



**Connecticut Senior Community Service
Employment Program
State Plan Program Year 2024 through 2027
July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2028**

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Governor

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Commissioner

The Connecticut Department of Aging and Disability Services is pleased to present its four-year State Workforce Plan for the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) as its roadmap for serving older workers as they re-enter the workforce. The plan encompasses July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2028 (Program Years 2024 through 2027) and provides an illustrative review of Connecticut's economy and labor market as it relates to the state's older workers. This plan has been developed through collaborative efforts with Connecticut's national SCSEP grantee, The WorkPlace. This SCSEP Workforce Plan will be the primary resource for the state to meet the needs of low-income older workers.

Who This Plan Serves

Connecticut is home to some of the nation's wealthiest residents. It also has some of the poorest cities. This disparity exists amid slow but steady progress in our economic and social outlook after the COVID-19 pandemic. The unemployment rate has declined, and job numbers are on the rise, however, people age 60 years and older comprise 23 percent of the total population and that number is expected to "more than double" by 2040 ("The Connecticut Healthy Aging Report" released in 2021).

The SCSEP provides subsidized work-based training, sector-based certification training, supportive services, and job development for program participants. Eligible program participants are those who are age 55 and older, are at or below 125 percent of the Federal Poverty Level and are unemployed. SCSEP is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor and authorized by Title V of the Older Americans Act. In Connecticut there are two SCSEP grantees serving its older workers. The state grantee is the Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS), and the national grantee is The WorkPlace. The state grant serves the Greater Bridgeport, Northwest Hills, South Central Connecticut, and Western Connecticut Planning Regions. The national grant serves the Capital, Greater Bridgeport, Lower Connecticut River Valley, Naugatuck Valley, Northeastern Connecticut, South Central Connecticut, Southeastern Connecticut, and Western Connecticut Planning Regions.

This State Plan will illustrate how, through these two grantees, Connecticut will administer SCSEP through coordination of services, partnerships within the aging services network, and outreach to those eligible individuals with barriers to training and employment.

Economic Projections and Impact

Long-term projections for jobs in industries and occupations in the state that may provide employment opportunities for older workers in the Senior Community Service Employment Program

Connecticut's economy, labor market, and workforce have experienced dynamic changes over the last few years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the loss of jobs, increased telework and the closure of many small businesses and non-profit organizations. Fortunately, in October 2023, the Connecticut

Department of Labor (CT DOL) Office of Research announced that the state's jobs numbers had fully recovered COVID losses. As labor markets improve, the Office of Research has provided the "State of Connecticut Occupational Projections for 2020 to 2030" which lists the fastest growing job opportunities in Connecticut. The following is a list of the top 10 growing occupations, regardless of skill level or educational level required.

Connecticut Top 10 Occupational Projections for 2020-2030 CT Department of Labor Office of Research	
Occupation	Forecasted Job Growth Increase
Cooks, Restaurant	65.9%
Transportation Attendants, Except Flight Attendants	65.2%
Epidemiologists	50.4%
Fitness Trainers & Aerobics Instructors	50.0%
Amusement & Recreation Attendants	49.9%
Non-Farm Animal Caretakers	47.7%
Athletes & Sports Commentators	47.5%
Nurse Practitioners	47.5%
Medical Scientists, Except Epidemiologists	43.4%
Bartenders	41.7%

Available jobs are on the rise. Where there may be labor shortages, mature workers can help meet the need. The SCSEP provides job skills training for Connecticut residents, age 55 years and older, who are low-income (at or below 125 percent of the Federal Poverty Level), and unemployed. Program participants often present with at least one barrier to employment (i.e. low literacy, persistent unemployment, homelessness, etc.) and require supportive services to be ready to participate in training and be considered employable.

To illustrate this, the following is a review of the percentage of program participants in Connecticut who participated between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023 (Project Year 2022), with one or more Most in Need elements, which may represent a barrier to employment. This information is collected from the "QPR Analysis Section A Demographics by Grantee and Nationwide Q4" provided by the U. S. Department of Labor.

