

Solicitation for Public Comment
September 2012

The purpose of this notice is to request public comment regarding Vermont's Senior Community Employment Program (SCSEP). Those parties and entities with particular interest in business, labor, workforce development, community service, and older workers invite input.

The U. S. Department of Labor (USDOL) request changes to the Vermont Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) state plan per Section 503(a) of the 2006 Older Americans Act (OAA) Amendments every four years.

The Department of Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) administers the State SCSEP grant and coordinates with the National SCSEP also operated in Vermont. The state plan captures the coordination between the State and the National grantees operating in Vermont; partnerships with community organizations, key stakeholders, and the Workforce Investment Act (WIA); and the statewide provision of community services and other activities for eligible individuals under the SCSEP during program years 2012 – 2015. In addition, it describes efforts with population specific organizations to work collaboratively to accomplish SCSEP goals.

Instructions for Public Comment

A copy of the draft of the new state plan is attached and it will be posted at <http://www.dail.vermont.gov/>.

Comments may be submitted by email to jennie.masterson@state.vt.us with "State Plan Comments" in the subject line.

Written comments may be mailed to Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living (DAIL) 103 S. Main St., Waterbury, Vt. 0567-1601 Attention: Jennie Masterson
Hard copies of the document may be obtained by calling
Jennie Masterson, DAIL Supported Employment Services Coordinator at 802-786-2571
Public comments in response to this notice must be received by noon EST on September 17, 2012.

VERMONT STATE PLAN
For
Senior Community Services Employment Program
SCSEP
Program Years 2012 to 2015

Background and Purpose: The 2006 Older Americans Act (OAA) Section 503(a)(1) and SCSEP funding criteria requires that Vermont submit a plan to the U. S. Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration that will describe the long term, strategic plan for the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) to cover program years 2012 – 2015. The Vermont State SCSEP Plan is an independent document that outlines a four-year strategy for the statewide provision of community service employment and other authorized activities for eligible, unemployed, low-income seniors who participate in the SCSEP grants of Vermont. The plan describes how Vermont’s two SCSEP grantees, the State and the National programs, work as one to deliver services at the highest level of collaboration and mutual support. It describes current statewide partnerships and outcomes achieved by expanding partnerships with other programs, initiatives, and entities operating in the state. The plan reflects the development of new initiatives and strategies we intend to implement over the course of the plan. It also conveys the importance of the State’s role, to convene efforts of key stakeholders—including state and local boards under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA)—to work collaboratively to accomplish SCSEP goals.

The Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living (DAIL) is the Grantee and administrator of the State SCSEP awarded by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). Vermont Associates for Training and Development (VATD) is the non-profit sub-grantee operating the National SCSEP awarded by the USDOL. VATD also operates the State SCSEP as Vermont’s sub-grantee. The specific requirements for the plan are located in 20 CFR 641.300-641.300.

Involvement of Organizations and Individuals

The input process was enhanced by the state's size and because collaborators are often divisions within the DAIL structure, DAIL sub-grantees, or community organizations that have long-standing relationships with DAIL and/or VATD. Additionally, VATD's parallel role as the operator of the National and State SCSEP provided a conduit for the cross program alignment needed for a successful plan. DAIL asked the following organizations to provide input in the development of the State SCSEP Plan.

- Area Agencies on Aging;
- State and local groups under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA);
- Public and private nonprofit agencies and employment services organizations;
- Social service organizations serving older individuals;
- Grantees under title III of the OAA;
- Affected communities throughout the state;
- Unemployed older individuals including SCSEP participants;
- Community-based organizations serving older individuals;
- Business organizations; and
- Labor organizations

The DAIL network includes Area Agencies on Aging, Community of Vermont Elders (COVE), ten Aging, and Disabilities Resource Connections (ADRC) sites, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), adult day service providers, grantees under Title III of the OAA, nursing homes, and home health agencies. The Vermont Department of Labor (VDOL) network includes Workforce Investment Act (WIA) partner organizations, business, labor, state government, community employment organizations, and the Workforce Development Council (WDC). The sub-grantee, VATD, has developed a vast network, which includes non-profit host sites, post secondary education, certification training programs, Vermont Chamber of Commerce, Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility, and numerous other partners. Solicitation for comment included networks that extend out from DAIL, VDOL, and VATD to capture key stakeholders involved with the program-eligible population.

