

Eliminate Job Corps

SAVINGS IN MILLIONS OF DOLLARS

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2016–2020	2016–2025
\$1,721	\$1,757	\$1,797	\$1,838	\$1,878	\$1,917	\$1,965	\$2,015	\$2,065	\$2,112	\$8,991	\$19,065

Heritage Recommendation:

Eliminate Job Corps. This proposal saves over \$1.7 billion in 2016, and \$19 billion over 10 years.

Rationale:

The National Job Corps Study, a randomized experiment—the “gold standard” of scientific research—assessed the impact of Job Corps on participants compared to similar individuals who did not participate in the program. For a federal taxpayer investment of \$25,000 per Job Corps participant, the study found:

- Compared to non-participants, Job Corp participants were less likely to earn a high school diploma (7.5 percent versus 5.3 percent);
- Compared to non-participants, Job Corp participants were no more likely to attend or complete college;
- Four years after participating in the evaluation, the average weekly earnings of Job Corps participants were a mere \$22 higher than the average weekly earnings of the control group; and
- Employed Job Corps participants earned only \$0.22 more in hourly wages compared to employed control group members.

If the Job Corps actually improves the skills of its participants, it should have substantially raised their hourly wages. A paltry \$0.22 increase in hourly wages suggests that Job Corps does little to boost the job skills of participants.

A cost-benefit analysis based on the National Job Corps Study found that the benefits of the Job Corps do not outweigh the cost of the program. Job Corps does not provide the skills and training to substantially raise the wages of participants. Costing \$25,000 per participant over an average participation period of eight months, the program is a waste of taxpayers’ dollars.

Additional Reading:

- David B. Muhlhausen, “Job Corps: An Unfailing Record of Failure,” Heritage Foundation *WebMemo* No. 2423, May 5, 2009, <http://www.Heritage.org/research/reports/2009/05/job-corps-an-unfailing-record-of-failure>.
- David. B. Muhlhausen, “Do Federal Social Programs Work?” Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 2884, March 19, 2014, <http://www.Heritage.org/research/reports/2014/03/do-federal-social-programs-work>.

Calculations:

Savings are expressed as budget authority as reported on page 233 of “Analytical Perspectives, Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2015, Table 29-1. Federal Programs by Agency and Account,” http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/budget/fy2015/assets/29_1.pdf. Budget authority is not provided for 2025, but is assumed to increase at the same rate as the geometric mean of the previous nine years.