SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Participant Manual

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WELCOME TO THE SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM!

INTRODUCTION

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is locally sponsored the Centralina Area Agency on Aging (AAA). Funding comes from **Senior Service America, Inc.,** headquartered in Silver Spring, Maryland. Senior Service America Inc. (SSAI) is a non-profit organization that provides civic engagement and employment opportunities for adults over the age of 55. SSAI administers the SCSEP on behalf of the U.S. Department of Labor.

The SCSEP office is located at 525 North Tryon Street, 12th Floor Charlotte NC.

The information found in this booklet is intended to be a brief summary of the opportunities, responsibilities, and privileges you have as a participant in the Senior Community Service Employment Program (Title V or SCSEP).

As authorized by the Older Americans Act, the Senior Community Service Employment Program is a temporary employment and training program with an emphasis on helping individuals return to the workforce. It is not intended to be a long-term employment program. You will be asked to read and sign a "Statement of Understanding" form stating you understand the objectives of the program.

MISSION AND PURPOSE

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) serves low-income unemployed persons who are 55 years of age and older, by training them in part-time community service assignments and by assisting them in developing skills and experience to facilitate their transition to unsubsidized employment.

Our purposes are to foster individual economic self-sufficiency and promote useful opportunities in community service assignments for unemployed low-income persons who are 55 years of age or older, and to increase the number of older persons who may enjoy the benefits of unsubsidized employment in the private and public sectors.

The purpose of this manual is to inform participants of the requirements and working conditions within the SCSEP.

Our goal is to help you obtain ***your*** goal of finding employment!

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

DISCRIMINATION PROHIBITED

The Centralina Area Agency on Aging SCSEP will not subject any person to discrimination in employment, services and activities on the grounds of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, political affiliations or beliefs, disability, or age, or participation in other government programs, except where age is a consideration for eligibility or where participation in other programs may affect income eligibility.

The Centralina Area Agency on Aging SCSEP is an Equal Opportunity Employer, and shall use its best efforts to ensure a safe and healthful working environment, free of substance abuse (drugs and alcohol), harassment and hazardous conditions. The Centralina Area Agency on Aging SCSEP Drug-Free Workplace Policy is included.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must meet the following criteria shall be considered for enrollment.

- **Age** – Must be at least 55 years of age; there is no upper age limit for SCSEP.
- **Income** – Annual household income must be equal to or less than 125% of the federal poverty level (determined annually by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.) Income definitions for determining eligibility are published by the U.S. Department of Labor.
- **Residence** – At the time of enrollment applicants must be a resident of the county or counties authorized to be served by Centralina Area Agency on Aging.
- **Must be unemployed** - At the time of application and while enrolled on SCSEP participants must be unemployed.
- **Durational Limit** – Cannot have been previously on SCSEP for four years/48 months. The four years is cumulative and includes any time you may have been on SCSEP with another provider.

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a federally subsidized, state run program designed to accomplish these four objectives:

- Foster and promote useful part-time community service opportunities for economically disadvantaged persons who are 55 years of age or older and who may have poor prospects for employment.

- Enhance the abilities, skills, and aptitudes of participants to increase their opportunities for improved income and benefits.

- Change negative attitudes and stereotypes about older workers through public education and demonstrated success.

- Conduct projects that promote innovative work alternatives, second career training, and the placement of participants into employment.

SCSEP participants are 55 years of age or older and must meet federal income guidelines. Participants are assigned to local nonprofit or public agencies, also called "host agencies," for an average of 20 hours per week. You will be paid at the rate of $7.25 per hour, which is the minimum wage for the State of North Carolina.

While receiving training and/or updating your existing skills, you will provide a valuable service to your local community. The services provided must *not* be essential to the Host Agency's operation, meaning the agency could operate in an effective manner without the position.

DOCUMENTATION

Proof of the above eligibility criteria is required at the time of eligibility determination and during recertification. Examples of acceptable documentation include but are not limited to the following:

- **Age** – birth certificate, driver's license, or passport
- **Income** – (of family members in household): social security administration benefit letters, earning statements from employers, or bank statements showing interest
- **Family Size** – income tax return for prior year, a lease, or landlord statement, or a marriage certificate
- **Residence** – a utility bill, a voter registration card, or a driver's license
- **Veteran Status** – Form DD-214, issued by the Defense Department. Participants are required to complete and sign an Employment Eligibility Verification Form (I-9) to document U.S. citizenship or permission to work in the United States.

RECERTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIRED

Income eligibility of every participant will be reviewed each year by the Project Director, even participants on an approved break. The recertification schedule is determined by

Senior Service America, Inc., and must be completed prior to June 30 of each year. It is the responsibility of each participant to notify the Project Director of any significant changes in income or family size that may affect eligibility. If, at any time, the Project Director suspects that a participant may be over income, they may be asked to provide information for the necessary documentation.

