

# Study of Hispanics in Job Corps

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Background and Methodology**

Harrison Maldonado Associates (HMA), under contract to the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment Training Administration (DOL/ETA), Office of Performance and Technology (ProTech), undertook the “Study of Hispanics in Job Corps” (SHJC) in September 2004 to explore factors that can affect the post-program economic impact of Hispanics in Job Corps.

Specifically, the primary task was to try to explain why findings from the National Job Corps Study (NJCS) for Hispanics were different from those for other groups, which noted positive economic impact for Job Corps participants as measured by earnings after four years of follow-up, compared to a randomly assigned control group. The Study was also designed to profile and assess the status of Hispanics in Job Corps Centers in more recent times.

Four investigative areas were identified that might relate to Hispanic success: language, culture and community support networks, elements found in successful programs targeted toward Hispanics, and Job Corps placement services. The research utilized four methodologies: the review of NJCS data specifically related to Hispanic participants; the development of a comparative profile of Hispanic Job Corps participants from 1995 to PY 2001; the review of the “Limited English Proficiency/Hispanic Youth Survey (LEP/HY)” conducted with Job Corps Centers in 2004; and site visits to four Job Corps Centers. Techniques included the review of existing database and report information, as well as the direct interview of present Job Corps staff, Hispanic students, and Hispanic graduates/former enrollees.

### **Findings**

**NJCS** – The review of NJCS data related to Hispanics found minimal differences between the Hispanic Control Group and the Hispanic Program Group. Where dissimilarities were seen, a similar pattern was often present between the Non-Hispanic Control Group and the Non-Hispanic Program Group. Little information could be gathered regarding the effect of language use; i.e., how fluency in English might impact performance. Only a small number of Hispanic participants in either group was enrolled involved in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.

Demographic changes were similar in both Hispanic groups, with the Hispanic Program Group containing slightly more females and, by the study's conclusion, showing more married and heads of households. Hispanic Control Group members were more likely to live in dense urban areas.

Those in the Hispanic Program Group stayed in Job Corps longer and took more courses than the Non-Hispanic Program Group, which included job readiness and placement-related assistance.

The primary difference between the two Hispanic groups was found to revolve around employment issues. The Hispanic Control Group noted more employed members prior to Job Corps application and this Group maintained a higher percentage of employment throughout the four-year study period. This was unlike the pattern seen among the two Non-Hispanic Groups.

**Profiles** – For a picture of more current Hispanic participants, those entering Job Corps in PY 2001 were targeted as most likely to have completed their Job Corps training and follow-up interviews. This group was compared to NJCS subjects, identified as Job Corps participants from 1995. Few comparative points were available due to administrative and programmatic changes within Job Corps. PY 2001 profiles were also examined separately, comparing Hispanic and Non-Hispanic Job Corps participants when possible.

Similarities between 1995 and PY 2001 Hispanic Job Corps participants were found in age, head of household status, gender, and geographic region. Data was found that showed a large increase in single person households. However, because there was no accompanying inflation in number of household heads, this finding was considered questionable.

Fewer Hispanics than Non-Hispanics had high school diplomas when entering Job Corps in 2001; the percentage that fell into this category was an increase from 1995. The same pattern was seen in regard to individuals being employed prior to entering Job Corps. More Hispanics than Non-Hispanics reported holding jobs, and an increase for both Hispanics and Non-Hispanics was seen from 1995 to 2001.

Looking only at PY 2001 Job Corps participants, both Hispanic and Non-Hispanic students equally participated in and completed vocational training, and they enrolled in similar types of vocational trades. Hispanics continued to remain in Job Corps longer than Non-Hispanics, the same pattern as seen in the NJCS. Hispanics also presented fewer disciplinary problems in the one measure where such data was available.

Little could be learned about English-language fluency from the PY 2001 participants as few took ESL training. In regard to job placement, greater percentage of Hispanics took advantage of job skills training and Job Corps-related employment search assistance than Non-Hispanics.

Similar to NJCS findings, employment-related issues appeared to show a pattern of differences between Hispanics and Non-Hispanics. This included an

increased percentage of Hispanics employed prior to entering Job Corps and a decreased percentage of Hispanics who indicated they were not looking for a placement after Job Corps. However, initial placement salary for Hispanics was less than Non-Hispanics, possibly indicating Hispanics were concerned with working but earned less.

**LEP/HY** – The LEP/HY involved a survey of all Centers, as well as site visits. It found that approximately 10% of Hispanic students at Job Corps Centers were involved in ESL classes, although there could be others in need of language assistance who were not identified or some who felt they needed additional help that they did not get.

Family ties were said to be very important for Hispanic students, and close relatives could encourage or discourage those enrolled to succeed within Job Corps. A correlation was found between greater numbers of Hispanic students and staff and the identification of cultural barriers. Those Centers that did identify such barriers pointed to the need for more familiarity with Hispanic culture and traditions, including an emphasis on religion, and recognition of the use of the Spanish language, even when the parties were fluent in English. Collaborating with outside organizations and reaching out to the Hispanic community were seen as important ways to support Hispanic students.

Most Centers felt a need for additional bilingual staff and better integration between ESL and vocational training. Mentoring and case management teams were seen as exemplary approaches to assisting Hispanics. Center staff indicated they did not think OA or Job Corps staff in regional offices placed enough emphasis on recruiting Hispanics.

In regard to employment, Hispanic students were said to be hesitant to relocate to find a position and were likely to take any job due to feeling family-related obligations to work as quickly as possible. The study noted employers desired bilingual employees, but were hesitant to hire those with limited English language skills.

**Job Corps Center Site Visits** – Four Job Corps Centers around the country were visited at which individual interviews were conducted with a range of staff and Hispanic graduates/former enrollees. A focus group of current Hispanic students was also conducted at each site. In all, 126 individuals were involved in discussions.

Hispanics were identified as ideal Job Corps students in many ways. They understood why they were in the program; presented less discipline issues; listened and followed instructions; performed required assignments; and were respectful. They expected and wanted to work, which placed their desires in line with Job Corps

objectives. Many gave up employment in order to enter Job Corps and wanted to finish the Program as quickly as possible to begin earning income once again. Hispanics may, however, be hesitant to speak up to make their needs known and may be overlooked in favor of those who are more forward.

Similar to the LEP/HY, few Hispanics were found to be in need of English-language assistance, however, some felt they required more help than they were able to receive. Language was more of an issue in working with Spanish-speaking parents where failure to communicate can result in lack of support for the Program or misunderstandings.

Again similar to the LEP/HY, family, community, and culture were noted as the driving forces for Hispanic students. Family ties, use of the Spanish language, and personal expectations were all said to be tied to these elements. Family members play a large role in deciding Job Corps entrance, as well as offering support and encouragement while students are enrolled. On the other hand, a real or expected sense of family obligation causes Hispanic students to drop out, take employment below their abilities, or hesitate to relocate in search of better jobs.

Treatment of Hispanic females is different than of males, particularly if family members are first generation arrivals to this country. Females tend to be more protected with families hesitant to let their daughters live in dormitories or take training in hands-on, non-traditional vocational trades (e.g., construction).

Hispanic family members and students look for individuals within the program they can trust. Parents may be discouraged by the disruption and disrespect shown by some Job Corps students, and are hesitant if they do not see Hispanic staff at the Center. Mentors and role models are important to Hispanic students looking for someone who can relate to their background and culture. In regard to teaching style, Hispanics gravitate toward hands-on professions rather than desk jobs requiring solitary computer work. They prefer interactive teaching methods where they are involved in learning activities as part of a group and complain when they feel they do not have easy access to one-on-one instruction in self-paced learning situations.

Because Hispanic students may feel guilty about not pulling their weight in regard to providing family income, their desire to find a job as quickly as possible when leaving Job Corps may mean they will take the first job they find even if it is not in their training field. They prefer to turn to family and friends rather than wait for Career Transition Specialist (CTS) assistance, which they consider to be too slow. Additionally, wanting to stay within their personal comfort level may also be a factor in their asking friends and family members for job referrals. It may also influence their choice to work where someone they already know is employed rather than risk a situation where they would be working around few Hispanics.

The reluctance of many Hispanics to move beyond their community or comfort zone may make them undervalue their own worth and what they have learned in Job Corps, causing them to settle for less than they should. They may find it more comfortable to work for a family member or take a job where speaking fluent English is not necessary.

Site visit interviewees asked to speculate about why the 1995 NJCS found those who did not go to Job Corps earned more than Hispanics who did suggested four reasons:

- Hispanics in the control group found high paying jobs in construction and other trades.
- The Hispanic Program Group took lesser paying employment not in their trade after completing the Program.
- Hispanic Job Corps participants might have chosen professions with minimal starting salary, and after four years would not have caught up with Hispanic Control Group members.
- Hispanic Control Group members denied entrance into Job Corps might have adopted an “I’ll show you what I can do without this program” approach and felt even more determined to do well.

### **Overall Conclusions**

Hispanics who compose the past and current Job Corps population need little language assistance. However, those requiring help may not get all they want or need. The importance of family and community is ingrained within Hispanic culture and drives a great deal of their thinking and activities. A sense of family obligation and a desire to remain within a comfortable community environment can affect the type of employment Hispanics obtain. On the other hand, Hispanic culture helps account for what is described by some as the desirability of having Hispanic Job Corps students who are respectful, more likely to follow instructions, and goal-oriented to finish quickly and find employment.

In regard to the NJCS study findings of diminished economic impact for the Hispanic Program Group compared to the Hispanic Control Group, employment history may be the primary reason for this differential. The tendency to have a job when entering Job Corps, and desire to seek employment immediately upon exiting the program appears to have been present in 1995 and continues with Hispanic students today. Unfortunately, more recent statistics also show Hispanics earning less than Non-Hispanics, at least in initial placement.

Findings related to employment appear to be the principal theme running throughout the research conducted for this Study. Hispanic culture encourages an expectation of working hard. Hispanics are employed prior to joining Job Corps, understand the Program is about finding employment, and are driven to

complete the program as quickly as possible so they can go back to work. Their accomplishments in Job Corps are as good, if not better than other students, and they take advantage of what is offered. While in Job Corps, they stick to their work, cause few problems, and do what is asked of them –presenting the picture of an ideal student.

The problem occurs when Hispanics leave Job Corps and turn to employment below their abilities. They are in a hurry to find a job and are sensitive to staying within their comfort zone, which is attached to family, community, and culture. As a result, they undervalue the training they have received and their own worth as employees. They take the first job they can find so they can immediately start contributing to the family unit, feeling guilty because they have spent the last year or more in the Job Corps Program. Hispanic graduates will use family and friends as a network for employment, hesitating to enter work situations where there are few other Hispanics. Those uncomfortable with their English language skills may choose work where there is less of a need to speak the language even if the job is not in the field in which they have been trained.

The problem might be that although Hispanic Job Corps students do take advantage of what Job Corps has to offer, they have other concerns that override the Job Corps message. For this reason, when they complete the program they are less likely to take advantage of what they have been received through their participation. In other words, Hispanics and their family members may not really be accepting the full concept of the Job Corps Program.

One solution might be to incorporate Hispanic culture, which is already ingrained in these students within Job Corps to help make them feel as comfortable and supported as possible while they are in the program. In other words, Job Corps could serve as a temporary “family” while Hispanic students are enrolled. Mentoring, providing Hispanic roles models, using interactive teaching methods, recognizing cultural values, and involving the Hispanic community in Job Corps are elements that appear to speak to this model. Like a family works to sway the outlook of its members, Hispanic students may, in this way, be encouraged to look toward long-range goals instead of only short-range ones. The results can be an increased willingness to take risks when looking for employment that matches their skills and the placement of more value on themselves and what they have achieved through Job Corps.

Doing this will be far easier if family members are also brought into the program and convinced of its value so they can exert positive pressure on their Hispanic students to succeed -- to stay in Job Corps until they finish all their academic and vocational training and to holdout for the right job that offers long-term benefits over short-term economic gain. It may even mean the family accepting relocation for one of its members as a means to obtain better employment, with the



idea of helping one member of the unit advance that will ultimately help the entire family as that individual moves to give back.

There is reason to believe that Job Corps will benefit from attracting more Hispanic students who are already oriented toward goals similar to what the program tries to instill. However, this research has found some indication that Center staff and students feel not enough is currently being done in this regard. Evidence exists to suggest why Outreach/Activities (OA) might be less successful with Hispanics. The most effective outreach specifically targets Hispanics by going out to them rather than expecting them to come into the OA office. Making connections at Hispanic events and with community, cultural, and religious organizations are the best means to relate to a culture that relies heavily on word-of-mouth. Marketing to family members/parents in addition to prospective students, was also identified as essential, and is where language barriers can be an issue.

Having individuals with whom both students and parents can identify and to whom they can give their trust is very important for not only recruiting Hispanics but also for keeping them in the program, as well as helping them accept all that Job Corps has to offer, and avoid the misunderstandings that can sometimes arise. With trust, Hispanics will be less hesitant to speak up about issues that might be keeping them from taking advantage of their Job Corps training. Hispanic staff communicating with Hispanic parents beginning with recruitment, and consistently throughout the program, will help family members understand, appreciate, and offer encouragement around all the benefits Job Corps has to offer.

# **STUDY OF HISPANICS IN JOB CORPS**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background**

In September, 2004 Harrison Maldonado Associates (HMA), under contract to the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment Training Administration (DOL/ETA), Office of Performance and Technology (ProTech) undertook the “Study of Hispanics in Job Corps” (SHJC) to explore factors that can affect the post-program economic impact of Job Corps on Hispanics.

This effort is a follow-up to the National Job Corps Study (NJCS), which began in 1993 to “examine program implementation, measure impacts on participants’ employment and related outcomes, and assess whether the value of the program’s benefits exceeds its costs” (Mathematica Policy Research, 2001). This extensive undertaking compared a random sample of national program participants and control groups over a four-year period.

The study found

- Job Corps centers deliver comprehensive and consistent services.
- Job Corps makes a meaningful difference in participants’ educational attainment and earnings.
- Job Corps is cost-effective: the value of benefits from the program exceed its costs.
- The gains from Job Corps are found across most groups of students and types of settings.

Only two Job Corps subgroups did not correspond to these findings: those between the ages of 18-19 and Hispanics. HMA was engaged to study issues around the latter group.

Impact was defined by the NJCS as Job Corps participants being employed and earning more than the corresponding control group after four years. Hispanic Job Corps participants did not show an economic impact.

## **Research Design**

Four research methodologies were developed for the SHJC to examine the topic from a variety of aspects. Techniques looked both at data from the original NJCS, some of which were up to ten years old, as well as conditions for current Hispanic Job Corps program participants. The methodologies included:

- Review of NJCS data looking specifically at Hispanic study participants to examine factors that might explain the findings of the Hispanic Control Group better than the Hispanic Program Group.
- Comparative profiles of 1995 and current Hispanic Job Corps students to assess any changes in characteristics, program participation, or other areas.
- Review of the “Limited English Proficiency/Hispanic Youth Survey” (LEP/HY) which looked at a variety of issues for the national LEP and Hispanic/Latino Youth Initiative Workgroup
- Site visits to four Job Corps Centers to interview staff, students, and graduates/former enrollees directly and gain their perspectives on study-related issues.

Research included both the gathering of secondary source and database information and original research using unstructured interviews to solicit experience and viewpoint from those recently involved in Job Corps. Separate conclusions were drawn based on findings from each of the four methodologies. The results were integrated to form an overall picture looking at both past experience and the present situation for Hispanics.

## **Investigative Areas**

After preliminary research, four investigative issues were identified as having the potential to affect the success of Hispanic Job Corps participants in relation to recruitment, retention, graduation and job placement leading to employment stability and economic gain.

**Language:** A factor often related to the Hispanic population is English language fluency. This includes the ability to orally communicate, as well as read and write English effectively. Related to fluency is a general comfort level with English—without which employability and job advancement might be affected.

**Culture and Community Support Networks (CSNs):** Hispanics are seen as an ethnic group with deep-seated cultural ties. This includes a sense of community, family, and cultural identity, all of which come with certain behavioral norms and expectations. These cultural connections might work both for and against Hispanic Job Corps graduates.

**Successful Hispanic Program Elements:** Many educational and employment assistance programs have been developed and specifically tailored toward assisting Hispanic youth and adults. Through assessments of these programs, a common set of elements have been identified relative to the success of those enrolled. These include: language, cultural/community ties, interactive learning methods, bilingual/bicultural service providers, and mentoring/positive role models.

**Job Corps Placement Services:** The NJCS found that program job placement assistance was the weakest link in Job Corps services, used by only forty percent of all Job Corps graduates. A great deal has changed about job placement assistance since that 1995 study. Now there is more emphasis on concentrated assistance and follow-up. However, the question remains whether Hispanic Job Corps graduates are using such services or turning to less effective alternatives to secure employment.

### **Questions to be Pursued**

Within each of these investigative issues, research questions were identified that could be relevant to both the assessment of Hispanic Job Corps participants' lack of impact as seen in the NJCS and in examination of Hispanics in Job Corps today. These included:

#### **Language**

- Do Job Corps participants need English language skills at a greater rate than is identified by Job Corps staff?
- Do Job Corps participants complete the ESL courses in which they are enrolled, and do they stay in these courses long enough to thoroughly master the English language?
- Are LEP Hispanic participants really proficient and comfortable using English once they complete their Job Corps training and enter the employment market?
- Do Hispanic Job Corps participants seek employment opportunities where their English language skills are less important, and are these jobs less likely to lead to promotional opportunities and earnings advancement?

### **Culture/Community Support Networks**

- Do Hispanic Job Corps participants have cultural/familial ties that might interfere with their success in Job Corps; for example, pressure to drop out of the program, or a desire to stay within their community and close to their families?
- Are Hispanic Job Corps graduates urged to find immediate employment once they leave the program making them less likely to look for a job within their field of training?
- Are Hispanic Job Corps trainees more likely to consider the needs of their family unit than their personal long-term goals?
- Where do Hispanic Job Corps participants turn when they need assistance in securing employment?
- If Hispanic Job Corps participants use their Community Support Networks (CSNs) to help them find jobs, do they find these resources limited in terms of employment options and advancement potential?
- Where are Hispanic Job Corps trainees employed and are their positions in the fields in which they were trained? How much English is required in the work Hispanic Job Corps graduates find, and does this employment have reasonable advancement potential?

### **Successful Hispanic Program Elements**

- Do Job Corps Centers offer assistance that includes the identified success elements?
- Do Hispanic participants desire these elements within an assistance program?
- Do Hispanic youth turn to arenas other than Job Corps where they can receive support tailored specifically for their needs?

### **Job Corps Placement Services**

- How extensive is the use of Job Corps placement assistance by Hispanic graduates?
  - What are the expectations and comfort level of Hispanic participants and graduates toward this form of assistance?
  - What are the staff experiences placing Hispanic program participants?
  - Are there improvements that might be made in employment placement assistance to better serve Hispanic participants?
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# NATIONAL JOB CORPS STUDY

## METHODOLOGY

### Direction for the Research

Review of data from the National Job Corps Study (NJCS) was designed to examine existing information to determine possible rationales for the study's finding of negative impacts for Hispanics compared to zero or positive impacts for other ethnic groups. Impact was defined by the NJCS as Job Corps participants being employed and earning more than the corresponding control group after four years. Hispanic Job Corps participants were one of only two subgroups investigated that did not show an economic impact at the conclusion of the study period.

Although when compared against the Hispanic Control Group, the Hispanic Program Group did not do as well economically, it does not appear that either group was notably better or worse than other racial/ethnic subgroups. As seen on Table 1, both Hispanic program and control participants earned more per week than African American but less than White study participants in their respective groups. However, a pattern is seen for both African American and White Job Corps participants of higher earnings than their respective control groups.

**Table One: National Job Corps Study Participants Earnings Per Week in Year Four After Random Assignment**

	Participants	Controls	Impact
White	\$264	\$231	\$32*
African American	\$183	\$166	\$17*
Hispanic	\$207	\$218	\$-11

The NJCS found Hispanic program participants received and completed services and took part in program activities at the same rate as African American and White program participants. In fact, Hispanic participants stayed in Job Corps slightly longer than their counterparts in the other two groups (9.4 weeks compared to 7.7 for African American and 7.6 for White non-Hispanic). Their

“success” within Job Corps appeared to be comparable to that of the other two groups.

Conversely, because earnings for the Hispanic control group fell, as might be expected, between that of the African American and White control groups, no definitive evidence exists to say that Hispanic control group members did any better than other control group members.

Although the Hispanic Control Group and Hispanic Program Group might not have done better or worse than could be expected among racial/ethnic groups in regard to average weekly earnings, there might have been factors within the Hispanic Control Group that made it stronger than the Hispanic Program Group, and therefore better able to perform than the other group, or--on the other hand, elements about the Hispanic Program Group that made it weaker, and therefore less able to show positive results. This is the area of investigation for the current research.

### **Data Factors Examined**

The extensive data list available from the NJCS was reviewed in light of the research areas identified for the SHJC (language, culture and community support networks, successful Hispanic program elements, and job placement). Analysis also looked at an area suggested through information gained in site visits to Job Corps centers: employment. Four timeframes were found to be useful for examining demographic and experiential characteristics of all NJCS subjects:

- At baseline: characteristics and experience at the point study subjects were randomly assigned to control and program groups; e.g., background associated with education and work.
- During Job Corps participation: experiences of the Hispanic Program Group and the Non-Hispanic Program Group; for example, courses taken and vocational trades chosen while in Job Corps.
- Quarter-by-quarter review: the patterns of academics, vocational training and employment participation of each group.
- Four years after random assignment: the overall experience of all participants and their demographic characteristics after 48 months.

