



# Participant & Host Agency Handbook

---

## **S**enior **C**ommunity **S**ervice **E**mployment **P**rogram

---

**Ventura County Area Agency on Aging**  
Policies and Procedures – Title V SCSEP

*Effective July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021*

Funded by the U.S. Department of Labor,  
California Department of Aging and  
Ventura County Area Agency on Aging

# Table of Contents

---

Introduction .....	1
About the Ventura County Area Agency on Aging (VCAAA) .....	1
SCSEP Overview.....	2
Services for Participants.....	3
Background Checks and Medical Tests.....	4
Meetings, Workshops and Other Training .....	4
Physical Examinations.....	4
Supportive Services.....	5
Workers' Compensation Insurance.....	5
Participant's Responsibilities.....	5
Communicate With Your Case Manager .....	5
Participant Commitment Agreement.....	7
Corrective Action Warning Notices .....	8
Community Service Assignments.....	9
Limitations of Host Agency Training Sites .....	9
Participant's Training Schedule and Breaks .....	9
Driving Vehicles.....	10
Cashier Training .....	10
Home-Based Training.....	11
Rotation Policy.....	11
Drugs and Weapons Policy .....	11
Payroll and Attendance .....	12
Pay Periods and Pay Dates.....	12
Direct Deposit and Pay Cards .....	12
Time and Attendance Reports (timesheets) .....	12
Correcting Timesheet Errors.....	13
Punctuality and Absences .....	13
Paid Sick Leave .....	13
Court Appearances.....	14

Host Agency Closings.....	14
Leave of Absence .....	14
Exiting the Program.....	16
Participant Voluntary Separation .....	16
Participant Involuntary Termination .....	16
Host Agency Partnerships.....	18
Benefits of Being a Host Agency .....	18
Host Agency Responsibilities .....	18
Host Agency Agreements and Evaluations.....	19
Host Agency Monitoring Visits .....	19
In-kind Contribution to the SCSEP.....	20
U.S. Department of Labor Surveys .....	20
Role of the Host Agency Supervisor.....	20
Home-based Training Assignments.....	22
Participant Rotation .....	22
Maintenance of Effort.....	22
Hiring the Participant .....	22
Participants Volunteering at the Host Agency.....	23
Paying the Participant.....	23
Injury Reporting & Safety Awareness.....	23
Injury Reporting .....	23
Safety Guidelines and Suggestions .....	24
Privacy Act Statement.....	27
Consent for Release of Information.....	28
Complaint Resolution Procedures and Grievance Policy .....	29

# INTRODUCTION

---

This handbook describes the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) services provided by the Ventura County Area Agency on Aging (VCAAA). The information contained in this handbook is subject to change without prior notice. Questions or comments regarding this handbook should be directed to the Ventura County Area Agency on Aging (VCAAA) case manager.

Each participant and host agency should receive a copy of this handbook when joining the SCSEP and at the beginning of each new program year. A program year is defined as the 12-month period beginning on July 1 and ending on the following June 30.

## **About the Ventura County Area Agency on Aging (VCAAA)**

In 1980, the Ventura County Area Agency on Aging (VCAAA) was formed as a public agency under the auspices of the County of Ventura. VCAAA, like area agencies on aging nationwide, assesses the needs of older individuals and their informal family caregivers in their Planning and Service Area and develops a variety of services and programs through planning, coordinating, advocating, interagency agreements, information sharing, monitoring, and evaluating. The efforts of the VCAAA and its Advisory Council are directed toward developing a comprehensive and coordinated community-based service delivery system and ensuring access to services.

Planning and Service Area (PSA) 18 is a single county planning and service area consisting entirely of Ventura County. Ventura County is one of 58 counties in California. The total area of the county is 2,208 square miles, which includes 1,845 square miles of land and 363 square miles of water. In the state, the county ranks 26th out of 58 in land size. According to Ventura County Public Health<sup>1</sup>, the current total population of Ventura County is 860,013, an increase of 3,558 people from FY 2017-2018. An estimated 38.5% of the population speak a language other than English at home. People over the age of 65 make up 14.48% of the population in the county versus 13.69% of the state population. The poverty rate remains around 8% of the total population versus 12% statewide.

There are 10 incorporated cities, and all are in the southern half of the county. Ventura County is known as the “Gold Coast” because of its scenic beauty, fertile lands, and Mediterranean-type climate. Tourists and homebuyers alike enjoy the climate and lifestyle of Ventura County. The principal employment clusters in Ventura County are biotechnology, information technology, agriculture, healthcare services, financial services, and government.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ventura County Public Health, [www.healthmattersinvc.org](http://www.healthmattersinvc.org)

## SCSEP Overview

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a hands-on job skills training program for older workers. The program provides subsidized community service-based training for low-income persons 55 or older who are unemployed and have poor or limited employment prospects. Participants have access to SCSEP services and other employment assistance through America's Job Center of California.

Participants are paid the highest of federal, state or local minimum wage for part-time job training averaging 20 hours a week and perform training at a variety of host agencies providing community service activities at non-profit and public facilities. It is intended that training serves as a bridge to unsubsidized employment opportunities.

The program provides community service hours to public and non-profit agencies, allowing them to enhance and provide needed services. The program also provides services to participants including *Individual Employment Plan* (IEP) development, orientation, community service placement, training specific to community service assignment, other training as identified in the IEP, supportive services, wages, fringe benefits, annual physicals, assistance in securing unsubsidized employment, and access to local America's Job Center of California.

Eligibility requirements:

- Age 55 or older at the time of application
- Family income must fall within 125% of federal poverty level
- Must reside in Ventura County
- Must be unemployed at and throughout the time of enrollment including self-employment by performing any activity which provides an income no matter how small the amount
- Must provide income and household information for annual re-certification to verify continued eligibility
- Must register at the local America's Job Center of California office
- Must collaborate with the SCSEP case manager develop an *Individualized Employment Plan* (IEP)
- Must be willing and able to attend community service assignments and other trainings
- Must seek permanent employment and provide proof of such activity as a condition of enrollment
- Must not volunteer at the assigned host agency site

- Must not participate in partisan or non-partisan political or religious activities at the host agency site

Eligible individuals may participate in the program for a maximum duration of 48 months, excluding approved breaks in service. The 48-month time limit is cumulative and includes any participation with any other SCSEP service providers.

