

**SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE
EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM
PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK**

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Welcome to the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). You are now a participant in the only National work-training and employment program exclusively for persons age 55 and older. We are happy that you are able to participate in this work-training program.

WHAT IS SCSEP?

The SCSEP is a work-training program which encourages and lengthens self-sufficiency by supplementing income while providing work-training and increased marketability. SCSEP fosters useful part-time work-training opportunities in community service for unemployed low income persons who are 55 years of age or older and have poor employment prospects to sharpen employment skills. The Program also fosters individual economic self-sufficiency by assisting participants in transitioning to unsubsidized employment. Community service activities are provided through community service work-training assignments at host agencies, which must be a governmental or non-profit, nonpartisan organization.

PARTICIPANT GOALS

Your Goals in entering this program should include:

- Upgrading job skills and work experience by attending training sessions and through a “work-training” experience providing community service;
- Seeking improved employment opportunities beyond this program;
- Improving your living situation through paid training while connecting with your community and preparing for unsubsidized employment;
- Pursuing the work and community related goals you have;
- Pursuing additional skill improvement through this program and developing a comprehensive plan to assist you; this plan is called an “Individual Employment Plan” (IEP), and we help you create it; and
- Finding unsubsidized employment.

PROGRAM GOALS

The overall goal of this program is to help you build skills that improve your ability to find and maintain unsubsidized employment. This goal is achieved by providing a combination of useful part-time work-training assignments and traditional training, while promoting transition to unsubsidized employment.

To this end, the Senior Community Service Employment Program’s goal is to:

- Help the participant receive training in a demand-occupation by successfully participating in community service work-training assignments;
- Assist participants in developing marketable skills so they may secure unsubsidized employment in today’s market and remain self-sufficient for a longer, more vital life-span; and
- Provide community service activities to communities.

Additionally, other resources are often available that will improve your ability to contribute to your community or to a private organization and ultimately find work. Participants may find that

with these improved skills and experience, they obtain better employment. We are excited about your participation and can offer suggestions, support, and services—including resume-writing, interviewing skill development, job search workshops, etc.—to help you meet your employment goals.

SCSEP—HISTORY AND TODAY

History

During the 1960s, President Lyndon Baines Johnson announced his “War on Poverty” campaign. The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), Title V of the Older Americans Act, was a product of that campaign. The program, which has been continuously funded since its inception, is in response to the unfortunate reality that many mature people seek work with outdated skills and that economic changes often result in mature persons losing work or being forced into retirement before they are financially ready. Additionally, many older workers especially women, may find themselves seeking work for the first time (or returning after many years of homemaking) because of family changes and in need of gaining updated skills.

