



NFFE-IAM Opposes Privatization of the USDA Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers

Position: The Job Corps program, administered by the Department of Labor (DOL), provides at-risk youth with career and technical education they need for in-demand careers. The program saves lives and saves taxpayer dollars. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) operates 26 Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Job Corps centers as part of this program. The funding for CCC centers flows through DOL to USDA. The President's FY 2019 budget proposes to end USDA's role in Job Corps, and requests authority to privatize the 26 CCCs. The rationale provided in the DOL budget is inaccurate, is inconsistent with the law, and evades DOL mismanagement that is hindering program performance. NFFE *strongly opposes* any closure or privatization of the CCCs.

In March 2018, NFFE published a Special Report covering the mismanagement of Job Corps under DOL and provides corrections to inaccuracies in the FY 2019 DOL budget request regarding the state of Job Corps centers under USDA versus DOL. The following highlights some of those findings. A complete copy of the Special Report is available at NFFE.org.

Performance:

- USDA centers are not overrepresented in the lowest performing quartile, as claimed by DOL, but include the highest performing centers at a lower cost per student than DOL.
- The performance of CCC centers has been trending upward over the last four years.

Cost:

- From 2010 to 2017, the cost per student enrolled in a CCC center was \$6,181 to \$13,705 **less than the cost per student** at DOL privately run Job Corps centers.
- In total dollars, that is an average of \$31,323 per USDA student versus \$41,175 per student DOL student. USDA successfully operates at 76% the cost of DOL centers.
- The above equated to a savings of over \$410 million from 2010 to 2017.

Mission Alignment:

- The core role of USDA in workforce development goes back decades, is codified in law, and remains unique and vital to the success of rural communities and public projects.
- In 2017, USDA students worked 430,000 hours of support to wildfire firefighting and natural disasters; 88,328 hours of land management; and 95,218 hours on community projects. **Annually, over a half-million hours of service at no additional cost to the taxpayer.**

DOL Mismanagement:

- There is a revolving door between upper DOL management and lucrative positions with contractors running centers overseen by DOL.

Therefore, NFFE respectfully requests the following:

1. Reject any proposal to eliminate or privatize the CCC Job Corps program at USDA.
2. Reject DOL's mischaracterization and inaccurate report of performance at CCCs.
3. Investigate DOL mismanagement of Job Corps, effecting both USDA and DOL centers.