

SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

PARTICIPANT ORIENTATION

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

MANUEL

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SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Identification
Table of Contents
Letter to Title V Participants
History of the Title V Program
Equal Opportunity Statement
Handicap Accessibility Information
Physical Examinations
Annual Income Review
Age Requirements
Participant Responsibilities and Expectations
Orientation
Placement into a Worksite
Test Period
Evaluation
Rotation
Training
Wages
Holidays
Other Leave
Disciplinary Action
Termination
Grievance Procedure

Dear Title V Participant:

We are happy to have you as one of our Title V participants. The policies and procedures for the program are recorded in this handbook to give you necessary information about your rights, privileges and obligations as a participant. It is required that you familiarize yourself with these policies. Please do not hesitate to ask questions about items you do not understand.

We are glad you are a part of the Senior Community Service Employment Program and look forward to sharing many good and rewarding times with you.

Sincerely,

Michelle Brinson
Subproject Director
Senior Community Service Employment Program

Purposes

To foster independent living and prevent premature or unnecessary institutionalization.

To offer opportunities for participation in community life through a variety of educational and recreational activities, volunteer roles and employment.

To advocate for the rights of elderly and handicapped individuals in the community and in long term care facilities.

To enhance the image of aging through community awareness, education and networking.

To identify needs and coordinate available funding and volunteer resources to maximize choices for older adults and handicapped individuals.

To provide support for caregivers.

HISTORY OF THE SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

A joint resolution of Congress in 1958 authorized the first White House Conference on Aging, which was held in January 1961. In 1963 President Kennedy recommended to Congress a five-year federal program of assistance to state, local, and voluntary organizations in support of their efforts to plan and develop services for older persons.

The Administration on Aging was established to administer the six new titled programs. **Title V** authorized training of persons working or preparing to work in the field of aging.

The enactment of the Older Americans Comprehensive Services Amendments of 1973 authorized the establishment of employment\training programs to provide part-time public service employment for unemployed low-income persons over 55. It is now often shortened to simply **Title V Program**.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT

Athens Community Council on Aging Senior Community Service Program is committed to the principle of affirmative action and shall not discriminate against otherwise qualified persons on the basis of race, color, sex, age, national origin, religious belief, political affiliation, over-qualification, physical or mental handicap, disability, veterans status, or past participation in the discrimination complaint process in its employment, facility, and program accessibility. This policy applies to all aspects of the employment relationship including, but not limited to the following: recruitment or recruitment advertising; promotion, demotion, or transfer; layoff or termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation; and selection for training, including apprenticeship. Employees and Participants are not allowed to show prejudice or discrimination in matters concerning service recipients, visitors, volunteers, or co-workers.

HANDICAP ACCESSIBILITY INFORMATION

To better serve the community, the staff wants to make sure that everyone, including individuals with disabilities, is able to participate in our Program. The staff of the Athens Community Council on Aging Senior Community Service Program will ensure that programs and activities are readily accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATIONS

Each individual selected for enrollment into SCSEP will be offered a physical examination. A copy should be provided to the subproject director if the individual works in a manual job (as defined by the agency's worker's compensation carrier). A physical is a benefit to the participant and is not intended to be the basis for denial into or continuation on the program. The physical will be reimbursed as stated below.

A participant may refuse a physical exam only through a signed waiver signed within 60 days of the placement. Also, this waiver must be signed yearly thereafter. However, if the participant is considering a manual job, the participant will be required to have a physical.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Support offered to participants will include counseling and/or instruction designed to assist the participant to participate successfully in the community service assignments or to obtain unsubsidized employment. Counseling will include topics that assist the participant personally in areas such as health, nutrition, social security benefits, Medicare benefits and retirement laws.

Incidentals will be provided such as work shoes, badges, uniforms, safety glasses and hand tools if necessary for successful participation in the SCSEP Program, if not available from another source. Support will also include transportation to in-service meetings.

ANNUAL INCOME REVIEW

To be enrolled on the SCSEP Program, your household income must fall within the income eligibility guideline for Georgia. This is 125% of the Federal poverty level and is set yearly by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Household refers to family members living in the same home. It is necessary to continue to meet the eligibility requirements to remain enrolled in the program.