Today

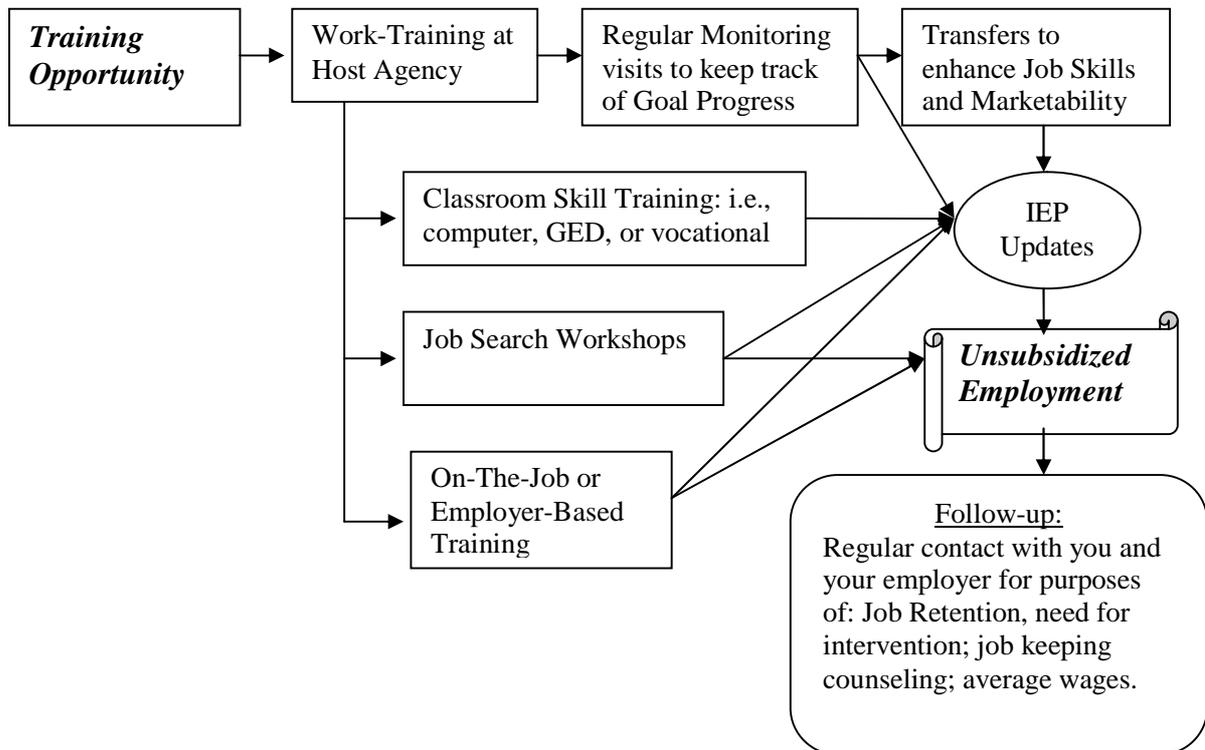
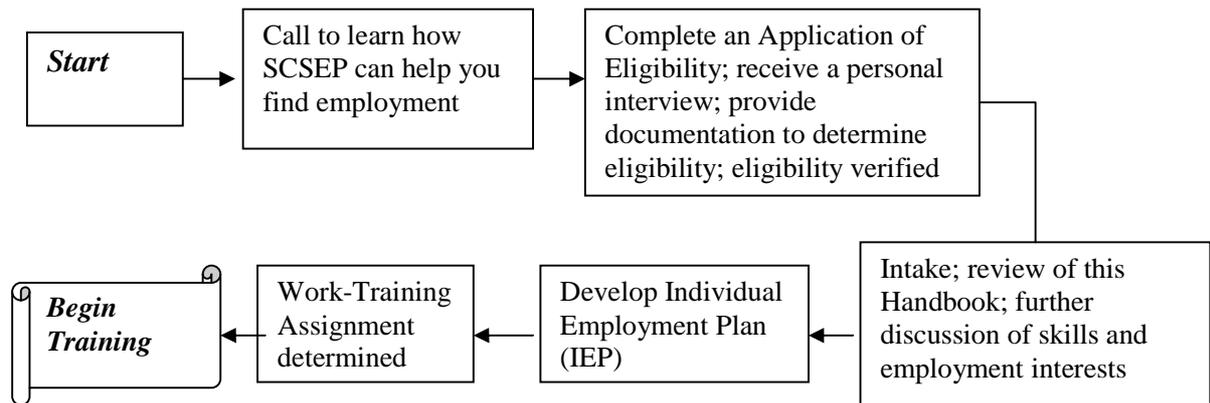
SCSEP has been updated to take into account changes in the modern economy and to provide greater focus on the work-training aspects afforded to SCSEP Participants. Private companies ensure success by updating their policies and procedures to take advantage of more efficient methods and to keep pace with the changing social and economic environment. Similarly, SCSEP makes use of over 40 years of history while taking advantage of new knowledge and constraints in the modern employment market.

Experience has shown that mature persons can modernize and improve their skill levels in a wide range of activities. Additionally, by working closely with SCSEP Participants to create a plan that aligns work-training with traditional learning and other support services, SCSEP Participants can focus their efforts more effectively. The ultimate result is that SCSEP Participants can develop skills and behaviors that result in greater employability, facilitating their transition into unsubsidized employment.

