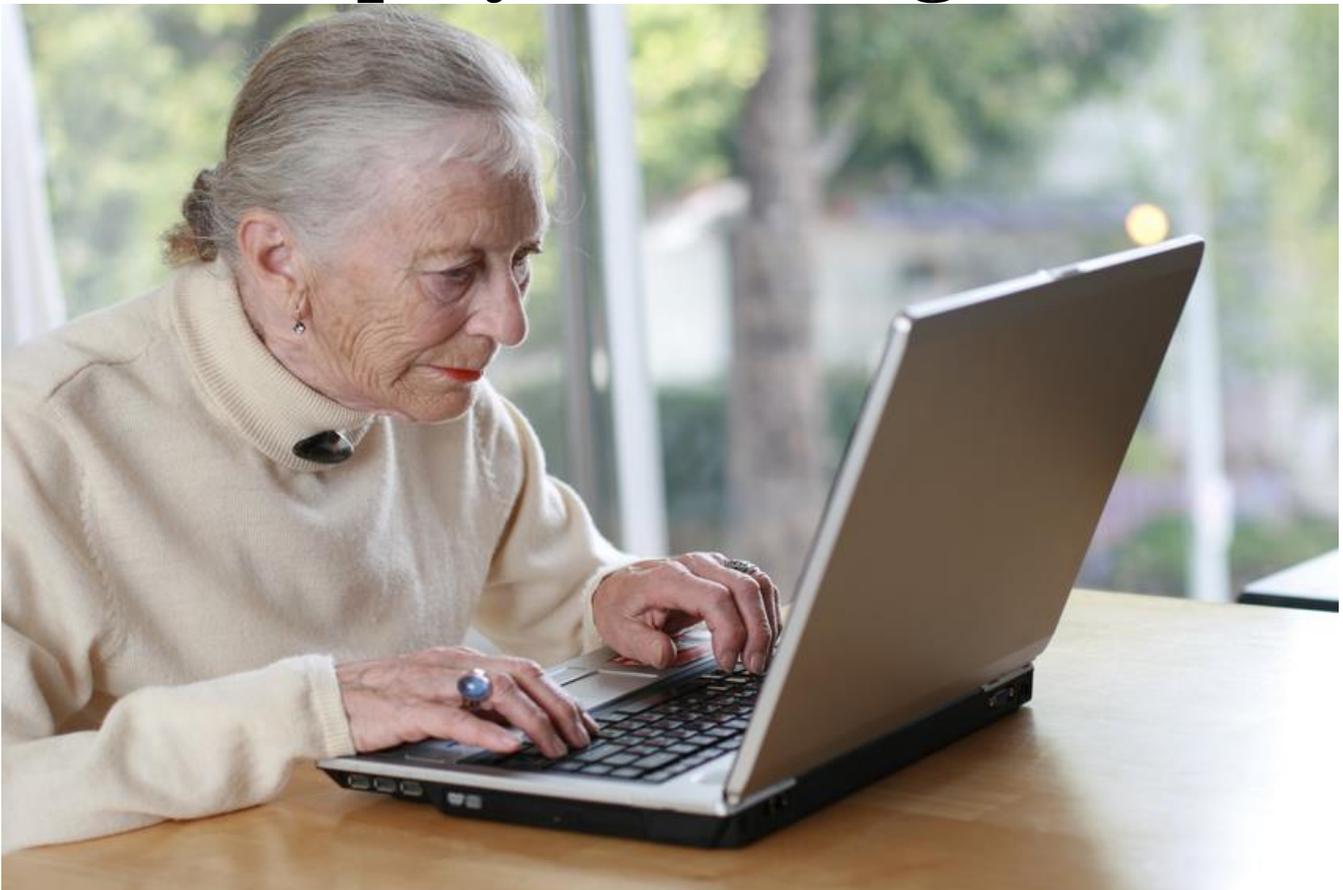


Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging

Senior Community Service Employment Program



Participant Handbook

SCSEP Participant Handbook

INTRODUCTION

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is locally sponsored by Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging (M4A). Funding comes from Service America, Inc., headquartered in Silver Spring, Maryland and the Alabama Department of Senior Services located in Montgomery, Alabama. Senior Service America, Inc., (SSAI) is a non-profit organization that provides civic engagement and employment opportunities for adults 55 years of age and older. The Alabama Department of Senior Services (ADSS) is a cabinet level state agency that administers programs for senior citizens and people with disabilities. SSAI and ADSS administer the SCSEP on behalf of the U.S. Department of Labor.

