

**GEORGIA SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE
EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)
STANDALONE STATE PLAN**

**Division of Aging Services
Program Years 2024-2027**

Georgia Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) 2024-2027 State Plan

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Section 1: Purpose of State Plan

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a federally mandated job training program that serves low-income workers aged 55 years and older. SCSEP is authorized under the Older Americans Act (OAA) and is administered by the United States Department of Labor's Employee and Training Administration (USDOL/ETA).

The SCSEP program promotes individual economic self-sufficiency and increases the number of people who may benefit from unsubsidized employment in both the public and private sectors by providing individuals with appropriate training for targeted jobs in the community.

The Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS) considers the State Plan an opportunity for its Division of Aging Services (DAS) to take a long term, strategic view of the SCSEP program in the state, including SCSEP's role in workforce development, given projected changes in the demographics, economy, and labor market in the state. The state plan outlines the four-year strategy on how to best reach and serve participants and addresses the role of SCSEP relative to other workforce programs and initiatives, as well as other programs serving older workers. It also articulates how the grantee managing the four geographical regions operating in Georgia examine and, as appropriate, plan long-term changes to the design of the program to better achieve SCSEP goals.

In Georgia, the SCSEP State Plan is a standalone state plan as it is not included in the Georgia WIOA Unified State Plan submitted through the Georgia Department of Labor and the Technical College System of Georgia. Although this program works in coordination with many partners, this attached state plan is for compliance with the federal requirements for the SCSEP program alone.

DHS/DAS is responsible for four SCSEP regions in the state. The Northeastern region covers the following counties: Barrow, Clarke, Elbert, Greene, Jackson, Jasper, Madison, Morgan, Newton, Oconee, Oglethorpe, and Walton. The Southern Crescent region covers the following counties: Butts, Carroll, Coweta, Heard, Lamar, Meriwether, Pike, Spalding, Troup, and Upton. The Northwestern region covers the following counties: Catoosa, Chattooga, Cherokee, Dade, Douglas, Floyd, Gordon, Haralson, Paulding, Pickens, Polk, Walker, and Whitfield. Lastly, the Southwestern region covers the following counties: Baker, Brooks, Calhoun, Clay, Colquitt, Decatur, Dougherty, Early, Grady, Lee, Miller, Mitchell, Quitman, Randolph, Seminole, Sumter, and Thomas.

There are two national grantees for SCSEP in Georgia. One of the national grantees, the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), covers the metro Atlanta area which include the following counties: Cobb, DeKalb, Fulton, and Gwinnett. The other national grantee, Legacy Link, subgrantee for the National Council on Aging, covers all the other

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remaining counties in Georgia with some overlap in Floyd, Dougherty, and Whitfield counties.

Involvement of Organizations and Individuals

The stand-alone state plan was developed by the Georgia OAA State Unit on Aging and shared with the subgrantee, Athens Community Council on Aging (ACCA), and the program coordinators in the four geographical regions for their assistance on improving the draft SCSEP State Plan.

Ongoing collaborations between regional program coordinators and the one-stop centers include getting information on job openings and trends, participating in meetings to coordinate employment and training programs in their respective regions and meetings with local workshop development boards. Two of the regional offices, northwestern (Rome) and southwestern (Albany), are located in the one-stop centers.

Solicitation and Collection of Public Comments

Federal regulations require that the delegated agency for creation of the SCSEP State Plan must publish a draft of the SCSEP State Plan for public comment in accordance with established State procedures.

Public comment will be sought by posting the proposed SCSEP State Plan Draft on the DHS/DAS website, aging.georgia.gov. Solicitation for input will be made via various methods, including distribution of the notice to the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA), current SCSEP participants, host agencies, and the two national grantees in Georgia. Documentation of solicitation is provided as Attachment B in the Appendix.

Using this methodology, DHS will use a combination of multiple processes to obtain public feedback, which include public publication, targeted outreach, and a public hearing opportunity. An in-person public hearing will be held on April 24, 2024. And, as noted above, the draft SCSEP State Plan will be published on the DHS/DAS website for 30 days with a link to provide feedback.

Section 2: Economic Projections and Impact

Using annual estimates from the United States Census Bureau, 118 of Georgia's 159 counties are considered rural. For context, rural is defined as an area with a population less than 50,000. Using data from the poverty estimates from National Institutes of Health (NIH) Minority Health and Health Disparities, 21 rural counties have a high poverty rate.

The success of the SCSEP program must be considered in the context of Georgia's low overall unemployment rate. According to GDOL, the unemployment rate in December

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2023 was 3.2%, with a total of 171,000 unemployed people below the national rate of 3.5%. This indicates that competition for available jobs will increase and perhaps hinder the ability of SCSEP participants to find employment.

SCSEP evaluates area employment trends compiled by the GDOL. Like most states, Georgia has a rapidly growing older population and will need to make preparations to accommodate an older workforce as well as jobs that serve seniors. Long-term trends project persistent growth in health care and social assistance related jobs in caring for older and disabled Georgians, as well as continuing growth in construction and film industry related employment. The majority of GDOL's predicted "HOT Careers to 2023" list are jobs that require more than just a high school education or training.

Long-term Projections

The following two charts indicate fields and occupations with the greatest growth and most annual job openings expected over the next 10 years for specific education levels, according to GDOL.

