

# UNITED WAY OF THE CAPE FEAR AREA

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## SCSEP Host Agency Handbook

### INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in serving as a host agency for the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). Host agencies provide a valuable service. Placing older individuals in community service positions provided by host agencies strengthens their ability to become self-sufficient, provides much-needed support to organizations that benefit from increased civic engagement, and strengthens the communities that are served by such organizations. This handbook serves as a resource for you to use as you provide this valuable service to the individuals who are participating in the SCSEP.

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is locally sponsored by the United Way of the Cape Fear Area. Funding comes from Senior Service America, Inc. (SSAI), headquartered in Silver Spring, Maryland. SSAI is a non-profit organization that provides civic engagement and employment opportunities for adults over the age of 55. SSAI administers the SCSEP on behalf of the U.S. Department of Labor.

The SCSEP Director and staff of the United Way of the Cape Fear Area SCSEP are available to answer your questions and be of assistance.

Our SCSEP office is located at 5919 Oleander Drive Suite 115, Wilmington, NC 28403.

### MISSION AND PURPOSE OF SCSEP

SCSEP serves low-income unemployed persons who are 55 years of age and older, by training them in part-time community service assignments and by assisting them with developing skills and experience to facilitate their transition to unsubsidized employment. The program is designed to accomplish the following objectives: Provide useful part-time community service training opportunities for economically disadvantaged persons who are 55 years of age or older and who may have poor employment prospects • Enhance the abilities, skills and aptitudes of participants to increase their opportunities to obtain mainstream employment and foster individual economic self-sufficiency • Change negative attitudes and stereotypes about older workers through demonstrated success.

### WHAT IS A HOST AGENCY?

A host agency is a community-based organization, [501(c) (3)] or government entity that provides part-time training and supervision for one or more SCSEP participants who may have poor employment prospects. Each host agency is encouraged to develop training situations which are mutually beneficial to the participant and the host agency. Host agencies provide valuable services to their community and to the participants they train, and are encouraged to develop situations which will benefit the participant first and then the host agency. While receiving this training or updating existing skills, participants provide significant services to their local communities and their host agencies. Their ultimate goal, however, is to continue to learn and gain the skills they need to qualify for unsubsidized employment.

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## GENERAL INFORMATION

SCSEP participants must be 55 years of age or older, meet federal poverty income guidelines, and be unemployed. Training is designed in the form of assignments to local nonprofit or public agencies (host agencies) for 20 hours per week where participants receive a training wage based on the higher of the state or federal minimum wage rate. Wages are funded through the grant and paid by the Sponsors.

***DISCRIMINATION PROHIBITED*** United Way of the Cape Fear Area is an equal opportunity employer and will not subject any person to discrimination in employment, services or activities on the grounds of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, political affiliations or beliefs, disability, age, or participation in other government programs, except where age is a consideration for eligibility or where participation in other programs may affect income eligibility.

***MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT*** According to federal regulation 20 CFR 641.844; “Assignment of a participant funded under Title V of the OAA [Older Americans Act] to a host agency is permissible only in addition to employment that would otherwise be funded by the host agency without assistance under the OAA.” This means that participants may not perform duties or be in a position which would normally be in the host agency’s budget if funds are/were available. It also means that participants may not displace currently employed workers.

***VOLUNTEER SERVICE PROHIBITION*** According to the USDOL, the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) prohibits individuals under certain circumstances from volunteering for extra hours of service with a public agency if they are employed by the same agency. Although these SCSEP community service assignments are training opportunities and not employment the following still applies. Section 3[e][4][A](iii) of the FLSA does not permit an individual to perform volunteer service for a public agency when such service involves the similar or identical service which the individual is assigned to perform for the same public agency.

***NEPOTISM PROHIBITED*** Participants are not to serve at a host agency where a member of their immediate family is in a supervisory or administrative capacity involving their oversight.

***BACKGROUND AND REFERENCE CHECKS*** SCSEP does not verify references and does not conduct criminal background checks on participants. If the host agency deems it necessary to do so, they will assume full responsibility for any investigation including payment of any associated costs.

***DRIVING AS PART OF THE HOST AGENCY ASSIGNMENT*** Participants may not drive or ride with Host Agency staff as part of their work assignment. Participants are to work at the designated office/site only as approved by the SCSEP Director.

***UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT AT A HOST AGENCY SITE*** Participants may not train at the host agency and work as an unsubsidized employee at that site at the same time. Host agencies may never compensate participants for extra hours worked or increase the wage being paid with other funds. Any such payment for hours worked at the training site in excess of the allowed training hours will be considered unsubsidized employment, and the participant will immediately be exited from the program as an unsubsidized placement. This action may result in cancellation of the Host Agency Agreement.

***WORKERS’ COMPENSATION*** The SCSEP Sponsor provides Workers’ Compensation coverage for participants. Host agencies are prohibited from paying Workers’ Compensation costs.

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***DRUG FREE WORKPLACE POLICY*** Host agencies should provide participants with a safe assignment environment, free of drugs, alcohol, and medications. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance is prohibited and thus will result in termination from the program.

***SAFETY PROCEDURES CONSULTATION*** Host agencies are required to ensure that all laws governing workplace safety are followed. Host agency safety procedures must be reviewed with the participant at the beginning of the training assignment. We encourage participants to report unsafe conditions to their host agency supervisor and to the SCSEP staff who will discuss these with the host agency supervisor directly for possible corrections.

***CONFIDENTIALITY*** All records related to the participant's assignment shall be kept confidential in accordance with the host agency's policies and procedures regarding personnel files. By providing written and signed consent, participants may give permission to a SCSEP staff and/or the host agency supervisor to share pertinent information with other agencies to help reach his/her employment goal(s).

***ASSIGNMENT ROTATION*** The length of time at a host agency or on the program varies for each participant and is based on individual training needs. If it is necessary, rotation of position or training site may be recommended to provide continued learning and growth for the participant. The maximum time a participant may spend in the program, known as the "durational limit," is a total of 48 months, or four years.

***EXPECTATIONS OF HOST AGENCIES***

- When possible, consider participants for employment in open positions for which they qualify. Also help participants by referring them to positions they know are available in the community and by providing references.
- Provide additional support to SCSEP by promoting the program with peers and employers in the community, co-sponsoring special events, or providing in-kind or direct support to the program.
- Complete a customer satisfaction survey that may be sent from the Department of Labor. If you do receive a survey, please take a moment to complete and return it in the stamped, self-addressed envelope provided.

## **HOST AGENCY SUPERVISION**

This section is intended for use by host agency supervisors of participants in the SCSEP program. **Supervisors are required to read this guide in its entirety.**

***ORIENTATION*** Before a participant begins the community service assignment, the host agency must provide an assignment-related orientation including but not limited to the host agency background and purpose; the community service(s) it provides; agency personnel policies and procedures related to work hours, time and attendance; and work performance expectations. A Safety Procedures Consultation may also be included in the orientation if it has not already been done with the participant, including: the location(s) and use of fire extinguishers and alarms; the posted designated route(s) of escape in event of a fire; the participant's role, if any, in an emergency; and a review of all other disaster action plans for the agency.

***COMMUNITY SERVICE ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION*** A Community Service Assignment Description form is required to help the participant understand his/her work assignment so that training

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activities are clear among all involved. The SCSEP staff will work with the host agency supervisor to develop assignment descriptions for each participant. Training position titles should be applied to these assignments. If new training or new activities are added or the location of the assignment is changed, the SCSEP staff must be advised so that the Community Service Assignment Description can be revised. The SCSEP staff and the host agency supervisor will assure that assigned duties are consistent with medical limitations, make any accommodations required by the *Americans with Disabilities Act*, and adhere to confidentiality requirements of the Act.

***SUPERVISION*** The host agency supervisor is the direct supervisor for the participant's ongoing assignment, monitors the participant's day-to-day activities, and will train as well as give feedback about performance. The supervisor or a designated alternate must provide supervision coverage at the site at all times. In the event of the absence of the participant's direct supervisor, a simple written plan for backup supervision shall exist and be provided to the SCSEP staff. A participant must know who they are to report to at all times. Any change of supervisor must be reported to the SCSEP staff. The same level of supervision and training provided to regular employees performing related tasks at the agency should also be provided to SCSEP participants. Training and supervision will prepare the participant for the transition to unsubsidized employment.

***HOST AGENCY SAFETY AND OTHER MONITORING*** SCSEP project directors are responsible for obtaining reasonable assurance that the participants' working conditions are safe and healthful and the assignment is appropriate to the individual. Project directors are to conduct one host agency safety and monitoring consultation per participant per community service assignment and thereafter on an annual basis if the participant stays in the same community service assignment.

