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Report to the Chairwoman, Committee on Education and the Workforce, House of Representatives

June 2018

JOB CORPS

DOL Could Enhance Safety and Security at Centers with Consistent Monitoring and Comprehensive Planning

Accessible Version

GAO-18-482

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GAO Highlights

Highlights of GAO-18-482, a report to the Chairwoman, Committee on Education and the Workforce, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

Deficiencies identified in multiple DOL Inspector General audits since 2009 and two student deaths in 2015 have raised concerns regarding the safety and security of Job Corps students. GAO was asked to review safety and security of students in the Job Corps program. GAO's June 2017 testimony summarized preliminary observations. This report further examines (1) the number and types of reported safety and security incidents involving Job Corps students; (2) student perceptions of their safety at Job Corps centers; and (3) the extent to which ETA has taken steps to address safety and security at Job Corps centers.

GAO analyzed ETA's reported incident data for Job Corps centers from July 1, 2016, through June 30, 2017. GAO also analyzed ETA's student survey data from the same period, reviewed relevant documentation, and interviewed ETA officials at its national office and all six regions. GAO also visited two Job Corps centers that had different operators and at least 100 recent incidents. These two centers are not generalizable to all centers.

What GAO Recommends

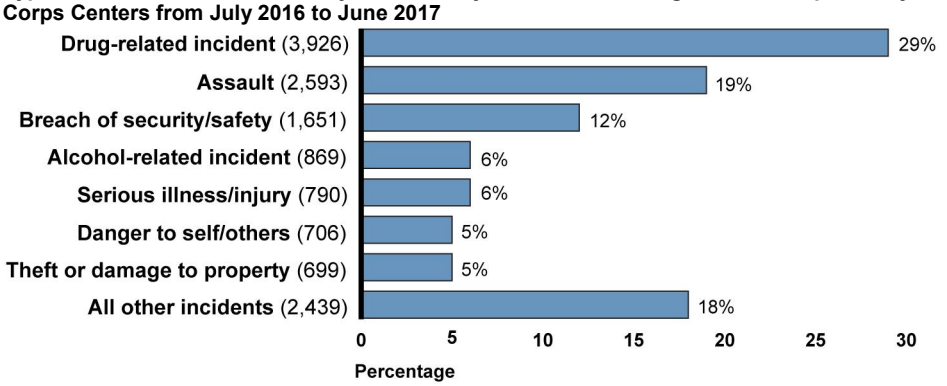
GAO is making three recommendations to DOL, including that ETA develop additional monitoring guidance and a comprehensive plan for safety and security. DOL agreed with GAO's three recommendations.

View GAO-18-482. For more information, contact Cindy Brown Barnes at (202) 512-7215 or brownbarnesc@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

Job Corps centers reported 13,673 safety and security incidents involving students from July 2016 to June 2017, according to GAO's analysis of the Department of Labor's (DOL) Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) data. Most reported incidents occurred onsite and involved recently enrolled male students under age 20. During that time, the program served about 79,000 students at 125 Job Corps centers, according to ETA officials. ETA's Office of Job Corps administers the program, which is the nation's largest residential, educational, and career and technical training program for low-income youth generally between the ages of 16 and 24. Drug-related incidents and assaults accounted for 48 percent of all reported incidents (see fig.).

Types of Onsite and Offsite Safety and Security Incidents Involving Students Reported by Job Corps Centers from July 2016 to June 2017



Source: GAO analysis of Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data. | GAO-18-482

Students generally felt safe at Job Corps centers, yet fewer felt safe in some situations, based on GAO's analysis of ETA's September 2016 and March 2017 Job Corps student satisfaction surveys. At least 70 percent of students reported that they felt safe on half of the 12 safety-related questions in the 49 question survey about their experiences in the Job Corps program; but fewer students reported feeling safe when asked if they were made to feel unimportant or if they heard students threaten each other. ETA plans to administer a new survey nationally by January 2019 that focuses solely on safety and security issues.

ETA has initiated several actions to improve safety and security at Job Corps centers, but insufficient guidance for its monitoring staff and absence of a comprehensive plan for safety and security may put the success of these actions at risk. Among its actions, ETA adopted a new risk-based monitoring strategy to identify emerging problems at the centers. Officials GAO spoke with in five of ETA's regional offices said that the new strategy has improved monitoring, but that more guidance on how to interpret and apply safety and security policies is needed to promote consistency across centers. Also, ETA lacks a comprehensive plan linking its new efforts to an overall safety and security framework. ETA officials told GAO that limited staff capacity and lack of expertise have hindered their efforts in developing such a plan. Without a comprehensive plan, ETA runs the risk that its new efforts will not be successful.

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Abbreviations

DOL	Department of Labor
DOL OIG	DOL Office of Inspector General
ETA	Employment and Training Administration
SIRS	Significant Incident Reporting System

SOP	standard operating procedures
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture

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U.S. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE
441 G St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20548

June 15, 2018

The Honorable Virginia Foxx
Chairwoman
Committee on Education and the Workforce
House of Representatives

Dear Madam Chairwoman:

Job Corps is the nation's largest residential, educational, and career and technical training program for low-income youth generally between the ages of 16 and 24.[1] The Job Corps program is administered by the Office of Job Corps in the Department of Labor's (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA).The program enrolls approximately 50,000 new students each year at 123 Job Corps centers nationwide and for fiscal year 2017 was appropriated about $1.7 billion.

For almost a decade, concerns have been raised regarding the safety and security of Job Corps students. For example, DOL Office of Inspector General (OIG) audits in 2009, 2010, 2015, and 2017 found that the Office of Job Corps did not properly address serious incidents related to student safety and security because of deficiencies in its oversight of program disciplinary policies.[2] As a result, the DOL OIG included providing a safe learning environment at Job Corps centers among the department's top management challenges in November 2017.[3] Additional concerns were

[1]In general, individuals must be 16 to 21 at the time of enrollment to be eligible for the Job Corps program. While the law makes an exception to allow individuals who are 22 to 24 at the time of enrollment to participate in the program, it limits their participation to 20 percent of Job Corps participants. The age limits may be waived by DOL, in accordance with DOL regulations, for individuals with a disability. For the legal provisions governing this program, see 29 U.S.C. § 3191 et seq.

[2]See, for example, Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, *Review of Job Corps Center Safety and Security,* 26-17-001-03-370 (Washington, D.C.: March 31, 2017). *Job Corps Needs to Improve Enforcement and Oversight of Student Disciplinary Policies to Better Protect Students and Staff at Centers*, 26-15-001-03-370 (Washington, D.C.: February 27, 2015); *Performance Audit For ResCare, Inc., Job Corps Centers*, 26-10-002-01-370 (Washington, D.C.: March 2010); *Performance Audit of Adams and Associates, Incorporated Job Corps Centers,* 26-09-003-01-370 (Washington, D.C.: September 2009).

[3]Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, *Top Management and Performance Challenges Facing the U.S. Department of Labor* (Washington, D.C.: November 2017).

raised regarding the safety and security of students following the deaths of two students at two separate Job Corps centers in 2015.

For a June 2017 hearing, you asked us to provide preliminary observations on the safety and security of students in the Job Corps program.[4] Our preliminary results found that Job Corps centers reported 49,836 safety and security incidents of various types that occurred both onsite and offsite between January 1, 2007, and June 30, 2016. During this time period, approximately 539,000 students were enrolled in the program, according to ETA officials. Beginning July 1, 2016, ETA implemented policy changes that impacted the categorization and number of reportable incidents. As such, incident data after July 1, 2016—the focus of this report—are not comparable with the earlier incident data presented in our June 2017 testimony. In addition, we reported in our testimony that from March 2007 through March 2017, students generally reported feeling safe at their Job Corps center, but reported feeling less safe in certain situations such as when they witnessed physical fights and heard threats between students.

This report examines (1) what is known about the number and types of reported incidents involving the safety and security of Job Corps students in program year 2016;[5] (2) what is known about student perceptions of safety and security at Job Corps centers, and what steps, if any, is ETA taking to improve the survey used to collect this information; and (3) the extent to which ETA has taken steps to address safety and security at Job Corps centers.

To address our first objective, we analyzed ETA's incident data for program year 2016, the most recent year for which Job Corps data were available. ETA captures these data in its Significant Incident Reporting System (SIRS). We assessed the reliability of SIRS data by reviewing relevant agency documentation about the data and the system that produced them and interviewing knowledgeable ETA and DOL OIG officials. We determined that the data were sufficiently reliable to report the minimum number of incidents that occurred in program year 2016. It is likely that the actual number of incidents was greater than the number

[4]GAO, *Job Corps: Preliminary Observations on Student Safety and Security Data,* GAO-17-596T (Washington, D.C.: June 22, 2017).

[5]Job Corps operates on a program year basis, which runs from July 1 of a given year to June 30 of the following year. Program year 2016 was from July 1, 2016, through June 30, 2017.

reported in SIRS because the information is reported by Job Corps centers, and the DOL OIG previously found instances of underreporting by a non-generalizable sample of center operators.[6] While ETA has recently taken steps to improve center reporting of significant incidents, according to DOL OIG officials, it is too early to determine if these steps have resolved the OIG's concerns regarding center underreporting. The incident categories and definitions in this report are taken directly from ETA documents and represent how ETA categorizes these incidents. We did not assess these categories and definitions.

To address our second objective, we analyzed ETA's national student satisfaction survey data for program year 2016, the most recent year for which data were available. The surveys were administered to students in September 2016 and March 2017, and each had a response rate of about 90 percent. The semi-annual survey on various aspects of the Job Corps program included 12 questions about students' perceptions of safety at their center. We assessed the reliability of the data by reviewing relevant agency documentation about the data and the system that produced them and interviewing knowledgeable ETA officials, among other steps. We determined that the student survey data were sufficiently reliable for our purposes.

To address our third objective, we reviewed documentation on ETA's recent actions to improve center safety and Job Corps policies for monitoring center operators. We also used criteria to assess whether ETA's documentation of its recent and planned actions constituted a comprehensive plan. These criteria included leading practices for comprehensive planning and Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government.[7] We selected these criteria because they included a process for developing a comprehensive plan and specify the content of such plans, which we determined to be most relevant, given our initial understanding that ETA was early in its planning process.[8]

[6]In its March 2017 report, DOL OIG found that 12 of 125 Job Corps centers did not report 34 percent of significant incidents in SIRS from January 1, 2014, through June 30, 2015.

[7]GAO, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government,* GAO-14-704G (Washington, D.C.: September 2014).

[8]In prior work, GAO identified leading practices for comprehensive planning. For the leading practices we used as criteria that could inform ETA's planning, see table 6.

To address all three objectives, we reviewed agency policies and procedures and interviewed ETA national and regional officials. We also conducted site visits to two Job Corps centers to interview center staff and students about various safety and security issues. The two selected centers were within geographical proximity to Washington, D.C., operated by different contractors, and had over 100 reported incidents of various types in program year 2016. While these two site visits are not generalizable to all Job Corps centers, they provide examples of student and staff experiences with safety and security. Additional details on our methodology can be found in appendix I.

We conducted this performance audit from April 2017 to June 2018 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Background

Job Corps Eligibility Criteria and Program Services

To be eligible for the Job Corps program, an individual must generally be 16 to 24 years old at the time of enrollment;[9] be low income;[10] and have an additional barrier to education and employment, such as being homeless, a high school dropout, or in foster care. See table 1 for characteristics of students served by Job Corps during program year 2016.

[9]In general, individuals must be 16 to 21 at the time of enrollment to be eligible for the Job Corps program. While the law makes an exception to allow individuals who are 22 to 24 at the time of enrollment to participate in the program, it limits their participation to 20 percent of Job Corps participants. The age limits may be waived by DOL, in accordance with DOL regulations, for individuals with a disability. For the legal provisions governing this program, see 29 U.S.C. § 3191 et seq.

[10]The criteria for being considered low income include receiving certain public assistance or having a total family income that does not exceed the higher of the poverty line or 70 percent of the lower living standard income level. The Department of Health and Human Services publishes annual poverty guidelines and DOL publishes annual lower living standard income levels.

Table 1: Characteristics of Students Served by Job Corps, Program Year 2016

Total number of students served on center	Under age 20 (percent)	Male (percent)	Entered without a high school diploma (percent)	Self-reported disability (percent)	Family received public assistance (percent)	In foster care or homeless prior to enrollment (percent)
79,030	61%	63%	60%	30%	26%	5%

Source: Employment and Training Administration data. | GAO-18-482

Note: Of the 79,030 students served on center in program year 2016, 48,302 students were newly enrolled in the Job Corps program, according to ETA officials.

Once enrolled in the program, youth are assigned to a specific Job Corps center, usually one located nearest their home and which offers a job training program of interest. The vast majority of students live at Job Corps centers in a residential setting, while the remaining students commute daily from their homes to their respective centers. This residential structure is unique among federal youth programs and enables Job Corps to provide a comprehensive array of services, including housing, meals, clothing, academic instruction, and job training. In program year 2016, about 16,000 students received a high school equivalency and about 28,000 students completed a career technical training program, according to ETA officials.

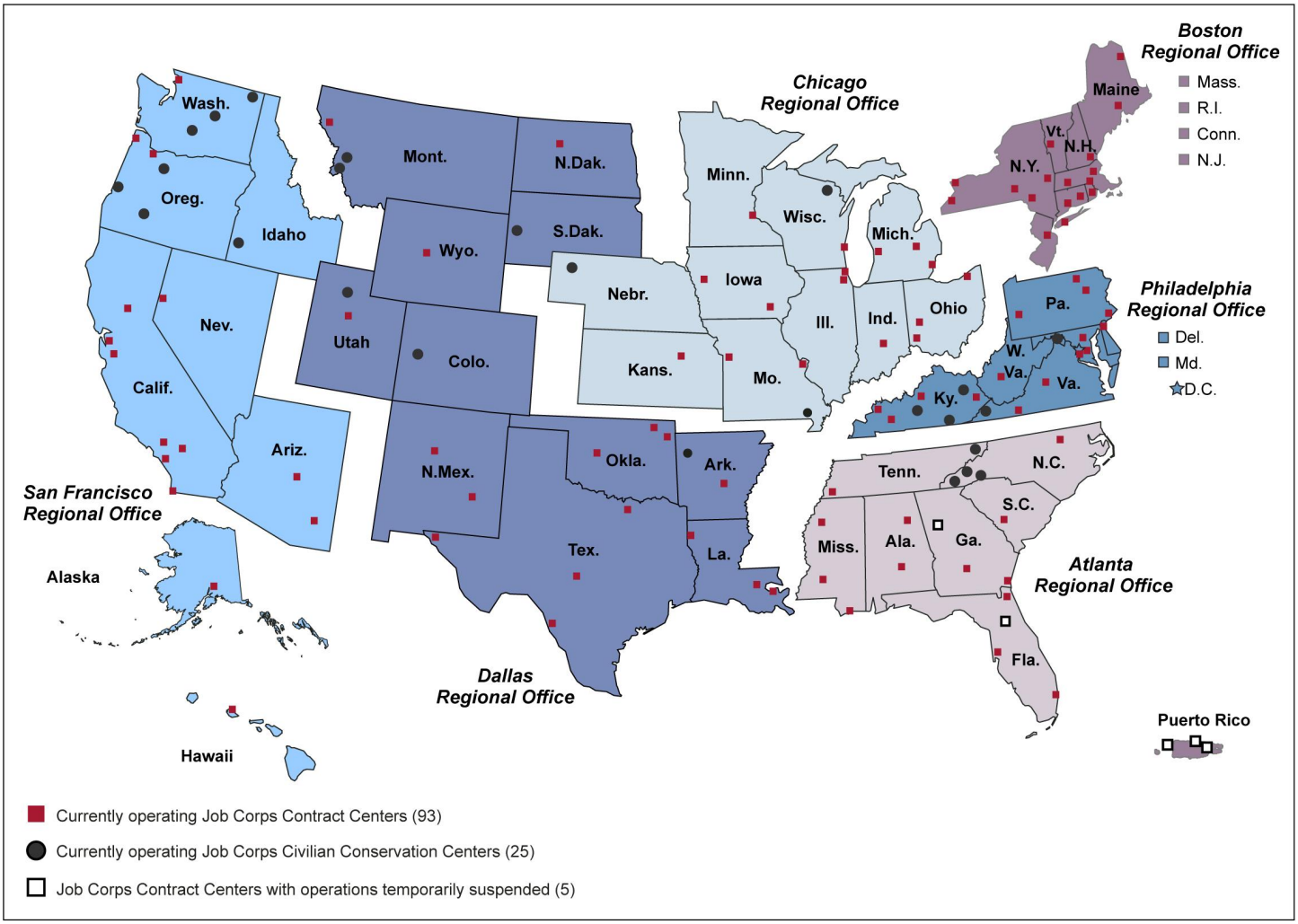
Job Corps Structure and Operations

ETA administers Job Corps' 123 centers through its national Office of Job Corps under the leadership of a national director and a field network of six regional offices located in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Philadelphia, and San Francisco (see fig. 1).[11] Job Corps is operated primarily through contracts, which according to ETA officials, is unique among ETA's employment and training programs (other such programs are generally operated through grants to states). Among the 123 centers, 98 are operated under contracts with large and small businesses, nonprofit organizations, and Native American tribes. The remaining 25 centers (called Civilian Conservation Centers) are operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Forest Service through an interagency agreement with DOL. Job Corps center contractors and the USDA Forest Service employ center staff who provide program services to students. The President's fiscal year 2019 budget seeks to end

[11]During program year 2016—the focus of this report—there were 125 Job Corps centers. In April 2018, ETA permanently closed two Job Corps centers, which reduced the total number of Job Corps centers to 123.