A total of 245 factors or combination of factors were reviewed. These included elements related to demographics, reasons for wanting to enter Job Corps and influences for this decision, Job Corps experiences, employment search elements, academic and vocational training at baseline and throughout the study period, actual employment, and other factors. The DOL/ETA/Office of Performance and Technology ran the data for this analysis.

## **Analysis Approach**

The first level of assessment followed a standard set by Mathematica Policy Research, the authors of the NJCS, during their examination of potential factors that might explain differences in economic impact between the Hispanics and other ethnic groups. Mathematica looked at a set of 12 baseline characteristics associated with demographics and anticipated Program enrollment for all study participants (including control group members) noting differences between Hispanics and White Non-Hispanics and Black Non-Hispanics that might warrant further investigation. (NJCS Report, Table VI.10, p. 173) They identified two “main observable differences” and undertook additional analysis in an effort to explain impact differentials. The factors they chose, primary language and geographic location, had an observable difference (in percentages) of at least 17 percentage points. Mathematica disregarded other factors with an observable difference of at least 8 points.

Comparing the Hispanic Control Group and Hispanic Program Group factors, none were found to have a percentage difference as great as 17%. Only four factors that included the entire sample had a percentage difference between these two groups of 10% or more.

- Ever enrolled in GED program: 13.9% Hispanic Control Group > Hispanic Program Group; 10.5% Non-Hispanic Control Group > Non-Hispanic Program Group (N = 117,741).
- Ever received high school diploma or GED: 12% Hispanic Control Group < Hispanic Program Group; 13.1% Non-Hispanic Control Group < Non-Hispanic Program Group (N = 121,834).
- Got a vocational degree during months 1 – 48: 19.8% Hispanic Control Group < Hispanic Program Group; 23.1% Non-Hispanic Control Group < Non-Hispanic Program Group (N = 160,536).
- Ever in education other than Job Corps: 10.5% Hispanic Control Group > Hispanic Program Group; 10.5% Non-Hispanic Control Group > Non-Hispanic Program Group (N = 157,365).

Three of these looked at the end results of the study subjects’ involvement with education (GED or high school diploma) or vocational training (vocational degree). Given that these subjects represented a major concentration of Job Corps enrollment, it is not surprising that the Hispanic Program Group would show considerably more attainment than the Hispanic Control Group. This same pattern is seen among the Non-Hispanic Control Group and Non-Hispanic Program Group.

The fourth factor looked at involvement with education other than Job Corps. For this factor, the Hispanic Control Group showed greater participation than the Hispanic Program Group. This same pattern is seen in the Non-Hispanic Control



Group and Non-Hispanic Program Group. More will be discussed concerning such patterns below.

The second level of assessment looked at any significant differences between the Hispanic Control Group and the Hispanic Program Group in relation to each factor within the four timeframes. Many factors showed a significant difference, leading to the question of whether these were of practical significance or simply an expected pattern. For that reason, significant differences between the Non-Hispanic Control and Non-Hispanic Program Groups were also examined, and if a similar pattern occurred, the factor was deemed not to be of importance in explaining differences between the Hispanic Control Group and Hispanic Program Group.

## **FINDINGS**

All of the discussion below is based on analysis of weighted data. The original NJCS research sample included 15,386 individuals out of a universe of 80,883 eligible Job Corps applicants, with 5,977 randomly selected for the control group and 9,409 randomly chosen for the program group.

### **Language**

One of the research areas proposed for investigation in the current study is language. It was felt that a difference in English language fluency between the Hispanic Control Group and Hispanic Program Group might help explain the lack of economic impact. The NJCS used the question “What is your native language” as a measure of investigation. No other question related to language fluency was asked of study subjects.

This factor was found to be statistically significant when the Hispanic Control Group and Hispanic Program Group were compared, although the actual percentage difference of reported native language between the two groups was very small. The factors related to study subjects ever enrolling in an ESL program and, for those participating in Job Corps, ever taking English or ESL as an academic subject while in the program were also examined.

A very small percent of all study subjects ever enrolled in ESL (3.1% for the Hispanic Control Group and 2.3% for the Hispanic Program Group). For Non-Hispanics, .5% ever enrolled in an ESL program. Less than ten percent (8.6%) of the Hispanic Program Group enrolled in ESL while in Job Corps. This was true for 2.1% of the Non-Hispanic Program Group. A larger percentage of Non-Hispanics (23.5%) than Hispanics (18.3%) took English as an academic subject while in Job Corps.

## **Baseline**

Only a few baseline characteristics of the Hispanic Control Group/Hispanic Program Group tested significant, and for each of these, a similar pattern was seen in the Non-Hispanic Control Group and Non-Hispanic Program Group. For example, on the factor “Most important reason for joining Job Corps,” there was a significant difference found between the responses of each of the control/program group pairs, and the pattern was the same; e.g., each of the control groups recorded a higher percentage to the response “for personal or family reasons” than the program groups.

Most demographic characteristics showed the same results: similar patterns between the two paired groups of control/program. The one exception was gender where both Hispanic and Non-Hispanic paired group differences were found statistically significant, but a greater percentage of females were present in the Hispanic Program Group than the Hispanic Control Group (45.0%/47.6%). The difference between the Non-Hispanic Control Group and the Non-Hispanic Program Group was minimal (43.2%/42.3%). Factors were constructed to further examine marital status (married or living in a committed relationship versus single) and residing with relatives. No significant difference was found between the paired groups for either of these factors.

The one exception to this pattern was seen on the issue of whether or not the study subjects had a job at the point of random assignment into a control or program group. The factor was found to be statistically significant for both Hispanic and Non-Hispanic groups, however the Hispanic Control Group was employed at a higher percentage compared to the Hispanic Program Group, (22.5%/18.1%) than was true of the Non-Hispanic Control Group compared to the Non-Hispanic Program Group (20.2%/21.7%).

## **Job Corps Experience**

Only two subgroups could be compared in looking at activities while in Job Corps: the Hispanic Program Group and the Non-Hispanic Program Group. Enrollment in a variety of academic subjects, social and employment skills classes and vocational trades were examined. In assessing results, it should be remembered that NJCS program group members were enrolled in Job Corps Centers across the country and not every Center offered the same classes or vocational trades.

Neither of the two factors “took academic classes in Job Corps” or “took vocational training in Job Corps” were found to be statistically significant, verifying the NJCS finding that both Hispanics and Non-Hispanics took generally the same type of education and training. Some differences were found,

however, when looking at specific types of classes. Table 2 points out those classes and vocational trades found to be statistically significant (most at  $< .01$ ), noting whether the Hispanic Program Group or Non-Hispanic Program Group reported the greater participation.

As noted on the table, Hispanics took part in a variety of academic classes at a greater level than Non-Hispanics. There were only two areas where this was not true: English and science.

More Hispanics appeared to take clerical, electrical, and electronics vocational trades than Non-Hispanics, while Non-Hispanics took welding, construction, and food service vocational trades more than Hispanics. Not all trades were offered at all Centers where program participants were enrolled.

Hispanics participated more in skills building classes including parenting skills, social skills, cultural awareness, and progress/performance panels. The same was true for receiving assistance associated with enhancing employment skills including: attending world of work classes, resume writing, interviewing and job clubs. More Hispanics also received help with career or job counseling.

Hispanics reported a greater level of assistance from Job Corps in looking for employment, and more indicated they found a job as a result of Job Corps placement services. However, less than half of the Hispanic Program Group said yes to either of these two factors (43% and 44% respectively). More Non-Hispanics than Hispanics received aid enrolling in other educational programs.

### **Quarter-By-Quarter Review**

On the issue of whether Group members took academics during each of the 16 quarters of the study, almost all group pairings of Hispanic and Non-Hispanics were found to be significant. For the Hispanic Control and Hispanic Program Groups the exceptions were quarters 9, 10, and 11, however, there was no difference in the pattern of control to program group when Hispanics and Non-Hispanics were compared.

Almost the same pattern was found when looking at vocational training by quarter, with all except the 12<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> quarters noting statistical significance between the Hispanic Control and Hispanic Program Groups, and both the Hispanic and Non-Hispanic program groups indicating more involvement in vocational training than their respective control groups. A difference occurred in quarters 13 and 15, however, when a larger percentage of the Hispanic Control Group enrolled in vocational training than the Hispanic Program Group. The opposite was true of the Non-Hispanic Control Group/Non-Hispanic Program Group for these two quarters. The actual percentage of Hispanic Control Group

**TABLE 2**  
**PARTICIPATION IN JOB CORPS EDUCATION AND TRAINING COURSES**  
**SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES (< .01) BETWEEN HISPANIC AND NON-HISPANIC PROGRAM GROUPS**

Job Corps Course/Assistance	df	Chi-Square	**N (weighted)	Direction
Reading	1	14.699	52,687	HP > NHP
Writing	1	147.927	52,591	HP > NHP
English	1	112.937	52,541	HP < NHP
ESL	1	996.773	52,541	HP > NHP
GED	1	16.161	52,608	HP > NHP
Mathematics	1	38.221	52,732	HP > NHP
Science	1	23.612	52,507	HP < NHP
Clerical trade	1	252.731	52,478	HP > NHP
Welding trade	1	12.067	52,491	HP < NHP
Electrical trade	1	60.523	52,467	HP > NHP
Construction trade	1	65.762	52,492	HP < NHP
Food service trade	1	50.504	52,516	HP < NHP
* Electronics trade	1	4.892	52,467	HP > NHP
World of work class	1	20.998	51,427	HP > NHP
Progress/performance panels	1	17.258	51,544	HP > NHP
Health classes	1	102.758	51,520	HP > NHP
Parenting skills classes	1	17.570	51,797	HP > NHP
Social skills training	1	7.854	51,146	HP > NHP
Cultural awareness classes	1	25.525	51,222	HP > NHP
Resume writing assistance	1	16.424	20,613	HP > NHP
Help with interview skills	1	10.885	20,614	HP > NHP
Career or job counseling	1	17.639	20,613	HP > NHP
Received help from job clubs	1	14.105	20,613	HP > NHP
* Received aid enrolling in other ed programs	1	4.512	20,613	HP < NHP
Got help looking for a job from Job Corps	1	49.823	51,960	HP > NHP
Got job as result of Job Corps placement services	1	16.811	20,613	HP > NHP

\* Significant only at .05 level.

\*\* For discussion of weighting and original sample sizes, see: U.S. Department of Labor, Employment Training Administration, *National Job Corps Study: The Impacts of Job Corps on Participants' Employment and Related Outcomes*, Research and Evaluation Monograph Series 01-K, Washington, D.C., 2001.

members enrolled in vocational training during either of those quarters was only seven to eight percent.

Reports on quarterly employment did not follow this same pattern. No statistical significance was found between Hispanic Control and Hispanic Program Groups in quarters 10, 12, 13, 14, and 15. The Hispanic and Non-Hispanic pairings matched only through quarter 6 and again in quarter 11. For quarters 1 - 6, a greater percent of the control groups for both Hispanics and Non-Hispanics were employed than was true of the program groups. This might be expected as most program group members would be engaged in Job Corps or beginning their employment search. However, the Hispanic Control Group continued to outdo or equal the Hispanic Program Group in terms of percentage employed throughout the study period. The same was not true of Non-Hispanics.

In quarter 7, the two Non-Hispanic groups were essentially equal in employment participation. After that quarter and throughout the remainder of the study period, the Non-Hispanic Program Group noted a greater percent employed than was true of the Non-Hispanic Control Group (with the exception of quarter 11 as noted above).

Table 3 shows the exact percentages of Hispanic and Non-Hispanic group members reporting employment in each quarter. As noted, the weighted "N" for each quarter differed. The percentage of the Hispanic Control Group who are employed increased every quarter (with the exception of quarter 4), and by the end of the study, nearly three-fourths were employed (72.6%). This is 3% greater than employment by the Hispanic Program Group at quarter 16. Additionally, the percentage of the Hispanic Control Group employed is greater than any other subgroup including Non-Hispanic Program Group members.

### **48 Months After Job Corps Entry**

By the 48-month follow-up, the marital status difference between the control and program groups was statistically significant for both Hispanics and Non-Hispanics. A smaller percentage of the Hispanic Control Group was married or in a committed relationship (living together) than was true of the Hispanic Program Group (31.2%/36.9%). Only a small difference was seen between the Non-Hispanic Control Group and Non-Hispanic Program Group (28.9%/29.7%). No statistical relationship was seen between the two Hispanic groups on the issue of living with relatives.

In examining where participants lived by looking at their residence within a metropolitan statistical area (see Table 4), both paired Hispanic and Non-Hispanic groups were found to be statistically significant. However, while non-Hispanics in both the control and program groups were about equal in their residence in a primary metropolitan area (PMSA), metropolitan area (MSA) or

**TABLE 3**  
**PERCENT EMPLOYED IN EACH STUDY QUARTER**  
**HISPANIC CONTROL, HISPANIC PROGRAM, NON-HISPANIC CONTROL,**  
**AND NON-HISPANIC PROGRAM GROUPS**

Employed in Quarter:				
	Control	Program	Control	Program
1	43.3%	29.6%	41.7%	33.9%
2	49.0%	27.8%	46.9%	33.8%
3	51.6%	36.4%	52.9%	42.9%
4	56.2%	44.4%	57.7%	50.9%
5	54.8%	49.4%	56.7%	54.4%
6	56.3%	50.7%	53.6%	52.3%
7	56.6%	54.0%	55.3%	55.3%
8	60.4%	58.6%	57.0%	59.0%
9	63.8%	62.3%	60.5%	62.6%
10	64.6%	64.9%	63.1%	65.6%
11	65.7%	67.9%	63.6%	66.8%
12	67.3%	66.3%	63.4%	65.9%
13	68.2%	67.5%	63.7%	66.5%
14	68.2%	67.2%	65.6%	67.3%
15	69.1%	68.7%	66.0%	67.8%
16	72.6%	69.9%	68.9%	71.2%

**TABLE 4**  
**SIZE OF GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF RESIDENCE**  
**HISPANIC CONTROL GROUP AND HISPANIC PROGRAM GROUP**

*Lives in:	Hispanic		Non-Hispanic		Total
	Control	Program	Control	Program	
PMSA	49.1%	42.7%	29.1%	29.7%	32.3%
MSA	39.7%	45.7%	46.5%	45.8%	45.5%
Non-MSA	11.2%	11.6%	24.5%	24.5%	22.2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

N = 155435

**Hispanic Control Group/Hispanic Program Group**

Degrees of freedom: 2

Chi-square = 119.746

< .01

**Non-Hispanic Control Group/Non-Hispanic Program Group**

Degrees of freedom: 2

Chi-square = 8.614

< .01

\* PMSA - primary metropolitan statistical area. MSA - metropolitan statistical area.

non-metropolitan area, the same was not true of Hispanics. More of the Hispanic Control Group lived in a PMSA (49.1%/42.7%) and fewer lived in an MSA (39.7%/45.7%). The same percent lived in a Non-MSA.

Another factor looked at whether the subject was living in the same state at 48 months as he/she had resided when the study began. Both paired groups showed statistical significance but the percentages for each pair were virtually the same (at least 88% for all groups).

The results for the factor of whether the study subject was ever arrested during the 48 months of the study was significant for both paired groups. The percentage of never arrested was less for the Hispanic Control Group than for the Hispanic Program Group (78.4%/81.0%), while for the Non-Hispanic Control Group and Non-Hispanic Program Group, the percentage was about the same (76.5%/76.2%).

Similar questions were asked of study participants at 12, 30 and 48 months regarding different methods they used for their job search. For 6 of these methods noted at the 12 month and 30 month follow-up periods, the difference between the responses for the Hispanic Control Group and Hispanic Program Group were statistically significant while the same was not true of the Non-Hispanic Control and Non-Hispanic Program Groups.

At the 12 month point, the Hispanic Program Group was more likely to report checking want ads in the newspaper or applying directly to workplaces than was the Hispanic Control Group. At 30 months, the Hispanic Program Group reported greater frequency of checking with state employment services, private employment services, or local JTPA programs, and asking friends or relatives about employment than was true of the Hispanic Program Group. For each of these points, the difference between the Non-Hispanic Control Group and Non-Hispanic Program Group was not found to be significant.

At the 48-month follow-up, only two means of searching for a job showed statistically significant differences between the Hispanic Control Group and the Hispanic Program Group. The same was true for the Non-Hispanic Control Group and Non-Hispanic Program Group.

Information was available on the occupation of the study subjects' most recent jobs at quarter 10 and at quarter 16. Both paired groups showed statistical significance, although the percentage difference on most occupations was small. Table 5 compares the results for each quarter for only the Hispanic groups.

The Hispanic Control Group and Hispanic Program Group in each quarter for most occupations noted similar percentages and similar shifts from quarter 10 to quarter 16. A slight difference can be seen when the top five occupations are ranked for the Hispanic groups for each quarter. The Hispanic Program Group



**TABLE 5**  
**OCCUPATION ON MOST RECENT JOB AT QUARTERS 10 AND 16**  
**HISPANIC CONTROL GROUP AND HISPANIC PROGRAM GROUP**

Occupation	Quarter 10 - Hispanic		Quarter 16 - Hispanic	
	Control	Program	Control	Program
services	18.2%	16.8%	16.6%	17.4%
sales	16.3%	15.7%	14.7%	11.9%
construction	19.0%	19.0%	21.2%	20.3%
private household	5.8%	6.9%	5.3%	6.8%
clerical	12.0%	14.8%	15.6%	15.0%
mechanic-repairers-machinist	11.1%	11.5%	12.8%	12.4%
agriculture-forestry	1.3%	2.9%	1.2%	1.7%
other	16.3%	12.4%	12.5%	14.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
N	7,944	7,463	9,440	9,184

Ranking, Top Four Occupations	Quarter 10 - Hispanic		Quarter 16 - Hispanic	
	Control	Program	Control	Program
services	2	2	2	2
sales	4	3	4	5
construction	1	1	1	1
clerical	5	4	3	3
mechanic-repairers-machinist			5	
other	3	5		4

moved more quickly into clerical occupations (ranked 4<sup>th</sup>) than the Hispanic Control Group (ranked 5<sup>th</sup>) in quarter 10. This occupation appeared to have similar importance for both groups by quarter 16 (ranked 3<sup>rd</sup>), however the Hispanic Control Group moved into occupations of mechanics/repairers/machinists, a move that was not duplicated by the Hispanic Program Group in regard to the ranking.

Although ranking occupations might be a useful measurement tool, it should be noted that the percentages for most occupational categories were the same for both groups at each quarter; e.g., mechanic/repairer/machinist was not ranked in the top five categories for the Hispanic Program Group in the 16<sup>th</sup> quarter, but 12.4% of members reported this occupation compared to 12.8% for the Hispanic Control Group.

Information was available for a few demographic characteristics to judge change from the beginning to the end of the study period. This included whether the subject was head of the household, marital status, living with relatives, and household size. Comparisons are presented on Table 6.

The percentage of study subjects who were head of their households increased dramatically from baseline to 48 months, as did the percentage of those who were married or in a committed relationship. This large increase was seen for all Hispanic and Non-Hispanic groups, with each program group noting the largest percentage change.

Fewer study subjects were living with relatives by the end of the study. The change was slightly less for the Hispanic Control Group although approximately the same actual percentage as noted in the Hispanic Program Group were living with relatives.

Mean household size decreased for all groups, with the Hispanic Program Group showing a very slight increase in household size over the Hispanic Control Group at baseline and the Hispanic Control Group reporting a larger household size after 48 months. The largest difference between Hispanic and Non-Hispanic control and program groups for the two time periods was with the Hispanic Program Group.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Nothing stands out as a major factor to explain the lack of impact for the Hispanic Program Group in the NJCS. The percentage differences between the Hispanic Control Group and Hispanic Program Group for almost all the factors which were examined was not large. For the few where this was not the case, results could be explained by the Hispanic Program Group participation in formal education and vocational training programs while in Job Corps.

**TABLE 6**  
**COMPARISON OF SELECT DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS**  
**AT RANDOM ASSIGNMENT / AT 48 MONTHS**

**DIFFERENCE - SAMPLE MEMBER IS HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD**

	Hispanic		Non-Hispanic		Total
	Control	Program	Control	Program	
Baseline	12.4%	12.0%	12.2%	11.7%	12.0%
48 months	47.5%	49.6%	51.0%	52.4%	51.2%
Difference	-35.1%	-37.7%	-38.8%	-40.7%	-39.2%

**DIFFERENCE - SAMPLE MEMBER MARRIED OR IN COMMITTED RELATIONSHIP**

	Hispanic		Non-Hispanic		Total
	Control	Program	Control	Program	
Baseline	9.3%	9.8%	5.8%	5.5%	6.3%
48 months	32.1%	36.9%	28.9%	29.7%	30.2%
Difference	-22.8%	-27.2%	-23.0%	-24.3%	-23.9%

**DIFFERENCE - SAMPLE MEMBER IS LIVING WITH RELATIVES**

	Hispanic		Non-Hispanic		Total
	Control	Program	Control	Program	
Baseline	76.9%	77.5%	78.0%	76.3%	77.0%
48 months	66.8%	66.2%	58.9%	57.9%	59.8%
Difference	10.1%	11.3%	19.1%	18.4%	17.2%

**DIFFERENCE - MEAN HOUSEHOLD SIZE**

	Hispanic		Non-Hispanic		Total
	Control	Program	Control	Program	
Baseline mean	4.71	4.79	4.36	4.43	4.46
Outcome mean	3.92	3.81	3.51	3.47	3.56
Difference	0.78	0.98	0.85	0.96	0.91

The NJCS question on “native language” does not appear to be a good indicator of English language fluency. Approximately half of the Hispanic Control Group and the Hispanic Program Group said their native language was Spanish; however, only 9% were enrolled in an ESL program at some time during the study (the only other language-related question in the study). It might be expected that this percentage would be larger if response of “Spanish” as native language was a good indicator of English proficiency. Although more of the Hispanic Program Group took “English” as a class in Job Corps, a larger percentage of Non-Hispanics did likewise. The conclusion is that no information in the NJCS was available to judge the language fluency and comfort level in speaking English between the Hispanic Control Group and the Hispanic Program Group.

