

**SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM
STATE PLAN
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT FOR AGING AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**

Program Years 2016-2019

Introduction to the Plan

The Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), which administers the state's Senior Community Service Employment Plan (SCSEP), is responsible for taking the lead role to complete a SCSEP State Plan. This plan is required by the 2006 Older Americans Act (OAA) Amendments, signed into law by the President in 2006. The OAA amendment required the governor or designee to submit a State Plan that includes a four-year strategy for the statewide provision of community service training and other activities for eligible individuals under SCSEP. The State Plan is intended to foster both short-term and long-term coordination among the various national and state SCSEP grantees and sub-recipients operating within the State. It is intended to facilitate the efforts of key stakeholders to work collaboratively through a participatory process to accomplish the SCSEP's goals.

SCSEP is the only federally sponsored employment and training program targeted to unemployed, low-income older Americans age 55 and older who have poor employment prospects. Individuals served by the program receive training through part-time service oriented positions at public or non-profit agencies in their communities, while earning minimum wage. The program subsidizes these part-time community service positions. The program has dual goals of promoting community service and helping participants achieve economic self-sufficiency by guiding them into unsubsidized employment, when appropriate. The program benefits both participants and communities they serve. It serves as a bridge to unsubsidized positions in entry level employment and benefits communities by performing valuable and needed community service.

SCSEP, authorized by Title V of the OAA Amendments, is administered at the federal level by the United States Department of Labor (DOL). DOL allocates funds to operate the program to state agencies on aging in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the territories, and awards funds based on open competitions to national contractor organizations or sponsors. In the Commonwealth of Virginia, the state funding share (22%) is administered by DARS. The national sponsors that operate in Virginia are the AARP Foundation, Goodwill Industries International, Inc. (GWI); Experience Works, Inc. (EW), and the National Council on Aging (NCOA).

Section I. Purpose of the Plan

DOL considers the State Plan as an opportunity for the state to take a longer term, strategic view of the SCSEP in the state, including SCSEP's role in workforce development, given projected changes in the demographics, economy and labor market in the state. The State Plan is intended to address the role of SCSEP relative to other workforce programs as well as other programs serving older workers. The plan should articulate how all grantees operating in the state examine

and, as appropriate, plan longer-term changes to the design of the program within the state so as to better achieve the goals of the program.

Section 2. Involvement of Organizations and Individuals

The planning process envisions participation of certain organizations and individuals with expertise in older worker issues. DARS, the Commonwealth of Virginia's SCSEP grantee, ensured that all DOL-designated stakeholders were made aware of the development of the State Plan and sought their advice and involvement in its development. Copies of emails soliciting this input are attached in Appendix D.

A broad range of interested parties and stakeholders were notified by email of the State Plan process and invited to participate, submit comments, and make recommendations on the process. Recipients included Virginia's area agencies on aging (AAA) network that operates Title III of the OAA Amendments, state SCSEP sub-projects, national sponsor grantees operating in Virginia, the State Workforce Investment Act office, the division of the Virginia Department of Social Services that provide services to older workers, the Virginia Community Action Partnership that represents community based organizations, the Virginia Chamber of Commerce that represents businesses, the Virginia AFL-CIO, and unemployed older individuals. All recipients were requested to forward the email to their respective field offices, state or local boards, and any other affected organizations and individuals, including participants and underserved older individuals that were deemed appropriate. Recipients were informed that the State Plan would be posted on the DARS web site for public comments prior to submission to DOL. Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) also were made aware of the State Plan process by SCSEP and aging network staff national contractors serving on WIBs.

A meeting was initially planned in January to convene the nationals and state sub-grantees at the DARS office to discuss the state plan. This meeting had to be cancelled due to inclement weather. A conference call between the national and state grantees took place February 12, 2016, in place of this meeting. National sponsors were also sent drafts of the state plan and invited to contribute and make comments on the plan content.

Section 3. Solicitation and Collection of Public Comments

No comments were received during the public comment period.

Section 4. Economic Projections and Impact

- A. Discuss long-term projections for jobs in industries and occupations in the State that may provide employment opportunities for older workers. (20 CFR 641.302(d)). Alternately, States may discuss this in the economic analysis section of strategic plan, if submitting a Combined State Plan.**

Virginia's population, much like the rest of the nation's, is aging. In 2014, Census estimates put the population of Virginians age 55 or older at 2,187,310, with a total population of 8,326,289. (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, 7/1/2014, Census Estimate by Age and Sex).

The projected population for 2020 in Virginia for people over 55 is 2,507,949. (Source: Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, 2012 Population Projections by Age and Sex for Virginia). This number will continue to grow, nearing 3,000,000 by 2040. Demand for employment in this age demographic will also increase.

Review was also performed on employment growth in Virginia. This data was pulled from Virginia Labor Market Information (virginialmi.com). A listing of the top 25 growth industries is available in Appendix A. Areas of high growth include Ambulatory Health Care Services, Home Health Care Services, Other Professional, Scientific and Technical Services, and Individual and Family Services. These opportunities for job growth apply to all Virginia Workers.

Growth areas by occupation are located in Appendix B. Top occupations for growth include retail, food preparation, cashiers, waiters, office clerks, janitorial, and personal care aides. All of these occupations may be appropriate for SCSEP participants.

B. Describe how the long-term job projections discussed in the economic analysis section of strategic plan relate to the types of unsubsidized jobs for which SCSEP participants are trained and the types of skills training to be provided. (20 CFR 641.302(d))

The top seven areas of occupational growth noted in Appendix B require low levels of education and skill. Per 2014 Final QPRs, the Virginia state grant and four national sponsors in the state show that 57% of SCSEP participants have a high school diploma or lower education level. SCSEP funding does not provide for advanced training or college level education. If a participant does have post-secondary education, that will be evaluated along with occupational growth data for that participant's area.