Chart 1 provides a list of occupations typically requiring a high school diploma/equivalent or less that are projected to have the largest job growth by 2030. The occupations listed below represent over 31 percent of all job gain, twelve of which are on the list of overall projected job growth in Georgia. The occupations at the top of this list are generally high volume and relatively low-skill, entry-level jobs.

Chart 1 - Most Job Growth in Occupations that Require a High School Diploma or Less

Retail Salespersons	151,470
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers	145,690
Fast Food and Counter Workers	138,390
Cashiers	121,390
Customer Service Representatives	114,410
Waiters and Waitresses	84,450
Stockers and Order Fillers	77,750
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	60,350
Cooks, Restaurant	50,490
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	49,410
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	41,830

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First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	41,400
Food Preparation Workers	38,230

*Georgia Department of Labor - 2020-2030 Long Term Occupational Projections

Chart 2 - Occupations with the Most Annual Openings

Fast Food and Counter Workers	28,020
Cashiers	22,050
Retail Salespersons	21,740
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	19,930
Waiters and Waitresses	16,350
Customer Service Representatives	14,710
Stockers and Order Fillers	12,400
Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers	9,150
General and Operations Managers	8,060
Home Health and Personal Care Aides	7,930
Cooks, Restaurant	7,830
Food Preparation Workers	6,620
First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	6,330
Project Management Specialists and Business Operations Specialists, All Other	5,780
Software Developers and Software Quality Assurance Analysts and Testers	5,660
Registered Nurses	5,470
Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	5,130
Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	4,890
Medical Assistants	4,370
Nurse Practitioners	1,250

*Georgia Department of Labor - 2020-2030 Long Term Occupational Projections

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Chart 2 shows the occupations with the most annual openings. According to GDOL , total employment in Georgia is projected to grow to over 5.2 million in 2030, an increase of 15.5% from 2020 employment levels. With over 709,000 jobs projected to be added in Georgia from 2020-2030. Over this ten-year projection period, the job growth equates to an average growth rate of 1.5 percent.

GDOL long-term occupation projections indicate that segments with the highest growth between 2020 and 2030 will be health care and health care supporting employment (combined 51.5%), food preparation employment (29.3%), personal care employment (27%), and transportation related employment (22.1%).

Strategies to Address Long-term Projections

Subgrantee staff recruit host training sites for their diversity and their willingness to train program participants in the skills they need to meet their work goals and to obtain the jobs they prefer. Most preferred jobs can be found at community service agencies and in all private sector industries, where such jobs may include clerical and custodial work.

The long-term projection has changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and is going back to normal gradually. Even though there is no available data to report, changes have been noticed in the availability of jobs in general and to the older population in particular. The prospect of available jobs has gone up after the pandemic.

The subgrantee overseeing the four different regions will continue to focus on improving the program infrastructure by:

- Reviewing the status of all host agencies (reviewing host agency agreements, identifying new host agencies, purging inactive host agencies, etc.).
- Developing and submitting plans to improve equitable distribution.
- Developing and submitting plans to improve the performance measures.
- Developing and submitting plans to use participant assistants effectively.

Opportunities for Current and Long-term Projections

Subgrantee staff will use the above information to match SCSEP participants' interests with maximum opportunities for employment in the community. Also, staff will use this data to identify potential employers as well as entrepreneurial and microenterprise ventures.

The trends detailed above provide insight into the opportunities available for SCSEP grantees to work with workforce partners to maximize the participation of older workers in the workforce.

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Historically, subgrantees are most successful in placing participants in unsubsidized employment opportunities with community service agencies (especially host training sites), and other service-oriented industries. The most prevalent occupations for SCSEP participants include maintenance and custodial workers, office clerks and receptionists, van drivers, senior center program assistants, retail sales associates, housekeepers, food service workers, and customer service representatives.

Most participants seek work experiences for benefits such as physical and mental activity, social interaction, the opportunity to contribute to the community, and/or the need for income. While many potential employers seek full-time employees who are willing to work nights and weekends, the typical SCSEP participant usually has part-time employment with daytime hours during the normal work week. Also, SCSEP participants do not normally seek jobs that would require relocation or an extended commute.

The program primarily targets community service organizations and small businesses because these employers typically offer the types of jobs that SCSEP participants are seeking. Subgrantee staff continue to identify and develop high-growth industries and occupations with a presence in local community job markets as potential employers of SCSEP participants.



(Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics via Data Commons)

Section 3: Service Delivery and Coordination

The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated host site closures, which impacted service provision to participants. To adjust for those closures, participants were assigned to their next nearest host site. Many of the non-profit organization host sites in the rural areas did not re-open after the pandemic. Currently, all but two participants are training at host sites.

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For some participants with lack of transportation, the closures of host-sites in their region made it difficult for them to remain in the program.

The pandemic also disrupted the way training was provided. The closures made it difficult to conduct trainings at the host sites, resulting in the regional program coordinators leading virtual trainings. Virtual trainings covered topics such as resume preparation and interviewing techniques.

As we move forward, the subgrantee in four geographical areas will continue to:

1. Intensify efforts to collaborate and secure WIOA assistance for participants by co-enrolling participants.
2. Assign job ready participants to local job clubs sponsored by Goodwill Career Centers, where they can receive assistance with resume preparation, interview skills, job referrals, basic computer skills, etc.
3. Increase contact with private sector employers, trade groups, and local economic development offices.