Solicitation and Collection of Public Input

DAIL requested stakeholder input via e-mail alerts specifically soliciting input across these broad networks. Electronic alerts served the rural geography of Vermont well by assuring statewide access for input more comprehensively than a centrally held public forum process would have produced. Email distribution lists were used to disseminate the draft to stakeholders. The draft was placed on the DAIL and VDOL web sites for three weeks – 8/30/12 to 9/14/12. Individual emails from the SCSEP State Coordinator went to key statewide contacts requesting comment on the plan. To assure alternative access, DAIL advertised contact information in regional newspapers with directions for those who required that a hard copy be mailed. The newspaper posting included the hyperlink for downloading the draft. *See Attachment A for a summary of public comments received.*

Information Required in the State Plan

1) The long-term strategy for achieving equitable distribution of SCSEP positions within the State that:

(a) Moves positions from over-served to underserved locations within the State.

The equitable distribution of the slots in the State and National programs are well coordinated between DAIL and the single SCSEP vendor that operates both; there is no variance between the equitable share per county and the distribution of authorized slots. Many states encounter significant challenges to align their distribution of slots, but the coordination of the Vermont State and National slots has allowed us to achieve a seamless and flexible process. If the demographics change, and a county is under or over served, consultation between VATD and DAIL and the USDOL occurs to achieve balance by moving slots from one county to another. Movement of positions is facilitated without disruption to participants.

(b) Equitably serves rural and urban areas. Vermont is a small, rural state generally classified as rural and of its 14 Counties, the only urban classification—assigned by the Rural Urban Commuting Area (RUCA) data in the USDOL-SCSEP database—is Chittenden County where Burlington, the largest city is located. The following bedroom communities of Burlington are in reality extremely rural but have been included in Chittenden County’s urban classification due to their proximity to Chittenden County. They are Cambridge, Charlotte, Fairfax, Ferrisburg, Grand

Isle, Hinesburg, Huntington, Jeffersonville, Jonesville, Bolton, Richmond, South Hero, Starksboro, Underhill, Westford, and Moretown. As an example of the rural character of these towns, all but Richmond have only one or two convenience stores and a gasoline station, and several have neither. Twelve of these 14 towns have no manufacturing or industrial base.

Given an almost statewide rural classification, serving the rural population occurs as a matter of course with both the State and the National SCSEP serving the entire state. Vermont has a statewide network of local training centers located in each labor market region; some co-located the VDOL One-Stop venues. The rural and urban areas are served with parity and adequate resources to promote the SCSEP program.

(c) Serves individuals afforded priority for service.

Vermont does well in serving minorities and priority populations. This includes, individuals who are age 65+; have a disability; limited English proficiency or low literacy skills; reside in a rural area; are veterans or qualified spouses; have low employment prospects; have failed to find employment after utilizing services provided through the One-Stop; or are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Development of outreach and recruitment strategies ensures equitable participation for these important groups of the eligible population. Vermont program year 2012, 3rd quarter *State and National SPARQ* (SCSEP Performance and Results Quarter) data indicate that:

- 33 % of participants have disabilities
- 34 % of participants are age 65 years or older
- 77% of participants have low employment prospects
- 92% reside in rural areas as compared to a national rate of 29%
- No instances of under-service to any minority category

2) The ratio of eligible individuals in each area to the total eligible population in the state

Data from Vermont *Quick Facts-US Census Bureau* and the *Vermont Department of Health Census Counts and Population Estimate-Bulletin 10* identifies the following distribution and demographics of program eligible Vermonters for program year 2012.