The Executive Director and Project Director and staff of Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging are available to answer questions and be of assistance.

The Project office is located at 209 Cloverdale Circle, Alabaster, AL 35007.

MISSION AND PURPOSE OF THE SENIOR COMMUNITY SERVICE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SCSEP)

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

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

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

DISCRIMINATION PROHIBITED

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

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DRUG FREE WORK PLACE POLICY

Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging is an Equal Opportunity Employer and shall use its best efforts to ensure a safe and healthful working environment; free of substance abuse (drugs and alcohol), harassment, and hazardous conditions. Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging Drug-Free Workplace policy is as follows:

Coming to work under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances or possessing such items on M4A property or assigned Host Agency at any time is prohibited. Any arrest for or evidence of possession, use, or sale of illegal substances or related paraphernalia will result in immediate administrative leave pending administrative and legal investigation. Termination will follow unless the employee/participant is fully exonerated.

ELIGIBILITY

A. CRITERIA

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

- **Age** – Must be at least 55 years of age; there is no upper age limit for SCSEP.
- **Income** – Annual household income must be equal to or less than 125% of the federal poverty level (determined annually by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.) Income definitions for determining eligibility are published by the U.S. Department of Labor.
- **Residence** – At the time of enrollment, the applicants must be a resident of the county or counties served by M4A.
- **Must be unemployed** - At the time of application and while enrolled on SCSEP, participants must be unemployed.
- **Durational Limit** – Cannot have been previously on SCSEP for four years/48 months. The four years is cumulative and includes any time they may have been on SCSEP with another provider.

B. DOCUMENTATION

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

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- **Age** – birth certificate, driver’s license, or passport
- **Income** – (of family members in household): social security administration benefit letters, earning statements from employers, or bank statements showing interest
- **Family Size** – income tax return for prior year, a lease, or landlord statement, or a marriage certificate
- **Residence** – a utility bill, a voter registration card, or a driver’s license
- **Veteran Status** – Form DD-214 issued by the Defense Department

Participants are required to complete and sign an Employment Eligibility Verification Form (I-9) to document U.S. citizenship or permission to work in the United States.

C. RECERTIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIRED

Income eligibility of every participant will be reviewed each year by the Project Director, even participants on an approved break. The recertification schedule is determined by Senior Service America, Inc., and must be completed prior to June 30 of each year. It is the responsibility of each participant to notify the Project Director of any significant changes in income or family size that may affect eligibility. If at any time the Project Director suspects that a participant may be over the income level the Project Director may ask the participant to provide income documentation.

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

COMMUNITY SERVICE ASSIGNMENT

Once enrolled in the SCSEP Project, the participant will be given a community service assignment at a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit or government agency. This agency will be known as the “Host Agency.”

RULES OF CONDUCT

- Participants in a SCSEP Project are expected to observe certain standards of conduct and make every effort to fulfill the objectives of the Program. All participants will be expected to:
- Register with the State Employment Services (Department of Labor or One-Stop Career Center) and/or other appropriate employment referral services.
- Actively seek and work to fulfill the goals in the individual employment plan (IEP)
- Perform assignment duties accurately, neatly, promptly, and efficiently.

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- Work regular assigned hours, arrive to work on time, notify supervisor when late or out due to illness, and notify the project director and Host Supervisor in advance when requesting time off.
- Wear appropriate clothing and maintain good personal grooming habits on the assignment.
- Work cooperatively with the Host Agency Supervisor and other staff members as well as any other SCSEP participants assigned at the Host Agency.
- Ask questions of the supervisor or Project Director if unsure what is expected.
- Work cooperatively with the Project Director to secure an unsubsidized job if that is agreed upon as an IEP goal.
- Report injuries or unsafe working conditions immediately to the Host Agency Supervisor and Project Director.

