Background and Current Issues in SCSEP

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Welcome and Introductions

What's your name again?
NASUAD Overview

• 56 members, representing state and territorial agencies on aging and disabilities

• State members have somewhat different roles and responsibilities due to variances in state structure
  – Members have a role in administering LTSS services for seniors and people with disabilities
  – Can include OAA administrators, Medicaid program managers, Waiver Administrators, other health/human services employees designated by the state

• Mission: to design, improve, and sustain state systems delivering home and community based services and supports for people who are older or have a disability, and their caregivers.
Senior Service America Overview

- National non-profit organization based in Silver Spring, MD
- New Executive Director: Gary A. Officer
- Currently manages three employment programs for older workers
  - **Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)**
    - Second largest SCSEP National Grantee
    - 65 SCSEP subgrantee partnerships in 13 states
  - **The Senior Environmental Employment Program**
    - Environmental Protection Agency locations across U.S. and Puerto Rico
  - **Agriculture Conservation Experienced Services Program**
    - US. Department of Agriculture locations across U.S. and Puerto Rico
Background and Overview of SCSEP

History of the Program and How it Works
Background of SCSEP

• The only federally mandated job training program that explicitly serves low-income adults, age 55 years and older
• First funded in 1965 as part of a demonstration project called Operation Mainstream
• Operation Mainstream was broader than just older adults, but seniors were one targeted population
• In 1978, the program was redesignated as Title V of the Older Americans Act
SCSEP Today

• SCSEP is housed at the Department of Labor in the Employment & Training Administration
  – The only OAA program not within the Administration for Community Living at HHS

• $434 million appropriated for SCSEP in FY2016
  – 15 National grantees and every State receive SCSEP funds
  – Funding is divided 78% to national grantees and 22% to states
  – Grant Competition in 2016 (every 4-5 years)

• $400 million appropriated for SCSEP in FY2017
  – 18 National grantees and every State receive SCSEP funds
SCSEP Today (cont’d)

• Diverse network of grantees that administer the program
  – A list of grantees is available at http://bit.ly/2hv6eK6
  – Find a SCSEP grantee near you at http://bit.ly/2tRV8nj

• State flexibility in administration:
  – Most states house SCSEP within their agency on aging, but a number have SCSEP within their labor/workforce agency
SCSEP Program Basics

Eligibility

• Age 55 or older
• Family income below 125% of poverty
• Legally eligible to work in the U.S.
• Unable to find a job without assistance or after WIOA services
• Maximum of 48 months in the program (can be waived)
SCSEP Program Basics

Target Populations

- Veterans
- Age 65+
- Have Disability
- Limited English Proficiency or Low Literacy Skills
- Rural
- Low Employment Prospects
- Homeless or At-Risk for Homelessness
SCSEP Services

SCSEP Program Funds can be spent on:

- Participant wages and Benefits (must account for at least 75% of funds)
- Participant training
- Job placement assistance, including job development and job search assistance
- Participant supportive services (i.e. health and medical costs, transportation, work-related equipment, child care, etc.)
- Outreach, recruitment and selection, intake, orientation, and assessments
SCSEP Service Delivery

• Once eligibility is established, providers perform an assessment to determine the individual’s:
  – Interests
  – Occupational preference
  – Skills and training
  – Educational attainment
  – Barriers to employment
• The assessment is used to develop an individual employment plan (IEP) that outlines:
  – Established goals with timelines for training
  – How barriers to employment will be addressed
  – Supportive services for the individual
• The assessment and IEP are used to inform an individual’s community service assignment
Community Service Placement

• Participants are often placed in a community service assignment at a host agency, which can be:
  – federal, state, county or city governments; or
  – 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations
• Placements are generally in a community near the individual’s place of residence
• Participants provide needed services to the host agency while developing/improving job skills and establishing relationships in the community
• SCSEP beneficiaries are paid minimum wage for their work, which is subsidized by the SCSEP program funds
• Participants work 20 hours a week on average
On the Job Experience

- SCSEP participants may also receive On-The-Job experience (OJE)
- OJE focuses on securing participants unsubsidized employment in the private sector
- Participant is matched with a for profit employer and trained for a specific position
- Training can occur up to 29 hours per week for up to 12 weeks
  - Wages are paid from SCSEP budget or reimbursed to employer
- This kind of training gives the participant training and skills specific to a position and guarantees employment with the employer
SCSEP Program Statistics

• Program Statistics (July 2015 through June 2016)
  – 65,081 low-income older Americans served
  – 51% entered unsubsidized employment after exiting the program

• Participant Characteristics
  – 88% with family incomes at or below 100% of FPL
  – 49% were a racial or ethnic minority
  – 65% were women
  – 20% had at least one disability
  – 32% were 65 or older, including 13% who were 70 years or older;
  – 18% had less than a high school diploma
  – 39% had a high school diploma
  – 43% had one or more years of college
  – 13% were veterans or qualified spouses
Suku Menon
Customer Service Associate,
Walgreens

"I am indebted to Operation A.B.L.E for several reasons. I had approached them for on-the-job-training; I got that. I was an empowered employee, and I acquired several new sets of skills. There were great opportunities to serve the cause of training and to develop employment opportunities for the unemployed. I found a very supportive and caring staff and officers."