Table 1 – Individuals Age 55+

Counties	Total Population	2012 Eligible %	Eligible Population
Addison	36742	29%	10539
Bennington	36979	34%	12585
Caledonia	31166	31%	9611
Chittenden	157545	23%	36248
Essex	6291	37%	2299
Franklin	48113	25%	11930
Grand Isle	6931	32%	2247
Lamoille	24701	26%	6505
Orange	29006	30%	8846
Orleans	27173	33%	8981
Rutland	61289	32%	19823
Washington	59626	30%	17612
Windham	44266	33%	14526
Windsor	56666	34%	19272
	626,431		181,024

Table 2 – Equitable Distribution Program Year 2012

USDOL Distribution of Vermont slots between State and National SCSEP

County	State	National	Total
Vermont			247
Addison County, Vermont	5	7	12
Bennington County, Vermont	8	7	15
Caledonia County, Vermont	6	12	18
Chittenden County, Vermont	6	32	38
Essex County, Vermont	1	4	5
Franklin County, Vermont	0	18	18
Grand Isle County, Vermont	0	2	2
Lamoille County, Vermont	2	8	10
Orange County, Vermont	3	9	12
Orleans County, Vermont	0	21	21
Rutland County, Vermont	8	21	29
Washington County, Vermont	0	23	23
Windham County, Vermont	6	16	22
Windsor County, Vermont	6	16	22
Totals	51	196	247

3) The relative distribution of eligible individuals who:

(a) Reside in the State

The 2011 population of Vermont was 626,431 of which 181,024 were age 55 or over. The distribution by county is in Table I from which the USDOL calculates the Equitable Distribution of SCSEP slots per area.

(b) Reside in urban and rural areas

Thirteen of Vermont's fourteen counties are classified as rural and the only urban classification is Chittenden County with a census of 157,545 as compared to the thirteen rural counties with a total census of 468,886.

(c) Have the greatest economic need

The Vermont Department of Health Census Counts and Population Estimates reported that in June 2012, 26,022 of the eligible population were living at the poverty level and that 54% of the eligible population were unemployed. The ratios are dispersed below by county.

Table 3 – Economic Need

County	Classification	Total Population	Eligible Population	Poverty Level (Greatest Economic Need)	Unemployment (Greatest Economic Need)
Vermont		626431	181024	11.5%	4.7%
Addison	Rural	36742	10539	12.0%	4.7%
Bennington	Rural	36979	12585	13.8%	5.8%
Caledonia	Rural	31166	9611	16.1%	6.0%
Chittenden	Urban	157545	36248	11.8%	4.4%
Essex	Rural	6291	2299	17.2%	5.8%
Franklin	Rural	48113	11930	11.9%	4.6%
Grand Isle	Rural	6931	2247	8.1%	4.8%
Lamoille	Rural	24701	6505	13.3%	5.2%
Orange	Rural	29006	8846	12.5%	4.6%
Orleans	Rural	27173	8981	17.0%	6.7%
Rutland	Rural	61289	19823	13.2%	6.4%
Washington	Rural	59626	17612	10.8%	4.8%

Windham	Rural	44266	14526	12.8%	5.2%
Windsor	Rural	56666	19272	10.2%	4.6%

(d) Are minorities

Vermont's average minority population is 5.8% of its 626,431 residents. The highest ratio is 8.9% occurring in Chittenden County, the only urban area of the state. The remaining 13 counties are very rural with minority populations that range from 2.6% to 5.9%.

(e) Are limited English proficient

Vermont population census for all residents who spoke a language other than English at home is 5.4%. Chittenden County is 8.5%, Essex County is 7.9%, and Orleans County is 6.7%. These higher rates are because one county has a very active refugee resettlement programs and the other two are close to the Canadian border where many speak French as their first language at home. The remaining 11 counties have rates that range from 2.5% to 5.4%.

(f) Have the greatest social need

The following areas comprise the greatest social need in Vermont.