ASSESSMENT AND INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYMENT PLAN

After a participant has been determined eligible to participate in SCSEP, the participant will be interviewed to determine job interests, current skills, past work and volunteer experience. Based on this information, they will be assigned to a community service assignment. Shortly after the participant has spent some time in a community service assignment, the Project staff will meet with them to design an Individual Employment Plan (IEP). The IEP process is most important for successful participation in SCSEP. Together the participant and the Project staff will establish goals such as: training needed for viable unsubsidized employment and also supportive services to address barriers that may get in the way of obtaining IEP goals. The first assessment is the initial assessment; all subsequent assessments are re-assessments.

WRITTEN COMMUNITY SERVICE ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTION

Participants will be given a written Community Service Assignment Description with pertinent information on assignment title, duties, number of hours, Host Agency, location, supervision, etc., and a copy will be made for the personnel files. The participant and the Host Agency staff will adhere to the written assignment description in all aspects. Any changes in hours, duties or other factors must be approved by the Project Director. The written community service assignment description will be used in revising and updating the participant's assessment and IEP. Participants are not permitted, nor will they be required to perform an assignment in buildings or surroundings or under conditions that are unsanitary or potentially hazardous.

HOST AGENCY SAFETY AND OTHER MONITORING

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

HOURS

SCSEP participant training assignments are a maximum of twenty (20) hours per week, as scheduled in the assignment description, unless limited funding requires Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging to

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be able to only less than 20 hours per week. Once the schedule is set, any changes must be approved in advance by the Project Director.

SCSEP participants should not exceed working twenty (20) hours per week at their assignment. Unauthorized additional hours are not allowed. Participants who exceed their authorized hours may be subject to progressive disciplinary action.

SCSEP participants will not be paid for extended break time (a lunch break, for example). If the work schedule includes such a break, time should be made up accordingly. (Please see section regarding Federal Holidays under Fringe Benefits)

PARTICIPANT MEETINGS

Attendance at periodic meetings of all participants for the purpose of providing training and information is required. Meetings are held at least twice each year but may be held more frequently. SCSEP participant meetings are training sessions and provide opportunities for participants to gain information and engage in skill training. An opportunity to ask questions and receive answers is provided.

Attendance at regular SCSEP participant meetings is mandatory. Hours spent at a participant meeting or a recertification meeting shall be compensated at the regular rate of pay.

If unable to attend, participants are to speak with the Project Director prior to the meeting. Since these meetings are mandatory; if absent, participants will be docked the appropriate number of hours.

TRAINING

Training for job skills is an important part of SCSEP. Training and other opportunities should be offered at each Host Agency. Limited training funds are available for skills or classroom training; however, the Project office will work with participants to identify resources in the local area. Participants should always bring to the attention of the Project staff any training of which they are aware. The staff will review if it is feasible. Participants may also be paid for time spent in appropriate training, as determined by their Assessment and Individual Employment Plan, provided resources are available.

UNSUBSIDIZED JOBS

A key purpose of SCSEP is to enable older workers to achieve gainful employment and personal development through community service and training. Therefore, participants are required to seek unsubsidized employment per their first IEP and cooperate with the Project Director's efforts. Further, participants are expected to register with the Department of Labor's State Employment Services or One-Stop Career Center.

At the orientation session and throughout SCSEP enrollment, the Project Director will encourage participants to search and apply for unsubsidized jobs. The Project staff of Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging will assist participants in their efforts towards unsubsidized placement.

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UNSUBSIDIZED PLACEMENT FOLLOW UPS

When a participant exits SCSEP for an unsubsidized job, Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging is required to conduct follow ups for the next sixteen months. Several contacts with the participant and employer are required during this time and will include gathering information about new wages, benefits, etc. This is done to indicate to DOL the value of SCSEP to participants. A Release Form must be signed by the participant to allow Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging to conduct the follow ups.

PARTICIPANT PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Host Agency supervisors may make an evaluation of the participant's performance at least once a year. The evaluation lets the participant know how their performance is regarded. It identifies areas of accomplishment, areas where improvement may be needed, and areas in which additional training or experience may improve the likelihood of unsubsidized employment. The supervisor completing the evaluation must discuss its content with the participant. The evaluation will be used to update the IEP. Participants will have the opportunity to sign and receive a copy of the evaluation as well as have an opportunity to comment or respond to the evaluation in writing.

