

# **Zina L. Watkins**

## ***Regional Director***

***Office of Job Corps- Employment and Training Administration (ETA)***

Zina Watkins is an energetic public servant with a proven track record of analyzing problems, applying technical knowledge, and producing high quality results. Zina currently serves at the Regional Director for the Office of Job Corps in Chicago. Job Corps is the largest, national residential career training program in the country and has been operating for more than 50 years. The program helps eligible young people ages 16 through 24 train for meaningful careers, complete their high school education, and obtain employment. Since 1964, Job Corps has trained and educated over two million students.

Prior to this, Zina worked for the Department of Education and served in many roles. She was a Program Specialist in the Immediate Office of the Chief Financial Officer. In this role, she engaged senior leaders and staff across the Department to formulate the strategic direction for federal financial assistance and enterprise risk management. Her efforts helped lay the groundwork for a new Office of Enterprise Risk Management. Zina was the Regional Coordinator to states and territories for the adult education and literacy program – last appropriated at \$617 million – in the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education in which she partnered with federal, state, and local municipalities to strengthen the U.S. workforce system by promoting the individual academic achievement for the estimated 36 million adults who have not yet obtained secondary school credentials or basic English proficiency. In addition, Zina was an Education Program Specialist in the Office of Correctional Education where she administered a post-secondary program - appropriated \$25.3 million – that reduced national recidivism rates for nearly 570,000 young adults and juveniles in the adult correctional system.

Zina entered federal service through the Presidential Management Fellows program in 2005 and began her federal career as a Research Specialist with the Congressional Research Service at the Library of Congress. Although Zina is originally from Illinois, she is a proud graduate of the University of South Carolina and the College of Charleston and was a decorated K-12 educator in the Charleston County School system in South Carolina.