Because of the eligibility requirement, it will be necessary to review your income from all sources at the time of your first interview **and every year thereafter**. Your income refers to total cash receipts before taxes and includes Social Security. Proof of income in the form of check stubs or other documentation must be submitted annually.

AGE REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for the SCSEP Program, you must be at least 55 years old. There is no upper limit for initial or for continued enrollment on the program. Proof of age is required.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Certain standards of conduct, or rules and regulations are necessary in every organization. Every standard of conduct of the Senior Community Service Employment Program is established specifically for the well being of all participants and the overall efficient operation of the program.

Participants who **fail** to follow the necessary rules and regulations governing their conduct are not only penalizing themselves, but they are doing a disservice to all the other participants. The standards of conduct are not intended to restrict or impose upon the privileges of anyone, but are designed to insure the rights and safety of all participants and to provide working guidelines to assure equitable and businesslike behavior to efficiently serve in the proper role.

As a Title V participant, you will be expected to:

- * be at your assignment regularly and on time,
- * perform the duties you were instructed by your supervisor to do,
- * handle your assignment in a pleasant manner,
- * Always be neat and clean,
- * keep personal information about clients you may serve at your worksite confidential,
- * turn in all time sheets and/or travel sheets on time,
- * do five job searches per month
- * call your supervisor when you are out sick,
- * attend required in-service training sessions.

ORIENTATION

Once you are enrolled into the SCSEP Program, you will be given an orientation into the program by the subproject director. Orientation will provide information on what is expected from you as a participant and discuss policies and procedures of the Senior Community Service Employment Program. You will be given this handbook to read and understand.

Following orientation, you will be placed on a waiting list until there is an opening in your community for a participant and an appropriate community assignment is found.

PLACEMENT INTO A WORKSITE

Once you are enrolled in the Senior Service Employment Program, you will be given a work assignment at a host agency in or near your community. The community assignment will be chosen by the subproject director using the Individual Employment Plan and is based on your skills, aptitudes, and interests. This plan includes goals for training placement and future employment goals for the participant.

Host agencies are selected on the basis of their ability to provide a genuine on-the-job training situation that will provide marketable skills and experience to enable participants to secure jobs off the program. Host agencies are non-profit or publicly owned and operated facilities and projects. Your work with the agency will be a service to the community as well as a training experience.

You will interview with the supervisor at the site to determine if this is an appropriate site for you and the agency. You will be placed on the job when vocational interest and ability shows that you will be well suited for the work.

The host agency will provide you with a job description. After working at a site for awhile, it may become necessary to change or add to the duties in your original job description. These must first be approved by the subproject director.

No enrollee may perform volunteer work for the host or subproject agency unless the uncompensated activity is separate and distinct from activities described in the job description.

If you are placed in an agency where your work duties include direct contact with children or vulnerable population, you may be asked to take a fingerprint background check. This is done at local police stations and will be paid for by the Athens Clarke

County Police Department.

TEST PERIOD

All new participants are employed for an initial 90 day test period. This allows time to decide if you wish to continue as a participant, and it gives the host agency supervisor the opportunity to determine whether or not you can perform satisfactorily in your position. If it is determined that you cannot perform satisfactorily, or if you decide that the assignment is not appropriate for you, the subproject director will try to find another host agency. During this test period, you will receive all benefits afforded permanent participants.

EVALUATION

Your performance as a participant will be evaluated after the first three months and annually thereafter. We have found that most participants receive evaluations full of praise and, if necessary, some may include constructive criticism. If it is determined that the participant is not performing satisfactorily, he or she will be advised of the weakness in performance and instructed on how to perform better.

The host agency supervisor will base the evaluation on the job description. After this 3-month evaluation, you will be given an annual evaluation using the same form.

ALTERNATIVE ASSIGNMENTS

All participants are placed with a host agency on a time limited basis in order to acquire job skills. When the training has been completed, it is hoped that the participant can be hired by the agency or helped to find a job. If neither of these options is available, the participant will then be placed with a new host agency to continue acquiring work skills.

Recommendations of alternative assignments are based on:

- * Individual Employment Plan
- * The annual evaluation performed by the host agency,
- * Potential for employment with the current host agency,
- * Available transportation,
- * Available non-profit or publicly owned host agency within the participant's county of residence.
- * Health ramifications, if any.

It is recommended that **no participant remain with one host agency for more than twelve continuous months** unless a waiver is requested by the subproject director because of **extreme and unique circumstances**. Waivers must be approved by the Area Agency on Aging and the Division of Aging Services.

