

State of Connecticut
Senior Community Service Employment Plan
State Plan Program Year 2016 through 2019
July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2020

DRAFT

Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

Elizabeth B. Ritter
Commissioner

The Connecticut State Department on Aging is pleased to present its four-year State Workforce Plan for the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) as a roadmap for serving older workers as they re-enter the workforce. The plan for Program Years 2016 through 2019 (July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2020) 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 grantees. This SCSEP Workforce Plan will be the primary resource for the state to meet the needs of low-income older workers. Older workers, for the purposes of this plan, are defined as workers ages 55 and older.

Connecticut is still recovering from the great recession, just now seeing a near return to 2008 unemployment figures. The number of jobs in the state continues to rise slowly and more work needs to be done. This plan and the goals therein will be an integral tool to continue those efforts of recovery.

Who this Plan Serves

Connecticut is home to some of the nation's wealthiest residents as well as headquarters to numerous large international companies. At the same time, Connecticut has some of the poorest cities. This disparity comes amid slow but steady progress in our economic and social outlooks. While unemployment is down and jobs are on the rise, it is estimated that the overall population is decreasing and residents are getting older.

The State Department on Aging (SDA) is the state grantee for the Senior Community Service Employment Program. In addition there are two national grantees in Connecticut, Associates for Training and Development and Easter Seals. During Program Year 2014 (July 2014 through June 2015) the three SCSEP grantees provided job skills, supportive services and job development services to 574 program participants, according to SCSEP program reports. Of those participants, 519 live at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty level. Fifty-six individuals have Limited English Proficiency (defined as individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English). Finally, 506 individuals have low employment prospects as there is the likelihood that they will not obtain employment without the assistance of SCSEP or another workforce training program due to significant barriers to employment. (*PY 2014 SCSEP Quarterly Progress Report*).

This plan is written focusing on the needs and abilities of older low-income workers served through SCSEP.

I Economic Projections and Impact

Connecticut's Older Residents

Connecticut has one of the country's oldest populations. It also has the third highest life expectancy in the U.S. resulting in a growing population of those ages 85 and older (*Connecticut State Plan on Aging October 1, 2014 - September 30, 2017*).

The following table is a review of the last three years of data illustrating the rising number of older residents in the state. This information is from the Connecticut Department of Public Health, "State-level Bridged Race Estimates for Connecticut, 2012, 2013 and 2014" by Backus, K. and Mueller, LM.

| Age Groups | 2012 | | | 2013 | | | 2014 | | |
|--------------|---------|---------|-----------|---------|---------|-----------|---------|---------|-----------|
| | Men | Women | Total | Men | Women | Total | Men | Women | Total |
| 55-59 yrs | 125,410 | 132,174 | 257,584 | 128,929 | 135,508 | 264,437 | 130,768 | 137,839 | 268,607 |
| 60-64 yrs | 100,301 | 109,588 | 209,889 | 102,074 | 110,872 | 212,946 | 104,950 | 113,704 | 218,654 |
| 65-69 yrs | 79,521 | 88,860 | 168,381 | 81,152 | 91,059 | 172,211 | 83,113 | 93,990 | 177,103 |
| 70-74 yrs | 51,093 | 62,143 | 113,236 | 55,880 | 66,712 | 122,592 | 58,554 | 69,260 | 127,814 |
| 75-79 yrs | 37,623 | 50,058 | 87,681 | 38,164 | 50,175 | 88,339 | 38,813 | 50,736 | 89,549 |
| 80-84 yrs | 30,195 | 45,051 | 75,246 | 29,334 | 43,825 | 73,159 | 28,888 | 42,784 | 71,672 |
| 85+ yrs | 28,608 | 59,560 | 88,168 | 29,362 | 60,008 | 89,370 | 29,693 | 60,092 | 89,785 |
| TOTAL | | | 1,000,185 | | | 1,023,054 | | | 1,043,184 |

The aging population presents both challenges and opportunities for the state's labor markets and for older workers. Many current workers will be retiring over the next four years. The loss of knowledge base as the workforce loses experienced workers will challenge the existing workforce. This will create new job opportunities for younger workers. At the same time, those that continue to work as well as those looking for employment will require job skills training programs offering more services and opportunities to older workers.

