

What Works Clearinghouse



Job Corps

Program description *Job Corps*, a federally funded education and job training program for economically disadvantaged youth, offers remedial education, GED (General Educational Development) preparation, vocational training, job placement assistance, and other supports. *Job Corps* participants typically reside in a *Job Corps* center while enrolled in the program and can remain in the program for up to two years.¹

Research One study of *Job Corps* met What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards. This randomized controlled trial was based on a nationally representative sample of all eligible applicants who applied for *Job Corps* in late 1994 and 1995. The study sample included 11,313 students from more than 100 *Job Corps* centers nationwide. Based on this one study, the WWC considers the extent of evidence for *Job Corps* to be small for the progressing in school and completing school domains. This study did not examine the effectiveness of *Job Corps* in the staying in school domain.²

Effectiveness *Job Corps* was found to have no discernible effects on progressing in school and potentially positive effects on completing school.

	<i>Staying in school</i>	<i>Progressing in school</i>	<i>Completing school</i>
Rating of effectiveness	na	No discernible effects	Potentially positive
Improvement index³	na	Average: -3 percentile points	Average: +13 percentile points

na = not applicable

1. The WWC dropout prevention review includes interventions designed to encourage students who drop out to return to school and earn a high school diploma or GED certificate, as well as interventions designed to prevent initially enrolled students from dropping out. For more details, see the [WWC dropout prevention review protocol](#).
2. The evidence in this report is based on available research. Findings and conclusions may change as new research becomes available.
3. These numbers show the average improvement index for all findings across the study.

Research The WWC reviewed two studies on the effectiveness of *Job Corps*. One study (Schochet, Burghardt, & Glazerman, 2001) was a randomized controlled trial that met WWC evidence standards. The other study did not meet WWC evidence standards.

The Schochet, Burghardt, and Glazerman (2001) study used a nationally representative sample of *Job Corps* applicants. The sample was selected from those who applied to *Job Corps* for the first time between November 16, 1994, and December 17, 1995. During this period, 80,883 applicants were eligible for the program. From this group, 9,409 applicants were randomly assigned to the intervention group that was offered *Job Corps* services, and 5,977 applicants were randomly assigned to the control group that was not. The results here are based on data for the 6,828 *Job Corps* youth and 4,485 control group youth who responded to the 48-month follow-up survey. The study

authors restricted the analysis of *Job Corps*' effect on completing school to the 77% of survey respondents who entered the study without a high school diploma or GED certificate.

Extent of evidence

The WWC categorizes the extent of evidence in each domain as small or moderate to large (see the [What Works Clearinghouse Extent of Evidence Categorization Scheme](#)). The extent of evidence takes into account the number of studies and the total sample size across studies that met WWC evidence standards with or without reservations.⁵

The WWC considers the extent of evidence for *Job Corps* to be small for progressing in school and completing school. The one *Job Corps* study that met WWC evidence standards did not address *Job Corps*' effectiveness in the staying in school domain.

Effectiveness Findings

The WWC review of interventions for dropout prevention addresses student outcomes in three domains: staying in school, progressing in school, and completing school. The Schochet et al. (2001) study examined outcomes in the progressing in school and completing school domains.

Progressing in school. At the end of the 48-month follow-up period, Schochet et al. (2001) found no statistically significant difference between *Job Corps* and control group youth in their self-reported years of regular schooling completed. In addition, the effect size for this outcome was not large enough (at least 0.25) to be considered substantively important, according to the WWC criteria.

Completing school. Schochet et al. (2001) found that, among those who entered the program without a high school diploma or

GED certificate, 43% of *Job Corps* students earned one by the end of the 48-month follow-up period, compared with 26% of control group students. This difference was both statistically significant and substantively important by WWC standards. *Job Corps*' effect on completion came entirely from its positive and statistically significant effect on the likelihood of receiving a GED certificate. *Job Corps* was found to have a small, but statistically significant, negative effect on the likelihood of earning a high school diploma.⁶

Rating of effectiveness

The WWC rates the effects of an intervention in a given outcome domain as positive, potentially positive, mixed, no discernible effects, potentially negative, or negative. The rating of effectiveness takes into account four factors: the quality of the research

5. The Extent of Evidence Categorization was developed to tell readers how much evidence was used to determine the intervention rating, focusing on the number and size of studies. Additional factors associated with a related concept, external validity—such as students' demographics and types of settings in which studies took place—are not taken into account for the categorization. Information about how the extent of evidence rating was determined for *Job Corps* is in Appendix A6.
6. As in other WWC dropout prevention reviews, the combined effect of *Job Corps* on receiving a high school diploma or a GED certificate was used to determine the effectiveness rating. These results are in Appendix A3. The separate effects of *Job Corps* on receiving a high school diploma or a GED certificate are in Appendix A4.2. At the end of the follow-up period, the percentage of youth who earned a high school diploma was small for both *Job Corps* and control group youth, 5.3% and 7.5% respectively.

Appendix A2.1 Outcome measures for the progressing in school domain

Outcome measure	Description
Highest grade completed	This measure represents the number of years of regular schooling completed at the time of the 48-month follow-up survey. These data were self-reported. Respondents who reported fewer than 12 years of regular school and indicated that they had earned a GED certificate were not recoded as having completed 12 years of school.

Appendix A2.2 Outcome measures for the completing school domain

Outcome measure	Description
Earned a high school diploma or GED certificate	This measure represents the percentage of students who received a high school diploma or GED certificate. These data were self-reported and collected from 48-month follow-up surveys. This measure is available only for those who entered the program without a high school credential.

Appendix A5.1 Job Corps rating for the progressing in school domain (continued)

Potentially negative effects: Evidence of a negative effect with no overriding contrary evidence.

- Criterion 1: At least one study showing a statistically significant or substantively important *negative* effect.

Not met. No study found statistically significant or substantively important negative effects in this domain.

AND

- Criterion 2: No studies showing a statistically significant or substantively important *positive* effect, or more studies showing statistically significant or substantively important *negative* effects than showing statistically significant or substantively important *positive* effects.

Met. No study found statistically significant or substantively important positive effects in this domain.

Negative effects: Strong evidence of a negative effect with no overriding contrary evidence.

- Criterion 1: Two or more studies showing statistically significant *negative* effects, at least one of which met WWC evidence standards for a strong design.

Not met. No study found statistically significant negative effects in this domain.

AND

- Criterion 2: No studies showing statistically significant or substantively important *positive* effects.

Met. No study found statistically significant or substantively important positive effects in this domain.

1. For rating purposes, the WWC considers the statistical significance of individual outcomes and the domain-level effect. The WWC also considers the size of the domain-level effect for ratings of potentially positive or potentially negative effects. For a complete description, see the [WWC Intervention Rating Scheme](#).

Appendix A6 Extent of evidence by domain

Outcome domain	Number of studies	Sample size		Extent of evidence ¹
		Schools	Students	
Staying in school	0	na	na	na
Progressing in school	1	105	11,313	Small
Completing school	1	105	8,597	Small

na = not applicable/not studied

1. A rating of “moderate to large” requires at least two studies and two schools across studies in one domain and a total sample size across studies of at least 350 students or 14 classrooms. Otherwise, the rating is “small.”