The areas of occupational growth that SCSEP focuses on also require low to moderate levels of on-the-job training, and make efficient use of SCSEP funds. Personal care assistance is one area of growth that provides unique opportunities to SCSEP participants, and child care is another area of growth that many SCSEP programs have had success in placing SCSEP participants. Although SCSEP program officers focus on areas of growth, a participant's IEP and assessment also guide training and job placement.

Individual Employment Plan

Following an in-depth assessment, an IEP is developed for each SCSEP participant. The IEP serves as a roadmap with established goals for measurable action steps. The IEP is an agreed-to plan between the participant and grantee or sub-grantee, which outlines the occupational preferences and training needed by the participant. A set of established goals with timelines are determined for training; barriers to employment are addressed and supportive service needs are identified. This information helps determine an appropriate community service training position with a host agency where the participant gains work experience and develops or improves skills. Along with the work experience gained through the community service assignment at a host agency, the participant may also take advantage of specific skills training

such as basic computer skills. The IEP, coupled with knowledge of the local labor market, forms the basis for determining training and types of skill training to be provided.

Community Service Training Positions

Participants receive work experience at local public or non-profit agencies, and are paid minimum wage for approximately 20 hours per week while participating in community service work and other job training. Through their community service placement at host agencies, SCSEP participants gain valuable training and real-world work skills that will prepare them for unsubsidized employment. Each participant's background, history, skill training needs, and employment goals are carefully weighed when selecting a host agency to ensure that training and work experience are both realistic for the individual and prepare the individual for available occupational opportunities in the community. We will continue to target public and non-profit host agencies that are willing to offer community service work that develops the skills needed for regional occupational demand. We view host agencies as partners and will continue to work with and seek out host agencies that provide training, mentoring, and encouragement that develop the skills and confidence of participants assigned to them.

C. Discuss current and projected employment opportunities in the State (such as by providing information available under §15 of the Wagner-Peyser Act (29 U.S.C. 491-2) by occupation), and the types of skills possessed by eligible individuals. (20 CFR 641.325(c)).

SCSEP is designed for low-income individuals who are not job ready. Virginia's grantees have found that even though the backgrounds of SCSEP participants are diverse, marketable skills may be absent, including technological skills and soft skills. Many SCSEP participants face significant barriers to employment. These include outdated or non-existent work histories, limited education, low reading levels, lack of basic computer literacy, and general lack of communication and customer service skills. Frequently participants have multiple needs, ranging from housing and transportation, to mental health and other health needs that must be addressed prior to or while enrolled in the program. Health problems prevent some individuals from engaging in occupations for which they were trained earlier in life. Many are interested in part-time employment to supplement social security income. Virginia grantees have seen an increase in the number of felons entering the program, which presents additional challenges including identifying them and placing them with willing host agencies.

Among the top 25 growing occupations, according to information provided in Appendix A, are Ambulatory Health Care Services, Home Health Care Services, Office Administrative Services, and Services to Grounds or Dwellings (maintenance). Long term employment projections for Virginia can be seen in Appendix B, and include Food Services, Retail, Customer Services positions, and Office Services and Janitorial Services. Given the types of skills possessed by the Virginia SCSEP participants, Virginia's grantees believe it is realistic to offer work experience and training in entry-level demand occupations such as companion, personal and home care aides, home health aides, office assistants, receptionists, security guards, housekeepers, maintenance preparation workers, custodians, groundskeepers and retail workers. This is by no means all inclusive. Depending on the participant's assessment and IEP, there are other

occupations within these sectors that may be a good match for Virginia's participants. We will also pursue opportunities for SCSEP participants who are qualified beyond entry level.

Section 5. Service Delivery and Coordination

Grantees collaborate with key community organizations in a variety of ways depending on the regions. Grantee representatives are members of region-wide human service agency networking groups and education and workforce networking groups which meet and communicate on a regular basis. This results in cross referrals, exchange of support services information, increased training opportunities, sharing of local job market information, speaking opportunities, increased host agency opportunities, increased contact with case managers, and increased sharing of information that is mutually beneficial. All grantees will continue to develop partnerships, collaborate with regional and local private and public entities, and share best practices in an effort to more effectively and efficiently serve our participants.

Coordination of SCSEP with Other Programs

A. Coordination with WIOA Title I

Grantees will continue to refer SCSEP participants to local one-stop career centers throughout their respective service areas. We will continue to educate participants regarding the availability of comprehensive workforce development-related activities provided by one-stop centers, including updating interviewing skills, resume preparation, and job placement services, and strongly encourage participants to avail themselves of these services.

DARS, the state grantee, will continue to represent the SCSEP in state level one-stop partner meetings and initiatives. The DARS SCSEP Project Director works with DARS representation to provide information to one-stops and workforce initiatives about the program and referral opportunities.

AARP grantees work closely with One-Stop partners, providing both programmatic and organizational support. SCSEP participants are conducting assignments at WIOA one-stop centers, providing reception and assisting with job searches. SCSEP grantees must enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with local WIBs, describing how services will be provided and how cross-referrals and enrollment will occur.

Goodwill is the contractor providing services via WIOA through all but one WIB in their service area. Program coordination between WIOA and SCSEP is managed through communication of referrals through each program. Career services including job search, career counseling, labor market statistics, unemployment insurance information, and basic skills and assessments are provided through one-stops.

B. Coordination with activities under other titles of OAA.

DARS also administers other titles of the OAA through contractual agreements with the statewide network of AAAs, and is in the position to coordinate the activities of the OAA with SCSEP. DARS will continue these coordination efforts and will ensure that Virginia's SCSEP national grantees are aware of AAA activities and initiatives through e-mail

notification. SCSEP coordinator will schedule Title V monitoring to occur with monitoring of other OAA programs as appropriate.

SCSEP grantees will continue to reach out to AAAs to offer them the opportunity to become host agencies for SCSEP participants. In addition, referrals will be made to nutrition programs, transportation services, health and wellness programs, caregiver support programs, and other programs offered through other titles of the OAA. SCSEP participants and other older workers will be directed to one of the local information and referral hotlines when these workers are seeking services or information.