In regard to demographic characteristics, there appeared to be slightly more females in the Hispanic Program Group than the Hispanic Control Group. By the end of the study, more of those in the Hispanic Program Group were married and head of their households, although they lived in smaller households. The Hispanic Control Group appeared to be more concentrated in dense population areas than the Hispanic Program Group.

Within Job Corps, the Hispanic Program Group appeared to receive greater assistance than the Non-Hispanic Program Group. They took more academic, social skills and job-related classes. The Hispanic Program Group also received more job placement assistance from Job Corps. The fact that not all of these classes were offered in each Job Corps Center could explain some of these discrepancies. The findings also seem to indicate that the Hispanic Program Group should have done better if use of Job Corps assistance is a good measure for success.

The one major area where several indicators show the Hispanic Control Group and Hispanic Program Group differ is in employment. More in the Hispanic Control Group had a job when the study began, and similar to the Non-Hispanic Control Group, were employed while their respective program groups were engaged in Job Corps. For Non-Hispanics, the trend reversed during the seventh quarter of the study when the training and skills picked up in Job Corps probably contributed to the Non-Hispanic Program Group increasing their percentage of employment over the Non-Hispanic Control Group.

However with Hispanics, the control group continued to be employed at a greater percentage than the program group for the remainder of the study and boasted the highest employment percentage at the end. Additionally, the Hispanic Program Group appeared to move into clerical positions quicker than the Hispanic Control Group. These might have been lower in pay. Conversely, by the study conclusion, the Hispanic Control Group was moving into employment as mechanics, machinists, and repairers – occupations which might pay more.

These findings seem to point to the fact that the Hispanic Control Group was employed earlier and longer than the Hispanic Program Group and possibly in higher paying positions. Longevity in employment usually results in higher pay. The increase in females in the Hispanic Program Group might also speak to the possibility of employment in positions with lower pay as females traditionally earn less. On the other side, the higher concentration of the Hispanic Control Group in denser population areas might also contribute to a greater availability of higher paying employment.

In summary as much as they could be investigated, theories concerning culture and community support networks, successful Hispanic program elements, and job placement were not seen as necessarily relevant in explaining the lack of economic impact for the Hispanic Program Group compared to the Hispanic Control Group. It was not possible to investigate the issue of English language fluency and comfort. Differences in employment patterns have been shown to be the strongest reasons for impact differentials.

## **PROFILES OF HISPANIC JOB CORPS PARTICIPANTS**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The second study methodology involved drawing a comparative profile between Hispanics involved in the NJCS and more current Hispanic Job Corps participants to determine if the population segment had changed over time. This was done with the assistance of the DOL/ETA Job Corps Accountability Unit. For descriptive purposes, the NJCS timeframe was set as program year (PY) 1995.

Job Corps administrative systems have changed a great deal from 1995 to the present as have some of the program definitions, required Job Corps activities, and the type of information which is gathered from participants. In discussion with Job Corps personnel familiar with both these aspects, it was determined that the best source for profiling 1995 Job Corps participants would be data collected in the NJCS, as actual program administrative information on Job Corps participants for PY 1995 would be difficult to obtain.

Personnel associated with the Job Corps data system suggested pulling a profile of those entering Job Corps in PY 2001 to represent more current program participants and then tracking what happened to them through the data that was gathered. Looking at individuals in PY 2001 would allow enough time for that program class to “exit” Job Corps (complete their program participation in some manner) and take part in the 3, 6 and 12 month follow-up surveys. It was requested that Job Corps Accountability Unit personnel look for 54 specific factors that were available in the NJCS and might also be present for PY 2001 Job Corps participants.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to gather information on all of these factors for PY 2001 participants. On the other hand, other factor information was provided that was not available for NJCS study subjects. The additional information will also be summarized in this section as a way to look at more recent Job Corps participants.

Exact comparisons between the past and present Job Corps population groups were difficult to make for additional reasons. The NJCS was a random sample of Job Corps applicants that included program characteristics for both those who entered Job Corps as well as a control group of individuals screened as eligible for Job Corps but who were not allowed to enter. All of these individuals were followed for 48 months including those who might have only stayed in the program a short time and those who did not participate.

The PY 2001 group consisted of only Job Corps enrollees. Although the information gathered about them at the time of their entrance into the program would be similar to NJCS baseline data for both Hispanic program and control groups, the information concerning PY 2001 individuals after that point screens out certain individuals in compliance with current Job Corps reporting requirements. For example, follow-up surveys were only conducted on Job Corps graduates or former enrollees (those who do not complete but do remain in the program at least 60 days) not on all PY 2001 program participants. The same is true of placement statistics--if an individual is not placed in three months, they are not surveyed again. This would mean only those defined as "placed" by Job Corps (in a job, in the military, in an educational or vocational program) would be questioned in the 6 and 12 month follow-up surveys and in fact the category "in the military" was dropped in the data after initial placement statistics were collected.

Caution was also advised by the Job Corps Accountability Unit on the accuracy of some of the information gathered at baseline. Unlike the NJCS database, PY 2001 responses did not come directly from the Job Corps participant. Instead the information was completed by the OA counselor working with the student.

Given all of the considerations noted above, it is difficult to draw any conclusive findings from the two profiles. They are presented here at face value. All of the above should be considered when trying to compare the 1995 and 2001 Hispanic profile information. Conclusions are suggested but may not be definitive.

## **FINDINGS**

### **Comparison Between NJCS 1995 and PY 2001 Job Corps Participants**

The NJCS notes that 18% of all Job Corps participants involved in the study were Hispanics. This percentage did not change in PY 2001 (11,974 Hispanics, 55,644 Non-Hispanics). Table 7 presents data points where comparisons can be made between 1995 NJCS participants and those entering Job Corps in PY 2001.

The percentage of Hispanic Job Corps participants under 18 years of age remains approximately the same, around 40%. This is not true for Non-Hispanics where the percentage decreased by 6% to 35%. Slightly more Hispanic males entered Job Corps in PY 2001 than occurred in 1995 for Hispanic program participants (increase of 5.3%). A very similar percentage of Hispanic Job Corps participants were head of their households in both 1995 and 2001 (the percentage increased 6% for Non-Hispanics).

**TABLE 7**  
**COMPARISON OF NJCS (1995) AND PROGRAM YEAR 2001 JOB CORPS PARTICIPANTS**  
**CHARACTERISTICS AT ENTRANCE INTO JOB CORPS**

Characteristic	Category	1995				2001	
		Hispanic		Non-Hispanic		Hispanic	Non-Hispanic
		Control	Program	Control	Program	Program	Program
Age (%)	16-17		40.3		41.2	38.8	34.8
	18-19		31.9		31.8		
	18-20					42.8	46.5
	20-24		27.8		26.9		
	>/= 21					18.4	18.7
	16-17		40.3		41.2	38.8	34.8
	>/= 18		59.7		58.8	61.2	65.2
Gender (%)	female	45.0	47.6	43.2	42.3	43.0	39.0
	male	55.0	52.4	56.8	57.7	57.0	61.0
Head of household (%)	"family head"					11.3	18.2
	family member					56.2	48.6
	household head at baseline	12.4	12.0	12.2	11.7		
	household head at 48 months	47.5	49.6	51.0	52.4		
Education at entrance (%)	had high school credential	22.3	23.0	23.9	23.5	18.0	23.7
Household size (%)	1 member		1.9		3.4	36.4	45.4
	2 members		8.9		11.8	7.9	9.6
	cumulative 1 or 2 members		10.8		15.2	44.3	55.0
	3 - 5 members		59.4		60.2	41.6	35.4
	cumulative 1 - 5 members		70.2		75.4	85.9	90.4
Employed (%)		22.5	18.1	20.2	21.7	46.7	43.2
Non-resident (%)			16.0		13.7	23.4	14.5
Average length of stay in Job Corps (months)			9.4		7.7	8.3	7.4



**TABLE 7 Continued**

Characteristic	Category	1995					2001	
		Hispanic		Non-Hispanic			Hispanic	Non-Hispanic
		Control	Program	Control	White	Black	Program	Program
	1 - Boston Region		6.3		8.3	2.3	7.2	4.6
	2 - New York Region		8.4		2.5	5.7	14.9	4.9
	3 - Pennsylvania Region		6.5		10.1	18.9	4.7	13.5
	4 - Atlanta Region		11.1		16.2	35.3	12.1	25.5
	5 - Chicago Region		4.0		9.8	13.3	4.2	11.3
	6 - Dallas Region		29.1		12.0	11.8	24.3	13.8
	7&8 - Kansas and Denver Regions		8.2		21.7	8.3	4.9	11.1
	9 - San Francisco Region		22.7		5.6	3.8	24.0	8.5
*Residency Region (%)	10 - Seattle Region		3.8		13.9	0.7	3.7	6.8

\* 1995 data from U.S. Department of Labor, Employment Training Administration, National Job Corps Study: The Impacts of Job Corps on Participants' Employment and Related Outcomes, Table VI.10, page 173, Research and Evaluation Monograph Series 01-K, Washington, D.C., 2001.

For PY 2001: N = 11,974 Hispanic, 55,644 Non-Hispanic.

A large difference was seen in the percentage of Job Corps participants who indicated they lived in single person households. This went from 1.9% in 1995 to 36.4% in 2001. A similar increase was seen in the Non-Hispanic population (from 3.4% to 45.4%). In PY 2001, 9% more Non-Hispanics reported living in single person households than was true for Hispanics. Household size decreased from 1995 to 2001 for both groups, while Hispanics continued to report larger households than Non-Hispanics.

Hispanics entering Job Corps in PY 2001 with a high school diploma or GED decreased from what was seen in 1995 (down by 5% to 18%), while the percentage for Non-Hispanics remained constant at 24%. At the same time, PY 2001 data also show Hispanics had more education than Non-Hispanics (39.5% of Hispanics completed school through grade 9 compared to 31.6% for Non-Hispanics).

The region of residency for Hispanic Job Corps participants has not changed greatly from 1995 to 2001. The only region showing over five percent difference is New York which had a 6.5 percentage point increase for Hispanic enrollment in 2001. The Dallas Region showed a decrease in Hispanic participation in 2001 of 4.8 percentage points.

The percentage of Hispanic Job Corps participants who were employed when they entered Job Corps increased considerably (up 28.6 percentage points from 18.1 percentage points in 1995 to 46.7 percentage points in 2001). Although the same was seen in the Non-Hispanic population, the increase was not as dramatic (up 11.5 percentage points).

The average length of stay for Hispanic Job Corps participants decreased from 1995 to 2001 an average of 1.1 months (9.4 to 8.3 months). The decreased length of time in Job Corps went down less than a month for Non-Hispanics during the same time period.

### **Comparison Between Hispanics and Non-Hispanics for PY 2001 Only**

Information was pulled from PY 2001 administrative data to provide additional profile data looking at Hispanic and Non-Hispanic Job Corps participants. This information is exhibited on Table 8 which also includes the "N" for each data point..

Mean age for the two groups is approximately the same at 19 years. The mean number of months each group was out of school before entering Job Corps is the same (16 months). Number of dependents was also similar with 91%-92% reporting "none."

More Hispanics were born outside the United States (19.9%) than was true of Non-Hispanics (7%). An additional 6.8% of Hispanics were born in Puerto Rico.

**TABLE 8**  
**COMPARISON OF PY 2001 HISPANIC AND NON-HISPANIC JOB CORPS PARTICIPANTS**

Characteristic	Category	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic
<b>Baseline</b>			
Age at enrollment (yrs) N = 11,974 (Hispanic), 55,638 (Non-Hispanic)	Mean	19.01	19.1
	Median	18.6	18.8
Months out of school. N = 11,974 (Hispanic), 55,644 (Non-Hispanic)	Mean	16.64	16.1
	Median	11	9.0
Number of dependents (%) N = 11,974 (Hispanic), 55,644 (Non-Hispanic)	0	90.9	92.3
	1	6.1	5.6
	2	2.2	1.5
	3 or more	0.8	0.5
Birth Place (%) N = 11,974 (Hispanic), 55,644 (Non-Hispanic)	Not born in USA	19.8	7.0
	Born in USA	73.4	93.0
	Born in Puerto Rico	6.8	0.0
<b>Job Corps Program Participation</b>			
Educational certificate attainment in Job Corps (%) N = 11,974 (Hispanic), 55,644 (Non-Hispanic)	Did not complete test	17.8	15.4
	Eligible but not enrolled	7.5	7.3
	Failed to pass test	4.5	4.1
	Ineligible to take GED/high school diploma	39.0	45.3
Vocational completion while in Job Corps (%) N = 11,974 (Hispanic), 55,644 (Non- Hispanic)	Obtained GED/high school diploma	31.2	27.9
	Did not enroll in vocation	0.1	0.0
	Enrolled in vocational training and completed	59.0	58.2
Mean length of time to complete vocation (days) N = 7,068 (Hispanic), 32,393 (Non-Hispanic)	Enrolled in voc training and not completed	40.9	41.8
	Complete any vocation	177.55	157.1
*Vocational cluster participated in the longest (%) N = 7,068 (Hispanic), 32,393 (Non-Hispanic)	Complete longest enrolled vocation	186.75	163.4
	Automotive and machine repair	8.2	4.8
	Business and finance	17.4	14.3
	Construction	24.1	28.7
	Hospitality	7.3	10.2
	Health care	13.2	13.8
	Information technology	3.4	4.1
	Manufacturing	7.8	8.1
	Renewable resources and energy	1.2	1.7
	Services	4.5	3.5
	Retail	1.6	2.2
Transportation	11.3	8.6	

Characteristic	Category	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic
<b>Separation From Job Corps</b>			
Reason for student separation from Job Corps (%) N = 11,974 (Hispanic), 55,644 (Non-Hispanic)	AWOL	25.4	22.1
	Completed program	45.7	42.9
	Disciplinary infraction	17.5	23.7
	Fraudulent enrollment	0.1	0.1
	Medical reason	3.7	4.1
	Removal of parental consent	1.5	1.4
	Resigned from program	6.1	5.7
Type of placement (%) N = 8,604 (Hispanic), 37,798 (Non-Hispanic)	Placed in a job	69.7	72.5
	Placed in an education program	9.3	7.6
	Placed in a job/education program	0.3	0.2
	Placed in a training program	4.1	3.1
	Not placed	12.5	13.1
	Cannot locate or obtain placement status	4.1	3.4
Reason not placed (%) N = 1,078 (Hispanic), 4,940 (Non-Hispanic)	Family obligation	7.7	3.7
	Not seeking placement	27.8	41.0
	Re-entered Job Corps	0.3	0.3
	Seeking employment	16.4	16.0
	Other reason	47.8	39.0
Initial placement hourly wage (\$) N = 5,996 (Hispanic), 27,409 (Non-Hispanic)	Mean	\$ 7.81	\$ 7.93
	Median	\$ 7.25	\$ 7.50

\* Hispanic Job Corps participants were scattered in Job Corps Centers throughout the country. Not all Centers offered every vocational cluster.

Job Corps program participation information was available for only those identified as Job Corps trainees. A slightly greater percentage of Hispanics completed their GED or received a high school diploma while in Job Corps than was true for Non-Hispanics (difference of 3.3 percentage points).

The percentage of Job Corps participants who did not take vocational training is very small. PY 2001 statistics concerning vocational training are for all Job Corps participants. Data on “ever enrolled in vocational training in Job Corps” was also gathered for NJCS 1995 participants and showed 35% of 1995 Hispanics and 36% of Non-Hispanics indicated they did not enroll in vocational training. The change from 1995 to 2001 probably reflects differing Job Corps requirements through these years rather than any real variation in courses of study for Hispanics in Job Corps.

Approximately the same percentage of Hispanics and Non-Hispanics completed the vocational training in which they were enrolled. Hispanics stayed in vocations longer than Non-Hispanics for all such training they took, and for the trade in which they were enrolled the longest. There is some slight difference in the vocational training taken by Hispanics and Non-Hispanics (looking at the occupation in which they were enrolled the longest), although only one trade noted a difference of 5 percentage points (4.6% fewer Hispanics were enrolled in construction trades than Non-Hispanics).

The reasons given for separation from Job Corps were very similar between Hispanics and Non-Hispanics. Only one category, removal for disciplinary reasons, noted greater than 5 percentage points (6.2% greater for Non-Hispanics).

Slightly more Hispanic graduates and former enrollees (by 3 percentage points) were initially placed in a job than was true for Non-Hispanics. Other types of placements (educational program, training program, job/education program) were virtually equal. A much larger percentage of Non-Hispanics (by 13.2 percentage points) indicated they were not seeking placement after leaving Job Corps.

There was a difference in starting hourly salary for Hispanics and Non-Hispanics at initial placement in employment after their separation from Job Corps. Non-Hispanics earned an average of 12 cents more an hour (a median differential of 25 cents/hour). For those few placed in a combination job/education situation, the difference was even more striking (36 cents mean difference).

### **Additional Information on Hispanic PY 2001 Job Corps Participants**

Placement and follow-up survey data were available for Hispanic Job Corps graduates and former enrollees from PY 2001. Comparable information on Non-Hispanic was not readily accessible.

Of the original 11,974 Hispanic PY 2001 Job Corps participants, 8,604 (71.9%) were included in an assessment of initial placement status of graduates and former enrollees. This would indicate 28.1% dropped out of the program before 60 days or for some other reason were not included in this assessment.

Table 9 notes responses from PY 2001 students regarding employment-related assistance they received from Job Corps, their assessment of the value of the program, and aid they obtained after leaving the program. Although some of these questions were also asked of NJCS Job Corps program participants, the information is not comparable as the NJCS study sought input from all who had attended Job Corps while PY 2001 figures are only for Job Corps graduates and enrollees who responded to the follow-up surveys.

Half of Hispanic Job Corps program participants who were surveyed felt Job Corps did an excellent or very good job of preparing them for employment or further schooling, and 84% would recommend Job Corps to a friend. As might be expected, the further away in time the student was from their Job Corps experience, the less assistance they received from Job Corps related to employment help. Following the on-Center services received, the type of assistance most often reported at 3, 6 and 12 months was information about job openings. Only 8% of Hispanic students noted this type of help at 12 months, however it is not known what percentage of all of those interviewed needed such help (72% were engaged in education or job placements at 12 months).

Initially, 45% of Hispanic students were placed in full-time jobs. This was true for 48% of students at the 12 month survey period. By the conclusion of the follow-up period, 28% of all of those surveyed were not in a job or educational placement. This percentage was 5% less than was true for those surveyed at 6 months.

Thirteen percent of those surveyed during each follow-up period were engaged in advanced education/vocation training (vocational or trade school, 2 or 4 year college).

**TABLE 9  
DATA ON PY 2001 HISPANIC JOB CORPS PARTICIPANTS OBTAINED THROUGH FOLLOW-UP SURVEYS**

Category	Initial Placement	Survey Period			
		3 month		6 Month	12 Month
		Received On-Center	Receive Post-Program		
<b>N</b>	8,604	3,306	3,306	3,545	2,992
<b>% of "initial placement"</b>	100.0%	38.4%	38.4%	41.2%	34.8%
<b>Student assessment of Job Corps preparation for employment or further schooling (%)</b>					
Excellent		29.1%			
Very good		27.3%			
Good		27.4%			
Fair		11.5%			
Poor		4.5%			
<b>Would recommend Job Corps to a friend (%)</b>					
Yes		84.2%			
No		9.5%			
Maybe		5.8%			
<b>Receiving service from Job Corps (%)</b>					
Computer training		71.7%			
Information about One-Stops		59.6%	16.2%	11.5%	4.4%
Training in job search skills		88.9%	15.8%	9.3%	3.5%
Information about job openings, schools, etc.		69.0%	26.6%	17.5%	7.8%
Help scheduling interview with employer/school		45.9%	11.8%	6.5%	2.2%
Assistance with housing		27.7%	3.5%	2.0%	0.9%
Assistance with transportation		55.1%	6.2%	3.7%	1.6%
Assistance with child care		8.4%	1.5%	0.9%	0.4%
<b>Job- or education-related placement (%)</b>					
Full-time job	45.4%		43.9%	44.3%	47.8%
Part-time job	21.3%		13.5%	10.2%	11.4%
Full-time education placement	9.3%		10.2%	9.9%	9.2%
Part-time job/education placement	0.3%		2.7%	2.6%	3.7%
** Not in job or educational placement	23.7%		29.7%	32.9%	27.9%
<b>***Reported educational placements (%)</b>					
"N"			577	607	471
% of those in survey			17.5%	17.1%	15.7%
High school			1.5%	1.4%	0.5%
ABE program (pre-GED)			0.6%	0.7%	0.3%
GED program			1.1%	1.4%	0.7%
ESL classes			0.2%	0.3%	0.2%
Vocational/technical/trade school			5.6%	5.7%	5.3%
Community/jr college (2 years)			5.9%	5.6%	6.1%
College (4 years)			1.8%	1.3%	2.0%
Other			0.8%	0.8%	0.5%
On summer vacation			0.6%	0.3%	0.7%

\* The number of Hispanic students involved in "initial placement" statistics = 8,604. This is 71.9% of the 11,973 Hispanic students enrolled in Job Corps in PY 2001.