In previous years, for various reasons, our efforts to increase co-enrollments were low. During this plan cycle, efforts will be made to coordinate quarterly meetings between regional program coordinators and with local WIOA coordinators to increase co-enrollments. These meetings will address challenges and barriers, as well as to develop to resolve the challenges.

The Goodwill Career Centers continue to provide basic computer trainings. Additionally, the Albany Technical College offers a General Educational Development (GED) preparation course. Future collaboration efforts will be made to hopefully increase the number of technical colleges in other regions that offer GED preparation course. Attendance for these training and courses is currently being tracked, however, future tracking will include the number of participants receiving these trainings who have secured unsubsidized employment.

Georgia's SCSEP subgrantee in the four geographical regions will continue to collaborate with the One-Stop System, including the One-Stop Career Centers and the Georgia Workforce Development Board. The Board routinely share information (program eligibility requirements and priorities, open training slots, and workshop information) with the One-Stop Career Centers. The SCSEP subgrantee will also collaborate with these partners in other ways, including by:

1. Sharing information regarding the fastest growing industries, occupations and businesses that offer appropriate job opportunities for SCSEP participants.
2. Maintaining inventory of SCSEP marketing materials, brochures, and posters (including bilingual materials) at the One-Stop Career Centers.
3. Participants and program coordinators attending job fairs at the One-Stop Career Centers.

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4. Promoting the use of Federal Bonding and Work Opportunity Tax Credits as employer incentives to hire older workers.

SCSEP participants assigned to the One-Stop Career Centers as Older Worker Specialists help older Georgians access job information and obtain other One-Stop services to enhance employability. In addition, they share job market and training information between the One-Stop Centers and the SCSEP program offices. The Older Worker Specialists disseminate information regarding training vacancies and refer potential applicants to the SCSEP program offices in each county.

Exiting participants are encouraged to continue their collaboration with the One-Stop Career Centers. Subgrantee staff refer participants who have reached their individual durational limit for SCSEP services, but who have not yet obtained unsubsidized employment, to the One-Stop Career Centers for further job search and training support.

SCSEP Collaborations with OAA

Georgia's SCSEP program is housed within DHS/DAS. There are 12 Area Agencies on Aging in Georgia. The subgrantee in the four geographical regions collaborate with other OAA programs in several ways. First, the regional program coordinators refer participants in need of OAA supportive services like nutrition and adult day programs. Secondly, the AAAs continuously refer interested individuals to the state program coordinator which then refers them to the regional program coordinator based on the county of residence. Lastly, effective training assignments between SCSEP host sites and agencies providing OAA services have led to employment of SCSEP participants, which results in a slot opening for another participant.

During this state plan cycle, DHS will enhance assessments of participants that result in increased coordination of the following OAA services to support SCSEP participants:

- Caregiver activities and support, including kinship care services.
- Evidence-based health and wellness programs, including chronic disease self-management programs and falls prevention programs.

SCSEP Collaboration with Private and Public Entities

All collaborative efforts between regional program coordinators and public and private entities will continue to include:

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1. Identifying a minimum of five agencies and organizations (including churches and ESL programs) in targeted counties that serve low-income seniors and Hispanic/Latino older adults.
2. Identifying and initiating contact with a minimum of five organizations that serve veterans in targeted counties.
3. Working with the Office of Veterans Employment Services, which has satellite locations in many of the counties we serve, subgrantees will host resource fairs that will include WIOA, the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, and regional technical colleges. The purpose of this event is to help remove the barriers to employment that many Veterans face.
4. Recruiting five appropriate host agencies in each of the targeted areas who can serve and train Hispanic/Latino adults.

The SCSEP program collaborates and leverages resources with many organizations to provide training and supportive services for the participants. Some of these entities include host training sites, educational organizations, veterans' organizations, vocational rehabilitation activities, social service agencies and faith-based organizations.

In addition, Georgia's SCSEP subgrantee in the four geographical areas coordinate with many agencies to help participants in need of services such as subsidized housing or temporary shelters, no cost or lower-cost medical and prescription programs, energy assistance, utility discounts, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, Supplemental Security Income, and reduced transportation fares.

Collaborations and Job Training Initiatives

Host agencies are encouraged to provide computer training for their participants. Specialized computer training opportunities are provided through diverse agencies including local community colleges, One-Stop Career Centers, and public libraries. In addition, the subgrantees provide access to computers and other specialized training, including customer service. Computer skills have become increasingly important for SCSEP participants as most employment opportunities now require basic computer skills. All SCSEP participants are required to register with One-Stop Career Centers and encouraged to participate in available computer training classes.

Subgrantee will continue to pursue access to training courses offered by the One-Stop Career Centers. However, One-Stop training funds are used primarily for participants looking for full-time work, and most SCSEP participants are interested in part-time employment.

SCSEP partners coordinate education and training activities with Workforce Development Board partners and programs, such as WorkSource Georgia and Go Build Georgia.

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WorkSource Georgia ([link](#)) is a website developed by GDOL to share employment needs of both employers and job seekers and to connect job seekers with job openings. Go Build Georgia is a program aimed at educating Georgians about careers in the skilled trades and how to pursue opportunities in those industries. The Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) is a key training partner, with 22 colleges in 88 campus locations across the state.