If a participant is determined to be over-income on the recertification date or at any other point during SCSEP participation, they will be provided a thirty (30) day written notice of termination that includes the reason for termination and a copy of the appeal procedures. The participant can continue to work until their exit date. See Grievance Procedures for appeal rights. The Project staff will refer the participant to other employment and training services for assistance

PARTICIPANT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- Report any change in countable income, change of residence, change in number of people in the family, or if you obtain full or part time employment.
- Develop realistic goals for obtaining regular employment.
- Participate in developing the Individual Employment Plan (IEP), which may include a target date for employment.
- Learn skills and gain experience to qualify for regular jobs.
- Maintain a good work ethic: regular attendance, punctuality, and a desire to learn.
- Participate in evaluating and monitoring progress toward completing IEP goals.
- Register at the NC WORKS Career Center.
- Participate in training and other job preparation activities at the NC WORKS Career Center.
- Conduct an active job search through the NC WORKS Career Center and by contacting local employers and submit job search forms, if an employment goal is included on your IEP.
- Accept an offer of suitable regular employment.

- Provide a two-week notice of resignation in writing to the SCSEP staff when possible. Provide employer, wage and benefit information to SCSEP office.

- After placed in regular employment, remain in contact with SCSEP for 360 days.

The Senior Community Service Employment Program is ***temporary***. This means that while participating in the program, you may be required to seek unsubsidized employment or other goals according to your Individual Employment Plan (IEP). Based on your IEP goals you may be required to register with the NC WORKS Career Center and visit the NC WORKS Career Center, and/or employment searches by contacting prospective employers. A form will be provided to you for making notes of when you visited the NC WORKS Career Center or prospective employers. These forms are to be completed and returned with your time sheets.

ENROLLMENT, INTAKE AND ASSESSMENT

Once you are determined eligible for the Senior Community Service Employment Program the following steps will be taken:

1) You will complete the Statement of Understanding, indicating that you understand the rules of the Senior Community Service Employment Program.

2) You will receive an orientation to the program and a copy of this Participant Manual.

3) You will help complete the Enrollment, Intake and Assessment forms, which will be used to complete an evaluation of your skills, aptitudes, and career interests. This will help to determine your IEP.

4) You will work with the SCSEP staff and your Host Agency Supervisor to develop an IEP. The IEP will be used to identify vocational goals, training needs, needed supportive services, and for future Host Agency placements.

5) Your IEP will be updated a minimum of twice a year, but may be updated more frequently, to insure that you are receiving the work experience you need to transition into regular employment. You and your Host Agency supervisor will receive a copy of your Individual Employment Plan.

FOUR YEAR/48 MONTH LIFETIME LIMIT ON SCSEP PARTICIPATION

The Older Americans Act, the authorizing legislation for SCSEP, requires that eligible participants may participate in SCSEP for a maximum period of 48 months or 4 years. The IEP will determine the length of your enrollment in the Senior Community Service Employment Program. Periods may vary based on individuals. In most cases participants rarely participate for 48 months as they leave for unsubsidized placements or other personal reasons. Each participant's time enrolled is tracked by the Centralina Area Agency on Aging by preparing enrollment forms and documenting breaks of service entered into SPARQ.

Effective October 1, 2013, SSAI and Centralina Area Agency on Aging received authorization from the U.S. Department of Labor to end the durational limit waiver policy for SCSEP Participants. This change in policy means that starting on October 1, 2013; no SSAI SCSEP Participant will be able to seek a waiver on SCSEP to extend their time beyond their four year or 48 month lifetime cap. Each participant must be exited when he/she reaches their individual four year durational limit date.

TRANSITION ASSESSMENT AND IEP

The Transition Assessment and Individual Employment Plan (IEP) are for participants who are approaching their four-year time limit on participation. The Transition Assessment and IEP are intended to help develop a post-SCSEP survival plan by the time the participant must be terminated from the program.

Participants have the option to decline the Transition Assessment and IEP process. If they decline, project staff must document this decision thoroughly in detailed case notes as well as on the *Transition Assessment and IEP Form*.

If a participant concludes that they do NOT have sufficient financial resources, program staff should help them identify and put in place community resources that will help to close the gap between the finances they have and the amount they may need. The goal of such plans is to increase the financial stability by giving them the steps to take, which may include them contacting various agencies and programs (with the assistance of program staff and other professionals as appropriate).

A participant's health status may be assessed when applicable, especially if it would identify a disability for which they would be eligible for disability benefits.