CHANGING COMMUNITY SERVICE ASSIGNMENTS

Changing community service assignments is intended to:

- Increase the chances of obtaining unsubsidized employment;
- Provide opportunities to increase responsibilities and learn or improve skills in new assignments;
- Prevent a Host Agency from using any participant to perform tasks which otherwise would be performed by regular staff members; or
- Encourage the development of new Host Agency training assignments.

To that end, the length of time that a participant may remain in a community service assignment is determined by the participant's IEP. Sponsors must document in each participant's IEP the appropriate assignment length. However, a Project Director may choose to move a participant to a new community service assignment, either within the existing Host Agency or to a new Host Agency, when the participant has mastered existing opportunities or when the Project Director determines that a change in assignment would be in the best interest of the participant in progressing towards his/her IEP goals.

NOTE: Participants who are exercising the Right of Return – for example, following a failed unsubsidized placement – are not allowed to return to the previously held community service assignment.

FOUR YEAR/48 MONTH LIFETIME LIMIT ON SCSEP PARTICIPATION

The Older Americans Act, the authorizing legislation for SCSEP, requires that eligible participants may participate in SCSEP for a maximum period of 48 months. In most cases participants rarely participate for 48 months as they leave for unsubsidized placements or other personal reasons. Each participant's

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time enrolled is tracked by Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging by preparing enrollment forms and documenting breaks of service entered into SPARQ.

TRANSITION ASSESSMENT AND IEP

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

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

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

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

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

- Up-to-date information on transferrable skills, interests, unsubsidized placement goal, if applicable, and specific action steps, such as updating the participant's resume, job interviewing and job search skills, additional needed training, employers to target and an outreach strategy;
- Up-to-date information on supportive needs and goals along with specific action steps, such as developing a personal budget without SCSEP wages, or getting permission from you to contact social support systems to ensure safety net services throughout the transition;
- Up-to-date information on continuing community service goals or other plans post-exit and specific action steps, such as identifying other stipend/volunteer programs.

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

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INJURY ON TRAINING ASSIGNMENT

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

NEPOTISM PROHIBITED AT HOST AGENCIES

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

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PARTICIPANT RECORDS

Participant records are kept confidential and placed in a secure place at the Project Office. Participants may, at a mutually convenient time, have the right to examine the contents of their file and may be allowed to supplement to the employment record.

PAYROLL DISTRIBUTION

WAGES

- SCSEP participants will receive no less than the state minimum wage as the pay rate, which is specified in the community service assignment description.

TIME SHEETS

- Time sheets are the basis for payroll calculations. It is extremely important that time sheets are completed accurately and submitted on the date they are due to the Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging Project office by fax or in person. If a participant is to fax in time sheets, then they must mail in the original in a timely manner.

PAY SCHEDULE

- Paychecks are written after receipt of time sheets. A schedule of pay dates is listed on the back of the participant time sheet and will be given to each participant at orientation. The time sheet is on file at the Host Agency, Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging Project office and can be accessed at the M4A website.

DISTRIBUTION METHODS

- Paychecks are mailed by Friday of the pay date if you have not opted for direct deposit. If you have direct deposit your pay will be deposited into your account on Friday morning of the pay date.
- If your bank account is closed or changed, M4A fiscal office must be immediately notified. Failure to notify M4A's office staff may result in delayed payroll payment.

DESIGNEE

- If another person is designated by a participant to pick up a paycheck, a written note giving permission must be on file. The person will sign his/her name for the paycheck. Designees are to be used on an emergency basis only.

DIRECT DEPOSIT

- If you have direct deposit your pay will be deposited into your account on Friday morning of the pay date.

FRINGE BENEFITS

F.I.C.A. – Middle Alabama Area on Aging contributes to the Social Security System/Medicare for all participants in accordance with payroll tax provisions. Federal and State income taxes may also be withheld.

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UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE – SCSEP participants are not covered by Unemployment Compensation insurance as it is not required by state law.