SCSEP may not be able to help everyone who is eligible for the program because SCSEP is not an entitlement program. The SCSEP case manager will review each applicant's documentation to determine eligibility and suitability.

No person may be excluded from participation in this program because of race, creed, color, sex, age, disability, national origin, religion, political affiliation, ethnicity or marital status.

Host agency training site discrimination based on race, creed, color, sex, age, disability, national origin, religion, political affiliation, ethnicity or marital status, as governed by State and Federal laws, is prohibited. Also, training site sexual harassment is prohibited. SCSEP participants must report discrimination or harassment to their case manager.

## **SERVICES FOR PARTICIPANTS**

---

SCSEP is an employment training program, not a job. Every participant is required to actively seek employment.

To improve each participant's training and search for employment, the following services are provided:

- A skills assessment
- A formal program orientation
- The development of an *Individual Employment Plan* (IEP)
- Help with setting employment goals
- Job readiness workshops
- Referrals to employment opportunities
- Job training at a host agency
- Follow-up meetings, evaluations and reviews

Participants train at nonprofit organizations or government offices called host agencies. However, participants are not employees of the host agency. Participants have a host agency supervisor that helps them with the training they have agreed upon prior to being assigned to the host agency.

Participants also have a case manager that arranges for participant training at the host agency. Participants should contact their case manager to resolve any issues or concerns they have about their training.

Participants are paid for the number of hours that they train each week. The number of weekly training hours is set by their case manager and may vary. Their case manager will notify them of any changes in the number of weekly training hours before the change takes effect.

## **Background Checks and Medical Tests**

If a participant's training assignment requires a background check, SCSEP will pay for it. If a participant's training assignment requires a medical test, e.g., tuberculosis test, the results of the test will be included in the participant's medical file. If a participant objects to sharing the results of medical tests, the case manager will explain to the participant that the absence of such a test may limit or exclude some training assignments because of the requirement to obey applicable health laws.

## **Meetings, Workshops and Other Training**

Occasionally, meetings and workshops are conducted that provide participants with additional information about training, job search, employment trends and opportunities, and other information that is relevant to older workers. All participants that are not on a leave of absence must attend these meetings and workshops. Participants will be paid for the time they spend at the meetings and workshops. If a participant is unable to attend, he or she must notify the SCSEP case manager before the date of the meeting or workshop. If the participant does not attend the meeting or workshop but instead reports to their host agency, they will receive a *Corrective Action Warning Notice*.

When other training that has been identified by the SCSEP case manager as beneficial and that would lead toward unsubsidized employment is available for participants, they are required to attend such training. Participants will be paid during the time spent in other training. The case manager must approve the training in writing and notify the host agency about the time that the participant will be absent from their regular training site.

## **Physical Examinations**

Each participant will be offered a basic physical examination during enrollment and annually at the time of re-certification. The participant may waive his or her right to receive the examination.

The physical examination cannot be used in determining eligibility. SCSEP will pay for the cost of the physical examination.

The results of the examination are to be provided to the participant only and are the property of the participant. The participant not obligated to share the results with the case manager.

## **Supportive Services**

Supportive services help participants to benefit from their job training. Supportive services may be provided for participants if approved by the SCSEP staff and funding is available.

Supportive services may include:

- Follow-up services
- Needs-related payments
- Health and medical services
- Housing including temporary shelter
- Payment of reasonable costs of transportation
- Special job related or personal counseling
- Work shoes, badges, uniforms, eyeglasses and tools

Supportive services may also be provided for up to twelve (12) months following unsubsidized job placement if necessary to retain employment.

## **Workers' Compensation Insurance**

Workers' Compensation Insurance is a benefit provided to each participant. Participants are covered if they are injured at their assigned host agency while performing their assigned tasks during the training hours as described on their current *Community Service Assignment* (CSA) form. Participants are not covered if they are injured at any other time. Filing a false Workers' Compensation claim is illegal and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

# **PARTICIPANT'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

---

## **Communicate with Your Case Manager**

Participants are responsible for discussing their activities, concerns, progress and goals to their case manager. Below are some examples of times when the participant should talk with the case manager:

- **When problems occur with the training assignment, duties, supervisors, other trainees, or staff.** By keeping communication open with the case manager, small problems can be often resolved before they turn into big problems. If the case manager cannot correct the problem, a transfer may be necessary. The participant may be placed on administrative leave while another host agency site is identified.
- **When unable to report to the host agency as scheduled for any reason.** Calls should be made at the beginning of the day, even if scheduled to report in the afternoon.
- **When making any changes to the scheduled training hours.** Only the SCSEP case manager can approve changes to the scheduled training hours. Should the host agency supervisor ask the participant to rearrange his or her hours for the day, for the week, or permanently; the participant must first contact the SCSEP case manager to confirm that the host agency received the approval to modify his or her time, before accepting different hours.
- **When enhancing the training or asking the host agency for more duties.** When the participant has mastered the training duties on his or her *Community Service Assignment*, the participant should contact the case manager to review the *Individual Employment Plan* to enhance the current training or to add new skills to be learned.
- **When applying for employment at the host agency.** Host agencies are encouraged to hire participants who are qualified and ready for the position. Both the participant and the host agency personnel should notify the case manager if a position is available and the participant would like to apply for the position.
- **When applying for a job and going to an interview.** Participants must conduct an active job search when it is listed on their *Individual Employment Plan* (IEP). When the participant informs the case manager about the status of his or her job search, it helps the staff to assist in further job leads. Also, if the participant keeps applying and interviewing unproductively, it will indicate to the staff that a review of the participant's IEP may be beneficial.
- **When America's Job Center of California (AJCC) services are refused.** If services are refused to the participant for any reason, he or she must notify the SCSEP case manager. Local employment offices and AJCs should be assisting the SCSEP participants with workforce development techniques.
- **When there is a change in the marital status, address, name, income, etc.** The participant must notify the SCSEP case manager about any changes to name, residence address, phone number, email address, family income, or marital status. The SCSEP case manager needs to contact the participant about

meetings, job fairs, and other important events and having the correct information makes it easier to contact the participant.