Recently, changes have been implemented to make use of additional programs and services to provide SCSEP Participants with more complete work-training and support. As they go through the initial assessments and develop Individual Employment Plans (IEPs), SCSEP Participants will help to identify barriers they face, and then work with their Case Managers and use the IEP to design specific plans to overcome those barriers whenever possible. These additional services are designed to enhance not only job obtainment, but also retention. “Retention” means keeping the unsubsidized job. Your Case Manager will do periodic follow-ups over a 15-month period to determine that employment has continued and to collect wage information for average wage measurement. Participants are asked to save pay stubs and notify the Senior Employment Center of any changes in address and/or phone numbers, in addition to keeping the Case Manager current on the status of the job during this follow-up period. This will greatly assist us in collecting this important follow-up information to complete the Participants’ files after they have secured employment.

SCSEP PROCESS

As a SCSEP Participant, it is very important that you have a good understanding of the process you are undertaking. These representations present a simple visualization of the process from your point of view.



PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is strongly committed to maintaining the privacy of your personal information and the security of our computer systems. With respect to the collection, use and disclosure of personal information, SCSEP staff makes every effort to ensure compliance with applicable Federal law, including, but not limited to, the Privacy Act of 1974, the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, and the Freedom of Information Act.

SERVICES

Intake and Eligibility Process

The intake and eligibility process introduces all applicants to the Program. This process explains:

- Goals and objectives of the SCSEP
- Community Service Work-Training Assignments
- Availability of a free physical examination
- Training opportunities
- Supportive services
- Participant's rights and responsibilities
- Assessment
- Individual Employment Plan
- Permitted and prohibited political activities
- Reasons for termination from the program
- Grievance procedures

Overviews of the following topics are also included:

- The Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA)
- The Drug-Free Workplace Act
- The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA)

Host Agency Work-Training Site Orientation

A "Host Agency" is either a public agency or a non-profit organization that provides supervision for one or more SCSEP participants during their community service work-training assignments.

Orientation to the host agency work-training site will be provided before participants begin community service work-training assignments. Work-training site Orientation will be held during normal business hours and will include the following:

- Location of the work-training assignment site
- Job description

- Work schedule
- Community service work-training assignment Supervisor's name and contact information
- Administrative procedures (time sheets, leave requests, grievance procedures, etc.)
- Plans for transition to unsubsidized employment as described in the Individual Employment Plan (IEP).

NOTE: No Participant should be the only representative on the premises at any Work-Training Site at any time.

Assessment

The assessment is used to identify the appropriate training objective, and determining the most suitable SCSEP community service work-training assignment. The assessment is the starting point for your overall success and is the first step in writing your IEP. An effective initial assessment is crucial to properly match your skill needs with a host agency that will enable you to meet the milestones and goals identified in your IEP.

Individual Employment Plan (IEP)

You will work together with SCSEP staff to complete an IEP. This plan lists specific goals, milestones and needs and the action steps necessary—with associated timeframes—to achieve those goals.

A summary of any counseling needs, medical assistance and personal concerns are discussed and, if necessary, supportive services (i.e., safety glasses, tools, uniforms, etc.) may be provided and documented on the plan. The IEP is jointly prepared by you and SCSEP staff and constitutes a contract. The IEP will be updated regularly as you meet goals and set new goals to achieve successful unsubsidized employment.

Physical Examinations

A physical examination is a fringe benefit and a service to the participant. It is not used to determine eligibility.

Each participant must be offered a physical examination within 60 calendar days after enrollment. The offer of a physical examination must be documented. Results of the examination are the property of the participant and are kept completely confidential. Participants may, but are under no obligation to, share the results with the program staff. Results of physicals disclosed to SCSEP staff are kept in a separate locked file.

Participants have the right to waive the physical examination. If you object to having a physical examination, you will be required to sign a Physical Examination Waiver. Waiving the physical examination may limit your work-training site assignment because of the need to comply with applicable health laws.