The IEP portion of the Transition Assessment and IEP should include the following as appropriate:

- Up-to-date information on transferrable skills, interests, unsubsidized placement

goal, if applicable, and specific action steps, such as updating the participant's resume, job interviewing and job search skills, additional needed training, employers to target and an outreach strategy

- Up-to-date information on supportive needs and goals along with specific action steps, such as developing a personal budget without SCSEP wages, or getting permission from you to contact social support systems to ensure safety net services throughout the transition;

- Up-to-date information on continuing community service goals or other plans post-exit and specific action steps, such as identifying other stipend/volunteer programs

Project Staff will start working with participants on their Transitional Assessments and IEPs one year prior to the participant reaching his/her individual durational limit exit date. Participants will minimally receive reminder notification letters that they are approaching the end of their four years/48 months on SCSEP from project staff 90 days before the time limit is reached and 30 calendar day termination notice before the four year time limit is reached**.**

COMMUNITY SERVICE ASSIGNMENT AND HOST AGENCY SUPERVISION

Participants will be assigned to work at a Host Agency, also known as a training site. Participants will be under the direct supervision of a Host Agency supervisor. A position description has been developed and will be the tool for direction and instruction for the assignment. Participants are not employees of the Host Agency or of the Senior Community Service Employment Program. Participants are "enrollees or trainees."

Training Plan and Work Schedule:

Your Host Agency supervisor will provide you with a copy of your position description, a work schedule, and an orientation to your community service assignment, which includes the Host Agency's personnel policies.

Participant and Host Agency Rules:

- Participants are not allowed to open or close Host Agency buildings and therefore, should not be given keys.

- Participants cannot remain at the agency without the presence of a Host Agency staff member.

- Participants are permitted to drive Host Agency vehicles with proper documentation but not drive their personal vehicles for Host Agency business.

- Participants are allowed to handle cash with supervision but not Host Agency credit cards.

- Participants cannot work overtime nor be paid by the Host Agency for working more than their scheduled work week.

- Participants may accept non-cash gifts from their Host Agency as a way of recognition for a job well done, as a parting gift, or birthday or holiday gift.

Host Agency Rotations:

Because the major purpose of the program is to assist individuals to gain regular employment, it is important to have many learning experiences. Changing Host Agencies often helps to make this possible. Your progress in learning new skills, satisfaction, and readiness for regular employment will be reviewed with you and your Host Agency supervisor. Based on the review you may be moved to another Host Agency.

As progress toward achieving your IEP goals is monitored, you will be expected to make suggestions, ask for counsel, and discuss resources. If SCSEP staff, the supervisor, and/or the participant agree that more training is needed to be ready for regular employment, then rotation to another Host Agency for additional training may be considered. Training alternatives such as classroom training, job search training, and job search activities will also be considered.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Performance evaluations are required after 30 days and then annually and are completed by the Host Agency supervisor. The evaluation identifies areas of accomplishment, as well as areas needing improvement. The Host Agency supervisor may also recommend additional training or experience or the need to rotate Host Agencies. The participant will be given the evaluation both verbally and in written form and has an opportunity to respond to the evaluation in writing. A copy of the evaluation is kept in the participant's file at the SCSEP office.

HOST AGENCY SAFETY AND OTHER MONITORING

At least once per year, project staff will visit each participant on site at the host agency to meet with he/she and the host agency supervisor as well as to conduct a host agency safety check to ensure that each Participant is familiar with the host agency's

emergency procedures.

INJURY ON TRAINING ASSIGNMENT

In case of injury on the community service assignment, a participant must immediately file a First Report of Injury, with a copy to the Host Agency Supervisor and the Project Director. Even if a minor incident occurs, reporting protects the participant's Workers' compensation rights. Workers' Compensation information is posted in the Project Office.

NEPOTISM PROHIBITED AT HOST AGENCIES

No participant shall be assigned to a host agency where a member of the immediate family of the participant is in a supervisory or administrative capacity involving oversight of the participant.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Supportive services are designed to help the participant overcome barriers to their training, their community service assignment, or regular employment. To obtain supportive services, the SCSEP staff must authorize all supportive services in advance.

The following are examples of supportive services available to participants in limited amounts:

- Clothes or tools required for the community service assignment or to transition into regular employment.
- Eye exam and glasses, safety glasses.
- Other services or items that are needed to participate in a community service assignment or in regular employment that are not addressed above.

OPPORTUNITIES

Work Experience/Training:

Host Agencies provide specific tasks and supervision to enable participants to gain new experiences, learn new skills, or improve their current skill levels. This is a subsidized, temporary activity to prepare participants for regular employment.

Skills Training:

When a participant needs concentrated and specifically guided skills training to match skills in demand within the local labor market (i.e. computer skills, basic skills, English as a Second Language); training activities might include limited classroom training, seminars, or workshops on a particular subject.