- 1) *Physical and mental disabilities:* Vermont population census for all residents who have a physical disability is 55,048, or 9.5%. The census for all residents who have a mental disability is 39,339 or 6.8%.
- 2) *Language barriers:* Language barriers exist in an environment where people who do not have English as their primary language speak English less than "very well". The Vermont population census for all residents with a barrier is 9,793, or 1.7%.
- 3) *Cultural, social, or geographical isolation:* Although Vermont is a rural state, most of the isolation that is experienced is the result of cultural and social barriers associated with linguistic isolation. Vermont population census for all residents who are linguistically isolated is 1,850 or 0.7%.

4) Steps taken to avoid disruptions to the program when positions are redistributed, when new census or other reliable data become available, or when there is over-enrollment for any other reason

When new census data indicate that a shift in the location of the eligible population has occurred, or when there is over-enrollment for any other reason, SCSEP positions are redistributed through attrition to avoid any disruption of SCSEP services. The Vermont program has a positive participant flow rate because of its success in assisting participants to find unsubsidized employment. This creates available slots to refill in an underserved area of the state. The recovery of slots by attrition is a reliable tool because the quality of Vermont's host sites coupled with the broad array of training and support services provided by community partners expedites job placements.

The mutually supportive collaboration between the State and the National SCSEP slots allows the gradual shift of positions from over-served areas to under-served areas. Consultation and approval from DAIL and USDOL will always occur prior to moving slots from one county to another. Redistribution of positions between DAIL and VATD will occur, as an intentional and thoughtful process to assure that there is no disruption to participants.

5) The long-term strategy for serving minority older individuals under SCSEP

According to the *SCSEP Preliminary Analysis of Service to Minority Individuals, May 2009*, Vermont has a 3.6% minority population with Vermont's SCSEP serving 6.7% of minority participants. This indicates that the Vermont SCSEP exceeds the minority average for the State by a factor of two.

Vermont SCSEP has proactively recruited and enrolled minorities to achieve a minority participation level relative to the minority distribution within the state. Vermont ensures that minority participants achieve similar outcomes to those achieved by non-minority participants through partnerships with minority associated service organizations. Diverse support services for minorities provided by an array of collaborating organizations have helped to reinforce consistent outcomes across SCSEP participants. Religious organizations, behavioral health organizations, and the Vermont Refugee Resettlement Program engage in extensive outreach to minorities, which often leads to referrals to SCSEP for their clients over age 55. In addition, the smallness of Vermont's communities serves the minority goal well, because non-profits and

helping organizations have tight connections within each county of the state. Partnerships with entities such as English as Second Language (ESL) programs, faith-based organizations, refugee-resettlement employment programs, and specific job programs at VDOL are cultivated without difficulty due, not only to small geography, but also to a shared vision that centers on the inclusion of minorities in Vermont's workforce. A strategy that has been very effective is host site development within the minority oriented service provider agencies. Finally, Vermont's sub-grantee bolsters referrals of minority applicants to SCSEP by placing staff in regular contact with all partnering programs.

6) Long term projections for job growth in occupations in the state that may provide employment opportunities for older workers and how they relate to the types of unsubsidized jobs for which SCSEP participants will be trained, and the types of skill training to be provided

The source for Table 4 and Table 5 below is the *Vermont Department of Labor: Economic & Labor Market Information 2010*.

(a) Vermont's Growing Industries

The health care, environmental, and information technology industries comprise the top 16 occupations of the 25 projected to have annual growth rates between 2008 and 2018. Health care occupations represent 50% of the three top growth areas. Over the decade, Vermont's aging population will require increased personnel in long-term care occupations such as personal care attendants. In addition, the need for physician assistants, dental assistants and hygienists, health care practitioners, and technical workers will increase. The environmental field has four of the fastest growing jobs, which include waste management and remediation, environmental protection, engineering, and geological science technicians. A decline in computer programmer jobs is expected over the next decade, but a demand is expected for computer applications software engineers and network systems administrators.

