

## **Attachments B - I**

## **Older Workers Implementation and Descriptive Study SCSEP SUBGRANTEE AND LOCAL SITE PROGRAM DIRECTORS/STAFF INTERVIEW GUIDE**

### **Introduction**

I am [Name] a researcher from [Urban Institute/Capital Research Corporation], a policy research organization based in Washington, DC. The US Department of Labor (DOL) Chief Evaluation Office, in collaboration with the Employment Training Administration (ETA), has funded the Urban Institute and its partner Capital Research Corporation, to conduct the Older Workers Implementation and Descriptive Study. The purpose of this study is to build evidence about the implementation of the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) and other DOL workforce programs serving older workers to inform the continuous improvement of SCSEP.

As part of this study, the Urban Institute team is conducting a round of [virtual or in-person] site visits to 20 SCSEP subgrantees to and local sites of national grantees to better understand current SCSEP program components and services, with an important focus on identifying the broad array of strategies for serving older workers. As part of each visit, we are conducting interviews with program directors and staff involved in the SCSEP service delivery at the local level, as well as SCSEP partners, host agencies, employers, and participants. Additionally, as part of our site visits, we will interview the national grantee for which your organization is a subgrantee or a local site.

Your responses in this interview—combined with our subgrantee and local site survey and interviews of SCSEP program staff, partners, your national grantee, and participants—will result in a report that will offer lessons for policymakers and practitioners to inform SCSEP implementation and improvement and inform future research and evaluation activities.

**Privacy Statement:** Thank you for responding to our request for an interview and scheduling this time with us. We expect the interview to take approximately 2 hours. Before we start, we want to make sure you know that:

- **This interview is not part of an audit or a compliance review.** We are interested in learning about your experiences with and perspectives about SCSEP and other workforce services for older workers in your service area. There are no right or wrong answers. We want to know what you think.
- **Your participation in this interview is voluntary.** We have many questions and are going to talk to many different people, so please do not feel as though we expect you to be able to answer every question. You only have to answer questions you want to, you are free to not participate at all, and you can choose to end the interview at any time.
- **We value the information you will share with us today and want to make sure we capture all of it.** My colleague here, [NAME] is also from [Urban Institute/Capital Research Corporation] and will be taking notes during this discussion. So that we can make sure we capture a complete set of notes, we would like to record this conversation. The recording will be deleted as soon as we have made complete notes of the meeting. Is that OK with you?
- **We consider the information you provide during this interview as private.** We will not do anything to associate your name or identity with the results of the research. We do not share the notes from our interview outside of our study team,

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nor do we quote you by your name in our reports. We do not think that the information we are gathering is sensitive, but we will be sure to treat it with care in accordance with our data security protocols.

- **Information from our interviews in our reports will be attributed to your organizations, but never to individuals.** If at any time you feel that you are sharing particularly sensitive or privileged information that you would not like attributed to your organization or that you would prefer to exclude from public findings, please let us know. We will share potential quotes by you first to obtain your permission prior to publication.
- **What are the risks and benefits of participation?** The risks are minimal since we are not asking any sensitive questions. There is a small risk that you could be identified through your organization. The benefits are that you support research that could lead to improvements in SCSEP or other programs serving older workers.

*Do you have any questions?*

*Do I have your permission to begin the interview?*

*Do I have your permission to start recording?*

**OMB Burden Statement:** According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays an Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is XXXX-XXXX. The time required to complete this collection of information is estimated to average 4 hours, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed and complete and review the collection of information. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to [Chiefevaluationoffice@DOL.gov](mailto:Chiefevaluationoffice@DOL.gov) and reference the OMB Control Number XXXX-ONEW.

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### A. Background on the Respondent(s)

Collect the following information on each respondent involved in the interview:

1. Respondent's name
2. Respondent's contact information (address, telephone, e-mail)
3. Respondent's title and how long the respondent has been in his/her position
4. Specific role of respondent in SCSEP and number of years the respondent has been involved with SCSEP
5. Approximate proportion of time spent on SCSEP over past year (e.g., full-time, part-time involvement)
6. Other roles (other than related to SCSEP), if appropriate

### B. Check of Basic Background on Subgrant or Role as Local Site of National Grantee

Based on your organization's survey responses and our review of background documents, we wanted to check to make sure we have the right information about your organization and your subgrant - and nothing has changed since you submitted your survey response.

1. National grantee - **XX**
2. Subgrant period - **XX**
3. Subgrant amount - **XX**
4. Name of the local SCSEP (funded the subgrant), i.e., if different from SCSEP: **XX**
5. Your organization **[is/is not]** a local site of the national grantee
6. The service area for your subgrant or local site is - **XX**
7. Your service area is mainly **[urban, rural, or suburban, or combination]**
8. Aside from your subgrant or local site which is the focus of our visit, your organization **[has/does not have]** other SCSEP subgrants

### C. Overview of SCSEP Design and Operations

1. How does SCSEP funding support your organization's overall mission?
2. Can you please briefly describe what you consider to be the major objectives of your programming that is supported by the SCSEP subgrant?
3. Is there anything distinctive about this geographic area that affects (a) the structure of your SCSEP program or (b) outcomes for SCSEP participants?
4. In your survey response, you indicated that **XX** of your staff and **XX** subcontracted staff/consultants work on SCSEP. Could you briefly discuss the organizational structure of SCSEP and the role of each SCSEP staff? [\[Note to Interviewer: Request organizational chart.\]](#)
5. How did your organization come to be a subgrantee to [the national grantee]?
6. Is [the national grantee] the main driver of how your program operates or do you determine SCSEP operations at the local level? To what extent and in which of the following programmatic areas is there discretion as a subgrantee to determine the structure and operation of your SCSEP program?

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- SCSEP participant recruitment
  - SCSEP participant flow through services
  - SCSEP assessment process and IEP
  - Community Service Assignments (CSA) – recruitment of hosts; types of CSAs
  - Training outside of CSAs
  - Provision of support services
  - SCSEP participant placement in unsubsidized jobs
  - SCSEP data collection/reporting to the national grantee
  - SCSEP data collection/reporting to the US Department of Labor
7. Based on your survey responses, we wanted to get an overview of how your program operates in several key programmatic areas. [\[Note to interviewer: review survey responses for subgrantee for each of the topic areas below and build the discussion based on those responses.\]](#)
- a. **SCSEP participant recruitment and screening**
- i. To what extent does your organization need to conduct outreach and recruitment to reach its participant enrollment goals? Does your program typically have a waiting list? To what extent does or could your organization over-recruit/enroll SCSEP participants, with the anticipation that some older workers will drop out?
  - ii. What are the main outreach methods/approaches you use to inform and recruit older adults to SCSEP? How do these approaches differ when trying to recruit individuals who are considered “most in need?”
  - iii. In what ways is your organizations working to ensure access to SCSEP across racial and ethnic groups in the communities you serve?
  - iv. In obtaining referrals for new participants, which organizations are most helpful or effective (e.g., American Job Center, other local programs serving older workers, word-of-mouth)?
  - v. What are your main challenges with recruitment?
  - vi. What is your process for screening potential candidates prior to enrolling them? What do you screen them for?
  - vii. If an individual is determined eligible/suitable for enrollment in SCSEP, to what other programs/services are they referred? Within your organization or to other organizations?
  - viii. What has worked well in your screening process?
  - ix. What are your main challenges with screening potential participants?
  - x. Has your organization made changes to or implemented new outreach and recruitment strategies to address challenges? What were those changes? What have you found to be helpful or effective in supporting recruitment?
  - xi. Were there barriers to implementing changes to recruitment that could not be overcome? If yes, what were they?
- b. **SCSEP participant flow through SCSEP services**

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- i. Would you briefly provide an overview of the flow of a SCSEP participant through SCSEP services from the point of intake through placement into a CSA and finally into an unsubsidized job.
- ii. When do you consider an older adult recruited and/or served by your organization to be a SCSEP participant? What differentiates participants who receive services supported by SCSEP from other participants you serve (e.g., placement into a CSA)?
- iii. Would you briefly provide an overview of the intake and assessment process for new SCSEP participants?
- iv. During the assessment process, are there formal tests taken to inventory worker skills, interest, or service needs? If so, what tests? What key pieces of information do they provide about the applicant?
- v. What criteria, if any, are used to determine whether a participant is appropriate for and should be enrolled in SCSEP? [Note to interviewer: This may be covered in question C.7.a.iv on screening.]
- vi. What are the main components covered in the IEP and how is the IEP used to guide service delivery and help participants secure an unsubsidized job?
- vii. To what extent is labor market information (LMI) on in-demand occupations and/or wages of different jobs shared with participants as part of assessment/IEP process? If shared, how is LMI used to set goals/inform development of the IEPs?
- viii. From which sources do you gather LMI (i.e., your own analysis/research, AJCs, their network of employers, etc.)?
- ix. During their involvement in SCSEP, can you describe the participant's case management process – what staff are involved, the usual points of contact, and the way in which staff keep in contact with participants?
- x. To what and extent and why do SCSEP participants drop out of the program (a) before they are placed in a CSA and (b) before they are placed in an unsubsidized job?
- xi. Has your organization made changes to or implemented new intake/assessment, IEP, case management or the flow of participants through services to address challenges? What were these changes? What have you found to be helpful or effective in supporting SCSEP persistence to an unsubsidized job?
- xii. Were there barriers to implementing changes to participant flow that could not be overcome? If yes, what were they?

### c. **Community Service Assignments (CSA)**

- i. Host agencies
  - a. Would you briefly describe the process by which you recruit new CSA host agencies?
  - b. What kind of positions are usually available as CSAs?
  - c. To what extent is recruitment of new host agencies a challenge? If yes, what makes it challenging?
  - d. How do you train or provide guidance to host agency staff on being a successful host agency? Initially and ongoing?