***PARTICIPATION IN HOST AGENCY/STAFF MEETINGS/TRAINING*** Host agency supervisors should include participants in regular staff meetings and related activities as this enables trainees to see where they fit into agency service delivery. This experience also provides opportunities for learning and enrichment through participation with the other workers.

***COMMUNITY SERVICE SCHEDULES*** The host agency will provide the participant and sponsor with a schedule indicating when the participant will be doing his/her training each week. The host agency and participant are encouraged to develop the most appropriate schedule to meet the needs of both parties. If changes occur, other than a short-term modification to accommodate a unique work situation or the participant's personal needs, a new work schedule will need to be submitted to the sponsor showing the revised schedule. The participant may train a maximum of 20 hours per week. If a participant has a special need to train fewer than 20 hours, for an extended period, this must be approved by the sponsor.

***TIMESHEETS*** Timesheets will be provided for the participants by the SCSEP Sponsor. Host agency supervisors will assure that timesheets are:

- Completed on time by the participant
- Verified to be accurate by the host agency supervisor
- Signed by both participant and supervisor
- Faxed and mailed at the end of the pay period to the SCSEP Sponsor issuing checks

(Original time sheets are to be mailed to the SCSEP Sponsor within the timeframe determined by the SCSEP Sponsor. A copy should be kept on file by the host agency.)

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**LEAVE TIME** Certain “lost” time (such as weather closings, illness, non federal holiday closings, emergencies, personal time) may be made up providing that the time can be made up in the same pay period.

**TRAINING SITE MONITORING** SCSEP staff will conduct periodic site visits (announced and unannounced) for monitoring host agency compliance with training and supervision as well as working and safety conditions. An attempt will be made to coordinate site visits with scheduled visits for enrollments, participant recertifications, IEP reviews, or exits. The host agency supervisor should plan to be available for announced site visits.

**OTHER HOST AGENCY SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Attend SCSEP training sessions.
- Encourage participants to find employment off the program.
- Follow guidelines for any disciplinary actions.
- Maintain participant records as required by the SCSEP Sponsor.

**DISCIPLINE PROCEDURE GUIDELINES** Use your best judgment: If the problem is serious, call the SCSEP staff immediately.

Host agency supervisor’s steps to take in the event of behavior or performance issues:

Step 1 • The host agency supervisor discusses behavior/performance issues with the participant and makes specific suggestions regarding the kinds of changes desired. • The host agency supervisor informs the SCSEP staff of the situation, documents what was discussed and puts it in the host agency file. Then it is forwarded to the SCSEP staff to put in the participant’s file. • The SCSEP staff then addresses this situation with the participant, documents it and puts it in the participant’s file.

Step 2 • If the behavior/performance issues reoccur, the host agency supervisor discusses the situation with the SCSEP staff to determine how best to address the issue(s). • The host agency supervisor prepares formal documentation of issue(s) to be discussed with the participant, noting specifics such as date and time of incident(s), review of behavior/performance changes desired and realistic deadlines for these changes to occur.

**Specific to Drug/Alcohol Related Procedures** If a SCSEP participant appears to be impaired while on duty, the host agency supervisor shall remove him/her from the training site and inform the SCSEP staff immediately. If the participant appears to be impaired for reasons other than drugs or alcohol, the SCSEP staff may request that the participant obtain a physician’s release before the participant may return to his/her assignment.

## SCSEP STAFF ROLE

The role of the SCSEP Sponsor includes outreach, recruitment activities, eligibility determination, completing assessments, processing enrollments, determining community assignments, and providing the participant, host agency and host agency supervisor with an orientation to the SCSEP program. The SCSEP staff is also responsible for monitoring host agency compliance, provision of support services, conflict mediation and/or resolution, employment counseling, assisting the participant with transitioning to unsubsidized employment, and the exit process. The host agency cannot be responsible for determining the eligibility of an applicant or participant and cannot terminate a participant.

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***DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYMENT PLAN (IEP)*** - The SCSEP staff, in partnership with the participant, will develop an IEP to reflect the needs of the participant as indicated by an assessment, as well as his/her expressed interests, skills and aptitudes. The host agency supervisor's participation and agreement is encouraged. The IEP is a tool to help the participant make progress with his/her goal(s). If after a suitable amount of time the participant has not made progress toward his/her goal(s) the IEP will be reviewed and a determination will be made as to whether the participant should stay in his/her current position or be rotated to another position which may be better suited to meeting the participant's goals.

***UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE*** SCSEP staff along with the host agency assists participants with job search and works with local American Job Centers and other career centers serving mature workers. Because low-income older individuals may require more services than the SCSEP can offer, SCSEP partners with other agencies to help them achieve their goals.

## **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION**

This section is intended to provide host agencies and the host agency supervisors with information relative to the benefits, rights, and responsibilities of participants assigned to your site. However, questions brought to you by the participant regarding these matters should be referred to SCSEP staff for final clarification.

***PARTICIPANT SUPPORTIVE SERVICES*** Supportive services are available to participants and may include, but are not limited to, counseling in areas such as health, nutrition, and Medicare benefits, etc. They may also include work shoes, badges, or eyeglasses. In addition, transportation to training or the worksite may be paid for if no other source of payment is available. All participant supportive services are dependent upon funding and must be pre-approved by the SCSEP staff. The need for supportive services will be identified in the original IEP if possible or the plan will be updated once the need for a specific supportive service is identified. Requests for supportive services must be made in writing or by email and must include the approximate cost of the service. Written approval (letter or fax) or an email approving the supportive service will be sent prior to the service being provided.

***PHYSICAL EXAM*** Each participant is offered the opportunity to receive an annual physical examination upon enrollment and at each annual recertification. The participant may choose to accept or waive the offers. Although SCSEP does not require that a participant take a physical exam, there may be some community assignments that do require it. In this case, if the participant refuses the physical exam, an effort may be made to find an assignment for the participant where it is not required.

***PAID HOLIDAYS*** Compensation will be provided for scheduled training hours at host agencies for all of the following federal holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday, Washington's Birthday (President's Day), Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas Day. If the SCSEP participant misses time for a federal holiday closing they may log these missed hours on the timesheet. If the host agency is open on a federal holiday the SCSEP participant will be expected to work if scheduled.

***APPROVED BREAKS IN PARTICIPATION*** Any formal break in participation must be arranged in advance with the SCSEP Sponsor. A maximum allowable approved break in participation may be limited to 30 calendar days.

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***SCSEP ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF HOST AGENCY ASSIGNMENT*** Participants are to be provided time to attend SCSEP participant meetings, training, and employment search workshops, job clubs, and job fairs, or interviews. These activities will be included within the 20-hour work week. Time away from the training site should be arranged by the participant and approved in advance. In addition to the above, the SCSEP staff will conduct an annual recertification for each participant. This process may take up to 1 or 2 hours. .

***EMPLOYMENT SEARCH*** When designated in the Individual Employment Plan (IEP), participants will be required to visit the local American Job Center or other agencies as assigned. If there is not a local American Job Center in the area, participants will be required to make an active job search to the best of their abilities by contacting local employers (when and as determined in the IEP). If participants are unable to get a job, the SCSEP staff and participant discuss what additional services may be needed, and determine the next steps. These steps may include developing a new training plan or determining that the SCSEP services are not suitable for the participant, leading to exit from the program.

***COMPLAINT RESOLUTION PROCEDURE*** When a participant files a written complaint, the sponsor, host agency supervisor and the participant should promptly seek to resolve the differences in an informal conference. If the participant is not satisfied with the results, he/she has the right to appeal to a complaint resolution committee established by the Sponsor or to the Sponsor's chief executive officer. A written summary of decisions made must be provided to all involved. Further appeals may be made to the Sponsor's grantor, Senior Service America, Inc., or, if there is a violation of federal law, to the U.S. Department of Labor. A copy of the grievance procedure is given to new participants as part of the SCSEP orientation.

## **SUPERVISING OLDER ADULTS**

**You are a key to making the senior's training a successful experience.** You can be a partner throughout the planning process. You can assist the senior in setting goals during the interview, orientation, and development of the assignment description. Be clear about expectations and ask for feedback regularly. Include them in staff meetings and trainings and make them part of your work group. This keeps them up to date and allows them to have a sense of belonging. Giving senior trainees responsibilities learned through training tasks encourages them to speak up and request assistance to resolve issues. Give undivided attention to what the participant is saying. Give them time to think and collect thoughts. Most of all recognize their contributions and their value.