The purpose of alternative assignments is:

- * To provide each participant an opportunity to gain new experience and skills.
- * To help participants clearly perceive the SCSEP Program as **training and temporary employment** rather than a secure job in one host agency for an indefinite period.
- * To help host agencies perceive the SCSEP Program as employment and training. If the host agency wants to keep a participant, the alternative assignment plan should encourage the agency to hire that participant as a "regular" employee.

Participants will sign the "Enrollment Agreement" annually which is a memorandum of understanding that the Program is a work-training program and alternative assignments from worksites will occur at the completion of job training.

LENGTH OF PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

It is recommended that no participant remain with on the SCSEP for more that 12 months. Subproject directors may request an extension of time, up to an additional 12 months, on behalf of the participant if there are extenuating circumstances involved. Request should be sent to the attention of:

Sarah Collins
The Georgia Department of Human Resources
Division of Aging Services/Senior Employment Program
2 Peachtree Street 9-231
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3412

TRAINING

Training meetings are held quarterly. Meeting topics will include subjects that will help prepare the participant for unsubsidized employment as well as other topics of interest for the health and well being of the participants. Participants are encouraged to let the subproject director know of subjects that might be addressed which will enhance their skills and interests.

Training meetings are working time. **You are required to attend.**

PLANS FOR TRANSITION TO UNSUBSIDIZED SERVICES

Participants are expected to actively seek employment while enrolled in the Title 5 Program. Host agencies and supervisors are expected to encourage the enrollee to use skills learned at the host agency and during in-service training to acquire employment outside the program. Host agencies are also expected to consider the participant for positions that become available in the host agency for which the enrollee is qualified or can be trained to do.

WAGES

You will be paid the minimum wage established by Federal guidelines. The normal number of hours worked per week is twenty. If it is mutually agreeable to the agency and the participant, fewer hours may be worked.

The total hours each participant works is recorded on a timesheet. This is handed in bi-weekly.

Timesheets must be in this office no later than the Monday after the last day of the first week of the pay cycle.

Deductions from the money earned include Social Security, Federal and State taxes, depending on how you claim exemptions.

HOLIDAYS

Enrollees will not receive holiday or sick leave pay.

OTHER LEAVE

Jury and Court Leave

You will be given a leave of absence and without charge against other types of leave so long as your presence is required elsewhere for purposes of serving as a juror or in obedience to a subpoena or direction by proper authority to appear as a witness for the federal government, the state of Georgia or a political subdivision thereof. The project director must be notified immediately after receiving jury duty summons or court subpoena.

If you are subpoenaed in private litigation or by some party other than the federal government, the state of Georgia, or a political subdivision thereof to testify as an individual, not in your capacity as a participant with the OACSEP Program, you must use leave without pay for your absence, or you may make the time up.

Leave of Absence

A leave of absence without pay for a period not to exceed six months may be granted by the subproject director under unusual circumstances or for an extended illness. If the leave is due to illness, a written recommendation from a physician will be required. A physician's statement will also be required for clearance to return to your position.

Inclement Weather Pay

Generally, it is the policy of the Older American Community Service Employment Program to close due to bad weather conditions (snow, sleet, ice, etc.) when (*name of subproject*) closes because of such conditions. If hazardous conditions are announced or observed during the night, local radio stations will be notified no later than 6:30 a.m.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION

The Senior Community Service Employment Program wishes to ensure fair and equal treatment for all and to enable supervisors to be consistent in dealing with poor performance or misconduct. It is expected that minor problems will be corrected by private discussions between the supervisor and the participant. Disciplinary action shall be prescribed when, in the opinion of the project director or immediate supervisor, the participant's performance or actions are sufficiently below program standards to be considered detrimental to the program, host agency, or clients served. The guidelines and rules are intended to protect you from unreasonable discharge, and to give you an opportunity to improve performance before final action is taken.

Decisions concerning the type of disciplinary action taken are based upon the seriousness of the offense, the frequency of misbehavior in the past, the participant's previous performance record, and the participant's willingness or ability to correct the offense. In some instances, a specific incident may justify severe disciplinary action. Except in extreme cases, disciplinary action will follow the steps explained below.