Connecticut's Economy

Connecticut's economic environment has improved since the last SCSEP Workforce Plan. The state is recovering from the great recession. As of August 2015, Connecticut has recovered all but an estimated 20,000 jobs that were lost since 2008. Between October 2014 and October 2015 Connecticut has seen an increase in employment of 1.4 percent (*CT Dept of Labor Office of Research*) compared to the U. S. national average of 2.0 percent. While jobs are coming back to

Connecticut it is not always the same quality of jobs that were lost. The greatest job loss between 2013 and 2014 was in the Financial Activities sector, which were jobs with the highest average wage. The greatest job growth is in Leisure and Hospitality sector which has a lower average wage (*2014 North Central Workforce Investment Area; Information for Workforce Investment Planning*). The good news is that in Connecticut, job recovery is occurring across most industries.

| CT Unemployment | |
|---------------------------|------|
| November '12 | 8.2% |
| November '13 | 7.3% |
| November '14 | 6.3% |
| November '15 | 4.1% |
| CT DOL Office of Research | |

Average earnings are on the rise, up 4.0 percent between November 2014 and November 2015. The Workforce Investment Area (WIA) with the highest average earnings continues to be the Southwest WIA and the lowest is the Eastern WIA (*2014 Eastern Workforce Investment Area; Information for Workforce Investment Planning*).

Connecticut's Workforce

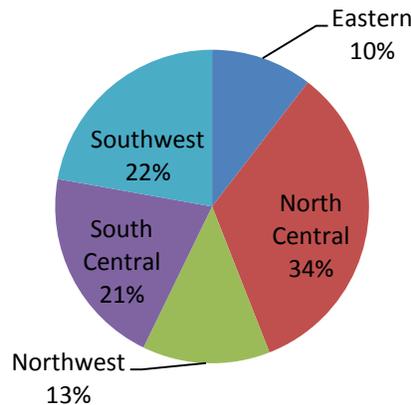
According to the state's five (5) WIA Workforce Investment Planning Reports of 2014, there were a total of 1,611,358 jobs in the state. The following information, provided by those Workforce Investment Planning Reports, illustrates the demographics of the state's job holders during that time period.

| | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Total Jobs | 1,611,358 |
| Male | 49 % |
| Female | 51 % |

| | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Total Jobs | 1,611,358 |
| White | 82.8 % |
| Black | 11.0 % |
| American Indian | 0.5 % |
| Pacific Islander | 0.2 % |
| Two or More | 1.4 % |
| Hispanic/Latino | 11.1 % |

| | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Total Jobs | 1,611,358 |
| Age: 24 or younger | 11.8 % |
| 25-34 | 19.6 % |
| 35-44 | 19.9 % |
| 45-54 | 24.4 % |
| 55-64 | 18.1 % |
| 65+ | 6.1 % |

2013 Jobs by WIA



According to the Connecticut Department of Labor (CT DOL), employment opportunities differ by “education, community, race/ethnicity and age”. Workers with lower education levels experience sharper declines in the rate of employment and have fewer opportunities for maintaining steady employment due to a shortage of employable skills.

Connecticut Job Projections

As stated earlier, Connecticut is seeing improvements in job development throughout the state and through most industries. The area expected to see the most growth is Health Care with a projected 38.7 percent increase in Home Health Care jobs (*Statewide Occupational Projections 2012-2022, CT Department of Labor, Office of Research*). Jobs with the most openings statewide are found in retail sales, cashiers, waiters/waitresses, food preparation and service workers, all jobs with frequent turnovers.