\*\* Initial placement statistics also recorded 4.1% in a job-related training program and 2.9% in the military. Similar information was not available for the follow-up surveys.

\*\*\* It is not clear how these statistics relate to "full-time education placement" and "part-time job/education placement" as reported above.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The task of drawing comparative profiles between NJCS (1995) Job Corps program participants and more current Job Corps enrollees was hampered by changes in data systems, program definitions and program requirements. Not a great deal of common data points were found between the 1995 Hispanic student profile and that of PY 2001 participants. Additional problems occurred when data were found to be in different forms for each of the targeted years.

A number of characteristics of Hispanic Job Corps participants have remained unchanged from 1995 to 2001. This includes age at entrance, percentage who are head of their household, gender (5% increase in percentage of males), and geographic regions. The data do show a dramatic increase in percentage of single person households for both Hispanics and Non-Hispanics, although there is no companion increase in number of heads of households. This may lead more to questioning the accuracy of the data gathered in 2001 than a conclusive finding.

Fewer Hispanics entered Job Corps with a high school credential in 2001. This is not only a decline from 1995 percentages, but it is also less than what was seen for Non-Hispanics in 2001. Accordingly, a larger percentage of Hispanics obtained such a credential while in the Job Corps program.

A considerably larger percentage of both Hispanics and Non-Hispanics held a job when they entered Job Corps in 2001. This increase and overall percentage was greater for Hispanics than for Non-Hispanics.

Hispanic program participants stayed in Job Corps for a shorter period of time than was true in 1995. By 2001, the Hispanic length of stay in the program was beginning to approach the length of stay for Non-Hispanics.

Looking only at Hispanics and Non-Hispanics entering Job Corps in 2001, as might be expected, a larger percentage of Hispanics (one-fifth) were born outside the United States. In regard to participation in vocational training, length of time in training and completion, as well as trades chosen, similar findings were seen for both Hispanics and Non-Hispanics. This is a similar pattern to what was true in 1995.

There were three major differences between Hispanics and Non-Hispanics in 2001 with smaller percentages for Hispanics: removal from the program for disciplinary reasons, not seeking placement after leaving Job Corps, and the hourly wage at initial placement.

The following are findings in regard to the four investigative areas of the SHJC:



- Language – No conclusions can be reached. There is no indication that English language fluency is or is not an issue. A decrease in Hispanics entering Job Corps with a high school credential is seen, but there is no evidence this ties to language proficiency.
- Community Support Networks and Culture – There is no change in demographic characteristics at entrance except a possible increase in the number of single person households. A fifth of “current” Hispanic Job Corps participants were born outside the United States (this factor was not asked of Hispanics in the NJCS). Serious disciplinary issues appear to be less for Hispanics than Non-Hispanics.
- Successful Hispanic Program Elements – Enrollment in vocational training, choice of trade, and completion of training appears to remain similar between Hispanics and Non-Hispanics from 1995 to 2001. As was true earlier, Hispanics seem to stay slightly longer in Job Corps than Non-Hispanics. However, only half of Hispanic Job Corps participants felt Job Corps prepared them to search for work, which might indicate some disappointment with the program. At the same time, 84% said they would recommend Job Corps.
- Job Placement – Hispanic Job Corps participants in 2001 indicated receipt of job skills and employment search assistance at a high rate (for over half while they were in Job Corps), although no comparison with Non-Hispanics’ use of such help was available. When considering this issue, it should be kept in mind that the Job Corps program is currently placing a major emphasis on job placement assistance, which might indicate that these percentages should be even higher.

Similar to what was seen in the assessment of NJCS data, employment appears to be the issue with the biggest differential between current Hispanic and Non-Hispanic program participants. There are indications this area has increased in importance to the Hispanic population through the years. Nearly half of Hispanics are employed when entering Job Corps. This is seen more frequently among Hispanics than Non-Hispanics, and the percentage change from 1995 to 2001 of those employed at program entrance is also greater than for Non-Hispanics. Fewer PY 2001 Hispanics reported they are “not looking for a placement” (a job or educational opportunity). Although they might be working more, starting salary for Hispanics fresh out of their Job Corps training is less than for Non-Hispanics.

## **LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY/HISPANIC YOUTH SURVEY**

### **METHODOLOGY**

The third part of the Study of Hispanics in Job Corps involved reviewing results from the Limited English Proficiency/Hispanic Youth Survey (LEP/HY), conducted in 2004 to assess the status of LEP students enrolled in Job Corps programs, a portion of which related to Hispanic Job Corps participants. The LEP/HY was coordinated by DOL/ETA Job Corps and overseen by the LEP and Hispanic/Latino Youth Initiative Workgroup. The study consisted of two parts. The first was a survey of Job Corps Centers conducted via an internet-provided instrument that asked questions concerning services to LEP, ESL students and Hispanics. The second study part involved site visits to select Centers around the country.

HMA researchers met with the Job Corps study manager to discuss details of the survey and results. HMA researchers also corresponded with the consultant hired to conduct or coordinate the study's site visits. Documents from this study were reviewed including survey tabulations, narrative summary results and site visit reports.

### **FINDINGS**

#### **Survey Results**

Job Corps Centers were asked a variety of questions about LEP and/or Hispanic students served, ESL instruction, other language assistance, bilingual staffing, cultural barriers, and related assistance needs. A total of 120 Job Corps Centers completed survey forms from May-July, 2004. Survey completion was encouraged but was voluntary. The results reflect practices from a large sample of responding Centers, but may not be totally representative.

Below are some of the highlights from the LEP/HY survey with relevance to the SHJC. Percentages given relate to the number of surveyed Centers that reported on the particular issue cited.

- 88% of Job Corps Centers with LEP indicate they have Spanish-speaking students enrolled (although the percentage of all LEP who speak Spanish is not reported).
- 65% have a formal process to assess the need for ESL assistance. Almost all use the TABE test.

- Only 20% have a formal way to test the literacy of students in their “native language.”
- 42% provide ESL on-center, 28% offer these services off-Center and 18% make assistance available through outside partners. 34% do not provide help with ESL.
- For ESL services on-Center, the average staff consists of one FTE instructor teaching an average of 29 hours/week with an average of 38 students per class, producing a ratio of 1 staff for every 13 students.
- 24% of Centers indicated they have an unmet need for ESL instructors.
- 40% reported an unmet need for translation assistance. Another 9% said they were unsure if they had such a need.
- 36% of interpreting is conducted by staff with another 5% fulfilled by outside agents. 31% of Centers said they had an unmet need for interpretation help.
- 72% of Centers do not offer vocational ESL.
- Half (53%) indicated using computer programs “to support ESL instruction.”
- 39% use translated materials to help with training.
- 67% of LEP stay in Job Corps at least 30 days. 73% of these stay in the program at least 60 days. A third (30%) of Centers said non-LEP have similar statistics for longevity in the program. Another 50% indicated LEP remain in the program longer than non-LEP.
- The average length of time in Job Corps for LEP is 14 months. 30% of the responding Centers felt this was about the same as other students, while 60% felt LEP students stay in the program longer. The average for all students in Job Corps during PY 2002 was 8 months.
- On average, Centers reported that 20% of their LEP students received a GED/high school diploma during PY 2002. Of these, 20% took their GED test in Spanish. One-fourth of Centers serving LEP said none of these students received a GED during PY 2002.
- 60% of LEP were vocational completers.
- 54% of LEP graduates were placed in jobs. This was true for 32% of former enrollees.
- 64% had bilingual staff on-Center. The average number of such staff was 18 per Center of which an average of 12 were bilingual Spanish/English.
- An average of 8 staff per Center offered translation services.
- One-fourth of Centers partnered with other organizations to provide support other than interpretation, translation, or ESL instruction.
- The average number of Hispanic students in the surveyed Centers during PY 2002 was 91. The average number of Hispanic students enrolled at these Centers at the point of the survey (2004) was 63. 48% of the Centers felt this percentage had stayed the same in the last

five years. 35% felt the need had increased; 18% indicated the need had decreased.

- 11% of Hispanics were identified as needing ESL assistance. This was true for 36% of those in the New York Region but only 5% of Hispanics in the Denver Region.
- 85% of Centers did not feel Hispanic students faced cultural barriers other than language. 80% did not offer any programs to address cultural barriers.

The authors of the LEP/HY further described study results including examining perceived and actual change in the last five years in number of Hispanic students. These results are presented in Table 10. As can be seen, Center staff responding to the survey misjudged Hispanic presence in regard to perceiving similar or decreasing enrollment. There was a difference of 34% between Centers that perceived their Hispanic population had remained the same and those who actually experienced no population change. The difference was 43% between Centers which perceived a decrease in their Hispanic population and those which actually did see such a decrease.

Cultural diversity activities reported by Centers included international foods, fiestas and celebrations held monthly on-Center, speakers or community members brought in for Center presentations, group discussions, diversity-related field trips, articles written by students in Center newsletters, essay contests incorporating the topic of diversity, and other activities. A range of curriculum materials and videos were also mentioned.

The cultural barriers identified by Centers for Hispanic students included:

- Family issues – “Students are often rushed by their families to complete their programs, as they are needed as the family breadwinners and caretakers. . Hispanic females are swayed against the hard trades as they are seen as inappropriate trades for females.
- Different priorities – “Many believe that education is not as important as other things.”
- Cultural differences – “Tradition, customs, religion.”
- Low literacy levels – “Many students are not literate in their first language, which causes difficulties for them in becoming fully literate in English.”
- Lack of childcare.
- Lack of transportation.

For the 23 Centers that indicated they had programs to address cultural barriers the following were some aspects: diversity training, counseling, working with local community organizations, knowledgeable staff, meeting with family

**TABLE 10**  
**LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY/HISPANIC YOUTH SURVEY**  
**PERCENT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PERCEPTION AND REALITY OF**  
**HISPANIC JOB CORPS CENTER POPULATION STABILITY**

Hispanic Population:	"Last Five Years" % of Centers Reporting		Difference Perceived - Actual
	Perceived By Study Centers	Actual Enrollment	
Increased	34%	28%	+ 6%
Stayed the same	46%	12%	+ 34%
Decreased	17%	60%	- 43%

members, providing childcare and transportation. The 11 Centers who did not indicate having cultural barriers said they had such programs.

Survey researchers looked at response patterns and concluded that Centers with higher numbers of Hispanic students were more likely to report they face cultural barriers. Those with more Spanish/English bilingual staff are more likely to report Hispanic students face cultural barriers and offer them programs. Centers with high numbers of bilingual staff speaking a variety of languages recognize such barriers but do not necessarily provide programs to counteract them.

The survey summary results identified the following LEP/Hispanic program needs:

- Smaller student to teacher ratios, specialized vocational programs.
- More cultural diversity and respect for diversity.
- Staff training in accommodating LEP students in both academic and vocational classes.
- Better familiarity of staff with overall Hispanic culture including Spanish language and Hispanic traditions.
- More bilingual staff in positions such as administration, residential advisors and academic and vocational instructors.
- Development of community resources to provide linkages to the Hispanic community.
- A push by Center admissions staff to get more LEP and Hispanics into the program.

### **Site Visit Results**

Reports from six Job Corps Center site visits were available for review. Table 11 presents some basic characteristics concerning Hispanic student enrollment and availability of bilingual/Spanish-speaking staff at these Centers. Those visited included a wide range of Center size, Hispanic student population and bilingual/Spanish-speaking staff.

The following findings were noted through the site visit reports:

- Centers with few bilingual staff indicated a need for more.
- Students stressed LEP students are at different levels of English language proficiency. They desired more staff to assist at each level.
- Students may test too high (in English language proficiency) to qualify for LEP but personally feel they need language assistance.
- More integration between ESL and vocational instruction is needed. Vocational instructors could use training on how to adjust their teaching to better assist those students learning English.

**TABLE 11**  
**LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY/HISPANIC YOUTH SURVEY SITE VISIT REPORTS**  
**HISPANIC STUDENT ENROLLMENT, BILINGUAL/SPANISH-SPEAKING STAFF**

<b>Job Corps Center</b>	<b>Total Enrollment</b>	<b>Hispanic Enrollment</b>	<b>Total Staff</b>	<b>Bilingual Staff</b>	<b>Spanish-Speaking Staff</b>
Los Angeles, CA	735	430	unknown	83	unknown
El Paso, TX	unknown	majority	160	150	150
Clearfield, UT	1320	200	unknown	46	unknown
Waimanalo, HI	unknown	0	unknown	8	0
Grand Rapids, MI	280	10	unknown	3	unknown
Homestead, FL	unknown	200	unknown	66	53

- The fewer the number of Hispanics at a Center, the less attention is given to the need for diversity and cultural sensitivity training/activities.
- Students at several Centers could benefit from a better understanding of the culture of LEP students.
- Family ties are strong for Hispanic students who feel “family obligations.” “Families can motivate students to finish faster but may also interfere with their completion”; e.g., encourage them to drop out in order to make money for their families.
- Because of these family ties, Hispanic students might: 1) take the first job they find which may not necessarily be in their field of study, 2) work under the table for unlicensed firms, 3) work for a relative as a way to “keep the money in the family.”
- Positive outreach to Hispanics includes going to Hispanic-oriented events and having bilingual OA staff.
- It is important to reach out to parents to tell them about Job Corps so they can encourage and support their Job Corps student. One Center has a weekly “parent night” where parents are invited to eat dinner at the Center with their children. This also gives instructors a chance to talk with the parents.
- Centers could use more Spanish-language brochures about Job Corps targeted to parents.
- More vocational ESL is needed with integration of vocational terms and curriculum into ESL classes.
- There should be more coordination between ESL staff and academic and vocational instructors.
- Employers value bilingual Job Corps graduates.
- LEP students are more hesitant to relocate to find a job.
- Staff and students do most of the interpretation and translating required at Job Corps Centers.
- Outside community contact is seen as valuable when it occurs, but this is not often done.
- Several Centers perceived that OA or Job Corps regional offices do not put much emphasis on recruiting Hispanic or LEP students.
- Two Centers used the concept of a case management team composed of a counselor, a mentor, instructors in ESL, academics and vocational training to monitor the progress of each LEP student.
- Some Centers purposely pair LEP students with English-speaking students in dorms to encourage the learning of English. One Center purposely does the opposite.
- Employers hesitate to hire LEP because they fear such employees will have limited English-language skills.
- It can take considerably longer for LEP students to finish their Job Corps program. Only one Center integrates ESL classes with academic and vocational training. Others note that once an LEP



student spends eight months in ESL, he/she may not have enough time left in Job Corps to complete his/her chosen vocational training.

- Job Corps staff sometimes discourage LEP students from choosing trades that require a higher level of academic knowledge.
- One Center described issues related to identifying students in need of English language assistance. They indicated it can take two months or more before such students enter an ESL class, a situation which can be very frustrating for the student.
- Two Centers have mentoring programs. Mentors can be anyone at the Center including service staff.
- A couple of Centers have diversity support groups (formal or informal) for specific ethnicities. This allows students with similar backgrounds to talk, suggest measures for counteracting negative stereotypes, and develop cultural events.
- Two Centers offer Spanish-language classes for staff.
- Hispanic families may discourage females from going into the hard trades. One Center brings in successful Hispanic professionals from the various trades to talk to female students.
- Because Hispanic students in general exhibit greater perseverance and determination, as well as an overall element of respect, Center staff indicate Hispanics can make better students than others in Job Corps.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The LEP/HY Survey had findings related to many of the areas of investigation noted for the SHJC. The following summarizes what was found:

### **Language**

- Staff and students do the primary interpreting at Job Corps Centers. When insufficient bilingual staff are present, this can present a problem.
- Overall, around 10% of Hispanic students in Job Corps Centers need ESL assistance (this can vary from location to location). There can be issues around identifying those in need of language assistance.
- Lack of literacy (reading and writing ability) in Spanish as well as English can be a problem for Hispanic ESL students.
- LEP Hispanic students can be at various levels of language assistance. Those beyond the beginning level can feel their needs are not adequately being met, including students who want English language help but test too high to receive it.
- Some Centers offer Spanish-language classes for staff.

## **Community Support Networks/Culture**

- Family ties and/or obligations are very important to Hispanic students. They can serve to support student success or hamper their completion of the program, e.g., the student may feel rushed or encouraged to drop out in order to find any job to bring money into the family.
- Female Hispanic students can be discouraged by their families from entering hard trades such as those related to construction.
- It is important to inform parents, particularly the matriarch of the family, about the benefits of Job Corps. If this is done successfully, the family will encourage and support the student in his/her completion of the program.
- There seems to be a correlation between a greater number of Hispanic students and staff and the identification by Center staff of cultural barriers.
- Most Centers do not identify cultural barriers or offer special programs (other than language assistance) to address these issues. (survey finding)
- Staff identifying cultural barriers point to a need for better familiarity with Hispanic traditions, religion, and use of the Spanish language.
- Cultural/diversity activities within Centers include: diversity training, counseling, working with local community organizations, meeting with family members, celebrating cultural events, holding group discussions, viewing related videos, incorporating cultural diversity into curriculums, and establishing support groups for specific ethnicities.
- Job Corps students, as well as staff, could benefit from diversity training and a better understanding of various cultures.
- Collaborating with community organizations and other resources is seen as an important way to offer support to Hispanic students.
- Effective outreach includes using bilingual OA staff to attend Hispanic community events and make other contacts in the Hispanic community.
- Staff at three Centers noted Hispanics are in some way better students than other groups; e.g., more respectful, do not get in trouble. (site visits finding)

## **Elements of Exemplary Hispanic Programs**

- Most Centers seem to feel a need for additional bilingual staff, including counselors, instructors, and residential advisors.
- There should be more integration between ESL and vocational training including better coordination among instructors and integration of ESL into the curriculums.

- LEP students tend to take considerably longer to finish their Job Corps programs; e.g., completing GED courses. Sometimes it takes so long to master language skills that the student is not able to complete their first choice vocational training within the two year time limit.
- Centers do not feel OA staff or Job Corps regional offices place enough emphasis on recruiting Hispanics. Many Center staff also seem unaware of the true extent of their on-campus Hispanic population.
- There is a need to offer training to vocational staff on effectively teaching students who are in the process of learning English.
- Centers need to adopt exemplary approaches to assisting Hispanic students such as mentoring programs and case management teams composed of staff and others who come into contact with a particular student.

### **Job Placement**

- LEP students are more hesitant than others to relocate to find employment.
- Hispanic students, because of feelings of family obligation, might be inclined to take any job or work for a relative rather than locate employment in their vocational field.
- Employers seek bilingual employees but are hesitant to hire those with limited English skills.

## **JOB CORPS CENTER SITE VISITS**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Selection of Centers for Site Visits**

As it was only feasible to conduct four site visits for this Study, an effort was made to select a variety of Centers encompassing a range of characteristics that might be relevant to gathering maximum information. Consideration was given to the following factors:

- Rural/urban,
- Geographic location,
- Total number of center students,
- Total number of center Hispanic students,
- Percent of center total who are Hispanic,
- Change in total population and/or Hispanic population from 2002 to 2003/04,
- Center operated by private contractor/federal contractor,
- Multi-site contractor/single site contractor,
- Percent of students from out-of-state,
- Center contractor provides OA or CTS services.

Sites previously visited for the LEP/Hispanic Youth Survey and other recent Job Corps-related research were excluded so as not to unduly burden Job Corps Center staff. The following Centers were selected for interviews:

- Phoenix Job Corps Center, Phoenix, Arizona
- North Texas Job Corps Center, McKinney, Texas
- Earl C. Clements Job Corps Center, Morganfield, Kentucky
- Fort Simcoe Job Corps Center, White Swan, Washington

After the first two site visits, Phoenix and North Texas, a strong pattern seemed to be emerging concerning Hispanic participation in Job Corps Centers in relation to the Study investigative issues. As both these Centers are situated in the Southwest, HMA research staff determined it was important to test preliminary findings in different environments. First consideration was to visit a Center with a significant proportion of Hispanic students in a different area of the United States, preferably in the east. Additionally, although both the Phoenix and North Texas Centers are in urban or suburban areas, neither is located in a primary metropolitan statistical area within a dense urban environment.

Job Corps national and regional programmatic staff and ETA ProTech personnel were consulted to identify a suitable Center in a large, geographically eastern

urban city. Because the first two Centers primarily served Hispanics of Mexican descent, a similar student population was sought to maintain consistency. After considering several alternatives, the Paul Simon Chicago Job Corps Center was chosen for the third site visit.

Following the Chicago site visit, HMA researchers once again consulted Job Corps and ETA ProTech national staff for advice. A report of preliminary findings was prepared and presented to these staff in August, 2005, and several alternatives were proposed for the final Center site visit.

All site visits to date had provided contact with primarily Hispanics of Mexican descent. There was concern that the findings would be considered only reliable applied to this segment of Hispanics in Job Corps as no evidence would be available to support findings for Puerto Ricans (primarily in the New York Area), Cubans (principally in the Florida area), and South and Central Americans (scattered throughout Centers).

DOL staff recognized these limitations, but determined that considering individuals of Mexican heritage make up the majority of both the current and projected Hispanic population in Job Corps Centers nationally, it was acceptable for Center site visits to concentrate in this direction.