Verbal Warning

Whenever a participant's performance or personal conduct is unacceptable, supervisors are to discuss the problem with the participant. This discussion should include a specific explanation of the problem(s), description of proper performance or conduct, and expectations of a reasonable period of time in which to correct the problem. Documentation of a verbal warning will be placed in the participant's confidential file.

Written Reprimand

A written reprimand may be issued, followed by discussion with the participant of its contents and becomes a part of the participant's confidential file. Written reprimands should include a specific explanation of the problem, description of proper performance or conduct, expectations of a reasonable period of time in which to correct the problem, and clear warnings of the penalty for continued poor performance or misconduct. Penalty may take the form of disciplinary probation or dismissal.

Disciplinary Probation

A participant may be placed on disciplinary probation, with or without pay, for a period of up to three months in order to allow improvement in performance or personal conduct. If the participant has made the necessary improvement by the end of the probation period, reinstatement to regular status will occur. If the expected improvement has not occurred, the participant may be subject to dismissal.

Dismissal

If the project director determines that dismissal is appropriate, a written notice of separation from the program shall be mailed to the participant by certified mail. A copy of the separation notice becomes a permanent part of the participant's file.

Violations Subject to Disciplinary Action

A participant may be terminated at the discretion of the SCSEP program director. The following is a non-exhaustive list, for illustrative purposes, of causes which constitute a proper basis for disciplinary action. Items marked with an asterisk (*) are offenses which may result in immediate dismissal.

- A. unwillingness or failure to cooperate with the SCSEP program director or host agency supervisor,
- B. unwillingness to follow SCSEP Policies and Procedures and Federal Guidelines,
- C. refusal to accept reasonable and proper work assignment from an authorized supervisor,
- D. found to be over the income eligibility level; failure to report change(s) in economic status after enrollment,
- E. absence without leave; excessive abuse of leave privileges; habitual pattern of tardiness or departure from the worksite prior to appointed hour,
- F. consistent inefficiency, incompetence, or negligence in the performance of

duties and responsibilities,

- * G. hitting or hurting a client deliberately or through negligence,
- * H. misrepresentation or falsification of application for enrollment, time sheets, travel reimbursements, or other records.
- * I. unauthorized possession or use of drugs, bringing liquor or other intoxicants to your worksite, reporting to your worksite in an intoxicated condition,
- * J. stealing or unauthorized possession of property belonging to others; destroying or damaging property of others,
- * K. use of abusive, profane, or threatening language toward others,
- * L. possession of firearms or other weapons while at your worksite,
- * M. failure to attend required in-service training session (unless otherwise Approved by the subproject director).
- * N discussing confidential information about the client(s) served at the worksite.
- * O. does not relate well to others, for example: impatient, complains, talks too much, unpleasant disposition, and any other action deemed unlawful and/or inappropriate conduct and discredits the program's service

**Subject to immediate dismissal from the program*

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE:

Any participant who feels aggrieved by an action or decision of SCSEP subproject director or other MOW staff may utilize the formal grievance procedure as specified in this handbook. Should the enrollee need assistance with filing a complaint, please feel free to contact (*name of sponsoring agency*) executive director or any staff member. If the grievance is unresolved after completion of the agency procedure, a review of the issue by the Area Agency on Aging and/or the DHR Division of Aging Services may be requested. If the complaint alleges discrimination and is not resolved at the agency, AAA or state level, the enrollee may file a complaint with the Chief, Division of Older Workers Programs, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, Washington, DC 2021

TERMINATION

Resignation

A participant is asked to give at least **one (1)** week's notice when resigning from the program. However, this rule **would not** apply if the cause of the resignation is illness.

Dismissal

A participant may be dismissed at the discretion of the OACSEP program subproject director following any action for which disciplinary action is warranted. Although supervisors will ordinarily make every effort to work with a participant to correct deficiencies, there are some actions which may result in immediate dismissal.

A participant may also be dismissed when the subproject director cannot find a placement site during rotation that is within the abilities of the participant. Dismissal can also occur when the participant refuses to accept reasonable and proper assignment of a worksite.

If a participant feels that dismissal is unjustified, a grievance may be filed in accordance with the Grievance Procedure set forth in this handbook.

Death

In the event of a participant's death, termination date from the program is effective on the date of death. All compensation due will be paid to the designated beneficiary or beneficiaries or to the estate as required by state law.