Participants may be required to complete appropriate training, such as computer classes or GED, based upon the needs identified in their assessment and IEP.

PERSONNEL PRACTICES AND POLICIES

Salary and Hours:

As a participant, you will be paid at the State of North Carolina minimum wage, which is currently $7.25 per hour. Hours per week worked are usually 20 and does not include a lunch period. There are times when less than 20 hours per week are required by a Host Agency and the participant must agree in writing to accept the position with adjusted hours. Overtime is not allowed in the Senior Community Service Employment Program.

Physical examinations:

After enrollment in the SCSEP Program, participants will be offered at no cost, the opportunity to have a limited physical examination provided by the program. Maximum reimbursement is $75. If the physical costs less than $75, then the participant will only be reimbursed the actual cost. The Project staff will assist participants in obtaining a physical examination from a local resource if needed. Once enrolled, physical examinations are offered on an annual basis. The physical examination is for the participant's information only and a copy is not needed in the Project Office. If required by applicable health laws certain community service training assignments may require participants to have physical examinations. Under these circumstances if the participant objects to take the physical examination or share the results, the project director may limit or exclude the participant from a particular community service assignment.

WORKERS COMPENSATION

- All employees are protected by Workers Compensation which covers injuries received at work. All injuries related to the community service assignment must be reported immediately to the Project Director.

- If a participant become involved in an accident or sustain an injury while working, they must report the situation as required by state law.

- Workers Compensation information is posted in the Project Office.

- If a participant has an active Workers' Compensation claim with the Centralina Area Agency on Aging they will be put on an approved break in service, and participant will not be terminated from SCSEP while the claim is active.

- If a participant has an active Worker's Compensation claim during the recertification period and while they are on approved break with an open workers compensation claim they do not have to be recertified at that time.

- Once the claim is closed, the participant will return to active status and be recertified if he/she missed a recertification period. This is because family income could have changed during the period on approved break. If found currently eligible, every reasonable accommodation will be made to find a suitable host agency assignment within the parameters of the participant's current physical status.

Volunteering:

Participants may not volunteer at the Host Agency to which they are assigned.

If you leave the program without a regular job the SCSEP staff will direct you to opportunities to volunteer in the community. The SCSEP staff will be following up with you after your exit to make sure you continue providing community service.

Pay Periods:

Centralina Area Agency on Aging's pay periods are every other Friday by direct deposit. Please refer to the pay schedule calendar. Participants are responsible for completing their own time sheets correctly and must have their supervisor approve the time reported. Time sheets should be submitted to Centralina Area Agency on Aging's office via email or fax (email information and fax number is located on timesheet). A sample timesheet will be provided and will serve as a guide for completion. Hours recorded under "training" must be pre-approved by project staff. Any questions regarding how to complete a timesheet may be directed to the Project Director/staff at any time.

Mandatory Deductions:

Participants must contribute to Medicare and Social Security. These deductions are automatically taken out of your pay.

Rules for Time and Attendance:

An attendance record must be maintained at the Host Agency as documentation for hours worked. Participants are to follow the SCSEP policies and procedures for attendance.

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Laws:

If you think you have been subjected to discrimination, you may file a complaint within 180 days from the date of the alleged violation. For information regarding filing a complaint, contact an Equal Employment Opportunity Specialist.

Absenteeism:

Participants are responsible for informing their Host Agency supervisor they will be out of the office due to illness. A written release from a physician is required for more than three days absenteeism. If the participant does not contact their supervisor after three days the participant will be terminated. The participant should also inform the supervisor of a scheduled absenteeism, e.g., a doctor's appointment, at least one week prior to the appointment.

Leave of Absence:

Participants may request a leave of absence for up to 30 days for illness or personal reasons. Authorization for approval of the leave of absence is made by the SCSEP staff and not the Host Agency supervisor and will be made on a case-by-case basis. If the participant is unable to return on the agreed upon date, the participant will be terminated, but *may* be eligible for re-enrollment at a later date.

Annual and Sick Leave:

SCSEP participants are not allowed sick or annual paid leave. If you desire to make up any lost time due to an approved time away from your position, you may do so with the approval by, and coordinated with, your Host Agency supervisor and the SCSEP Office.

Inclement Weather and Disaster closings:

If the Host Agency is closed due to snow, weather, power, or other factors, these are not paid days. With prior approval of the project director and if the Host Agency can accommodate, a participant can make up the time in the same period or subsequent pay period.

Make-up-Time:

Certain "lost" time (such as snow closings, etc.) may be made up providing:

(a) the time can be made up in the same or subsequent pay period, and

(b) the participant's total hours do not exceed thirty-nine (39) hours per week, and

(c) is approved in advance by the Project Director

Participants are required to notify the Project Director and host agency supervisor in all instances when they will not be reporting to their community service training assignment as scheduled.