DOL personnel consulted were more interested in pursuing the topic of “community connections” and, in particular, ideas for enhancing such coordination. As such, it was suggested that the Sacramento Job Corps Center be the final site visit as this location was known to do an exemplary job in community relations.

### **Interview Protocols**

Protocols were developed which outlined interviewee selection criteria, discussion topics, and Center introduction to the study. Each site visit lasted three days.

### **Interview Discussion Topics**

On-site discussions were designed to cover aspects of the four research issues. A Discussion Guide was prepared for each type of interview subject to list topics being covered within the unstructured dialogs. This approach allowed those being interviewed to freely discuss anything around the broad issues or other topics they felt were relevant to the research.

Each discussion began with the following elements:

- Preference for discussion language – English or Spanish.
- Explanation of the research purpose.
- Clarification of the type of individuals from whom information was being gathered.
- Guarantee of confidentiality.
- Encouragement to discuss personal experiences, opinions, ideas and suggestions as well as what the respondent perceived might be true for other Hispanics or staff.
- Gathering basic background information about the respondent. For example, home location, previous enrollment in other assistance programs or employment before entering Job Corps, program residential status, length of time at Job Corps Center, and other topics. Staff were asked preliminary questions such as the length of time they had been at the Center, length and type of all Job Corps work or student experience, and bilingual/Spanish-speaking ability.

The discussion presented each of the four research investigation issues (language, culture/CSNs, exemplary program elements, and job placement assistance). Both central topics and conversational probes were listed to help the researcher encourage the respondent to offer information (copies of all three Discussion Guides are provided in the Appendix.) As expected, the exact list of topics and probes changed or broadened as new information was secured.

### **Interviewee Selection Criteria**

Information from three different perspectives was sought at each Center visited: staff, Hispanic students, and graduates/former enrollees. Previous HMA experience, as verified through discussion with Job Corps personnel, determined focus groups would be the best format for gathering information from students. Individual interviews were found to be most effective with staff and graduates/former enrollees.

Quantitative information about each center was also gathered from staff including number of Hispanic students, description of Hispanic staff, vocational and academic courses available, Center history, and other details.

A range of staff positions were targeted for interview encompassing every aspect of program participant contact. This included Center administration/the Center Director, and representatives from each Job Corps program area: outreach/admissions (OA), career preparation, career development, and career transition services (CTS). If OA or CTS functions were contracted outside the Center, researchers identified and met with representatives from these contractors. Most staff discussions took place in private offices where the

individuals could be guaranteed privacy, encouraging them to freely share their experiences and opinions.

Students selected for focus group participation were in the program at least four months, and were enrolled in a range of vocations. The ideal group size was set at ten. Discussion was set for mid-day at a site away from the Job Corps Center. Students were excused by their instructors from their regular Job Corps training classes to participate in the group discussion. Focus group discussions lasted for one to one and a half hours. A day prior to the focus group, HMA researchers met with student participants to explain the purpose of the discussion, present general topics which would be covered, and answer any questions the students might raise about their participation.

Meetings with Hispanics separated from the Job Corps program primarily involved graduates, although two former enrollees were also interviewed. The goal was to speak with five individuals from each Center who had terminated from the program from six to eighteen months prior to the discussion. These interviews took place at off-Center locations, with the exception of one site where it appeared to be easier for both graduates/former enrollees and research staff to meet at a new and as yet unused building on the Job Corps Center campus. Discussions with former students lasted from 30 to 90 minutes.

Staff to be interviewed were chosen by each Center's Director or Deputy Director based on HMA research staff request for individuals in various positions who could provide maximum information and differing perspectives. The terminees for potential interview were identified by Center staff who also made the first contact to inform the individuals about the Study. HMA staff followed-up with additional details and made arrangements for the interview time and location. Hispanic focus group students were chosen by the Center Director or his designee in accordance with the criteria provided.

### **Techniques for Study Introduction to Centers**

Prior to contacting each Center Director concerning the visit, HMA contacted the Job Corps programmatic representative, who in turn called the Job Corps Regional Manager associated with each site to explain the purpose of the Study and visit as well as to introduce HMA to the Center Director. On several occasions, HMA researchers also spoke with the Job Corps Regional Managers.

A call was made to each Center Director following contact by the Federal Regional Manager to further explain the Study and site visit requirements, secure agreement to participate, and set visit dates. An introductory letter was sent with details concerning times and criteria for selection of those with whom further discussion was desired.

All staff, students and graduates/former enrollees visited at each Center were most cooperative and freely gave of their time for the three-day site visit. Each openly discussed their experiences, gave their opinions, and expressed a high degree of interest in learning Study results.

### **Information Analysis**

All notes taken during site visit interviews were transcribed. The single interview conducted in Spanish was translated and transcribed. A code sheet was prepared covering each study issue and subtopic. Every interview paragraph was coded and then sorted to assess overall findings for each topic. Attention was paid to the type of interviewee (staff, student, graduate/former enrollee). Reports summarizing findings were developed after each Center visit.

An Interim Report with preliminary findings was prepared after the first two Center visits and presented to DOL in July, 2005. Findings after three Center site visits were discussed with DOL in August, and again in November after the fourth site visit was concluded.

## **FINDINGS**

Because Hispanic students are well-integrated into Job Corps Center activities, a discussion of findings regarding their interaction within the Centers cannot be totally separated from observations concerning all Job Corps students or the general picture of the Center itself. An effort has been made in the discussion of site visit findings and conclusions to separate out what is specific to Hispanics, but this is difficult in some circumstances. It should be noted that what is relevant to Hispanics may also be relevant to other students. However, the site visit issues discussed in this report are of particular relevance to Hispanics.

### **General Observations**

Table 12 presents selected characteristics concerning each Center visited. Only one had a student population greater than 1000. Two had Hispanic populations around 30%. Another had 50%, and the fourth 12%-17%. Residential status varied considerably from total to half.

Most Hispanic students were from the area surrounding the Center, with a small percentage from another part of the state or another neighboring state. All four Centers were in urban or suburban settings. One Center had been open for only seven years (and was described as being purposefully located within an Hispanic community), while the other three had been in existence for a considerable period of time.



**TABLE 12**  
**SITE VISIT CENTER CHARACTERISTICS**

Characteristic	Site Visit Location			
	Arizona	Texas	Illinois	California
Total Number Students (2003-2004)	454	1259	510	442
*Percent Hispanic Students	50%	12%-17%	28%	30%
Percent Residential	50%	all	only a few non-residential	75%
Geographic Location of Hispanic Students	most from Phoenix	most Hispanics from Dallas-Ft. Worth MSA	78% from Illinois, most from Chicago area	most Hispanics from Sacramento area, some from S. Calif, a couple from other countries
Center Location	downtown Phoenix; Center in existence at least 30 years	former rural area, now Dallas commuting suburb; Center in existence 38 years	Chicago neighborhood; Center in existence 7 years	Sacramento neighborhood; Center in existence 27 years

\* Percentage Hispanic Students as related by Center administrative staff during site visit.

In total for the four Centers, 126 individuals were interviewed including 64 staff, 45 Hispanic students, and 17 Hispanic graduates/former enrollees. (See Table 13 for details.) As noted, those chosen for discussion were not randomly selected. Choice was left primarily to Center administrators, in accordance with HMA criteria, and was both a purposive as well as a convenience sample (particularly in regard to graduates/former enrollees). As information was collected through unstructured discussion with similar topics used for each type of interviewee, a cross check was obtained to provide a sense of verification in relation to this type of exploratory research.

Table 13 also lists the variety of staff interviewed. The range is considerable, covering every aspect of Center interaction with students.

The range of staff time spent in Job Corps was also varied, with the mode at 3 – 5 years, within a range from 3 months to 31 years. At one Center where staff turnover was an issue, some of those interviewed had worked with Job Corps for a longer period but had only been at the Center a short time. In addition, the Center itself had only been open for seven years.

Table 14 presents information about graduates/former enrollees. Four of the seventeen interviewed were not employed. Another two were in school and not working. For those employed at the time of the interview, three were not working in the vocation in which they were trained while in Job Corps.

Three of the Centers were reasonably easy to find, but were not outstanding in their location within their respective geographic areas. At the fourth Center the administration had made a conscious effort to make the facility highly visible (e.g., changing the entrance from a side to a busy, well-traveled street and asking the city to locate a stop light at the entrance).

## **Findings Concerning Study Investigative Issues**

### **Language**

The percentage of all students at each of the Centers engaged in ESL classes was low. Within that, the actual number of Hispanics identified as needing ESL assistance was very small. Only five Hispanic students were currently enrolled in the ESL classes at the time of each site visit. The remainder of ESL students included Africans, Marshal Islanders, and those of Asian descent. Spanish-language assistance was available at each of the four focus groups conducted during the site visits but was only utilized at two sites for a few students. Only one of the graduate/former enrollee interviews was conducted in Spanish.

**TABLE 13**  
**NUMBER AND TYPE OF INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED DURING JOB CORPS SITE VISITS**

**Number Interviewed By Type of Interviewee**

Type of Interviewee	Site Visit Location				Total
	Arizona	Texas	Illinois	California	
Staff	12	20	18	14	64
Hispanic Student	11	10	12	12	45
Hispanic Graduate/Former Enrollee	3	5	5	5	18
Total	26	35	35	31	127

**Number and Type of Staff Interviewed**

Type of Staff Interviewee	Total All Sites
Management	7
Outreach/Admissions	7
Career Preparation Specialist	5
Career Development Specialist/Counselor/Case Manager	11
Residential Advisor	7
Career Transition Specialist	9
Education/Academics Instructor	5
Vocational Instructor	4
*Other	9
Total	64

\* "Other" includes records clerk, security, career standards, human resources and recreational specialist.

**TABLE 14**  
**SELECT INFORMATION CONCERNING INTERVIEWEES**

**Staff Length of Time Associated with Job Corps**

Characteristic	Site Visit Location				Total
	Arizona	Texas	* Illinois	California	
< 1 Year	1	5	1		7
1 Year		2	3	2	7
2 Years	1	2	4		7
3 - 5 Years	3	4	7	1	15
6 - 10 Years	1	5	2	3	11
11 - 20 Years	3			3	6
> 20 Years	3	2		2	7
Total	12	20	17	11	60
Not Available			1	3	4

\* Time noted is length of service with Job Corps. Several staff indicated they had been at the Chicago Job Corps Center only a short time or were working for a contract agency to the Chicago Center.

**Graduates/Former Enrollees**

Characteristic	Site Visit Location			
	Arizona	Texas	Illinois	California
Job Corps Separation Status				
Graduate	3	4	4	3
Former Enrollee		1	1	
Employment Status at Time of Interview				
Not Employed		2	2	
Yes Employed				1
Employed in Trained Vocation	2	1	3	1
Not Employed in Trained Vocation		2		
In School	1			1

One of the Centers is in a State that requires formal English-language proficiency screening of all students in an educational setting. At the other three Centers, language screening occurs through various means, and it appeared possible for individuals who were not fully bilingual (Spanish/English) to slip through the system. In fact, one frustrated student discussed how this had happened, requiring him to leave vocational training after a month to enter an ESL class. Two students at different Centers complained because they wanted to take additional English-language training but were not allowed to as they met the Center's standards for English proficiency. At three Centers, students must finish ESL classes before beginning their vocational training.

One Center only offers ESL classes two or three times a year with limited enrollment. Staff expressed frustration with not being able to accept all Hispanic students who want to enter Job Corps if their English is limited and the language assistance class has no vacancy. Another Center appeared to discourage Hispanics inquiring about Job Corps if they are not fluent in English.

Students at most of the Centers indicated there were Hispanics who were not completely comfortable speaking English but were not in ESL classes. Many Hispanic students, when together informally, speak Spanish, making it easier for someone not fully comfortable using English to communicate with his/her peers. Bilingual Spanish/English staff were mixed in their reaction to speaking Spanish with students. Some use the Spanish language as a way to get closer to students and help them to open up. Others felt that all students should speak English as that is the language of the working world, and the more students use it the more comfortable with it they will become. Primary vocational instruction is conducted in English with translation, if needed, offered primarily by bilingual students in the same class. The few bilingual vocational instructors were said to offer assistance to those in their classes who are not fully fluent in English to assure complete understanding of the information.

Most of those individuals interviewed during site visits, when asked, felt that constant practice is the best means for learning English. Some Centers purposefully team those learning English with fluent speakers (both in vocational training and in the dorms) to encourage learning. Often, this happens informally as students try to encourage and assist those less proficient to speak English. Other translations, for example with parents who only speak Spanish, may be conducted through Center staff and other employees such as clerks, kitchen and janitorial help.

Most students, trainees, and staff indicated they felt speaking fluent English is an essential component for securing good employment with advancement potential. In two locations, however, students and staff said a Spanish-speaking individual could grow up, seek education, work, shop, and have a very satisfying social life without speaking English. In fact, they were concerned that Hispanic students who enhanced their English fluency while in Job Corps would revert

back to speaking only Spanish once they finished the program and returned to their home environment.

CTS staff at each Center noted Hispanic students who are bilingual Spanish/English are a prized commodity by local employers. On the other hand, they said some employers refuse to hire a graduate who is not fully fluent in English, and discomfort with English might be a contributing factor for graduates not seeking a job in the vocational field in which they were trained.

Although the number of LEP Hispanic students was small, the primary need for language assistance discussed at each Center was the need to talk with monolingual Spanish-speaking parents. As will be presented later in this report, working with parents during OA activities, giving parents student progress reports (for those under age 18), or collaborating with family members to encourage continuation in the program was considered essential for Hispanic students to be successful. Staff at each site visit talked about the necessity of conducting many such conversations in Spanish and the difficulties that ensued when no Spanish-speaking individual was available to represent Job Corps, e.g. following-up with a graduate or former enrollee when a mono-lingual Spanish-speaking family member answered the phone. Misunderstanding or lack of clarity was also possible because of language barriers. Two students said their parents thought Job Corps was “some sort of jail” and their child was forced to attend because he/she had done something wrong.

A few staff at three of the Centers also spoke about how some Hispanic students with parents do not speak English particularly those who are under-age, have a tendency to tell their family members only what they want them to know. Once staff talk with these parents, they find misunderstandings as the parents do not have the whole story about Job Corps requirements or other issues.

On a language-related positive note, Hispanic students were teaching Spanish to instructors and other Job Corps staff at two of the Centers.

### **Culture and Community Support Networks**

There is a clear sense of family ties for most Hispanic students and graduates/former enrollees. This was pinpointed as a central cultural value by most staff, students and graduates/former enrollees. Most students indicated their families were supportive of their being in Job Corps. Some, particularly females, indicated less family encouragement.

Hispanic family members were described as both encouraging and discouraging to student program completion. Families may put pressure on students to drop out and begin earning money after completing their educational goals rather than finish their vocational training. Hispanic students may miss classes because they

are needed to help the family, for example, when a family member is sick the student may be expected to stay home to help.

On the other hand, family members can help the student accomplish his/her Job Corps-related goals by taking on child care duties so the female Hispanic student can attend Job Corps, or by showing a sense of pride in their children's accomplishments. Making their parents proud of them or having their parents recognize their accomplishments were things many students and graduates/former enrollees talked about.

Some staff suggested that rather than the family putting pressure on students to quit the program and find a job, Hispanic students put pressure on themselves as they feel guilty about being in Job Corps for a year or more without contributing any funds to support the family. This real or assumed sense of family obligation, which was described as a "cultural trait," may also cause many Hispanics to want to finish their training quickly so they can get to work as soon as possible.

Many staff indicated they have seen Hispanic students conferring with their family before making decisions, such as whether to enter Job Corps. Many students said they learned about Job Corps from other family members or friends and may have relatives who have gone through the program.

First generation (in this country) Hispanic parents are said to be very wary. They are watchful over their children, do not trust any government-sponsored programs, and have a difficult time understanding many things because most do not speak English. It is not easy to convince them of the value of Job Corps, because they tend to think there must "be a catch" to education and training services offered for free by the government. Additionally, their own personal experiences may not be with education or vocational training programs, and definitely not with college, so they may not understand the value of such things for their children.

Female Hispanics are said to face more pressure from their families than males. If family members are first generation in the United States, they often have traditional views that value the role of the female as wife, homemaker, and mother. Females are expected to stay home until they marry and then establish their own household, with children, supported by their husbands. This may cause the family to discourage young women from entering Job Corps., They may not understand why it is necessary for them to learn a vocation, and in particular do not want them to enter the hard trades. Some female Hispanics may choose the residential over the non-residential option as a means to escape this negative family influence.

On the other side, some staff at the Centers noted that certain female Hispanics were very independent, very directed, and more outspoken than male Hispanics.

They were less concerned about the opinions of their families, knew what they wanted out of Job Corps, and planned to get it.

Most Hispanic students and graduates/former enrollees indicated they were living with their families before entering Job Corps and most planned to or had (in the case of graduates) returned to living with their families once they completed the program. Staff described this as different from students of other races/ethnicities who were often living on their own or faced difficult family home situations from which they wanted to escape. After completing Job Corps, they were planning to live on their own. As staff at one Center put it, "Hispanics are less likely to be at the Center because of a court order or because their family wants them out of the house."

Because Hispanics value the opinion of their families, OA staff who recruit Hispanics insisted it is just as important to inform the family, particularly the mother, and for female students the father, as it is to talk with the prospective student. The parents must be convinced that Job Corps will be good for their child. Staff said once you get the parents "on your side," they can serve as major encouragers for student success.

### **Characteristics of Targeted Hispanic Programs**

**Mentoring** – Those fulfilling roles as mentors were described as approachable, always open to talking, encouraging, "like a friend," "someone you can trust," and glad to see graduates long after they have left the Center. "It kind of makes you stay there because you want to be associated with them."

Almost all staff, students and graduates/former enrollees who were interviewed felt mentoring was an important and useful tool to encourage Job Corps students. Hispanic students, in particular, were said to benefit a great deal from this individualized sense of encouragement –somewhat filling the gap of missing family while the students are in Job Corps.

Some of those who were interviewed felt that a good mentor should be Hispanic, particularly if the Hispanic student is not fluent in English. Others thought a good mentor depended more on the individual and that anybody would fill this role as long as he/she could relate to Hispanic and other students in an honest and caring manner. Although some Hispanic students will not often turn to non-Hispanic mentors, they have much more involvement with Hispanic staff. For example, many non-Hispanic staff say Hispanic students are "very closed" about their personal lives, while Hispanic staff say these students are open to discussing all issues.



In practice, most individuals acknowledged as mentors to Hispanic students appeared to be Hispanic themselves. This was even true in Centers without many Hispanic staff, where Hispanic students turned to service staff (kitchen aides, records clerks, janitorial staff) as mentors. Often, particularly in Centers where there were not large numbers of Hispanic staff, those who were around indicated they went out of their way to approach Hispanic students, particularly if they saw an individual who might look troubled or whose behavior had suddenly changed.

Some of the Centers visited had set up formal mentoring programs where staff are assigned or take on the role themselves of looking out for an entering class of students or others. Students who were interviewed did not seem to relate to such forced relationships but preferred to establish their own informal mentoring links.

**Community/Culture** – All Centers had some type of community service activities, often involving students engaged in very visible public activities. Only one Center incorporated a culture of community service requiring students to fulfill a specified level of involvement in both external (outside the Center) and internal (on Job Corps committees) service. While some of the organizations receiving the students' external service might be Hispanic organizations, there is no special effort made to engage this community segment for required public service activities. Other Centers were much less involved with any outside organizations.

No special efforts appeared to be aimed at inviting the Hispanic community to participate in Center events. Hispanic family members might take part in parent nights, open houses, graduation ceremonies or other events similar to family members of any Job Corps student. Often, when Hispanic parents are on-Center, they will approach Hispanic staff to talk about the progress their children are making in Job Corps, or Hispanic students will go out of their way to introduce their parents to an Hispanic staff member. Other staff did not feel it is necessary to be involved with students' family members unless the student is under age 18.

Two Centers described engaging in an event which is more likely to bring Hispanics from the community on-campus: a soccer tournament and an immigrant assistance day. It is not clear, however, that either has been undertaken as a specific strategy to introduce Job Corps to the Hispanic community.

Many staff and students felt having more interaction with the Hispanic community would be a positive thing. This includes Hispanic student family members, Hispanic community organizations, religious organizations and institutions with large Hispanic memberships, Hispanic-owned businesses, and other entities.

Hispanic students and many staff did not feel there were sufficient activities recognizing Hispanic culture at the Centers. Most referred to Cinco de Mayo celebrations but not many other directed activities. Students and staff felt more celebration, recognition, and introduction of Hispanic culture to other students is needed. Non-Hispanic staff often did not differentiate the need for more Hispanic cultural recognition from a similar need they see for other cultures.

Students and some staff at a few Centers raised concerns about students being denigrated for informally speaking Spanish during class or on their free time. In one Center, students expressed resentment that another ethnic group was allowed to speak their primary non-English language while Hispanics were not allowed to speak Spanish. Several Hispanic staff interviewed associate speaking Spanish with cultural ties: "When you speak the language of the people you are comfortable. You don't feel like strangers any more if you find someone who speaks your language." Some Non-Hispanic staff, however, resent Hispanics who speak Spanish knowing others around them are not able to understand the language.

Some staff, particularly Hispanics, believe others at the Center could benefit from diversity training that would introduce both staff and students to different cultural values and practices. They think some misunderstandings; e.g., the desire to speak Spanish, occur because of lack of knowledge. Nonetheless, Hispanic students described having diversity committees in which not many of their peers participate.