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- e. What is the monitoring process for CSAs? What challenges do you typically have to address with host agencies?
  - f. How do you maintain relationships with host agencies?
  - g. Has your organization made changes to or implemented new methods for recruiting new and maintaining successful relationships with host agencies or? What were these changes? What have you found to be helpful or effective in working with host agencies?
  - h. Were there barriers to implementing changes to host agency recruitment or relationships that could not be overcome? If yes, what were they?
- ii. Participant placement in CSAs
- a. What are your organization's goals for CSAs - both employment and non-employment related?
  - b. When a participant is ready to be placed in a CSA, how is the match of the participant made with a particular host and CSA position?
  - c. How challenging is it to find an available position for a participant, especially one that is a good fit for the participant and likely to lead to unsubsidized work?
  - d. What is it that makes for a high-quality CSA experience for a participant?
  - e. To what extent do participants bump up against the 48-month limit on CSA duration? Why do they?
  - f. What, if any, are the common concerns/challenges that participants have with their CSA experiences?
  - g. To what extent do CSAs turn into permanent unsubsidized jobs for participants (with the host agencies sponsoring the CSA)? Are there any types of CSA positions that are more likely to turn into permanent unsubsidized jobs?
  - h. Has your organization made changes to or implemented new CSA placement strategies that support successful CSA experiences? What were these changes? What have you found to be helpful or effective in supporting CSA placements?
  - i. Were there barriers to implementing changes to CSA placements that could not be overcome? If yes, what were they?
- iii. Use of On-the-Job Experience (OJE) for CSAs
- a. How is your organization using OJEs for participants in CSAs? How long have you offered OJE opportunities? What skills do participants need to acquire that CSAs are not providing?
  - b. How do you determine if a participant can/should participate in an OJE opportunity?
  - c. How do you recruit employers to provide OJE? Are there industries that you are focused on? What has been successful and what has been challenging?
  - d. What does your OJE contract look like? What has been important to emphasize to participants and employers about expectations for the OJE?

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- e. What has the approval process with DOL look like?
  - f. How do you monitor OJEs?
  - g. To what degree have OJEs led to unsubsidized employment with the employer? What do you think are the reasons for successful transitions to unsubsidized employment? What have been the challenges?
  - h. Has your organization made changes to or implemented particular strategies for OJE that have provided training that participants needed to transition to an unsubsidized job? What were these changes? What have you found to be helpful or effective about these OJE strategies?
  - i. Were there barriers to implementing changes to OJE experiences that could not be overcome? If yes, what were they?
- d. Provision of supportive services for SCSEP participants**
- i. What types of supportive services does your organization or other partners provide? Which are the supports most needed and which ones seem to contribute to reducing early attrition from the program and to placement in an unsubsidized job?
  - ii. Who are your partners for support services? What are their roles?
  - iii. Are Additional Funds for Participant Training and Support Services (ATSS) sufficient for the supportive services you think participants need? If not, what other supportive services would you provide with additional funding?
  - iv. Are there key challenges to making available supportive services needed by participants to successfully participate in SCSEP, and ultimately, secure an unsubsidized job?
  - v. Has your organization made changes to or developed new support service strategies to better serve SCSEP participants to address challenges? What were these changes? What have you found to be helpful or effective?
  - vi. Were there barriers to improving support services that could not be overcome? If yes, what were they?
- e. Provision of training for SCSEP participants**
- i. Would you briefly describe any specialized training that SCSEP participants receive to orient them to their CSAs, improve their performance in their CSAs, or prepare them for an unsubsidized employment (other than OJE)? What participant need(s) does this training fulfill?
  - ii. How is the training delivered (online/in-person, synchronous/asynchronous, etc.)?
  - iii. What credentials do participants earn from these specialized training? Are these credentials used by employers in your area to hire?
  - iv. What has the DOL process been like for specialized training?
  - v. Is ATSS funding sufficient for the training you think participants need? If not, what other training would you provide with additional funding?
  - vi. Do you refer participants to training outside of what is offered by the SCSEP program? If so, please describe.
  - vii. What are the challenges to providing training needed by participants to successfully participate in SCSEP and ultimately secure an unsubsidized job? |



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- viii. Has your organization made changes to or implemented new training strategies for participants? What were these changes? What have you found to be helpful or effective in providing training to participants?
  - ix. Were there barriers to implementing changes to specialized training that could not be overcome? If yes, what were they?
- f. Placement in unsubsidized jobs**
- i. How do you determine if a participant is ready for an unsubsidized job?
  - ii. Would you briefly describe your organization's approach to transitioning participants from CSAs into unsubsidized jobs (e.g., training participants how to conduct a job search effectively; preparing participants for job search (e.g., resume development/interviewing); soliciting/identifying job openings for participants; individual job matching)?
  - iii. To what extent does job search and placement responsibilities rest with the participant versus SCSEP staff?
  - iv. To what extent do other partners help out with job search/placement? How is the local AJC involved in unsubsidized job placement for participants?
  - v. To what extent does your organization advertise to or work with employers that can offer an unsubsidized job opportunity to a participant?
  - vi. Do you help participants retain employment once they have found an unsubsidized job? How do you provide retention services?
  - vii. What challenges do participants face in transitioning to an unsubsidized job? Why are some participants ultimately unsuccessful in finding unsubsidized jobs?
  - viii. Are there certain groups of participants that are challenging to place in unsubsidized jobs? If so, which groups and what are their challenges? What strategies seem to work well to place individuals these groups?
  - ix. To what extent do SCSEP participants face issues of age, gender, race, or other forms of discrimination in securing an unsubsidized job? Are there any strategies that your organization has implemented to help older workers overcome these barriers to job placement?
  - x. In what industry sectors and occupations are your participants securing unsubsidized jobs? Over the last three years, are there any new types of industry sectors or occupations where you are trying to place SCSEP participants? |
  - xi. Has your organization made changes to or implemented new strategies for placing participants in unsubsidized employment? What were these changes? What have you found to be helpful or effective in providing training to participants?
  - xii. Were there barriers to implementing changes to placement in unsubsidized jobs that could not be overcome? If yes, what were they?

## D. Special Topic Areas

### 1. Working with the National Grantee

- a. Please describe your working relationship with [your national grantee organization]. Who do you work with?

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- b. How do you work with [the national grantee] to address challenges with the SCSEP program?
  - c. To what extent and how does [the national grantee] serve as a source of training, guidance, and technical assistance (TA)?
    - i. How often and how do you communicate with [the national grantee] and, if relevant, other subgrantees, to receive guidance, training, and TA (e.g., regular site visits, video-conference calls, conferences with national grantee/subgrantees, etc.)?
    - ii. In what areas of SCSEP program operations does your organization request and/or need the most technical guidance, training, and TA?
    - iii. Are there ways in which guidance, training, and TA could be improved?
2. Data Infrastructure and Program Performance
- a. How do you collect data on participants for performance reporting? Describe the data system you are using. What works well and what is challenging?
  - b. Does your organization have data sharing agreements/MOUs with other organizations (such as the AJC) that supports participant tracking/reporting?
  - c. On which measures is your organization meeting/exceeding performance measures and where is your organization lagging? Why?
  - d. How well do the various performance data you report to the national grantee reflect your subgrant performance and/or how well SCSEP participants are served? Are there any dimensions of achievements that are not reflected by performance data?
  - e. What participant outcomes are you tracking in addition to the 7 DOL-required performance measures? Short-term and long-term outcomes?
  - f. Does your organization collect data on SCSEP participants other than what is required by SCSEP? If so, please discuss.
  - g. Are there ways in which reporting or collecting participant data could be improved?
  - h. What would you like to better understand about your SCSEP program's performance?
3. Partnerships
- a. Which organizations (other than [the national grantee] and host agencies) do you regard as your most important partners in terms of your SCSEP program? Please briefly discuss up to five of your most important partners and their role in SCSEP.
  - b. Are there other organizations that you have sought out to partner with, but you have not been successful in forging a partnership with respect to SCSEP?
  - c. How have you worked with employers in your area? What strategies have you used to better engage local employers and industry?
  - d. Over the past three years, has your organization implemented any new or improved existing partnerships with other organizations? If yes, please discuss.
4. Ensuring Equity within SCSEP
- a. To what extent, and how, is your organization building capacity for more equitably serving older workers?

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- b. How is your organization navigating equity issues in hiring and training SCSEP staff and engagement with employers?
  - c. To what extent, and how, is your organization measuring access to and outcomes for SCSEP participants by race/ethnicity, gender, and age? What strategies have you been using? What is working well and what has been challenging?
  - d. Do you have any suggestions for changes to the SCSEP program that would improve access of SCSEP services to more diverse populations of older workers?
5. Lessons from Other Services for Older Workers/Jobseekers
- a. With limited SCSEP funding and eligibility restrictions, an area of interest in our study is how SCSEP might learn from other programs serving older workers/jobseekers and how SCSEP can better connect with these other programs (such as WIOA). Are there strategies that other programs serving this group are using that might inform delivery of services in SCSEP? If yes, please describe.

## E. Response to COVID Pandemic

One of our study's focuses is how SCSEP grantees/subgrantees have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and adapted program activities during the pandemic.

1. Please briefly describe how the pandemic continues to affect your SCSEP operations and services under your subgrant.
2. If there were suspensions/interruptions in SCSEP, has the program yet returned to pre-COVID participation levels and operations? {Note to interviewer: Check SPARQ data to review participant data.}
  - a. When did your program resume (a) enrolling new participants into SCSEP; and (b) participants return to CSAs?
  - b. How do the number of programs enrollments and CSA placements today compare to pre-COVID?
3. To what extent and how did SCSEP participant needs change during the pandemic? If there were changes in participant needs, how did your SCSEP program address them?
4. Did your organization provide SCSEP staff with any special training related to addressing COVID challenges in delivery of services to SCSEP participants? If yes, please describe the training provided.
5. What new approaches or strategies, if any, did your SCSEP program implement during the pandemic, including virtual service delivery?
6. What new features/innovations are being retained (e.g., virtual service delivery) or do you expect to be retained going forward

## **Older Workers Implementation and Descriptive Study**

### **SCSEP NATIONAL GRANTEE INTERVIEW GUIDE**

#### **Introduction**

I am [Name] a researcher from [Urban Institute/Capital Research Corporation], a policy research organization based in Washington, DC. The US Department of Labor (DOL) Chief Evaluation Office, in collaboration with the Employment Training Administration (ETA), has funded the Urban Institute and its partner Capital Research Corporation, to conduct the Older Workers Implementation and Descriptive Study. The purpose of this study is to build evidence about the implementation of the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) and other DOL workforce programs serving older workers to inform the continuous improvement of SCSEP.

As part of this study, the Urban Institute team is conducting a round of [virtual or in-person] site visits to 20 SCSEP subgrantees to and local sites of national grantees to better understand current SCSEP components and services, with an important focus on identifying the broad array of strategies for serving older workers. As part of each visit, we are conducting interviews with the national grantees that oversee the implementation of local programs. We are also interviewing program directors and staff involved in the SCSEP service delivery at the local level, as well as SCSEP partners, host agencies, and participants. For our interview today, we will be referring to the activities of **X number** of your subgrantees or local sites [subgrantee name 1, subgrantee name 2 ...] that are a part of our site visits for this study.

The findings from this interview—combined with our subgrantee and local site survey and interviews of local SCSEP program staff, partners, and participants—will result in a report that will offer lessons for policymakers and practitioners to inform SCSEP implementation and improvement and inform future research and evaluation activities.