Grantees will continue to share local job market information, make cross-referrals, take advantage of speaking opportunities, increase contact with case managers, exchange support services information, and increase information sharing that is mutually beneficial with all programs under OAA.

DARS will share relevant state-level one-stop partner information with national grantees as appropriate.

DARS will include one-stop coordination in its training agenda for sub-projects and will be available to meet with one-stops as needed to identify needs and opportunities for both programs.

C. Coordination with other private and public entities and programs serving older Americans.

Planned actions of Virginia grantees are as follows:

DARS administers rehabilitative service programs statewide through its Division of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) which also houses the state SCSEP grantee. Grantee will continue to work with DRS representatives to identify cross-referrals and supportive services. SCSEP representative will speak at local office management meetings as well as new counselor trainings to ensure that DARS employees are aware of the program, and how to refer clients.

Grantees will coordinate with career centers, vocational rehabilitation service organizations, and other members of the local disability community regarding activities, resources, and services for seniors with disabilities.

Grantees will participate in meetings, as appropriate, with senior service providers, both public and private, and will develop partnerships and collaborate in an effort to more effectively and efficiently serve our participants through coordinated service delivery.

Grantees will coordinate with local service providers and community stakeholders to assess needs and develop solutions for local transportation services.

Use of the 211 and other directories to identify entities and programs in the community that provide referrals and support services to seniors will continue. These directories are especially helpful for transition services when a participant's durational limit is approaching and project staff are working with the individual to develop a transition assessment and IEP.

Grantees will network with local faith-based organizations to conduct outreach to SCSEP-eligible individuals.

If assistance is needed for training and employment services with the deaf and hard of hearing, interpreters and other communication access services will be scheduled.

The state grantee plans to focus on partnerships with state community colleges to provide more opportunities for training and potential host agency and job placement. Several sub-grantees are working with community colleges to coordinate computer training for participants. Outreach to non-profits focused on providing veterans' benefits will also be increased in the duration of this state plan.

Goodwill has partnered with community colleges and adult education programs to provide GoodCare, a free health care training program. Participants benefit from supportive services, life-skills, education, training, and assistance to obtain employment in the health care industry, which as many in-demand occupations. Goodwill has partnered with many businesses in the health care sector and adult education community throughout the service area to advance professional learning, expand regional partnerships, and improve the regional workforce system.

Goodwill has also partnered with Med Express to provide any physicals offered to participants during enrollment and annual recertification. Regardless of location, one price is paid throughout the service area.

Goodwill Industries SCSEP program also co-enrolls with the Valleys Re-Entry program. This provides job assistance to men and women with criminal convictions. Attempting to re-enter the workforce with a criminal background is particularly difficult, and partnership with this program assists those most in need due to this barrier.

D. Coordination with other labor market and job training initiatives.

State grantee will provide local labor market data to all sub-grants on a semi-annual basis to assist with identification of growth occupations and industries.

Grantees will increase advocacy roles with partner programs on behalf of the SCSEP population and seek opportunities to jointly serve SCSEP participants.

Grantees will actively seek job training opportunities that will translate to jobs available in the local labor market and offered by community colleges, technology centers, non-profit organizations, adult education programs, and other training institutions.

Grantees and sub-grantees will continue to work with labor organizations such as the Virginia Employment Commission to identify areas of need, training opportunities, and job opportunities in each locality.

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

DARS will continue to review one-stop delivery system involvement with its sub-grantees to ensure that active communication and information sharing is occurring. DARS SCSEP director will be available for speaking opportunities and meetings with one-stops. Grantees will continue to refer SCSEP participants and those determined ineligible to one-stop programs for additional training and services.

SCSEP participants will be placed with one-stops for on-the-job training to serve as greeters, resource aids, job developers, custodians, clerical aids and customer service representatives.

SCSEP participant openings will be listed with one-stop career centers.

Co-enrollment with WIOA, when possible, will be encouraged for participants seeking full-time employment.

Grantees will encourage one-stop career centers to include all SCSEP grantees operating in the local area in regular partner meetings to improve coordination with one-stop delivery system.

Guidance will be requested from one-stop career centers on relevant skills required by local employers.

When applicable, grantees will attend WIB board meetings regularly in the service area.

F. Efforts to work with local economic development offices in rural locations. All grantees work in rural locations within the state. Grantees establish relationships with local VEC office and WIBs to communicate about SCSEP benefits and to utilize cross-referrals and training opportunities.

State and national grantees will continue to partner with local economic development offices in both urban and rural locations to expand job search opportunities. When possible, these offices can serve as host agencies for local SCSEP projects to encourage communication and information sharing.

Local SCSEP offices partner with local VEC offices and WIBs to improve referrals, access training and services unavailable through SCSEP, and to ensure that any employment and training opportunities are extended to as many participants as possible. Local VECs and WIBs are an excellent source for available jobs in the service areas. Participants are often placed at local VECs and have even more access to those services, and can extend those opportunities to other SCSEP participants.

In several localities, local VEC and WIB offices have been brought in to provide trainings such as resume writing courses, mock interviews, and soft skills trainings. Other steps that will continue to be taken to access these services in the next four years include, but are not limited to the following:

-Grantees will seek out local VEC and WIB offices and opportunities to partner with these and other local job/employment boards.

-Grantees will encourage these agencies to include all local SCSEP offices in regular partner meetings to improve coordination between all entities.

-SCSEP participant openings will be shared with local VEC and WIB offices.

-Guidance will be requested from VEC and WIBs regarding training for relevant skills requested by local employers.

-Grantees will use local labor market information and staff information to identify occupations and industries with most promise for older job seekers, employers that are hiring or will soon be hiring, and employers moving to the local area.

In the past year, several local VEC offices in Virginia have been closed, which has caused hardship to local SCSEP offices, particularly in rural areas. Grantees will continue to work with local SCSEP offices to identify additional opportunities and local agencies in their areas that can assist with job training and placement.