Using the information from Chart 2, SCSEP participants receive training and work experience for many in-demand occupations, such as fast food and counter workers; cashiers; retail salespersons; laborers and freight, stock, and material movers; and waiters and waitresses. Based on participants' past education and goals, the SCSEP coordinators assist them in obtaining professional certifications like a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) and or Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) certificate. Through the collaboration with the technical colleges, participants attend classes to obtain certifications. For participants showing interest in pursuing a CDL license or a CNA certificate, testing fees can be provided using SCSEP supportive services funds. These training efforts help support the federal credential attainment goals.

The program coordinators are aware of the job trends and tailor their training assignments to provide the skills and work experience needed to support the employment requirements of the regional economy. During this plan cycle, Georgia will seek to expand the number and diversity of training assignments to ensure the greatest success for participants.

Host training site supervisors complete performance evaluations, and the subgrantees review these evaluations to assess the participants' progress and on-site supervision. Participants remain at their host training sites for as long as they are learning skills that will make them more marketable to employers and are complying with their Individual Employment Plans. Many host sites eventually hire their assigned SCSEP participants and have good job retention rates, indicating successful training and preparation.

Continued Coordination with the One-Stop Delivery System

Due to the pandemic, three of the four years of the previous state plan cycle were not fully implemented, making it challenging to measure successes. However, now we are in the post-pandemic era, the hope is to implement similar strategies to paint the whole picture to show the effectiveness of the One-Stop system. During the last year of the previous state plan cycle, we were able to transition participants due to re-opening of businesses, host-sites, One-Stop Career Centers, etc.

Goal: Improve Coordination with One-Stop Delivery System

Strategies:

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1. Maintain partnerships with the One-Stop Career Centers to monitor information on job openings and trends that will help identify current and future job opportunities.
2. Continue monitoring information regarding fast-growing industries and the occupations and businesses that offer job opportunities for SCSEP participants.
3. Ongoing training for SCSEP participants as Older Worker Specialists that can be assigned to the One-Stop Career Centers to assist older job seekers.
4. Continue participating in meetings that coordinate employment and training programs in local areas, including meetings of local Workforce Development Boards and GDOL Employer Committees.

Indicators:

1. Increase the number of SCSEP participants assigned to One-Stop Career Centers.
2. Increase the number of meetings with One-Stop Career Centers and partners.

Collaborative Efforts with Local Economic Development in Rural Areas

State and national grantee service providers in Georgia's rural communities cite the lack of viable 501(c)(3) not-for-profit and appropriate public agencies for community service assignments as a barrier to recruiting participants. SCSEP staff in these under-enrolled areas have committed to using other resources to improve recruitment efforts.

Based on the Equitable Distribution Report for Program Year (PY) 2022, the latest report available, 45.95% of the counties that were under-enrolled are designated as rural according to the Rural-Urban Continuum Codes. Many of those not counted as rural are in areas of the state with minimal population centers or other areas that do not expect business growth.

Goal: Expand SCSEP services in rural areas of Georgia

The State, in collaboration with the subgrantee in the four geographical regions, will continue to work toward improving the disparity in the Equitable Distribution Report for the counties that show significant barriers in over- and under-enrollment. The challenges continue to be the same year after year.

The absence of viable 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organizations and public agencies and the closure of host sites is a barrier to placing participants for community service assignments. This is a challenge for both the State and national grantees.

As previously mentioned, the strategies to expand SCSEP services in rural areas were not fully implemented due to the pandemic. One of the measures using strategies from the previous state plan that resulted in effective implementation is the number of participants providing community service. For PY 2021, the number of participants that provided community service was 179, 54 of which were in rural areas. For PY 2022, the

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number increased to 209, 68 participants of which were in rural areas. Efforts will be made using the strategies below to continue to expand SCSEP services in rural areas.

Strategies:

1. Compile and distribute to grantees a listing of rural counties with under-enrollment.
2. Identify one county per region per program year to target for expansion.
3. Identify potential partners in each county to assist with recruiting participants, host agencies and potential employers.
4. Evaluate progress toward goals at the mid-year training session.

Indicators:

1. Decrease the number of under-enrollment in rural counties in each program year
2. Increase the number of new participants enrolled in identified counties.
3. Increase the number of new host agencies enrolled in identified counties.
4. Increase the number of potential employers identified and contacted in identified counties.

Long-term Strategies to Engage Employers

During this state plan cycle, Georgia will continue to collaborate with community partners to develop the expertise of subgrantee staff in employer engagement, including the University of Georgia College of Family and Consumer Sciences. Georgia will also focus on developing entrepreneurial and microenterprise opportunities for SCSEP participants, as noted below. Employer engagement is crucial for placing participants via the On-the-Job Employment (OJE) Program.

Goal: Improve Employer Engagement in the SCSEP Program

Strategies:

1. Recruit potential employers.
2. Identify specific potential employers' skill needs.
3. Include employers in training activities.
4. Increase the number of OJE Program placements.

Indicators:

1. Increase the number of new employers identified.
2. Increase the number of employers included in training activities.

Goal: Increase participants' placement in entrepreneurial ventures to enhance opportunities for entrepreneurship

Strategies:

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1. Identify agencies that can provide technical assistance to SCSEP regional program coordinators about entrepreneurship and microenterprise.
2. Identify agencies that can provide training to participants about entrepreneurship and microenterprise.
3. Identify unmet needs in communities that might be addressed by SCSEP participants engaging in entrepreneurial ventures.
4. Recruit host agencies that can offer entrepreneurial opportunities to participants.
5. Provide training to SCSEP regional program coordinator about entrepreneurial activities within the SCSEP program.