**Privacy Statement:** Thank you for responding to our request for an interview and scheduling this time with us. We expect the interview to take approximately 1.5 hours. Before we start, we want to make sure you know that:

- **This interview is not part of an audit or a compliance review.** We are interested in learning about your experiences and perspectives about SCSEP and other workforce services for older workers in your service area. There are no right or wrong answers. We want to know what you think.
- **Your participation in this interview is voluntary.** We have many questions and are going to talk to many different people, so please do not feel as though we expect you to be able to answer every question. You only have to answer questions you want to, you are free to not participate at all, and you can choose to end the interview at any time.
- **We value the information you will share with us today and want to make sure we capture all of it.** My colleague here, [NAME] is also from [Urban Institute/Capital Research Corporation] and will be taking notes during this discussion. So that we can make sure we capture a complete set of notes, we would like to record this conversation. The recording will be deleted as soon as we have made complete notes of the meeting. Is that OK with you?
- **We consider the information you provide during this interview as**

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**private.** We will not do anything to associate your name or identity with the results of the research. We do not share the notes from our interview outside of our study team, nor do we quote you by your name in our reports. We do not think that the information we are gathering is sensitive, but we will be sure to treat it with care in accordance with our data security protocols.

- **Information from our interviews in our reports will be attributed to your organizations, but never to individuals.** If at any time you feel that you are sharing particularly sensitive or privileged information that you would not like attributed to your organization or that you would prefer to exclude from public findings, please let us know. We will share potential quotes by you first to obtain your permission prior to publication.
- **What are the risks and benefits of participation?** The risks are minimal since we are not asking any sensitive questions. There is a small risk that you could be identified through your organization. The benefits are that you support research that could lead to improvements in SCSEP or other programs serving older workers.

*Do you have any questions?*

*Do I have your permission to begin the interview?*

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### **A. Background on the Respondent(s)**

Collect the following information on each respondent involved in the interview:

1. Respondent's name
2. Respondent's contact information (address, telephone, e-mail)
3. Respondent's title and how long the respondent has been in his/her position
4. Specific role of respondent in SCSEP and number of years the respondent has been involved with SCSEP program
5. Approximate proportion of time spent on SCSEP over past year (e.g., full-time, part-time involvement)
6. Other roles (other than related to SCSEP), if appropriate

### **B. Check on Basic Organizational Background**

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Based on our review of background documents, we wanted to check to make sure we have the right information about your organization and SCSEP grant.

- National grantee
- Grant period
- Length of time as a SCSEP grantee
- Grant amount for current program year
- Confirm subgrantee(s) that are part of national or state grant that are the focus of the visit
- Geographic regions served
- Aside from your national grant which is the focus of our visit, your organization [has/does not have] other SCSEP subgrants

### C. SCSEP Overview

1. How does the SCSEP program support your organization's overall mission?
2. Can you please briefly describe what you consider to be the major objectives of your SCSEP grant?
3. How many staff do you dedicate to SCSEP activities? What are their roles? [\[Note to Interviewer: Request organizational chart.\]](#)
4. How did you select subgrantees to operate SCSEP programs? What was the process? What factors did you consider?

### D. SCSEP Subgrantee Oversight and Support [\[Ask questions for all subgrantees; then probe on specifics for subgrantees of interest.\]](#)

1. How do you oversee subgrantees? Can you walk us through various activities including:
  - a. Administrative and other policies,
  - b. Compliance,
  - c. Data reporting/infrastructure,
  - d. Regular meetings, and
  - e. Other?
2. How often and how do you communicate and interact with the subgrantees and specifically with [subgrantee organization]? What are the purposes of these communications (e.g., monitoring, TA, convenings, newsletters)?
3. What successes and challenges are there to overseeing subgrantees?
4. To what extent and in which of the following programmatic areas is there discretion as a subgrantee to determine the structure and operation of your SCSEP program?
  - SCSEP participant recruitment
  - SCSEP participant flow through services
  - SCSEP assessment process and IEP
  - CSA – recruitment of hosts; structure of CSAs
  - Provision of support services
  - SCSEP participant placement in unsubsidized jobs
  - SCSEP data collection/reporting
5. How do you provide training, guidance, and technical assistance (TA) to local programs?
  - a. In what areas of SCSEP program operations do subgrantees and specifically [subgrantee organization] request and/or need the most technical guidance, training, and TA?
  - b. Are there ways in which guidance, training, and TA could be improved? Is there support that you would like DOL to provide?
6. What types of tools and resources do you provide subgrantees on any of the following strategies?

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- a. Participant recruitment
  - b. Employer engagement/partnerships
  - c. Supports for participants with specific barriers to employment
  - d. Strategies to address social isolation
  - e. Specialized services such as digital skill building, occupational training, professional skills
  - f. Partnerships in the community - community-based organization, American Job Centers
  - g. Addressing issues of equitable access to and outcomes of SCSEP
  - h. Data infrastructure or use of data for decision-making
  - i. Other?
7. How do you help subgrantees under your national grant learn from or connect with each other? Do they ever interact with and learn from subgrantees from other national grants? If yes, what is the purpose and how are they connected?

### **E. SCSEP Performance Measurement and Evaluation**

1. We recognize that you and your subgrantees are capturing a lot of data on your SCSEP participants? How do subgrantees generally collect these data? How are data reported and validated? What data systems or infrastructure do you have in place with your subgrantees for capturing and maintaining these data?
2. Do you or your subgrantees have data sharing agreements with other government agencies or partners to collect needed data on SCSEP participant? If yes, what are those data? How were these agreements developed?
3. We know you are held to the 7 core performance measures for SCSEP. What do they capture well and what do they miss? Do you have additional performance measures or outcomes that you think are important? If yes, why? What outcomes would you measure if it were possible?
4. How do you use SCSEP data? Are you using it for making programming decisions? If yes, would you provide an example of a decision you make based on analysis of the SCSEP data?

### **F. Strategies for Serving Older Workers**

1. What strategies for serving SCSEP participants have you found to be effective in
  - a. providing high-quality CSAs,
  - b. recruiting and serving older adults who are considered most-in-need and/or those with higher barriers to employment,
  - c. improving access to SCSEP to ensure racial and gender equity,
  - d. providing support services strategies to SCSEP participants,
  - e. decreasing social isolation,
  - f. increasing financial stability,
  - g. helping SCSEP participants find and retain an unsubsidized job,
  - h. addressing age discrimination by employers,
  - i. developing partnerships with American Job Centers
  - j. developing partnerships with employers?
2. Are there barriers to addressing any or some of these issues within the SCSEP program structure? If yes, what are those barriers and what changes could be made to remove these barriers?
3. Are there other federal programs (e.g., WIOA) or nonprofit programs that address some of these issues better than SCSEP? If yes, how so?

**G. Response to COVID Pandemic**

[Note to Interviewer: If the national grantee participated in the Early Implementation Study interviews, refer to those notes and ask them to update any information.]

1. Please first briefly describe how the pandemic has affected SCSEP program operations under your subgrant.
  - a. Beginning in March 2020, were SCSEP program operations suspended under your subgrant? Please discuss what your organization did with respect to (a) enrolling new SCSEP participants, and (b) serving SCSEP participants already enrolled in the program, including those involved in CSAs?
7. If there were suspensions/interruptions in the SCSEP program, has the program yet returned to pre-COVID participation levels and operations?
  - a. When did your program resume (a) enrolling new participants into SCSEP; and (b) participants return to CSAs?
  - b. How do the number of programs enrollments and CSA placements today compare to pre-COVID?
8. To what extent and how did SCSEP participant needs change during the pandemic? If there were changes in participant needs, how did your SCSEP program address them?
9. Did your organization provide SCSEP staff with any special training related to addressing COVID challenges in delivery of services to SCSEP participants? If yes, please describe the training provided.
10. What new approaches or strategies, if any, did your SCSEP program implement during the pandemic, including virtual service delivery?
11. What new features/innovations are being retained (e.g., virtual service delivery) or do you expect to be retained going forward?



## **Older Workers Implementation and Descriptive Study**

### **SCSEP HOST AGENCY INTERVIEW GUIDE**

#### **Introduction**

I am a researcher from [Urban Institute/Capital Research Corporation], a policy research organization based in Washington, DC. The US Department of Labor (DOL) Chief Evaluation Office, in collaboration with the Employment Training Administration (ETA), has funded the Urban Institute and its partner Capital Research Corporation, to conduct the Older Workers Implementation and Descriptive Study. The purpose of this study is to build evidence about the implementation of the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) and other DOL workforce programs serving older workers to inform the continuous improvement of SCSEP.

As part of this study, the Urban Institute team is conducting a round of virtual site visits to 20 SCSEP subgrantees to better understand current SCSEP components and services, with an important focus on identifying the broad array of strategies for serving older workers. As part of each visit, we are conducting interviews with host agencies who have partnered with local SCSEP programs to learn more about your experiences with providing SCSEP participants with community assignments. We are also interviewing SCSEP administrators and staff and other SCSEP partners such as community-based organizations, employers, and American Job Centers.

Your responses in this interview—combined with our subgrantee and local site survey and interviews of SCSEP program staff, partners, national grantees, and participants—will result in a report that will offer lessons for policymakers and practitioners to inform SCSEP implementation and improvement and inform future research and evaluation activities.

**Privacy Statement:** Thank you for responding to our request for an interview and scheduling this time with us. We expect the interview to take approximately 1 hour. Before we start, we want to make sure you know that:

- **This interview is not part of an audit or a compliance review.** We are interested in learning about your experiences with and perspectives about SCSEP and other workforce services for older workers in your service area. There are no right or wrong answers. We want to know what you think.
- **Your participation in this interview is voluntary.** We have many questions and are going to talk to many different people, so please do not feel as though we expect you to be able to answer every question. You only have to answer questions you want to, you are free to not participate at all, and you can choose to end the interview at any time.
- **We value the information you will share with us today and want to make sure we capture all of it.** My colleague here, [NAME] is also from [Urban Institute/Capital Research Corporation] and will be taking notes during this discussion so that we can make sure we capture a complete set of notes, we would like to record this conversation. The recording will be deleted as soon as we have made complete notes of the meeting. Is that OK with you?
- **We consider the information you provide during this interview as private.** We will not do anything to associate your name or identity with the results of the research. We do not share the notes from our interview outside of our study team,

## Attachment D

nor do we quote you by your name in our reports. We do not think that the information we are gathering is sensitive, but we will be sure to treat it with care in accordance with our data security protocols.

- **Information from our interviews in our reports will be attributed to your organizations, but never to individuals.** If at any time you feel that you are sharing particularly sensitive or privileged information that you would not like attributed to your organization or that you would prefer to exclude from public findings, please let us know. We will share potential quotes by you first to obtain your permission prior to publication.
- **What are the risks and benefits of participation?** The risks are minimal since we are not asking any sensitive questions. There is a small risk that you could be identified through your organization. The benefits are that you support research that could lead to improvements in SCSEP or other programs serving older workers.