Long Term Strategies for Employer Engagement

Virginia's SCSEP grantees place importance on maintaining employee relationships, increasing employer outreach, and assisting participants in retaining positions after job placement. Grantees strive to ensure that at the initial placement there is a good match between employer expectations and participant skill levels and interests. This is followed up by contact with the employer and participant to ensure employer satisfaction with the placement and to provide counseling and additional supportive services when necessary.

DARS Grant

The state grantee is working with DARS regional Business Development Managers to help identify employers that have both short and long term need for employees, and what skills those employees need. Through this partnership the grantee will help establish relationships between local SCSEP programs and employers in the area, and increase potential for permanent, unsubsidized job placement.

DARS' SCSEP programs are operated by local organizations with close ties to the communities they serve. By working closely with employers, including keeping the program visible to employers; networking with community leaders in private industry; serving on WIBs; coordinating closely with one-stops and chambers of commerce; planning and participating in job fairs in conjunction with regional employers, and working with other workforce development organizations and committees, program staff stay abreast of employer needs and local and regional occupational demand trends, including demand in second tier jobs. Staff are knowledgeable about available jobs for which SCSEP participants are suited and the skills needed to obtain those jobs. One of our goals is to increase placements by continuing to focus and expand on these efforts.

In rural communities, program staff have one-on-one contact with local employers who operate small "Mom and Pop" businesses as well as staff of private not-for-profit agencies, all of which have employed participants. These are long standing relationships that serve the program well. We will continue to maintain and expand these relationships and market the program to these employers who have potential job opportunities that are suitable for our SCSEP population.

SCSEP programs will link up with local economic agencies by identifying key agencies with which to coordinate, contacting those agencies, networking at meetings and community functions, and determining demand occupations that will be available for SCSEP participants as a result of planned economic development efforts. This includes economic efforts that are on the drawing board as well as those that have begun. Participants are made aware of employment opportunities in regional demand-industries and demand-occupations and encouraged to pursue training and education to meet job qualifications. Occupations vary depending on the region; however, many participants are interested in obtaining skills for entry level positions in the health services, transportation, and office and administrative fields. We will continue to work with participants to identify possible career ladders, and encourage participants to pursue occupations in positions with career ladders.

Goodwill

Goodwill Industries employs a Director of Business Engagement who focuses on building and maintaining positive working relationships with employers. The director meets with employers to uncover their needs, and sets up all job fair activities brought into Goodwill.

The Career Connection Coordinator develops and maintains knowledge of local employment trends and opportunities and utilize this knowledge to facilitate employment, develop and maintain positive working relationships with local business owners and employers and to develop and promote employer services.

NCOA

NCOA has learned that the key to engaging employers in each community is to become the “go-to” partner that helps them meet their critical staffing needs in a timely manner. A combination of thorough individual assessments, the right employer partnerships, and appropriate training of participants results in successful outcomes. These participants are prepared for the jobs that are available in the communities and geographic areas being served. NCOA has public and private sector partners in each of the geographic areas served who can serve as both the trainer and potential employer. This is an effective arrangement because each partner is familiar with the needs of their organization, has up-to-date techniques and curriculum, and understands skills required for a particular opportunity.

Additionally, in rural areas the vast majority of unsubsidized positions are with small “Mom and Pop” businesses so the relationships our Project Directors have with the local community employers is crucial to make sure local employers are aware of the strong work ethic and fresh skills each of our participants can bring to their workplace. Established and successful personal relationships with community employers are key to success, especially in rural areas.

Describe the Long-Term Strategy for Serving Minorities

Per the Senior Community Service Employment Program Analysis of Service to Minority Individuals, PY 2013 (April 6, 2015), the state grantee serves a minority population of 59.4%, with a state census minority population was 37.5%. DARS will continue in our efforts to reach all minority populations in Virginia.

GIV's Service to Minority report identified the Hispanic population as being under-served along with the Asian community. This past year, GIV developed a successful relationship with a non-profit that provides services to people in need throughout their community. Their services range from free showers, meals, and fellowship and have been heavily visited by the Hispanic community. Because of this partnership, GIV's service to this minority has increased.

NCOA has Resource Centers and sub-recipients already recruit and provide services to individuals from minority populations as part of their SCSEP activities and, in the case of the sub-recipients, also as part of their other core missions in their communities. All attempt to recruit each cohort in proportion to its representation in that community. All focus on recruiting participants from minority populations by conducting direct outreach to those populations.

All of NCOA's Resource Centers and sub-recipients currently serve participants with limited English proficiency, many of whom are monolingual. All of the sub-recipients have professional staffs that are bilingual, and some provide support services in multiple languages. The Resource Centers all have bilingual participants to act as participant staff case managers. All of the sub-recipients have professional staff and each of the Resource Centers participant assistants who are minorities.

The PY 2013 Minority Report showed that the overall NCOA SCSEP minority participation in all states exceeds the population percent minority for that state and nationwide we served 160.9% of the overall minority population as calculated by census.

Grantees place high priority on serving minorities in proportion to their incidence in the population. Grantees will continue to use DOL's Analysis of Service to Minority Individuals and Charter Oak Group's county-level data to identify areas needing improvement and will implement strategies based upon data resources. The following strategies will be used in areas where each grantee operates:

- Continue to utilize information and training on practices posted on the older worker web-based Community of Practice.
- Monitor the proportion of minority participants served and minority outcomes for SCSEP participants.
- Recruit and serve minorities through community outreach, publicity, management practices, staffing, participant referrals, and additional services.
- Build upon established linkages with service organizations that provide services to minority groups including continued contact with agencies and organizations in the community that serve Asian and Hispanic populations and including making those organizations aware of SCSEP's recruitment goals and open slots.
- Reach out to community and faith-based organizations that serve minority populations to recruit eligible individuals.
- Seek eligible minorities through outreach efforts with one-stop partners such as veteran's representatives, vocational rehabilitation representatives, and social service agencies.
- Use multi-lingual brochures and fliers to reach non-English speaking minority groups and place them in employment centers, community centers, food banks and one-stop centers.