TRAINING

Training goals for program participants are designed to encompass the teaching of specific skills deemed crucial to obtaining or maintaining employment. SCSEP training includes:

- Community service work-training assignments
- Classroom and Educational training
- Other training programs

Community Service Work-Training Assignment

The community service work-training assignment description is used to document the duties and responsibilities that will be expected of you at the work-training site. The SCSEP staff and host agency work together to develop a work-training assignment description based on the goals set in your IEP. The work-training assignment description is updated as your responsibilities are increased, or as new skills or tasks are added. Community service work-training assignments are based on skills that you need to learn in order to achieve your employment goals. As you achieve each goal, it may be necessary to change your Community service work-training assignment.

July 1, 2007, changes were implemented which reduce the time a Participant may be enrolled in SCSEP. Individual enrollments must average no more than 27 months in duration. This means that it is imperative that Participants find unsubsidized employment as quickly as possible – hopefully within 3 to 9 months of enrollment, allowing for time remaining for additional assistance, should it be needed in the future. This time allowance will be monitored by the DOL database for SCSEP and will take into account all work-training time accumulated from all SCSEP providers in the country for each Participant. It is vital to the success of each Participant in the attainment of their employment goals that they understand these restrictions, and that they work to achieve unsubsidized employment as quickly as possible.

Classroom and Educational Training

You are encouraged to pursue short-term training at career technology centers or colleges/universities. If these approved courses are consistent in meeting the goals set in the IEP, the program may pay for part or all of the costs, including the payment of reasonable costs of instructors, classroom rental, training supplies, materials, equipment, and tuition, if funds are available.

Other Training Programs

SCSEP often works with other training programs that have related objectives. These programs can provide information on job training, job-search workshops, resume writing classes, and vocational training. Many of these training programs are offered free of charge at Workforce Centers.

NOTE: Documentation signed by Workforce Center staff must be submitted to your Case Manager for participants to be paid for attending training.

Workforce Centers

These Centers offer a variety of services (depending on the center location), such as:

- Career information and planning
- Skills assessment
- Career resource library
- Computer lab for preparing or updating your resume and practicing computer skills
- Telephones, copiers and fax machines
- Internet access for job leads or job searches
- Local employer and labor market information
- Free informational workshops, such as resume writing, job search assistance and interviewing skills
- Career Readiness Certificates (Work Keys)
- Screening for training assistant programs
- Referral to other services, if needed

Check with your local Workforce Center for available programs. A directory of Workforce Centers is available at www.workforceok.org/locator.htm. SCSEP staff can also assist you.

TRAINING WAGE AND FRINGE BENEFITS

Training wages are set by the Oklahoma Minimum Wage Act (40 O.S. § 197.1 *et seq*) at:

- \$5.85 per hour as of July 24, 2007
- \$6.55 per hour as of July 24, 2008
- \$7.25 per hour as of July 24, 2009

Training hours for work-training assignments are not to be more than 25 hours per week. There is no minimum number of training hours, although 20 hours per week is strongly encouraged.

Fringe Benefits for SCSEP participants are limited to a basic physical examination and Workers' Compensation coverage. The Senior Community Service Employment Program is a training program. Participants are not eligible to receive unemployment benefits, retirement benefits, paid annual leave, paid sick leave, paid holidays, bonuses or any kind of monetary incentive.

Absences from your community service work-training assignment must be requested in advance and approved by the work-training site supervisor and in accordance with work-training site guidelines. The work-training site designated supervisor will notify SCSEP staff—in writing—of the approved, unpaid leave. In the event of an unexpected illness or accident, notification must be given to your SCSEP counselor as soon as possible. Your SCSEP counselor will notify the work-training site designated supervisor of the illness.

RECERTIFICATION

All SCSEP participants are required by the Department of Labor to be recertified if there has been a substantial change in circumstances that is likely to have an effect on eligibility, such as a substantial increase in an existing source of income or the addition of a new source of income. The marriage of a SCSEP participant is a substantial change of circumstances that requires a recertification. (Data Collection Handbook, Participant Form- 53, Topic 64—Recertification within 12 months; substantial change in circumstance)

During the recertification process, if it is determined that you are no longer eligible, you will receive written notification advising you of the date of termination from the program. SCSEP staff will assist you in contacting other available employment and training resources.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Drug-Free Workplace

The dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance or alcohol is prohibited by participants in the Senior Community Service Employment Program. The use, consumption, sale, purchase, transfer or possession of any illegal or nonprescription drug by program staff or participants while on a community service work-training assignment or SCSEP-sponsored training is prohibited. Any participant who violates this policy is subject to disciplinary action, including termination from the program.