USDA's role in the program, thereby unifying responsibility under DOL. The Administration reported that it was proposing this action because workforce development is not a core mission of USDA, and the 25 centers it operates are overrepresented in the lowest performing cohort of centers. According to ETA officials, the Office of Job Corps has oversight and monitoring responsibility to ensure that center operators follow Job Corps' Policy and Requirements Handbook, including the safety and security provisions. Job Corps regional office staff are largely responsible for these duties.

Figure 1: Job Corps Center Locations and Regional Offices as of April 2018



Sources: Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data; Map Resources (map). Locations are approximate. | GAO-18-482

Note: As of April 2018, a total of five centers had operations that were temporarily suspended, according to ETA officials. Four contract centers—the three centers in Puerto Rico and one in Florida—had operations temporarily suspended due to hurricane damage during 2017. A contract center in Georgia had operations temporarily suspended due to construction of a new center, according to ETA officials. In April 2018, ETA decided to close two centers that previously had operations temporarily suspended, reducing the total number of Job Corps centers to 123.

Requirements for Job Corps Centers Related to Incident Reporting

Job Corps' Policy and Requirements Handbook requires centers to report certain significant incidents to the national Office of Job Corps and to regional offices using SIRS.[12] Centers are required to report numerous categories of incidents, including assaults, alcohol and drug-related incidents, and serious illnesses and injuries (see appendix II for definitions of these categories of incidents). Within the Policy and Requirements Handbook, ETA establishes student standards of conduct that specify actions centers must take in response to certain incidents.[13] In some cases, the incident categories in SIRS are related to the specific infractions defined in the Policy and Requirements Handbook, which are classified according to their level of severity. Level I infractions are the most serious, and includes infractions such as arrest for a felony or violent misdemeanor or possession of a weapon, and are required to be reported in SIRS. Level II includes infractions such as possession of a potentially dangerous item like a box cutter, or arrest for a non-violent misdemeanor. The majority of these infractions are required to be reported in SIRS. Minor infractions—the lowest level—include failure to follow center rules, and are not required to be reported in SIRS.

Centers must report incidents involving both Job Corps students and staff, and incidents that occur onsite at centers as well as those that occur at offsite locations. According to ETA officials, the agency and its center

[12]According to the Policy and Requirements Handbook, centers must report most incidents within 24 hours of becoming aware of them. With respect to certain types of incidents, including deaths of students and on-duty staff, centers must report them immediately to the regional office, and report them in SIRS within 6 hours of becoming aware of them.

[13]The Policy and Requirements Handbook states that centers are to conduct investigations and recommend appropriate sanctions, and that they must also have an appeals process for students. For example, centers are required to hold a fact-finding board for the most severe incidents (known as Level I infractions) to determine if accused students are responsible. If the fact-finding board finds a student responsible for severe incidents, such as assault, weapons possession, or drug use, the student is automatically dismissed from the program.

operators must take steps to protect the safety and security of Job Corps students when students are under Job Corps supervision. Students are under Job Corps supervision when they are onsite at Job Corps centers and when they are offsite and engaged in center-sponsored activities, such as work-based learning or community service. According to ETA officials, the agency and its contractors are not responsible for protecting the safety and security of Job Corps students when students are offsite and not under Job Corps supervision, such as when students are at home on leave. However, when offsite safety and security incidents of any type occur, Job Corps center operators are responsible for enforcing the student conduct policy. For example, if a student is arrested for a felony offsite while not under Job Corps supervision, the arrest may result in a Level I infraction and dismissal from the program.

Job Corps Student Satisfaction Survey

Since 2002, ETA used its student satisfaction survey to periodically obtain views from enrolled Job Corps students on various aspects of the program, including career development services, interactions between students and staff, access to alcohol and drugs, and overall satisfaction with the program.[14] The survey of 49 questions has remained the same over time and included 12 questions on students' perceptions of safety and security at centers.

ETA used the responses to the 12 safety-related survey questions to calculate a center safety rating, which represented the percentage of Job Corps students who reported feeling safe at each center, as well as a national safety rating, which represented the percentage of Job Corps students who reported feeling safe nationwide. ETA officials said they used these ratings to assess students' perceptions of safety at individual centers and nationwide, to monitor and evaluate center operators, and to determine whether ETA needed to take action to better address students' safety and security concerns. In 2018, ETA will pilot a stand-alone survey for safety related topics and remove the safety questions from the student satisfaction survey.

[14]ETA has administered the survey twice a year since 2009. In 2008, ETA administered the survey three times. Between 2002 and 2008, ETA administered the survey four times a year.

Job Corps Centers Reported Nearly 14,000 Incidents of Various Types during Program Year 2016, Which Mainly Occurred Onsite and Involved Recently Enrolled Males under Age 20

Almost Half of the Reported Onsite and Offsite Incidents Involved Drugs or Assaults

Our analysis of ETA's data from the Significant Incident Reporting System (SIRS) showed that Job Corps centers reported 13,673 safety and security incidents involving students, including those that occurred both onsite and offsite, in program year 2016.[15] During this time period (July 1, 2016, through June 30, 2017), approximately 79,000 students were served by the program, according to ETA officials.[16] Drug-related incidents (29 percent) and assaults (19 percent) accounted for 48 percent of all reported incidents involving students.[17] The remaining 52 percent of reported incidents involving students included breaches of security and safety (12 percent), alcohol-related incidents (6 percent), serious illness and injury (6 percent), theft or damage to property (5 percent), danger to self or others (5 percent), and all other types of incidents (18 percent)

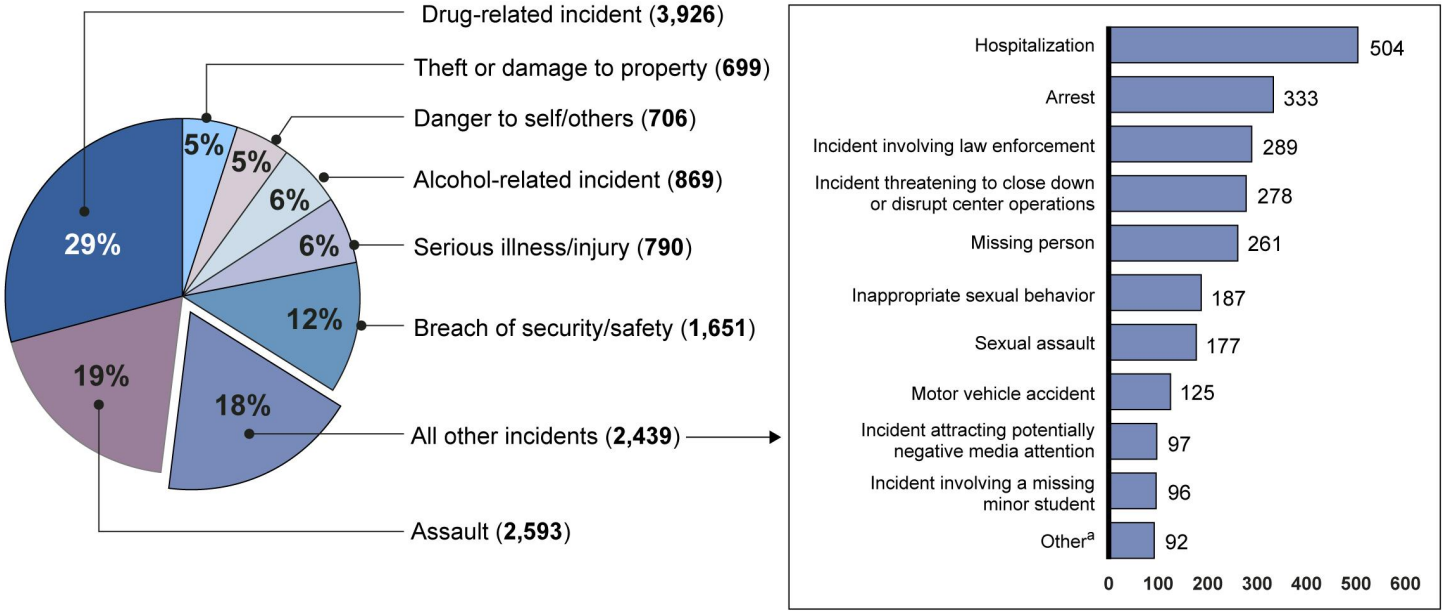
[15]In this section, we present our analysis for reported incidents that involved at least one student victim or perpetrator in program year 2016. Additional incidents were reported in SIRS that did not involve students. These incidents, which involved staff members or individuals not affiliated with Job Corps, increased the number of reported safety and security incidents at Job Corps centers to 14,704 in program year 2016. See appendix III for additional information on all reported safety and security incidents in program year 2016. Also, see appendix IV for information on the number of incidents reported by each Job Corps center.

[16]Of the 79,030 students served on center in program year 2016, 48,302 students were newly enrolled in the Job Corps program, according to ETA officials.

[17]See appendix II for ETA's definition of the SIRS incident categories. The incident categories and definitions in this report are taken directly from ETA documentation and represent how ETA categorizes these incidents. We did not assess these categories and definitions.

(see fig. 2).[18] According to ETA officials, about half of the 3,926 drug-related incidents are due to positive drug test results among students that are administered drug tests about 40 days after entering the program.[19]

Figure 2: Types of Onsite and Offsite Safety and Security Incidents Reported by Job Corps Centers during Program Year 2016



Source: GAO analysis of Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data. | GAO-18-482

Notes: This figure includes incidents that were reported to ETA's Significant Incident Reporting System and shows the primary incident type that was assigned to each incident. The incident categories and definitions in this report are taken directly from ETA documents and represent how ETA categorizes these incidents. We did not assess these categories and definitions.

[18]All other types of incidents includes hospitalization (4 percent), arrest (2 percent), incident involving law enforcement (2 percent), incident threatening to close down or disrupt center operations (2 percent), missing person (2 percent), inappropriate sexual behavior (1 percent), sexual assault (1 percent), motor vehicle accident (1 percent), incident attracting potentially negative media attention (1 percent), incident involving a missing minor student (1 percent), incident involving illegal activities not covered by other categories (less than 1 percent), death (less than 1 percent), and safety/hazmat (less than 1 percent).

[19]According to the Policy and Requirements Handbook, newly enrolled Job Corps students are administered drug tests within 48 hours of initial arrival to the center. An initial positive drug test is considered to reflect drug use prior to enrollment and students are provided intervention services. Students with an initial positive drug test are retested between the 37th and 40th day of enrollment. This second positive drug test results in a significant incident report and dismissal from the program.

[a] "Other" consists of the following types of incidents, which each represent less than 1 percent of all reported incidents: death, incident involving illegal activity not covered by other categories, and safety/hazmat.

We found that about 20 percent of reported onsite and offsite incidents in program year 2016 were of a violent nature, which we define as homicides, sexual assaults, and assaults.[20] There were two reported homicide incidents in program year 2016 and both occurred while students were offsite and not under Job Corps supervision.[21] Also, centers reported 177 sexual assaults and 2,593 assaults involving students during program year 2016. For each reported sexual assault and assault, SIRS provides an additional description of the incident (see table 2).[22]

Table 2: Job Corps Descriptions of Reported Sexual Assault and Assault Incidents Involving Students in Program Year 2016

Primary reported incident	Secondary reported incident description	Number of reported incidents (percentage)
Sexual assault	n/a	177 (100%)
Sexual assault	Attempted rape	5 (3%)
Sexual assault	Rape	52 (29%)
Sexual assault	Other	120 (68%)
Assault	n/a	2,593 (100%)
Assault	Assault/battery	1,499 (58%)
Assault	Bullying	195 (8%)
Assault	Fighting	662 (26%)
Assault	Hazing	19 (1%)
Assault	Mugging/robbery	13 (1%)
Assault	Other	219 (8%)

[20]For the purposes of our report, we developed a definition for incidents of a violent nature. ETA does not have a definition for such incidents. The incident categories and definitions for homicides, sexual assaults, and assaults are taken directly from ETA documents and represent how ETA categorizes these incidents. We did not assess these categories and definitions.

[21]According to ETA officials, two Job Corps students were fatally shot while offsite and not under Job Corps supervision and there were no Job Corps perpetrators of homicide incidents in program year 2016.

[22]To calculate the total number and types of safety and security incidents, we analyzed the primary incident type that was assigned to each incident reported in SIRS. In addition, certain categories of incidents have a secondary incident type in SIRS that further categorizes the nature of the incident.

Source: GAO analysis of Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data. | GAO-18-482

Notes: To calculate the total number and types of safety and security incidents, we analyzed the primary incident type that was assigned to each incident reported in the Significant Incident Reporting System (SIRS). In addition, certain categories of incidents have a secondary incident type in SIRS that further categorizes the nature of the incident. For assaults, the total number of secondary incident descriptions is greater than the actual number of primary assault incidents because it is possible to have more than one secondary incident description in SIRS. For example, one primary assault incident could have bullying and fighting as a secondary incident description. The incident categories and definitions in this report are taken directly from ETA documents and represent how ETA categorizes these incidents. We did not assess these categories and definitions. Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

In our June 2017 testimony, we stated that 49,836 onsite and offsite safety and security incidents of various types were reported by Job Corps centers between January 1, 2007, and June 30, 2016, based on our preliminary analysis of ETA's SIRS data.[23] We cannot compare our analysis of safety and security incidents in our June 2017 testimony to the analysis contained in this report for program year 2016 due to a policy change by ETA beginning July 1, 2016, which affected the categorization and number of reportable incidents. Specifically, ETA changed the way some incidents are defined, and required that some incidents be reported in SIRS that previously had no such requirement. Anecdotally, officials from one ETA regional office and two Job Corps centers that we visited said that the number of reported incidents has increased since July 1, 2016, due to these changes. In its December 2017 report, the DOL OIG compared the number of safety and security incidents reported to the OIG for the same 8-month periods in 2016 and 2017 and found an increase of 134 percent.[24] According to the DOL OIG, this increase is likely due to more accurate incident reporting as a result of the recent policy change. In addition, the DOL OIG said an actual increase in incidents is also possible.

[23]GAO-17-596T.

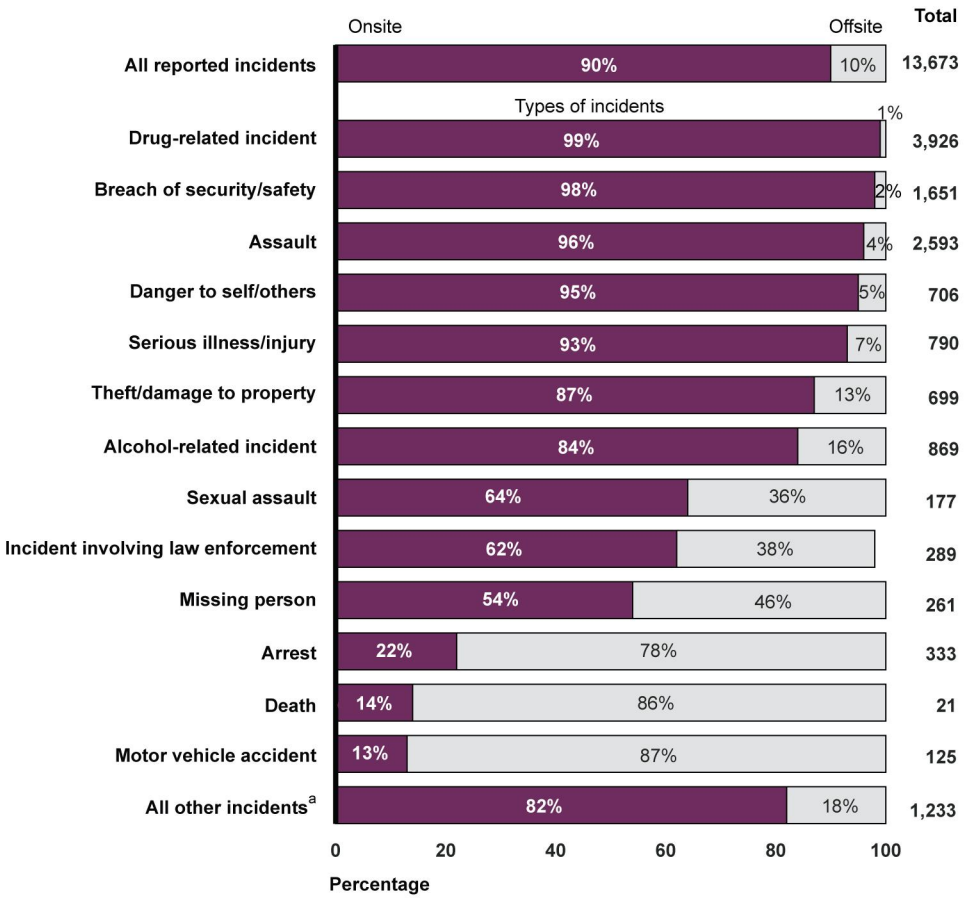
[24]In February 2016, ETA began providing select significant incident reports to the DOL OIG, including some assaults, sexual assaults, weapons possession, substance distribution, or other serious incidents which have or are reasonably expected to result in Congressional, media, or other public review. Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, *Job Corps Took Action to Mitigate Violence, Drugs, and Other Student Misconduct at Centers, But More Needs to Be Done*, 26-18-001-03-370 (Washington, D.C.: December 29, 2017).