Holiday Pay:

SCSEP participants can only be paid for hours worked/spent in training, with the exception of Federal Holidays. Participants will be paid if they are scheduled to work on a day that their host agency is closed for a federal holiday. The approved Federal Holidays are: New Year's Day; Birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; Washington's Birthday; Memorial Day; Independence Day; Labor Day; Columbus Day; Veterans Day; Thanksgiving Day; and Christmas Day Participants will receive holiday pay if the holiday falls on a participant's regular work day. The rate of pay is $7.25 per hour times the number of hours usually worked that day.

Unemployment Benefit Claims:

Participants should note that they cannot file a claim for unemployment benefits. SCSEP is a training program not a job. As such SCSEP is exempt from paying unemployment taxes.

Workman's Compensation:

Participants are covered by SCSEP any on-the-job injury should be reported immediately to their Host Agency supervisor and the SCSEP office.

Terminations for Cause:

Participants will be immediately dismissed from SCSEP for theft, fraud or forgery, causing harm to others or property, starting altercations, possession of firearms or other weapons while on SCSEP business.

Miscellaneous:

No activity of personal nature such as solicitation, fund raising, promotions of hobby products or sales items, is to be conducted at Host Agencies or with contacts made at the site.

PARTICIPANT MEETINGS

The SCSEP staff are required to conduct quarterly meetings, also called Job Club Meetings, to provide employment-related information such as job seeking skills; employment opportunities, to provide in-service training, or provide information on community resources; legislation enacted, pending and proposed, which may affect participants; consumer education; health care; and retirement planning, and to discuss other program related issues. These meetings are **mandatory** for participants.

Participants may be asked to attend the meetings in lieu of their community service assignment. Exceptions will be noted in the written meeting announcements sent directly to both participants and their supervisors. Missed meetings ***may*** require additional training on the part of the participant.

EXITING SCSEP

If a participant decides to voluntarily exit the SCSEP program, one week's notice should be given with the reason for exit stated. If the participant has obtained an unsubsidized job, they may be released the next day if that is in the best interest to secure the job. Project staff will ask the participant to submit copies of acceptable documentation to verify your reason for exiting SCSEP.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

A three-step procedure will be used and will always be constructive and supportive with the goal of helping the participant to be successful. At each step every attempt will be made to offer one or more options for constructive resolution so that the participant can make a choice from the available options. In the event that termination is considered, the participant will be made aware of alternative options to avoid termination. Thus, termination will only occur when the participant has refused to choose other options, leaving termination as the only alternative. At each step the participant will be provided a period of 30 days to succeed in making the corrective actions. Centralina Area Agency on Aging staff or the Project Director may skip Steps One and Two and go straight to Step Three (outlined below) and terminate a participant immediately for serious violations such as fraud, theft, destruction of property, violence, or threats to health and safety of the participant or others.

Step One: Documented Verbal Warning

The Centralina Area Agency on Aging staff or the Project Director will verbally warn a participant and follow up with written documentation of the warning. This documentation will be placed in the personnel file.

Step Two: Written Warning

The Centralina Area Agency on Aging staff or the Project Director will prepare a written warning to a participant and discuss with them via telephone or in person. A copy of the written warning will be sent to the participant and placed in your personnel file.

During both Steps One and Two – the participant will be informed of the correction action needed and the time frame for which the corrective action must be taken.

Step Three: Termination

Participants may not be terminated until 30 calendar days after they have been provided a written notice. Written notices of termination including the reason for the action and appeal procedures must be given to the participant if we expect to terminate him/her from SCSEP. Participants have the right to appeal any decision.

TERMINATIONS FROM SCSEP

Reasons for termination**:** SCSEP participants may be terminated for any one of the following seven (7) reasons:

1. Termination for Cause
2. Termination for Individual Employment Plan Violation
3. Termination for Income Eligibility
4. Termination for Violation of Leave without Pay (the project may call this Approved Break in Service)
5. Termination for Reaching Durational Limit
6. Termination Due to Program Ineligibility

7. Termination Due to Becoming Employed While enrolled in SCSEP

Termination for Cause:

The participant will be put on leave without pay for 30 calendar days and will be issued a 30 day written notice. Reasons for termination for cause may include, but are not limited to:

- Refusal to cooperate in establishing eligibility;
- Refusal and/or unwillingness to perform assigned duties without good cause;
- Three or more unauthorized absences from the host agency/training site without good cause or proper notice or a pattern of unexcused tardiness;
- Falsification of timesheets, eligibility or other official records;
- Insubordination, that is, intentionally refusing to carry out the direction or instructions of a host agency supervisor or sponsor staff without good cause;
- Obscene, abusive, harassing, or threatening language or behavior;
- Causing an imminent threat to health or safety;
- Theft, meaning illegally taking or withholding the property of another without permission;
- Intentional loss, damage, destruction or disclosure of unauthorized use of property, records or information;
- Workplace harassment or discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, marital status, or disability;
- Conviction of a felony or any criminal drug statue for a violation occurring in the workplace while on or off duty, or while on duty away from the workplace;
- Consuming, selling, purchasing, manufacturing, distributing, possessing or using any illegal or non-prescribed drug or from being under the influence of alcohol and/or other drugs while performing his/her host agency assignment or while carrying out objectives required by the IEP. Legally

prescribed medications are excluded if they do not affect the participant's ability to perform his or her duties or protect the safety of the participant or others;

- Being found to have unsubsidized employment while on SCSEP;
- Exceeding the sponsor leave without pay/approved break policy by failing to return to community service by the required date without due notice or good cause;
- A pattern of consistent and conscious failure to follow the steps mutually agreed upon and outlined in the Individual Development Plan (IEP) without good cause, including:
    - Refusing to search for a job;
    - Sabotaging a job interview, for example, a participant tells the interviewer that he or she is not interested in the job or tells the interviewer that he or she is not qualified;
    - Refusal of a reasonable number (3) of job offers and/or referrals to job openings;
    - Refusing to accept or transfer to a different community service assignment;
    - Refusal to accept IEP-related training opportunities;
    - Refusal to register and follow-up with the NC WORKS Career Center related to unsubsidized employment;
    - Refusing to accept or follow-through on obtaining support services that will enhance the participant's ability to participant in a community service assignment consistent with the IEP without good cause;
    - Refusing to cooperate with the assessment or IEP process such as refusing to participate in the completion of the assessment, reassessment, the IEP and/or updates;
    - Refusing to cooperate with other IEP-related referrals

Termination for Individual Employment Plan Violation:

Failure to participate in the IEP process may be cause for corrective actions and,

as a last resort, termination. Prior to an IEP related termination, the participant will be given a chance to correct the offending action. Written notice shall be given to the participant, citing a specific incident in which they did not fulfill your responsibility. The notice should list the specific event, cite the jointly signed agreement provision and provide a period of time for corrective action.

Termination for Income Eligibility:

If at any time, a project sponsor determines that a participant is no longer eligible for continued enrollment because he/she has attained additional includable income during the preceding six or 12 months or because of a change in family status, that participant must be terminated. Determinations of ineligibility cannot be based on anticipated changes in income or family size; they must be based on actual data. Participants have the responsibility to report increases in income and changes in family status. If income eligibility is questioned and confirmed, the Centralina Area Agency on Aging SCSEP staff will provide the participant with a 30 day written notice of termination due to income ineligibility. Participants are allowed to continue working at their Community Service Assignment until their date of exit.

Termination for Violation of Leave without Pay:

Participants may be terminated if they do not return to their community service assignment once they reach the end of an approved leave of absence (usually no more than 30 days) or if they do not comply with the SSAI approved policy as outlined in this Participant Handbook. If the participant does not return to the assignment, Centralina Area Agency on Aging SCSEP staff will provide a 30-day notice of termination; the participant will remain on leave for an additional 30 days and then be exited from the program.

Termination for Reaching Durational Limit:

The maximum eligibility period for SCSEP participation for people enrolled on or after July 1, 2007, is a total of 48 months. Participants, who reach their durational limit must be terminated on the date when they reach their four year limit. Participants are allowed to continue working at their Community Service Assignment until their date of exit.

Termination Due to Program Ineligibility:

If the Centralina Area Agency on Aging determines that a participant is no longer eligible during the eligibility verification process, project staff must give written notice explaining the reasons for termination and applicable procedures to

appeal. If the Centralina Area Agency on Aging discovers after the eligibility or recertification process is finished that staff incorrectly determined the participant to be eligible through no fault of their own; project staff must give written notice. Participants are allowed to continue working at their Community Service Assignment until exited.

Termination Due to Becoming Employed While on SCSEP:

To remain qualified for enrollment in SCSEP, a participant has to be unemployed. If, at any time, the Centralina Area Agency on Aging staff determines that a participant got an unsubsidized job while enrolled on SCSEP, that participant will be placed on leave without pay for 30 calendar days and will be given an immediate written 30 calendar notice letter explaining the reason for termination and the appeal procedure.

GRIEVANCE/COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Written notices of termination including the reason for the action and appeal procedures must be given to participants who the project sponsor expects to terminate. Participants have the right to appeal any termination decision. Participants may not be terminated until 30 calendar days after you have been provided a written notice. The Centralina Area Agency on Aging project staff will ensure that the grievance procedure will be provided uniformly and fairly.