Table 4 – Industry Growth

Occupational Title	Employment		Annual Percent Change (compounded)
	2008	2018	
<u>Network Systems and Data Communications Analysts</u>	503	811	4.90%
<u>Personal and Home Care Aides</u>	7,222	10,585	3.90%
<u>Home Health Aides</u>	1,328	1,926	3.80%
<u>Computer Software Engineers, Applications</u>	868	1,211	3.40%
<u>Geoscientists, Except Hydrologists and Geographers</u>	93	129	3.30%
<u>Environmental Engineers</u>	216	298	3.30%
<u>Pharmacy Technicians</u>	576	794	3.30%
<u>Medical Scientists, Except Epidemiologists</u>	209	288	3.30%
<u>Environmental Science and Protection Technicians, Including Health</u>	98	135	3.30%
<u>Financial Examiners</u>	59	81	3.20%
<u>Veterinary Technologists and Technicians</u>	391	533	3.10%
<u>Athletic Trainers</u>	105	143	3.10%
<u>Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Workers, All Other</u>	179	243	3.10%
<u>Septic Tank Servicers and Sewer Pipe Cleaners</u>	163	221	3.10%
<u>Eligibility Interviewers, Government Programs</u>	156	209	3.00%
<u>Veterinarians</u>	215	284	2.80%
<u>Computer Software Engineers, Systems Software</u>	663	872	2.80%
<u>Personal Financial Advisors</u>	493	641	2.70%
<u>Separating, Filtering, Clarifying, Precipitating, and Still Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders</u>	116	149	2.50%
<u>Medical Equipment Repairers</u>	78	100	2.50%
<u>Agents and Business Managers of Artists, Performers, and Athletes</u>	69	88	2.50%
<u>Helpers--Carpenters</u>	523	667	2.50%
<u>Electrical and Electronics Repairers, Powerhouse, Substation, and Relay</u>	131	166	2.40%

<u>Physical Therapist Assistants</u>	79	100	2.40%
<u>Physical Therapist Aides</u>	83	105	2.40%

(b) Occupations with the Largest New Job Growth or Openings

Table 5 represents the estimated number of positions available annually based on a combination of openings due to industry growth and employee turnover. Therefore, occupations with the most openings include those with the most additions, but also those that have a significant turnover. Vermont projections for jobs with the highest annual openings are; retail and cashier, personal health care, food service, and registered nurses.

Table 5 – Occupations with the Most Growth

Occupational Title	2008 Employment	Annual job openings
Cashiers	9,148	459
Personal and Home Care Aides	7,222	426
Retail Salespersons	10,471	362
Waiters and Waitresses	5,328	311
Registered Nurses	5,686	215
Customer Service Representatives	3,748	176
Teacher Assistants	5,367	174
Carpenters	6,546	171
First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Retail Sales Workers	5,629	146
Child Care Workers	4,136	144
Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	6,723	140
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	3,825	135
Landscaping and Grounds keeping Workers	4,418	128
Accountants and Auditors	3,473	126

Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	3,716	125
Counter Attendants, Cafeteria, Food Concession, and Coffee Shop	1,566	123
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	5,421	120
Teachers and Instructors, All Other (includes substitute teachers)	3,966	117
Executive Secretaries and Administrative Assistants	4,813	114
Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer	4,523	95
Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Vocational Education	2,407	94
Food Preparation Workers	2,174	91
Receptionists and Information Clerks	2,582	91
Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	2,674	86
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants	2,893	85

(c) Growth Occupations That Offer Career Opportunities for SCSEP Participants

The following occupations offer career opportunities for participants: Nurse, Retail Associate, Customer Service Representative, Data Entry Clerk, Home Health Aide, and Personal Care Attendant. Other suitable occupations include Educational Para professional, Receptionist, and Information Clerk. Vermont has been very successful at placing over 50% of participants at their non-profit host site venues upon completion of their training plan. In Vermont, over 22% of the workforce in professional occupations consisted of older workers with the prevalent occupation being administrative support staff. The majority of host sites hiring Vermont trainees upon completion of training offer these types of occupations. Although this requires constant development of new host sites, participants at non-profits, municipalities, and social service organizations often report higher satisfaction than working in entry-level service jobs that are prevalent in Vermont. In addition, many participants express interest in the human service sector because they can contribute life experience, maturity, and make a difference in their communities and towns.