- **When injured or suddenly becomes ill while at the host agency site.** The host agency supervisor must be notified immediately when the participant has been injured, suddenly becomes ill or if an incident occurs. Upon notifying the host agency supervisor, the case manager must also be notified immediately.
- **When obtaining employment.** The case manager wants to document and celebrate this achievement with the participant and the host agency. So, it is important to communicate this information to the case manager as soon as the participant becomes employed. When the participant exits the training assignment for employment, the case manager will periodically contact the participant or his or her supervisor to establish how the participant is doing in employment. The information provided when the case manager conducts follow-up calls on exited participants helps to evaluate the SCSEP program and verify that it is providing the best training for participants in seeking, finding and keeping a job.
- **When deciding to leave SCSEP.** If a participant decides to leave the program, the participant should contact the case manager as soon as possible in advance of the last day of training.
- **When the U.S. Department of Labor sends a survey about the program.** The U.S. Department of Labor sends out surveys to randomly chosen participants to measure how well the SCSEP is achieving its goals. This survey is offered at no cost to the participant. It is important that when the survey is received, the participant carefully reads it, fills it out, and returns it to the sender. Responses are used to gauge performance, which can impact the availability of future funding.

## **Participant Commitment Agreement**

As a participant of SCSEP, I promise to:

- Participate in the development of my *Individual Employment Plan* (IEP) and try to the best of my ability to meet the timeframes and goals established in it.
- Perform the assigned duties at my host agency training site to the best of my ability and to notify my case manager immediately if those duties change
- Obey all SCSEP policies, rules and regulations
- Attend all training, classes and other activities as required by my case manager or my training site supervisor
- Seek permanent employment, register with America's Job Center of California, go to appropriate job interviews and report my job seeking activities to my case manager as required

- Provide information to my case manager for job retention and follow-up purposes
- Not volunteer time at my training site
- Not participate in any political or religious activity during my training hours

As a participant of SCSEP, I understand the following:

- The SCSEP does not offer employment but is a subsidized work experience and training program funded by Title V of the Older Americans Act. This program is designed to teach me new and marketable skills so I may enter the competitive job market. My continued enrollment depends upon the availability of funds, my performance and my commitment to the program.
- I will be assigned to a temporary training position and will be paid the California state or local hourly minimum wage, whichever is higher. I will be given a scheduled number of hours per week for the time I am required to train at my host agency. My case manager will notify me if the number of my training hours changes.
- I will report to my training site promptly at the designated time, and if I am going to be late or am unable to attend, I will first notify my case manager and then notify my host agency supervisor.
- In my participant file is a *Record of Participant Orientation* form bearing my signature which acknowledges my commitment to the program.

## **Corrective Action Warning Notices**

Corrective action warning notices emphasize what is expected of participants about compliance with rules and proper training site etiquette by communicating the need to correct unacceptable behavior or non-compliance with policy. The goal is to guide the participant to appropriate behavior by identifying the problems, causes and solutions.

Host agency supervisors must report any infractions that occur at the training site to the case manager. The case manager issues the corrective action warning notice to the participant.

Usually, participants will receive an opportunity for corrective action before a formal exit notice is issued. However, VCAA reserves the right to exit a participant from SCSEP without corrective action warnings.

# COMMUNITY SERVICE ASSIGNMENTS

---

A community service assignment has two meanings:

1. It is the host agency site where each participant is placed for training.
2. It is the title of the activity the participant is performing at the host agency training site.

Each participant's community service training occurs at a host agency site. The host agency will provide a supervisor that will oversee the training to help the participant prepare for unsubsidized employment.

The *Community Service Assignment (CSA)* form records the required information regarding the host agency where the participant will be receiving training. The case manager will cooperate with the host agency and the participant to develop a training plan that states the tasks and duties in which the participant will be trained by the host agency. The case manager will give a copy of the CSA to the participant and the host agency supervisor.

The participants may only perform those duties listed on their most recent CSA form. The host agency staff may not ask the participants to perform any duties not listed on their CSA form, nor change the hours or responsibilities of any participant who is training at the host agency site. Only the case manager is authorized to change the information on CSA form.

## Limitations of Host Agency Training Sites

Participants cannot participate where the training involves the following:

- The construction, operation, or maintenance of any facility used or to be used as a place of sectarian religious instruction or worship
- Training which primarily benefits private, profit-making organizations
- Training which directly or indirectly benefits any private or personal undertaking of any executive or member of the staff of the sub-grantee or of any host agency
- Training at the participant's place of residence
- Training at the participant's place of worship/study/club, etc.
- Participants may not possess keys that may be used to open or close the host agency's facilities

## Participant's Training Schedule and Breaks

The participant's training is performed during the host agency's standard business operating hours and is scheduled a minimum of three hours per training day or a

maximum of eight hours per training day. The participant's training schedule may not exceed five consecutive training days.

If the participant trains more than five hours in one day the participant is required to take an unpaid 30-minute meal break. Meal breaks must be shown on the time and attendance sheet but are not to be included in the total training hours for the day. Rest breaks are allowed at the discretion of the host agency supervisor who must apply the California law regarding breaks in the work place.

The average number of training hours is 20 hours per week, although the number may fluctuate. The case manager will inform participants and host agency supervisors about changes to the number of weekly training hours.

The policies and procedures of the host agency training site apply to the participant while in training. If there is a policy or procedure that the participant disagrees with, the participant should notify the case manager to discuss the issue.

## **Driving Vehicles**

Participants are not allowed to drive any vehicle during training without approval from the SCSEP project coordinator.

A participant may drive a vehicle belonging to the host agency if:

- It is approved in writing by the SCSEP project coordinator.
- The host agency provides a copy of their current auto insurance policy to the SCSEP case manager.
- The participant provides a copy of his or her valid driver license to their SCSEP case manager.