Most Reported Incidents Occurred Onsite, but Arrests and Deaths Most Frequently Occurred Offsite While Students Were Not Under Job Corps Supervision

Our analysis of SIRS data found that in program year 2016, 90 percent of the 13,673 reported safety and security incidents involving students occurred onsite at Job Corps centers, and 10 percent occurred at offsite locations (see fig. 3). For example, 99 percent of drug-related incidents, 96 percent of assault incidents, and 84 percent of alcohol-related incidents occurred onsite. While most reported incidents occurred onsite, our analysis showed that the majority of reported arrests, deaths, and motor vehicle accidents occurred offsite. For example, of the 21 student deaths,18 occurred at offsite locations and 3 occurred onsite.[25] In our June 2017 testimony, we reported that from January 1, 2007, through June 30, 2016, 76 percent of the reported safety and security incidents occurred onsite at Job Corps centers, and 24 percent occurred at offsite locations based on our preliminary analysis of ETA's SIRS data. However, as previously noted, that analysis is not comparable to the analysis in this report for program year 2016 due to ETA's July 1, 2016, policy change that impacted the categorization and number of reportable incidents.

[25]In addition to the two homicide incidents previously described, we found that Job Corps centers reported an additional 19 student deaths in program year 2016 that were reportedly due to a variety of causes, including medical causes (5), accidental causes (4), suicide (2), other (2), or unknown causes (6). ETA officials told us that deaths are categorized as being due to unknown causes based on the coroner's assessment that the cause of death is unknown. Officials said that deaths are categorized as being due to other causes when the cause of death is known, but it is not covered by any of the other categories.

Figure 3: Type and Location of Safety and Security Incidents Reported by Job Corps Centers during Program Year 2016



Source: GAO analysis of Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data. | GAO-18-482

Notes: This figure includes incidents that were reported to ETA's Significant Incident Reporting System and shows the primary incident type that was assigned to each incident. The incident categories and definitions in this report are taken directly from ETA documents and represent how ETA categorizes these incidents. We did not assess these categories and definitions.

[a] "All other incidents" includes hospitalizations, incident threatening to close or disrupt center operations, inappropriate sexual behavior, incident attracting negative media attention, incident involving a missing minor, incident involving illegal activity, and safety/hazmat.

We analyzed the 1,406 incidents of 13,673 total reported incidents that were reported to have taken place offsite in program year 2016 to determine if the students involved were on duty (i.e., under Job Corps

supervision) or off duty (i.e., not under Job Corps supervision).[26] We found that for offsite incidents, similar percentages of student victims and perpetrators were on duty and off duty.[27] Specifically, we found that 50 percent of student victims were on duty, 44 percent were off duty, and we were unable to determine the duty status of 6 percent. For student perpetrators, we found that 45 percent of students were on duty, 45 percent were off duty, and we were unable to determine the duty status of 10 percent. Some types of reported incidents occurred more frequently when students were offsite and off duty. For example, of the reported arrest incidents that occurred offsite, 76 percent of student perpetrators were off duty. Of the reported death-related incidents that occurred offsite, student duty status was reported as off duty for 16 of 18 incidents.

We were unable to determine the duty status for all students involved in offsite incidents due to inconsistencies in ETA's data. Of the 1,406 offsite incidents reported in SIRS, there were 178 instances in which a student's duty status location conflicted with the incident location. For example, the student's duty status was listed as onsite and on duty, but the incident location was listed as offsite. We asked ETA officials why these inconsistencies existed and they were unable to explain all instances in which these inconsistencies occurred. ETA officials did state, however, that these inconsistences can sometimes occur when centers enter information in SIRS based on the student's duty status at the time the incident report is completed instead of the student's duty status at the time the incident occurred. Due to this data limitation, we were unable to determine if the 178 students involved in those incidents were on duty or off duty.

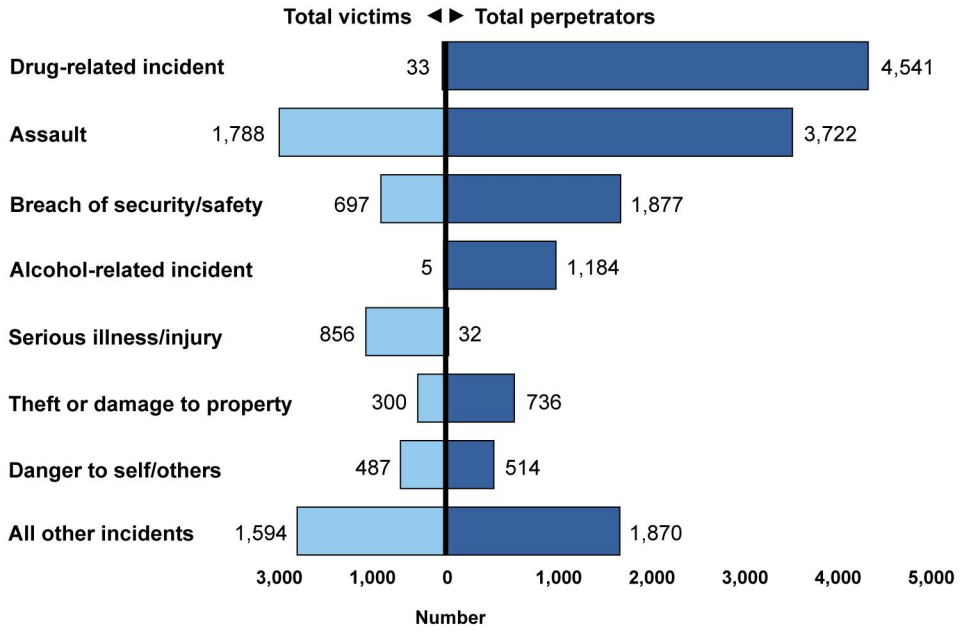
[26]As previously noted, according to ETA officials, Job Corps is responsible for protecting students' safety onsite at Job Corps centers and while offsite and engaged in Job Corps supervised activities; however, incidents that occur offsite while not engaged in Job Corps supervised activities may violate the student conduct policy and could result in dismissal from the program.

[27]In SIRS, students are described as either a victim or a perpetrator of a safety and security incident.

Student Victims and Perpetrators Most Often Were Recently Enrolled Males under Age 20, Reflective of the Job Corps Population

We analyzed SIRS data to determine the characteristics of students involved in reported safety and security incidents and found that about 17,000 students were reported as victims or perpetrators of all onsite and offsite incidents in program year 2016.[28] The total number of students reported as victims or perpetrators is 22 percent of the students served in program year 2016. The number of student victims and perpetrators varied across incident types (see fig. 4).

Figure 4: Number of Student Victims and Perpetrators of Incidents Reported at Job Corps Centers in Program Year 2016



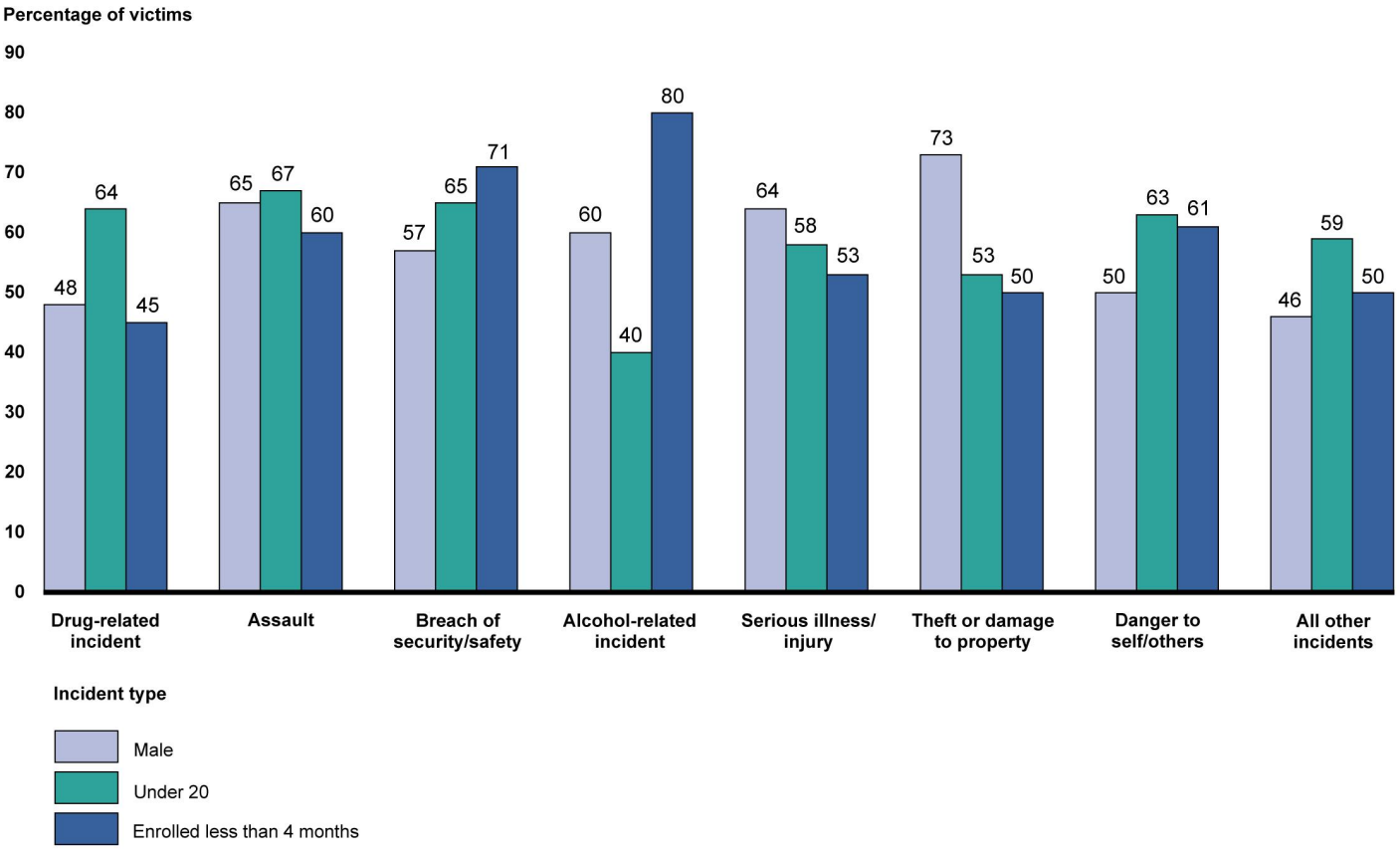
Source: GAO analysis of Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data. | GAO-18-482

[28]The number of student victims and perpetrators is not equal to the number of incidents involving students because more than one student can be involved in an incident. It is also possible that a student was a victim and/or perpetrator of more than one type of incident. While we counted the student once within each individual incident type, when we present the total number of student victims and/or perpetrators, we eliminated duplicates across incident types. There were 1,054 students reported as both a victim and perpetrator of at least one incident type in program year 2016.

Notes: This figure includes incidents that were reported to ETA's Significant Incident Reporting System and shows the primary incident type that was assigned to each incident. "All other incidents" includes hospitalization, incidents threatening to close down or disrupt center operations, incidents involving law enforcement, missing person, motor vehicle accident, sexual assault, inappropriate sexual behavior, incidents involving a missing minor student, incidents attracting potentially negative media attention, death, incident involving illegal activities not covered by other categories, and safety/hazmat. The incident categories and definitions in this report are taken directly from ETA documents and represent how ETA categorizes these incidents. We did not assess these categories and definitions.

In program year 2016, we found that about 5,000 students (6 percent of students served) were reported as victims of various types of onsite and offsite incidents. We separately examined the gender, age, and enrollment time of reported student victims and found that for all reported incidents the majority of student victims were male, under age 20, and enrolled in Job Corps for less than 4 months (see fig. 5). These characteristics are somewhat similar to the overall Job Corps student population, which is primarily male and under age 20, as previously noted. For example, 65 percent of reported assault victims and 73 percent of reported theft victims were male. However, the number of female victims exceeded the number of male victims within some reported incident categories, such as sexual assault, inappropriate sexual behavior, and missing persons. Students under age 20 were victims of 67 percent of reported assault incidents and 63 percent of danger to self or others incidents. According to ETA officials, 18 percent of students served in program year 2016 were enrolled for less than 4 months; however, across all reported incidents 56 percent of student victims were enrolled for less than 4 months. For example, about 60 percent of student victims of reported assault and danger to self or other incidents were enrolled in Job Corps for less than 4 months.

Figure 5: Characteristics of Student Victims of Selected Incident Types Reported at Job Corps Centers in Program Year 2016



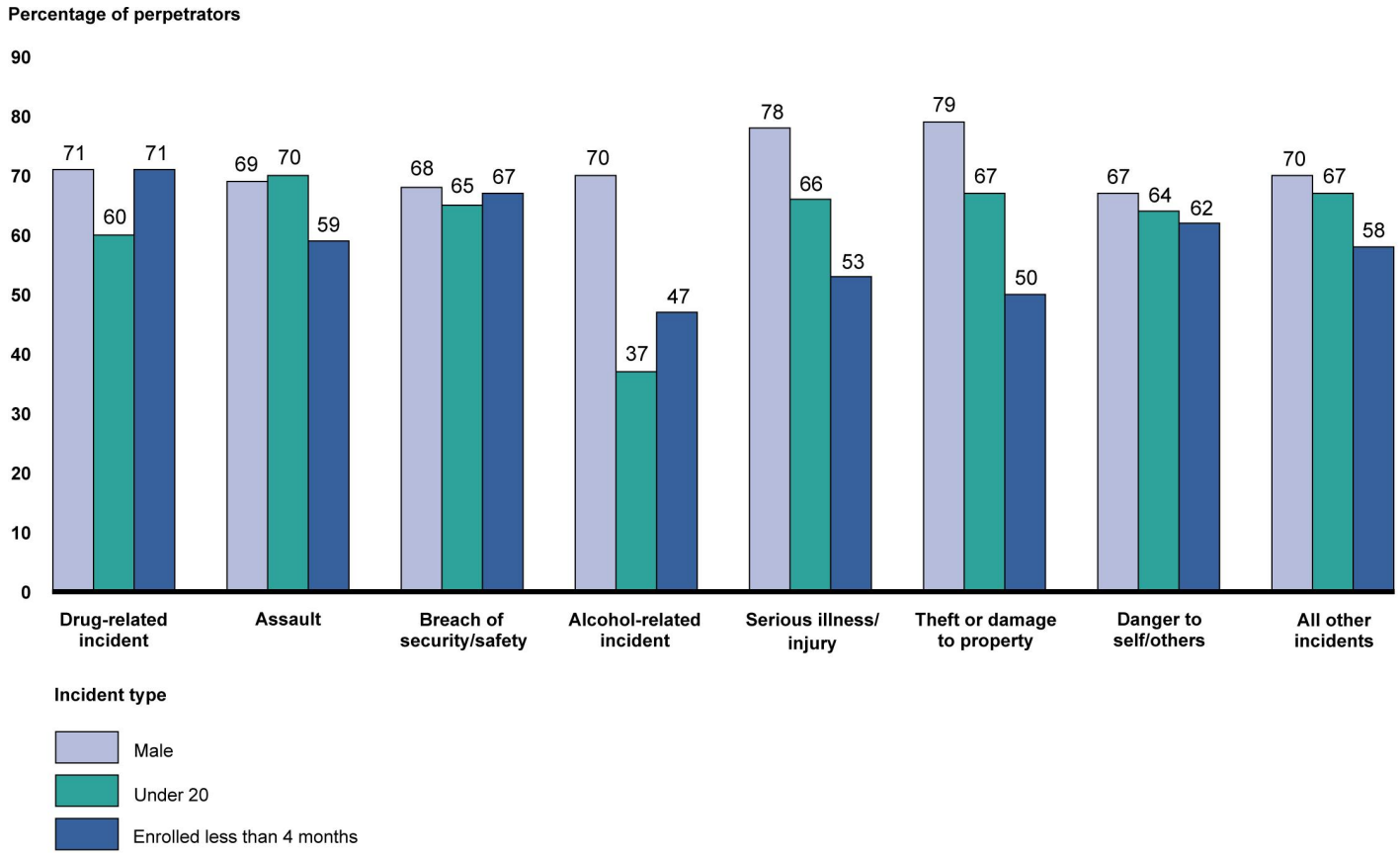
Source: GAO analysis of Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data. | GAO-18-482

Notes: This figure includes incidents that were reported to ETA's Significant Incident Reporting System and shows the primary incident type that was assigned to each incident. "All other incidents" includes hospitalization, incidents threatening to close down or disrupt center operations, incidents involving law enforcement, missing person, motor vehicle accident, sexual assault, inappropriate sexual behavior, incidents involving a missing minor student, incidents attracting potentially negative media attention, death, incident involving illegal activities not covered by other categories, and safety/hazmat. The incident categories and definitions in this report are taken directly from ETA documents and represent how ETA categorizes these incidents. We did not assess these categories and definitions.