*Do you have any questions?*

*Do I have your permission to begin the interview?*

*Do I have your permission to start recording?*

**OMB Burden Statement:** According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays an Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is XXXX-XXXX. The time required to complete this collection of information is estimated to average 1.5 hours, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed and complete and review the collection of information. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to [Chiefevaluationoffice@DOL.gov](mailto:Chiefevaluationoffice@DOL.gov) and reference the OMB Control Number XXXX-ONEW.

**A. Background on the Respondent(s)**

Collect the following information on each respondent involved in the interview:

1. Respondent's name
2. Respondent's organization (i.e., agency, division/unit)
3. Respondent's contact information (address, telephone, e-mail)
4. Respondent's title and how long the respondent has been in his/her position
5. Specific role of respondent in relation to his/her agency being involved as a host agency providing CSAs for SCSEP participants
6. Other organizational roles (other than related to SCSEP), if appropriate

**B. General Information Host Agency Organization**

1. Is your organization a government agency or non-profit organization?
2. What is the organization's overall mission? How does being involved with [the subgrantee organization] as part of SCSEP further your organization's mission/objectives?
3. How many employees/staff does your organization have?
4. How many locations/offices does your organization have?
  - a. If more than one office location, out of how many of these locations/offices are SCSEP participants hosted in CSAs?
  - b. What are the names of the locations/offices out of which SCSEP participants are hosted as CSAs?
5. What types of programs, services, or products does your organization provide?
  - a. Across your various programs, what (if any) types of individuals/populations does your organization recruit and serve?
  - b. Are older adults a population your organization recruits or serves?
6. How long has your organization been involved in SCSEP?
  - a. When did your organization first become a host agency (i.e., hire a SCSEP participant into a CSA)?
  - b. How did you learn about and come to be a host agency?
  - c. Why was your organization interested in becoming a host agency?
  - d. Does your organization serve as a host agency with other SCSEP grantees/subgrantees other than [the subgrantee organization]? If so, to which other SCSEP grantees/subgrantees?
  - e. Does your organization serve as a host (similar to SCSEP) providing CSAs (or subsidized work-based learning opportunities) for other programs for the aged or other disadvantaged populations?
  - f. Since you became a SCSEP host agency, have you had continual involvement as a host agency or are you intermittently involved as the need for CSAs arises?

**C. Community-Service Assignments (CSAs)**

1. How many SCSEP participants is your organization hosting currently in CSAs?
  - a. Are all of these SCSEP participants referred from [the subgrantee organization]?
  - b. If not, please provide a breakdown of SCSEP participants in CSAs for [the subgrantee organization] and other SCSEP grantees/subgrantees.
2. Looking back over the past three years, has the number of SCSEP participants you have hosted in CSAs been relatively stable or has there been a lot of variation from month-to-month or year-to-year (i.e., for the subgrantee that is the focus of the site visit)?
  - a. Over the last three years, what is the most and fewest SCSEP participants you have had in CSAs at a time?
  - b. What effect did the COVID-19 pandemic have on the numbers of SCSEP participants in CSAs at your organization and the nature of their CSAs?

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- 1) During the pandemic, were CSAs temporarily suspended?
- 2) If not, did SCSEP participants still come in-person to perform their CSAs or conduct them remotely?
- 3) Has the number of SCSEP participants in CSAs returned to the same/similar numbers?
- 4) Overall, what would you say were the main effects of COVID-19 on hosting CSAs?
3. Focusing on SCSEP participants that are currently in CSAs at your organization (i.e., that were referred by [the subgrantee organization]), in what types of CSAs are they working? For each type of CSA position, how many SCSEP participants are currently working and what are the types of work activities they are engaged in the CSA?
4. How long do participants typically stay in a CSA position before they move to another one (i.e., the average duration and range)? When SCSEP participants move to another CSA, do they do so within your organization, or do they move to another organization for their new CSA?
5. How many CSAs do SCSEP participants typically have with your organization? What is the average and range?
6. What is the participant compensation for CSAs for SCSEP participants?
  - a. Is compensation (i.e., hourly wage) the same across all CSA positions?
    - 1) If it is the same, what is the hourly wage?
    - 2) If it varies, what is the average and range?
  - b. How is compensation determined (e.g., state or federal minimum wage)?
7. Do all SCSEP participants work the same number of hours per week in their CSAs?
  - a. If yes, how many hours per week (e.g., 20 hours/week)?
  - b. If no, what is the average and the range of hours worked each week?
  - c. Is there a minimum number of hours that SCSEP participants are expected to work?
8. What screening process/criteria is used to select participants to fill an open CSA position (e.g., skills required, education level, previous work experience)?
  - a. Who determines these criteria (e.g., your organization, the subgrantee/grantee)?
  - b. When you have a vacant CSA position, how many SCSEP participants are referred (e.g., just one or several participants)?
  - c. What role does your organization play in the selection of a SCSEP participant to fill a vacant CSA position?
    - 1) Do you interview each referral to a position?
    - 2) To what extent does your organization have a say in who fills each CSA and can your organization (as a host) reject a referral from the subgrantee for a CSA position?
  - d. To what extent has your organization (as a host agency) experienced challenges in filling vacant CSA positions?
    - 1) About how long does it take to fill a vacancy?
    - 2) Does your organization experience any difficulties in finding a good match for CSA positions? Please discuss.
9. Are CSAs structured specifically for SCSEP participants or are these CSA positions identical to other positions in the organization that are hired through the regular hiring process?
  - a. If they are identical or similar and you have or have had multiple SCSEP participants, have you noticed any differences in how SCSEP participants perform in their jobs compared to other non-SCSEP participants in the same jobs?
10. What types of orientation and/or training is provided to SCSEP participants to prepare them to fill a CSA at your organization?

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- a. Is the orientation the same as for other newly hired workers at the organization (i.e., into the same or similar positions that are not SCSEP participants)?
  - b. Is the orientation one-on-one or a group orientation? If it is a group orientation, does the orientation include SCSEP and non-SCSEP new hires?
  - c. Beside an orientation to the CSA (and the position), is there training provided for the CSA prior to or when the SCSEP participant first comes to the job? If so, what kind of training is there? What is the duration of the training? Who provides that training?
11. Once the SCSEP participant is in the CSA, is there any additional, ongoing training provided? If so:
- a. What kind of training/professional development activities are provided? For example:
    - i. Computer and office skills
    - ii. Other occupational skills (e.g., handling money, customer services skills, retail skills, food handling)
    - iii. Soft skills
  - b. Who delivers the training?
  - c. How is training delivered (e.g., one-on-one v. group training; in-person v. virtual/remote training; using computer modules)?
  - d. About how frequently do SCSEP participants involved in CSAs receive training each month (e.g., about "x" hours per month)?
12. While SCSEP participants are involved in the CSA, does the host agency (either directly or through referrals), make available supportive services that SCSEP participants might need to engage in the CSA (e.g., transportation, meals, work equipment, counseling, peer support, etc.)? If so, what are the three types of supports most frequently provided and who provides such supports?
13. Are there opportunities for advancement within the CSAs for participants in terms of wage increases?
14. Who manages and oversees the SCSEP participants (e.g., a single staff person that oversees all SCSEP participants at the organization or a regular manager that oversees SCSEP and other workers within a unit)?
- a. How often and how are SCSEP work hours/performance monitored and assessed?
  - b. Do staff that are managing and overseeing SCSEP participants involved in CSAs receive any training either from your organization or [the subgrantee organization] on how to provide effective mentoring and oversight of SCSEP participants?
15. How is it determined as to whether a SCSEP participant is ready (or not ready) to transition to another CSA or unsubsidized employment?
16. Do SCSEP participants typically last the full duration of their assignment (e.g., six months)? To what extent is their turnover prior to the anticipated end date for CSAs among SCSEP participants (e.g., "x" percent of participants do not make it to the end of a CSA)? What are some of the leading reasons for turnover?

### **D. SCSEP Participant Performance and Outcomes in CSAs**

1. About how long does it take a SCSEP participant to become functional in their CSAs? Is this any different from other newly hired workers (in the same or similar positions)?
2. Overall, how would you rate the quality of work performed by SCSEP participants in their CSAs?
3. To what extent do you think SCSEP participants' skill level/work readiness is at the level needed at the beginning and as the CSA progresses?
4. To what extent do SCSEP participants involved in CSAs at your organization make the transition into unsubsidized employment?

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- a. Over the past three years (if available), how many (and what percentage) of SCSEP participants have been placed into unsubsidized jobs? [\[If not available, ask for estimates.\]](#)
  - At your organization (as the host agency)
  - At other employers
- b. What factors affect your organization's (as a host agency) decision to hire a participant involved in a CSA into an unsubsidized job (e.g., participant skills/attitudes/performance, budget available)?
- c. What are the challenges/barriers do SCSEP participants run into in moving from CSA to unsubsidized jobs?
- d. What constraints, in general, do you think older workers run into in obtaining unsubsidized jobs (e.g., need for better digital/technological skills; age/gender/race discrimination)?
5. To what extent does the SCSEP grantee and/or other partners play a role in assisting with placement of SCSEP participants in unsubsidized jobs? Please discuss.
6. To what extent are SCSEP participants responsible for securing an unsubsidized job?
7. To what extent do you feel SCSEP participants enhance employability and skills during their involvement in CSAs at your organization?
8. Do SCSEP participants gain any certifications or accreditations as a result of their CSA or training provided during the SCSEP? If so, please, discuss.

### **E. Host Agency Views on CSAs, SCSEP and Wrap-up**

1. What are the main benefits to serving as a host agency for SCSEP participants involved in CSAs?
2. What do you believe are the main benefits to SCSEP participants of being placed into and completing CSAs?
3. What have been the main challenges to your organization serving as a host agency and providing CSA opportunities?
4. What are the main costs to your organization of being a host agency? For example:
  - Typical costs accrued by host agencies, such as interviewing/selection of SCSEP participants, orientation, and training of SCSEP participants, ongoing supervision/monitoring of SCSEP participants in CSAs, paperwork burden/administrative costs, etc.
  - Other costs to the host (such as loss of productivity, training of employees to supervise SCSEP participants, etc.)
5. Can you point to anything your organization has done in recent years that you feel is new or innovative with respect to making available CSAs for SCSEP participants? Can you point to anything that [the subgrantee organization] has put in place that you feel is new or innovative?
6. Do you have any suggestions on how SCSEP could be improved, especially with respect to CSAs or the host agency role in the program? Are there ways that [the subgrantee organization] could do a better job supporting your organization or in providing supports to the SCSEP participants themselves?