Indicators:

1. Increase the number of training activities for SCSEP project staff.
2. Increase the number of training activities for SCSEP participants.
3. Increase the number of partnerships established to support entrepreneurship and microenterprise.
4. Increase the number of participants who launch an entrepreneurial venture.

Long-term Strategies to Engage Minorities

The following chart from the PY 2021 United States Department of Labor (USDOL) Minority Report, the latest report available, illustrates Georgia's service to minorities in SCSEP.

Table 1: SCSEP Minority Participation

<u>Category</u>	<u>SCSEP %</u>	<u>Census %</u>	<u>% Difference</u>	<u>Significant</u>
Minority Overall	71.0%	36.7%	193.5%	No
Hispanic	2.1%	4.1%	51.2%	Yes
Black	66.0%	29.1%	26.8%	No
Asian	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	No
American Indian	1.2%	0.3%	N/A	N/A
Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	N/A	N/A

(Source: SCSEP National PY 2021 Minority Report)

During the upcoming state plan cycle, Georgia will increase enrollment of Hispanic/Latino and Asian older adults in the SCSEP program. To be successful, these strategies must involve an integrated approach to recruiting participants, host agencies, and potential employers. Rather than using a statewide approach to increase enrollment of Hispanic/Latino and Asian older adults, DAS will focus on specific counties with the largest percentages of Hispanic/Latino and Asian residents compared to their total population.

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Goal: Increase enrollment of Hispanic/Latino older adults in SCSEP by 50%

Strategies:

1. Identify agencies and organizations, including churches and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs, in target areas that serve Hispanic/Latino older adults.
2. Identify liaisons between subgrantee and organizations that serve Hispanic/Latino older adults.
3. Provide outreach to identified organizations about the SCSEP program.
4. Recruit appropriate host agencies and potential employers that could serve Hispanic/Latino older adults.

Indicators:

1. Increase the number of agencies and organizations involved in outreach to Hispanic/Latino older adults.
2. Increase the number of host agencies recruited.
3. Increase the number of potential employers recruited.
4. Increase the number of Hispanic/Latino older adults served by SCSEP.

Goal: Increase enrollment of Asian older adults in SCSEP

Strategies:

1. Identify agencies and organizations (including churches and ESL programs) in target areas that serve Asian older adults.
2. Identify liaisons between subgrantee and organizations that serve Asian older adults.
3. Provide outreach to identified organizations about the SCSEP program.
4. Recruit appropriate host agencies and potential employers that could serve Asian older adults.

Indicators:

1. Increase the number of agencies and organizations involved in outreach to Asian older adults.
2. Increase the number of host agencies recruited.
3. Increase the number of potential employers recruited.
4. Increase the number of Asian older adults served by SCSEP.

Service to Most in Need

SCSEP's service to a community is based primarily on the social and economic needs of the participants entering the program and on the demand for services within local communities. The subgrantee identifies potential training sites through community

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outreach efforts, such as meetings with current and potential host training sites, and which help determine where the greatest needs for SCSEP assignments exist. Efforts also include frequent coordination with the One-Stop Career Centers and Georgia's Aging and Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) to monitor unmet community needs.

People who reside in urban areas often have greater access to resources like transportation, health services, and educational opportunities than people who reside in less populated areas. Participants with the greatest economic need are provided with supportive services. Services may include a gas card or a bus pass to access transportation to and from their host agency assignment until they receive a paycheck. SCSEP regional program coordinators and Area Agency on Aging staff work in conjunction to provide resource guides to identify supportive services, such as assistance with shelter, utilities, clothing, and food available through community resources. Many times, those resources are provided at no cost to SCSEP or the participant. The SCSEP subgrantees initiate and maintain partnerships with local non-profit agencies that provide a wide range of services, including adult day programs, child day care, food services, recreational facilities, and health care and social services.

SCSEP participants who are not comfortable in social settings are assigned to training sites that are able to provide a more supportive environment. These sites may already serve clients facing similar social barriers, thus providing a more comfortable environment for the participant.

DHS/DAS and the subgrantee continue the efforts to expand outreach of SCSEP throughout the state. Georgia's SCSEP grantee will explore opportunities for increasing our online presence – using websites, social media, etc. – to further expand the program's reach and impact throughout the state. Georgia will target strategies related to entrepreneurship and microenterprise to address identified gaps in services in local communities (such as transportation, home repairs, and in-home support for older adults who live alone and for caregivers).

DHS/DAS employs a full-time SCSEP coordinator. This SCSEP coordinator organizes and monitors all grant-related activities, including managing the grant budget, program planning and evaluation, statewide program coordination, and providing technical assistance and training to subgrantees. The SCSEP coordinator is also responsible for creating a systematic approach for program management and ensuring that contracted agencies comply with all state and federal regulations, and oversees the subgrantee and conducts the monitoring for program and financial compliance. There is a team lead who supervises the SCSEP coordinator.

DHS/DAS put out a bid for the SCSEP program for PY 2022. Athens Community Council on Aging (ACCA) a former subgrantee won the bid to manage the SCSEP program in Georgia starting in the PY 2022 and continued with the contract for PY 2023 and 2024.

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ACCA decided to keep the regions the same (Northeast, Northwest, Southern Crescent, and Southwestern).