Most In Need Elements Recorded with SCSEP Participants July 2022 – June 2023 SCSEP GPMS Data Management	
Most in Need Element	Percent of Enrollees
Severe Disability	0.00%
Age 75 or Older	2.99%
Old enough but not receiving Social Security Title II	0.60%
Residing in Rural Areas	2.69%
Frail	0.00%
Homeless or at Risk of Homelessness	64.67%
Failed to Find Employment After Using WIOA Title I	4.49%
Disability	47.90%
Limited English Proficiency	10.48%
Low Employment Prospects	88.62%
Low Literacy Skills	43.71%
Employment Prospects in Areas of Persistent Unemployment	2.99%
Formerly Incarcerated	0.00%
Veterans or (Eligible Spouse of Veteran)	13.77%
Receiving Public Assistance	88.43%
Displaced Homemakers	0.90%

In addition to these elements, which often represent barriers to employment, SCSEP participants enroll with a wide range of educational backgrounds. The following information, also compiled from the “QPR Analysis Section A Demographics by Grantee and Nationwide Q4” provided by the U. S. Department of Labor, provides a look at education levels for participants in Connecticut who were actively enrolled between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2023.

Reported Education Levels Attained by SCSEP Participants July 2022 – June 2023 SCSEP GPMS Data Management	
Education	Percent of Enrollees
8 th Grade and Under	5.99
9 th to 11 th Grade	13.47
High School Diploma or Equivalent	46.11
Completed 1 or More Years of Post-Secondary	15.87
Certification, License or Educational Certificate	2.40
Associates Degree	3.59
Bachelor’s Degree or Equivalent	8.68
Advanced Degree Beyond Bachelor’s Degree	3.29

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Based on these factors, the following is a list of the growing labor markets that may be suitable for SCSEP participants, with support and training, and are projected to be in demand with either no or short-term training, and lower skills requirements. The projections are from the “State of Connecticut Occupational Projections for 2020 to 2030” provided by the Office of Research at <https://www1.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/projections.asp> and the training and skills needed are based on data from occupational information resource O*Net (www.onetonline.org).

Top 10 Occupational Projections for 2020-2030 based on needs of SCSEP Participants			
Occupation	10-Year Change	Training	Skills Needed Include
Transportation Attendants (i.e. Passenger Attendant, Bus Monitor), Except Flight Attendants	+65.2%	None	Interpersonal, Speaking, Monitoring, Social Perceptiveness
Non-Farm Animal Caretakers	+47.7%	Microsoft Office, Scheduling Software	Monitoring, Coordination, Decision Making
Bartenders	+41.7%	ServSafe Alcohol, Bartending Certificate, Microsoft Office	Interpersonal, Critical Thinking, Service Orientation, Social Perceptiveness
Passenger Vehicle Drivers, Except Bus Drivers, Transit	+33.8%	None	Defensive Driving, Interpersonal, Social Perceptiveness
Preschool Teachers, except Special Education	+30.1%	Early Childhood Education and teaching, basic software	Instructing, Speaking, Learning, Strategies, Interpersonal, Coordination
Motor Vehicle Operators, All Others	+26.9%	None	Defensive Driving, Coordination
Bus Drivers, Transit & Intercity	+28.2%	Truck and Bus Driver/Commercial Vehicle Operator	Operations & Control, Critical Thinking, Service Orientation
Cooks, Short Order	+23.3%	Food Safety Certification, Food Service	Coordination, Service Orientation, Active Listening, Critical Thinking
Light Truck or Services Drivers	+22.8%	Delivery/Tracking software	Monitoring, Operations & Control, Active Listening
Home Health & Personal Care Aides	+20.5%	CPR, Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), Microsoft Office	Interpersonal, Service Orientation, Social Perceptiveness, Monitoring, Critical Thinking

These are attainable opportunities appropriate for many SCSEP participants.

Through this state plan, the two SCSEP grantees will administer program services that create successful unsubsidized employment opportunities for its participants. To do so, the state's two grantees will focus on growing labor markets appropriate for this cohort of older workers. This strategy will include determining training goals that are attainable within the program's 48-month program time limit, and employment goals that are both reachable and sustainable for the participant upon exiting the program.

Service Delivery and Coordination

1. Actions to coordinate SCSEP with other programs.

a. Actions to coordinate SCSEP with other WIOA Title I Programs.

The primary method of job skills training for the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is work-based training. This is achieved by placing a participant in a Community Service Assignment with a local non-profit or municipal agency for twenty hours per week where they are involved in activities germane to the work they seek to secure upon completion of the program. This is not the only source of skills training with which SCSEP connects older workers to become job ready. Program participants also often attend training courses with the American Job Centers (AJC) to supplement the skills learned at their Community Service Assignment.

SCSEP is a required Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) partner. As a result, both the state and national grantees maintain Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) and Infrastructure Funding Agreements (IFA) with the local Workforce Development Boards within their service areas. In several counties, these IFAs allow SCSEP staff weekly use of a cubicle, and space for monthly meetings at the local American Job Center (AJC). In other areas, SCSEP is part of the Workforce Development Board and co-located at an AJC. This coordination facilitates increased communication between SCSEP and the AJC and provides the program with valuable meeting space.