## **Older Workers Implementation and Descriptive Study**

### **SCSEP EMPLOYER PARTNER INTERVIEW GUIDE**

#### **Introduction**

I am [Name] a researcher from [Urban Institute/Capital Research Corporation], a policy research organization based in Washington, DC. The US Department of Labor (DOL) Chief Evaluation Office, in collaboration with the Employment Training Administration (ETA), has funded the Urban Institute and its partner Capital Research Corporation, to conduct the Older Workers Implementation and Descriptive Study. The purpose of this study is to build evidence about the implementation of the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) and other DOL workforce programs serving older workers to inform the continuous improvement of SCSEP.

As part of this study, the Urban Institute team is conducting a round of virtual site visits to 20 SCSEP subgrantees to and local sites of national grantees to better understand current SCSEP components and services, with an important focus on identifying the broad array of strategies for serving older workers. As part of each visit, we are conducting interviews with employers who have partnered with local SCSEP programs, especially to hire or support the preparation of SCSEP participants for available jobs. We are also interviewing SCSEP administrators and staff and other SCSEP partners such as host agencies, American Job Centers, and community-based organizations.

Your responses in this interview—combined with our subgrantee and local site survey and interviews of SCSEP program staff, partners, national grantees, and participants—will result in a report that will offer lessons for policymakers and practitioners to inform SCSEP implementation and improvement and inform future research and evaluation activities.

**Privacy Statement:** Thank you for responding to our request for an interview and scheduling this time with us. We expect the interview to take approximately 1 hour. Before we start, we want to make sure you know that:

- **This interview is not part of an audit or a compliance review.** We are interested in learning about your experiences with and perspectives about SCSEP and other workforce services for older workers in your area. There are no right or wrong answers. We want to know what you think.
- **Your participation in this interview is voluntary.** We have many questions and are going to talk to many different people, so please do not feel as though we expect you to be able to answer every question. You only have to answer questions you want to, you are free to not participate at all, and you can choose to end the interview at any time.
- **We value the information you will share with us today and want to make sure we capture all of it.** My colleague here, [NAME] is also from [Urban Institute/Capital Research Corporation] and will be taking notes during this discussion. So that we can make sure we capture a complete set of notes, we would like to record this conversation. The recording will be deleted as soon as we have made complete notes of the meeting. Is that OK with you?
- **We consider the information you provide during this interview as private.** We will not do anything to associate your name or identity with the results of the research. We do not share the notes from our interview outside of our study team,

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nor do we quote you by your name in our reports. We do not think that the information we are gathering is sensitive, but we will be sure to treat it with care in accordance with our data security protocols.

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- **What are the risks and benefits of participation?** The risks are minimal since we are not asking any sensitive questions. There is a small risk that you could be identified through your organization. The benefits are that you support research that could lead to improvements in SCSEP or other programs serving older workers.

*Do you have any questions?*

*Do I have your permission to begin the interview?*

*Do I have your permission to start recording?*

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### **A. Background on the Respondent(s)**

Collect the following information on each respondent involved in the interview:

1. Respondent's name
2. Respondent's organization (i.e., agency, division/unit)
3. Respondent's contact information (address, telephone, e-mail)
4. Respondent's title and how long the respondent has been in his/her position
5. Specific role of respondent in relation to his/her company being involved with the SCSEP program
6. Other organizational roles (other than related to SCSEP), if appropriate

### **B. General Information on Employer Organization**

1. Can you please provide us with some basic information about your organization, including?
  - a. Name
  - b. Industry sector
  - c. Number of employees
  - d. Geographic location(s)
2. How did you first learn about and become involved with the SCSEP program?



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- a. How long has your firm been involved with the SCSEP program?
- b. Why did your organization first become involved? Why have you continued to be involved with the program?
3. How is your organization/firm involved with [the subgrantee organization]?
  - a. Currently, how many SCSEP participants are employed in (unsubsidized) jobs with your organization? Since you first became involved with [the subgrantee organization] how many SCSEP participants has your organization hired into unsubsidized jobs?
  - b. **[Note: Ask only of government or nonprofit organizations]** Currently, do you have any SCSEP participants in CSAs? If so, how many? Since you first became involved with SCSEP, how many SCSEP participants has your organization hired into unsubsidized jobs?
  - c. Beside hiring SCSEP participants into jobs or placing them into CSAs, does your organization have any other types of involvement with [the subgrantee organization]?
4. Does your organization partner with other SCSEP grantees/subgrantees other than [the subgrantee organization]? If yes, have you hired any other SCSEP participants into jobs or placed them in CSAs? If so, how many SCSEP participants are currently employed in unsubsidized job or placed in CSAs in addition to those from [the subgrantee organization]?

### C. Hiring Process

We would like to ask you a few questions about your hiring process for SCSEP participants into permanent (unsubsidized) employment, including:

1. Does your organization have an ongoing arrangement with [the subgrantee organization] for referral and hiring of SCSEP participants? If yes, who is the main contact? How often is your firm in contact with [the subgrantee organization]? Do your firm or [the subgrantee organization] usually initiate the contact (e.g., when [the subgrantee organization] is looking for a participant to be placed in a job or CSA; or when your firm is looking to recruit new workers)?
2. How are SCSEP participants hires similar or different than non-SCSEP hires?
3. What are the steps involved in the normal hiring process for employees?
  - a. Is this hiring process any different for SCSEP hires (e.g., pre-screening by [the subgrantee organization])?
  - b. Are hiring requirements or expectations for SCSEP participants any different from other employees hired?
4. Does [the subgrantee organization] involvement (i.e., CSA, training, screening) make it more or less likely that your organization would hire a SCSEP participant (versus other job applicants)? Why (e.g., skills and work experience developed during CSA, an ability to test out the worker during the CSA)?
5. If your organization has SCSEP participants placed in a CSA, does your organization give weight or preference in hiring these individuals into new (unsubsidized) job openings at your firm?
6. Once hired, does [the subgrantee organization] provide your company or the former SCSEP participant with any types of ongoing support? Please discuss.

### D. Specifics of Job Positions and How SCSEP Participants Perform

- a. You noted earlier that you had "X" SCSEP participants currently employed in unsubsidized jobs. Please provide a description of each of the unsubsidized positions currently occupied by SCSEP participants:
  - a. Job Title/occupation

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- b. Number of SCSEP participants in that position
- c. Hourly wages and benefits
- d. Number of hours worked per week
- e. Job duties and basic skills requirements
- b. Are there any differences in turnover rates for SCSEP participants versus other hires in the same positions?

### **E. Wrap-up**

1. What is your overall satisfaction with hiring SCSEP participants as employees in unsubsidized positions?
2. Should other employers consider hiring other SCSEP participants in the future, and if so, why?
3. Could [the subgrantee organization] do anything to better prepare SCSEP participants to succeed in employment? If so, how?
4. Are there additional supports that could be provided to your company/organization by [the subgrantee organization] or supports that could be provided to participants after they are hired?

## **Older Workers Implementation and Descriptive Study**

### **SCSEP AMERICAN JOB CENTER PARTNER INTERVIEW GUIDE**

#### **Introduction**

I am a [NAME] researcher from [Urban Institute/Capital Research Corporation], a policy research organization based in Washington, DC. The US Department of Labor (DOL) Chief Evaluation Office, in collaboration with the Employment Training Administration (ETA), has funded the Urban Institute and its partner Capital Research Corporation, to conduct the Older Workers Implementation and Descriptive Study. The purpose of this study is to build evidence about the implementation of the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) and other DOL workforce programs serving older workers to inform the continuous improvement of SCSEP.

As part of this study, the Urban Institute team is conducting a round of [virtual or in-person] site visits to 20 SCSEP subgrantees to and local sites of national grantees to better understand current SCSEP components and services, with an important focus on identifying the broad array of strategies for serving older workers. As part of each visit, we are conducting interviews with American Job Centers who have partnered with local SCSEP programs. We are also interviewing SCSEP program directors and staff and other SCSEP partners such as host agencies, employers, and community-based organizations.

Your responses in this interview—combined with our subgrantee and local site survey and interviews of SCSEP program staff, partners, national grantees, and participants—will result in a report that will offer lessons for policymakers and practitioners to inform SCSEP implementation and improvement and inform future research and evaluation activities.

**Privacy Statement:** Thank you for responding to our request for an interview and scheduling this time with us. We expect the interview to take approximately 1 hour. Before we start, we want to make sure you know that:

- **This interview is not part of an audit or a compliance review.** We are interested in learning about your experiences with and perspectives about SCSEP and other workforce services for older workers in your service area. There are no right or wrong answers. We want to know what you think.
- **Your participation in this interview is voluntary.** We have many questions and are going to talk to many different people, so please do not feel as though we expect you to be able to answer every question. You only have to answer questions you want to, you are free to not participate at all, and you can choose to end the interview at any time.
- **We value the information you will share with us today and want to make sure we capture all of it.** My colleague here, [NAME] is also from [Urban Institute/Capital Research Corporation] and will be taking notes during this discussion. So that we can make sure we capture a complete set of notes, we would like to record this conversation. The recording will be deleted as soon as we have made complete notes of the meeting. Is that OK with you?
- **We consider the information you provide during this interview as private.** We will not do anything to associate your name or identity with the results of the research. We do not share the notes from our interview outside of our study team, nor do we quote you by your name in our reports. We do not

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think that the information we are gathering is sensitive, but we will be sure to treat it with care in accordance with our data security protocols.

- **Information from our interviews in our reports will be attributed to your organizations, but never to individuals.** If at any time you feel that you are sharing particularly sensitive or privileged information that you would not like attributed to your organization or that you would prefer to exclude from public findings, please let us know. We will share potential quotes by you first to obtain your permission prior to publication.
- **What are the risks and benefits of participation?** The risks are minimal since we are not asking any sensitive questions. There is a small risk that you could be identified through your organization. The benefits are that you support research that could lead to improvements in SCSEP or other programs serving older workers.