- Request minority client referrals from one-stop centers, communicate recruitment needs at one-stop partner meetings, and request minority referrals from other partner programs such as Department of Social Services, Virginia Employment Commission, veterans programs, and senior centers.
- Maintain and/or make new contacts with disability and mental health community partners and providers of literacy training to ensure that minority participants in need of these services can be expeditiously referred.
- Distribute brochures in grocery stores, physicians' offices, dentists' offices, pharmacies, utility payment centers, churches, senior centers, and other places that serve minority individuals.
- Identify new minority recruitment sources in the community that have not previously been approached, e.g., churches, day care centers, community centers, and homeless shelters. This will include identifying agencies, businesses, churches, and other organizations that serve Asians and Hispanics and targeting our recruitment efforts accordingly.
- Encourage minority participants to recruit their friends.
- When language barriers are encountered, staff will refer participants to English as a Second Language classes and also attempt to set up host agency sites that can accommodate the language barriers.

List Needed Community Services and Locations Where Services are Most Needed

Virginia's greatest community service needs are driven by poverty. For more detailed information about the demographics of localities, please refer to the section detailing equitable distribution.

Grantees agreed that the most common and universal community service needs of participants are housing assistance, transportation assistance, food assistance, utility support, and temporary financial assistance. Other concerns of our participant population are health concerns, financial difficulties, isolation, lack of employment, fear of identity theft, and caring for family members, including children, grandchildren, and parents.

Grantee Resource Centers and sub-grantees are an integral part of the workforce development consortium in their communities, and they have access to and are aware of Labor Market information. They are partners with the local American Job Centers and Workforce Investment Boards, often serving on the boards, and are involved in the creation and implementation of local workforce development initiatives. They are in demand as speakers at local workforce events, called upon because of their knowledge of the local job market and older workers. Especially in small communities, most of the project coordinators are well known members of the community who grew up and have worked in the area for years. They are part of the fabric of the community and are aware of employers and economic conditions.

Virginia is a diverse state. Community service needs and organizations to meet those needs vary throughout the state. Based on assessments, participants are connected to community resources that will address barriers and basic unmet needs. Participants are referred to groups

that meet community service needs such as AAAs, DARS' Division of Rehabilitative Services local offices, food banks, Salvation Army, Red Cross, United Way, Legal Aid Society, senior centers, food stamp offices, free clinics, adult education and literacy programs, community colleges, one-stop partners, Lions Clubs, and community action agencies. Grantees and sub-grantees at the local level are very resourceful in linking SCSEP participants to these organizations and others to meet the unique needs of each participant.

Describe the 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 and program operators to better achieve the goals of the program.

One major challenge identified by the state and national grantees in the state is lack of sufficient funding for administrative staff. Current professional staff must rely on participant assistants to carry out most basic administrative functions. The local project directors, with sole responsibility, must monitor, and approve all aspects of that administrative work and payroll, be the face of the older worker effort in their community, meet with host agencies, meet with employers, and promote older workers through local organizations. Local project directors often handle the participant caseload from intake to exit with little assistance. The program continues to add administrative tasks and rely on an outdated, and often out of service data collection system. These factors make long term policy change difficult, as local service coordinators are already overburdened.

Even with these challenges, state and national grantees will continue to work with local projects to identify potential employment opportunities, create efficient means of intake and assessment, and assist with financial management. The DARS state grant will be undertaking a marketing program to provide outreach to underserved areas, and will work with sub-projects to find ways to bring in participants from underserved areas, and identify new avenues for training.

Virginia's SCSEP grantees are dedicated to achieving high performance level by providing training and job placement that will result in successful unsubsidized placements.

In the next four years, DARS will be expanding marketing efforts, particularly in underserved areas. Avenues that are being researched are newspaper ads, radio spots, and social media outlets. DARS will provide labor market data to sub-grants to assist in focusing job training and searches on growing industries in the area with skill and education levels appropriate for SCSEP participants. Part of DARS's outreach will include education to private, public, and non-profit entities, informing potential host agencies and employers about the program and the benefits of participating and/or offering employment to participants.

Virginia's grantees will also continue to improve SCSEP services as follows:

- Continue to advocate on behalf of participants in an effort to ensure that the needs of older workers are heard.

- Seek opportunities to increase collaboration among grantees to include sharing information and best practices and identifying and addressing common issues and challenges.
- Continue to participate in local WIOA one-stop planning processes.
- Continue to analyze the results of DOL's participant and host agency satisfaction surveys to determine how to improve services.
- Increase outreach to the most-in-need populations, including leveraging relationships with Vocational Rehabilitation, Veterans Affairs, disability groups, cultural groups in communities, adult education programs, and other programs designed to reach out to the most-in-need population.
- Training of local SCSEP service deliverers to focus on achievement of performance goals.

Describe a strategy for continuous improvement in the level of performance for SCSEP participants' entry into unsubsidized employment, and to achieve, at a minimum, the levels specified in OAA Section 513(a)(2)(E)(ii). (20 CFR 641.302(f))

Strategies of Virginia's grantees are as follows:

- Focus on increasing awareness of the program. Many employers, community service organizations and potentially eligible participants are not aware of the benefits offered by the SCSEP. By increasing awareness of the program and values of older workers among these groups, the Virginia SCSEP should see an increase in the number and quality of placements. By increasing the number of placements into quality community service experiences and unsubsidized employment, Virginia will serve more of the eligible population.
- Provide on-going training to sub-grantees to improve their performance in meeting the common measure performance goals of employment, retention, and earnings. This will include training on topics such as performance measures, data management, job search strategies, data validation, and most-in-need barriers.
- Provide additional training through WIOA services. These resources include basic learning skills, upgrading computer skills, enrollment with WIOA for vocational education, resume writing, and assistance with full-time job placement.
- Encourage local employers to participate in job fairs targeted to older workers.
- Ensure that efforts are made to establish rapport with employers that have reliable career pathways and who are willing to develop and maintain a working partnership.