A significant number of jobs in Connecticut require some post-secondary education. For the purposes of this plan, the State Department on Aging is focusing on jobs that would be suitable and attainable for the older workers enrolled in the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). These jobs require low to moderate skills level that can be obtained in a classroom and on the job. The following are the top projections for jobs suitable for SCSEP participants based on skill level, required education and training.

| Occupational Title | Percent Change 2012 - 2022 | Work Experience | Job Training |
|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Home Health Aides | 38.7 | Less than High School | Short-Term On The Job |
| Personal Care Aides | 38.1 | Less than High School | Short-Term On The Job |
| Physical Therapist Assistants | 37.4 | Associates Degree | None |
| Occupational Therapy Assistants | 35.4 | Associates Degree | None |
| Occupational Therapy Aides | 35.4 | High School Diploma or Equivalent | None |
| Medical Secretaries | 30.8 | High School Diploma or Equivalent | Moderate-Term On The Job |
| Meeting, Convention & Event Planners | 29.5 | Bachelor's Degree | None |
| Substance Abuse & Behavioral Disorder Counselors | 27.5 | High School Diploma or Equivalent | Moderate-Term On The Job |
| Social & Human Service Assistants | 23.6 | High School Diploma or Equivalent | Short-Term On The Job |
| Community Health Workers | 23.6 | High School Diploma or Equivalent | Short-Term On The Job |
| Health Educators | 22.4 | Bachelor's Degree | None |

CT Department of Labor, Office of Research

During the course of this workforce plan, SCSEP staff will be mindful of these projections when working with program participants to develop Individual Employment Plans focusing on successful training for unsubsidized employment. To do so will include identifying, updating and providing the necessary job skills for each occupation. The following is a list of skills for each of the occupations with the highest growth potential (www.onetonline.org)

| Occupational Title | Skills Needed |
|--|---|
| Home Health Aides Personal Care Aides | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active Listening • Critical Thinking • Complex Problem Solving • Judgement & Decision Making • Social Perceptiveness |
| Physical Therapist Assistant | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Comprehension • Critical Thinking • Learning Strategies • Instructing • Judgement & Decision Making • Active Listening |

| | |
|--|---|
| Occupational Therapy Assistant Occupational Therapy Aides | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Comprehension • Critical Thinking • Learning Strategies • Instructing • Persuasion • Systems Analyst |
| Medical Secretary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Orientation • Reading Comprehension • Complex Problem Solving • Critical Thinking • Writing |
| Meeting, Convention & Event Planner | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical Thinking • Coordination • Social Perceptiveness • Negotiation • Complex Problem Solving |
| Substance Abuse & Behavioral Disorder Counselor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of Therapy and Counseling • Monitoring • Coordination • Judgement and Decision Making • Learning Strategies • Active Listening |
| Community Health Workers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of medical services • Complex problem solving • Management of Personnel Resources • Critical Thinking • Service Orientation • Systems Evaluation |
| Health Educators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking • Critical Thinking • Reading Comprehension • Knowledge of Communication • Knowledge of Medical Services • Instructing • Social Perceptiveness |

SDA, as the state grantee and the two (2) national grantees, Associates for Training and Development and Easter Seals will continue to monitor the Connecticut’s job market, the

projections and trends as they affect job growth in the state and the skills needed for program participants to secure these jobs.

II Service Delivery and Coordination

A. Provide a detailed description of what actions will be taken to coordinate SCSEP with other programs.

a. Actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees with WIOA Title I programs, including plans for using the WIOA one-stop delivery system and its partners to serve individuals aged 55 and older

SCSEP participants are encouraged to enroll with the local American Job Centers (one-stop system). In Program Year 2014, 58 percent of all SCSEP participants in the state did enroll in many of the numerous workshops including resume writing, computer training, and online job application assistance.

Strategy: Connecticut will increase co-enrollment between SCSEP and the American Job Centers during each year of this plan.

The Connecticut Department of Labor recently launched www.cthires.com. This centralized website is consolidates job listings from around the state as they are listed with each Workforce Investment Board.

Strategy: All SCSEP participants will be trained in and regularly access www.cthires.com as well as other online job sites as appropriate, when they are prepared to begin searching for unsubsidized employment in accordance with their Individual Employment Plan (IEP)

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

The SDA, as the designated State Unit on Aging for Connecticut, administers the Older Americans Act programs for supportive services, in-home services and congregate and home delivered meals. The Department also provides health insurance counseling and respite care for caregivers. These efforts include close work with the state's aging network which includes Connecticut's five (5) area agencies on aging and local human service agencies.