Our analysis of SIRS data shows that about 13,000 students (17 percent of students served) were reported as perpetrators of various types of onsite and offsite incidents in program year 2016. The most commonly reported incidents—drug-related and assaults—also had the highest numbers of student perpetrators. We found that 6 percent and 5 percent of students served in program year 2016 were perpetrators of reported drug-related and assault incidents, respectively. Similar to our analysis of student victims, we separately examined student characteristics and

found that the majority of reported student perpetrators of all reported incidents were male, under age 20, and enrolled in Job Corps for less than 4 months (see fig. 6).

Figure 6: Characteristics of Student Perpetrators of Selected Incident Types Reported at Job Corps Centers in Program Year 2016



Source: GAO analysis of Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data. | GAO-18-482

Notes: This figure includes incidents that were reported to ETA's Significant Incident Reporting System and shows the primary incident type that was assigned to each incident. "All other incidents" includes hospitalization, incidents threatening to close down or disrupt center operations, incidents involving law enforcement, missing person, motor vehicle accident, sexual assault, inappropriate sexual behavior, incidents involving a missing minor student, incidents attracting potentially negative media attention, death, incident involving illegal activities not covered by other categories, and safety/hazmat. The incident categories and definitions in this report are taken directly from ETA documents and represent how ETA categorizes these incidents. We did not assess these categories and definitions.

Students Generally Reported Feeling Safe; ETA Plans to Create a New, Expanded Survey

Most Students Reported Feeling Safe, but Fewer Reported Feeling Safe on Selected Questions

Our analysis of ETA's student satisfaction survey data from program year 2016 showed that while students generally reported feeling safe at Job Corps centers, a smaller proportion reported feeling safe in certain situations.[29] ETA considers students to feel safe if they provide certain responses to each of the 12 safety-related survey questions, some of which are phrased as statements. For example, if a student provided a response of "mostly false" or "very false" to the statement "I thought about leaving Job Corps because of a personal safety concern," that student would be counted as feeling safe on that survey question. On 6 of the 12 safety-related survey questions in program year 2016, at least 70 percent of responding students indicated that they felt safe (see table 3). For example, 74 percent of students responded that they did not ever or in the last month carry a weapon, and 83 percent of students responded that it was very or mostly true that a student would be terminated from Job Corps for having a weapon at the center. These are responses that ETA considered to indicate feeling safe. At the two centers we visited, students that we interviewed said that they felt safe onsite at their center. For example, students at one center said that they felt safe because absolutely no weapons, fighting, or drugs were allowed at the center.

Table 3: Percentage of Job Corps Students Who Reported Feeling Safe on Each Safety-Related Survey Question in March 2017

n/a	n/a	Percent of students who responded that they felt the following[b]:		
Survey question (exact wording of the question)	**Responses indicating that students felt safe[a]**	**Safe**	**Unsafe**	**Don't know / does not apply[c]**

[29]We analyzed the two surveys covering program year 2016, which were administered in September 2016 and March 2017. The response rate for each survey was about 90 percent.

n/a	n/a	Percent of students who responded that they felt the following[b]:		
Survey question (exact wording of the question)	**Responses indicating that students felt safe[a]**	**Safe**	**Unsafe**	**Don't know / does not apply[c]**
A student would be terminated if he/she was found with a weapon—like a knife, club, or sharp object—on center.	Very true or mostly true	83	13	5
How often did you carry a weapon—like a knife, club, or a sharp object—with you on center?	Never or not in the last month	74	7	19
How often were you in a physical fight with a student on center?	Never or not in the last month	72	8	20
I thought about going to a different Job Corps center because I felt threatened by other students.	Mostly false or very false	72	17	11
I could talk to my counselor if I was threatened by another student.	Very true or mostly true	71	23	6
I could talk to my residential advisor if I was threatened by another student.	Very true or mostly true	70	20	10
How often did other students pick on you even after you asked them to stop?	Never or not in the last month	59	23	18
I thought about leaving Job Corps because of a personal safety concern.	Mostly false or very false	59	31	10
The zero tolerance policy was applied equally to all students.	Very true or mostly true	59	35	5
How often did you see a physical fight between students on center?	Never or not in the last month	58	26	16
How often did other students say things to make you feel like you are not important?	Never or not in the last month	53	30	17
How often did you hear a student threaten another student on center?	Never or not in the last month	36	49	15

Source: GAO analysis of Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data and documentation. | GAO-18-482

Note: Results for the September 2016 survey were very close to the percentages that we present for March 2017. They were generally within 2 percentage points.

[a]The survey asked students to answer the questions for the time period of the last month. For example, the survey asked students how often they carried a weapon with them at the center in the last month. According to Job Corps policy, ETA considered the above survey responses to indicate that students felt safe.

[b]The sum of percentages may not equal 100 due to rounding. Percentages in this table are not comparable to numbers in other publications including ETA reports because of differences between GAO and ETA calculations. Furthermore, our national measure of safety may not equal the average of these 12 percentages because, for example, not all students answered every safety question.

[c]ETA's survey does not provide insight on how to interpret responses of "don't know / does not apply." We reported these percentages based on students' original responses.

A smaller number of students reported feeling safe on questions that dealt with hearing threats or hearing things from other students that made

them feel unimportant. For example, 36 percent of students reported they had not ever or in the last month heard a student threaten another student at the center, which is considered safe according to ETA policy. Meanwhile, 49 percent reported that they had heard a student threaten another student at least once in the last month, and ETA considered these responses to indicate that students felt unsafe.[30] Another 15 percent chose "don't know / does not apply." On another question, 53 percent of students reported that other students had not ever or in the last month said things that made them feel like they were not important, which ETA considered as feeling safe. Yet 30 percent reported that others made them feel unimportant at least once in the last month—which ETA considered as feeling unsafe—and 17 percent chose "don't know / does not apply."

In response to a question about the student conduct policy, 35 percent of students indicated that the policy was not applied equally to all students. At the two centers we visited, students that we interviewed had varying views on applying the student conduct policy. Students from one center said that staff have applied the policy in a fair way. Yet at another center, students told us that they have occasionally perceived that staff have not applied the student conduct policy fairly. They mentioned that they were aware of favoritism in a few recent incidents when staff applied the policy's disciplinary consequences for certain students but not others. For example, they said that a student they perceived as the perpetrator remained in Job Corps while a student they perceived as innocent was dismissed.

Our June 2017 testimony contained similar observations about students' perceptions of their safety, with students generally reporting that they felt safe at their Job Corps centers.[31] For example, most students reported feeling safe because a student found with a weapon at the center would be terminated. In that testimony, we also noted that students reported feeling less safe on such questions as hearing threats or applying the student conduct policy.

[30]Among the 49 percent, 11 percent reported hearing threats daily at the Job Corps center, 15 percent weekly, and 22 percent said once or twice a month. Percentages do not total 49 due to rounding.

[31]See GAO-17-596T. Our preliminary observations in the testimony were based on student survey data from March 2007 to March 2017.

In addition to the 12 safety-related questions, we examined data on the 2 questions about access to alcohol or drugs, and found that almost two-thirds of survey respondents said that it was mostly or very false that they could access alcohol or drugs at their Job Corps center.[32] Although a large number of reported incidents in program year 2016 involved drugs or alcohol, less than 15 percent of survey respondents said that it was mostly or very true that they could access alcohol or drugs at their Job Corps center.

National Measures of Safety and Security Have Been Developed

Based on students' responses to the 12 safety-related questions, ETA determined that 88 percent of students indicated that they felt safe in program year 2016. ETA calculated its national measure of safety—referred to as a safety rating—to summarize and track students' perceptions of their safety and to determine the need for additional action, as noted previously. Similarly, it calculated a safety measure for each center.

However, we calculated a national measure differently and found that an average of 73 percent of students reported feeling safe in program year 2016. Our national measure reflected the average of how safe each student felt on the 12 safety-related survey questions.[33] We estimated that one key difference accounted for about 11 of the 15 percentage points between our and ETA's measure. (See table 7 in appendix I.) Specifically, we calculated our measure based on a numeric average for each student without rounding. For example, if a student answered all 12 safety questions with 6 responses that he felt safe and another 6 that he felt unsafe, we counted this student as half safe (0.5). Meanwhile, ETA rounded the average to either safe or unsafe, so that ETA counted a student with 6 safe responses and 6 unsafe responses as feeling safe.

In addition to differences in calculations, we developed our own national measure of safety because it is important to assess and track students'

[32]These two questions on access to substances were not among the 12 questions that we or ETA used to calculate national and center measures of safety, in accordance with Job Corps policy.

[33]More details on our methodology are in appendix I. See appendix V for information on measures of safety for each Job Corps center.

perceptions for the program as a whole, as ETA has noted. Also, a national measure facilitates analysis of groups of students, such as male or female students or younger or older students, as described below.

We examined whether our national measure differed by age, gender, time in program, center size, or operator type and found statistically significant and meaningful differences in our national measure by students' length of time in the program. In particular, an average of 78 percent of students in the program for less than 4 months responded that they felt safe, compared to an average of 71 percent for students in the program for at least 4 months.[34] According to ETA officials, differences in responses based on length of time in the program may relate to new students being less aware about life at the center because they begin the program with other newly arrived students for up to 2 months. For example, ETA officials said that new students may live in a dormitory specifically for new students. Thus, they are not yet fully integrated into the larger student body. Although differences were also statistically significant between age groups, center size, and operator type, such differences were not meaningful in a practical manner (i.e., around 3 percentage points or less). Differences in our national measure by gender were not statistically significant.[35]

When we analyzed the survey's separate question about overall satisfaction with Job Corps, we found that students who reported they were satisfied with the Job Corps program responded that they felt safer than students who were not satisfied. In program year 2016, about two-thirds of students said it was very or mostly true that they would recommend Job Corps to a friend, which ETA uses to gauge overall satisfaction with the program.[36] Of the 65 percent of students who would

[34]Our national measure of safety decreased as follows: 81 percent for students in the program less than a month; 74 percent for 1 to 3 months; 71 percent for 4 to 5 and 6 to 12 months; and 72 percent for more than a year. The difference was 9 percentage points between our national measure for those in the program for less than a month compared to the combination of those in the program for longer than a month.

[35]We tested for statistical significance at the alpha = 0.05 level of significance. Although small differences may be statistically significant, we determined that the differences were not meaningful and were likely due to the large number of respondents (about 27,000). These tests were not sensitive to the assumption of normality.

[36]About 11 percent of students would not recommend Job Corps to a friend, 20 percent chose a mixed answer of partly true and partly false, and 4 percent chose "don't know / does not apply."

recommend Job Corps to a friend, 79 percent said they felt safe. Of the 11 percent of students who would not recommend Job Corps to a friend, 52 percent felt safe.

ETA's New Web-based Survey Is Designed to Be More Timely and Detailed

ETA officials said that the agency is creating a new expanded safety survey to improve upon the prior survey. With Job Corps' heightened attention to safety and security, the new survey—the Student Safety Assessment—is focused solely on safety and security issues and is designed to provide more timely and more detailed information.

- *More timely information.* ETA plans to administer the new safety survey monthly to a random sample of students rather than twice per year to all enrolled students. Also, it will be web-based, rather than the current paper-based survey. As a result, ETA officials said that they will receive more timely information from students because it will take less time to administer the survey and analyze the responses.
- *More detailed information.* The number of questions about center safety will increase from 12 to about 50—pending finalization of the survey—which is about the same number of questions on the current student satisfaction survey. For example, the new questions will ask about sexual assaults and harassment or the types of drugs bought or used at the center, which were not topics covered by the prior survey.

ETA continues to work with its contractor with survey expertise to develop, test, and administer the new survey in 2018, according to ETA officials. To develop the new survey, ETA and its contractor have considered, incorporated, and revised questions from other existing surveys. For example, they have drawn from safety surveys of teenage students and postsecondary students. ETA plans to continue developing and refining the survey and its administration in 2018, including conducting monthly pilots from January to June 2018, assessing response rates, and developing a new way to calculate national and center-level safety measures. Additionally, ETA officials said that, in 2018, they will seek to obtain comments and approval on the survey from the Office of Management and Budget. ETA officials told us that they plan to administer the new survey nationally by January 2019. As ETA refines and administers this new survey, officials told us they plan to develop a new way to measure student safety based on the more detailed survey.

ETA Initiated Multiple Actions to Improve Center Safety and Security, but the New Monitoring Strategy Was Implemented Inconsistently and ETA Lacks a Comprehensive Plan

ETA Initiated Multiple Actions to Improve Center Safety and Security

In 2014, ETA launched multiple actions to improve safety and security at Job Corps centers in response to DOL OIG recommendations (see table 4).[37] For example, in 2015 the DOL OIG found ETA's oversight of Job Corps centers ineffective, in part, because ETA's student conduct policy excluded some violent offenses.[38] As a result, ETA revised its student conduct policy by elevating several infractions previously classified as Level II to Level I (the most severe) and by adding several new categories of reportable incidents. Under the revised student conduct policy, assault, a Level I infraction, now includes fighting, which was previously a Level II infraction. In addition, the DOL OIG found that ETA did not monitor centers regularly enough to ensure center consistency in administering Job Corps disciplinary policies. In response, ETA implemented a risk-based monitoring strategy that identifies potential safety and security issues before they occur.

Table 4: Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Actions in Response to Selected Department of Labor (DOL) Office of Inspector General (OIG) Job Corps Center Safety and Security Recommendations

DOL OIG recommendation	ETA actions	Status of ETA's actions

[37]See Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, *Job Corps Took Action to Mitigate Violence, Drugs, and Other Student Misconduct at Centers, But More Needs to Be Done*, 26-18-001-03-370 (Washington, D.C.: December 29, 2017).

[38]See Department of Labor, Office of Inspector General, *Job Corps Needs to Improve Enforcement and Oversight of Student Disciplinary Policies to Better Protect Students and Staff at Centers,* 26-15-001-03-370 (Washington, D.C.: February 27, 2015).

DOL OIG recommendation	ETA actions	Status of ETA's actions
ETA should require center operators to ensure serious misconduct is promptly reported, investigated, and resolved.	• Established the Division of Regional Operations and Program Integrity to monitor center's adherence to student conduct policy and ensure incoming complaints are referred to and addressed by the appropriate office, among other duties. • Implemented new risk-based monitoring strategy to predict the emergence of student misconduct and safety issues and identify high risk centers.	Implementation began in January 2015. DOL OIG has not closed this recommendation.
ETA should clearly define all student misconduct infractions to ensure infractions are properly classified and Level I infractions should include all significant violent offences.	• Reclassified some violent offenses, which were previously considered less serious, as Level I infractions (the most severe) and provided clear definitions of each infraction.	Implemented program-wide as of July 2016. DOL OIG has closed this recommendation.
ETA should eliminate the backlog of unaddressed student conduct infractions.	• Eliminated the backlog of nearly 9,000 unaddressed student conduct infractions.	Backlog eliminated as of August 2017. DOL OIG has closed this recommendation.
ETA should ensure centers report potentially serious criminal misconduct to law enforcement.	• Updated the Policy and Requirements Handbook to require centers to develop standard operating procedures (SOP) for safety and security and clarified that centers should enter into agreements with law enforcement agencies that describe circumstances when centers will contact law enforcement. • ETA regional staff plans to review center safety and security SOPs and law enforcement agreements.	Implementation began in August 2016. DOL OIG has not closed this recommendation.
ETA should ensure significant incidents are reported to Job Corps and correctly classified.	• Revised student conduct policy to clearly define behavior infractions, prescribe center actions, and specify reporting requirements for significant incidents. • Job Corps national and regional leadership review each significant incident report filed by centers on an on-going basis and follow-up, as needed. • Conducted training for ETA and center staff to ensure uniform understanding and enforcement of student conduct policies system wide.	Implementation began in July 2016. DOL OIG has not closed this recommendation.
ETA should proactively and continuously evaluate its efforts to mitigate violence and other serious crimes at Job Corps centers.	• Established new policies and procedures, such as the risk-based monitoring strategy. • Established the Division of Regional Operations and Program Integrity to strengthen quality assurance and promote continuous improvement, among other duties.	Implementation began in January 2015. DOL OIG has not closed this recommendation.

DOL OIG recommendation	ETA actions	Status of ETA's actions
ETA should define the types and frequency of background checks needed for center employees.	• Developed a new background check policy for staff, in consultation with the DOL Solicitor's Office.	ETA issued the policy in February 2018 and background checks for current employees must be completed within 6 months of the policy's issuance. DOL OIG has not closed this recommendation.

Source: GAO analysis of ETA and DOL OIG documentation. | GAO-18-482

Notes: This table does not include DOL OIG identified deficiencies that are beyond the scope of this engagement, such as centers' physical safety. For the recommendations that are not closed, DOL OIG is requesting that ETA provide SOPs and other implementation documentation to DOL OIG. See table 5 for additional information on the SOPs.

Staff from five ETA regional offices and at one Job Corps center we visited said that ETA's actions overall helped to improve center safety and security. For example, staff from five regional offices said that the changes to the student conduct policy that were implemented in July 2016 clearly describe the penalties for infractions and eliminate grey areas that previously allowed center staff to use their professional judgement. Staff from four regional offices also said these changes resulted in tradeoffs that reduced center staff discretion in imposing penalties. In addition, at one center we visited, the Director of Safety and Security told us he updated the center's security-related standard operating procedures in response to ETA's guidance. ETA's guidance was part of the 2017 updates to the Policy and Requirements Handbook in response to DOL OIG concerns about reporting potentially serious criminal misconduct to law enforcement.