*Do you have any questions?*

*Do I have your permission to begin the interview?*

*Do I have your permission to start recording?*

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**A. Background on the Respondent(s)**

Collect the following information on each respondent involved in the interview:

1. Respondent's name
2. Respondent's organization (i.e., agency, division/unit)
3. Respondent's contact information (address, telephone, e-mail)
4. Respondent's title and how long the respondent has been in his/her position
5. Specific role of respondent in relation to his/her organization being involved with SCSEP
6. Other organizational roles (other than related to SCSEP), if appropriate

**B. General Information on Organization**

1. Can you please provide us with some basic information about your American Job Center, including:
  - a. Name
  - b. Organization operating the AJC
  - c. WIOA Workforce Development Board overseeing/contracting the AJC operator
  - d. Type of AJC (i.e., full service, satellite)
  - e. Geographic area served by the AJC
  - f. Main program/services delivered out of the AJC (i.e., in addition to WIOA and Wagner Peyser/ES services)
  - g. Number of total workers at the AJC
    - Employed by the AJC operator
    - Employed/co-located at AJC by other programs
2. How long has the AJC been involved with or partnered with [the subgrantee organization] that is the local SCSEP that is the focus of our site visit?
  - a. Do you know why the AJC first become involved with SCSEP?
  - b. How does SCSEP help support the AJC's mission?
3. How often does your AJC communicate with SCSEP staff, and what are the nature of these communications? Which of your staff communicate most commonly with SCSEP staff?
4. With regard to the SCSEP, is your AJC only working with [the subgrantee organization], or does it partner with other SCSEP grantees/subgrantees serving this local area?
  - a. If yes, with which other SCSEP grantees/subgrantees are you working?
  - b. What is the nature of your involvement/partnering with these other SCSEP grantees/subgrantees? How similar or different is your partnering with this subgrantee and other SCSEP grantees/subgrantees? (Note: From this point in the interview on, we would like to mostly focus on your partnering with [the subgrantee organization].)
5. Does your AJC receive any SCSEP funding from [the subgrantee organization] or other SCSEP national, state, or subgrantees? If so please discuss sources and amounts?
6. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your AJC's operations and/or ability to serve the local area?
  - a. Did the COVID-19 pandemic affect your organization's ability to provide services to the populations it normally serves? If so, how?
  - b. Did the COVID-19 pandemic affect your organization's ability to provide services to older adults/SCSEP? If so, how?

**C. Engagement with the SCSEP and SCSEP Participants**

- a. Are SCSEP staff co-located at the AJC? If yes:



## Attachment F

how many SCSEP participants are referred for supportive services each month.

- ii. Do all of the referrals of SCSEP participants for services come from this subgrantee? If not, how many (or roughly what proportion) of referrals for employment and training services are from [the subgrantee organization] versus other SCSEP grantees/subgrantees?
- iii. What proportion of SCSEP participants are registered with the Employment Service?
- iv. What proportion of SCSEP participants are co-enrolled in WIOA?
- v. What specific types of education, employment, and training services do you provide for these referred SCSEP participants?
- f. Does [the subgrantee organization] refer SCSEP participants to the AJC for other types of supportive services provided by the various programs that may be available at the AJC (e.g., rehabilitative services, clothing, energy assistance, emergency shelter, food assistance, etc.)?
  - i. What are the major types of supportive services that SCSEP participants come to the AJC to obtain?
  - ii. To which programs/partners co-located within the AJC are SCSEP participants most likely to be referred for services?
- g. To what extent, and how, does the AJC get involved in helping place SCSEP participants into unsubsidized jobs with employers in your region?
  - i. What types of job search and placement assistance does the AJC make available?
  - ii. To what extent do SCSEP staff rely on AJCs to place SCSEP participants in unsubsidized jobs?
  - iii. Does coordination/co-enrollment of SCSEP participants in ES and/or WIOA make a difference in terms of placement of SCSEP participant into unsubsidized jobs? Does that co-enrollment lead to any other types of collaboration between SCSEP and ES and/or WIOA, or impact any other outcomes for participants?
- h. With limited SCSEP funding, an area of interest in our study is how SCSEP might learn from other programs serving older adults. When older adults – those 55 and older – come to your AJC for services, to what extent are their needs for employment, training, and other workforce services different from other customers seeking AJC services?
  - i. Aside from SCSEP, are there other programs or services available at the AJC that are used by or targeted at older adults?
  - ii. Aside from SCSEP, are there other organizations or programs that you refer older adults to for services? If yes, please discuss.
  - iii. Are there service strategies that the AJC is using in serving older adults that might inform delivery of services in the SCSEP program? If yes, please describe.

### **D. Wrap-up**

- a. Are you satisfied with your partnership with [the subgrantee organization]? If so, how does it compliment/advance the work the AJC (and partnering organizations within the AJC) is attempting to do?
- b. Has your AJC (or partnering organizations within the AJC) run into any challenges to collaborating with [the subgrantee organization]?
- c. Are there any ways SCSEP could be changed to enhance its partnership with the AJC, and/or to better serve older adults?
- d. Would you recommend other organizations partner with SCSEP, and if so, why?
- e. Could SCSEP do anything to better serve older workers, and help them succeed in employment? If so, how?





## **Older Workers Implementation and Descriptive Study**

### **SCSEP COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION PARTNERS INTERVIEW GUIDE**

#### **Introduction**

I am [Name] a researcher from [Urban Institute/Capital Research Corporation], a policy research organization based in Washington, DC. The US Department of Labor (DOL) Chief Evaluation Office, in collaboration with the Employment Training Administration (ETA), has funded the Urban Institute and its partner Capital Research Corporation, to conduct the Older Workers Implementation and Descriptive Study. The purpose of this study is to build evidence about the implementation of the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) and other DOL workforce programs serving older workers to inform the continuous improvement of SCSEP.

As part of this study, the Urban Institute team is conducting a round of virtual site visits to 20 SCSEP subgrantees to and local sites of national grantees to better understand current SCSEP components and services, with an important focus on identifying the broad array of strategies for serving older workers. As part of each visit, we are conducting interviews with organizations that have partnered with SCSEP local programs. We are also interviewing SCSEP program directors and staff and other SCSEP partners such as host agencies, employers, and American Job Centers.

Your responses in this interview—combined with our subgrantee and local site survey and interviews of SCSEP program staff, partners, national grantees, and participants—will offer lessons for policymakers and practitioners to inform SCSEP implementation and improvement and inform future research and evaluation activities.

**Privacy Statement:** Thank you for responding to our request for an interview and scheduling this time with us. We expect the interview to take approximately 1 hour. Before we start, we want to make sure you know that:

- **This interview is not part of an audit or a compliance review.** We are interested in learning about your experiences with and perspectives about SCSEP and other workforce services for older workers in your service area. There are no right or wrong answers. We want to know what you think.
- **Your participation in this interview is voluntary.** We have many questions and are going to talk to many different people, so please do not feel as though we expect you to be able to answer every question. You only have to answer questions you want to, you are free to not participate at all, and you can choose to end the interview at any time.
- **We value the information you will share with us today and want to make sure we capture all of it.** My colleague here, [NAME] is also from [Urban Institute/Capital Research Corporation] and will be taking notes during this discussion. So that we can make sure we capture a complete set of notes, we would like to record this conversation. The recording will be deleted as soon as we have made complete notes of the meeting. Is that OK with you?
- **We consider the information you provide during this interview as private.** We will not do anything to associate your name or identity with the results of the research. We do not share the notes from our interview outside of our study team, nor do we quote you by your name in our reports. We do not

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think that the information we are gathering is sensitive, but we will be sure to treat it with care in accordance with our data security protocols.

- **Information from our interviews in our reports will be attributed to your organizations, but never to individuals.** If at any time you feel that you are sharing particularly sensitive or privileged information that you would not like attributed to your organization or that you would prefer to exclude from public findings, please let us know. We will share potential quotes by you first to obtain your permission prior to publication.
- **What are the risks and benefits of participation?** The risks are minimal since we are not asking any sensitive questions. There is a small risk that you could be identified through your organization. The benefits are that you support research that could lead to improvements in SCSEP or other programs serving older workers.

*Do you have any questions?*

*Do I have your permission to begin the interview?*

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**A. Background on the Respondent(s)**

Collect the following information on each respondent involved in the interview:

1. Respondent's name
2. Respondent's organization (i.e., agency, division/unit)
3. Respondent's contact information (address, telephone, e-mail)
4. Respondent's title and how long the respondent has been in his/her position
5. Specific role of respondent in relation to his/her organization being involved with SCSEP
6. Other organizational roles (other than related to SCSEP), if appropriate

**B. General Information on Organization**

1. Would you please provide us with some basic information about your organization, including:
  - a. Name
  - b. Number of employees
  - c. Geographic location(s)
  - d. Whether organization serves as a SCSEP host agency - if so, how many SCSEP participants are currently placed in CSAs with your organization?
2. Briefly, what is the nature of your organization's involvement/partnering with [the subgrantee organization], the SCSEP local program or subgrantee that is the focus of our site visit?
3. How did you first learn about SCSEP? How long has your organization been involved with SCSEP? Why did your organization first become involved with SCSEP? How does SCSEP help support your organization's mission?
4. With regard to SCSEP, is your organization only working with the [the subgrantee organization] or does it partner with other SCSEP grantees/subgrantees serving this local area?
  - a. If yes, which other SCSEP grantees/subgrantees (other than [the subgrantee organization])? What is the nature of your involvement/partnering with these other SCSEP grantees/subgrantees? How similar or different is your partnership than with [the subgrantee organization]?

(Note: From this point in the interview, we would like to mostly focus on your partnering with [the subgrantee organization].)
5. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your organization's operations and/or ability to serve older individuals through SC?
  - a. Did the COVID-19 pandemic affect your organization's work with [the subgrantee organization] and the SCSEP participants? If yes, how so? How does your work with [the subgrantee organization] continue to be affected? What changes do you think are permanent?

**C. Engagement with the SCSEP program and SCSEP Participants**

1. Are SCSEP staff co-located on your organization's premises? If yes:
  - a. How many SCSEP workers are currently working at your premises (i.e., co-located)?
  - b. Are these SCSEP staff all from the subgrantee that is the focus of our visit or from any other SCSEP grantees/subgrantees serving the area? If so, how many are from the subgrantee that is the focus our visit?
  - c. How is it beneficial to your organization to have these SCSEP workers co-located at your agency?
  - d. How do you think it is helpful/beneficial for SCSEP to be co-located at your agency?