SCSEP will work with the WIOA Title I programs to provide information sharing, and cross referrals. The Connecticut Department of Labor maintains a centralized website, consolidating job listings statewide as they are listed with each Workforce Development Board. All SCSEP participants will be required to enroll with www.cthires.com as part of their transition plan towards unsubsidized employment.

During this State Plan, Connecticut will continue to partner with the state's WIOA Title I program through the AJCs to find new ways for these resources to be an asset to training older workers.

b. Actions to coordinate SCSEP with the activities being carried out under the other titles of the Older Americans Act (OAA).

The SCSEP grantees and sub-grantees will ensure all program participants age 60 and older are informed about the five Area Agencies on Aging throughout the state and the services provided through the OAA in Connecticut, as needed. This information sharing will be done through job club meetings, emails, and

during all participant assessments. This information will include, but is not limited to: nutrition assistance, caregiver programs, healthy aging programs and information and assistance. The SCSEP state grant is located within the designated State Unit on Aging and this dual role creates ready-made opportunities for coordination between SCSEP and OAA programs. In addition to providing needed supportive services to participants and thereby addressing barriers to employment, coordinating with the Area Agencies on Aging creates an opportunity to grow Community Service Assignment locations.

- c. Planned actions to coordinate SCSEP with other private and public entities and programs that provide services to older Americans, and programs for those with special needs or disabilities.

Connecticut's primary partnerships are those non-profit, 501c3 organizations, and municipal agencies that provide in-person training for SCSEP participants through Community Service Assignments. These organizations act as SCSEP host agencies and provide opportunities for work-based training with skilled supervision in a safe environment for older workers to prepare for today's labor market. Recent host agencies include Area Agencies on Aging, long term care facilities, food banks, American Job Centers, senior centers, community action agencies, and more.

SCSEP relies on a two-pronged approach when assisting program participants: 1) job skills training through the community service assignment and 2) addressing barriers to employment. The partnerships that assist participants to be prepared and able to focus on training and employment are as important to Connecticut as those providing job training and workforce initiatives.

The Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS) houses vocational rehabilitation (VR) services within the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS) and the Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB). Both bureaus provide supports and assistance to those with a disability who are looking for jobs skills and to acquire and maintain employment. While assisting job seekers, these programs also work to ensure employers receive the training and resources needed to support their employees. SCSEP will work with the VR programs when appropriate to meet the needs of an older worker with a disability seeking job skills training. At the same time, SCSEP will continue to welcome any referrals from these programs.

SCSEP will also work with The Connecticut Tech Act, part of BRS, whose purpose is to help individuals with disabilities, as well as employers, have access to assistive technology devices and services. Devices and items such as screen readers for the computer, would be vital to addressing a barrier to employment for a SCSEP participant with low vision.

The grantees and subgrantees will ensure job skills training services and supportive services are available to SCSEP eligible veterans. Program staff will partner with organizations, including but not limited to the Veteran's Outreach Center, and Veterans' Administration Hospitals.

Finally, SCSEP relies on a myriad of non-profit organizations, public entities, and faith-based organizations for services to address barriers, such as food banks, transportation assistance, heating assistance, broadband services and more. Through this state plan, Connecticut will maintain these existing partnerships and seek out new ones as they are needed to provide a holistic approach to best address barriers to employment for SCSEP participants.

d. Planned actions to coordinate SCSEP with other labor market and job training initiatives.

SCSEP participants are frequently in need of skills training that cannot be fully achieved with a Community Service Assignment at a host agency. The most common of these is training in computer skills but additional trainings include Certified Nurse's Aide (CNA), Child Development Associate and ServSafe Manager or Food Handler certifications. Many participants may also need basic education skills such as basic math courses, literacy, or General Education Development (GED). For these educational opportunities, SCSEP relies on a variety of partnerships throughout the state. In south central Connecticut, the Whitney Center has trained several participants as CNAs; in the western region, the Stamford Library has provided basic computer skills training; and in the capitol region, an Early Childhood Education Certificate may be obtained from Capital Community College. SCSEP also relies on resources, such as adult education services, Literacy Volunteers to provide general assistance to participants when education or reading skills are presented as barriers to employment.

In early 2024, Connecticut launched jobs.ct.gov which provides access to job search tools, tips and resources. This information, available to all seeking help, will assist SCSEP participants in finding job opportunities. It will also help local SCSEP staff connect participants to training and certification opportunities in accordance with their employment plans.

To prioritize the training and supportive services needed of formerly incarcerated individuals, SCSEP grantees will seek out partnerships with reentry and workforce inclusion programs through public and non-profit resources such as the Connecticut Department of Labor.