Lobbying

SCSEP funds shall not be used in any way to influence the legislative process.

Volunteer Time

You will not volunteer or be asked to volunteer additional work hours beyond your training hours. To do so is in violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act. If you are asked to volunteer additional work hours beyond your training hours, you must notify SCSEP staff immediately. Any participant who violates this policy is subject to disciplinary action, including termination from the program.

Nepotism

You will not be assigned to a host agency site if any member of your immediate family is in a decision-making capacity at that agency.

Prohibited Activities

While participating in the SCSEP, you may not be selected, rejected, promoted, or terminated based on your political affiliation or beliefs. Your selection or advancement as a reward for

political services or as a form of political patronage, whether or not the political patronage is partisan in nature, is prohibited. Neither you nor any staff person may engage in partisan or nonpartisan political activities during time for which the person is paid with SCSEP funds. Neither you nor any staff person may engage in partisan political activities in which the person represents him/herself as a spokesperson of the SCSEP. Any participant who violates this policy is subject to disciplinary action, including termination from the program.

TERMINATION FROM PROGRAM

Your participation in the Senior Community Service Employment Program may be terminated for "Cause." "Cause" may include, but is not limited to:

- Refusal to cooperate in recertifying eligibility
- Inability and/or unwillingness to perform assigned duties
- *Unreasonable refusal to accept a different work-training assignment
- *Unreasonable refusal to accept job offers or job referrals
- Failure and/or refusal to cooperate with the IEP
- Frequent tardiness
- Falsification by the participant of time sheets or other official records
- Insubordination
- Obscene/abusive language or behavior
- Non-compliance with substance abuse policy
- Failure to cooperate with grantee and/or host agency staff
- Failure to maintain Standards of Conduct

*"Unreasonable refusal" is defined as the refusal of three community service work-training assignments, job offers, or job referrals.

Disciplinary Action is defined as:

1. Verbal warning
2. Written warning
3. Termination from program

Participants who disagree with the termination may file a grievance. When participants are terminated for Cause, the SCSEP staff will inform the participant in writing of the reasons for termination and of the right to file a grievance as advised in orientation.

When feasible, participants terminated from the SCSEP will be referred to other potential sources for assistance.

If, at any time, the SCSEP staff determines that you were incorrectly declared eligible as a direct result of false information provided by you, you will be terminated from the program immediately.

If, at any time, the SCSEP staff discovers that you, through no fault of your own, were incorrectly determined to be eligible, you will be given written notice of termination effective 30 days from the date of notice and will be referred to other potential assistance sources.

ADA AND EEO COMPLIANCE AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Senior Community Service Employment Program is committed to complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Program will ensure that qualified individuals with disabilities are given an opportunity to participate in and benefit from its services, programs, benefits and training opportunities.

Equal Opportunity

It is against the law for this recipient of Federal financial assistance to discriminate on the following bases:

- Against any individual in the United States, on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief; and
- Against any beneficiary of programs financially assisted under Title 1 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), on the basis of the beneficiary's citizenship/status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States, or his/her participation in any WIA Title I-financially assisted program or activity.
- The recipient must not discriminate in any of the following areas:
 - Deciding who will be admitted, or have access, to any WIA Title I-financially assisted program or activity;
 - Providing opportunities in, or treating any person with regard to, such a program or activity; or
 - Making employment decisions in the administration of, or in connection with, such a program or activity.

If you think that you have been subjected to discrimination under a WIA Title I-financially assisted program or activity, you may file a complaint within 180 days from the date of the alleged violation with the recipient's Equal Opportunity Officer or person designated for the purpose. If the issue alleging violations of law, other than discrimination, still remain unresolved within 90 days as a result of the combined complaint resolution procedure, the Complainant may file the grievance with the SCSEP Coordinator, Workforce Integrated Programs Division, Oklahoma Employment Security Commission, PO Box 52003, Oklahoma City, OK 73152-2003.