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

WORKERS’ COMPENSATION

- All employees are protected by Workers’ Compensation which covers injuries received at work. All injuries related to the community service assignment must be reported immediately to the Project Director.
- If a participant becomes involved in an accident or sustains an injury while working, they must report the situation as required by State law.
- Workers Compensation information is posted in the Project Office.
- If a participant has an active Workers’ Compensation claim with Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging, they will be put on an approved break in service, and cannot be terminated from SCSEP while the claim is active.
- If a participant has an active Compensation claim during the recertification period and while they are on approved break with an open Workers Compensation claim, they do not have to be recertified at that time
- When the claim is closed, the participant will return to active status and be recertified if he/she missed a recertification period. This is because family income could have changed during the period on approved break. If found currently eligible, every reasonable accommodation will be made to find a suitable Host Agency Assignment within the parameters of the participant’s current physical status.

LEAVE TIME

Certain “lost” time (such as snow closings, etc.) may be made up provided:

- the time can be made up in the same or subsequent pay period, and
- does not exceed forty (40) hours per week, and
- is approved in advance by the Project Director

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

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FEDERAL HOLIDAYS

- SCSEP participants can only be paid for hours worked/spent in training with the exception of Federal Holidays. Participants will be paid if they are scheduled to work on a day that their Host Agency is closed for a federal holiday. The approved federal holidays are: New Year's Day; Birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; Washington's Birthday; Memorial Day; Independence Day; Labor Day; Columbus Day; Veterans Day; Thanksgiving Day; and Christmas Day.
- Sick leave – if sick for less than three (3) consecutive days, participants may make-up hours missed in the same or subsequent pay period.
- Inclement Weather and Disaster closings – If the Host Agency is closed due to snow, weather, power, or other factors, these are not paid days. With prior approval of the Project Director and if the Host Agency can accommodate, a participant can make up the time in the same period or subsequent pay period.
- Leave without Pay - Participants may apply to the Project Director for leave without pay for a leave of more than three (3) consecutive days. The participant must mutually agree on the extent or time frame of leave with the Project Director and Host Agency Supervisor. However, after 30 days of absences, a participant may be terminated from the SCSEP program.
- Jury Duty- Participants will receive payment for jury duty consistent with the policies of Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging and state law.

Alternative Assignment – Participants may request an alternate community service assignment if the Host Agency is to be closed for an extended period of time.

TRANSPORTATION REIMBURSEMENT

- Participants will not be reimbursed by Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging for personal use of their vehicle or commuting to their assignment.
- If authorized to use their own personal vehicle for Host Agency business, the participant may be reimbursed. A copy of the current auto insurance policy and current driver's license must be provided for personnel files.
- Drivers of Host Agency-owned vehicles will be covered under the Host Agency's insurance policy, which will be on file with the Project office. Also, the Host Agency should pay for a public service license if needed.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Participants will have several supportive services available. The types of supportive services include but are not limited to:

- Training as described previously;
- Job Search Assistance (creating resume, interview skills, etc.) and

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- Counseling and Referrals.

Participants are to consult with the Project Director if they need these types of services. The Project Director will assess the Project's ability to assist.

LIMITS TO ACTIVITIES

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

A. POLITICAL

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

B. VOLUNTEERING

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

C. LABOR PRACTICES – MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT

- SCSEP participants may not be assigned at any agency which is involved in a labor/management dispute, including, but not limited to strikes, picketing or lock-outs.
- SCSEP participants may not displace a worker or replace a worker who has been laid-off.
- SCSEP participants may not be assigned to do the same duties at a Host Agency where they were previously employed. This is maintenance of effort.
- The Project Director shall assign SCSEP participants in accordance with Fair Labor Practices.

EXITING SCSEP

VOLUNTARY EXITS

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

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DISCIPLINARY/TERMINATION PROCEDURES

The termination procedure will typically include the following disciplinary steps. Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging staff or the Project Director may skip Steps One and Two and go straight to Step Three (outlined below) and terminate a participant immediately for serious violations such as fraud, theft, destruction of property, violence, or threats to health and safety of the participant or others.