Often, SCSEP participants present significant social issues that are barriers to employment. With necessary referrals to social services programs, in particular those funded through the Older

Americans Act, these barriers can be addressed and the participant is able to focus on job skills training and preparation for unsubsidized employment.

Over the course of the previous SCSEP Workforce Plan, SCSEP participants were referred to the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) for information and referral services. This assistance included a review of services to assure the participant received available help to meet basic needs. During this Workplan, SCSEP staff will continue to connect SCSEP participants to the services and benefits they need. The State Department on Aging (SDA) will work with the national grantees and its own sub-grantees to educate SCSEP participants on the services available through the state's aging network.

Strategy: SCSEP grantees and sub-grantees will provide information to all participants about the local area agency on aging through job club meetings or informational e-mails and at the orientation of new enrollees.

The Connecticut SDA offers Live Well Workshops as its Chronic Disease Self-Management Program, funded by Title IIID of the OAA. The program focuses on healthy aging. These workshops work with small groups of seniors to provide support and practical ways to deal with chronic health issues such as diabetes, arthritis, high blood pressure, heart disease, chronic pain and anxiety. Through this course the participant will have a step-by-step plan to improve their health and life. Through these classes, SCSEP participants suffering from chronic health conditions will take control of their health, particularly as it may be a barrier to employment.

Strategy: SDA will provide SCSEP grantees and sub-grantees with information about the Live Well program to encourage enrollment in the course and assist with scheduling as appropriate.

- c. Actions to coordinate SCSEP with other private and public entities and programs that provide services to older Americans, such as community and faith-based organizations, transportation programs and programs for those with special needs or disabilities.

The three SCSEP grantees have always greatly relied on multiple public and private agencies to provide training and supportive services. During the last program year SCSEP participants have received training at Goodwill Services in Litchfield County, the United Labor Agency in New Haven County and the Urban League in Fairfield County. The state's five (5) area agencies on aging have provided supportive services for access to state benefits and Medicare counseling. Other supportive services have come from Community Action Agencies such as Thames Valley Council for Community Action in New London County.

The grantees have relied on the Community Action Agency of New Haven and the Russell Library in Middletown, (Middlesex County) to provide meeting space which supports the administration of SCSEP services.

Transportation is a frequently reported challenge in many parts of the state, particularly in rural and many suburban areas. Public transportation is prevalent in urban areas and in most surrounding towns. However, outside of those areas, transportation needs are met primarily by Dial-a-Ride and other social service agencies. Unfortunately, most available services are for medical appointments only. The State Department on Aging assisted The Arc Connecticut in developing a comprehensive website, www.transitnet.info. This website outlines numerous transportation resources statewide. This effort along with the expansion of services by mobility managers can be a helpful tool in addressing transportation needs when public transportation is not an option.

The state's SCSEP grantees have found important partners in many human service programs including Dress for Success, local literacy and English as a Second Language for supportive services. SCSEP has also accessed services at faith-based organizations, particularly The Salvation Army. These partnerships are of great value and resource to the program.

Strategy: Connecticut's SCSEP grantees and sub-grantees will continue to support the partnerships formed with both public and private agencies and will work to create new connections to provide the needed services to program participants.

Strategy: The state grantee will provide all SCSEP staff with information about www.transitnet.info and mobility managers.

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

Connecticut is fortunate to have numerous labor markets and job training initiatives throughout the state. Statewide, The Step-Up program offers wage subsidy incentives to employers. Platform to Employment provides 8 weeks of paid work experience with local employers.

There are also regional efforts, such as the Plus 50 Initiative at Norwalk Community College, offering instructional and academic support for baby boomers to train for new jobs or strengthen current job skills in health care, education and social services. In Hartford, Jewish Family Services offers Jewish Employment Transition Services (JETS). This initiative offers workshops, networking and educational opportunities to older residents looking to go back to work.

In past years, SCSEP has not taken full advantage of the opportunities and initiatives available to mature workers. During the course of this plan, the state will work to make improvements building partnerships and developing access points to these services for SCSEP participants.

Strategy: SDA will develop a comprehensive webpage listing job skills training and job development services available to older workers throughout the state.