If you file your complaint with the recipient, you must wait either until the recipient issues a written Notice of Final Action, or until 90 days have passed (whichever is sooner), before filing with the Civil Rights Center.

If the recipient does not give you a written Notice of Final Action within 90 days of the day on which you filed your complaint, you do not have to wait for the recipient to issue that Notice before filing a complaint with the CRC. However, you must file your CRC complaint within 30 days of the 90-day deadline (within 120 days of the incident). The Director, Civil Rights Center (CRC), U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue NW, Room N-4123, Washington, DC 20210.

If the recipient does give you a written Notice of Final Action on your complaint, but you are dissatisfied with the decision or resolution, you may file a complaint with CRC. You must file your CRC complaint within 30 days of the date on which you received the Notice of Final Action.

Grievance Procedures

You are to receive a copy of Grievance Procedures during Program Orientation. You may get an additional copy from SCSEP staff member upon request. You may file a Grievance if you feel you were incorrectly denied service or terminated unjustly. The grievance process begins when you submit a written grievance to your Community Service/Host Agency Supervisor. If you are not satisfied with the results received from the Host Agency, SCSEP staff and the Oklahoma State Title V Coordinator will step in. The US Department of Labor only reviews grievances that are in violation of Federal law.

PARTICIPANT RESPONSIBILITIES

As a SCSEP participant, I am responsible for:

- Performing the assigned duties of my community service work-training assignment to the best of my ability and reporting to SCSEP staff immediately should any of my duties change.
- Abiding by all host agency personnel policies and SCSEP rules and regulations.
- Attending all SCSEP meetings, training, classes, and other activities, as required by the SCSEP staff or my host agency supervisor.
- Registering and placing my resume on Oklahoma Job Link.
- Seeking unsubsidized employment on my own.
- Attending all appropriate job interviews to which I am referred or instructed to arrange by the SCSEP staff.
- Reporting my job-seeking activities to the appropriate SCSEP staff member.
- Notifying SCSEP staff of potential training opportunities that I may be interested in, which will help me meet my Individual Employment Plan goal.

- Not volunteering time at my worksite without pay or compensatory time, as this is prohibited and in violation of the U.S. Fair Labor Standards Act.
- Understanding that I may be terminated from the program, and the reasons for which I may be terminated.

PARTICIPANT RIGHTS

As a participant in the Senior Community Service Employment Program, you have the right to:

- A suitable assignment, with consideration for personal preference, temperament, life experience, education and employment background, and job development goals.
- Receive an orientation to my community service host agency assignment.
- A safe and orderly training environment.
- Participate fully in the development of the Individual Employment Plan.
- A community service work-training assignment description which accurately reflects the tasks and responsibilities of the assignment and the right to participate in updating the assignment description periodically, to show goals achieved, accommodate changes in tasks and/or added responsibilities.
- Be treated as a trainee with a community service work-training assignment and not as free help.
- Patient and thoughtful guidance from an informed and experienced host agency supervisor.
- Obtain additional responsibilities during my community service work-training assignment.
- Apply for permanent employment when vacancies occur at the host agency that aligns with the goals set in my IEP.
- Assistance from SCSEP staff to obtain unsubsidized employment.
- Not be discriminated against for excluded from participation or denied benefits under this project on the grounds of race, creed, color, disability, national origin, sex, political affiliation, beliefs or age.
- Have all information pertaining to participation in SCSEP kept confidential.

SCSEP PARTICIPANT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*(This page with the original signatures is to be placed and maintained
in the participant's file, a copy must be returned to Participant)*

I, the undersigned SCSEP participant, have received and read a copy of the Senior Community Service Employment Program Participant Handbook. I have read and understand the SCSEP Standards of Conduct, Reasons for Termination from the program, Participant's Responsibilities and Participant's Rights. I fully understand and agree to follow the program requirements set forth within.

This agreement is intended to reinforce the participant's understanding of the SCSEP training program and his/her rights and responsibilities to the program.

Participant's full name (please print) Date

Participant's signature

SCSEP Staff Member (please print) Date

SCSEP Staff Member signature