Step One: Documented Verbal Warning

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

Step Two: Written Warning

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

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

Step Three: Termination

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

TERMINATIONS FROM SCSEP

REASONS FOR TERMINATION: SCSEP participants may be terminated for any one of the following seven (7) reasons:

- Termination for Cause
- Termination for Individual Employment Plan Violation.
- Termination for Income Eligibility.
- Termination for Violation of Leave without pay (the Project may call this Approved Break in Service)
- Termination for Reaching Durational Limit.
- Termination Due to Program Ineligibility.
- Termination Due to Becoming Employed While enrolled in SCSEP.

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1. ***Termination for Cause*** – the participant will be put on leave without pay for 30 calendar days and will be issued a 30 day written notice. Reasons for termination for cause may include, but are not limited to:
 - Refusal to cooperate in establishing eligibility;
 - Refusal and/or unwillingness to perform assigned duties without good cause;
 - Three or more unauthorized absences from the Host Agency/training site without good cause or proper notice or a pattern of unexcused tardiness;
 - Falsification of ‘ timesheets’, eligibility or other official records;
 - Insubordination, that is, intentionally refusing to carry out the direction or instructions of a Host Agency supervisor or sponsor staff without good cause;
 - Obscene, abusive, harassing, or threatening language or behavior;
 - Causing an imminent threat to health or safety;
 - Theft, meaning illegally taking or withholding the property of another without permission;
 - Intentional loss, damage, destruction or disclosure of unauthorized use of property, records or information;
 - Workplace harassment or discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, marital status, or disability;
 - Conviction of a felony or any criminal drug statute for a violation occurring in the workplace while on or off duty, or while on duty away from the workplace;
 - Consuming, selling, purchasing, manufacturing, distributing, possessing or using any illegal or non-prescribed drug or being under the influence of alcohol and/or other drugs while performing his or her host agency assignment or while carrying out objectives required by the IEP. Legally prescribed medications are excluded if they do not affect the participant’s ability to perform his or her duties or protect the safety of the participant or others;
 - Being found to have unsubsidized employment while on SCSEP;
 - Exceeding the sponsor leave without pay/approved break policy by failing to return to community service by the required date without due notice or good cause;
 - A pattern of consistent and conscious failure to follow the steps mutually agreed upon and outlined in the Individual Employment Plan (IEP) without good cause, including:
 - Refusing to search for a job;
 - Sabotaging a job interview, for example, a participant tells the interviewer that he/she is not interested in the job or tells the interviewer that he/she is not qualified for this job.
 - Refusal of a reasonable number (3) of job offers and/or referrals to job openings;
 - Refusing to accept or transfer to a different community service assignment;

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- Refusal to accept IEP-related training opportunities;
 - Refusal to register and follow-up with the One-Stop Career Center related to unsubsidized employment;
 - Refusal, without cause, to accept or follow-through on obtaining support services that will enhance the participant's ability to participate in a community service assignment consistent with the IEP.
 - Refusal to cooperate with the assessment or IEP process such as refusing to participate in the completion of the assessment, reassessment, the IEP and updates.
 - Refusal to cooperate with other IEP-related referrals
2. ***Termination for Individual Employment Plan Violation*** – Failure to participate in the IEP process may be cause for corrective actions and, as a last resort, termination. Prior to an IEP related termination, the participant will be given a chance to correct the offending action. Written notice shall be given to the participant, citing a specific incident in which they did not fulfill their responsibility. The notice should list the specific event, cite the jointly signed agreement provision, and provide a period of time for corrective action.
 3. ***Termination for Income Eligibility*** – If at any time a project sponsor determines that a participant is no longer eligible for continued enrollment because he/she has attained additional includable income during the preceding 6 or 12 months or because of a change in family status, then that participant must be terminated. Determinations of ineligibility cannot be based on anticipated changes in income or family size; it must be based on actual data. Participants have the responsibility to report increases in income and changes in family status. Participants are allowed to continue working at their Community Service Assignment until their date of exit.
 4. ***Termination for Violation of Leave without Pay*** – Participants may be terminated if they reach the time limit established with the Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging or if they do not comply with the approved policy as outlined in this Participant Handbook.
 5. ***Termination for Reaching Durational Limit*** – The maximum eligibility period for SCSEP participation for people enrolled on or after July 1, 2007, is a total of 48 months. Participants who reach their durational limit shall be terminated on the date when they reach their four year limit. Participants are allowed to continue working at their Community Service Assignment until their date of exit.
 6. ***Termination Due to Program Ineligibility*** – If Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging determines that a participant is no longer eligible during the eligibility verification process, we must give written notice explaining the reasons for termination and applicable procedures to appeal. If Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging discovers after the eligibility or recertification process is finished that staff incorrectly determined the participant to be eligible through no fault of your own, we must give written notice. Participants are allowed to continue working at their Community Service Assignment until exited.

