

GAO Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-17-596T](#), a testimony before the Committee on Education and the Workforce, House of Representatives

Why GAO Did This Study

The deaths of two Job Corps students in 2015 raised concerns about the safety and security of students in this program. The Job Corps program serves approximately 50,000 students each year at 125 centers nationwide.

Multiple DOL Office of Inspector General (OIG) audits have found deficiencies in the Office of Job Corps' efforts to oversee student safety. ETA and the Office of Job Corps have taken steps to address these concerns, but in March 2017, the DOL OIG raised new safety and security concerns, including some underreporting of incident data, and made related recommendations.

This testimony is based on GAO's ongoing work on these issues and provides preliminary observations on (1) the number and types of reported safety and security incidents involving Job Corps students, and (2) student perceptions of safety at Job Corps centers.

GAO analyzed ETA's reported incident data from January 1, 2007 through June 30, 2016. GAO's preliminary analysis summarizes reported incidents in the aggregate over this time period but the actual number is likely greater. GAO also analyzed student survey data from March 2007 through March 2017, reviewed relevant documentation, and interviewed ETA officials and DOL OIG officials.

What GAO Recommends

GAO is not making recommendations in this testimony but will consider recommendations, as appropriate, when ongoing work is finished. GAO incorporated comments from ETA as appropriate.

View [GAO-17-596T](#). For more information, contact Cindy Brown Barnes, (202) 512-7215, brownbarnesc@gao.gov.

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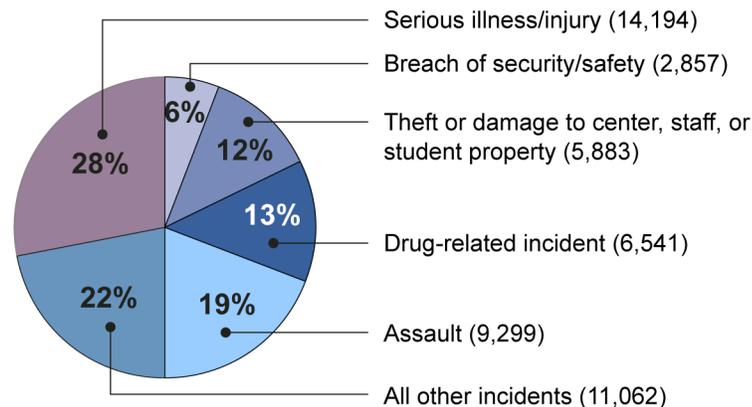
JOB CORPS

Preliminary Observations on Student Safety and Security Data

What GAO Found

GAO's preliminary analysis of the Department of Labor's (DOL) Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) incident data 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. ETA's Office of Job Corps is responsible for administering the Job Corps 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. As shown in the figure, the three most common types of reported incidents were serious illnesses or injuries, assaults, and drug-related incidents.

Types of Onsite and Offsite Safety and Security Incidents Reported by Job Corps Centers, January 1, 2007 – June 30, 2016



Source: GAO analysis of Employment and Training Administration (ETA) data. | GAO-17-596T

More than three-quarters of the reported incidents occurred onsite at Job Corps centers, and the rest occurred offsite. Most reported violent incidents—specifically assaults, homicides, and sexual assaults that occurred onsite and offsite—involved Job Corps students. For example, students were victims in 72 percent of these reported incidents, while staff were victims in 8 percent, and the remaining incidents involved victims who were not associated with Job Corps.

GAO's preliminary analysis of ETA's student survey data from March 2007 through March 2017 found that students generally reported feeling safe, but they reported feeling less safe with respect to certain issues. The student survey contains 49 questions about students' experiences in the Job Corps program, including 12 questions related to safety at centers. Across all 12 of these safety-related survey questions, an average of 72 percent of students reported feeling safe over this 10-year period. However, the average percentage of students who reported feeling safe on each individual survey question ranged from 44 percent to 91 percent. For example, an average of 44 percent of students reported that they had never heard students threaten each other, or had not heard such threats within the last month. The remaining 56 percent of students, on average, reported hearing such threats at least once in the last month.