



BRIEFLY...

JOB CORPS SHOULD DO MORE TO PREVENT CHEATING IN HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS

September 25, 2019

WHY OIG CONDUCTED THE AUDIT

We conducted this audit because of several allegations we received of cheating in Job Corps' high school programs.

A high school diploma greatly improves the chances of getting a job. Unemployment rates for people without high school diplomas are significantly higher than for those who have a diploma. A diploma, however, is more than just a piece of paper: it means students have acquired basic math and reading skills that enable them to better compete for jobs. Students who obtain their diplomas by cheating not only falsify their qualifications but also cheat themselves by not acquiring important skills that will help improve their economic future.

WHAT OIG DID

We conducted a performance audit to determine the following:

Was Job Corps' oversight adequate to prevent, detect, and mitigate cheating in its high school education programs?

Our work included interviewing ETA and Job Corps officials and reviewing Job Corps' policies and procedures, internal reviews, and other records related to cheating.

READ THE FULL REPORT

<http://www.oig.dol.gov/public/reports/oa/2019/26-19-001-03-370.pdf>

WHAT OIG FOUND

Job Corps' oversight was not adequate to prevent, detect, and mitigate cheating in high school education programs because Job Corps, for the most part, lacked necessary controls, as follows:

First, Job Corps implemented a set of basic preventative controls only for online, and not live, programs which represented about 40 percent of the total number of programs.

Second, Job Corps relied on infrequent, periodic internal reviews to detect cheating, and did not make use of relevant data it already had available, data which might have yielded red flags for the agency to investigate.

Third, even when Job Corps found cheating, it took, on average, two years to mitigate it. By that time, the students in question had more than likely left the program.

For these reasons, we determined Job Corps placed insufficient emphasis on developing and monitoring comprehensive controls against cheating in high school programs, because it did not believe cheating was a widespread problem. As a result, it did not have assurance that it was able to prevent, detect, and mitigate cheating.

In addition, Job Corps did not require centers to collect sufficient data on cheating and possible cheating. As a result, Job Corps took between 3 and 14 months to provide us with the bulk of information we requested on its efforts to address cheating. Most of this information should have been readily available, including, for example, the date a student enrolled in the program and the date they earned their diploma.

WHAT OIG RECOMMENDED

We issued 5 recommendations to Job Corps to establish basic preventative, detective, and mitigating controls against cheating for all high school programs.

ETA generally agreed with our results and said it plans to implement the recommendations.