**Role Models/Hispanic Staff** – Hispanic role models were noted as very important by staff and students. However, even when those interviewed said mentors exist for Hispanic students within the Center, they would often say there are few role models. This is particularly true in Centers where there are not many Hispanic staff. Role models appeared to mostly be equated with staff; however, a few who were interviewed pointed to successful Hispanics within the community, particularly Job Corps graduates, who they think could adequately serve as such role models.

The need for additional Hispanic staff was mentioned in every Center but one. Although not everyone made this comment, it was a consistent remark from both staff and students. Those interviewed felt more Hispanics are needed in every position in which students come into contact, particularly residential advisors and counselors/case managers. In one Center, most of the Hispanic staff are service workers.

Students seem to feel that having Hispanic staff at the Center was less important the longer they had been in the program but is very important for Hispanics not fluent in English and others who might be hesitant about entering Job Corps.

Some students had spent all of their time in the Hispanic community prior to coming to Job Corps and so felt very strange in an environment with different cultures. Those individuals needed Hispanic staff who would “know where I’m coming from” as they adjusted to the Center routine and requirements.

Parents were another reason noted as important to have Hispanic staff at the Center. A shortage of Hispanic staff and students at the Center may cause Hispanic families to discourage their children from attending. Comments were made that for students under age 18 in particular, having Hispanic staff to whom parents can relate is essential to building their trust. “Someone they can feel comfortable turning their daughter over to.”

At all the Centers that were visited, the first person with whom every student comes into contact as they enter the program just happens to be Hispanic. This individual was described by many students and other staff as firm but caring, a real role model and mentor. For Hispanic students, having such an individual who is Hispanic in this important staff position seemed to have a very positive affect. One Center did not have any OA staff at one of their major recruitment offices who speaks Spanish. This was pointed out as a major problem and roadblock to recruiting Hispanic Job Corps participants and talking with Hispanic parents.

At another Center, staff turnover appeared to be a problem, particularly for Hispanics students. Staff described this situation as an issue because Hispanics, slow to trust, may just begin to open up to a particular staff member when he/she leaves. In fact, focus group participants from this Center were the least animated of all the groups. They appreciate Job Corps and the opportunities the program has to offer them, but they were not overly enthusiastic about it.

**Teaching Methods** – Hispanic students appear to prefer active occupations over passive fields of training (desk jobs). This is not true of all such students, but this preference was described by both staff and students when they discussed the vocational trades Hispanic students were studying. This means that equipment-related trades, painting, construction, health occupations, culinary arts and other vocations which are more hands-on appear to be the first choice for many Hispanic students.

These students prefer interactive teaching methods with hands-on activities and group tasks rather than learning by passively reading material, listening to lectures or using computers with little direction from the instructor. Hispanic students are satisfied with lectures as a teaching method if they can be reinforced with a more participatory learning technique. Computerized instruction is acceptable for professions which are best taught in a self-paced manner, but Hispanic students

want one-on-one time with the instructor or some type of group activity to go along with this solo learning.

### **Job Placement**

Many Hispanic Job Corps students were employed before entering Job Corps. One staff interviewee indicated this was a major difference between Hispanics and other races/ethnicities. Hispanics often have to leave a job to enter Job Corps where other races/ethnicities are more likely to be unemployed and can make money going to Job Corps and earning a stipend.

As noted, Hispanics may feel real or assumed cultural-based guilt over spending time in Job Corps rather than working. This can lead them to a sense of needing to find employment as quickly as possible once they finish Job Corps. As a result they may take the first job that comes along or the one that pays the most rather than wait for a job in their vocational trade. This sense of needing to work might also affect their decision to enter college after graduation. “Not too many Hispanics leave Job Corps and have nothing planned to go to.”

Staff indicated Hispanics finished with their Job Corps training may seek to return to their comfort zone once they graduate. This may mean taking a job where they are not required to speak English, for those having difficulty with language fluency, or working with family or friends rather than seeking a job in their vocation with an employer they do not know or in an environment where there are few Hispanics.

Most Hispanic graduates and former enrollees who were interviewed indicated that CTS does not meet their needs. Several talked about not having contact with CTS or being frustrated because they had not been given job leads. Several did, however, find their first job with Job Corps assistance, but usually they received help from a vocational instructor not CTS. Other Job Corps staff also spoke about CTS not adequately assisting Hispanic students; e.g., are too slow to meet the immediacy of the need for a job felt by Hispanic Job Corps graduates. “I found a job before CTS could even help.”

Most Hispanics were described as being very resistant to relocation as a means to finding employment – not wanting to move away from their families. At the same time, at least two areas where site visits were conducted were described as generally paying low wages to Hispanics, particularly immigrants, making it hard for Hispanic Job Corps graduates to find good employment opportunities. One staff member commented that Hispanic graduates will settle for too little, undervaluing themselves and the education/training they have received.

CTS and other staff see Hispanic graduates’ level of personal confidence as a major factor in their desire to find jobs in their vocational field if they do not know

anyone currently employed in similar work. One staff interviewee who deals with students as they transition into their job search insisted what was needed most for Hispanics ready to graduate is assistance with such things as mock job interviews, communication skills, and encouragement to value themselves more.

## **Other Findings**

### **Outreach/Admissions**

The discussion above pointed out a couple of areas related to OA for Hispanics: utilizing bilingual Spanish/English (preferably Hispanic) staff and the importance of reaching out to Hispanic parents and convincing them of the value of Job Corps. Those interviewed also stressed the idea that it is important to go out into the Hispanic community as this group is less likely to come into the OA office. It was suggested that OA staff attend Hispanic events, approach Hispanic organizations and generally make their presence known within the community if they want to encourage Hispanics to take a look at Job Corps. "In our culture, we want a person to reassure us, not a commercial." [[IL]]

Positive word of mouth was identified as the best means to recruit Hispanics into the program. Many students who participated in the focus group indicated they knew someone or had a relative who had attended Job Corps. They also said they would recommend Job Corps to others, with many indicating they would encourage their siblings to enter the program.

Three Centers were located within or reasonably near an Hispanic community, however, only one appeared to be considering local student recruitment activities. This Center is acutely aware of their lack of localized admissions and had been discussing needed changes prior to the site visit for this study. OA staff at the other two Centers are involved in recruiting Hispanics but not actively from the area around the Center. The fourth Center is engaged in recruiting Hispanics from throughout the area. In discussing Hispanic involvement with staff at all of the Centers, at only one was it felt there are sufficient numbers of Hispanic students.

The sense of a "Job Corps stigma" was mentioned at all the Centers but did not appear to be a serious problem except in one of the communities where the Center had been located a long time. Possibly as a result of this issue, no Hispanics from the immediate area of the Center were enrolled in the program, and the local Hispanic community appears to be uninvolved with the Center in any way.

More than thinking negatively about Job Corps there seemed to be a sense that most in the Hispanic community just does not know about the program.

Sometimes OA staff said they had trouble convincing particularly skeptical parents that Job Corps is as good as it sounds. OA and other staff felt it is important to have recruitment literature that shows Hispanics involved in Job Corps.

One possible block to participation by Hispanics mentioned by a few OA staff was immigration– not from potential students but concerning their parents. If the students are legally in this country but their parents are not, the family might fear entering the government-sponsored Job Corps could somehow jeopardize the status of the parents.

### **Interaction between Races/Ethnicities in Centers**

No major instances were discussed of serious racial problems between groups at the Centers. Hispanic students appear to stick with each other while at the same time interacting freely with students of other race/ethnicities.

At a couple of Centers where Hispanics are a minority, some resentment was expressed by students over what they perceive to be favorable treatment to the dominant racial group. At all but one Center, many Hispanics were described as hesitant and quiet – a group that needs to be invited to express their opinions. As such, they are often run over by louder, bolder groups who have no trouble letting their desires be known.

Rather than a racial/ethnic clash, some staff referred to a culture clash that causes Hispanic students to complain among themselves and some to leave the program. They find that the disruption, noise and disrespect shown to those in charge is too strange in relation to their own upbringing, and they can not understand or tolerate it.

### **Gang Activity**

At two Centers, Hispanic gang members were mentioned as present on campus. This was said to also be true for African Americans but possibly, at the current time, more an issue with Hispanics. However, staff at both these Centers did not feel gang activity was out-of-hand. They made it clear that they are always on the lookout for any signs of rival gangs about to cause trouble and immediately take action to stop problems before they begin. A few staff and a couple of students said some gang members look at their involvement with Job Corps as their last chance to “do right.”

## **Hispanics Compared to Other Racial/Ethnic Student Groups**

Several staff at each Center referred to Hispanics as easier to deal with than students from other racial/ethnic groups. These features include: hard working, motivated, know what they want out of Job Corps, less disruptive, respectful, well-mannered, neat, organized, focused, and “eager to take on new stuff.” “They do what you ask them to do, and they do it right the first time.” In general, many staff felt Hispanics are much less of a discipline issue than other groups. These attributes were said to be related to the family/community orientation of Hispanic culture.

Some staff also said Hispanic students “don’t complain as much.” Others, particularly Hispanic staff, felt this could be a problem as Hispanics are reticent to come forward so may not express their opinions, discuss problems, or make their wishes known. A student who is dissatisfied with the program may simply drop out without ever expressing the real reasons for his/her dissatisfaction. Someone having trouble with training or feeling uncomfortable with the prospect of going to job interviews may fail to understand instructions or take employment outside their field rather than tell staff of the problems.

## **Findings Concerning NJCS Economic Impact Results**

During interviews, staff were asked if they had any ideas why the NJCS findings showed less economic impact for Hispanics who attended Job Corps over a control group of Hispanics who did not. The primary reason given was a sense Hispanics who were turned away from Job Corps most probably went immediately to work. As Hispanics gravitate toward the hard trades, one of the biggest in-demand occupations at the time of the study was construction, where language and graduation from high school are not issues. A conscientious worker could start at a good hourly wage and receive increases in pay, within certain limits, as on-the-job skills took hold.

At the time of the NJCS, many Hispanics were participating in a building boom occurring all over the United States. Some in the NJCS Hispanic Control Group might have been working in construction prior to applying to Job Corps and simply went back to the work they knew best. Others might have entered another hands-on service field; e.g., landscaping, and found more than sufficient work. If this were the case, they might be earning more in four years than the Hispanic Program Group that went to Job Corps, possibly for as long as two years, then entered the job market.

Additionally, some of those interviewed felt Hispanics who were turned away from Job Corps, more than any other racial/ethnic group, might have quietly said to themselves “I’ll show you” I don’t need Job Corps and driven themselves even harder to succeed.

Last, some of those interviewed pointed to the fact that some Job Corps vocations offer only minimal starting pay but have great potential. Therefore, if an individual was in an occupation like entry-level health professions, they might have stayed in Job Corps two years then taken a minimal wage job in their field. By the end of the four year study period, they might be making only slightly more than starting salary.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The following conclusions can be drawn from the site visits, looking both at the four study research issues (language, community support networks/culture, characteristics of targeted Hispanic programs, job placement) and other areas. Site visit interviews also generated ideas concerning possible reasons for NJCS Hispanic-related findings. The conclusions relate specifically to Hispanics of Mexican descent and may or may not represent the viewpoints and experiences for those of Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central American, or other Hispanic descent.

### **General Observations**

- Hispanics (on average) appear to be very attractive students for Job Corps. They understand why they are in the program, present fewer discipline issues, listen to instructions and follow them, perform required work, and have a desire to complete their training and leave Job Corps as quickly as possible.
- Often Hispanics do not speak up to make their needs known and are overlooked because other students are more forward.

### **Reasons NJCS Results Found a Greater Economic Impact for the Hispanic Control Group**

- Hispanic control group members denied entrance into Job Corps may have found work in relatively high paying construction or other trades. The extra year or more of employment may have put them ahead of Job Corps graduates in terms of earnings after four years. Such employment might have been particularly available to Hispanics from 1995 – 2000.
- Job Corps students complete their vocational training, but after graduation might take the first available job even if it is not in their trade. Control group members would have been working longer at four years and might not have felt so driven to take the first available job, thus finding higher paying employment.
- Some of the professions in which Job Corps graduates receive training offer minimum starting pay, but greater potential in a career path.



Compared to control group members earning more in construction or other professions, Hispanic Job Corps graduates would statistically be earning less after four years.

- Hispanic control group members denied entrance to Job Corps may have been driven by the rejection to adopt an “I’ll show you what I can do without this program” attitude. This extra incentive to succeed might be more prevalent among Hispanics than other racial/ethnic groups.

### **English Language Usage**

- A large majority of Hispanics entering Job Corps are fluent in English.
- Hispanics taking ESL may have issues over leaving this training before they are ready and may have difficulty following vocational instruction given only in English.
- There is a conflict between the desire to speak Spanish as a way to connect with culture and comfort, and the sense only English should be spoken as a courtesy to others and because the world of employment is primarily English-speaking. Sometimes this conflict can cause difficulties and misunderstandings.
- Language problems seem to arise more in communicating with monolingual Spanish-speaking parents than with Hispanic students.

### **Family Issues**

- Family ties are a major concern and influence for Hispanic students. They often feel guilty about not working to help contribute to their family’s support while they are in the program. Sometimes Hispanic students will drop out before completion to contribute income to the family or other assistance such as caring for siblings.
- Hispanics want to and expect to work. Unlike many other students, Hispanics are often employed and give up jobs to enter the program. Many have a desire to or feel a need to work while they are in the Job Corps program.
- If parents are newly arrived in the United States, they may have greater difficulty agreeing to female children entering a residential Job Corps program or study a “hard” trade. Parents, particularly fathers or other male figures in the family, need to be convinced female students will be safe and surrounded by people they trust.
- Hispanic female students are sometimes described as independent and aggressive, particularly if they are not first generation U.S. residents.

## **Outreach to Attract Hispanic Students to Job Corps**

- To sell Job Corps to Hispanics, it is necessary to convince the family/parents as well as potential students of its value. If Hispanic parents think Job Corps students are disrespectful or they do not see Hispanic staff at the Center they feel they can trust, parents may discourage their children from attending.
- The Job Corps program will sell itself but first it is necessary to entice potential Hispanic students and their parents to take a look.
- To encourage Job Corps entrance, it is necessary to extend outreach into the Hispanic community using targeted print and visual media, making direct personal contact, and establishing connections with Hispanic community institutions such as organizations, churches, and leaders.
- Outreach works best if those making the contacts are Hispanic.
- Word-of-mouth is a major recruitment tool for Hispanics. Students often refer their family members and friends to Job Corps.

## **Cultural Recognition and Community Involvement**

- Hispanic culture is very important to students and their families. This relates to Spanish-language use, family ties, and personal expectations. Job Corps may not be offering enough to support Hispanic cultural values.
- Reaching out to the Hispanic community is a good way to tell Hispanics about Job Corps and build trust.
- It is important to recognize cultural values associated with family and community if the program is to do a good job in recruiting, training and placing Hispanics.

## **Meeting the Needs of Hispanic Students**

- Job Corps needs to be the “family” for Hispanic students in a residential setting. Feeling as if they are part of a family will encourage Hispanic students to stay and graduate from the program as well as seek employment in the fields in which they are trained.
- Supportive bilingual Hispanic staff in Job Corps departments that interact directly with students are important for encouraging program completion.
- Hispanics need mentors and role models. If they trust and look up to staff, mentoring will happen naturally. Hispanics make the best role models for these students.
- When Hispanics first enter Job Corps they are more likely to turn to Hispanic staff and other Hispanic students, identifying with those of similar background and culture. The longer they are in the program, the less they will need this comfort.

- Staff longevity at a Center makes a difference for Hispanic students, particularly Hispanic staff they grow to trust. This, as well as positive interaction of staff to the benefit of the students, helps support the idea of the Job Corps Center as family. Some Hispanic graduates may turn to such staff for continued help and advice after leaving the program.
- Hispanics prefer interactive teaching methods. If courses involve self-paced individual instruction, Hispanics want easy access to instructors who can answer questions. Hispanics are attracted to hands-on professions such as the hard trades or health occupations.

### **Job Placement Issues**

- Hispanic students expect to complete their training quickly and begin working immediately after graduation to contribute income to their families as soon as possible. They often find Job Corps CTS assistance to be too slow to meet their needs. They turn to family and friends, or take any available job even if it is not in their trade.
- Hispanics are often accustomed to working for less, simply being grateful they have any job. They undervalue themselves and need to be convinced that the skills they have acquired are valuable to employers and that waiting to find a job in their field will eventually result in greater benefits for them and their family.
- Because of passivity and, for some, failure to feel secure with their English-language skills, Hispanics may fear approaching employers and participating in job interviews. This can be another reason they return to their pre-Job Corps program personal comfort zone and use family and friends for their job search.

## **HISPANICS IN JOB CORPS: CONCLUSIONS**

Research began by identifying four investigative areas as possible influences on Hispanics in Job Corps: language, culture and community support networks, successful Hispanic program elements, and Job Corps placement services. Four methodologies were used in the research: review of NJCS data, comparison of time-related Hispanic Job Corps student profiles, examination of the LEP/Hispanic Youth Survey, and site visits to operational Job Corps Centers.

Anticipated results were to include:

- Possible explanations for the NJCS finding of greater economic impact for the Hispanic Control Group as opposed to the Hispanic Program Group which attended Job Corps,
- Assess the status of current Hispanic Job Corps participants.

Research questions were posed in relation to each investigative area. These are noted below with conclusions reached through the research conducted for this study.

### **Language**

- Do Job Corps participants need English language skills at a greater rate than is identified by Job Corps staff?

All the research methodologies indicated that only a small proportion of Hispanics in Job Corps, both in 1995 and those currently enrolled, require ESL assistance. The NJCS noted only 3% of the Hispanic Control Group ever took ESL during the study period, and 9% of the Hispanic Program Group took ESL while in Job Corps. The LEP/HY found a similar percentage of ESL enrollment today, approximately a 10% average of all Hispanic students in Centers responding to the survey, with a great deal of variability. Only a small number of Hispanic students were enrolled in ESL classes at each of the site visit locations.

Both the site visits and LEP/HY pointed to instances where Hispanic students in need of language assistance might not be getting the necessary help. A lack of interpretation assistance in vocational classes to assure complete understanding by the LEP student was discussed. The role of interpreter/translator was often filled by their peers.

Site visits pointed to a second, related group in need of English language assistance – parents of Hispanic students. Many staff said communicating with mono-lingual Spanish-speaking family members can be a barrier as these individuals have great influence over their child/relative and can

seriously affect their Job Corps enrollment, potential to drop out, and job placement within the field in which the student has been trained. Many Centers do not have sufficient staff to communicate with family members, which can result in misunderstandings and mistrust.

- Do Job Corps participants complete the ESL courses in which they are enrolled, and do they stay in these courses long enough to thoroughly master the English language?

There is no indication Hispanic students drop out of ESL before completing their courses, however, there is a sense that some students would like additional language assistance, which they are not receiving. Both the LEP/HY and the site visits noted students are at various levels in their language skills, and those above basic need appear to receive less help. The LEP/HY spoke to a desire for vocational ESL and student participation in both ESL and vocational training simultaneously.

- Are LEP Hispanic participants really proficient and comfortable using English once they complete their Job Corps training and enter the employment market?
- Do Hispanic Job Corps participants seek employment opportunities where their English-language skills are less important, and are these jobs less likely to lead to promotional opportunities and earnings advancement?

Site visit interviews were the only source to speak to a lack of English language fluency as a factor in job placement. Several of those interviewed said discomfort with English is a factor in Hispanic students' willingness to settle for non-demanding jobs outside their vocational trade. Employment comfort level once a graduate returns to his/her family and community was pinpointed as a factor in turning to family and friends for job placement assistance rather than utilizing Job Corps CTS or pursuing a position in the field for which they were trained.

### **Culture/Community Support Networks**

- Do Hispanic Job Corps participants feel cultural/familial ties might interfere with their success in Job Corps; for example, pressure to drop out of the program, or a desire to stay within their community and close to their families?
- Are Hispanic Job Corps graduates urged to find immediate employment once they leave the program rendering them less likely to look for jobs within their field of training?

- Are Hispanic Job Corps trainees more likely to consider the needs of their family units over their personal long-term goals?

Both the LEP/HY and site visit information concluded that cultural, community and family ties are of extreme importance to Hispanic students and influence all aspects of Job Corps involvement. The obligations Hispanic students may feel in this regard are potentially even stronger than considerations for personal success.

If family members do not understand the purpose of Job Corps and benefits that can be derived by completing the program, they may put pressure on the student to leave and find employment. It was also expressed that this “pressure” might be something the student puts on himself/herself, feeling guilt over the time spent in Job Corps and not working to contribute to the family’s well-being. Family disapproval was also suggested as a reason few Hispanic females enter the hard trades where higher paying job opportunities, some with apprenticeship programs, might be available.

In making employment-related decisions, those Hispanics leaving Job Corps were said to lean toward taking a job where family members or friends are working to remain within their personal comfort zone. They would rather stay in the familiar than risk looking for employment in a new field where they might find few other Hispanics.

Family and community ties were also discussed as a reason Hispanic Job Corps participants do not relocate to find employment. The NJCS found 90% of Hispanic Control Group and 89% of Hispanic Program Group members lived in the same state at the beginning and end of the four year study period. Both the LEP/HY and site visits noted LEP and/or Hispanic students are reluctant to leave their family and community to find better jobs.

- Other issues related to recognition of Hispanic culture.

Culture is very important to Hispanic students and their families. Recognition of this culture within the Job Corps program was described in the LEP/HY and the site visits as very important to adequately serve Hispanic students. This involves incorporating culture into student life through events, community participation, better ties to local Hispanic organizations and institutions and engaging family members. It also means teaching staff and other students about Hispanic culture to avoid misunderstandings – such as criticism of students speaking Spanish outside of classes as a means to draw comfort from those of a similar background.