Section 6-Location and Population Served, Including Equitable Distribution

A. Describe the localities and populations for which projects of the type administered by Title V are most needed.

Projects are authorized in most localities in the Commonwealth. The number of SCSEP slots that each locality receives is based on a formula that takes into account the number of individuals age 55 and older who are at or below 125% of the poverty level. State

grantees strive to serve eligible participants under Priority of Service regulations. Priority of Service are:

- Veterans and Qualified Spouses
- Persons 65 or older
- Individuals with
 - Disability
 - limited English proficiency
 - low literacy skills
 - reside in a rural area
 - low employment prospects
 - failed to find employment through WIA Title I services
 - homeless or at risk of homelessness

Most of Virginia’s greatest community service needs are driven by poverty. Virginia’s 2014 poverty rate (through Virginia Performs, vaperforms.virginia.gov) and United States Census information, was 11.8% in 2014. High rates of poverty exists in clusters of rural counties primarily in Southside and Southwest Virginia, on Virginia’s Eastern Shore, and in heavily populated major cities.

Counties in the state that are experiencing poverty rates at 18% and above are:

Halifax County-18%	Scott County-20.8%	Buchanan County-23.2%
Cumberland County-19%	Mecklenburg County-21.1%	Sussex County-23.9%
Tazewell County-19.2%	Dickenson-21.3%	Nottoway County-24.3%
Accomack County-19.4%	Northampton County-21.5%	Montgomery County-24.8%
Richmond County-19.7%	Brunswick County-21.9%	Greensville County-25.1%
Smyth County-19.7%	Patrick County-21.9%	Prince Edward County-25.5%
Grayson County-19.9%	Wise County-21.9%	Lee County-26.6%
Henry County-20.5%	Lunenburg County-22.4%	
Charlotte County-20.7%	Buckingham County-22.8%	

The major cities experiencing high poverty rates are:

Danville-23.6%	Petersburg-25.8%
Martinsville-23.8%	Charlottesville-25.9%
Lexington-24.1%	Emporia-26.1%
Lynchburg-25%	Harrisonburg-28.3%
Richmond-25%	Radford-32.4%

All of these areas have active SCSEP offices. Virginia’s SCSEP population is increasingly more diverse. Populations that have special needs require additional attention, more intensive or comprehensive services, and in many cases unique approaches and partnerships. Growing populations include Asian, Hispanic, veteran, and populations with diverse cultural backgrounds. In addition, SCSEP federal legislation defines “priority of service” characteristics and requires that priority of service be offered to individuals with those defined characteristics. These include homeless, disabled, low literacy and veterans, among others. Please see sections C-D for more information about how SCSEP targets the most-in-need population.

- B. List the cities and counties where the SCSEP project will take place. Include the number of SCSEP authorized positions and indicate if and where the positions changed from the prior year.

For Program Year 2015, the state has 928 slots allotted. Of these slots, 193 are managed by the state grantee within DARS. The remaining 735 are managed by national sponsors. There have been no changes in slot level between PY14 and PY15.

State	NCOA	AARP	EW	GW
193	216	221	67	231

A breakdown of slots by county has been provided. Please see Appendix C for this information. This appendix shows both Program Year 14 and Program Year 15 slots by county/city and by grantee. No changes occurred between the two program years. As this is a competition year for national grantees, Virginia is anticipating some changes for the next four years. As of the due date of the state plan, these numbers had not been released.

- C. Describe any current slot imbalances and proposed steps to correct inequities to achieve equitable distribution, and explain the State’s long-term strategy for achieving an equitable distribution of SCSEP positions within the State.

Grantees use the equitable distribution report (scseped.org) to identify over- and under-served areas in the state, and work towards gradual shifting of SCSEP positions to those underserved areas. The state representative performed an analysis of slot level variance as of PY15, Q3. Most major variances occurred in urban areas, with major urban areas being overserved, and surrounding rural areas being underserved. This is expected based on transportation and populations differences. See Appendix D for a listing of slot variances by locality.

Ensuring SCSEP positions are equitably distributed is an on-going effort. The state’s long-term strategy for achieving an equitable distribution of SCSEP positions is to gradually transfer positions from over-served to under-served areas within the state. This is the only way to avoid disruptions to current enrollees and to maintain the program stability necessary to operate quality programs.

Virginia's plan for achieving equitable distribution will focus on those areas of the state with the most significant over or under service. Movement of slots occurs in consultation with DARS and with approval of the State Title V Administrator. DARS will work with all grantees to balance as needed over the duration of the plan period. Our strategy includes:

- Collecting data and preparing reports for determining how equitably positions are distributed within the state, and communicating that data with grantees and sub-grantees.
- Under-served areas have been identified by the DARS office, and marketing efforts in the next four years will be focused on those areas. These efforts include:
 - Newspaper ads in local papers
 - Human interest stories in local papers
 - Radio spots describing the program and its intended audience
 - Mailings both to individuals and to community service groups that interact with potential SCSEP clients
- Increasing outreach within the support community, including DARS local offices in under-served areas. SCSEP grantees will meet with and increase partnerships with local social service agencies, non-profits, and other community groups that interact with potential participants. This will not be limited to those groups that work with the elderly-as word of mouth is a very effective tool for SCSEP, outreach will target organizations that assist families and caretakers as well.
- Educating sub-grantees about equitable distribution and designated slot levels in their localities.
- As slots open in over-served areas, sub-grantees will be encouraged to enroll participants in under-served areas. This will prevent disruption in the program and gradually shift slots back to under-served areas.