ETA Officials Reported That Some New Actions Improved Center Monitoring, but That Actions Were Inconsistently Implemented and May Create Reporting Overlaps

ETA national officials said that the new risk-based monitoring strategy has improved center monitoring because it has allowed them to more effectively direct resources to areas of greatest need. Officials in five ETA regional offices agreed that the new strategy improved their ability to monitor centers. The new monitoring strategy shifted the focus from addressing problems after they have occurred to a data-driven strategy

that tracks center performance and identifies emerging problems.[39] This strategy provides ETA and center operators an opportunity to address problems before they occur, according to ETA national officials. For example, the new monitoring strategy features new tools, including the Risk Management Dashboard. The dashboard is a summary analysis tool that conducts trend analysis using center data and allows regional staff to engage in targeted interventions at centers with potential safety and security concerns. In addition, under the new monitoring strategy, instead of only conducting scheduled monitoring visits to a center at set times, regional staff conduct unannounced visits based on data indicating a decline in center performance or other triggers.[40] See appendix VI for additional information on the new monitoring strategy.

Although the new risk-based monitoring strategy has improved center monitoring, it is not consistently implemented across regional offices, according to ETA national officials. They told us that similar problems identified at centers may be treated with different levels of focus or intensity from one region to another. In addition, national and regional officials told us that regional office staff have relied on professional judgment to determine the appropriate response to centers that may be at risk of noncompliance with safety and security policies, which could lead to inconsistencies. For example, when problems are identified at centers, the type of assessment to conduct is left to regional office staff discretion. As a result, staff in one region may decide that the most comprehensive assessment, the Regional Office Center Assessment, is needed, while another region's staff would select a targeted assessment, which is more limited in scope. ETA national officials said that although each determination could be justified based on resource constraints and competing priorities, they would like to increase implementation consistency in this area.

[39]Regional office staff are largely responsible for implementing the monitoring strategy. Regional office staff members responsible for monitoring are known as Contracting Officer Representatives and Program/Project Managers. According to ETA officials, the titles are used interchangeably, as the staff have programmatic and contract oversight duties. Regional staff generally have oversight of two to four Job Corps centers, according to ETA officials.

[40]Regional office staff may initiate a center visit in response to significant incidents, such as a serious single incident or a negative trend. Other triggers include whistleblower allegations, constituent complaints, or a sharp decline in student satisfaction survey results.

To address regional inconsistencies, ETA national and regional office staff said that guidance in the form of standard operating procedures (SOP) would be helpful. These procedures would promote consistency in how policies are interpreted and applied and would help ensure that centers are held to the same standards, according to ETA national officials. For example, SOPs could specify which type of assessment to conduct in response to specific problems identified at centers. Internal control standards state that managers should document in policies each unit's responsibility for an operational process.[41]

Regional office staff said that they previously had a helpful tool, the Program Assessment Guide, that linked policies in the Policy and Requirements Handbook to the monitoring assessment process.[42] Regional office staff said they used the Program Assessment Guide to prepare for center monitoring visits and it was a helpful training tool for new staff. Our review of ETA documentation found that the Program Assessment Guide included specific questions to ask center staff about how they meet safety and security requirements and suggested where to look for information to determine center compliance with policies. However, the Program Assessment Guide, which has not been updated since 2013, does not include recent changes to the Policy and Requirements Handbook, such as the updated student conduct policy. ETA national officials told us that limited staffing has made it difficult to update the Program Assessment Guide as frequently as changes are made to the Policy and Requirements Handbook.

In February 2018, ETA national officials told us they plan to issue a variety of SOPs related to monitoring center safety and security issues (see table 5). ETA officials initially said these SOPs would be completed in August or November 2018 and later revised its plans with a goal of completing all SOPs by August 2018. However, in August 2017, ETA officials had told the DOL OIG that these SOPs would be completed in the March to July 2018 timeframe. ETA officials said that a staffing

[41]Internal control standards also state that managers should communicate quality information down and across reporting lines to key personnel responsible for achieving the organization's goals. In turn, managers should receive quality information from personnel about operational processes that will help managers fulfill the organization's mission and goals. See GAO-14-704G.

[42]The monitoring assessment process includes desk monitoring, as well as onsite visits to determine center compliance with the Policy and Requirements Handbook. See appendix VI for more information.

shortage in the Office of Job Corps' Division of Regional Operations and Program Integrity delayed development of the SOPs. This Division—established in 2015 to coordinate regional operations and strengthen communications and quality assurance—includes eight staff positions; however, as of January 2018, the Division has two staff members on board. ETA officials said that they have not yet received departmental approval to fill the six vacant positions in the Division.

Given this uncertainty, it is questionable whether ETA's revised timeframes will be met. Without SOPs or other relevant guidance, ETA cannot ensure that monitoring for center safety and security will be carried out uniformly across the program. As a result, centers may be held to different standards, and the program may not achieve its center safety and security goals.

Table 5: Employment and Training Administration's Plans for Developing Job Corps Standard Operating Procedures Related to Monitoring Center Safety and Security

Standard operating procedure (SOP) for:	Planned completion date
Monitoring centers' adherence to Job Corps' student conduct policy and procedures and incoming complaints.	August 2018
Implementing monitoring requirements that ensure centers report potentially serious criminal misconduct to law enforcement.	August 2018
Ensuring significant incident reports are classified and completed correctly, and submitted when required.	August 2018
Conducting remote desk audits and onsite reviews to determine whether Policy and Requirements Handbook safety and security requirements are being met.	August 2018
Implementing the risk management process for predicting the emergence of student misconduct and safety issues and identifying high risk centers.	August 2018
Detailing how Job Corps proactively and continuously evaluates and improves efforts to mitigate violence and other serious crimes at its centers.	August 2018

Source: Employment and Training Administration documentation. | GAO-18-482

Note: This table does not include planned SOPs that are beyond the scope of this engagement, such as centers' physical safety. DOL OIG requests these SOPs, along with other implementation documentation, to close recommendations for the Job Corps program. See table 4 for descriptions of the recommendations that are not closed.

In addition to inconsistencies in monitoring and a lack of sufficient guidance, staff in all six regional offices told us that components of ETA's risk-based monitoring strategy created reporting overlaps. As part of the new monitoring strategy, regional staff have additional reports that they complete—such as the Risk Management Dashboard Action report and Corrective Action Tracker—about potential safety and security problems

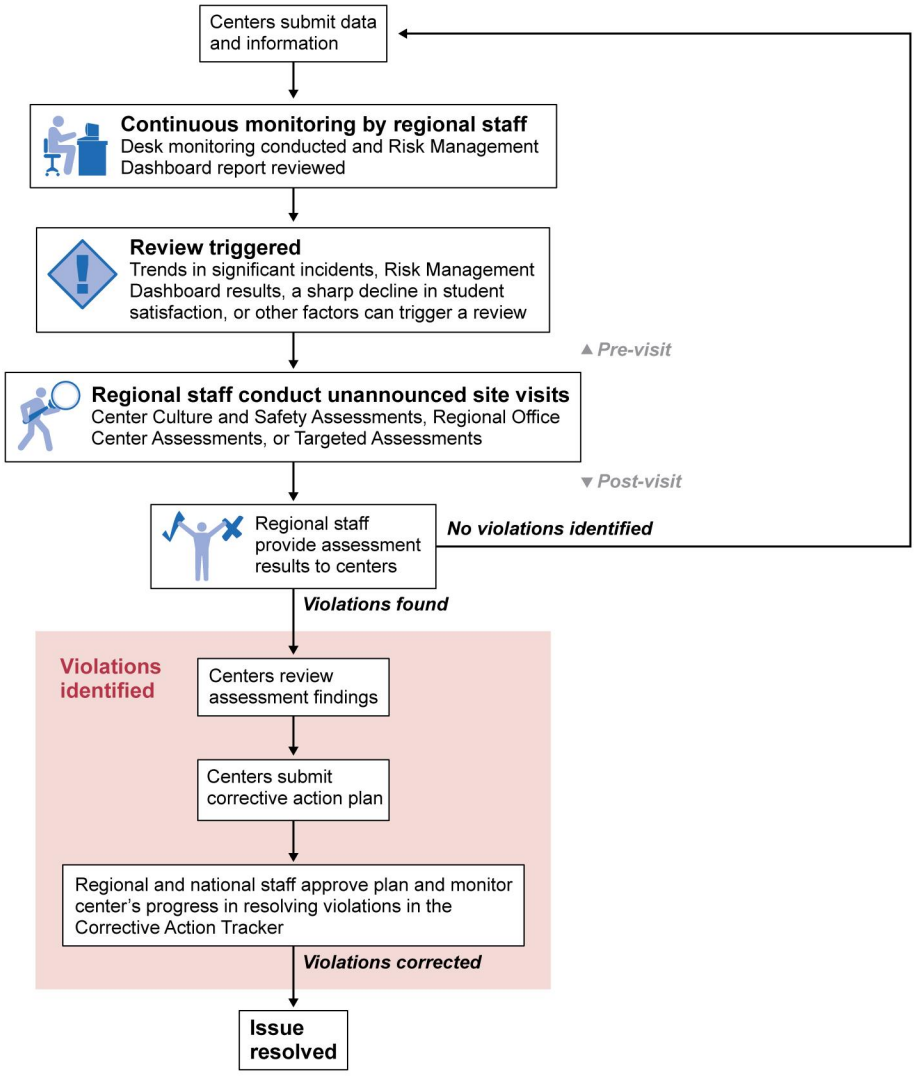
or actual violations found at centers.[43] Some regional staff said the desk monitoring report includes similar information to the Risk Management Dashboard and Corrective Action Tracker reports, which regional offices submit to the ETA national office.[44] Staff in one regional office said that they enter the same information about the status of center safety and security violations multiple times on the Corrective Action Tracker because the time between reporting periods is too short to allow for meaningful action to be taken. Staff from four regional offices said completing duplicative reports reduces time that could be used to conduct additional center monitoring, such as onsite visits, or to perform other key duties.

ETA national officials disagreed that overlap exists among monitoring reports. They said that although reports may appear to overlap, the reports are complementary and not duplicative, and are used at different points in the monitoring process (see fig. 7 for an overview of ETA's monitoring process). For example, ETA national staff told us that desk monitoring reports are primarily used by regional staff at the beginning of the monitoring process to identify potential problems and are not substantially reviewed by the national office. ETA national officials also said that the Risk Management Dashboard report is used at the beginning of the monitoring process to identify problems, whereas the Corrective Action Tracker is used later in the process after violations have been identified and corrective actions have been planned to bring the center back into compliance. In addition, ETA national officials also noted that regional staff are not asked to complete all reports every month. For example, regional staff complete a Risk Management Dashboard Action report only for those centers with potential safety and security concerns.

[43]For more information on the risk-based monitoring strategy and these reports, see appendix VI.

[44]Desk monitoring reports review center data, results of student surveys, and other information to determine how a center is performing. The Corrective Action Tracker documents steps center operators are taking to correct safety and security deficiencies. For more information on desk monitoring, Risk Management Dashboard, and the Corrective Action Tracker, see appendix VI.

Figure 7: Summary of Employment and Training Administration's Process for Monitoring Job Corps Centers



Source: Employment and Training Administration interviews and documentation. | GAO-18-482

Note: According to ETA officials, the violations described above are related to contractual actions. In some instances, regional staff work with center operators to correct additional deficiencies that are not contractual actions.

We compared the information included in five monitoring reports—the Center Culture and Safety Assessment, Corrective Action Tracker, Desk Audit, Regional Office Center Assessment, and Risk Management Dashboard Action report—and found opportunities for streamlining. For example, we found that the Center Culture and Safety Assessment,

Corrective Action Tracker, and Regional Office Center Assessment, all include a narrative description of the violations identified by regional staff categorized according to the corresponding requirement in the Policy and Requirements Handbook. In addition, ETA regional office staff said the Corrective Action Tracker, a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, is cumbersome to use and within the spreadsheet they attach and submit additional documentation. ETA national officials agreed that streamlining or automating monitoring tools would be helpful for its regional staff, along with additional training to help staff understand the different reports and how to write the required narratives. ETA national officials also told us that they did not systematically review existing reports before creating additional ones for the new risk-based monitoring process. Officials said they have lacked the resources to make some improvements that could reduce the time regional office staff spend on reporting.

Standards for internal control state that managers should identify the organizational level at which the information is needed, the degree of specificity needed, and state that managers should review information needs as an on-going process.[45] Streamlining or automating reporting requirements can help centralize documentation relevant to monitoring center safety and security, possibly eliminate seemingly duplicative reporting requirements, and help regional staff manage their workloads.

ETA Lacks a Comprehensive Plan to Link Its Various Efforts to Improve Center Safety and Security

While ETA initiated multiple actions to address various safety and security issues, the agency does not have a comprehensive plan to improve center safety and security. A comprehensive plan describes the organization's long-term goals, its strategy and timelines for achieving those goals, and the measures that will be used to assess its performance in relationship to its goals. It can also guide decision-making to achieve desired outcomes, including the priority with which to implement these efforts. ETA officials told us that although they do not have a single document that reflects a formal comprehensive plan, they have employed a comprehensive approach to improve center safety and security. However, in prior work, GAO established the importance of

[45]See GAO-14-704G.

comprehensive planning to ensure agencies effectively execute their missions and are accountable for results.[46]

GAO has also identified leading practices that help ensure organizations achieve their objectives. These leading practices include developing goals, strategies to achieve goals, plans to assess progress toward goals, and leadership and stakeholder involvement in plan development (see table 6).

Table 6: Selected Leading Practices and Federal Standards for Comprehensive Planning

Leading practice category	Leading practice	Description
Leading practices for conducting a planning process	Ensure leadership involvement and accountability	Leadership is responsible for ensuring that planning becomes the basis of day-to-day operations. Formal and informal practices should hold managers accountable and create incentives for working to achieve the program's goals.
Leading practices for conducting a planning process	Involve stakeholders	Agencies should involve stakeholders in developing the mission, goals, and strategies to help ensure they target the highest priorities.
Leading practices for conducting a planning process	Coordinate with other federal agencies	Agencies should coordinate in defining their mission, goals, and strategies to ensure that programs contributing to similar results are mutually reinforcing and efficiently employing federal funds.
Leading practices for comprehensive plan content	Define the mission and goals	The mission statement should explain why the agency or program exists, what it does, and how. Goals should explain the purpose of the agency or program and the results, including outcomes, it intends to achieve.
Leading practices for comprehensive plan content	Define strategies that address management challenges and identify resources needed to achieve goals	Strategies should address management challenges that threaten the program's ability to meet its long-term strategic goals. Strategies should include a description of the resources needed to meet established goals.
Leading practices for comprehensive plan content	Establish timeframes	Federal internal controls standards call for agencies to identify the timeframes for defined objectives and to assess their progress toward achieving their objectives.
Leading practices for comprehensive plan content	Develop and use performance measures	Performance measures should allow an agency or program to track the progress it is making toward its mission and goals, provide managers information on which to base their decisions, and create incentives to influence organizational and individual behavior.

Source: GAO. | GAO-18-482

Note: Leading practices for planning are derived from our prior reports. See, for example, GAO, *Military Readiness: DOD Needs to Incorporate Elements of a Strategic Management Planning*

[46]See GAO, *Elections: DOD Needs More Comprehensive Planning to Address Military and Overseas Absentee Voting Challenges,* GAO-16-378 (Washington, D.C.: April 20, 2016) and GAO, *New Trauma Care System: DOD Should Fully Incorporate Leading Practices into Its Planning for Effective Implementation,* GAO-18-300 (Washington, D.C.: March 19, 2018).

Framework into Retrograde and Reset Guidance, GAO-16-414 (Washington, D.C.: May 13, 2016); and GAO, *Elections: DOD Needs More Comprehensive Planning to Address Military and Overseas Absentee Voting Challenges*, GAO-16-378 (Washington, D.C.: April 20, 2016). In addition, federal internal controls provide a framework consistent with the leading practices for planning. See GAO, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government,* GAO-14-704G (Washington, D.C.: September 2014).

ETA officials agreed that a comprehensive plan is needed, but told us that limited staff capacity and lack of expertise have hindered their ability to produce a comprehensive plan. In particular, the Division of Regional Operations and Program Integrity would have a role in developing the agency's comprehensive plan. As previously mentioned, ETA officials told us that they did not have approval to fill the six vacant positions in the Division. With only two of the eight positions filled, ETA officials said that they prioritized correcting the deficiencies identified by the DOL OIG and responding to immediate safety and security concerns. ETA officials told us they plan to produce a comprehensive plan when they have secured the staff to do so. However, at this time, ETA does not have a specific timeframe for producing such a plan.

When the agency begins developing a comprehensive plan, it could consider using the leading practices outlined above and drawing on the expertise of the government-wide Performance Improvement Council.[47] In the absence of a comprehensive plan for safety and security, ETA risks the success of its new initiatives because they are not linked in an overall framework that demonstrates how they are aligned or contribute to goals for improving center safety and security.