During this plan, Connecticut will continue to coordinate with these training programs and resources. In doing so, grantees will continue to seek out and develop partnerships with adult education services, community colleges and other entities providing educational services needed by SCSEP participants. These partnerships will be maintained through regular contact from local SCSEP staff and information sharing.

e. Actions to ensure that SCSEP is an active partner with the one-stop delivery system and the steps the State will take to encourage and improve coordination.

One of the top partners in job readiness training is the American Job Centers (AJC) where the primary services of WIOA Title I are provided. SCSEP participants are expected to register with the local AJC. In prior years, participants have enrolled in many of the numerous workshops offered including resume writing, computer training, and online job application assistance.

For many years, SCSEP participants would attend classes at the AJC in person, providing them opportunities to meet other older workers, learn of other services, and to network. Since the beginning of the pandemic, Connecticut's American Job Centers encourage individuals to make an appointment to meet with staff at the center instead of simply walking in. Additionally, many classes are online. Online job skills training offers more skills training opportunities and often, a more flexible schedule, but they do not allow for informal meetings, idea sharing and learning beyond the classroom. Online classes are not the ideal training approach for older workers.

These changes at Connecticut's AJCs may make it difficult for older workers to navigate the system and make the right connections for assistance. As part of this state plan, SCSEP will identify a primary contact at each job center as the point of entry for program participants. This connection is intended to facilitate easier access to AJC programs, trainings, and services.

Local SCSEP staff will maintain regular contact with the job centers within each service area to be aware of training offerings and activities that will benefit older workers. SCSEP will refer program participants to the resources of the AJC, and both partners will refer potential enrollees as appropriate.

f. Efforts to work with local economic development offices in rural locations.

Connecticut, in most cases, does not operate on a county or regional basis, rather in a model in which municipalities govern and provide services for their town only. Therefore, most the state's economic development offices are located in larger municipalities. The exception is the Northeast Connecticut Economic Alliance in the Southeastern Planning Region which serves twenty-one (21) towns.

The state does have a state department, the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). Among several important missions, the Connecticut DECD is approaching economic development keeping in mind community development, transportation, and education. Given the rate at which the state's population is aging and the changing demographics of its workforce, it is important that discussions include the needs of mature workers.

Throughout the period of this plan, Connecticut will conduct outreach to the local economic development offices and the DECD. This communication will provide information about SCSEP and seek ways to support their efforts.

Action Step: To maximize access to training and to fully address barriers to employment, Connecticut will bring together workforce, aging network, and social services partners to meet as a workgroup. This workgroup will provide an opportunity for collaboration, and information sharing.

Connecticut, under the leadership of the Department of Aging and Disability Services, will convene these meetings quarterly during this state plan.

2. The State's long-term strategy for engaging employers to develop and promote placement of SCSEP participants in unsubsidized employment.

To successfully assist program participants in finding unsubsidized employment, it is vital that SCSEP staff are aware of which industries are hiring within their service area. Grantee and subgrantee staff will monitor CTHires, a job listing website service maintained by the state, as well as other posting sites. Staff will also attend local job fairs, when appropriate, to meet with local businesses and, through follow-up inquiries and outreach, will maintain contact with employers who have previously hired SCSEP participants. Staff will use this knowledge to work with employers, training programs, and participants to ensure successful placement with a job. Finally, SCSEP staff will remain up to date on labor market

information. With these efforts to understand the needs of local employers, SCSEP staff will use this knowledge throughout the participant's enrollment in SCSEP to create job-ready older workers prepared for the labor market they are entering.

Through connection with local employers, SCSEP staff learn to recognize what an employer needs in a future employee, and the program can, in turn, provide the necessary training to participants to meet that need. Awareness of employer priorities will be present at all stages of the participants' involvement with the program. Grantees and subgrantees will continue to promote placement opportunities for SCSEP participants through comprehensive Individual Employment Plans (IEP), which are developed for today's labor markets and the needs of the employers. These IEPs will coordinate training and develop a career pathway for participants that identifies a sector-based strategy to transition participants to unsubsidized employment. Efforts will also include robust partnerships with state and local workforce development services, host agencies and training opportunities to prepare participants for the jobs employers are looking to fill.

SCSEP will maintain its relationships with other state departments and local Chambers of Commerce and economic development offices. Local staff will also build on relationships with the American Job Centers and other workforce partners to remain informed of employment opportunities suitable for SCSEP participants. Expanded job development, well-prepared older workers, and strengthened partnerships will result in SCSEP participants securing and maintaining unsubsidized employment.