The participant may drive his or her own vehicle if:

- It is requested in writing by the host agency supervisor.
- It is approved in writing by the SCSEP project coordinator.
- The participant provides a copy of his or her valid driver license with a copy of his or her current auto insurance policy. If the participant continues to perform this duty, all documents on file must be kept current. The host agency is responsible for payment of mileage to the participants when they use their own vehicle.

## **Cashier Training**

Participants may train to be cashiers. The participant should receive the training necessary to ensure that he or she is able to acquire the skills and experience required to get a job as a cashier. Participants training as cashiers must take all the necessary precautions to ensure all the money is accounted for; this will affect their status with the

program. If bonding is required it is the responsibility of the host agency to provide this insurance requirement for the participant.

## **Home-Based Training**

Home-based training assignments are not permitted. Participants must physically report to a host agency training site that is not their place of residence. This includes but is not limited to homeless shelters, dormitories and religious facilities. Also, the participants may not take work home to complete. Any violation of this policy will be reason to exit the participant from the program and terminate the *Host Agency Agreement*.

## **Rotation Policy**

Rotation of a participant's training assignment increases opportunities to reach the goal of employment. Rotations of community service assignments will be based on the participant's training needs as defined in their *Individualized Employment Plan (IEP)*. The case manager will reassess the participant and update the IEP to determine what is in the participant's best interest.

Rotation also encourages host agencies to hire qualified job-ready participants and reminds participants who are comfortable in their training assignment to focus on their job search responsibilities.

Participants training at host agencies such as schools and other campuses that are closed more than two weeks for breaks require rotation.

A temporary rotation is the re-assigning of a participant at another host site for a period of not more than two weeks due to the closure of the current host agency. A temporary rotation is strictly a case manager choice and not a requirement.

## **Drugs and Weapons Policy**

Participants may not use, be under the influence of, distribute, dispense, possess, or manufacture drugs or alcohol during paid training or meeting hours while on VCAAA SCSEP or host agency property. Any violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action and can include exiting from the SCSEP.

- Any violation of this policy must be documented and reported to SCSEP staff immediately.
- Legally prescribed medications are permitted so long as their use does not adversely affect the ability to satisfactorily perform duties, participant safety, or the safety of others.
- Participants found "guilty" (or entered a plea of nolo contendere), or sentenced to serve time, or both, for a federal, state, or city criminal drug statute violation that

occurred during training assignment hours on the VCAA SCSEP or host agency property, must notify SCSEP staff within five (5) days of the verdict or sentencing.

- Convictions must be reported to the federal government.

Participants may not carry any weapon during the training hours, whether at the VCAA SCSEP local office, a meeting location, or at the host agency. Any violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action up to and including, the participant's exit from the program. Weapon is generally defined as, but not limited to, any firearm, knife-like object, or any form of weapon whose primary use is to inflict harm. If any participant is observed carrying a weapon in the training place, it should be reported immediately to the host agency supervisor and the SCSEP staff.

## **PAYROLL AND ATTENDANCE**

---

SCSEP participants are paid the highest of California or local minimum wage, including any local living wage, for orientation, classroom training, assessment, individual employment planning, and community service assignment training hours. Participants are not paid for court appearances, overtime, holidays, vacation, personal time off or compensatory time.

### **Pay Periods and Pay Dates**

A pay period is a length of time over which a participant's training time is recorded and paid. A participant shall receive his or her hourly rate of pay for the two-week pay period in accordance with the participant's hourly rate on or about the Friday following the end of the biweekly payroll period.

### **Direct Deposit and Pay Cards**

Participants have the choice to receive their training wages by electronic direct deposit into a bank account or other approved account. Participants should inform their case manager immediately about changes to their mailing address, direct deposit accounts or pay card information to avoid delays in the payroll process.

If a participant has received the wrong amount of training wages deposited into their bank account or pay card account, the participant should notify their case manager so the error can be corrected.

### **Time and Attendance Reports (timesheets)**

The SCSEP case manager will provide the host agency supervisor with the *Time and Attendance Report* (timesheet) form.

The host agency supervisor should ensure that:

- Timesheets are to be completed in blue ink only; never in pencil or erasable ink
- Participants who train more than five (5) hours in one day must take a 30-minute unpaid break that must be recorded on the timesheet
- Timesheets are completed on time and verified to be accurate
- Timesheets are signed and dated by both participant and supervisor
- Timesheets are transmitted by fax or email to the SCSEP case manager no later than three (3) business days before the last day of the pay period
- Original timesheets are sent by postal mail to the SCSEP case manager

### **Correcting Timesheet Errors**

Correction fluid or correction tape should not be used to correct timesheet errors. If an error is made on a timesheet, corrections should be made by drawing a single line through the error and indicate the correct information. The host agency supervisor and the participant should both initial and date each change made to the timesheet.

### **Punctuality and Absences**

Participants should report to their host agency training site promptly at the designated time. Repeated tardiness may result in exit from the SCSEP program.

Participants are expected to first notify their case manager and then notify their host agency supervisor if they are going to be late or are unable to attend training.

Any participant that is absent from the training assignment for three (3) consecutive days without proper notification and authorization shall be considered to have abandoned the assignment and may be exited from the SCSEP program.

Participants should schedule appointments that do not interfere with their training schedule. Training time missed for any appointment cannot be made up without prior approval of the case manager.

### **Paid Sick Leave**

Participants will receive paid sick leave in accordance with California's Paid Sick Leave laws. Participants who do not qualify to receive sick pay may make up training time missed due to illness pending prior approval of their case manager. In compliance with the AB 1522: Healthy Workplaces, Healthy Families Act of 2014, Title V SCSEP participants are entitled to up to twenty-four (24) hours of paid sick each year of participation. The parameters for the paid sick leave are as follows:

- After 30 days from enrollment, all Title V SCSEP participants accrue 24 hours of paid sick leave.
- After the 90th day of enrollment in Title V SCSEP, all participants are eligible to utilize available paid sick leave hours.
- Sick leave hours do not accrue and do not carry over to the next year.
- Participants are not paid for unused sick leave.