Conclusions

It is important that Job Corps students be provided with a safe and secure learning environment. For the last several years, however, numerous incidents have threatened the safety and security of students. ETA has taken steps to improve center safety and security, but its efforts could be strengthened by ensuring regional office staff responsible for monitoring Job Corps centers are better supported with additional guidance and streamlined reporting requirements. Without providing regional staff with this additional support, the full potential of the new monitoring strategy may not be realized. While ETA has implemented several actions to

[47]The Performance Improvement Council is a government-wide body that supports cross-agency collaboration and the exchange of knowledge to advance and expand the practice of performance management and improvement.

address safety and security concerns, it does not have a comprehensive plan to guide all of its efforts. Without a comprehensive plan, ETA will not be able to assess its overall effectiveness in addressing center safety and security.

Recommendations for Executive Action

We are making the following three recommendations to ETA:

The Assistant Secretary of ETA should ensure the Office of Job Corps expeditiously develops additional guidance, such as SOPs or updates to the Program Assessment Guide, to ensure regional offices consistently implement the risk-based monitoring strategy. (Recommendation 1)

The Assistant Secretary of ETA should ensure the Office of Job Corps streamlines the monitoring reports completed by regional office staff. This streamlining could include automating monitoring tools, consolidating monitoring reports, or taking other appropriate action. (Recommendation 2)

The Assistant Secretary of ETA should ensure the Office of Job Corps commits to a deadline for developing a comprehensive plan for Job Corps center safety and security that aligns with leading planning practices, such as including a mission statement with goals, timelines, and performance measures. This could also include developing the planning expertise within the Office of Job Corps, leveraging planning experts within other agencies in DOL, or seeking out external experts, such as the government-wide Performance Improvement Council. (Recommendation 3)

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

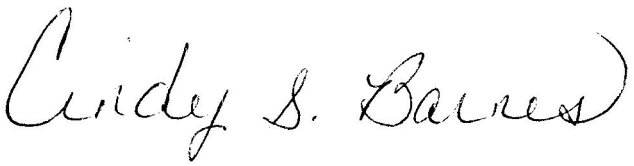
We provided a draft of this report to DOL for review and comment. We received written comments from DOL, which are reprinted in appendix VII. DOL concurred with our three recommendations. The department stated that it will move forward to develop standard operating procedures for its risk-based monitoring strategy, review and streamline existing monitoring reports, and provide additional training for its regional office staff. The department also plans to develop a formal written comprehensive plan for Job Corps safety and security. DOL also provided

technical comments that we have incorporated in the report as appropriate.

As agreed with your office, unless you publicly announce the contents of this report earlier, we plan no further distribution until 30 days from the report date. At that time, we will send copies to the appropriate congressional committees and the Secretary of Labor. In addition, the report is available at no charge on the GAO website at http://www.gao.gov.

If you or your staff have any questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-7215 or brownbarnesc@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made key contributions to this report are listed in appendix VIII.

Sincerely yours,



Cindy Brown Barnes
Director, Education, Workforce, and Income Security Issues

Appendix I: Additional Information about Our Methodology

The objectives of this review were to examine (1) what is known about the number and types of reported incidents involving the safety and security of Job Corps students in program year 2016; (2) what is known about student perceptions of safety and security at Job Corps centers, and what steps, if any, is the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) taking to improve the survey used to collect this information; and (3) the extent to which ETA has taken steps to address safety and security at Job Corps centers.

To address all three objectives, we reviewed agency policies and procedures, such as the Job Corps Policy and Requirements Handbook and guidance issued to center operators and ETA staff. In addition, we interviewed ETA officials, including Office of Job Corps national staff, Office of Job Corps regional directors, and staff in all six regional offices. We also conducted site visits at the Woodstock Job Corps Center in Woodstock, Maryland, and the Potomac Job Corps Center in Washington, D.C. We selected these two centers because they were within geographical proximity to Washington, D.C., operated by different contractors, and had over 100 reported safety and security incidents each in program year 2016. At each center, we interviewed the Center Director, Head of Safety and Security, a group of staff members, and a group of students. The staff and students we spoke with were selected by the centers. While these two site visits are not generalizable to all Job Corps centers, they provide examples of student and staff experiences with safety and security.

Analysis of Safety and Security Incidents at Job Corps Centers

To determine the number and types of safety and security incidents reported by Job Corps centers, we analyzed ETA's incident data for program year 2016 (July 1, 2016 to June 30, 2017). This was the most recent year of Job Corps data available at the time of our review. ETA captures these data in its Significant Incident Reporting System (SIRS).

Centers must report incidents involving both Job Corps students and staff, and incidents that occur at onsite and offsite locations. ETA has 20 categories of incidents in SIRS. See appendix II for incident category definitions. The incident categories and definitions in this report are taken directly from ETA documents and represent how ETA categorizes these incidents. We did not assess these categories and definitions.

In this report, we present information on reported safety and security incidents in program year 2016 involving at least one student victim or perpetrator. There were 13,673 reported incidents involving students; additional incidents are reported in SIRS that did not involve students. When these additional incidents are included, a total of 14,704 safety and security incidents were reported in program year 2016. See appendix III for further information on the total number of incidents reported.

To calculate the number and types of reported incidents, we analyzed the primary incident type that was assigned to each incident reported in SIRS. To provide additional information on reported assaults and sexual assaults, we also analyzed the secondary incident type that was assigned to each reported assault and sexual assault in SIRS. To calculate the total number and types of reported deaths, we analyzed both primary incident types and secondary incident types. In SIRS, deaths can be reported under three different primary incident types (“death”, “assault”, and “danger to self or others”). When an incident is assigned to any of these primary incident types, it may also be assigned a secondary incident type of “homicide,” among other secondary incident types.

In addition, we analyzed the duty status for student victims and perpetrators of offsite incidents. In SIRS, students are described as being either (1) on duty, which means that they are onsite at a center or in a Job Corps supervised offsite activity; or (2) off duty, which means they are offsite and not under Job Corps supervision. For the 1,406 offsite incidents, we were unable to determine student duty status in 178 instances due to inconsistencies in ETA’s data.

This report focuses on reported safety and security incidents in program year 2016, which was from July 1, 2016, to June 30, 2017. On July 1, 2016, ETA implemented policy changes that impacted the categorization and number of reportable safety and security incidents. Accordingly,

incident data after July 1, 2016, are not comparable with earlier incident data, including incident data we reported in a June 2017 testimony.[1]

We assessed the reliability of SIRS data by reviewing relevant agency documentation about the data and the system that produced them and interviewing ETA and Department of Labor Office of Inspector General (DOL OIG) officials knowledgeable about the data. We determined the data were sufficiently reliable to report the minimum number of incidents that occurred in program year 2016. It is likely that the actual number of incidents was greater than the number reported in SIRS because the information is reported by Job Corps centers and the DOL OIG previously found instances of underreporting by a non-generalizable sample of center operators. In its March 2017 report, DOL OIG found that 12 of 125 Job Corps centers did not report 34 percent of significant incidents in SIRS from January 1, 2014, through June 30, 2015. ETA has recently taken steps to improve center reporting of significant incidents, such as revising the student conduct policy to more clearly define behavior infractions and conducting system-wide training to ensure uniform understanding and enforcement of student conduct policies. However, DOL OIG officials told us in January 2018 that it is too early to determine if these steps have resolved the DOL OIG's concerns regarding center underreporting.

Analysis of Student Perceptions of Safety

Survey Response Rate and Reliability

To examine what is known about student perceptions of their safety and security at Job Corps centers, we analyzed students' responses to the student satisfaction survey administered during program year 2016: September 2016 and March 2017. We analyzed responses from both of these surveys in program year 2016, which was the most recent year for which data were available. ETA provided centers with the standardized paper-based survey to administer to students in-person on designated weeks. The survey of 49 close-ended questions contained 12 questions that ETA used to assess students' safety. In addition to questions on student safety, the survey includes questions on other topics, including

[1]GAO, *Job Corps: Preliminary Observations on Student Safety and Security Data,* GAO-17-596T (Washington, D.C.: June 22, 2017).

student demographics, overall satisfaction with Job Corps, and access to drugs and alcohol on center.

According to data from ETA, the response rate for each survey was approximately 90 percent of all enrolled students. ETA calculated the response rate by dividing the number of students who responded to the survey by the number of enrolled students during the week of survey administration. Students responded anonymously to the survey.

Because about 90 percent of students provided responses and about 10 percent did not, we analyzed the potential for non-response biases based on several student characteristics. If the responses of those who did not respond would have differed from the responses of those who did on relevant safety questions, the results calculated solely from those who responded may be biased from excluding parts of the population with different characteristics or views. We compared age, time in program, race, and gender—key characteristics available for the population of enrollees and respondents—to determine areas for potential bias.

We determined that the potential for non-response biases existed for particular groups of students: younger students and those enrolled in the program for at least 6 months. For race, the potential for non-response bias was unclear. We found no potential bias for gender. Specifically, we found the following:

- *Age.* Younger students were under-represented, and older students were over-represented among survey respondents. Thus, to the extent that non-responding younger students would have answered safety questions differently than responding younger students, the potential for bias existed in the survey results we analyzed. When we asked ETA officials about such a potential bias, they responded that they did not have evidence or documentation suggesting that age is a predictor of students' level of perceived safety in the program.
- *Length of time in the program.* Students in the program less than 6 months were over-represented among survey respondents, and students enrolled in the program over 6 months were under-represented in the survey. To the extent that non-responding students would have answered safety questions differently based on length of time enrolled, the potential for bias existed in the survey results we analyzed. When we asked ETA officials about such a potential bias, they noted that new students may be less aware about life at the center because they begin the program with other newly arrived students for up to 2 months. Thus, they are not yet fully integrated into

the larger student body. Otherwise, they did not have evidence or documentation suggesting that length of time in the program correlates with students' level of perceived safety.

- *Race.* It is unclear whether the distribution of race for respondents differs from that in the population. Specifically, ignoring item non-response, about 7 percent of respondents selected "Other," and if those respondents were Black/African American, the distributions between the respondents and sample would be similar since this would result in the respondent race percentage being close to 50 percent, like the population of enrollees. If respondents who selected "Other" were actually distributed across the race categories, this would result in a difference between the respondent and population race/ethnicity characteristics, and to the extent that students' responses to safety questions differ by race, this could result in a potential bias of respondent survey results we analyzed. We analyzed race for purposes of potential non-response bias, and not as part of statistical tests of survey results described below.
- *Gender.* We found no potential non-response bias for gender because the distribution of gender for respondents was similar to that in the population of students enrolled in the program.

In addition to our non-response bias analysis, we assessed the reliability of the survey data by reviewing relevant agency documentation about the data and the system that produced them, testing data electronically, and interviewing ETA officials knowledgeable about the data. We determined that the student survey data were sufficiently reliable for our purposes.

Calculations of Safety for Individual Survey Questions and for National Measures

For the 12 safety-related survey questions, Job Corps policy specified responses that the agency counted as safe or unsafe, which we followed. As noted previously, ETA considers students to feel safe if they provided certain responses to each of the 12 safety-related survey questions, some of which are phrased as statements. For example, if a student provided a response of "mostly false" or "very false" to the statement "I thought about leaving Job Corps because of a personal safety concern," that student would be counted as feeling safe on that survey question (see table 3). The percentages that we calculated are not comparable to prior publications, including ETA reports, because, for example, ETA revised (i.e., recoded) students' responses in certain circumstances, as explained below in table 7. Meanwhile, we used the original responses that students provided and did not revise them. Also, ETA excluded

responses of "don't know / does not apply" from its percentages. As a result, our percentages are not comparable with those reported by ETA.

We also calculated national measures of safety for the program and for particular demographic groups of students (e.g., male, female). Our calculation was similar to ETA's national safety rating in certain respects. For example, as ETA did, we determined how safe each individual student felt as the unit of analysis. Therefore, the national measures of GAO and ETA may not equal the average of the 12 questions because, for example, not all students answered every safety question.

However, in other respects, we produced our national measure differently than ETA. Table 7 explains the three ways that our calculation differed from ETA's.

Table 7: Comparison of Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) and GAO's National Measures of Job Corps Safety

Key elements of calculating the national safety measure	ETA's approach	GAO's approach	Estimated difference in safety measure calculated using GAO's approach as compared to ETA's approach (in percentage points)
Rounding student responses	ETA rounded the average of a student's responses as either safe or unsafe. If a student reported feeling safe on 50 percent or more of the safety questions, ETA counted the student as safe. For example, if a student answered all 12 safety questions with 6 responses that he felt safe and another 6 that he felt unsafe, ETA counted this student as safe (e.g., a numerical score of 1).	GAO computed a numeric average for each student. For example, if a student answered all 12 safety questions with 6 responses that he felt safe and another 6 that he felt unsafe, GAO counted this student as half safe (e.g., a numerical score of 0.5).	GAO's national safety measure is about 11 percentage points lower than ETA's measure.
Recoding student responses	In certain circumstances, ETA revised, or recoded, students' original responses for particular patterns or apparent inconsistencies.[a]	GAO included responses as students answered them on the survey and did not recode their responses.	GAO's national safety measure is about 4 percentage points lower than ETA's measure.
Population of student responses included	ETA calculated the measure of safety based on students who answered at least 7 of the 12 safety questions.[b]	GAO calculated the measure based on students who answered any of the 12 safety questions.	GAO's national safety measure is less than 0.5 percentage points lower than ETA's measure.

Source: GAO analysis of ETA data and information. | GAO-18-482

[a]For purposes of this report, recoding refers to revising the original answers that the respondent provided on the survey. For example, based on particular patterns, ETA revised students' responses to certain questions from "don't know/does not apply" to a response of feeling safe. In those circumstances, ETA officials said they interpreted the students' original responses to mean that they had not experienced that particular aspect of safety, such as seeing or participating in a physical fight. Since that aspect of safety potentially did not apply to those students, ETA deemed that they felt safe

for that question. ETA officials said they do not plan to recode students' responses on the new safety survey they are developing for students.

[b]Nearly all respondents—about 88 percent of enrolled students—answered at least 1 of the 12 safety questions for the two surveys in program year 2016 (in September 2016 and March 2017). ETA calculated that about 84 percent of enrolled students answered at least 7 of the 12 safety-related questions, and these responses have counted toward ETA's national and center safety ratings.

Although the student safety surveys were an attempt to survey a census of the population of participants, we treated the survey as a sample in certain respects due to the non-response of about 10 percent of students as well as the ongoing nature of the regularly repeated survey. Therefore, we considered these data as a random sample from a theoretical population of students in this program and used statistical tests to assess any differences.

Treating the data as a statistical sample, we carried out statistical tests of differences in safety measures for student characteristics (e.g., age, gender, length of time in the program). Because of the large sample size, smaller differences may be detected as statistically significant. This is because statistical significance is a function of the magnitude of the true difference (statistical tests are more likely to detect differences when the true values are very different) as well as the sample size (larger samples can detect statistical significance of smaller magnitudes, when compared to smaller sample sizes, when all else is equal). However, we used statistical significance in conjunction with whether the detected differences are meaningful or important, in a practical sense. In particular, we used a series of f-tests to statistically test, at the alpha = 0.05 level, for difference in average safety measure, across categories of age, gender, time in program, center size, and operator type.

Appendix II: Categories of Incidents in the Significant Incident Reporting System (SIRS)

Table 8: Categories of Incidents in the Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) Significant Incident Reporting System (SIRS) and Related Definitions, as of December 2016

SIRS incident category	ETA's definition
Alcohol-related incident	An incident involving the discovery of alcohol on center, or involving any student found in possession of alcohol or charged by local law enforcement agencies with illegal alcohol consumption or possession.
Arrest	An incident in which a student is arrested for an incident that occurred prior to his/her enrollment in Job Corps.
Assault	These are acts commonly known as assault, battery, or mugging; any assault with a weapon or object; or any altercation resulting in medical treatment for injuries. Mugging (robbery) is included in this category because it pertains more to an assault upon a person than on property.
Breach of security/safety	Any incident that threatens the security and safety of center students, staff, and property which may result in injury, illness, fatality, and/or property damage. Examples include arson, bomb threat, gang-related incidents, possession of gun, possession of an illegal weapon, unauthorized access to center buildings, grounds, or restricted areas, and verbal threats.
Danger to self or others	Attempted suicide is a deliberate action by student to self-inflict bodily harm in an attempt to kill one's self.
Death	The death of any student who is enrolled in Job Corps regardless of his/her duty status or a staff member if the death occurs while on duty, either on center or off center.
Drug-related incident	Incidents involving any student or staff found in possession of or charged by local law enforcement agencies with a drug offense (e.g. the illegal use, possession, or distribution of a controlled substance), or the discovery of drugs on center.
Hospitalization	ETA's *SIRS Technical Guide* does not provide a definition of this category.
Inappropriate sexual behavior	Sexual misconduct includes the intentional touching, mauling, or feeling of the body or private parts of any person without the consent of that person. Sexual harassment or unsolicited offensive behavior such as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature is also included.
Incident attracting potentially negative media attention	ETA's *SIRS Technical Guide* does not provide a definition of this category.
Incident involving law enforcement involvement	ETA's *SIRS Technical Guide* does not provide a definition of this category.
Incident involving a missing minor student	ETA's *SIRS Technical Guide* does not provide a definition of this category.