3. The State's long-term strategy for serving minority older individuals under SCSEP.

Connecticut remains committed to serving all eligible older workers and ensuring the census of SCSEP participants reflects that of the communities the program serves. Through this state plan, SCSEP grantees will monitor enrollment through the Grants Performance Management System (GPMS) as well as the SCSEP Minority Report released annually by The Charter Oak Group. These tools will provide measures for enrollment and performance of SCSEP when serving minority individuals.

To ensure diversity, Connecticut SCSEP grantees and sub-grantees will have Spanish-speaking staff available to assist participants and potential enrollees as needed. Targeted outreach will be conducted toward non-profit agencies serving minority groups, in particular Hispanic and Latino, and Asian communities. This outreach will assist in recruiting both older workers seeking to return to the workforce and potential host agencies to provide a more diverse and inclusive selection of Community Service Assignments.

Action Step: To better serve Hispanic and Latino older workers, a group historically underserved in Connecticut based on reporting from The U.S. Department of Labor, Connecticut will survey current and recently exited participants who identify as such. This survey will seek to learn how to better serve these older workers and how to improve recruitment into SCSEP.

4. List of community services that are needed and the places where these services are most needed.

One of the two goals for this Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) State Plan is to ensure service delivery strategies address barriers older workers face in participating in job skills training and finding employment. Community services are needed in varying forms across Connecticut. Planning regions with urban areas, such as Capitol and South Central Connecticut, are facing higher than average poverty and in others, like the Northwest Hills Planning Region, participants have few public transportation options, which limits available resources, such as Host Agencies for Community Service Assignments

Barriers may also include, but are not limited to,

Caregiver Supports
Energy Assistance
Food and nutrition

Financial Assistance
Housing Assistance

Additional services needed are in health care and healthy living education. In 2021, “The Connecticut Healthy Aging Report” was published by The Gerontology Institute at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. This comprehensive report highlighted chronic disease as an indicator of needed interventions for the state’s older residents. In this publication, it is reported that “Sixty-two percent of people age 65+ have been diagnosed with four or more chronic conditions”

SCSEP will work with community partners, including the Area Agencies on Aging, Community Action Agencies, and other non-profit and public agencies to address the needs of the population the program serves. Program-eligible participants will be referred to the Area Agencies on Aging for a Benefits Check-Up to connect with state and federal assistance programs when eligible. Partnerships with social services and aging services will assist program participants in addressing barriers to enrolling in job skills training and in securing unsubsidized employment.

The COVID-19 Pandemic forced job training services, including SCSEP, to move to a virtual format. This shift in how services were delivered strongly highlighted the digital divide among our older residents and the need for computer training. Between July 2020 and June 2023, The Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS) administered a SCSEP Demonstration Grant. With these funds, ADS looked to connect eligible participants with online job skills training and job development services. Grant funds were used to provide laptops and personal internet hotspots to participants who required them in order to participate in training. For the duration of this demonstration grant, local subgrantee staff struggled to find eligible participants with enough computer skills to fully engage in training. Many older residents participating in this program lacked basic computer skills. This illustrated an important need in services. Digital literacy must be an integral facet of job training programs for older adults.

Statewide, Connecticut SCSEP enrollees are varied in their computer skills. Some have extensive skills and are able to access training with minimal assistance. However, others lack the basic knowledge of how to use a computer or laptop. As evidenced in the list of needed skills required for growing occupations, outlined earlier in this plan, the ability to successfully use a computer is a necessity for employment after SCSEP. Through this state plan, Connecticut will seek out partners for computer skills training suitable for all levels of ability.

Action Step: Connecticut will contact municipalities, adult education programs, non-profits, and others to compile a list of available computer skills training programs. From there, partnerships will be nurtured to assist participants.

5. Long-term strategy to improve SCSEP services, including planned long-term changes to the design of the program within the state, and planned changes in the use of SCSEP grantees to better achieve the goals of the program.

This state plan has outlined actions the state will focus on to improve SCSEP services.

To provide job skills training, SCSEP will:

- Bring together workforce, aging network, and social services partners to meet as a workgroup. This workgroup will provide an opportunity for collaboration and information sharing.
- Partner with WIOA programs by maintaining office space at local American Job Centers; sharing information; and cross-referrals.
- Continue to recruit and maintain non-profit and municipal agencies as host agencies to provide Community Service Assignments for work-based training.

For this SCSEP State Plan, Connecticut will put a focus on sector-based training and creating career pathways for participants. These pathways will be designed to focus the Individual Employment Plan (IEP), including training activities, on occupations for which employers are hiring and that are projected to grow in the coming years. In the Economic Projections and Impact portion of this state plan, Connecticut identified 10 growing labor markets that are attainable for the average SCSEP participant. Several of these require certifications and specific skills training. The following table revisits the information from Connecticut Department of Labor, The Office of Research and O*Net Online.