Strategy: SCSEP will develop and implement marketing strategies aimed at increasing awareness of SCSEP services within labor market and job training initiatives.

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

During the last SCSEP Workplan, strides were taken to improve the partnership between SCSEP and the one-stop system. SDA met with one-stop administrators to provide information about older workers and about SCSEP. Each of the state's SCSEP offices has a working relationship with the local one-stop. In some areas that relationship is very strong as sub-grantee staff is co-located in the office. Staff provides information about SCSEP to potential enrollees. In other regions where co-location is not available, SCSEP continues to refer participants for workshops and job development services.

In recent years, consolidation of several one-stop offices has changed program coordination. For some areas, travel is more difficult and this has significantly impacted the delivery of SCSEP services. Training opportunities have been reduced not only in number but also due to limited accessibility to sites.

The one-stops continue to be valuable resources for SCSEP participants across the state and the state will endeavor to continue cultivating these partnerships.

Strategy: SCSEP grantees will endeavor to revitalize the partnerships with each one-stop in their service area by providing information about SCSEP and seeking out ways to help support their efforts.

- f. Efforts the state will make to work with local economic development offices in rural locations.

Connecticut, in most cases, does not work on a county or regional basis but rather in a "home rule" method in which municipalities govern and provide services for their town only. Therefore, the majority of the state's economic development offices are in municipalities and only in larger towns or cities. The exception is the Northeast Connecticut Economic Alliance which serves twenty-one (21) towns in the northeast corner of the state.

Strategy: SDA will identify all economic development offices in the state and conduct outreach efforts regarding SCSEP and the value of older workers.

Connecticut does have a state department, the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). Among several important missions, Connecticut DECD devises and implements strategies that help businesses grow and succeed. Given the rate at which

Connecticut's population is aging and the changing demographics of the state's workforce, it is important these discussions include the needs and availability of mature workers.

Strategy: SDA will work with DECD to promote the value of older workers in Connecticut and their inclusion in the state's economic strategies.

B. Describe the long-term strategy for engaging employers to develop and promote opportunities for the placement of SCSEP participants in unsubsidized employment.

Connecticut is dedicated to helping SCSEP participants find unsubsidized employment and providing businesses with a skilled workforce to meet their needs. To do so, the grantees will maintain regular contact with employers within their region. By doing so, SCSEP staff will recognize what an employer needs in a future employee and will provide the necessary training to program participants to meet that need. This awareness will be present at all stages of the participants' involvement with SCSEP, beginning at orientation. Participants will be aware of the jobs that are available and what it takes to get a job in that field. The Individual Employment Plan will then be developed accordingly.

SCSEP grantees will also be knowledgeable of the labor market changes during the course of this workforce plan. It is vital that staff is aware of which industries are hiring in their region and work with employers, training programs and participants accordingly to ensure successful placement in unsubsidized employment.

SCSEP will strengthen its relationship with other state departments and local Chambers of Commerce. As outlined in Section II(A)f, SDA will build a relationship with the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development and work with the national SCSEP grantees to reach out to local economic development offices. In the meantime, SCSEP staff will strengthen relationships with the local American Job Centers.

C. Describe the long-term strategy for serving minorities under SCSEP.

The following information is provided as an illustration of the racial and ethnic diversity of the SCSEP program in Connecticut. This breakdown of state residents ages 55 and older information is provided by the Connecticut Department of Public Health (*Backus, K, Mueller, LM (2015) State-level Bridged Race Estimate for Connecticut 2014*) and the SPARQ Quarterly Reports.

| | Program Year 2013 | | PY 2014 | PY 2015 Q1 |
|------------------|----------------------|-------|---------|---------------|
| | State | SCSEP | SCSEP | SCSEP |
| White | 84 % | 49 % | 35 % | 46 % |
| Black | 7 % | 30 % | 41 % | 46 % |
| American Indian | 0.2 % | 1.3 % | 1.3 % | 1.3 % |
| Asian | 3 % | 2 % | 2 % | 1.3 % |
| Pacific Islander | Unkwn | 0.6 % | 1 % | 1 % |
| Hispanic | 6 % | 12 % | 12 % | 13 % |

Connecticut remains committed to providing SCSEP services to all eligible older workers in the state. Over the course of this four year plan, the SCSEP grantees will partner with minority based organizations, including faith based organizations, to recruit participants, bring on new host agencies and find opportunities for employment. In addition, the state will assure all SCSEP offices have Spanish speaking staff as a resource for Spanish speaking enrollees.