SIRS incident category	ETA's definition
Incident involving illegal activity (that is not covered in any of the other categories)	ETA's *SIRS Technical Guide* does not provide a definition of this category.
Incident threatening to close down center/disrupt center operations	ETA's *SIRS Technical Guide* does not provide a definition of this category.
Missing person	ETA's *SIRS Technical Guide* does not provide a definition of this category.
Motor vehicle accident	Motor vehicle accidents involving any Job Corps student, on duty staff member, and/or center-owned vehicles.
Safety/hazmat	Any incidents involving hazardous materials/chemicals in any solid, liquid, or gas form that can cause harm to humans, plants, animals, property, or the environment. A hazardous material can be radiological, explosive, toxic, corrosive, biohazard, an oxidizer, an asphyxiant or have other characteristics that render it hazardous in specific circumstances. • Hazmat/toxic- mercury, gasoline, asbestos, lead, used syringe, blood • Hazmat/non-toxic- water, oxygen (can become hazardous under specific circumstances)
Serious illness/injury	Medical incidents include any diagnosis of injury, illness, or disease which is serious or widespread among students and/or staff, (e.g., communicable disease outbreak, reaction to medication/immunization, emergency surgery, hospitalization, emergency room treatment, etc.). Incidents which require medical treatment due to the physical effects of drug and/or alcohol use (drug overdose, alcohol poisoning, etc.) should be included in this category.
Sexual assault	Any alleged non-consenting sexual act involving forceful physical contact including attempted rape, rape, sodomy, and others.
Theft or damage to center, staff or student property	Property incidents are any incident by students or staff that involve the destruction, theft, or attempted theft of property. This includes but is not limited to automobile theft, burglary, vandalism, and shoplifting. Property incidents also include natural occurrences/disasters or any other incident threatening to close down the center or disrupting the center's operation (e.g., hurricane, flooding, earthquake, water main break, power failure, fire, etc.).

Source: ETA documentation. | GAO-18-482

Appendix III: All Significant Incidents Reported by Job Corps Centers in Program Year 2016

Our analysis of the Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) Significant Incident Reporting System (SIRS) data showed that there were 14,704 reported safety and security incidents at Job Corps centers in program year 2016, which include incidents involving students, staff, and non-Job Corps individuals. See table 9.

Table 9: All Onsite and Offsite Safety and Security Incidents Reported by Job Corps Centers during Program Year 2016

SIRS incident category	Student-involved incidents (number)	Student involved incidents (percent)	Other incidents (number)	Other incidents (percent)	Total number of incidents
Alcohol-related incident	869	99%	5	1%	**874**
Arrest	333	98%	6	2%	**339**
Assault	2,593	100%	2	0%	**2,595**
Breach of security/safety	1,651	94%	114	6%	**1,765**
Danger to self or others	706	99%	6	1%	**712**
Death	21	68%	10	32%	**31**
Drug-related incident	3,926	99%	53	1%	**3,979**
Hospitalization	504	94%	35	6%	**539**
Inappropriate sexual behavior	187	99%	1	1%	**188**
Incident attracting potentially negative media attention	97	78%	28	22%	**125**
Incident involving law enforcement	289	76%	92	24%	**381**
Incident involving a missing minor student	96	99%	1	1%	**97**
Incident involving illegal activity (not covered by other categories)	54	89%	7	11%	**61**
Incident threatening to close down center/disrupt center operations	278	84%	54	16%	**332**

SIRS incident category	Student-involved incidents (number)	Student involved incidents (percent)	Other incidents (number)	Other incidents (percent)	Total number of incidents
Missing person	261	98%	4	2%	**265**
Motor vehicle accident	125	28%	322	72%	**447**
Safety/hazmat	17	31%	38	69%	**55**
Serious illness/injury	790	93%	57	7%	**847**
Sexual assault	177	99%	1	1%	**178**
Theft or damage to center, staff or student property	699	78%	195	22%	**894**
Total	**13,673**	**93%**	**1,031**	**7%**	**14,704**

Source: GAO Analysis of Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data. | GAO-18-482

Notes: Student-involved incidents are incidents in which there was at least one student victim or perpetrator. Other incidents are incidents in which there was not at least one student victim or perpetrator. These incidents involved Job Corps staff members or individuals not affiliated with the program. The incident categories and definitions in this report are taken directly from ETA documents and represent how ETA categorizes these incidents. We did not assess these categories and definitions.

Appendix IV: Reported Safety and Security Incidents Involving Students by Job Corps Center, Program Year 2016

Job Corps centers reported 13,673 safety and security incidents involving students, including those that occurred both onsite and offsite, in program year 2016. See table 10 for information on each Job Corps center, including the number of incidents involving students reported in program year 2016.

Table 10: Onsite and Offsite Safety and Security Incidents Involving Students Reported by Each Job Corps Center during Program Year 2016

State	Center name	Operator (as of June 30, 2017)[a]	Number of students served on center	Residential students (percentage)[b]	Number of reported incidents[c]	Number of reported violent incidents[d]
Alabama	Gadsden	Alutiiq Education & Training[a]	558	94%	102	28
Alabama	Montgomery	Alutiiq Education & Training	578	75%	63	21
Alaska	Alaska	Chugach Education Services	463	95%	72	15
Arizona	Fred G. Acosta	Human Learning Systems[a]	518	50%	56	5
Arizona	Phoenix	Education Management Corporation	831	54%	169	16
Arkansas	Cass	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	357	100%	85	17
Arkansas	Little Rock	Odle Management Group[a]	567	90%	115	30
Arkansas	Ouachita[e]	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	52	100%	2	0
California	Inland Empire	Chugach Education Services[a]	619	91%	93	20
California	Long Beach	Odle Management Group	564	82%	171	19
California	Los Angeles	YWCA of Greater Los Angeles	1,137	56%	120	17
California	Sacramento	McConnell Jones Lanier & Murphy LLP	891	73%	155	27

State	Center name	Operator (as of June 30, 2017)[a]	Number of students served on center	Residential students (percentage)[b]	Number of reported incidents[c]	Number of reported violent incidents[d]
California	San Diego	Career Systems Development Corporation	1,119	91%	127	23
California	San Jose	Career Systems Development Corporation	725	87%	93	11
California	Treasure Island	Adams and Associates	1,109	97%	191	33
Colorado	Collbran	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	402	100%	13	2
Connecticut	Hartford	Education and Training Resources	382	60%	96	10
Connecticut	New Haven	Career Systems Development Corporation	338	78%	78	7
District of Columbia	Potomac	Exceed[a]	775	94%	135	24
Delaware	Wilmington	Management and Training Corporation	392	0%	45	10
Florida	Gainesville	Fluor	713	95%	104	27
Florida	Homestead[f]	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Florida	Jacksonville	Chugach Education Services	571	84%	105	18
Florida	Miami	ResCare	478	64%	62	19
Florida	Pinellas	Odle Management Group[a]	585	91%	86	13
Georgia	Atlanta	Management and Training Corporation	701	12%	121	14
Georgia	Brunswick	Management and Training Corporation	898	100%	224	72
Georgia	Turner	Management and Training Corporation[a]	1,181	91%	169	36
Hawaii	Hawaii	Management and Training Corporation	321	85%	84	14
Idaho	Centennial	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	530	97%	50	5
Illinois	Golconda	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	274	100%	74	21
Illinois	Joliet	Adams and Associates	538	96%	78	23
Illinois	Paul Simon	Management and Training Corporation	749	70%	129	31
Indiana	Atterbury	Adams and Associates	833	100%	190	53
Iowa	Denison	Management and Training Corporation	619	97%	82	18
Iowa	Ottumwa	Career Systems Development Corporation	549	84%	68	13

State	Center name	Operator (as of June 30, 2017)[a]	Number of students served on center	Residential students (percentage)[b]	Number of reported incidents[c]	Number of reported violent incidents[d]
Kansas	Flint Hills	Serrato[a]	547	96%	119	25
Kentucky	Carl D. Perkins	Insights Training Group[a]	512	92%	75	23
Kentucky	Earle C. Clements	Management and Training Corporation	1,924	99%	396	90
Kentucky	Frenchburg	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	213	100%	35	9
Kentucky	Great Onyx	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	366	100%	81	28
Kentucky	Muhlenberg	Insights Training Group[a]	791	95%	143	28
Kentucky	Pine Knot	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	383	100%	76	19
Kentucky	Whitney M. Young	Odle Management Group	837	90%	157	40
Louisiana	Carville	Paradigmworks Group, Inc.[a]	495	100%	71	23
Louisiana	New Orleans	Odle Management Group	521	0%	60	3
Louisiana	Shreveport	MINACT	631	71%	172	23
Maine	Loring	Career Systems Development Corporation	510	94%	87	24
Maine	Penobscot	Career Systems Development Corporation	546	83%	149	21
Maryland	Woodland	Adams and Associates	587	99%	112	34
Maryland	Woodstock	Adams and Associates	806	94%	147	33
Massachusetts	Grafton	Adams and Associates	551	86%	127	24
Massachusetts	Shriver	Alternate Perspectives, Inc.[a]	624	89%	89	18
Massachusetts	Westover	Alutiiq Education & Training	815	79%	112	18
Michigan	Detroit	Alutiiq Education & Training	687	75%	106	27
Michigan	Flint/Genesee	Alutiiq Education & Training	592	76%	91	19
Michigan	Gerald R. Ford	MINACT	601	93%	72	21
Minnesota	Hubert Humphrey	Management and Training Corporation	620	78%	59	7
Mississippi	Finch-Henry	MINACT	611	90%	142	22
Mississippi	Gulfport	MINACT	325	57%	66	24
Mississippi	Mississippi	Fluor	698	60%	84	19
Missouri	Excelsior Springs	MINACT	1,106	67%	170	31
Missouri	Mingo	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	357	100%	61	7
Missouri	St. Louis	Adams and Associates	988	78%	179	25
Montana	Anaconda	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	403	100%	37	7

State	Center name	Operator (as of June 30, 2017)[a]	Number of students served on center	Residential students (percentage)[b]	Number of reported incidents[c]	Number of reported violent incidents[d]
Montana	Kicking Horse	Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation	341	94%	60	14
Montana	Trapper Creek	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	444	100%	39	11
Nebraska	Pine Ridge	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	376	100%	46	17
Nevada	Sierra Nevada	Management and Training Corporation	972	88%	183	31
New Hampshire	New Hampshire	Adams and Associates	523	91%	75	15
New Jersey	Edison	ResCare	770	94%	123	26
New Mexico	Albuquerque	Alutiiq Management Services[a]	772	91%	168	19
New Mexico	Roswell	Alutiiq Management Services[a]	410	80%	136	15
New York	Cassadaga	Career Systems Development Corporation	542	94%	157	9
New York	Delaware Valley	Adams and Associates	655	100%	191	47
New York	Glenmont	Adams and Associates	596	96%	115	22
New York	Iroquois	Education and Training Resources	531	100%	80	18
New York	Oneonta	Education and Training Resources	627	97%	121	16
New York	South Bronx	ResCare	474	68%	80	11
North Carolina	Kittrell	Adams and Associates	656	91%	120	39
North Carolina	Lyndon Johnson	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	365	100%	125	36
North Carolina	Oconaluftee	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	321	99%	64	15
North Carolina	Schenck	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	424	97%	83	15
North Dakota	Quentin Burdick	Jackson Pierce Public Affairs, Inc.[a]	482	84%	123	9
Ohio	Cincinnati	Management and Training Corporation	537	77%	132	25
Ohio	Cleveland	Serrato	711	85%	121	21
Ohio	Dayton	Alutiiq Management Services	648	99%	130	32
Oklahoma	Guthrie	ResCare	1,137	90%	171	50
Oklahoma	Talking Leaves	Cherokee Nation	510	91%	50	15
Oklahoma	Tulsa	ResCare	530	79%	78	13

State	Center name	Operator (as of June 30, 2017)[a]	Number of students served on center	Residential students (percentage)[b]	Number of reported incidents[c]	Number of reported violent incidents[d]
Oregon	Angell	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	364	100%	65	17
Oregon	Springdale	Chugach Education Services	298	81%	83	9
Oregon	Timber Lake	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	407	100%	26	6
Oregon	Tongue Point	Management and Training Corporation	943	99%	181	20
Oregon	Wolf Creek	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	536	100%	72	12
Pennsylvania	Keystone	Adams and Associates[a]	942	99%	251	64
Pennsylvania	Philadelphia	Management and Training Corporation	677	0%	51	6
Pennsylvania	Pittsburgh	Odle Management Group	1,421	47%	279	35
Pennsylvania	Red Rock	ResCare[a]	448	100%	78	34
Puerto Rico	Arecibo	ResCare	361	58%	18	3
Puerto Rico	Barranquitas	ResCare	481	60%	43	15
Puerto Rico	Ramey	ResCare	564	57%	51	13
Rhode Island	Exeter	Adams and Associates	388	96%	92	18
South Carolina	Bamberg	Alutiiq Education & Training	504	100%	93	18
South Dakota	Boxelder	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	309	100%	61	2
Tennessee	BL Hooks/Memphis	MINACT	567	86%	135	21
Tennessee	Jacobs Creek	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	335	100%	93	22
Texas	David Carrasco	Odle Management Group[a]	818	66%	112	18
Texas	Gary	Management and Training Corporation	3,597	97%	572	142
Texas	Laredo	Career Systems Development Corporation	466	76%	33	4
Texas	North Texas	Horizons Youth Services[a]	1,087	100%	220	58
Utah	Clearfield	Management and Training Corporation	2,284	100%	436	69
Utah	Weber Basin	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	392	100%	49	15
Vermont	Northlands	Chugach Education Services[a]	375	99%	75	17
Virginia	Blue Ridge	Serrato	268	86%	65	10
Virginia	Flatwoods	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	315	99%	65	16
Virginia	Old Dominion	Odle Management Group[a]	503	100%	94	27

State	Center name	Operator (as of June 30, 2017)[a]	Number of students served on center	Residential students (percentage)[b]	Number of reported incidents[c]	Number of reported violent incidents[d]
Washington	Cascades[g]	Adams and Associates	22	100%	2	0
Washington	Columbia Basin	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	526	96%	59	10
Washington	Curlew	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	313	99%	49	19
Washington	Fort Simcoe	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	256	98%	43	10
West Virginia	Charleston	Horizons Youth Services	670	95%	132	29
West Virginia	Harpers Ferry	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	219	100%	32	7
Wisconsin	Blackwell	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	376	100%	76	28
Wisconsin	Milwaukee	MINACT	651	83%	119	26
Wyoming	Wind River	Management and Training Corporation	482	85%	115	7
Total	**n/a**	**n/a**	**79,030**	**85%**	**13,673**	**2,772**

Source: GAO analysis of Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data. | GAO-18-482

[a]Twenty-one Job Corps centers changed operators during program year 2016. For these centers, we listed the operator as of the last day of the program year (June 30, 2017). However, if a center changed operators during program year 2016 it is likely that some of the incidents reported occurred under the prior operator.

[b]Percentages were rounded to the nearest whole number.

[c]The total number of incidents in this table includes all safety and security incidents involving at least one student victim or perpetrator.

[d]For the purposes of this analysis we defined violent incidents as assault, homicide, and sexual assault. In program year 2016, the vast majority of violent incidents (93 percent) were assaults. The incident categories and definitions for assaults, homicides, and sexual assaults are taken directly from ETA documents and represent how ETA categorizes these incidents.

[e]On July 1, 2016, ETA announced its decision to close the Ouachita Job Corps center. Students enrolled at the center during that time were given the opportunity to complete their training and graduate at Ouachita or transfer to another Job Corps center.

[f]Operations were temporarily suspended at the Homestead Job Corps center during program year 2016.

[g]The Cascades Job Corps is piloting a program known as the Cascades College and Career Academy. The center temporarily did not have students enrolled for several months beginning December 2015 as it transitioned to the pilot program.

Appendix V: GAO Safety Measure for Job Corps Centers, March 2017

We calculated safety measures for each Job Corps center, based on student responses to the safety-related questions on the student satisfaction survey (see table 11). We used the methodology described in appendix I to calculate safety measures for the centers. Results in table 11 are from the March 2017 survey, the most recent for program year 2016. The percentages in this table are not comparable and should not be analyzed with the numbers of reported incidents at each center because they are distinct measures that cover different periods of time.