During orientation each participant will receive a copy of the SCSEP Participant Handbook which contains the Centralina Area Agency on Aging procedures for resolving a grievance. During orientation the participant must sign a form to acknowledge they have received this Handbook.

- ***Notification of Filing of Complaint required by the Participant***

  When a participant files a written complaint this invokes the project sponsor's complaint resolution procedures. The project sponsor must notify the SSAI SCSEP National Director and provide a copy of the complaint within seven business days.

- ***Complaint Resolution/Grievance Procedure Steps***

  The grievance procedure applies to participants complaints over conditions which are, in whole, or in part, subject to the control of the Host Agency Supervisor and/or Project Director, involving policy administration, terms and conditions of enrollment.

1. Upon receipt of a written complaint, the project director, the participant who filed the complaint and the host agency supervisor, if appropriate, should seek promptly to resolve the differences in an informal conference.

2. A written statement outlining the result of the conference should be provided to all involved persons including you.

3. If the participant is not satisfied with the results of the informal conference, they have the right to appeal to an established complaint resolution committee or to the chief executive officer of the Centralina Area Agency on Aging as provided for in this Participant Handbook

4. The Centralina Area Agency on Aging shall ensure the appeal is heard promptly.

5. Participants have the right to use the assistance of others at the hearing, to call witnesses and to question those involved in the complaint.

6. A written summary of the decisions made at the hearing must be provided promptly to all involved.

7. The time limit of the complaint resolution procedure for each project sponsor is 45 business days, including the time for filing the appeal to SSAI.

- ***Adverse Action against Participant***

When a project sponsor takes an adverse action against a participant, the sponsor must notify the participant in writing of the reason or reasons for the action, and advise him or her of the complaint resolution procedures and of his or her right to appeal to SSAI's SCSEP National Director.

- ***Right to Appeal to Senior Service America, Inc. (SSAI)***

Persons who are dissatisfied with a decision resulting from the project sponsor's complaint resolution procedure have the right to appeal to SSAI.

1. Participants should file a written appeal to SSAI within five business days of the sponsor's decision.

2. SSAI will send a letter to the participant acknowledging receipt of the compliant and will review the results of the complaint resolution procedure. SSAI will notify the Centralina Area Agency on Aging of receipt of the

complaint. SSAI may request additional information from the participant or the Centralina Area Agency on Aging. SSAI may decide to hold a hearing to gather additional information. In such cases where SSAI decides to hold a hearing, SSAI may request consent for additional time from all involved parties.

3. SSAI will affirm or amend the decision within 15 business days and provide the participant and the Centralina Area Agency on Aging a written copy of the decision stating that the decision is final, except if the participant appeals to the U.S. Department of Labor.

- ***Department of Labor Appeal***

A complaint alleging violations of law may be appealed to the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) as described below if the complaint is not resolved within 60 business days of the time of filing by the combined complaint resolution procedure of the project sponsor and the SSAI SCSEP National Director. A complaint alleging violations of law is appealed to the following DOL unit:

1. A complaint alleging violations of law, other than a complaint alleging discrimination, which is not resolved within 60 business days as a result of the combined complaint resolution procedure of a project sponsor and SSAI may be filed with the Chief, Division of Adult Services, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20210.

U.S. Department of Labor regulations governing SCSEP provide that, except for complaints alleging violations of the law, and for complaints alleging discrimination, the department shall limit its review to determining whether the appeals procedures of a project sponsor and SSAI were followed.

- ***Complaints or Questions Regarding Nondiscrimination Requirements***

1. Complaints or questions regarding nondiscrimination requirements, or complaints alleging a violation of the nondiscrimination requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), or their implementing regulations **must be directed or mailed** to Civil Rights Center at the U.S. Department of Labor at: Director, Civil Rights Center, U.S. Department of Labor, Room N-4123, 200 Constitution Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20210.

2. Per U.S. Department of Labor regulations governing SCSEP, staff of the

Centralina Area Agency on Aging must refer complaints alleging discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, disability or age – except when age was used as a valid requirement for SCSEP eligibility as described in the SSAI Policy and Procedure Manual (Policy 203, Eligibility Requirements) – to the Civil Rights Center.

3. Per U.S. Department of Labor regulations governing SCSEP, staff of the Centralina Area Agency on Aging is not permitted to process an allegation based on discrimination. The Centralina Area Agency on Aging staff should advise the participant that the complaint or question must be filed with the Civil Rights Center at the U.S. Department of Labor, as noted above.