## **Court Appearances**

SCSEP does not pay participants for missed training hours due to court appearances. However, the participant may make up the missed training hours within the same pay period pending prior approval of the case manager.

## **Host Agency Closings**

The participant will not be paid if the host agency is closed during training hours due to factors beyond their control such as inclement weather or other emergency. However, training hours lost due to host agency closings may be made up within the same pay period not to exceed eight (8) hours per day and not to exceed the maximum weekly hours approved pending SCSEP case manager approval.

## **Leave of Absence**

A Leave of Absence (LOA) is a pre-approved participant's request or a policy mandated event which temporarily suspends a participant's training activities and wages for a period of four (4) or more consecutive days. The SCSEP staff has the authority to approve or decline a participant's request for a LOA. If approved, the participant's SCSEP durational limit clock is stopped until the participant returns to training. The SCSEP staff may grant a LOA for up to 60 days. If the participant has not returned by the 61st day, the participant will be exited from SCSEP. If the participant ignores a declined LOA, the participant will be exited. Participants are not allowed to participate in any classroom trainings, workshops or meetings while on LOA.

### **Voluntary LOA**

This is a written request from the participant with an anticipated return date. To request a LOA, participants must contact the SCSEP case manager who will complete the *Notice of Leave of Absence* form. Participants are obligated to notify their case manager and their host agency supervisor if they are unable to return on the agreed upon date.

### **Administrative LOA**

The case manager may place participants on Administrative LOA while finding another suitable host training site or to resolving other administrative issues. Participants placed on Administrative LOA due to factors beyond their control may not be exited for

inactivity. If a participant is at fault and could not remain at the host agency due to his or her behavior and consequently is placed on Administrative LOA, he or she can be exited. This includes being disruptive, insubordinate, abusive or similar behavior.

**Workers' Compensation LOA**

Participants who are on Workers' Compensation LOA must be placed on an Administrative LOA until they provide documentation from the treating physician stating they are released back to training, or the participant submits a written statement that he or she is voluntarily leaving the program.

Any physician who provides the participant with a modified duty release must document the detailed descriptions of the modified activities. Participants that do not return to training after being released from a Workers' Compensation LOA may be exited from the program due to training abandonment.

# EXITING THE PROGRAM

---

## Participant Voluntary Separation

A participant may voluntarily separate/exit from SCSEP for any of the following reasons:

- Unsubsidized employment
- Relocation outside of the planning and service area
- Retirement
- Health reasons
- Institutionalization
- Family reasons
- Incapacitation or death

## Participant Involuntary Termination

Participants may be involuntarily terminated from the local SCSEP Project for the following reasons specified in the regulations:

- Provided false information to the Project
- Exceeded their durational limit
- Refused to accept three job offers or referrals to unsubsidized employment consistent with the participant's *Individual Employment Plan (IEP)* and there are no extenuating circumstances that would hinder the participant from moving to unsubsidized employment
- Failed to report unsubsidized employment
- The Project found the participant ineligible for enrollment during recertification
- The project incorrectly determined the participant to be eligible for the program

Participant may be terminated involuntarily for the following "for cause" reasons:

- Falsification of official records such as timesheets
- Physical violence or intentional destruction of property
- Obscene, abusive, harassing or threatening language or behavior
- Sexual harassment
- Imminent threat to health or safety posed by participant
- Non-compliance with substance abuse policy
- Gross misconduct such as violating the drug and alcohol policy or intentionally endangering the lives of themselves or others

- Violence including but not limited to physical or extreme verbal violence at the training site
- Violation of vacation, sick leave or approved break policy including failure to return from an approved break by the required date without due notice or good cause
- Frequent unexcused tardiness or absences (tardy more than six times or absent more than three times in a six-month period)
- Unauthorized possession of property belonging to the project or host agency work site
- Unauthorized release of confidential information obtained from project office or host agency
- Insubordination as intentional refusal to carry out the direct instruction of a supervisor, provided there were no extenuating circumstances
- Refusal to comply with the IEP without good cause (except for violations of work referral)

IEP “for cause” terminations include refusal to:

- Accept training opportunities outlined in IEP
- Accept a new community service assignment to enhance skill development in support of IEP goals
- Accept supportive services that will enhance the participant’s ability to participate in a community service assignment consistent with IEP
- Participate in project-offered services such as job search or resume writing
- Cooperate with the recertification, assessment and IEP processes

Projects must give a 30-day notice to participants prior to involuntary termination. The notice shall explain in detail why the participant has been terminated.

# HOST AGENCY PARTNERSHIPS

---

A qualifying SCSEP host agency is defined as a public agency or a private nonprofit organization exempt from taxation under the provisions of section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, other than a political party, which provides a work site and supervision for one or more participants. A host agency may be a religious organization so long as the projects do not involve the construction, operation, or maintenance of any facility used or to be used as a place for religious instruction or worship.

Through the training provided, host agencies help participants to develop skills that will enable them to compete in today's job market and help the community by providing qualified and experienced workers.

## Benefits of Being a Host Agency

SCSEP can provide host agencies with temporary support personnel who can help strengthen programs and services being provided to the community. Many host agency supervisors find that support services provided by SCSEP participants allow them to complete priority tasks more effectively by delegating "must do but are very time consuming" assignments that helps the organization be better able to serve others.

Another benefit of being a host agency is the open door to networking with other host agencies that provides them the opportunity to expand their own marketing base. Through host agency meetings, and other events, each host agency is able to further assist the community by collaborating and sharing referrals with each other.