Cultural issues, according to those interviewed during site visits, can have a major affect on the ability of the Hispanic student to fit into the Job Corps environment. Several instances of Hispanic students finding disruptive behavior on campus, disrespect in classrooms and disorganization shown by other students in the dormitories were cited. At least one staff member indicated this issue can cause Hispanic students to drop out of the program because they are used to a more cohesive community. Most Hispanic students are described as knowing why they entered the program, what they hope to get from it, maintaining drive to succeed, finish and find employment. This determination may not mesh with what they see in the more disruptive students and atmosphere around them.

Additionally, Hispanic students were noted as very hesitant to speak up, to the point of failing to identify their own needs. Because other students are more forward, the issues of Hispanic students might get overlooked. It is not within their culture to draw attention to themselves in a loud manner, so they may not speak up unless approached and encouraged to participate. This can affect their success in a number of ways. They may drop out before completion. They may not get all the information and assistance they need to succeed. They may undervalue their own worth when seeking employment. And, they may be extremely insecure with approaching a stranger and asking for a job, —rather choosing lesser employment as a way to avoid uncomfortable job interview situations.

Recognition and support of culture and community may not currently be happening in many Job Corps Centers. The LEP/HY found the fewer the number of Hispanic students and staff, the smaller the likelihood of identification of cultural barriers. Most Centers do not offer programs to overcome cultural barriers (other than language assistance).

### **Successful Hispanic Program Elements**

- Do Job Corps Centers offer assistance that includes the identified success elements?

Successful programs outside of Job Corps which are targeted toward Hispanics were identified as having the following elements: mentors, role models, Hispanic staff, and interactive teaching methods. Most Job Corps Centers appear to do fairly well on the first and last of these factors but not as well on the other two.

Mentoring naturally occurs because of the close proximity of staff and students in a residential setting. They are thrown together every day within a living and training environment. Because Hispanics have a strong need for family connections, many appear to look for someone to whom they can relate. Formal mentoring programs where the Center tries to pre-identify an individual to “adopt” a class of students do

not seem to be as successful as students finding their own mentors. In addition to Job Corps site visits, the LEP/HY also identified mentoring as an exemplary approach to assist Hispanic students.

Mentors who are Hispanic are those most utilized by Hispanic students, particularly those with limited English ability. These individuals can relate to the background and culture of Hispanic students. However, other non-Hispanic individuals also seemed to fill this role for certain Hispanics if they were open, welcoming, and encouraging. Where Hispanic professional staff were not available to serve as mentors, some students turned to other Center Hispanics such as kitchen, janitorial, or clerical staff. Many graduates/former enrollees and staff indicated Hispanic students maintained positive contact with their Job Corps mentors long past their separation from the program.

Most Job Corps vocational training appears to take advantage of interactive rather than passive training. Hispanic students in site visits definitely indicated a preference for hands-on training or participatory learning activities. When self-paced computer course work was the means for training, Hispanic students stressed a desire to have easy access to one-on-one attention from instructors as needed.

Both the NJCS (1995) and more recent (PY 2001) Hispanic profile information indicated Hispanic students stay in Job Corps longer than Non-Hispanic students, and take more courses than Non-Hispanic students. This includes academic courses as well as job-related classes. In regard to choice of trade, Hispanic students do not appear to necessarily choose different vocational training than Non-Hispanics. This finding was not consistent with the LEP/HY. LEP students often take longer to complete the Job Corps program and specific course work such as GED requirements. Sometimes due to the time necessary to complete ESL courses Hispanic LEP students are unable to finish vocational training in their preferred occupation before reaching the end of their two-year stay in Job Corps.

In regard to role models, those interviewed during site visits strongly suggested a necessity for Hispanic role models to whom Hispanic students can relate. Many indicated such individuals were lacking within the Centers, and were not brought in from the outside community to benefit Hispanic students.

According to Hispanic profile development, the LEP/HY, and site visit information the lack of role models could be related to too few Hispanic staff at many, but not all, Centers, LEP/HY. Lacking were Hispanics employed in OA, as residential assistants, in vocational training, as case managers, or CTS workers. At one site where staff turnover was an issue, those interviewed felt there was lack of trust as students would get comfortable with a staff member right before the staffer left.



Not having bilingual/bicultural staff was identified as a reason Hispanics and their family members considering Job Corps enrollment do not follow through. Failing to identify someone they can trust with their child was a factor parents may use to discourage Job Corps enrollment. In a related issue, the LEP/HY found a strong need to train vocational staff to adjust their teaching to succeed with LEP students.

Two sources looked at Hispanic student assessment of their Job Corps experience, and both found a general level of satisfaction. Within the Hispanic Program Group in the NJCS, 77% would recommend Job Corps to family and friends. Eighty-four percent of Hispanics profiled from PY 2001 data indicated they would recommend Job Corps to a friend. However, only half of these same students felt Job Corps did an excellent or very good job in preparing them for employment or further schooling.

- Do Hispanic participants desire the above elements within an assistance program?
- Do Hispanic youth turn to arenas other than Job Corps where they can receive support tailored specifically for their needs?

In talking with Hispanic students and graduates/former enrollees, they made it very clear that mentors, role models, interactive teaching and bilingual/bicultural staff (program elements identified as exemplary in Hispanic programs) were factors they also desired in Job Corps. These same sources agreed with 1995 statistics concerning the Hispanic Program Group in the NJCS that found those enrolled in Job Corps seldom seek out other programs which offer academic or vocational training. As for the Hispanic Control Group, some appeared to enter alternative sources of education and vocational training after being turned away from Job Corps (41% were enrolled in a GED program at some point during the study, 19% got a vocational degree, and 35% got a high school diploma or GED), but they did not appear to enter these programs at a greater percentage than Non-Hispanics.

### **Job Corps Placement Services**

- [originally a "Culture/CSN" research question] Where do Hispanic Job Corps participants turn when they need assistance in securing employment?
- How extensive is the use of Job Corps placement assistance by Hispanic graduates?
- What are the expectations and comfort level of Hispanic participants and graduates regarding this form of assistance?

Both the NJCS and profile information for those enrolled in Job Corps during PY 2001 noted Hispanics make use of Job Corps assistance in locating employment. The NJCS showed the Hispanic Program Group received more employment placement assistance from Job Corps than the Non-Hispanic Program Group, and profile data indicated a large percentage of Hispanics has continued to receive such help in more recent times (a comparison to the Non-Hispanic Program Group was not available for PY 2001 information). Only the NJCS reported the actual percentage of Hispanic Program participants who received a job as a result of Job Corps placement assistance (44%). Although this percentage is greater than Non-Hispanic Program Group, more than half did not report this result.

Anecdotal information from the site visit interviews with Hispanic Job Corps graduates/former enrollees and particularly with vocational instructors at Job Corps Centers indicates Hispanics are more likely to turn to family, friends or an immediate job opening rather than wait for CTS-related job placement assistance. The need/desire to find work immediately upon separating from the program was a reason given for Hispanics feeling CTS assistance is too slow. This drives them to locate their own jobs even when that employment is not in their vocational field.

Additionally, in at least one site visit, staff said Hispanic students may feel uncomfortable working with CTS staff as they were not well known to students, were not felt to be totally accessible, and finding a job was considered a sensitive subject often likely to make Hispanics uncomfortable. This was another area where having Hispanic CTS staff would make a difference in student comfort levels.

- [originally a “Culture/CSN” research question] If Hispanic Job Corps participants use their CSNs to help them locate jobs, do they find these resources limited in terms of employment options and advancement potential?

No hard evidence was available on the percentage of Hispanic Job Corps participants who were hampered in finding employment in the field in which they were trained because they relied on family and friends to help locate a position. Some of those interviewed at Job Corps Centers did indicate this reliance was a factor in Job Corps graduates not taking employment in their field – because they did not know anyone in their family/community already in that occupation.

- [originally a “Culture/CSN” research question] Where are Hispanic Job Corps trainees employed and are their positions in the fields in which they were trained? How much English is required in the work Hispanic Job Corps graduates find, and does this employment have reasonable advancement potential?

Of the 17 graduates/former enrollees interviewed during site visits, 11 were employed, with three not working in their vocational field. NJCS information specified where 1995 Hispanic Job Corps participants were employed – at 10 and

16 months after initiation of the study. “Construction” was at the top of the list for those time periods. This is an industry where Hispanics could have found work and not needed complete English language fluency. However, those interviewed during Job Corps site visits felt advancement potential without total fluency would be limited. In fact, data from the LEP/HY notes that employers are hesitant to hire those with limited English skills (although they are interested in workers with bilingual English/Spanish capability – also noted by site visit interviewees).

- What are staff experiences placing Hispanic program participants?

CTS and other staff during site visits appeared to look on Hispanic students as no different from other Job Corps students. They did not suggest it was necessary to offer a different approach to providing effective job placement assistance. Some said that Hispanic students often seemed to find their own employment before CTS could offer any help. A few of those interviewed noted that in particular parts of the country a surplus of Hispanic workers willing to take jobs at minimal pay created a challenge for Hispanic Job Corps graduates trying to locate positions which would pay them what they were worth.

- Are there improvements that might be made in employment placement assistance?

Staff suggested that more job preparation might be necessary when working with Hispanic students who may be more uncomfortable than other Job Corps graduates in approaching prospective employers and convincing them of their potential value as employees. This might include more attention to resumes, mock interviews, and confidence building/leadership exercises.

### **Lack of Economic Impact for the NJCS Hispanic Program Group**

Those interviewed during site visits suggested four reasons why the Hispanic Program Group showed less economic impact after the four year study period than members of the Hispanic Control Group. These are considered below as they relate to information gathered through the NJCS and other research methodologies.

- Job Corps students complete their vocational training, but after graduation might take the first available job even if it is not in their trade. Control group members would have been working longer at four years and might not have felt so driven to take the first available job, thus finding higher paying employment.

- Some of the professions in which Job Corps graduates receive training offer minimum starting pay, but greater potential in a career path. Compared to control group members earning more in construction or other professions, Hispanic Job Corps graduates would statistically be earning less after four years.

Information available through the methodologies used for the SHJC cannot conclusively answer these questions. Comparing information on vocational training for the Hispanic Program Group and the Non-Hispanic Program Group in the NJCS, and Hispanic and Non-Hispanic Job Corps students in PY 2001 is inconclusive as each Center in which the students were enrolled offered different vocational trades. Due to the varying roster of trades offered at Centers with more or fewer Hispanic students enrolled makes it difficult to determine if the pattern seen for Hispanics in any way differs from that seen for Non-Hispanics.

Employment occupations for the Hispanic Control Group compared to the Hispanic Program Group in the NJCS are only available for the 10<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> study months and showed little percentage differences between the Hispanic Control Group and the Hispanic Program Group for all occupation categories. When the top five occupations were ranked, a slight difference could be seen, with the Hispanic Program Group moving more quickly into what could be lower paying clerical positions while the Hispanic Control Group appeared to be moving into more lucrative jobs as mechanics/ repairers/machinists by the conclusion of the study. This does not provide clear evidence to prove or disprove the theory that the Hispanic Program Group consistently moved into lower paying positions or the opposite for the Hispanic Control Group.

- Hispanic control group members denied entrance to Job Corps may have been driven by the rejection to adopt an “I’ll show you what I can do without this program” attitude. This extra incentive to succeed might be more prevalent among Hispanics than other racial/ethnic groups.

Some members of the Hispanic Control Group did enroll in academic and vocational training outside of Job Corps, but this trend was not significantly different from what was seen with the Non-Hispanic Control Group. The same is true when looking at the trend for educational or vocational training enrollment for each quarter of the study. A difference was seen, however, when looking at quarterly employment trends, as will be discussed below.

- Hispanic control group members denied entrance into Job Corps may have found work in relatively high paying construction or other trades. The extra year of employment may have put them ahead of Job Corps graduates in terms of earnings after four years. Such employment might have been particularly available to Hispanics from 1995 – 2000.

Both Hispanic Control Group and Non-Hispanic Control Group members sought employment while study Program Group members entered Job Corps. This is apparent in quarterly employment statistics. Whether or not the Hispanic Control Group took jobs in construction is not known. By the 10<sup>th</sup> quarter, all four groups showed construction as the occupation with the greatest employment, and there is no percentage difference between the Hispanic Control and Hispanic Program Groups.

However, it is in the area of employment that the Hispanic Control Group appears to stand out when compared to the Hispanic Program Group. A greater percentage of Hispanic Control Group members were employed before entering Job Corps. Looking at quarterly employment statistics, as expected Control Group Hispanic and Non-Hispanic members both are employed at a greater percentage than their respective Program Groups – to a point. In study quarter eight the Non-Hispanic Program Group members outdo their counterparts in the Non-Hispanic Control Group, most probably a reflection of their Job Corps training. This reversal never occurs among Hispanic study participants. The Hispanic Control Group consistently outdoes the Hispanic Program Group in percentage employed in each quarter and shows the greatest percentage employment of any group by the conclusion of the study. The resulting steady wages would definitely add to a greater impact for the Hispanic Control Group.

As noted earlier when occupations are examined at the 10<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> quarters, Hispanic Control Group members are seen moving into what could be more lucrative positions as mechanics, machinists, and repairers; while those in the Hispanic Program Group, where a greater percentage of females were present, move more quickly into clerical positions which may pay less. By the conclusion of the study, Hispanic Control Group members are more concentrated in dense urban areas which may offer increased numbers and higher paying job opportunities.

Hispanic profile information from PY 2001 indicates this trend may be continuing, although no Hispanic Control Group was available with which to compare findings. A greater percentage of Hispanics, approximately half, were employed when they entered Job Corps. Site visit interviews suggested many Hispanics, for reasons of family pressure or maintenance of their personal comfort zone, took the first job available, particularly one where family and friends were co-workers. This employment might be outside their vocational field and offer little advancement opportunity. The PY 2001 information showed that the average starting hourly wage for Hispanic Job Corps graduates/former enrollees was \$.12 lower than Non-Hispanics. Additionally, a larger percentage of the Hispanic Program Group was looking for a job or educational placement than was true of the Hispanic Program Group.

The data seem to point to differences in employment as the most plausible explanation for the greater economic impact shown by the Hispanic Control Group over the Hispanic Program Group. Other factors, as suggested, may also have played a part.

### **Other Study Conclusions**

Two other areas were pinpointed through this research investigation as relevant to the success of current Hispanic Job Corps students. These are outreach and the desirability of attracting Hispanic students.

- **OA Activities Targeting Hispanic Students**

The OA staff interviewed during site visits place a great deal of emphasis on recruiting Hispanic students and the special activities that are required to do an effective job. Hispanic students appear to be satisfied with Job Corps. A majority of Hispanics from the 1995 NJCS and the PY 2001 data indicated they would recommend Job Corps to family and friends, a sentiment echoed by Hispanic students in site visit focus groups. The two timeframes (1995 and 2001) also showed Hispanics entering and completing Job Corps academic and vocational training in a greater proportion than Non-Hispanics, and receiving more job placement related training services.

The issue is how to encourage more Hispanics to attend Job Corps. The LEP/HY found a lack of emphasis by OA and Job Corps regional offices on recruiting Hispanics. At the same time, OA staff interviewed in Job Corps site visits felt the Program would sell itself if they could get Hispanics to take a look. Students who were interviewed indicated they noticed the Job Corps advertisements on television and on the radio, particularly if they were in Spanish. However, they reacted more positively to a direct approach where someone they trusted vouched for the program. Staff, particularly those in OA positions, stressed that it was necessary to go out into the Hispanic community rather than expecting Hispanic students to come into the OA office. This means attending community events, getting to know community leaders, collaborating more with Hispanic organizations and inviting the Hispanic community to be an active part of the Job Corps program. They also stressed that the best person to sell Job Corps to Hispanics is another Hispanic with whom potential students and families could identify.

Additionally, OA and other staff stressed that recruitment of Hispanics does not simply mean providing information to prospective students. It also means informing their parents and other family members who may either encourage or discourage enrollment. Such communication often needs to be in Spanish for those who are mono-lingual Spanish speaking. Hispanic family members are

easily put off by lack of Hispanic staff at the Centers or from seeing disruptive and disrespectful activities of some Non-Hispanic students, particularly if they are considering entrance of their female child into the Program.

- **Desirability of Hispanic Job Corps Students**

During site visits at each Center, staff referred to the attractiveness of having Hispanics as students. Comparing them to other groups, many staff felt Hispanics were easier to deal with as they listened to instructions and followed them, understood why they were in the program and were determined to complete required assignments, were respectful, and were less disruptive. In the LEP/HY, the same theme was noted in site visits to three Job Corps Centers conducted for that study.

Comments were made at most Centers that Hispanics offer few discipline problems. Hispanics want to and expect to find jobs and so are well suited to meet Job Corps objectives. This is a fact that was echoed through the NJCS which noted a larger percentage of Hispanics than Non-Hispanics who were “never arrested” (81% for the Hispanic Program Group; 76% for the Non-Hispanic Program Group). PY 2001 profiles repeated this theme revealing a smaller percent of Hispanic students separated from Job Corps for disciplinary reasons than was true for Non-Hispanics.

There does appear to be a small group of students who can present problems – gang members. The site visit Centers where this issue was noted had learned to head off any potential problems noting gangs were also present among racial/ethnic groups in addition to Hispanics. No major problems related to racial tensions were seen at any sites.

While undertaking recruitment, retention and placement activities, Job Corps should recognize and make use of Hispanic cultural values, to encourage more Job Corps usage by Hispanics. Job Corps needs to be “the family” for Hispanic students, temporarily replacing their own family, offering support and encouragement while Hispanics are part of the Program.

### **Overall Conclusions**

Hispanics who make up the past and current Job Corps population need little language assistance. However, those requiring help may not get all they want or need. The importance of family and community is ingrained within Hispanic culture and drives a great deal of their thinking and activities. A sense of family obligation and a desire to remain within a comfortable community environment can affect the type of employment Hispanics obtain. On the other hand, Hispanic culture helps account for what is described by some as the desirability of having

Hispanic Job Corps students who are respectful, more likely to follow instructions, and goal-oriented to finish quickly and find employment.

In regard to the NJCS study findings of diminished economic impact for the Hispanic Program Group compared to the Hispanic Control Group, employment history may be the primary reason for this differential. The tendency to have a job when entering Job Corps, and desire to seek employment immediately upon exiting the program appears to have been present in 1995 and continues with Hispanic students today. Unfortunately, more recent statistics also show Hispanics earning less than Non-Hispanics, at least in initial placement.

Findings related to employment appear to be the principal theme running throughout the research conducted for this Study. Hispanic culture encourages an expectation of working hard. Hispanics are employed prior to joining Job Corps, understand the Program is about finding employment, and are driven to complete as quickly as possible so they can go back to work. Their accomplishments in Job Corps are as good if not better than other students, and they take advantage of what is offered. While in Job Corps, they stick to their work, cause few problems and do what is asked of them –presenting the picture of an ideal student.

The problem occurs when Hispanics leave Job Corps and turn to employment below their abilities. They are in a hurry to find a job and are sensitive to staying within their comfort zone which is attached to family, community, and culture. As a result, they undervalue the training they have received and their own worth as employees. They take the first job they can find so they can immediately start contributing to the family unit, feeling guilty because they have spent the last year or more in the Job Corps Program. Hispanic graduates will use family and friends as a network for employment, hesitating to enter work situations where there are few other Hispanics. Those uncomfortable with their English language skills may choose work where there is less of a need to speak the language even if the job is not in the field in which they have been trained.

The problem might be that although Hispanic Job Corps students do take advantage of what Job Corps has to offer, they have other concerns that override the Job Corps message. For this reason, when they complete the Program they are less likely to take advantage of what they have been given through their participation. In other words, Hispanics and their family members may not really be accepting the full concept of the Job Corps Program.

One solution might be to incorporate Hispanic culture which is already ingrained in these students within Job Corps to help make them feel as comfortable and supported as possible while they are in the Program. In other words, Job Corps could serve as a temporary “family” while Hispanic students are enrolled. Mentoring, providing Hispanic roles models, using interactive teaching methods, recognizing cultural values, and involving the Hispanic community in Job Corps i



are elements that appear to speak to this model. Like a family works to sway the outlook of its members, Hispanic students may, in this way, be encouraged to look toward long-range instead of only short-range goals. The result can be an increased willingness to take risks when looking for employment that matches their skills and placing more value on themselves and what they have obtained through Job Corps.

Doing this will be far easier if family members are also brought into the Program and convinced of its value so they can exert positive not negative pressure on their Hispanic students to succeed -- to stay in Job Corps until they finish all their academic and vocational training and holdout for the right job that offers long-term benefits over short-term economic gain with less potential for the future. It may even mean the family accepting relocation for one of its members as a means to obtain better employment, with the idea that helping one member of the unit advance will ultimately help the entire family as that individual will then have more to give back.

There is reason to believe that Job Corps will benefit from attracting more Hispanic students who are already oriented toward goals similar to what the Program tries to instill. However, this research has found some indication Center staff and students feel not enough is currently being done in this regard. Evidence exists to suggest why OA activities might be less successful with Hispanics. The most effect outreach specifically targets Hispanics by going out to them rather than expecting them to come into the OA office. Making connections at Hispanic events and with community, cultural and religious organizations are the best means to relate to a culture that relies heavily on word-of-mouth. Marketing to family members/parents in addition to prospective students was also identified as essential, and is where language barriers can be an issue.