4. Pending the disposition of the allegation by the Civil Rights Center, the Centralina Area Agency on Aging staff will continue to assist the participant to resolve any Program problems in the same manner as sponsor staff would assist any other participant regardless of the discrimination allegation.

DRUGS IN THE WORKPLACE

The Centralina Area Agency on Aging SCSEP program recognizes the importance of a safe and healthy work environment for all participants. Being under the influence of any drug and/or alcoholic beverage on the job poses serious risks to a person's health and safety and jeopardizes the public trust that has been placed in the Senior Community Service Employment Program. Consequently, the Senior Community Service Employment Program has developed the following policy, in accordance with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988: The Senior Community Service Employment Program absolutely prohibits any use, consumption, sale or purchase, transfer or possession of any controlled substance by any participant while on duty or while on a training site or SCSEP premises.

In addition, participants are strictly prohibited from being under the influence of alcohol and/or any controlled substance while performing Host Agency assignments or while attending SCSEP sponsored training sessions or meetings. Legally prescribed medications are excluded from this prohibition and permitted only to the extent that the use of such medications does not adversely affect the participant's work ability, job performance, or the safety of the participant or others. The participant may choose to provide personal medical information to their supervisor for safety assurance.

Violation of Policy:

A participant who violates the above policy shall be subject to disciplinary action up to

and including termination from the program. Sanctions may include, but not be limited to, a requirement that the participant participate in a drug or alcohol abuse assistance or rehabilitation program.

Host Agency Responsibility:

Because Host Agencies provide day-to-day supervision for participants, they shall be required to assume primary responsibility for the enforcement of this policy as an expressed condition of their status. A Host Agency, which knowingly permits the violation of this policy or which otherwise, fails to ensure a workplace free of drugs, and alcohol and substance abuse, shall risk the immediate loss of their participant(s). (Also see Host Agency Handbook)

LIMITS TO ACTIVITIES

Various limitations on certain types of activities apply to SCSEP participants, as follows:

POLITICAL

- Participants are free to engage in political activities on your own time, however, the following instructions apply:
- Participants may not engage in political activities while in their community service assignment.
- Participants may not represent themselves as a spokesperson for the Centralina Area Agency on Aging SCSEP Program as part of any political activity at any time.
- Some participants assigned to Host Agencies which are federally funded, whether at Federal, State or Local government agencies, may have additional restrictions.

VOLUNTEERING

- Participants may not volunteer at the Host Agency to which they are assigned.

LABOR PRACTICES – MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT

- SCSEP participants may not be assigned at any agency at which is involved in a Labor/management dispute, including, but not limited to strikes, picketing or lock-outs.

- SCSEP participants may not displace a worker, or replace a worker who was laid-off.

- SCSEP participants may not be assigned to do the same duties at a Host Agency where he/she was previously employed. This is maintenance of effort.

- The Project Director shall assign SCSEP participants in accordance with fair labor Practices.

DEFINITIONS

There are many terms associated with the Senior Community Service Employment Program. Below are several of those terms with a brief explanation of what they mean.

Eligibility
To be eligible for participation in the SCSEP program a person must be 55 or over, low income, and be a North Carolina resident.

Intake
Intake is used to describe the two-stage process for application and enrollment in the program.

Subsidized Job/Position
The Community Service work or training experience funded by the SCSEP that provides skills to help participants obtain regular employment.

Regular employment
Employment paid for by funds other than the federally sponsored SCSEP (Title V) program.

Grantee: The North Carolina Division of Aging and Adult Services; **USDOL:** United States Department of Labor

Host Agency
Community service agencies providing work experience opportunities for SCSEP participants.

IEP
Individual Employment Plan serves as a guide for participants to reach their regular employment goals.

Assessment
An assessment will be conducted on every participant to determine the participant's needs, skills, aptitudes and goal(s) of the Senior Community Service Employment Program. An assessment is considered part of the enrollment and intake process and is reflected in the participant's IEP.

Enrollee/Participant/Client
Words used to describe those individuals enrolled in the Senior Community Service Employment Program.

Workforce Investment Act (WIA)
This is a federal training program administered through the Department of Labor (DOL) and locally operated by the North Carolina Department of Labor. SCSEP is a federally mandated participant of the WIA.

NC WORKS Career Centers
NC WORKS Career Centers are places where a person needing employment can go to find help. SCSEP participants are encouraged to visit their local Workforce as often as possible.

**Revised September 2014*

Participant Manual Certification

I have received the Participant Manual and an SCSEP staff has reviewed the contents with me. Any questions I have regarding this manual will be directed to the SCSEP Staff.

_____ _____

Participant Signature Date

This certifies that the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) Participant Manual and its contents have been explained during the SCSEP orientation and a copy given to the SCSEP participant.

_____ _____

SCSEP Representative Date

Revised September 2014