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7. ***Termination Due to Becoming Employed While on SCSEP*** – To remain qualified for enrollment in SCSEP, a participant has to be unemployed. If, at any time, Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging staff determines that a participant obtained an unsubsidized job while enrolled on SCSEP, that participant will be placed on leave without pay for 30 calendar days and will be given an immediate written 30 calendar notice letter explaining the reason for termination and the appeal procedure.

GRIEVANCE/COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

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

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

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

When a participant files a written complaint, this invokes the p Project Sponsor's complaint resolution procedures. Dependent on which program (Federal/SSAI or State/ADSS) a participant is enrolled in, the Project Sponsor must notify either SSAI or ADSS SCSEP National Director and provide a copy of the complaint within seven business days.

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

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

1. Upon receipt of a written complaint, the Project Director, the participant who filed the complaint and the Host Agency Supervisor, if appropriate, should seek promptly to resolve the differences in an informal conference.
2. A written statement outlining the result of the conference should be provided to all involved persons.
3. If the participant is not satisfied with the results of the informal conference, they have the right to appeal to an established complaint resolution committee or to the chief executive officer of the Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging as provided for in this Participant Handbook.
4. Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging shall ensure the appeal is heard promptly.
5. Participants have the right to use the assistance of others at the hearing, to call witnesses and to question those involved in the complaint.

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6. A written summary of the decisions made at the hearing must be provided promptly to all involved.
7. The time limit of the complaint resolution procedure for each project sponsor is 45 business days, including the time for filing the appeal to SSAI or ADSS.

Adverse Action against Participant

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

Right to Appeal to (SSAI) or (ADSS)

Participants who are dissatisfied with a decision resulting from the Project Sponsor's complaint resolution procedure have the right to appeal to SSAI or ADSS.

1. Participants should file a written appeal within five business days of the sponsor's decision.
2. SSAI or ADSS will send a letter to the participant acknowledging receipt of the complaint and will review the results of the complaint resolution procedure. SSAI or ADSS will notify Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging of receipt of the complaint. SSAI or ADSS may request additional information from the participant or M4A. SSAI or ADSS may decide to hold a hearing to gather additional information. In such cases where SSAI or ADSS decides to hold a hearing, SSAI or ADSS may request consent for additional time from all involved parties.
3. SSAI or ADSS will affirm or amend the decision within 15 business days and provide the participant and Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging written copy of the decision stating that the decision is final, except if the participant appeals to the U.S. Department of Labor.

Department of Labor Appeal

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

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

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

Complaints or Questions Regarding Nondiscrimination Requirements

1. Complaints or questions regarding nondiscrimination requirements, or complaints alleging a violation of the nondiscrimination requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), or their implementing regulations **must be directed or mailed** to Civil Rights Center at the U.S. Department of Labor at: Director, Civil Rights Center, U.S. Department of Labor, Room N-4123, 200 Constitution Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20210.
2. Per U.S. Department of Labor regulations governing SCSEP, staff of Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging must refer complaints alleging discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, disability or age – except when age was used as a valid requirement for SCSEP eligibility as described in the Policy and Procedure Manual (Policy 203, Eligibility Requirements) – to the Civil Rights Center.
3. Per U.S. Department of Labor are not permitted to process an allegation based on discrimination. Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging staff should advise the participant that the complaint or question must be filed with the Civil Rights Center at the U.S. Department of Labor, as noted above.
4. Pending the disposition of the allegation by the Civil Rights Center, Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging staff will continue to assist the participant to resolve any Program problems in the same manner as sponsor staff would assist any other participant regardless of the discrimination allegation.