these areas. In a conventional Job Corps program, long-term work-based learning opportunities, such as internships, are standard; CCCA pilot participants only received these services on a case-by-case basis.
- **There was substantial demand for a college-focused job corps model, including among students who would not otherwise be interested in Job Corps.** About a fifth of applicants met the program criteria—at least an eighth-grade equivalent in math and reading skills—indicating that there is an interested and eligible population. In addition, researchers found that about a quarter of CCCA participants would not otherwise have enrolled in Job Corps at all. Offering a college-focused Job Corps program to all interested individuals could increase the number of students in Job Corps centers by about 19%.
- **All students completed a two-week orientation, then had access to college readiness resources, education classes, and skills training on- and off-center.** Initial activities, including supplemental education and career/technical training, took place on



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center. Students usually continued to receive center-based support services such as counseling while pursuing college courses, training, work-based learning, or other services external to the center.

- **CCCA slightly adjusted its processes to better support students entering community college.** The program vision implicitly assumed that CCCA participants could perform well in community college with moderate support. However, CCCA participants' characteristics-including their youth, lower likelihood of high school completion, and lower test scores-meant that they required more support than most community college students. CCCA responded by lengthening the on-center component of the program, instituting benchmarks to be satisfied before students proceeded to college, and increasing support for college students on campus and at the center.
- **The offer of CCCA services increased participants' total time in education and training as compared to the control group.** At the time of the 18-month follow-up survey, the control group had spent an average of 6.6 months in training or education, while the treatment group spent 9.5 months in training or education (a 43% increase). Control group participants spent more time in employment.
- **Through 27 months after assignment, the offer of CCCA did not measurably impact attainment of a college credential, though it did increase receipt of non-college-specific credentials.** The offer of CCCA moderately increased the amount of time participants spent in college, by 1.5 months on average. In absence of COVID-19, researchers expected to observe impacts of CCCA participation on some college credentials, but there was no evidence of such an impact. However, the offer of CCCA did increase overall receipt of credentials from 41% in the control group to 52% in the treatment group.

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**TIMEFRAME:** 2016-2021

**SUBMITTED BY:** Abt Associates

**DATE PREPARED:** November 2021

**PARTNER AGENCY:** Employment and Training Administration (ETA)

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