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

1. Moves positions from over-served to under-served locations within the State in compliance with 20 CFR 641.365

DOL requests an equitable distribution report be prepared annually showing the distribution of Title V SCSEP enrollee positions among all political jurisdictions (independent cities and counties) in each state. DARS has the responsibility for the actual preparation and submission of this report to DOL, however, this is a collaborative effort involving all SCSEP grantees in Virginia. This report provides the basic information needed to assess the location of the eligible population and the current distribution of SCSEP enrollees served by the state program (DARS) and national contractor organizations within the state. Grantees use information to determine where slots need to be moved from over-served to under-served areas. Grantees within the state have a long history of accomplishing this task cooperatively without disruption to participants.

Equitable distribution (ED) is the process for distributing SCSEP positions so that all eligible persons have reasonably equal geographical access to SCSEP. In the Commonwealth, DARS and the four national sponsors operating in the state collectively receive grant funds for 928 enrollee positions as depicted in the following chart.

Grantee	Slot Level
DARS	193
AARP	221
Experience Works	67
Goodwill	231
NCOA	216
TOTAL	928

The collection of data and preparation of the report are for the purpose of determining how equitably positions are distributed throughout the state and to initiate progress towards equitable distribution where needed. It provides a means for deciding where to locate new or vacant positions.

The Commonwealth of Virginia will compile an ED report next year based on new census data. The report will be compiled from SCSEP enrollee data submitted from all SCSEP program grantees operating in the state. This data will show the number of current SCSEP enrollees residing in each city and county in the state. The report compares residency of current enrollees to a computed equitable share for each county and city in the state. The computed equitable share, provided by DOL, will be based on 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) census data showing the number of people age 55 and over and below 125% of the Health and Human Services poverty level by county and state.

Strategies

Ensuring SCSEP positions are equitably distributed is an on-going effort. The state's long-term strategy for achieving an equitable distribution of SCSEP positions within the state is to gradually transfer positions from over-served to under-served areas within the state.

Virginia's grantees unanimously agreed that to avoid further disruptions to enrollees and to maintain the program stability necessary to operate quality programs, a gradual transfer of positions over a reasonable length of time is the only prudent way to approach slot transfers. The State grantee and all national sponsor grantees operating in Virginia are committed to ensuring that participants will not lose positions as a result of transfer of slots.

Virginia's plan for achieving equitable distribution will focus on those areas of the state with the most significant over or under-service. Movement of slots occurs in consultation

with DARS and with the approval of the State Title V Administrator. DARS will work with all grantees to balance and rebalance as needed over the duration of the plan period. Our strategy includes collecting and tracking data and preparing reports for the purposes of determining how equitably positions are distributed throughout the state. This method works well and all grantees are willing to move positions when necessary to achieve equitable distribution.

To reach and serve eligible individuals in rural and isolated areas with limited resources, grantees will increase outreach and collaborative efforts with host agencies, employers, transportation providers, and other community support services within these regions.

This strategy was discussed in the previous topic related to correcting slot imbalances in the state. State grantees will maintain efforts to:

1. Collect data each quarter to determine what areas are under-served, and to communicate this with sub-grantees so recruitment and enrollment can be focused in those areas.
2. The DARS SCSEP office will focus marketing and mailings to under-served areas, and increase partnerships with other community service organizations in those areas that will improve outreach to under-served populations.
3. Newspaper advertisement and program awareness outreach in under-served areas.
4. Partnership with local DARS staff to identify potential crossover referrals in under-served areas.

2. Equitably serves both rural and urban areas

To reach and serve eligible individuals in rural and isolated areas with limited resources, grantees will increase outreach and collaborative efforts with host agencies, employers, transportation providers, and other community support services within these regions.

In analysis of equitable distribution in the current year, it was noted that most urban areas are over-served, and most under-served areas are rural. This is understandable based on the isolation of the SCSEP population, the lack of transportation services in rural areas, and the geographic challenges that Virginia faces. A rural participant may live up to or over an hour drive from any local SCSEP office, or the majority of host agencies in the area.

In order to increase services in rural areas, grantees will focus marketing efforts in those areas, including advertising in local papers. Most sub-grantees have access to transportation services, and will partner with those as much as possible to help participants get to host sites and training opportunities. Local SCSEP offices will also work with rural VEC and WIB boards as mentioned in a previous section to identify potential participants. As urban participants exit the program, sub-grantees will be encouraged to actively recruit in rural areas to increase equitable distribution between urban and rural localities.

3. Serves individuals afforded priority for service under 20 CFR 641.520.

Virginia grantees have a long history of serving eligible individuals who are most in need. We will continue to recruit and enroll individuals who are at risk. Priority of service is offered to qualified veterans and their spouses (first priority), individuals 65 and older and those who have disabilities, have limited English proficiency (LEP) or low literacy skills, reside in a rural area, have low employment prospects, have failed to find employment after using services under Title I of WIA, and are homeless or at risk of homelessness. We will continue to build upon relationships with organizations serving individuals with disabilities, the homeless, and other multi-challenged groups. All grantees will expand these efforts by working with state and community partners who represent special populations to ensure awareness of SCSEP. The following chart depicts each Virginia grantee’s service to individuals who met the “Priority of Service” definition. Data are for the period July 1, 2014- June 30, 2015.

**Service to “Priority of Service” Populations
SPARQ Quarterly Progress Report for Period July 1, 2014-June 30, 2015**

Priority of Service Char.	DARS	AARP	EW	GWJ	NCOA
Age 65 or Older	36%	17%	28%	30%	38%
Disabled	20%	6%	37%	27%	14%
LEP or Low Literacy	9%	29%	3%	12%	22%
Reside in Rural Area	49%	6%	69%	45%	37%
Veterans or Veterans’ Spouses	13%	15%	12%	20%	16%
Low Employment Prospects	74%	100%	68%	100%	98%
Failed to Find Employment Using WIA	4%	62%	56%	0%	57%
Homeless or at Risk of Homelessness	7%	93%	63%	76%	48%
Minority Individuals	57%	82%	10%	41%	75%
Poverty Level or Below	87%	91%	91%	88%	90%

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

The total population of Virginia per 2016 Suburban Stats data is 8,001,024. Of that population, 455,750 are age 55 or older. The U.S. Census Bureau 2006-2010 American Community Survey indicates that 183,013 of those Virginians over 55 years of age are living in poverty. Virginia’s SCSEP has 928 slots.