Sector Based Training for Growing Occupations CT Department of Labor Office of Research and O*Net		
Occupation	Skills Needed Include	Related Certifications
Transportation Attendants, Except Flight Attendants	Interpersonal, Speaking, Monitoring, Social Perceptiveness	
Non-Farm Animal Caretakers	Monitoring, Coordination, Decisions Making	
Bartenders	Interpersonal, Critical Thinking, Service Orientation, Social Perceptiveness	Alcohol Server Certification (ie TIPS, ServSafe, etc)
Passenger Vehicle Drivers, Except Bus Drivers, Transit	Defensive Driving, Interpersonal, Social Perceptiveness	Commercial Driver's License

Occupation	Skills Needed Include	Related Certifications
Preschool Teachers, except Special Education	Instructing, Speaking, Learning, Strategies, Interpersonal, Coordination	Early Childhood Education or Child Development, CPR and First Aid
Motor Vehicle Operators, All Others	Defensive Driving, Coordination	
Bus Drivers, Transit & Intercity	Operations & Control, Critical Thinking, Service Orientation	Commercial Driver's License
Cooks, Short Order	Coordination, Service Orientation , Active Listening, Critical Thinking	Food Safety Certification
Light Truck or Services Drivers	Monitoring, Operations & Control, Active Listening	
Home Health & Personal Care Aides	Interpersonal, Service Orientation, Social Perceptiveness, Monitoring, Critical Thinking	Personal Care Assistant or Certified Nurse's Aide, CPR and First Aid

Beyond these certifications, Connecticut will also assist participants in enrolling in others as they align with the IEP. These may include, but are not limited to, Microsoft Office and advanced computer skills.

To address barriers to training and employment, SCSEP will:

- Survey current and recently exited participants who identify as Hispanic or Latino. This survey will seek to learn how to better serve these older workers and how to improve recruitment into SCSEP.
- Compile a list of available computer skills training programs. From there, partnerships will be nurtured to assist participants.
- Provide information from and make referrals to Older Americans Act programs for participants age 60 and older, as well as other local social and community services.

To provide job development services SCSEP will:

- Register all participants with CT Hires.
- Conduct outreach to economic development offices.
- Utilize partnerships with state and local workforce development boards.

Connecticut SCSEP grantees may exercise the Additional Training and Social Service option provided by the U.S. Department of Labor, which assists in addressing barriers to employment and provides other training opportunities for participants to best prepare older workers to enter the labor market. In recent

years, these initiatives have included, but are not limited to: providing laptops and/or personal internet hotspots to participate in online training; financial assistance for hearing aides; assistance with transportation expenses; and providing access to certification programs to prepare for available sector-based jobs.

These efforts in job skills training, sector-based training, supportive services, and job development will be the tools used by SCSEP grantees and sub-grantees to achieve the goals of the program, to provide job skills training and address barriers to employment and employment for program participants.

6. Strategy for continuous improvement in the level of performance for SCSEP participants' entry into unsubsidized employment.

With this plan, Connecticut will focus on growing labor markets and include sector-based training to best prepare older workers to meet the needs of employers. It will connect with local employers to develop relationships and best understand their workforce needs now and in the coming years. Finally, SCSEP will strengthen partnerships with workforce training partners including the American Job Centers, and address barriers to training and employment by working with the state's aging and social service networks.

With these steps in mind, SCSEP will develop Individual Employment Plans (IEP) which will guide the program participant successfully through the training needed for available jobs. As a result, older workers will be prepared for the jobs that are available and successfully secure unsubsidized employment when exiting SCSEP.

By tailoring job skills training and removing the obstacles that make it difficult for older workers to find a job in today's labor market, more participants will find jobs and the level of performance for SCSEP in Connecticut will improve.

Location and Population Served, Including Equitable Distribution

1. Description of the localities and populations for which projects of the type authorized by SCSEP are most needed.

Beginning in 2022, Connecticut began recognizing planning regions instead of counties to identify geographic areas. These are based on the Council of Governments' regions and, beginning with the first year of this plan, will be used to identify locations served by SCSEP.

SCSEP serves all nine planning regions in Connecticut. Many of these regions are similar in demographics, economic and social need. For example, much of the Western Connecticut Planning Region, considered the wealthiest in the state also has the highest percent of its adults, ages 55 and older who are below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), according to data collected from U. S. Census American Community Survey for 2021. Meanwhile, the Southeastern Connecticut Planning Region, with a significant amount of its population residing in rural communities, has fewer adults below the FPL, but

higher unemployment. The need is evident statewide, but the delivery of services varies from one region to another.