By matching labor market information to information gleaned from participant assessments and Individual Employment Plans (IEP), Vermont has targeted growth industries from which to guide host site development and needed ancillary training provided by community partners and vendors. The following table presents the range of high growth jobs, their corresponding training tracks, and the types of host agencies needed for work experiences, skill training, or the on-the-job experiences needed for employment in growth occupations.

7) How the long-term job projections relate to the types of unsubsidized jobs SCSEP participants will train in and the types of skill training to be provided

Table 6 - Growth Jobs and Related Host Agencies

High Growth Industries – Training Tracks	Jobs in Demand	Host Training Sites
Health Care	LNA, Home Health Aide, Personal Care Attendant	rural medical centers, State Health Dept, Red Cross, nursing homes
Environmental Services	Waste management, environmental recovery/reuse, environmental protection, energy efficiency technicians	municipalities, regional planning commissions, energy audit firms
Education	Teacher, Teacher Aide, Instructional Aide	schools, libraries, adult education services
Finance and Insurance	Teller, IT, Support Staff, Bookkeeper, A/P Clerk	town offices, non-profits, finance firms, credit unions
Hospitality	Culinary, Service Staff, IT, Telemarketing, Front Desk	nutrition programs, homeless shelters, cafeterias
Human Services	Activity Coordinator, Information & Referral Specialist, Outreach Specialist	State & Area Agencies on Aging, Veterans Outreach & Assistance, Catholic Charities,
Retail & Customer Service	Greeter, Merchandiser, Sales Clerk, Asst Manager	hospital gift shops Good Will Industries, Salvation Army thrift shop

Manufacturing	Shipping/Receiving Clerk, Supervisory, Warehouse	emergency management centers, National Guard, warehouses
Child Care, Adult/Senior Care	Child Development Specialist, Adult Day Program Aide	parent-child centers, disability programs, senior, and advocacy centers
Jobs in variety of industries that require basic math, reading, computer literacy, communication & problem solving skills	Customer Service, Data Entry, Reception, Admin Assistant, Security	historical museums, local and state arts councils, community and faith-based organizations

Host sites are developed to assure that participants gain skills that will lead to the best match in high demand occupations by locating sites that will not only comply with all SCSEP requirements but also will authentically support the participants' skills development and job searches. Vermont combines meaningful training—that will enhance unsubsidized employability—with host sites that are willing and able to teach quality marketable skills that reflect the occupations in Table 6. The quality of host agencies directly affects the participants' abilities to transition into meaningful and satisfying unsubsidized employment.

Vermont SCSEP has strategically pursued utilizing the SCSEP Enrollee Wage and Fringe Waiver to support ancillary training and supportive services for participants. The waiver allows up to 10% of the customary funds for enrollee wage and fringe benefits used to provide training and supportive services. By utilizing the waiver and leveraging other types of funding, Vermont participants are able to enroll in classroom and/or community based trainings to augment their host site training. Participants receive computer training that will best enhance their employment goals. One-Stop Career Centers, community colleges, senior centers, adult vocational technical centers, community action organizations, and many other partner organizations provide ancillary skill development.

Vermont SCSEP encourages participants who arrive with pre-requisite skills and aptitudes pertinent to environmental occupations to explore the growth in Vermont's environmental occupations. To this end, Vermont has created partnerships with energy efficiency, weatherization, renewable energy, and environmental service organizations.

Vermont's sub-grantee has worked with Efficiency Vermont to collaborate on specialized training opportunities for participants. For individuals with past construction experience, some of these training options lead to certification by the Building Performance Institute (BPI) in positions such as Building Analyst. VATD has also coordinated with Vermont's Weatherization Program at the Office of Economic Opportunity to explore referring SCSEP participants to the energy audit and weatherization training workshops that they run throughout the state. Finally, Vermont coordinates with the statewide Regional Technical Career Center Adult Coordinators and with the Vermont Technical College Center for Sustainable Practices.