## Host Agency Responsibilities

The responsibilities of a host agency include the following:

- Provide orientation, supervision, instruction, and job training supporting each participant to achieve the *Individual Employment Plan* (IEP) goals
- Record the participants' training hours on timesheets and submit the timesheets to the SCSEP case manager on time
- Consider hiring the participant if funds become available for a position where the same or similar duties are being performed by the participant
- Support the goals of SCSEP to contribute to the general welfare of the community
- Attend SCSEP meetings facilitated and conducted by the local SCSEP office staff, to receive updates, obtain information and provide suggestions for program improvements

- Work with the SCSEP case manager and participant to create a training plan and schedule for the participant
- Notify the SCSEP case manager if the participant's supervisor is compensated with federal funds
- Notify the SCSEP case manager of any personnel changes that may affect the participant
- Notify the SCSEP case manager of any layoffs (within a two-year period) where participants may be assigned for training
- Communicate with the SCSEP case manager regarding the participant's training activities, time and attendance, and any other issues/situations
- Help provide job leads to the participant when available

## **Host Agency Agreements and Evaluations**

The *Host Agency Agreement* is a contract between the host agency and VCAAA that provides a summary description of the SCSEP and states the general expectations of the host agency. This agreement is general in terms because the main purpose is to document the partnership between the agency and VCAAA. The *Host Agency Agreement* may not be altered without the prior approval of VCAAA staff.

The host agency's participation will be evaluated annually. If the host agency is found to be in compliance with the *Host Agency Agreement*, the host agency representative may be asked to sign a new *Host Agency Agreement* verifying the continued partnership with VCAAA. Otherwise, if the host agency is not fulfilling its obligation to adequately train, supervise and guide the participants toward securing unsubsidized employment, VCAAA may discontinue its agreement with the host agency.

## **Host Agency Monitoring Visits**

The SCSEP case manager will visit and monitor each host agency. The monitoring observations and findings will be documented and included in the host agency file.

Monitoring on a regular basis assures:

- Compliance with the SCSEP policies and procedures.
- The host agency is adhering to the host agency agreement.
- There are no safety issues.
- The participant and supervisor are complying with the training plan and scheduled hours.
- Program satisfaction.
- There is an open dialogue to resolve issues that might arise.

Monitoring visits consist of the following, but are not limited to:

- Inspecting for safety issues
- Interviewing the host agency supervisor
- Interviewing participant
- A review of the participants' training duties as listed on the *Community Service Assignment*

### **In-kind Contribution to the SCSEP**

Cost-sharing, or matching, refers to the portion of the program costs not covered by the federal government. SER's non-federal share of the SCSEP program is met by the in-kind services provided by the host agency supervisor through the direct supervision of the SCSEP participants. The direct supervision hours and applicable percentage of fringe benefits paid to the supervisor by the host agency is reported quarterly to the local SER-VC SCSEP office. The *In-kind Contribution Documentation* form and instructions for completing the form will be provided by SCSEP case manager.

### **U.S. Department of Labor Surveys**

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) conducts an annual customer satisfaction survey of randomly selected SCSEP host agencies. If your host agency is selected, it is important that the survey is completed promptly. Once completed by the host agency, the survey is returned to a third-party contractor via a postage-paid envelope provided that will compile the survey results for the DOL.

### **Role of the Host Agency Supervisor**

The host agency must provide adequate supervision for participants. If the assigned supervisor is not present, there must always be an alternative staff person present. No participant may be the only representative on the host agency premises.

No participant may supervise another person at the host agency. Supervision is a staff assignment and participants may not provide supervision as part of their training assignment.

The case manager will cooperate with the host agency supervisor to determine what training opportunities are available at the host agency and to develop a training plan for the participant. The information will be recorded in the *Community Service Assignment* (CSA) form that is developed and approved by the participant, the case manager and the host agency supervisor.

Participants can only perform those tasks listed on the CSA. Host agency supervisors who wish to change the CSA must notify the participant's case manager before making any changes. Only the case manager is authorized to alter the participant's CSA.

The role of the supervisor is to:

- Provide an orientation that explains but is not limited to safety, emergency exits, agency's policies and procedures
- Provide supervised training
- Provide skill and personal development assistance
- Provide encouragement for job search
- Provide job leads
- Participate with the SCSEP case manager in upgrading the tasks of the participant
- Attend host agency meetings

The host agency supervisor is a partner with the case manager in monitoring the participant's progress. Communication with the case manager is needed to help the participant reach his or her goals. Problems, challenges, praise, suggestions, and ideas for improving the program and the participant's road to successful employment should be communicated to the participant's case manager.

The host agency may not fire, terminate or dismiss a participant. If there is an issue where the removal of the participant is required, the host agency supervisor must contact the case manager to make the arrangements. Even if the incident is minor, the host agency supervisor should notify the case manager.

Below are examples of incidents where contacting the case manager is required:

- When the participant calls in and is unable to report to his or her assignment
- When it appears the participant is having problems arriving on time
- When there is an insubordinate situation
- When a change to the participant's schedule or tasks is needed
- When there is a breach of confidence
- When the participant is injured
- When the participant is experiencing hardships that affect training performance
- When the participant has learned the tasks assigned

## **Home-based Training Assignments**

Home-based training assignments are not permitted. Participants must report to a host agency site that is not their place of residency including but not limited to homeless shelters, dormitories, and religious facilities. Also, participants may not take host agency training tasks home to complete. Any violation of this policy will be reason to exit the participant from the program and terminate the *Host Agency Agreement* with the host agency.

## **Participant Rotation**

The case manager will monitor and evaluate each participant's progress in their assigned training. Participants will be rotated to various community service assignments as needed to maximize their exposure to different training opportunities.

## **Maintenance of Effort**

Maintenance of Effort refers to the substitution of SCSEP participants for permanent agency employees. Federal regulations prohibit host agencies from using SCSEP participants as substitutes for their permanent employees. Participants may not be assigned to host agencies when their assignment causes displacement of host agency employees; reduces hours of non-overtime work, wages or employment benefits; or requires them to perform the assignments of persons on layoff.

The assignment of a SCSEP participant must not result in:

- Displacement of currently employed workers
- Impairment of existing contracts for service
- Other costs being substituted by federal funds in connection with work which would otherwise be performed
- Substitution of project assignments for existing federal jobs
- Employment of a participant to perform the duties assigned to a previously employed person who is currently on laid-off status

Host agencies that violate Maintenance of Effort are at risk of having their host agency status terminated.