Each region has rural and suburban communities, while five contain at least one urban area. Every planning region in the state is served by one of the two SCSEP grantees, with overlap in Greater Bridgeport, Western Connecticut and South Central Connecticut Planning Regions. These regions are densely populated throughout, allowing for easy cooperation between the two grants. In the Western Connecticut Planning Region, the area is split geographically between the two. In the South Central Connecticut Planning Region, both work cooperatively to ensure there is no overlap in host agencies or recruitment.

2. List the cities and counties where the project will be conducted. Include the number of SCSEP authorized positions and indicate where the positions changed from the prior year.

The following table illustrates the breakdown of authorized positions by the state and national grantee for Program Year (PY) 2023 (July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024).

SCSEP Authorized Positions by Planning Region Data from the US DOL Employment and Training Administration				
County	Cities	State Grantee Authorized Positions (AP) 2023	National Grantee AP 2023	Authorized Positions (AP) PY 2024
Capitol Planning Region	Hartford	0	122	122
Greater Bridgeport Planning Region	Bridgeport	19	26	45
Lower CT River Valley Planning Region	None	0	20	20
Naugatuck Valley Planning Region	Waterbury	0	58	58
Northeastern CT Planning Region	None	0	11	11
Northwest Hills Planning Region	None	14	0	14
South Central CT Planning Region	New Haven	28	49	77
Southeastern CT Planning Region	New London Norwich	0	33	33
Western CT Planning Region	Stamford	28	32	60

3. Describe any slot imbalances and proposed steps to correct inequities to achieve equitable distribution.

Connecticut does not have any imbalance in enrollment and all counties are being served equitably. The state will continue to monitor the equitable distribution of positions and the grantees will work together to address any concerns as they arise.

4. Describe the state's long-term strategy for achieving an equitable distribution of SCSEP positions within the State that:

- a. Moves positions from over-served to underserved locations within the state in compliance with 20 CFR 641.365**
- b. Equitably serves rural and urban areas.**
- c. Serves individuals afforded service under 20 CFR 641.520**

Connecticut will ensure equitable distribution of SCSEP activities throughout the state's nine planning regions. The state coordinator will monitor demographics, particularly social and economic need, labor market information, and in particular, the Most-in-Need elements that take priority in enrollment as defined by the U.S. Department of Labor. These elements are:

- Having a severe disability
- Age 75 or Older
- Old enough but not receiving Social Security Title II
- Living in a rural area
- Frail
- Homeless or at risk of homelessness
- Having a disability
- Limited English proficiency
- Low employment prospects
- Low literacy skills
- Employment prospects in areas of persistent unemployment
- Formerly incarcerated
- Veterans (or eligible spouse of a veteran)
- Post 911 Era Veterans
- Receiving public assistance
- Family income at or below poverty
- Displaced homemakers

The state grantee will consult with the national grantee to analyze equitable distribution of SCSEP positions across the state. When changes between counties are needed, Connecticut, to the greatest extent possible, will ensure priority individuals receive services. Additionally, when changes are needed, the State will ensure there is will be no disruption of services to enrolled participants.

5. Provide the ratio of eligible individuals in each service area to the total eligible population in the State

To illustrate the ratio of eligible individuals the following table compares population and the percentage of that population below the federal poverty level. This information is compiled from the U.S. Census American Community Survey.

Data Illustrating Need by Planning Region Information compiled from the U.S Census 2022 American Community Survey		
Planning Region	Total Population Age 55 and Older	Adults 55 + Below Federal Poverty
Capitol Planning Region	307,803	24,152
Greater Bridgeport Planning Region	98,489	12,842
Lower CT River Valley Planning Region	66,807	5,586
Naugatuck Valley Planning Region	149,232	10,969
Northeastern CT Planning Region	32,588	2,378
Northwest Hills Planning Region	42,555	3,168
South Central CT Planning Region	184,199	15,618
Southeastern CT Planning Region	149,232	8,680
Western CT Planning Region	196,881	13,952

- 6. The relative distribution of eligible individuals who:**
- a. Reside in urban and rural areas within the State**
 - b. Have the greatest economic need**
 - c. Are minorities**
 - d. Are limited English proficient**
 - e. Have the greatest social need.**