D. List needed community services and the exact places where these services are most needed. Specifically, the plan must address the needs and locations of those individuals most in need of community services and the groups working to meet their needs.

Connecticut is a small state and as a result, there can be great differences within one county and great similarity across the state. Fairfield County is home to the poorest city and one of the wealthiest towns. New London County has urban, suburban and rural communities all within its borders.

Overall, the community needs are the same. Upon review of the SPARQ Quarterly Reports, the three SCSEP grantees report the same community needs consistently in the state. These needs are “Family at or Below the Poverty Level” and “Individuals who are Homeless or at Risk of Homelessness”.

| <i>SCSEP Most in Need Elements</i> | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <i>Disability</i> | <i>Persistent Unemployment</i> |
| <i>Frail</i> | <i>Rural</i> |
| <i>Homeless</i> | <i>Severe Disability</i> |
| <i>Limited English Proficiency</i> | <i>Severely Limited Employment</i> |
| <i>Low Employment Prospects</i> | <i>Prospects</i> |
| <i>Low Literacy Skills</i> | <i>Veteran</i> |

There are numerous social service agencies across Connecticut to help residents address issues of poverty and homeless or risk of homelessness. An important social services provider is the local community action agency. Services at these agencies include but are not limited to, housing assistance, food programs, emergency shelters, and energy assistance. The Community Action Agencies are listed below.

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| Fairfield County | Action for Bridgeport Community Development (ABCD, Inc.) |
| | Community Action Agency of Western CT, Inc. |
| Hartford County | Bristol Community Organization, Inc. |
| | Community Renewal Team, Inc. |
| | Human Resources Agency of New Britain, Inc. |
| Middlesex County | Community Renewal Team, Inc. |
| New Haven County | Community Action Agency of New Haven, Inc. |
| | New Opportunities, Inc. |
| | TEAM, Inc. |
| New London County | Thames Valley Council for Community Action, Inc. |
| Windham County | The Access Community Action Agency |

Other community needs prevalent for SCSEP participants include Limited English Proficiency and illiteracy or low reading abilities. These services can be found at local adult education, such as Danbury Adult Education or at agencies such as Literacy Volunteers of Greater Hartford and the YMCA in Torrington.

Beyond the most in need elements determined by Title V, other barriers may exist for participants seeking unsubsidized employment, such as caring for an aging parent and caring for grandchildren. For these and other services one of Connecticut’s five area agencies on aging are important resources for SCSEP participants.

| | |
|---|--|
| Agency on Aging of South Central CT | New Haven County |
| Eastern CT Area Agency On Aging (Senior Resources) | Middlesex, New London, Windham, Tolland Counties |
| North Central Area Agency on Aging | Hartford County |
| Southwestern CT Agency on Aging | Lower Fairfield County |
| Western CT Area Agency on Aging | Upper Fairfield County, Litchfield County |

The three SCSEP grantees in Connecticut will continue to access the services provided at these agencies as well as find others to meet the needs of program participants. In doing so, SCSEP will assist the participant in addressing the barriers to successful job training and ultimately unsubsidized employment.

E. 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 for SCSEP grantees and program operators to better achieve the goals of the program.

To improve and enhance SCSEP over the course of this plan the state will use the strategies and ideas outlined beginning on page 6 of this plan to meet the following two goals.

1. Strengthen and support the core SCSEP services provided to older workers in Connecticut

Connecticut is dedicated to providing optimal services to eligible residents. Efforts will be made to continually ensure services are available to address barriers to employment and support older workers. To do so, grantees will develop partnerships with local service agencies, inform participants of available resources and ensure access to SCSEP services for all eligible older workers.