## Attachment G

- e. Are there any challenges or drawbacks for either your agency or SCSEP to having SCSEP staff located at your agency?
2. Does your agency refer older adults to [the subgrantee organization] for enrollment in the SCSEP?
  - a. If so, about how many older adults have your referred to [the subgrantee organization] for SCSEP over the past year (or per month)?
  - b. What types of older adults do you typically refer to SCSEP and why?
3. Has your organization served as a SCSEP host agency for SCSEP participants?
  - a. If yes, how many SCSEP participants are currently placed in CSAs with your organization? Over the past three years (if available) can you provide an estimate of how many SCSEP participants have been placed in CSAs in your organization?
  - b. Are all of these SCSEP participants referred from [the subgrantee organization]? If not, how many (or what proportion) are from [the subgrantee organization] versus other SCSEP grantees/subgrantees?
  - c. What is the nature of the CSAs (i.e., position title/occupation, hours/week, length of CSA, etc.)?
4. Has your organization hired any SCSEP participants into unsubsidized jobs?
  - a. If yes, how many (former) SCSEP participants are currently working in unsubsidized jobs with your organization? Over the past three years (if available) can you provide an estimate of how many SCSEP participants have been hired into unsubsidized jobs at your organization?
  - b. Are all of these SCSEP participants hired into unsubsidized jobs referred from the subgrantee that is the focus of our visit? If not, how many (or what proportion) are from [the subgrantee organization] versus other SCSEP grantees/subgrantees?
  - c. What types of unsubsidized jobs have SCSEP participants been hired into (i.e., position title/occupation)?
  - d. Have these SCSEP participants typically been in CSAs with your organization prior to hiring into their unsubsidized jobs?
    - o If yes, does having been in a CSA at your organization give the SCSEP participant a leg up in obtaining an unsubsidized job (compared to other applicants)? Why, or why not?
5. Does [the subgrantee organization] refer SCSEP participants to your organization for services (e.g., training, rehabilitative services, clothing, energy assistance, emergency shelter, food assistance, etc.)?
  - a. How often does SCSEP refer participants to your organization for services - for example, on average about how many SCSEP participants are referred for supportive services each month?
  - b. [If answered yes to B.4 ask] Do all of the referrals of SCSEP participants for services come from [the subgrantee organization]? If not, how many (or roughly what proportion) of referrals for supportive services are from [the subgrantee organization] versus other SCSEP grantees/subgrantees?
  - c. What types of services do you provide for these referred SCSEP participants?
6. Does your organization do anything to help prepare SCSEP participants for unsubsidized jobs? If so, what types of assistance do you provide (i.e., job skill training, soft skill training, job search, etc.)?
7. Has your organization helped SCSEP participants find unsubsidized jobs (i.e., outside of your organization)? If so, to which employers, and what types of jobs?
8. With limited SCSEP funding, an area of interest in our study is how SCSEP might learn from other programs serving older workers/jobseekers.

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- a. Aside from services your organization provides for SCSEP participants, are there other programs or services available through or provided by your organization that are used by or targeted at older adults whether or not they are SCSEP participants? If so, briefly describe.
- b. Are there service strategies that your organization is using in serving older adults, whether or not SCSEP participants, that might inform delivery of services in the SCSEP program? If yes, please describe.

### **D. Conclusions**

1. Overall, how satisfied are you with your partnership with [the subgrantee organization]? Please explain.
2. What about your partnership with [the subgrantee organization] would you say works well or appears effective, if anything?
3. Has your organization run into any particular challenges to partnering with SCSEP?
4. Are there any ways SCSEP could be changed to enhance its partnership with your organization, and/or to better serve older workers?
5. Would you recommend other organizations to partner with SCSEP, and if so, why? What advice would you give to them in developing and maintaining these partnerships?
6. What could SCSEP do to better serve its' participants, and help them succeed in employment? If so, how?

## **Older Workers Implementation and Descriptive Study**

### **SCSEP PARTICIPANT FOCUS GROUP GUIDE**

#### **I. Welcome and Introduction by Urban (10 min)**

Hello, my name is [NAME OF FACILITATOR]. I'm part of the Urban Institute (Urban) team that is studying the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). This is [URBAN STAFF NAME] who will be taking notes to make sure we get a complete record of today's discussion. Urban is a non-profit research organization based in Washington, DC. We are doing this study for the U.S. Department of Labor to learn more about how SCSEP works and how it helps older adults facing employment challenges. We'd also like to hear your thoughts about what parts of the program work well and what might need to be improved.

We appreciate your willingness to be here today.

[Show the following information on one or more screens and read aloud]

This discussion is intended to find out about your experiences in SCSEP and your opinions about the program.

Your participation is voluntary, and you can refuse to answer any question. Also, at any point you can decide to stop participating in this group session. It is important to also note that, voluntary also means that you can choose not to participate in the study at all. There will be no negative consequences if you choose not to participate.

We appreciate your willingness to be here today. At the end of today's group, we will send you \$25 to thank you for participation.

This focus group will take about one hour. The information you provide is considered private by the study team and we will not share your response outside of our team in any way that identifies you. We will combine responses across all SCSEP participants who we interview and report out our findings at an aggregate level. If we quote you, we will not identify your name or location. In fact, you do not even have to share your real name with us. If you would like, you can make up a name for yourself today that we will use during the discussion.

We have taken reasonable precautions to ensure the security of the videoconferencing platform, however, there is some chance it could be accessed (hacked) by unauthorized entities so please keep that in mind.

We ask all participants to not repeat any of the information they hear, do not to record, take screenshots or otherwise divulge the contents of the discussion. We advise you to take into consideration that we do not have the ability to assure that what you say will not be repeated by other participants.

[End screen sharing]

As the facilitator, my role here is to ask questions and listen. Everyone's participation today is important to us, and we want everyone to have an opportunity to speak. If one of you is sharing a lot, I may ask you to let others talk. If you aren't saying much, I may ask for your thoughts.

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Now that we've gone over the purpose of the focus group and how we will treat the information you share, **do you have any questions?** [Answer any questions.]

**We ask that each of you orally consent to participating in the focus group, one by one.** [Ensure all attendees respond.] Anyone who no longer wants to participate can leave this video call at this time.

For those who remain, please do not share any information during the discussion with anyone outside of this group.

**Do we have your permission to record this discussion?** It is for the purpose of ensuring the accuracy of our notes and we will delete the recording once we finalize our notes. [Ask for permission one by one.]

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## II. Participant Introductions (5 min)

To begin, let's find out a bit more about each other by going around the room and sharing:

1. **What would you like us to call you today (first name only)?**
2. **How long have you been part of SCSEP and where are you in the program** (e.g., recently enrolled, working in a CSA placement, searching for an unsubsidized job, working in an unsubsidized job)?
3. **SCSEP serves people in a wide age range starting at 50 through 80 years old. If you feel comfortable sharing: What year (or what decade) were you born?** "I can start us off. My name is [FACILITATOR], and I was born in the mid-1960s..."

## III. Enrolling in SCSEP (10 min)

Now we'd like to start by asking a few questions about how you came to learn about SCSEP and your experience enrolling in the program. We'd really like to understand where this group has had similar or different experiences, so if you hear someone sharing an experience similar to yours or if you want to add something different, please do so.

4. **How did you first learn about SCSEP, and why were you interested in participating?**

SUB-QUESTIONS/PROBES

## Attachment H

- *Were there any services or things you hoped to get out of the program that led you to enroll?*
- *Did the pandemic play any role in why you participated in the SCSEP program or your experience in the program?*
- *Did you have concerns about participating, and if so, what were they?*

### **5. Was the SCSEP enrollment process easy or hard to go through?**

#### SUB-QUESTIONS/PROBES

- *How long did it take, and were there any hiccups that caused delays?*
- *What types of paperwork did you have to fill out or provide?*
- *How many times did you meet with program staff about enrolling?*
- *How much of the enrollment was in-person versus by phone or online?*

### **6. How many of you completed an assessment (or a questionnaire) to help SCSEP staff learn more about you?**

#### SUB-QUESTIONS/PROBES

- *What types of assessments did you complete (e.g., interest inventory, digital literacy assessments, work experience/skills assessments, etc.)?*
- *Did you feel the assessment/questionnaire was accurate or helpful?*

## **IV. Services from SCSEP Staff (10 min)**

Next, we would like to ask about your experiences once you became a SCSEP participant, especially related to assistance you received from a SCSEP coach, navigator or other staff.

### **7. Once you became a SCSEP participant, were you assigned to one staff person (e.g., coach, navigator) to contact and coordinate your involvement in the program?**

#### SUB-QUESTIONS/PROBES

- *If yes, did you primarily work with the same coach/navigator from enrollment and throughout your involvement in SCSEP?*
- *If not, how many coaches or navigators have you had?*
- *Did you also interact with other types of SCSEP staff (e.g., job placement specialist)? What services did these staff provide?*

### **8. How often do/did you communicate with your coach or navigator (or other SCSEP staff)?**

#### SUB-QUESTIONS/PROBES

- *Do you feel that you were able to interact your coach/navigator frequently enough?*
- *What forms of communication did you use (e.g., in-person, telephone, email, text)?*
- *What has been the focus of your interactions (e.g., obtain a new CSA, help finding a job, need for supportive services)?*



9. **What was your experience like when developing an individual employment plan (or an IEP) with your coach or navigator (or other SCSEP staff)?**

SUB-QUESTIONS/PROBES

- *What information were you asked for during development of this plan?*
- *Did you revise and update this plan during your involvement in the program?*
- *In what ways has that plan been helpful (or unhelpful)?*

10. **Overall, what are your general feelings about the services and assistance you received from your SCSEP coach, navigator, or other staff?**

SUB-QUESTIONS/PROBES

- *What was the most helpful service, assistance, or advice you received?*
- *Were SCSEP staff responsive to your requests for assistance?*
- *How could SCSEP staff serve participants even better in the future?*

**We are about halfway done with our questions. Thank you for your responses so far.**

#### **V. Services from SCSEP Partners (5 min)**

Next, we would like to ask about services you received from other organizations partnered with SCSEP.

11. **How many of you received a referral from SCSEP staff to another service provider (partner) for assistance and support while you were involved in the program?**

SUB-QUESTIONS/PROBES

- *If so, which partnering service providers did you interact with the most and why?*
- *Were you referred to an American Job Center (AJC) or an aging agency/council?*
- *Were you enrolled in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)?*

12. **If you were served by a SCSEP partner, what services did you access or receive (e.g., job search assistance, training services), and which were the most helpful?**

SUB-QUESTIONS/PROBES

- *Did you receive assistance with learning new technologies, including digital literacy training, online supports for unsubsidized job search activities, or other technical or professional skills training?*
- *Did the AJC help you with finding an unsubsidized job?*

#### **VI. Experiences with CSA Placement (10 min)**

Next, we would like to discuss your work assignments (CSAs) and your experiences with these assignments.