Based on the above-mentioned information, DHS/DAS contracts with ACCA, a non-profit organization to provide direct SCSEP services. The private, non-profit organization was a former sub-project of the Northeast Area Agency on Aging.

ACCA has hired the previous four coordinators who have run the program in each of the four regions. The agency has direct contact with the regional coordinators who are responsible for recruiting participants and host agencies. In addition, the program coordinator for each region determines participant eligibility; reports required data; maintains file systems; participates in training and monthly conference calls; submits quarterly reports; handles any grievances or concerns; and ensures the best training experience possible for all participants. ACCA monitors all day-to-day activities of the program.

Goal: Target Jobs Effectively

Strategies:

1. Focus on placing participants in unsubsidized employment with community service agencies.
2. Identify and develop local job opportunities.
3. Routinely visit host training sites and encourage them to hire their SCSEP participants as funds become available.

Indicators:

1. Increase the number of participants placed in unsubsidized employment.
2. Increase the number of new host agencies.
3. Increase the percentage of host agencies that hire participants.

Goal: Manage Durational Limits Effectively

Strategies:

1. Provide quality support to each participant approaching his or her SCSEP durational limit.
2. Research the local job market and access all supportive services available to assist the SCSEP participants.
3. Reassess the participant no later than one year before the individual's durational limit date.
4. Update transitional Individual Employment Plans (IEP) enhancing job development and training efforts.

Indicator:

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1. Decrease the number of participants who reach durational limits without gaining unsubsidized employment (who have employment as a goal in their IEPs).

Goal: Train Participants Effectively

Strategies:

1. Encourage host training sites to make formal in-service and on-the-job training available for their assigned SCSEP participants.
2. Collaborate with local libraries and non-profit agencies that offer free training.
3. Conduct workshops covering different aspects of the job-seeking process and topics relating to health, consumer information, transportation, and all available social benefits.
4. Encourage participants seeking full-time employment to attend programs offered through the WIOA's One-Stop Career Centers.

Indicators:

1. Increase the number of OJE Program trainings for participants.
2. Increase the number of training hours.
3. Increase the number of participants who were hired after completion of OJE Program training.

DHS/DAS will continue to reach out to the National Council on Aging to swap slots in counties where both the national and the state grantee are present. If the agencies can negotiate a mutually beneficial swap, it will result in reduced travel time and administrative costs, and increase efficiency and coordination.

Strategies for Continuous OAA Improvement

Goal: Increase performance in core performance measures

Strategies:

1. Prioritize the core performance goals for improvement.
2. Identify additional data points that impact core performance goals.
3. Provide intensive training and technical assistance to SCSEP regional program coordinators on core performance goals, tools to diagnose performance, and strategies to improve performance.
4. Use the Subgrantee Tracking Sheet to manage performance.

Indicators:

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1. Increase the number of regions that meet all seven performance goals as set by USDOL.
2. Increase the number of regions achieving a performance goal of 80% and above.

Grantee Performance Management System (GPMS)

The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) launched the Grantee Performance Management System (GPMS) on July 1, 2022, creating a new case management tool to modernize service delivery and data validation for the SCSEP program. To help state and territorial grantees cover the cost to implement this system, USDOL announced the availability of funds to assist with this additional cost.

Georgia was one of the recipients of this Information Technology (IT) Implementation and Support Funding for SCSEP for PY 2022 and was awarded \$218,774.00. The funds were administered to the subgrantee, ACCA, for managing the implementation of the GPMS. ACCA used the additional funding to hire part-time, temporary personnel on a one-year contract, purchase hardware and software technologies to run and maintain records proficiently, lease equipment to complete adequate daily operations, and to procure useful supplies for program ease. Since USDOL has extended the funding for the grant period of July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025 (PY 2024, Georgia submitted the application for the grant and awaits the award announcement.

Section 4: Location, Population Served, and Equitable Distribution

Equitable Distribution for Over-Served and Under-Served Locations

As stated previously, rural areas face significant challenges in recruitment of participants, availability of host agencies and potential employers, and access to supportive services. Each of the special populations targeted for SCSEP participation face special needs and challenges that Georgia seeks to address through policy and practice.

Georgia has a large military presence with eleven military installations and more than 689,000 veterans who call Georgia home, according to the Georgia Department of Veterans Services 2022 Annual Report.

Goal: Increase enrollment of veterans and qualified veteran spouses by 50%

Strategies:

1. Identify and initiate contact with a minimum of five organizations that serve Veterans in target areas.
2. Develop relationship with the GDOL Office of Veterans Employment.
3. Implement area-specific outreach and recruitment methods to increase awareness of SCSEP services to Veterans.

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4. Conduct training for all SCSEP regional program coordinators to raise awareness and develop interventions to remove Veterans' barriers to employment.

Indicators:

1. Increase the number of veteran organizations contacted.
2. Increase the number of new or enhanced partnerships with veteran organizations.
3. Increase the number of training courses related to outreach, recruitment, barriers, and retention of Veterans in the SCSEP program.

Geographic Participation Changes

The Georgia SCSEP program is provided in four geographical regions, Northeast, Northwest, Southwest, and Southern Crescent areas managed by the subgrantee, (ACCA).