## **Hiring the Participant**

Filling available permanent positions within a host agency with trained SCSEP participants is cost efficient. Supervisors have had the opportunity to determine the work ethic and abilities of participants who are know the mission of the agency, the duties and staff, thus making filling the position a smooth transition.

## **Participants Volunteering at the Host Agency**

The participant may not volunteer at any time at a host agency. Workers' Compensation insurance will not cover the participant when he or she is volunteering, therefore the responsibility would fall on the host agency.

## **Paying the Participant**

The host agency may not pay participants for training extra hours at their community service assignment. This includes any employee of the host agency staff giving money to the participant out of his or her own personal funds for services rendered by the participant to the agency or staff. Host agencies are encouraged to hire participants and not supplement participant SCSEP wages. If this is happening, and the host agency will not hire the participant, the participant will be rotated, and the agency may no longer be considered a host agency provider.

If the host agency would like to show its appreciation to the participant for his or her efforts in training, the host agency may do so by other non-monetary means.

## **INJURY REPORTING & SAFETY AWARENESS**

---

The host agency must provide each participant with a safe environment and a safety orientation that includes all the relevant information and tools needed to safely perform assigned tasks. By participating as a host agency, the organization is agreeing to exercise maximum care and good judgment in preventing accidents.

### **Injury Reporting**

All participant injuries that occur during training must be reported to the participant's host agency supervisor. If the injury requires immediate medical care, the host agency supervisor should assist the participant in obtaining emergency medical treatment. If the injury is not considered an emergency, the participant should seek medical attention from his or her primary care physician or a local medical clinic.

The host agency supervisor must notify the case manager on the same day the injury occurs. The host agency supervisor will then complete a *Participant Incident/Injury Report* form and email it to the VCAAA case manager immediately upon completion.

In the event that an injury occurs that results in lost training time, participants cannot return to their host agency training assignment without a physician's written release. If the participant's physician has released the participant to return to training, the

participant must notify their case manager and provide the physician's written release and any other relevant documents to their case manager.

## **Safety Guidelines and Suggestions**

- Focus on the task you're performing.
- Do the task correctly even if it means using extra safety equipment and reviewing procedures.
- Take responsibility for safety
- Do the right thing even when others want you to take shortcuts or fool around.
- Avoid the risks of unsafe tasks, even when it means taking more time to get the task done safely.
- Never lift more than 25 pounds
- Never use a ladder
- Never perform an electrical repair
- Never operate heavy equipment such as forklift, dump trucks, commercial trucks, front end loaders, jack hammers, cranes, back hoes, etc.

## **Slips, Trips and Falls**

- Look before you walk and make sure your pathway is clear.
- Wear slip-resistant, well-fitted shoes.
- Clean up debris after each task and report accidental spills immediately.
- Clear wires, cords and cables away from walkways.
- Walk, don't run.
- Make use of stair handrails when available.

## **Walking on Ice, Snow, or Wet Pavement**

When walking on a wet, icy, or snow-covered walkway, take short steps and walk at a slower pace so you can react quickly to a change in traction. Bending your knees a little and taking slower and shorter steps increases traction and can greatly reduce your chances of falling.

Approach cleared streets and sidewalks with caution. Look out for "black ice." Dew or water vapor can freeze on cold surfaces, forming an extra-thin, nearly invisible layer of ice that can look like a wet spot on the pavement. It can happen early in the morning or in areas shaded from the sun.

When entering a building, remove as much water or snow from your boots as you can. Notice that floors and stairs may be wet and slippery.

## **Eye Safety**

- Be alert to eye hazards at your training site.
- Never depend on regular glasses or contact lenses to protect you. Always use the correct eye protection for your task. Make sure your eye protection is approved, properly fitted and in good repair.
- Follow established safety guidelines.
- Learn first aid for eye injuries.
- Know the location of all eyewash stations and emergency equipment.
- Know where the local emergency phone numbers are for eye injuries.
- Get prompt medical attention for an eye injury.

## **Hand Safety**

- Wash your hands often.
- Be alert to hand hazards before an accident can happen.
- Use push-sticks, guards, shields and other safety devices designed for your equipment.
- Use brushes, not hands, to wipe away debris.
- Inspect equipment and machinery to make sure it's in good operating condition.
- Disconnect power before repairing or cleaning machinery.
- Use the right personal protective equipment such as gloves, guards, or goggles.
- Be sure your gloves are the right type and size for your task.
- Do not wear rings, jewelry or loose clothing when using machinery.

## **Lifting Basics**

- Never lift more than 25 pounds.
- Make sure you have firm footing and a clear path.
- Ask someone for help when a load is heavy or awkward.
- Tuck in your pelvis by tightening your stomach muscles to keep your back aligned. Keep your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Bend your knees to let your legs do the lifting. Be sure to maintain the natural curve of your back.
- Hug the load to keep under it as much as possible. Grasp the load at opposite corners.
- Avoid twisting by pointing your feet, knees and chest in the same direction. First, lift the object and then turn, your whole body.
- Carry long, light objects with the front end higher than the back end.
- Get a helper for long, heavy loads. Each of you should shoulder it on the same side and walk in step.
- For large loads that block your vision, get help even if the load is light.