F. Provide the relative distribution of eligible individuals who:

1. Reside in urban and rural areas within the state

According to the 2010 Poverty Reduction Task Force publication on Poverty in Virginia, 80% of Virginia’s poor live in urban and suburban areas and slightly more than 20% live in rural areas. The following information was pulled from the SPARQ PY14 Final QPRs for each grantee. It is important to note that the majority of slots awarded to AARP are in urban areas, thus explaining their low percentage of rural participants.

Grantee	Urban	Rural
DARS	51%	49%
AARP	94%	6%
Experience Works	31%	69%
Goodwill	55%	45%
NCOA	63%	37%

2. Have the greatest economic need

This information is provided in section E, discussing the ratios of eligible individuals in the state.

Priority of Service Char.	DARS	AARP	EW	GW	NCOA
Poverty Level or Below	87%	91%	91%	88%	90%

3. Are minorities

Per data from the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service through the University of Virginia’s 2014 census data, 19.8% of the population is African American, 6.4% is Asian, .8% Other, and 2.8% two or more races. The Hispanic population estimate for July 1, 2014 was 8.9%

The minority population served by all grantees in the state is as follows:

	DARS	AARP	EW	GWI	NCOA
Minority Individuals	57%	82%	10%	41%	75%

Census briefs published by the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service and based on the 2010 Census and American Community Survey report the following snapshots of Virginia’s African American, Asian, and Hispanic populations:

- Black/African American remain the largest minority group in Virginia, accounting for nearly 20% of the total population. Blacks are concentrated in the Eastern half of the state while the Valley and Southwest regions have much smaller black populations. Norfolk and Richmond have the largest black populations (exceeding 100,000) while Petersburg city has the largest percentage of blacks (79%). Richmond lost nearly 10,000 (8.6%) of its black population between 2000 and 2010, the largest decrease in the Commonwealth. Additional information is available at <http://www.coopercenter.org/demographics/publications/blacks-virginia>.
- As of the last census on April 1, 2010, over 400,000 Asians were living in Virginia, representing 5.5 % of the population. The Asian population is not evenly distributed throughout the Commonwealth. Ninety-three percent of Asian Virginians live in the state’s three main metropolitan areas: Northern Virginia, Richmond, and Virginia Beach. The majority of Asians (71%) live in Northern Virginia alone. Additional information is available at <http://www.coopercenter.org/demographics/publications/asians-virginia>.
- Hispanics are the second-largest and fastest-growing minority group in Virginia. The latest Census, conducted on April 1, 2010, counted more than 630,000 Hispanic residents in Virginia, representing 8% of the population. With a total state population of just over 8 million, this means that 8 out of every 100 Virginians are Hispanic. Hispanics are concentrated in Virginia’s largest metropolitan areas. Sixty-two percent of Virginia’s Hispanics live in Northern Virginia alone. However, many areas which had few Hispanics in 2000 such as Culpeper, James City, and Orange counties, and Suffolk city, now have a sizable Hispanic population. Additional information is available at <http://www.coopercenter.org/demographics/publications/hispanics-virginia>

4. Limited English proficiency

Per the data above, populations of LEP served throughout the Commonwealth range from 3%-29%. Based on a 2003 study performed by the National Center for Education Statistics, Virginia’s overall rate of individuals lacking basic prose literacy skills is 12%. See Appendix E for literacy rates by locality.

Priority of Service Char.	DARS	AARP	EW	GWI	NCOA

LEP or Low Literacy	9%	29%	3%	12%	22%
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5. Have the greatest social need

One of the grantees' six performance measures is serving the most-in-need. The measure is defined as the average number of barriers per SCSEP participant. These barriers include severe disability, frail, over 75, old enough but not receiving SS Title II funds, limited employment prospects, low literacy, living in areas of persistent unemployment, limited English proficiency, rural, veteran status, failed to find employment after using WIA Title I, and homeless or at risk of homeless. The total number of barriers divided by the total number of participants served provides average number of barriers per participants. Virginia SCSEP grantees strive to exceed this performance goal by serving those participants with the highest social need.

G. Steps taken to avoid disruption to service for participants to the extent possible, when positions are redistributed.

When new Census data indicate that there has been a shift in the location of the eligible population within the State, resulting in over enrollment, or when there is over enrollment for other reasons, Virginia's grantees will gradually shift positions to avoid disruptions to participants. Enrollment will cease in the over-enrolled areas. The State grantee and all national sponsor grantees operating in Virginia are committed to ensuring that participants will not lose positions as a result of transfer of slots. Priority will be given to minimizing disruption to current participants and shifts will occur as positions become available through normal attrition.

DARS office works with national grantees to ensure that participants will not lose positions. Grantees in the Commonwealth submit proposed changes in distribution of slots to DARS for review prior to submitting proposed changes to DOL.

When redistribution of SCSEP positions occurs as a result of national grant competition, every effort is made to ensure there is no disruption in service to participants and that there is a seamless transition of participants to the new grantee. This has been successfully accomplished during past competitions and grantees will continue to assist participants who are moved from one provider to another. Steps will include timely meetings with participants and host agencies, transfer of all required files and records to the receiving grantee, and ensuring that participants are placed on the payrolls of recipient grantees in a timely manner. Transferred records include, but are not limited to eligibility documentation; contact information; assessments or latest IEP review; current community service work-based training description; host agency contact information; safety record of most recent monitoring; and the most recent offer of a physical examination.

On an ongoing basis, participants will be encouraged to move into unsubsidized employment as they become job-ready, thereby, making positions available for other eligible individuals within the State.