According to United States Census Bureau, the total population in Georgia was 10,519,475 and Georgians 55 and older comprise 26.08% of that population. USDOL authorized 897 SCSEP participant slots for PY 2022 and 2023 between Georgia and the two national grantees. Georgia administers 183 of those positions, and the remaining 714 are distributed between the two national grantees.

Participation Imbalance and Strategies to Correct

USDOL changed the number of modified and authorized positions allocated to Georgia for PY 2021 and have remained unchanged since then. Georgia had 987 modified positions prior to PY 2021. The number of modified positions assigned to Georgia beginning in PY 2021 was 897, 90 fewer slots from previous years. Table 3 shows the number of slots for PY 2023 Q1 with the variance. Georgia has 159 counties and SCSEP serves 158. Georgia administers 183 slots, and the remaining 714 slots are distributed among the two national grantees.

Based on the PY 2023 Q1 Equitable Distribution Report (EDR) summary (see Table 2), Georgia has an overall variance rate of 56.6%. Most of the counties are over- or under-enrolled by one or two participants. The following counties have variances of two or more slots: Clarke, Dougherty, Floyd, and Jasper.

The most significant variance for over enrollment for PY 2022 Q4 compared to PY 2023 Q1 is shown below.

Table 2

PY 2022, Q4		PY 2023, Q1	
COUNTY	VARIANCE	COUNTY	VARIANCE

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Clarke	+2	Clarke	+6
Dougherty	+7	Dougherty	+7
Floyd	+8	Floyd	+11
Jasper	+4	Jasper	+5

There is no significant difference between the number of counties that were over-enrolled by three or more for the PY 2022 Quarter 4 (three counties) and PY 2023 Quarter 1 (four counties). Clarke County was overenrolled by four slots in PY 2023 Quarter 1 compared to two slots in PY 2022 Quarter 4.

To monitor and correct inequities on an ongoing basis, DAS will continue to implement the following strategies:

1. Review the Equitable Distribution Report (EDR) periodically and discuss the variances with the subgrantee during the quarterly training and follow up individually as needed.
2. Review EDR semi-annually with the national grantee partners and develop strategies needed to achieve equitable distribution.

Table 3: Equitable Distribution Report Summary

Equitable Distribution – PY 2023 1 st Quarter													
Statewide Summary	MP	E	V	# Counties	# Under	% Under	Avg % Und. E.	# Over	% Over	Avg % Over E	# Over Under	% Over Under	Total V/AP
State Grantee	183	183	10	46	24	52.2%	64.9%	16	34.8%	79.7%	40	87.0%	61.2%
National Grantees	714	566	-148	112	74	66.1%	66.6%	25	22.3%	46.6%	99	88.4%	56.6%
Total ED Grantees	897	739	-158	144	92	63.9%	63.3%	37	25.7%	51.4%	129	89.6%	55.2%

(Source: SCSEP Equitable Distribution Report)

Strategies to Achieve Equitable Distribution

Many factors have contributed to the reason why some counties in Georgia have over-enrollment and some counties are underserved according to the allocated equitable distribution numbers.

The main reason that specific counties are overserved is because the areas the local GDOL offices are present, attract more potential candidates for SCSEP. The surrounding areas also make it easier for enrollment because the enrollees have easier access to the resources available. Typically, the counties with the GDOL (one stop centers) are the most overenrolled and the surrounding counties are next. Contributing to this SCSEP

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offices of the Northwestern and Southwestern regions are housed in the local GDOL. Due to their location, it draws more individuals in that area. In addition, those overserved areas are generally more urban locations that offer public transportation, more community resources and partners.

The reason that some areas are underserved or have no enrollment is because of their location and limited knowledge of the program. Many of these rural areas are not operating the same capacity prior to the pandemic. Most community resources in the rural areas only open when there is an event or a drive. Referrals through partners have diminished as there are no longer in-person community collaborations. SCSEP candidates in these areas come through the Senior or Nutrition Centers and many of those have not returned to full service. Typically, SCSEP candidates at the centers assisted with food preparation and serving, program activities, and janitorial services. With the closures of the traditional centers, these positions were eliminated. An example of these closures is the senior centers in the Southwestern Georgia (SOWEGA) AAA. SOWEGA has since transitioned from a brick-and-mortar model senior center to a senior center without walls model. In addition, transportation is another factor for under enrollment in those areas. The counties are spread out in mountainous areas making it difficult to drive to an onsite location or participants do not have the means to get there.

Historically, enrollment numbers have been higher in counties that are heavily populated, and the unemployment rate is significantly higher than in some of the smaller, rural counties. Recruitment efforts in those heavily populated areas are not as challenging and do not require a great deal of engagement because these counties are always operating at or above capacity. In addition, in these heavily populated areas, potential participants are aware of the SCSEP program through word-of-mouth marketing, and by referrals from partnering agencies or community organization. As mentioned above, in the areas where the SCSEP office is located, there is the benefit of the One-Stop Career Centers which serves as a “hub of information” for prospective participants.

In contrast, recruitment in rural more remote counties is quite different. These counties require a more visible and physical presence, and program coordinators must implement an aggressive approach by canvassing the communities to recruit participants and host sites.

According to the census information of 2022, the total population in Georgia was 10,913,150 and Georgians 55 and older comprise 24% of that population. The USDOL authorized 897 SCSEP participant slots for Program Year 2023 between Georgia and the two national grantees, AARP, and National Council on Aging. Georgia administers 183 of those positions and the remaining 714 are distributed between two national grantees.