### **Rules for Hand Tools**

- Know the purpose of each tool and use it only for that purpose
- Use the right size tool for the task
- Secure all tools; a falling tool is a dangerous object
- When carrying tools, point cutting edges toward the ground and away from other people
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment when dealing with tools
- Inspect tools before each use and replace or repair if worn or damaged
- Clean tools after every use
- Never use any tool unless you are trained to do so
- Never test a cutting edge with your fingers. Use scrap material instead
- Never put sharp or pointed tools in your pockets

### **Rules for Power Tools**

- Use each tool only for what it was designed to do
- Know how to operate the tool before you try to use it
- Do not use the tool if parts need to be replaced, repaired, or if parts are worn or damaged
- Make sure all nuts, bolts and other moveable parts are tight before using the tool
- Before plugging in or unplugging tools, be sure the power switch is turned off
- Use a ground fault circuit interrupter when working with power tools
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment
- Never use any tool unless you are trained to do so
- Never unplug a tool by pulling on the cord
- Never clean or repair a tool while the power is connected
- Never wear rings, jewelry or loose clothing when operating power tools

### **Working Safely with Electricity**

- Follow the host agency's procedures for operating electrical equipment in their vicinity
- Check equipment, cords and attachments before each use
- Report any damaged equipment promptly
- Make sure equipment is properly grounded and plugged into grounded circuits
- If flammable or corrosive chemicals are nearby, use extreme caution with electricity
- Stay clear of energized parts whenever possible. If you must train with energized parts, always use protective equipment, such as rubber gloves, sleeves, blankets, mats and non-conducting tools

- Keep conductive materials away from sources of electricity – these include steel wool, metallic cleaning cloths and some chemical solutions
- Never modify or remove a guard
- Never use electrical equipment in wet or damp locations unless the equipment was designed to be used there
- Never use equipment that you know is damaged
- Never leave an electrical panel door off or open

### **Protecting Against Chemical Hazards**

- Read labels to learn special handling procedures
- Use the right protective equipment such as goggles and safety gloves and make sure that you know how to use it
- Know the location of eyewash stations and safety showers and how to use them
- Wash your hands well before eating, smoking or leaving site
- Use proper ventilation such as fans and exhaust hoods
- Don't ever sniff a chemical to identify it
- Don't wear contact lenses – they can absorb or trap chemicals against your eyes
- Avoid putting your hands into corrosives or solvents – unless you're wearing the proper gloves
- Don't use a chemical if you don't know what it is
- Don't skip safety precautions to get done faster

## **PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT**

---

VCAA staff takes great measures to ensure the safekeeping and confidentiality of personal information. Social security numbers are protected and stored in locked files that are not accessible to anyone other than authorized personnel.

Section 6311 of Title V, United States Code, authorizes collection of this information. The primary use of this information is by VCAA to report to the U.S. Department of Labor on participant and outcome information.

Public Law 104-134 (April 6, 1996) requires that any person doing business with the Federal Government furnish a social security number or tax identification number. This is an amendment to Title 31, Section 7701. Furnishing the social security number as well as other data is voluntary, but failure to do so may delay or prevent action on the application. If your agency uses the information furnished on this form for purposes other than those indicated above, it should provide you with an additional statement reflecting those purposes.

In each participant's file is a signed copy of the *Record of Participant Orientation* form which acknowledges that each participant has received and understands the Privacy Act Statement.

## **CONSENT FOR RELEASE OF INFORMATION**

---

In my file at the local VCAAA SCSEP office is a signed copy of the *Record of Participant Orientation* form which acknowledges that I consent to release information to VCAAA for the purpose of enhancing and marketing the SCSEP in the following categories:

- Payroll information — Information will be obtained from day of enrollment until the day of exit from the program.
- Employment verification information — Information needed to determine SCSEP eligibility and placement in an appropriate training assignment (job title, duties, and earnings).
- Case management information — Information needed to monitor and/or provide case management services and referrals as requested by VCAAA.
- Host agency information — Information needed for achieving training and placement goals.
- Unsubsidized placement information — Information needed for tracking employment progress.
- Media — I authorize VCAAA to use any photographs and stories of myself for the purpose of publicizing the SCSEP program in any publications or exhibits, including websites, without payment or any other consideration. I waive the right to inspect or approve the finished product, including written or electronic copy, wherein my likeness appears. I hereby hold harmless, and release and forever discharge VCAAA from all claims, demands and causes of action which I, my heirs, representatives, executors, administrators, or any other persons acting on my behalf or on behalf of my estate have or may have by reason of this authorization.

# COMPLAINT RESOLUTION PROCEDURES AND GRIEVANCE POLICY

---

This is the process for addressing and resolving a complaint or grievance. This policy exists to provide the participant with mediation for problems encountered at host agencies and/or with the Ventura County Area Agency on Aging (VCAAA).

The process for addressing and resolving a work-related complaint or grievance is designed to successfully resolve the issue or situation. VCAAA protects your right to privacy. Only information relevant to the complaint may be released to the responding party without your consent.

## Complaint Resolution Procedures

**Step 1:** Address the complaint/grievance with the host agency supervisor and/or the SCSEP Site Coordinator within five (5) working days of the incident. Most workplace issues can be resolved in an informal manner.

**Step 2:** If the reply from the host agency supervisor and/or the SCSEP Site Coordinator is not satisfactory, write to the VCAAA within ten (10) days from the date of the incident or action that occurred that caused dissatisfaction. A detailed explanation of the complaint/grievance should be addressed to the VCAAA Director:

Director  
Ventura County Area Agency on Aging  
646 County Square Drive, Suite 100  
Ventura, CA 93003

The explanation should contain the following:

- The name, mailing address, and telephone number, if any, of complainant, or person authorized to act on behalf of the complainant
- The type of service and names of the individuals involved
- Explanation of the issue of concern or dispute
- The date, time, and place that the issue of concern or dispute occurred
- The names of witnesses, if any
- A copy of the previous communications
- A request for a re-examination of the facts

**Step 3:** Within 15 calendar days after receipt of the complaint, the VCAAA Director, or her designee, will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and the possible resolutions. Within 15 calendar days of the meeting, the VCAAA Director, or her designee, will respond in writing to explain the position of the County of Ventura and offer options for substantive resolution of the complaint. Complaints will be resolved within 30 calendar days of receipt of the complaint by VCAAA.

## **Grievance Policy**

**Step 4:** If the reply from the Ventura County Area Agency on Aging is not satisfactory and the allegation is in regard to a violation of laws pertaining to discrimination an appeal may be made to the U.S. Department of Labor. A written appeal must be filed within thirty (30) days of the determination.

Appeals should be mailed to:

Director, Civil Rights Center  
U.S. Department of Labor, Room N-4123  
200 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20210

*All participants have the right to propose a solution to the grievance. All written complaints received by the VCAAA Director, or her designee, and responses from the VCAAA office will be retained by the County of Ventura for at least three years.*