Expected Outcomes:

- Grantees will provide all participants with information about the local area agency on aging and the services they provide.
- SCSEP staff will conduct targeted outreach to local social service agencies for purposes of marketing the program for new host agencies and services to assist participants become job ready.
- All SCSEP providers will have Spanish speaking staff available to assist participants and future enrollees as needed.

The state's SCSEP grantees will work to develop new relationships with agencies in their service area to help with training opportunities, new Host Agencies and new classroom training; and for supportive services to help meet the needs of older workers seeking unsubsidized employment. At the same time, SCSEP will strengthen existing relationships with agencies that it relies on to train and support program participants.

2. Increase awareness of SCSEP among the state's workforce partners.

This workforce plan has provided information about the state's economy, the current labor force and projections of job opportunities for low-skilled older workers. The goal of SCSEP is to prepare participants for unsubsidized employment. To best achieve this goal, SCSEP must engage with other workforce initiatives to develop new opportunities for program participants.

Expected Outcomes:

- SCSEP grantees will increase co-enrollment with American Job Centers by five (5) percent during each year of this plan.
- SDA will develop a comprehensive website listing job skills training and job development services for older workers throughout the state.
- SCSEP grantees will visit each American Job Center in their service area to revitalize these partnerships by providing information about SCSEP and seek out ways to help support the efforts of the American Job Center.
- SDA will identify all economic development offices in the state and work with SCSEP staff on outreach efforts.

These efforts will increase awareness about SCSEP among the workforce community while developing new training opportunities for program participants needed to secure unsubsidized employment. These efforts will be driven by the labor market to ensure success for SCSEP participants.

F. Describe a strategy for continuous improvement in the level of performance for SCSEP participant’s entry into unsubsidized employment and to achieve, at a minimum, the levels specified in OAA.

Over the last two program years, SCSEP grantees have seen an overall increase in the percentage of participants who have left the program for employment.

| Program Year 2013 | Program Year 2014 |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 42.5% | 49.3% |

Connecticut will focus on the goals listed above to provide continuous improvement to the delivery of SCSEP services. By nurturing stronger relationships with workforce partners, more training opportunities and resources are available to prepare older workers for unsubsidized employment. At the same time, continued partnerships with local and state agencies address and relieve barriers to employment. Finally, knowledge of employer needs improves job development to secure unsubsidized employment and job retention for participants.

III Location and Population Served, including Equitable Distribution

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

Title V of the Older Americans Act serves all eight (8) counties of Connecticut. Each of these counties has urban, rural and suburban areas. They are each similar in demographics and in need. Litchfield County, primarily a rural area has the highest percentage of residents ages 65 and older as well as one of the lowest unemployment rates. Meanwhile, Hartford County, which borders Litchfield County, has urban, suburban and rural areas. Hartford County struggles with the highest percentage of seniors living at or below the poverty level and the largest percentage of minority residents.

Each county is served by one of the three SCSEP grantees, with several areas of overlap. The need is evident statewide but the challenges to deliver the services vary greatly from one county to another.

- 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.**

| County | Cities | Authorized Positions | Change from PY 14 |
|------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Fairfield | Bridgeport, Stamford | 109 | None |
| Hartford | Hartford | 139 | None |
| Litchfield | None identified | 23 | None |
| Middlesex | None identified | 18 | None |
| New Haven | New Haven, Waterbury | 131 | None |
| New London | Norwich | 32 | None |
| Tolland | None identified | 11 | None |
| Windham | Willimantic | 17 | None |

- C. Describe any current slot imbalances and proposed steps to correct inequities to achieve equitable distribution.**

SCSEP services are currently provided based on the modified slots designated by the US Department of Labor, as constructed using the state’s minimum wage. With those numbers in mind, there is no current slot imbalance. Connecticut will continue to monitor the equitable distribution and work with the national grantees to address any concerns as they arise.

- D. Explain 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;**
 - b. equitably serves both rural and urban areas; and**
 - c. serves individuals afforded priority for service.**

The state coordinator will monitor all relevant data impacting equitable distribution. This data includes but is not limited to, demographics, particularly social and economic need; rural and urban indicators; and labor market information.