Based on the EDR for PY 2023 Quarter 1, of the number of counties that were under-enrolled, 60.9% are designated as rural according to the Rural-Urban Continuum Codes (RUCC). Many counties that are not defined as rural are in areas of the state with minimal

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population or other areas that expect business growth. This impacts the availability of host agencies and potential employers.

The absence of viable 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organizations and public agencies is a barrier to placing participants for Community Service Assignments. This is a challenge for both the state and national grantees.

DAS and its subgrantee and the four regional program coordinators will continue to work towards improving the disparity in the Equitable Distribution for the counties that show significant variance in over and under enrollment. PY2023 holds an added challenge for delivering the program and improving disparity due to the lingering effect of the pandemic. We will take the following actions to improve enrollment variances:

1. Each quarter, DAS will continue to compile and distribute to the regional program coordinator a listing of counties with under-enrollment and develop strategies to mitigate variance.
2. DAS will work with each regional coordinator to identify one under-enrolled county per region per program year to target expanding enrollment.
3. Identify potential partners in each county to assist with outreach in recruiting participants, host agencies, and potential employers.
4. Review the Equitable Distribution Report semi-annually with the national grantee partners and develop strategies needed to achieve equitable distribution.

DAS still plans to reach out to the National Council on Aging (NCOA) to swap slots in some counties in which both the national and the state grantee are present. We believe that making the requested slots swaps will save unnecessary travel time and effort for both grantees and minimize confusion related to outreach and enrollment.

During this State plan cycle (2024-2027), Georgia will continue to collaborate with community partners to develop the expertise of subgrantee staff in employer engagement, including the University of Georgia College of Family and Consumer Sciences. Also, Georgia will focus on developing entrepreneurial and microenterprise opportunities for SCSEP participants. Employer engagement is crucial for placing participants via the On-the-Job Employment (OJE) program for which Georgia has been approved.

The following steps to improve employer engagement:

1. Identify potential employers.
2. Identify specific skill needs of potential employers.
3. Send qualified and suitable participants to job interviews.
4. Include employers in training activities.
5. Increase the number of OJE placements.

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The subgrantee in the four geographical regions will work collaboratively to identify areas of the state where over-enrollment or under-enrollment exists. The existing placement of positions in each county is compared with the number shown in the EDR to identify any areas of over-enrollment or under-enrollment in the state.

Participants cannot be terminated from the program because of the equitable distribution requirement, so grantees must rely on attrition to correct areas of over-enrollment. Georgia strives for equity, but it can be challenging in rural counties and areas with growth in the number of eligible individuals. When equity cannot be achieved, Georgia attempts to keep the actual position distribution within two positions above or below the equitable distribution goal.

When over-enrollment occurs, SCSEP acts on the guidance of the USDOL to bring enrollment back to a manageable level. The strategies recommended by the USDOL to manage over enrollment include stopping new enrollments and reducing hours for current participants.

Ratio for Eligible individuals

The 2020 Georgia WIOA State Plan notes that the state's population has limited language barriers, with only about 2.2% of households without a member over the age of 14 who speaks English. However, limited English proficiency disproportionately affects older persons and is a significant barrier to gaining unsubsidized employment.

When recruiting and selecting participants for SCSEP, priority is given to individuals who have one or more of the following priorities of service characteristics:

- Are covered persons in accordance with the Jobs for Veterans Act (Veterans and their eligible spouses, including widows and widowers who are eligible for SCSEP must receive services instead of or before non-covered persons).
- Are 65 years old or older.
- Have a disability.
- Have limited English proficiency.
- Have low literacy skills.
- Reside in a rural area.
- Have low employment prospects.
- Have been unable to find employment after using services provided through the One-Stop Delivery System.
- Are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of experiencing homelessness.
- Formally incarcerated individuals.

These priority of service requirements are included in the State's SCSEP contract and are also followed by the national SCSEP grantees. Local sub-project staff use their connections with other programs, such as Veteran Representatives and Vocational

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Rehabilitation counselors at the One-Stops, to promote SCSEP and learn about individuals who may meet the priority of service and eligibility requirements. Grantees partner with organizations that serve hard to-reach populations, such as those who are geographically or socially isolated and those whose primary language is not English.

Strategies to Avoid Service Disruption

USDOL allocates SCSEP subsidized community service slots to each county using a formula based on the number of individuals ages 55 and older with incomes at or below 125% of the federal poverty level. When slots are adjusted due to increases or decreases in census data or the modification of slots to ensure equitable distribution throughout the state, subgrantees ensure participants are not adversely affected. Redistribution is accomplished through attrition, such as retirements, relocations, durational limits, and unsubsidized job placement. In addition, DHS/DAS works with national grantees operating in Georgia to affect transfers between grants when necessary to accommodate a participant's preferences to continue training within an existing host agency.

The state SCSEP coordinator hosts monthly conference calls with the subgrantee staff to share important information related to the program. These calls provide a platform for local project staff to share information about successes and challenges in the areas they serve, and to allow the State to share updates on performance measures, position distribution and other program requirements. Subgrantees also meet with the state SCSEP coordinator quarterly for training to discuss topics about which they need more technical assistance and to exchange best practices.

The practice of open communication between the field and state office has proven to be a successful tool for the efficient operation of the program and has enabled both parties to respond quickly to issues that need immediate attention.