To review the relative distribution of residents between urban and rural communities, the following table reviews the population by planning region. This table is based on information from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Urban Residents and Rural Residents by Planning Region in 2022		
From the U.S Census Bureau		
Planning Region	Urban	Rural
Capitol Planning Region	88.02%	11.98%
Greater Bridgeport Planning Region	97.14%	2.89%
Lower CT River Valley Planning Region	68.66%	31.34%
Naugatuck Valley Planning Region	90.80%	9.20%
Northeastern CT Planning Region	37.6%	62.40%
Northwest Hills Planning Region	39.98%	60.02%
South Central CT Planning Region	96.37%	3.63%
Southeastern CT Planning Region	73.89%	26.11%
Western CT Planning Region	91.54%	8.46%

To provide some review of the economic need for SCSEP, the following is a breakdown of the poverty rate, and households receiving SNAP benefits by planning region.

Economic Need by Planning Region		
Information compiled from the U.S Census American Community Survey		
Planning Region	Estimated Poverty Rate Among People Ages 55 and Older 2022	Estimated Percentage of Households w/ at least 1 person 60+ receiving SNAP benefits 2022
Capitol Planning Region	7.8%	42.3%
Greater Bridgeport Planning Region	8.7%	50.0%
Lower CT River Valley Planning Region	8.4%	46.7%
Naugatuck Valley Planning Region	7.3%	40.0%
Northeastern CT Planning Region	7.3%	38.4%
Northwest Hills Planning Region	7.4%	54.6%
South Central CT Planning Region	8.5%	48.6%
Southeastern CT Planning Region	5.8%	43.6%
Western CT Planning Region	7.1%	46.2%

To further demonstrate economic need, the following is a review of unemployment in 2022. The Connecticut Department of Labor does not provide information based on planning regions. This information is by Workforce Investment Area.

Average Unemployment Rate in 2022 CT Department of Labor Office of Research	
Workforce Investment Area	Unemployment Rate
Eastern WIA	4.2%
North Central WIA	4.2%
Northwest WIA	4.2%
South Central WIA	3.9%
Southwest WIA	4.3%

The following table is a percentage of residents who identify as a minority by planning region.

Estimated Minority Rate by Planning Region From the U.S Census American Community Survey	
Planning Region	Minority Rate 2022
Capitol Planning Region	36.6%
Greater Bridgeport Planning Region	41.2%
Lower CT River Valley Planning Region	19.6%
Naugatuck Valley Planning Region	37.5%
Northeastern CT Planning Region	16.1%
Northwest Hills Planning Region	21.4%
South Central CT Planning Region	38.0%
Southeastern CT Planning Region	23.6%
Western CT Planning Region	39.3%

To review the distribution of social need, the following is the percentage of individuals limited in English proficiency and individuals who have less than a 12th grade education. Please note that this table captures those age 65 and older.

Social Need by Planning Region		
Information from the U.S Census 2022 American Community Survey		
Planning Region	Less than 12th grade education, age 65 and older	Percent of Total Population that Speaks English less than “very well”
Capitol Planning Region	10.1%	8.1%
Greater Bridgeport Planning Region	16.0%	13.3%
Lower CT River Valley Planning Region	7.6%	3.4%
Naugatuck Valley Planning Region	14.1%	8.3%
Northeastern CT Planning Region	12.6%	3.0%
Northwest Hills Planning Region	7.1%	4.0%
South Central CT Planning Region	9.9%	35.0%
Southeastern CT Planning Region	10.5%	5.3%
Western CT Planning Region	10.2%	12.2%

7. A description of the steps taken to avoid disruptions, to the greatest extent possible, when positions are redistributed, as provided in 20 CFS 641.365; when new Census or other reliable data become available; or when there is over-enrollment for any other reason

Should positions be redistributed between grantees, the Department of Aging and Disability Services will work with the national grantee to develop a transition plan ensuring coordination and diligence during any necessary transitions. This will include a joint meeting between the two grants with program participants to introduce new grantee members, detail the transition, and explain the reason for any changes. These efforts will allow for minimum disruption of service and allow the participant to continue their work-based job training and receive compensation for that work.

If the number of positions changes within planning regions, the State will ensure that no participants are terminated as a result. Should the number decrease, the grantees will not enroll new participants until the Equitable Distribution levels are achieved.

SCSEP Assurances

This plan is a standalone SCSEP Workforce Plan. The Department of Aging and Disability Services assures that this plan was developed with input from the national grantee, The WorkPlace, Inc. The plan has been submitted for public comment. In doing so, public, and private non-profit agencies providing employment services were provided an opportunity to provide comment, as were social service agencies providing services to older individuals, grantees under Title III of the Older Americans Act, affected communities and unemployed individuals. Where possible, comments were incorporated into this plan.