NICOA SCSEP
Elder Success Story

Alvin, trained as a custodian/maintenance person for a tribal nation for over a year before transitioning to job as a home health care aid, 28 hours per week at $13.50 per hour.
Impact on Communities

• USDOL-funded national survey of 7,864 agencies by Charter Oak Group
  – 77% of host agencies indicated that participation in SCSEP either significantly (46%) or somewhat (31%) increased their ability to provide services to the community.

• SCSEP participants provided more than 34.8 million paid staff hours to >20,000 local public and nonprofit agencies, such as American Job Centers, libraries, schools, and senior centers (including 7.6 million hours in aging services and programs).

• The value of the community service provided by SCSEP participants (using Independent Sector’s estimated value of a volunteer hour) exceeded $820 million, nearly twice the total SCSEP PY2015 appropriations of $434.4 million.
Impact on Participants

- USDOL-funded national survey of 13,451 participants by Charter Oak Group
  - 88% of participants reported that their physical health is the same or better than before they entered SCSEP
  - 72% reported that their outlook on life is a little more or much more positive
Current Issues in SCSEP

Low-income older workers continue to suffer from extraordinarily high rates of unemployment.
Current Issues in SCSEP: Survival

- Effective July 2017, funding was decreased to $400 million from $434 million
- SCSEP budget proposal for 2018 is $0 – complete elimination of the program.
FY 18 budget proposes $54 billion in cuts to domestic programs

- 21% cut to DOL ($2.5 billion)
  - Proposal would impact ETA funding
  - WIOA Title I formula funding – 40% cut
  - SCSEP funding eliminated
- 16% cut to HHS ($12.6 billion)
- 13% cut to the Dept. of Ed ($9.3 billion)
FY 18 Appropriations

The good news:
Congress in charge of budget

- “President proposes, Congress disposes”
- Both parties in the House and Senate have rejected this budget proposal and are advancing alternate proposals
- Bipartisanship essential - Senate requires 60 votes to move appropriations bills to the floor
- Only a few congressional work weeks remain before the end of FY17 – unlikely that a large bipartisan agreement will be forged
  - Continuing resolution at same funding level is strong possibility
House Labor-HHS appropriations

- SCSEP funding reduced to $300 million (-25% cut from already reduced levels)
- Transfers program to Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Community Living (ACL)
  - Transfer was not requested by the current Administration
- Other aging/OAA programs housed at ACL
  - However, these programs are largely focused on health and social services, not SCSEP’s dual purpose
  - ACL’s employment activities largely focus on individuals with disabilities
SENATE Labor-HHS BILL

• Far behind the House process
• Did not “mark-up” their bill before the August recess
• Other legislative issues – including healthcare (bi-partisan HELP hearings) and debt ceiling will create challenges with completing a comprehensive bill
The bottom line:

- Short term Continuing Resolution (CR) expected this year – likely until December
- Administration’s budget cuts have been rejected
- Year end budget negotiations must be bipartisan
- Wholesale elimination avoided, but SCSEP funding is vulnerable in this environment
Chairman Cole – two potential outcomes this year:

1. Bipartisan Omnibus Appropriations bill – likely with more funding for both defense and domestic programs
2. Year long CR

Both are good outcomes for SCSEP
A LONG TERM FIGHT

- Some proposed cuts may stick in FY 18;
- FY 18 budget is a reflection of the Administration’s priorities
- More fights ahead – agencies already told they cannot exceed proposed budget in FY 19.
- Caveat – if Congress rejects the Administration’s proposal to cut the first year, it becomes easier to protect core priorities in future years
  - Coalitions supporting SCSEP are already in place
For More Information…

• NASUAD SCSEP Primer: http://bit.ly/2v6qLbo


• Department of Labor SCSEP Website: https://www.doleta.gov/seniors/

• SCSEP Program near you at http://bit.ly/2tRV8nj
For more information, please visit: www.nasaud.org

Or call us at: 202-898-2578