**13. Can you describe the process of first getting placed in a work assignment (or CSA)?**

SUB-QUESTIONS/PROBES

- *Who helped you find your first CSA, and did you have any input on the type of organization?*
- *Once enrolled in SCSEP, how long did it take to first start working in a CSA?*
- *For your first placement in a CSA, were you offered more than one CSA opening?*

**14. Overall, were your CSA placements well matched to your interests, abilities, or skills?**

SUB-QUESTIONS/PROBES

- *If yes, what types of occupations have you been placed in and were any remote/hybrid?*
- *If not, what about that placement was not suitable/appropriate?*
- *Overall, how many assignments have you been placed in?*
- *Can you think of any ways the CSA placement process could be improved?*

**15. In what ways have your CSA assignments helped or increased your likelihood of finding (unsubsidized) employment?**

SUB-QUESTIONS/PROBES

- *Did wages earned through SCSEP involvement help support you financially? Was it enough to cover your expenses, and what other sources of income do/did you rely on?*
- *During your assignments, did you receive any training that resulted in enhanced skills (either at your CSA or in a separate training activity)?*
- *Did the training you received enable you to successfully perform CSA-related duties?*
- *Did the CSA assignment help you become familiar with new technologies?*

**16. While working in your CSA assignment, did you receive other supportive services or assistance from staff at SCSEP or at other programs that was helpful to you? Please describe.**

SUB-QUESTIONS/PROBES

- *In what ways were these services and assistance helpful (e.g., job readiness, digital skills development, social or emotional wellbeing)?*

**VII. Finding an Unsubsidized Job (5 min)**

Now we would like to discuss finding an unsubsidized job after participation in SCSEP.

**17. How many of you are currently searching for employment in an unsubsidized job (i.e., aside from your CSA assignments)?**

SUB-QUESTIONS/PROBES

- *How long have you been searching, and what are your biggest challenges?*
- *Has your CSA assignment or training enhanced your ability to search for a job?*
- *What support has been missing or could be improved, or how else might SCSEP have been helpful in your search for a job (e.g., increased familiarity with technology or Internet job searches)?*

**18. How many of you have found employment in an unsubsidized job (i.e., aside from your CSA assignments)?**

SUB-QUESTIONS/PROBES

- *What type of occupation did you find, how many hours per week, are you earning minimum wage or something higher, and how satisfied are you with the job?*
- *Were SCSEP staff involved in helping you find this job, or did you find the job on your own or through a different source?*
- *Do you think you would have gotten this job without participation in SCSEP, and how well did your CSA assignment help prepare you for the job?*
- ***If you are no longer in that initial job that you obtained after your CSA, are you currently employed?*** *If yes, in what type of occupation, how many hours per week, for how long have you held this job? Altogether following your CSA assignment, how many jobs have you held?*

**VIII. Satisfaction with SCSEP and Opportunities for Improvement (5 min)**

Lastly, we would like to understand your overall satisfaction with SCSEP and any suggestions you have for improving the program.

**19. Overall, how satisfied have you been with your SCSEP experience?**

SUB-QUESTIONS/PROBES

- *What do you like about SCSEP, or what do you want to stay the same?*
- *What aspects of SCSEP have been the most important for you personally?*
- *How has the program helped with your general health or well-being?*
- *How has the program helped with your understanding of technology and virtual employment opportunities?*

**20. Do you have any suggestions to strengthen or improve SCSEP, so it can better help older workers prepare for employment and find jobs?**

SUB-QUESTIONS/PROBES

- *What would you change about SCSEP?*
- *If you had to design a program to address employment issues that older adults are facing, what would you do?*

## Attachment H

- *Besides employment, are there other goals a program like SCSEP should be designed to help participants achieve (e.g., reduced social isolation, improved emotional wellbeing)?*

**21. Is there anything we have not discussed that you feel is important to understanding SCSEP?**

## **IX. Thank You and Reimbursement**

Thank you so much for your time and thoughtful responses to our questions.

## **Older Workers Implementation and Descriptive Study**

### **SCSEP PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW GUIDE**

#### **Introduction**

Hello, my name is [NAME OF INTERVIEWER]. I'm part of the Urban Institute (Urban) team that is studying the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP). This is [URBAN STAFF NAME] who will be taking notes to make sure we get a complete record of today's discussion. Urban is a non-profit research organization based in Washington, DC. We are doing this study for the U.S. Department of Labor to learn more about how SCSEP works and how it helps older adults facing employment challenges. We'd also like to hear your thoughts about what parts of the program work well and what might need to be improved.

We appreciate your willingness to be here today. This discussion is intended to find out about your experiences in SCSEP and your opinions about the program. My role is to ask questions and listen.

Your participation is voluntary. You do not have to participate in this interview and there will be no negative consequences. You can also refuse to answer any question and at any point, you can decide to stop participating in this interview. At the end of the interview, if you answer any questions, you will receive \$25 to thank you for your participation.

This interview will take about 30 minutes. The information you provide is considered private by the study team, meaning we will not share your response outside of our team in any way that identifies you. We will combine responses across all SCSEP participants who we interview and report out our findings at an aggregate level. If we quote you, we will not identify your name or location.

The risks of participating are minimal since we are not asking any sensitive questions. The benefits are that you support research that could lead to improvements in SCSEP or other programs serving older workers.

Now that we've gone over the purpose of the interview and how we will treat the information you share, **do you have any questions?** [Answer any questions.]

**Do you consent to participating in the interview today?** [Ask for oral consent and record in notes.]

**Do we have your permission to record this discussion?** It is for the purpose of ensuring the accuracy of our notes and we will delete the recording once we finalize our notes. [Ask for permission and record in notes.]

**OMB Burden Statement:** According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays an Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is XXXX-XXXX. The time required to complete this collection of information is estimated to average 30 minutes, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed and complete and review the collection of information. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to [Chiefevaluationoffice@DOL.gov](mailto:Chiefevaluationoffice@DOL.gov) and reference the OMB Control Number XXXX-ONEW.



## TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. **We'd like to hear a little bit about you first.**
  - a. How long have you been a part of SCSEP and what stage are you in the program? (e.g., recently enrolled, working in a CSA placement, searching for an unsubsidized job, working in an unsubsidized job)?
  - b. SCSEP serves people in a wide age range starting at 50 through 80 years old. If you feel comfortable sharing: What year (or what decade) were you born?
  - c. Prior to your involvement with SCSEP, can you share a bit about the past work that you were involved in – your occupation and recent jobs?
  - d. Did the pandemic play any role in why you participated in the SCSEP program or your experience in the program?
  
2. **To begin, we realize this might be some time ago, but we wanted to ask you a few questions about how you came to learn about SCSEP [note: or substitute specific name of the local program throughout] and why you were interested in participating in it.**
  - a. How did you first learn about SCSEP? In particular, did you receive materials or see an ad on TV or on social media, or were you referred by an organization/individual?
  - b. Why were you interested in participating in the program?  
Probes:
    - Were there any available services or specific things you wanted to get out of the program that led you to enroll?
    - Were there any special circumstances or anything in your life that may have been a factor in your interest in SCSEP (e.g., a loss of a job, the COVID pandemic, etc.)?
    - Did you have any concerns about participating in the SCSEP program? If so, what were they?
  
3. **We would like to understand the enrollment process and your work with SCSEP staff in planning your involvement in SCSEP.**
  - a. What was involved in becoming enrolled in SCSEP? [Probes:]
    - 1) What types of paperwork did you have to fill out?
    - 2) What types of documentation did you have to provide?
    - 3) How long did the enrollment process take? (for example, how many months?)
    - 4) What was easy and what was hard about enrolling?
    - 5) How did you communicate with program staff during the enrollment process?
  - b. How did you work with SCSEP staff on the development of a service plan or Individual Employment Plan (IEP)? [Probes:]
    - 1) Do you remember whether you took any types of assessment tests, say one that identified your work-related skills or your career interests? If so, please discuss.
    - 2) Has the plan or IEP been helpful? If so, how?
    - 3) How did you work with SCSEP staff to revise and update this plan during your involvement in the program?

## Attachment I

- c. Were you assigned to one staff person (i.e., a case manager), coach, or navigators to contact and coordinate your involvement in the program? What help and support did they provide?
  - d. Beside your SCSEP case manager, did you have contact or interaction with other SCSEP staff? If so, with which other SCSEP staff (e.g., job placement specialist)? What services did these staff provide?
  - e. What are your general feelings about the services and assistance you received from your case manager (or any other SCSEP staff)? [Probes:]
    - 1) Do you think your interactions were generally helpful?
    - 2) Were SCSEP staff responsive to your requests of assistance?
    - 3) Do you feel that you were able to interact your case manager frequently enough?
    - 4) Did these interactions result in helpful service or advice?
      - i. What specific services/assistance did you find most helpful?
      - ii. Where there any services/assistance that were unhelpful or you feel could be eliminated?
4. **Next, we would like to discuss your community service assignments (CSA) and your experiences with these assignments.**
- a. First, can you please describe the process of getting placed in a CSA. [Probes:]
    - 1) Who helped you to find your CSA?
    - 2) Once enrolled in SCSEP, how long did it take to first start working in a SCSEP?
    - 3) Did you have input on the organization and type of CSA in which you were first placed? For your first placement in a CSA, were you offered more than one CSA opening (to choose among)?
  - b. Prior to your CSA, did you receive any training to prepare you for the CSA? If yes, please describe.
  - c. As for as specifics of your CSA experiences:
    - 1) How many assignments have you been placed in?
    - 2) For your most recent assignment:
      - i. Occupation
      - ii. Main work tasks/activities
      - iii. Number of hours (typically worked) per week
      - iv. Hourly wage
      - v. Duration of assignment
  - d. Did you develop new or enhance existing skills in your CSA? How useful will these skills be in future employment?
  - e. Were these placements good matches to your interests, abilities, and skills?
    - 1) If yes, how so?
    - 2) If any were not, what about that placement was not suitable/appropriate?
  - f. While you were involved in your CSA, did you engage with your SCSEP case manager? If so, how often did you interact and what was the focus of your discussions? Did you receive supports or services from SCSEP during your CSA?
5. **Have you searched for and/or found employment in an unsubsidized job (i.e., aside from your CSA assignments)?** If yes: [*Note: If no, skip this line of questions.*]
- a. What has the job search process been like?



## Attachment I

- 1) What help have you received from your SCSEP program?
- 2) Have you received help from another organization such as an American Job Center? If so, how did they help?
- b. If you found a job, please tell us a little bit about that job.
  - 1) Occupation
  - 2) Length of employment
  - 3) How do you like the job?
  - 4) Did the CSA and other training received prepare you for the job?
  - 5) Would you have been able to find it without the SCSEP program?
6. **We would like to ask you now about services you may have received from other organizations as a part of the SCSEP program.**
  - a. Did SCSEP staff refer you to any other partnering service providers for assistance and support while you were involved in the program, such as an American Job Centers (AJCs) or aging agency/council?
  - b. If so, which partnering service provider(s) did you interact with the most and why? How was this assistance (from other partners) helpful?
7. **Overall, how satisfied with your SCSEP experience were you?**
  - a. How happy were you with your CSA assignment(s) and other employment opportunities?
  - b. How did the program help improve your life circumstances such as health, financial security, or other aspects of your life?
8. **Finally, do you have any suggestions for SCSEP to improve services that help older workers prepare for employment, and find jobs?**

Thank you so much for your time and thoughtful responses to our questions.