Over the course of this plan, the state will work with the national grantees by sharing data and program information to analyze equitable distribution to ensure priority individuals receive services without disruption to the greatest extent possible.

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

The following table shows the number of eligible individuals, including a breakdown of those eligible by minority status. This information is based on data from the US Census American Fact Finder 2010-2014.

| County | SCSEP Eligible | Eligible Minority | PY 15 Slot Level |
|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Fairfield | 8,581 | 3,106 | 109 |
| Hartford | 11,907 | 4,358 | 139 |
| Litchfield | 1,622 | 164 | 23 |
| Middlesex | 1,255 | 193 | 18 |
| New Haven | 10,614 | 3,715 | 131 |
| New London | 2,627 | 623 | 32 |
| Tolland | 805 | 111 | 11 |
| Windham | 2,735 | 459 | 17 |
| Total | 40,146 | 12,729 | 480 |

F. Provide 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; and**
- e. Have the greatest social need.**

The following tables are based on data from the US Census American Fact Finder 2010-2014.

Urban and rural areas within the state:

| County | Urban | Rural |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Fairfield | 874,801 | 42,028 |
| Hartford | 845,660 | 48,354 |
| Litchfield | 111,205 | 78,722 |
| Middlesex | 125,019 | 40,657 |
| New Haven | 831,083 | 31,394 |
| New London | 203,326 | 70,729 |
| Tolland | 94,351 | 58,340 |
| Windham | 59,497 | 58,931 |
| Total | 3,144,942 | 429,155 |

Economic Need:

| County | Percent of those ages 65 and older at or below poverty level | Unemployment Rate in 2014 |
|-------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| Fairfield | 6.5% | 6.8% |
| Hartford | 8.5% | 6.9% |
| Litchfield | 5.4% | 5.3% |
| Middlesex | 4.3% | 4.5% |
| New Haven | 7.9% | 6.9% |
| New London | 6.0% | 5.5% |
| Tolland | 3.8% | 5.1% |
| Windham | 5.9% | 7.6% |

Minorities:

| County | Minority Rate |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| Fairfield | 36.2% |
| Hartford | 36.6% |
| Litchfield | 10.1% |
| Middlesex | 15.4% |
| New Haven | 35.0% |
| New London | 23.7% |
| Tolland | 13.8% |
| Windham | 16.8% |

Limited English Proficiency:

| County | LEP Rate |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Fairfield | 12.2% |
| Hartford | 9.3% |
| Litchfield | 3.3% |
| Middlesex | 2.9% |
| New Haven | 7.7% |
| New London | 5.7% |
| Tolland | 2.2% |
| Windham | 5.0% |

Greatest Social Need:

| County | Residents receiving SNAP | Adults w/ education level of 12 years or under w/no diploma |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Fairfield | 8.8% | 11.0% |
| Hartford | 14.0% | 11.4% |
| Litchfield | 7.3% | 8.8% |
| Middlesex | 6.8% | 6.2% |
| New Haven | 14.2% | 11.2% |
| New London | 11.6% | 9.1% |
| Tolland | 6.0% | 6.8% |
| Windham | 16.0% | 12.0% |

G. Describe the steps taken to avoid disruptions to service for participants to the greatest extent possible, when positions are redistributed in 20 CFR 641.365; when new Census or other reliable data becomes available; or when there is over-enrollment for any other reason.

When positions are redistributed, the State Department on Aging will work with the national grantees to ensure coordination and diligence during any necessary transitions. These efforts will allow for minimum disruption of service and allow the participant to continue being paid.

In the event that slot levels change, the state ensures no participants will be terminated as a result. The grantees will not enroll new participants until the equitable distribution levels are no longer exceeded.

SCSEP ASSURANCES

This plan is a stand-alone SCSEP Workforce Plan. The State Department on Aging assures that the plan was developed with input from the national grantees, Associates for Training and Development and Easter Seals Capital Region and Eastern Connecticut. The plan was then submitted for public comment. In doing so, public and private nonprofit agencies providing employment services were given an opportunity to provide comment as well as social service agencies providing services to older individuals, grantees under Title III of OAA, affected communities, and unemployed older individuals.