**Executive Summary – HERO Corps Program**

The Human Exploitation Rescue Operative (HERO) Child Rescue Corps recruits and trains wounded, ill, or injured active duty service members, transitioning active duty service members, and military veterans in order to support law enforcement in the areas of child exploitation investigation, child victim identification, traveling child sex offender investigations, and computer forensics. The yearlong unpaid internship is managed by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations’ (HSI) Cyber Crimes Center (C3), the National Organization to Protect Children (PROTECT), the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD)/Special Operations Command (SOCOM), and supporting partners like the Wounded Warrior Project.

Initially started as a pilot initiative in 2013, the HERO Corps was formalized with the passage of the HERO Act, under the [Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015](http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/BILLS-114s178enr/pdf/BILLS-114s178enr.pdf), and was signed into law by President Obama on May 29, 2015. ICE and PROTECT provide funding for the HERO program: PROTECT, a non-profit organization, covers the costs of participant travel, equipment/software and relocation expenses while HSI provides the computer forensic training, procures vendor-specific training, and provides hands on field experience and mentorship.

For classes beginning in 2015, HSI expanded the recruitment outside of Special Operations Command (SOCOM) to include other partners, such as the Wounded Warrior Project and Soldier for Life, which also run transition operations for wounded military members. In addition to the training provided by PROTECT and HSI, the Northampton Community College in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania is offering a specialized 28 credit diploma program for the HEROs which combines credit for the field internship and four online college courses: American Legal System, Criminal Law, Criminal Justice Ethics, and Law Enforcement and Investigative Techniques. While the Northampton Community College program is optional, it provides HERO participants the opportunity to earn college credits and utilize their GI Bill while participating in the program.

To date, 41 HERO graduates were offered full-time positions with HSI as GS-1801 Computer Forensics Analysts (CFAs), of which 39 accepted the position, with the remaining HEROs going to the private sector in a related field. There are currently 34 HERO interns assigned to HSI offices in two separate internship classes. HERO class 1502 will finish their internship period in July 2016, and it is expected that 16 of the class members will be offered positions with HSI.

Since inception, 99 HEROs have started the training, and 17 have left the program for reasons such as medical issues, failure to pass the required tests, failure to pass the background clearance, and self-removal.

The second HERO class in 2016 has a start date of August 1, 2016. Classes for FY 2017 are tentatively scheduled to begin in January and August 2017.