Having individuals with whom both students and parents can identify and to whom they can give their trust is very important for not only recruiting Hispanics but for keeping them in the Program, accepting all that Job Corps has to offer, and avoiding the misunderstandings that can sometimes arise. With trust, Hispanics will be less hesitant to speak up about issues that might be keeping them from taking advantage of their Job Corps training. Hispanic staff communicating with Hispanic parents beginning with recruitment and consistently throughout the Program will help family members understand, appreciate, and offer encouragement around all the benefits Job Corps has to offer.

## Appendix

### FOCUS GROUP SITE VISIT PROTOCOLS JOB CORPS STUDENTS

1. [Language preference will be pre-determined before discussion.]
  - a. If session is to be in English, assure participants if they prefer to explain something in Spanish, an HMA bilingual staff member can assist in translation. We will also be taking a lot of notes while you are talking.
  - b. If session is to be in Spanish, tell participants we would like to tape the conversation so it might be transcribed. In this way we can be sure we will not miss any information you give us.
2. Introduce HMA staff and HMA the firm. Say you are working on a study for the federal Department of Labor, Office of Performance and Technology, and thank participants for agreeing to take part in the Hispanic Job Corps Study. At the conclusion of our discussion, we will be happy to give you \$25 for your help.
3. [Explain study purpose] The study is to better understand the characteristics, background, and assistance needs of Hispanic Job Corps participants and gather ideas on how services might better assist this population.
4. [Explain study methodology] We are trying to do this by talking to people like you who are currently in a Job Corps Center and others who have graduated or left the program. We will also be talking to some Job Corps staff members. We will be visiting four Job Corps Centers across the country to gather information.
5. [Guarantee confidentiality] All the information we gather will be grouped together. No individual names will be used or mentioned so that the final study will not indicate what you or any other particular individual told us.
6. [Explain type of information being sought] There are no right or wrong answers to anything we discuss. We would just like you to talk about your experiences and what you see happening with other Hispanic Job Corps students. We would also like to hear your opinions and your ideas for improving the help Job Corps can provide to Hispanics.
7. [Topics to be discussed] We want to talk to you about four general topics: your ties to your community, your use of English and Spanish, help you might receive when you start to look for a job, and ideas for serving you and other Hispanics better.

8. Ask if the participants have any questions.
  
9. [Gathering basic information] Please let me begin by asking you some basic questions:
  - a. Where are you from/where did you live before you entered Job Corps [geographic location]?
  - b. Are you first, second or other generation arriving in the United States? [Were you born in the United States? Were you parents born in the U.S.?)
  - c. How long have you been at this Job Corps Center? Are you residential or non-residential?
  - d. Before entering Job Corps, did you live with your family? Were you/are you married? Do you have children?
  - e. How did you find out about Job Corps? Why did you enter Job Corps? What did you expect to get out of Job Corps?
  - f. What type of assistance are you receiving/have you received from Job Corps? (education, English language training/ESL, vocational training, other)
  - g. Did you have a job before you entered Job Corps? If so, where, what type of position and did it pay more than minimum wage?
  - h. Have you enrolled in other assistance programs that helped you with your education or learning in school, offered employment training, assisted you in finding a job, helped you learn English, or offered any other type of assistance?
  
10. [Language] Do you think most of the Hispanics you know in Job Corps feel comfortable about their ability to communicate in English?

Probes

- a. Comfort level speaking English in specific situations; e.g., in conversation, at school, at work, in formal situations such as applying for driver's license?
- b. Level of English proficiency when you started Job Corps?
- c. Have you received any assistance in learning English while in Job Corps. Describe (type of help, effective features, ineffective features)?
- d. How long did you stay in language training/ESL? What makes it difficult to stay in language training/ESL?
- e. How could language/ESL instruction be made easier for you and other Hispanics.
- f. Do you feel Hispanics generally need to know English to get a better job?

11. [Family and community] How does your family and your community assist you in what you are trying to do, and how do you assist your family and your community? [Use information on whether or not participants are in a Center located in their general community or their family/community members are in another state.]

Probes

- a. How hard is it to be away from your family while you are in Job Corps?  
How much contact do you have with them while you are at the Center?  
For non-residential, if you had to live at the Job Corps Center, would you have enrolled in the program? Why not enroll?
- b. How much support do you get from you family while you are in the Center? Do they encourage you? Do they discourage you from completing your Job Corps program in any way?
- c. Do you ever feel like you should drop out of the program to be with your family; for instance to get a job that can bring your family immediate income.
- d. When you are ready to find a job, will you look for work outside your home community?

12. [Employment placement] What do you think it will be like when you finish your Job Corps program and start to look for work?

Probes

- a. How and why did you choose the vocational training you are receiving at Job Corps?
- b. When you leave Job Corps, who do you think will help you get a job: Job Corps staff, other programs or services in your community (describe), family, friends, other people you know?
- c. If you could not find a job right away in the field in which you got your Job Corps training, would you take any job just to help support your family?
- d. What do you think you'll do with the money you get when you graduate from Job Corps?

13. [Exemplary Hispanic assistance program factors] [For those who said they've taken education and/or training at another program, probe more about the program to determine if it was geared specifically to Hispanics.] How was this program different from Job Corps? How was it better? How was it not as good?

I would like to ask you to describe the ideal education assistance and vocational training program. This would be something similar to Job Corps in that employment placement services would also be available.

Probes

- a. How would they teach English language training/ESL? Is that different from how it is taught in Job Corps?
  - b. Would it be important for this program to tie into your community? If so, in what way? Is that different from what Job Corps does now? Do you think it would help Hispanic students learn better if what you were taught somehow related more to Hispanic culture?
  - c. Do you feel like everything you learn in Job Corps is related to what you need to know to get ahead (find a good job, earn a good living, become a productive member of your community)? What part of what you are being taught does not fit this description?
  - d. What is the best way to teach Hispanic students: lecture, group discussion, role playing, other ways? What techniques does Job Corps use to teach you – lecture/passive methods or interactive methods?
  - e. Do you feel it is important for Hispanic students to be taught by bilingual/bicultural staff? Why or why not? Do you feel Job Corps does a good job around this issue?
  - f. Do you think it would be good if Hispanic students had some type of mentor to help them through the Job Corps program? If so, what would this individual do? Is there anyone associated with your Job Corps program that you think serves as a mentor for you?
14. [Improving Job Corps services to Hispanics] Anything else you can think of that Job Corps could do that would help you or other Hispanics find and keep good jobs and/or get the education they need?
15. [Hispanics not in Job Corps] Thinking about other Hispanics like you who do not get into Job Corps, what other opportunities are open to them for education and training?

Probes

- a. What helps them get a good job that pays well and offers opportunities for advancement.
- b. How do they learn English?
- c. If they need help with their education, how can they get that help?
- d. How much does their family or community help them?
- e. Do you think there is a better way for them to get the education and training they want than entering Job Corps?

16. Thank participants for their assistance. Distribute \$25 to each participant and have them sign form.

**SITE VISIT PROTOCOLS FOR INDIVIDUALS**  
**JOB CORPS TERMINEES (GRADUATES AND FORMER**  
**ENROLLEES**

1. [Language preference will be determined before discussion.]
  - a. [If session is to be in English] I would like to tape our conversation just to make sure I do not miss any information you give me. I will also be taking a lot of notes while you are talking.
  - b. [If session is to be in Spanish] I would like to tape our conversation so it might be transcribed. In this way, we can be sure we will not miss any information you give us.
2. Introduce self and HMA the firm. Say you are working on a study for the federal Department of Labor, Office of Performance and Technology, and thank interviewee for agreeing to take part in the Hispanic Job Corps Study. At the conclusion of our discussion, I will be happy to give you \$50 for your help.
3. [Explain study purpose] The study is to better understand the characteristics, background, and assistance needs of Hispanic Job Corps participants and gather ideas on how services might better assist this population.
4. [Explain study methodology] We are trying to do this by talking to people like you who have graduated from or left the program and those who are currently in a Job Corps Center. We will also be talking to some Job Corps staff members. We will be visiting four Job Corps Centers across the country to gather information.
5. [Guarantee confidentiality] All the information we gather will be grouped together. No individual names will be used or mentioned so that the final study will not indicate what you or any other particular individual told us.
6. [Explain type of information being sought] There are no right or wrong answers to anything we discuss. We would just like you to talk about your experiences and what you see happening with other Hispanics who have left or graduated from Job Corps. We would also like to hear your opinions and your ideas for improving the help Job Corps can provide to Hispanics.
7. [Topics to be discussed] We want to talk to you about four general topics: your ties to your community, your use of English and Spanish, help you received when you started looking for a job, and ideas for serving you and other Hispanics better.
8. Ask if the interviewee has any questions.

9. [Gathering basic information] Please let me begin by asking you some basic questions:
- a. Just to verify, you [left/graduated from] the [name of local Job Corps Center]? When did you leave the program?
  - b. Are you first, second or other generation arriving in the United States? [Were you born in the United States? Were you parents born in the U.S.?)
  - c. How long did you stay at this Job Corps Center? Were you residential or non-residential?
  - d. Has your living situation changed from the time you entered Job Corps to today? Were you/are you living with your parents? Were you/are you married. Did you/do you have children?
  - e. How did you find out about Job Corps? Why did you enter Job Corps? What did you expect to get out of Job Corps?
  - f. What type of assistance did you receive from Job Corps? (education, English language training/ESL, vocational training, other)
  - g. Did you have a job before you entered Job Corps? If so, where, what type of position and did it pay more than minimum wage?
  - h. Have you enrolled in other assistance programs that helped you with your education or learning in school, offered employment training, assisted you in finding a job, helped you learn English, or offered any other type of assistance? Were these before or after you entered Job Corps?
10. [Language] How comfortable do you feel communicating in English? [If interviewee is a primary English speaker, probe for his/her opinion about other Hispanics.]

#### Probes

- a. What language do you speak most of the time? Is it different at work and at home?
- b. How comfortable do you feel speaking English; e.g., in conversation, at school, at work, in formal situations such as applying for driver's license?
- c. How well did you know English when you started Job Corps?
- d. Did you receive any assistance in learning English while in Job Corps? Describe (type of help, effective features, ineffective features)?
- e. How long did you stay in language training/ESL? What makes it difficult to stay in language training/ESL in this Job Corps program or any other program?
- f. How could language/ESL instruction be made easier for you and other Hispanics.
- g. Do you feel Hispanics generally need to know English to get a better job?



11. [Family and community] How does your family and your community assist you in what you are trying to do, and how do you assist your family and your community? [Use information on whether family situation or geographic location have changed since entering/leaving Job Corps and whether interviewee was residential or non-residential.]

Probes

- a. How hard was it to be away from your family while you were in Job Corps? How much contact did you have with them while you were at the Center? For non-residential, if you had to live at the Job Corps Center, would you have enrolled in the program? Why not enroll?
- b. How much support did you get from your family while you were in the Center? Did they encourage you or discourage you?
- c. Did you ever feel like you should have dropped out of the program to be with your family; for instance to get a job that could bring your family immediate income. [For those who left the program before completion, probe for why they left – was it a family-related reason?]
- d. Would you ever consider taking a job outside your home community?

12. [Employment placement] Tell me about what it was like when you finished/left your Job Corps program and started looking for work?

Probes

- a. Who helped you look for a job: Job Corps recruiter, family members, friends, One-Stop, employment agency, other? What kind of help did these sources give you?
- b. Was looking for a job more difficult than you thought it would be? If so, why?
- c. Do you have a job now? If so, what kind of job? [probe gently for details including whether or not they are earning more than minimum wage.] How did you find this job?
- d. [If no job now] Why do you think it has been hard to find a job?
- e. [If employed] Did the training you received in Job Corps help you get this job? How? Is the job in the vocational field in which you were trained while in Job Corps?
- f. [If not employed in field of Job Corps training] Did you look for a job in the vocational field in which you were trained while in Job Corps? [If no] Why not? [If yes] Why do you think it has been hard to find a job in that field?
- g. If you got a job offer in the vocational field in which you have been trained, but the job was out-of-state, would you take it and move away from your family?

13. [Exemplary Hispanic assistance program factors] [For those who said they have taken education and/or training at another program, probe more about the program to determine if it was geared specifically to Hispanics.] How was this program different from Job Corps? How was it better? How was it not as good?

Now that you can look back on your Job Corps experience (and think about other programs you have attended), I would like to ask you to describe the ideal education assistance and vocational training program.

#### Probes

- a. How would they teach English language training/ESL? Is that different from how you have been taught it at Job Corps and other programs?
  - b. Would it be important for this program to tie into your community? If so, in what way? Is that different from what Job Corps did? Do you think it would help Hispanic students learn better if what you were taught somehow related more to Hispanic culture?
  - c. Thinking back to what you learned while in Job Corps, what do you think were the best things? Do you feel there was anything you were taught that did not seem to make a difference (find a good job, earn a good living, become a productive member of your community)?
  - d. What do you think is the best way to teach Hispanic students: lecture, group discussion, role playing, other ways? Is that the way you were taught by Job Corps staff – lecture/passive methods or interactive methods?
  - e. Do you feel it is important for Hispanic students to be taught by bilingual/bicultural staff? Why or why not? Did Job Corps do a good job around this issue?
  - f. Do you think it would be good if Hispanic students had some type of mentor to help them through the Job Corps program? If so, what would this individual do? Is there anyone associated with your Job Corps program that you think served as a mentor for you?
  - g. Is there anything else you can think of that the ideal education and/or training program might do to help Hispanics like you find good jobs that pay well?
14. [Improving Job Corps services to Hispanics] Anything else you can think of that Job Corps could do that would help you or other Hispanics find and keep good jobs and/or get the education they need?
15. [Hispanics not in Job Corps] Thinking about other Hispanics like you who do not get into Job Corps, what other opportunities are open to them for education and training?

#### Probes

- a. What helps them get a good job that pays well and offers opportunities for advancement.
- b. How do they learn English?
- c. If they need help with their education, how can they get that help?
- d. How much does their family or community help them?
- e. Do you think there is a better way for them to get the education and training they want than entering Job Corps?

16. Thank the interviewee for his/her assistance. Distribute \$50 and have him/her sign form.

## **SITE VISIT PROTOCOLS FOR INDIVIDUALS** **JOB CORPS STAFF**

1. [Staff member will have been introduced to HMA researcher by Center Director or other Center manager and so will have a good idea why they are being interviewed.] Introduce self and HMA the firm. Say you are working on a study for the federal Department of Labor, Office of Performance and Technology, and thank staff member for agreeing to take part in the Hispanic Job Corps Study.
2. [Explain study purpose] The study is to better understand the characteristics, background, and assistance needs of Hispanic Job Corps participants and gather ideas on how services might better assist this population.
3. [Explain study methodology] We are trying to do this by talking to three groups of people associated with Job Corps Centers: staff, Hispanic students and Hispanics who have graduated from or left Job Corps. We will be visiting four Job Corps Centers across the country to gather information.
4. [Guarantee confidentiality] All the information we gather will be grouped together. No individual names will be used or mentioned so that the final study will not indicate what you or any other particular individual told us.
5. [Study background] Our research is an out-growth of a long-term study begun in 1995 that followed a group of Job Corps participants and a control group for four years. The results clearly showed Job Corps made a difference for those who went through the program.

However, the study found that Hispanics who participated in Job Corps did not seem to do as well as others. They did fine in Job Corps activities and found jobs when they left the program. But when researchers looked at earnings after four years, they found the Hispanic control group members actually did a little better than Hispanics who went through Job Corps.

I need to emphasize that this study is ten years old and a lot has changed with both Job Corps and the Hispanic population. Also, it reports an “average” which is the middle of what might be two extremes. This finding may not reflect anything that is going on in YOUR Center today.

6. [Explain type of information being sought] What I want to talk to you about today is why you think this might be true. Because you work with students and graduates every day, you might have some idea why Hispanics might not gain as much from their Job Corps experiences. We have some topics I would like to discuss with you, but I am also looking for other information you think might make a difference. We would also like to hear your opinions and your ideas for improving the help Job Corps can provide to Hispanics.
7. Ask if the staff member has any questions.

8. I will be taking a lot of notes while you are talking so please excuse me while I do this.
9. [Gathering basic information] Please let me begin by asking you some basic questions:
  - a. You are a [name staff position]? Please briefly describe to me what your job entails.
  - b. How long have you been working at this Center? Did you work in Job Corps before that? If yes, ask for details.
  - c. Do you speak Spanish? Level of Spanish language proficiency.
  - d. Do you work with many Hispanic students? Has the number of Hispanic students changed in the last [number depends on how long the staff member has been working at the Center] years?
  - e. Do you think Hispanic students have changed in any way during that time? [demographic characteristics, language needs/use, educational level, family characteristics, residential/non-residential, other]
  - f. Thinking of all Job Corps students and graduates, is it harder to work with Hispanics for any reason? Explain.
  - g. **[counselors]** Do Hispanics seem to choose a particular type of vocational training over others? If so, why?
  - h. **[job placement]** Do you find Hispanic Job Corps graduates are more or less likely to want to use the assistance you can offer? Why?
10. When I described our study, I said that the original research, conducted in 1995, found the Hispanic control group did slightly better than the Hispanic program group who entered Job Corps. "Better" means after four years, those in the control group earned more than those in the program group. Off the top of your head, why do you think this might be true?

#### Probes

- a. Whatever staff member suggests, ask why he/she thinks this might be the case; i.e., their experiences with Hispanics both inside and outside Job Corps.

11. [Language] Do you think the ability of Hispanic Job Corps participants to feel comfortable communicating in English might make a difference in their success? [This topic may have been mentioned above as a characteristic that has changed with recent Hispanic Job Corps participants. If so, build on that conversation.] [If appropriate, change the term “their success” to relate more to the staff member’s role. O/A staff: “desire to enter Job Corps and their ability to succeed there”; job placement: “their ability to find and keep a job in the field in which they received vocational training.”]

Probes

- a. In what way might it make a difference?
- b. What percent of Hispanic students would you say are comfortable communicating in English? Has this changed in the last [number of years depends on background of staff member].
- c. **[O/A]** Are Hispanics who have little English language ability more or less likely to enroll in Job Corps? Explain.
- d. **[O/A]** Do you think Job Corps is able to assist those with little English language ability? What might the program do to better help such individuals?
- e. **[counselors]** Do you think staff have any difficulty identifying those who need ESL or other language assistance?
- f. **[counselors]** Is there any problem getting those in need of language help to enroll in ESL or other English language training? Is there any problem encouraging them to stay in language training/ESL? Do many drop out before they achieve English language proficiency? Do you have any suggestions on what might make a difference with Hispanic participants taking and completing the language training/ESL they need?
- g. **[job placement]** Is it harder to place Job Corps graduates who have little English language ability or who are uncomfortable communicating in English? What percent of Hispanic Job Corps graduates fall into this category?
- h. **[job placement]** Do you think language issues might cause a Job Corps graduate to seek a job outside the field in which they have received vocational training? Details.

12. [Family and community] How do Hispanic students and graduates relate to their family and community?

Probes

- a. Do Hispanic students and graduates relate to [think about, are concerned about] their families and communities in a manner different from other Job Corps participants? If so, how?
  - b. **[O/A]** Are Hispanics more likely to consult with their family about entering Job Corps than is true of other potential participants? Describe.
  - c. **[counselors]** Do Hispanic students seem to miss their family and community more than other students?
  - d. **[counselors]** Do you think Hispanic students receive more input from their families while in Job Corps than other students? Is this input good or bad; e.g., does their family encourage them to stay in and complete the program or put pressure on them to leave?
  - e. **[job placement]** Are Hispanic graduates likely to turn to their families or other community members when they look for a job? Explain.
  - f. **[job placement]** Do you find Hispanic graduates are willing to move outside their home community to get a better job or find one in the field of their vocational training? Explain.
13. [Exemplary Hispanic assistance program factors] Are there other education or training assistance programs in the area that assist Hispanics who might also be eligible for Job Corps? [Probe for programs targeted specifically to Hispanics.]

[If the staff member does not know of programs targeted specifically for Hispanics] I would like to ask you to describe the ideal education assistance and vocational training program for Hispanics.

Probes

- a. How do they differ from Job Corps?
- b. How would they teach English language training/ESL? Is that different from how language training/ESL is taught in Job Corps?
- c. Do these programs have ties to the Hispanic community? If so, in what way? Is that different from what Job Corps does? Do you think it makes a difference to Hispanic students if what they are taught is somehow related more to Hispanic culture?
- d. **[counselors]** What methods are used to teach students: lecture, group discussion, role playing, other ways? Which of these seem to work best with Hispanic students? Do you think it would make a difference if Hispanics were always taught using [the method the staff member described as working best]?
- e. Do you feel it is important for Hispanic students to be taught by bilingual/bicultural staff? Why or why not? Do you feel Job Corps does a good job around this issue?
- f. Do you think it would be good if Hispanic students had some type of mentor to help them through the Job Corps program? If so, what would this individual do? Is there anyone serving as a mentor to Hispanic Job Corps students now? Do you think Hispanic students need a mentor more than other Job Corps students? If so, why?

14. [Improving Job Corps services to Hispanics] Anything else you can think of that Job Corps could do to better assist Hispanics find and keep good jobs and/or get the education they need?
15. [Hispanics not in Job Corps] [Ask if these topics have not been adequately covered through other responses.] Thinking about Hispanics who do not get into Job Corps, what other opportunities are open to them?

Probes

- a. What helps them get a good job that pays well and offers opportunities for advancement.
  - b. How do they learn English?
  - c. If they need help with their education, how can they get that help?
  - d. How much does their family or community assist them?
16. Thank staff for their assistance.