Table 11: GAO Safety Measure for Job Corps Centers Based on the Student Satisfaction Survey, March 2017

State	Center name	Operator (as of June 30, 2017)[a]	GAO's safety measure for the center[b]
Alabama	Gadsden	Alutiiq Education & Training[a]	65%
Alabama	Montgomery	Alutiiq Education & Training	72%
Alaska	Alaska	Chugach Education Services	78%
Arizona	Fred G. Acosta	Human Learning Systems[a]	77%
Arizona	Phoenix	Education Management Corporation	64%
Arkansas	Cass	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	73%
Arkansas	Little Rock	Odle Management Group[a]	66%
Arkansas	Ouachita[c]	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	n/a[c]
California	Inland Empire	Chugach Education Services[a]	76%
California	Long Beach	Odle Management Group	74%
California	Los Angeles	YWCA of Greater Los Angeles	74%
California	Sacramento	McConnell Jones Lanier & Murphy LLP	65%
California	San Diego	Career Systems Development Corporation	76%
California	San Jose	Career Systems Development Corporation	75%
California	Treasure Island	Adams and Associates	77%
Colorado	Collbran	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	84%
Connecticut	Hartford	Education and Training Resources	74%

State	Center name	Operator (as of June 30, 2017)[a]	GAO's safety measure for the center[b]
Connecticut	New Haven	Career Systems Development Corporation	68%
District of Columbia	Potomac	Exceed[a]	70%
Delaware	Wilmington	Management and Training Corporation	75%
Florida	Gainesville	Fluor	72%
Florida	Homestead[d]	n/a	n/a[d]
Florida	Jacksonville	Chugach Education Services	76%
Florida	Miami	ResCare	69%
Florida	Pinellas	Odle Management Group[a]	86%
Georgia	Atlanta	Management and Training Corporation	74%
Georgia	Brunswick	Management and Training Corporation	78%
Georgia	Turner	Management and Training Corporation[a]	68%
Hawaii	Hawaii	Management and Training Corporation	76%
Idaho	Centennial	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	74%
Illinois	Golconda	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	63%
Illinois	Joliet	Adams and Associates	66%
Illinois	Paul Simon	Management and Training Corporation	73%
Indiana	Atterbury	Adams and Associates	73%
Iowa	Denison	Management and Training Corporation	73%
Iowa	Ottumwa	Career Systems Development Corporation	68%
Kansas	Flint Hills	Serrato[a]	79%
Kentucky	Carl D. Perkins	Insights Training Group[a]	72%
Kentucky	Earle C. Clements	Management and Training Corporation	64%
Kentucky	Frenchburg	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	91%
Kentucky	Great Onyx	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	59%
Kentucky	Muhlenberg	Insights Training Group[a]	78%
Kentucky	Pine Knot	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	74%
Kentucky	Whitney M. Young	Odle Management Group	75%
Louisiana	Carville	Paradigmworks Group, Inc.[a]	71%
Louisiana	New Orleans	Odle Management Group	80%
Louisiana	Shreveport	MINACT	91%
Maine	Loring	Career Systems Development Corporation	70%
Maine	Penobscot	Career Systems Development Corporation	70%

State	Center name	Operator (as of June 30, 2017)[a]	GAO's safety measure for the center[b]
Maryland	Woodland	Adams and Associates	67%
Maryland	Woodstock	Adams and Associates	74%
Massachusetts	Grafton	Adams and Associates	77%
Massachusetts	Shriver	Alternate Perspectives, Inc.[a]	69%
Massachusetts	Westover	Alutiiq Education & Training	70%
Michigan	Detroit	Alutiiq Education & Training	71%
Michigan	Flint/Genesee	Alutiiq Education & Training	71%
Michigan	Gerald R. Ford	MINACT	61%
Minnesota	Hubert Humphrey	Management and Training Corporation	74%
Mississippi	Finch-Henry	MINACT	92%
Mississippi	Gulfport	MINACT	81%
Mississippi	Mississippi	Fluor	83%
Missouri	Excelsior Springs	MINACT	67%
Missouri	Mingo	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	66%
Missouri	St. Louis	Adams and Associates	67%
Montana	Anaconda	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	80%
Montana	Kicking Horse	Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation	66%
Montana	Trapper Creek	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	77%
Nebraska	Pine Ridge	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	70%
Nevada	Sierra Nevada	Management and Training Corporation	72%
New Hampshire	New Hampshire	Adams and Associates	64%
New Jersey	Edison	ResCare	82%
New Mexico	Albuquerque	Alutiiq Management Services[a]	74%
New Mexico	Roswell	Alutiiq Management Services[a]	73%
New York	Cassadaga	Career Systems Development Corporation	71%
New York	Delaware Valley	Adams and Associates	61%
New York	Glenmont	Adams and Associates	66%
New York	Iroquois	Education and Training Resources	62%
New York	Oneonta	Education and Training Resources	80%
New York	South Bronx	ResCare	81%
North Carolina	Kittrell	Adams and Associates	59%
North Carolina	Lyndon Johnson	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	67%

State	Center name	Operator (as of June 30, 2017)[a]	GAO's safety measure for the center[b]
North Carolina	Oconaluftee	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	64%
North Carolina	Schenck	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	66%
North Dakota	Quentin Burdick	Jackson Pierce Public Affairs, Inc.[a]	73%
Ohio	Cincinnati	Management and Training Corporation	77%
Ohio	Cleveland	Serrato	71%
Ohio	Dayton	Alutiiq Management Services	67%
Oklahoma	Guthrie	ResCare	70%
Oklahoma	Talking Leaves	Cherokee Nation	78%
Oklahoma	Tulsa	ResCare	66%
Oregon	Angell	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	61%
Oregon	Springdale	Chugach Education Services	78%
Oregon	Timber Lake	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	73%
Oregon	Tongue Point	Management and Training Corporation	83%
Oregon	Wolf Creek	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	79%
Pennsylvania	Keystone	Adams and Associates[a]	66%
Pennsylvania	Philadelphia	Management and Training Corporation	83%
Pennsylvania	Pittsburgh	Odle Management Group	79%
Pennsylvania	Red Rock	ResCare[a]	70%
Puerto Rico	Arecibo	ResCare	81%
Puerto Rico	Barranquitas	ResCare	74%
Puerto Rico	Ramey	ResCare	86%
Rhode Island	Exeter	Adams and Associates	68%
South Carolina	Bamberg	Alutiiq Education & Training	68%
South Dakota	Boxelder	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	75%
Tennessee	BL Hooks/Memphis	MINACT	71%
Tennessee	Jacobs Creek	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	55%
Texas	David Carrasco	Odle Management Group[a]	76%
Texas	Gary	Management and Training Corporation	71%
Texas	Laredo	Career Systems Development Corporation	81%
Texas	North Texas	Horizons Youth Services[a]	72%
Utah	Clearfield	Management and Training Corporation	77%

State	Center name	Operator (as of June 30, 2017)[a]	GAO's safety measure for the center[b]
Utah	Weber Basin	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	62%
Vermont	Northlands	Chugach Education Services[a]	64%
Virginia	Blue Ridge	Serrato	62%
Virginia	Flatwoods	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	67%
Virginia	Old Dominion	Odle Management Group[a]	81%
Washington	Cascades[e]	Adams and Associates	n/a[e]
Washington	Columbia Basin	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	62%
Washington	Curlew	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	72%
Washington	Fort Simcoe	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	71%
West Virginia	Charleston	Horizons Youth Services	67%
West Virginia	Harpers Ferry	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	67%
West Virginia	Blackwell	U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service	62%
West Virginia	Milwaukee	MINACT	71%
Wyoming	Wind River	Management and Training Corporation	69%
Total	**n/a**	**n/a**	**73%**

Source: GAO analysis of Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data. | GAO-18-482

[a]Twenty-one Job Corps centers changed operators during program year 2016. For these centers, we listed the operator as of the last day of the program year (June 30, 2017).

[b]Our measure of safety reflects the average of how safe each student felt on the 12 safety-related student satisfaction survey questions. For more information on this calculation, see appendix I.

[c]On July 1, 2016, ETA announced its decision to close the Ouachita Job Corps center and as a result students were not administered the student satisfaction survey during program year 2016. Students enrolled at the center during that time were given the opportunity to complete their training and graduate at Ouachita or transfer to another Job Corps center.

[d]The Homestead Job Corps center did not administer the student satisfaction survey during program year 2016 because its operations were temporarily suspended.

[e]The Cascades Job Corps center is piloting a program known as the Cascades College and Career Academy. According to ETA officials, due to the implementation of the pilot program students were not administered the student satisfaction survey in program year 2016.

Appendix VI: ETA's Monitoring of Job Corps Centers

The Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) risk-based monitoring strategy is designed to identify emerging problems that place a Job Corps center at-risk for safety and security problems. The strategy is largely implemented by regional office staff, which work with the Office of Job Corps' newly formed Division of Regional Operations and Program Integrity and use a variety of tools to assess, track, and report on center performance (see table 12).

Table 12: Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) Risk-Based Monitoring Strategy for Job Corps

Component	Description	Status	Regional staff role
Division of Regional Operations and Program Integrity	Established within the Job Corps National office to provide resources and oversight to regional office staff responsible for monitoring.	Established in September 2015, but has experienced staffing challenges. As of January 2018, two of eight positions were filled. ETA officials said that, as a result, the Division is unable to effectively perform its duties.	Receive national-level data and other information from the Division. May work with the Division to respond to challenging safety and security issues at centers.
Risk Management Dashboard (RMD)	Utilizes data from various Job Corps systems to identify centers at risk for declines in center culture and safety and security problems.	Since January 2015, data collected on measures of center climate and culture are analyzed. Each month, centers are assigned to a risk category based on their overall score.	Review RMD results, work with centers to address emerging problems, and complete a report documenting regional staff and center actions to address problem areas.
Risk-Based Monitoring Triggers	ETA issued a notice to Job Corps center operators outlining 10 risk-based triggers that could result in a center assessment.	Implemented beginning in January 2016.	Regional staff monitors these triggers on an on-going basis.
Desk Monitoring	Review of center data, significant incident reports, and other information to determine how a center is performing.	Beginning in fiscal year 2018, ETA modified the regional staff performance standards to include desk monitoring to emphasize its importance.	Each month, regional staff conduct desk monitoring, submit a desk monitoring report, and follow up on issues identified during the desk audit.

Component	Description	Status	Regional staff role
Center Assessments	Unannounced visits to determine if centers are implementing safety and security requirements in accordance with the Policy and Requirements Handbook.	In September 2015, ETA began conducting an assessment focused solely on safety and security issues. In addition, other assessments include safety and security.	Teams of regional staff conduct assessments, develop reports that identify areas of noncompliance, and review operator's plans to address areas of noncompliance.
Corrective Action Tracker	Documents steps operators are taking to correct center safety and security deficiencies.	Implemented in early 2016 and updated every 60 days.	Provide updates to the National office via the Tracker on center operator progress to address deficiencies and the regional staff's own follow-up monitoring activities.

Source: ETA documentation. | GAO-18-482

Appendix VII: Comments from the Department of Labor

U.S. Department of Labor

Employment and Training Administration
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20210

MAY 2 2 2018

Ms. Cindy S. Brown-Barnes
Director
Education, Workforce,
and Income Security Issues
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G. Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Ms. Brown-Barnes:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Government Accountability Office's (GAO) draft report, "Job Corps: DOL Could Enhance Safety and Security at Center with Consistent Monitoring and Comprehensive Planning." The Department appreciates GAO's work and recognition of the extensive steps the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) has taken to address safety and security at its Job Corps centers. It is critical that Job Corps students be provided with a safe and secure learning environment. ETA will continue its efforts to promote a safe and secure learning environment and will implement measures, including those recommended by the GAO, to support this goal.

The Department agrees with GAO's three recommendations. First, the Office of Job Corps will move forward to develop and implement Standard Operating Procedures and will update the Program Assessment Guide to ensure consistent implementation of the risk-based monitoring strategy. Second, the Office of Job Corps will review and streamline existing monitoring reports and will provide additional training to regional office staff to ensure understanding of the different reports and how to write required narratives. Third, even though a comprehensive safety and security approach has been pursued, the Office of Job Corps will develop and implement a formal written comprehensive plan for Job Corps center safety and security to ensure objectives are achieved.

Thank you for your review and recommendations.

Sincerely,

Rosemary Lahasky
Deputy Assistant Secretary

Appendix VIII: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

Cindy Brown Barnes, (202) 512-7215 or brownbarnesc@gao.gov

Staff Acknowledgments

In addition to the contact named above, Mary Crenshaw (Assistant Director), Andrea Dawson (Analyst-in-Charge), Sandra Baxter, and Matthew Saradjian made key contributions to this report. Additional assistance was provided by Alex Galuten, Gretta Goodwin, Benjamin Licht, Grant Mallie, Mimi Nguyen, Nhi Nguyen, Monica Savoy, Almeta Spencer, Manuel Valverde, Kathleen van Gelder, and Sonya Vartivarian.

Appendix IX: Accessible Data

Data Tables

Accessible Data for Types of Onsite and Offsite Safety and Security Incidents Involving Students Reported by Job Corps Centers from July 2016 to June 2017

Incident type	Number	Percentage
Drug-related incident	3,926	29
Assault	2,593	19
Breach of security/safety	1,651	12
Alcohol-related incident	869	6
Serious illness/injury	790	6
Danger to self/others	706	5
Theft or damage to property	699	5
All other incidents	2,439	18

Source: GAO analysis of Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data. | GAO-18-482

Accessible Data for Figure 1: Job Corps Center Locations and Regional Offices as of April 2018

San Francisco Regional Office	Dallas Regional Office	Chicago Regional Office	Boston Regional Office	Philadelphia Regional Office	Atlanta Regional Office
• Washington • Oregon • Idaho • California • Nevada • Arizona • Alaska • Hawaii	• Montana • North Dakota • South Dakota • Wyoming • Utah • Colorado • New Mexico • Texas • Oklahoma • Arkansas • Louisiana	• Minnesota • Wisconsin • Michigan • Nebraska • Iowa • Illinois • Indiana • Ohio • Kansas • Missouri	• Maine • Vermont • New Hampshire • Rhode Island • Connecticut • New Jersey • New York • Puerto Rico	• Pennsylvania • Maryland • Delaware • District of Columbia • Virginia • West Virginia • Kentucky	• Tennessee • North Carolina • South Carolina • Mississippi • Alabama • Georgia • Florida

Source: Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data; Map Resources (map). Locations are approximate. | GAO-18-482

Accessible Data for Figure 2: Types of Onsite and Offsite Safety and Security Incidents Reported by Job Corps Centers during Program Year 2016

Incident type	Percentage	Number
Drug-related incident	29	3,926
Theft or damage to property	5	699
Danger to self/others	5	706
Alcohol-related incident	6	869
Serious illness/injury	6	790
Breach of security/safety	12	1,651
All other incidents	18	2,439
Assault	19	2,593

All other incidents	Number
Hospitalization	504
Arrest	333
Incident involving law enforcement	289
Incident threatening to close down or disrupt center operations	278
Missing person	261
Inappropriate sexual behavior	187
Sexual assault	177
Motor vehicle accident	125
Incident attracting potentially negative media attention	97
Incident involving a missing minor student	96
Other[a]	92

Source: GAO analysis of Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data. | GAO-18-482

Accessible Data for Figure 3: Type and Location of Safety and Security Incidents Reported by Job Corps Centers during Program Year 2016

n/a		Percentage	n/a
Incident type	Onsite	Offsite	Total
All reported incidents	90	10	13,673

Source: GAO analysis of Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data. | GAO-18-482

n/a	Percentage		n/a
Incident type	**Onsite**	**Offsite**	**Total**
Drug-related incident	99	1	3,926
Breach of security/safety	98	2	1,651
Assault	96	4	2,593
Danger to self/others	95	5	706
Serious illness/injury	93	7	790
Theft/damage to property	87	13	699
Alcohol-related incident	84	16	869
Sexual assault	64	36	177
Incident involving law enforcement	62	38	289
Missing person	54	46	261
Arrest	22	78	333
Death	14	86	21
Motor vehicle accident	13	87	125
All other incidents[a]	82	18	1,233

Source: GAO analysis of Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data. | GAO-18-482

Accessible Data for Figure 4: Number of Student Victims and Perpetrators of Incidents Reported at Job Corps Centers in Program Year 2016

Incident type	Total number of victims	Total number of perpetrators
Drug-related incident	33	4,541
Assault	1,788	3,722
Breach of security/safety	697	1,877
Alcohol-related incident	5	1,184
Serious illness/injury	856	32
Theft or damage to property	300	736
Danger to self/others	487	514
All other incidents	1,594	1,870

Source: GAO analysis of Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data. | GAO-18-482

Accessible Data for Figure 5: Characteristics of Student Victims of Selected Incident Types Reported at Job Corps Centers in Program Year 2016

n/a		Percentage of victims	
Incident type	**Male**	**Under 20**	**Enrolled less than 4 months**
Drug-related	48	64	45
Assault	65	67	60
Breach of security/safety	57	65	71
Alcohol-related incident	60	40	80
Serious illness/injury	64	58	53
Theft or damage to property	73	53	50
Danger to self/others	50	63	61
All other incidents	46	59	50

Source: GAO analysis of Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data. | GAO-18-482

Accessible Data for Figure 6: Characteristics of Student Perpetrators of Selected Incident Types Reported at Job Corps Centers in Program Year 2016

n/a		Percentage of perpetrators	
Incident type	**Male**	**Under 20**	**Enrolled less than 4 months**
Drug-related	71	60	71
Assault	69	70	59
Breach of security/safety	68	65	67
Alcohol-related incident	70	37	47
Serious illness/injury	78	66	53
Theft or damage to property	79	67	50
Danger to self/others	67	64	62
All other incidents	70	67	58

Source: GAO analysis of Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data. | GAO-18-482

Agency Comment Letter

Accessible Text for Appendix VII: Comments from the Department of Labor

U.S. Department of Labor

Employment and Training Administration

200 Constitution Avenue, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20210

MAY 22 2018

Ms. Cindy S. Brown-Barnes Director

Education, Workforce,

and Income Security Issues

U.S. Government Accountability Office

441 G. Street, N.W.

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Rosemary Lahasky

Deputy Assistant Secretary

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