The example of development in this growth area illustrates how Vermont works to develop a broad range of host agencies to assure that positions are relevant to the needs, interests, and abilities of the participants and to the high growth jobs identified in Vermont's labor market.

8) The long-term strategy for engaging employers to develop and promote opportunities for the placement of SCSEP participants in unsubsidized employment

(a) Increasing placements

Vermont has established commendable partnerships with businesses in the Vermont workforce to assure the seamless placement of participants into unsubsidized jobs. The Vermont SCSEP program strives to establish solid working relationships and regular communication with the business sector in order to remain current with the competencies that participants need in the competitive job market. Close interface with VDOL, business associations, and individual employers has allowed Vermont to create training tracks specific to the industry standards and the cultural expectations of the market from the outset of the program. The Mature Transitions Holistic Assessment Portfolio steers participants to high growth areas that match the interests and aptitudes revealed by their assessments. The goal of unsubsidized employment is reinforced upon intake and at every stage of training activities. The IEP, developed by the participant with the aid of SCSEP staff, clearly maps the skill acquisition process and activities with the VDOL that will lead to employment opportunities as expeditiously as possible. The IEP serves as a case management tool to benchmark participants' existing skills and identify the training plans needed to reach their job goals. This approach leads to higher-level skills that enhance participant employability.

(b) Engaging and developing partnerships with employers

Vermont SCSEP staff maintains consistent employer contacts to remain current in their knowledge of actual and projected job openings. In addition, staff maintains on going relationships with Chambers of Commerce and economic development agencies, and they make use of the job orders and other resources provided by the Vermont One-Stops. The Vermont SCSEP benefits greatly from the VATD role as the Governor's appointee on the State Workforce Development Council (WDC). WDC represents older workers in their regional work to develop partnerships with the private sector to identify business skill shortages and demand jobs.

(c) Identifying Opportunities with Career Ladders

Vermont focuses on accessing job opportunities that offer the highest level of growth and advancement. In the health care industry, the career ladder begins with the position of Personal Care Attendant, advances to Licensed Nursing Assistant, Licensed Practical Nurse and then to Registered Nurse. In the retail industry, Sales Clerk and Cashier, advance to Assistant Manager, and then Manager. In the case of older workers, lateral transitions can be very appropriate. Improving transferable skills can open new opportunities for lateral movement into jobs that may not increase wages or benefits but will land older workers in industry sectors that are growing and stable. SCSEP job development beyond individual relationship building consist of participating and/or organizing job fairs, Chamber of Commerce mixers, presentations to clubs and trade associations, and regular contact with employers who not only retain SCSEP hires but have hired at some point in the past.

(d) Partnership with One-Stop

Vermont SCSEP is an active and long-standing partner with VDOL. Over the past 29 years, collaborative strategies and shared initiatives have benefited Vermont's participants. (See 9b below)

9) The strategy for continuous improvement in the level of performance for entry into unsubsidized employment

(a) Targeting jobs effectively

A great number of SCSEP participants are hired by their host sites. In large part, this happens because of the remarkable relationships that develop between supervisors, co-workers, and the older worker who has brought enthusiasm and commitment to the organization. Their contribution, coupled with the customer service provided to the sites by SCSEP staff, has spurred host site managers to locate funding and create new positions for the older worker. As an additional placement strategy, Vermont encourages the host agency to become part of the participant's personal employment network and job search team. The host agency supervisor routinely evaluates the participant's skill development against the benchmarks established in the IEP. When the participant attains the intended skill level, further assistance is provided such as job referrals, networking groups, and job fairs.

Another effective strategy is to have participants meet regularly with staff to discuss methods of overcoming job search barriers by developing positive work habits necessary to obtain and retain employment. Participants develop skills in self-evaluation, receive constructive input from their peers, and learn group networking skills to advance their job search.

Non-profits, social service organizations, and State of Vermont departments represent other successful hires and retentions. Vermont will continue to target jobs in the non-profit world because it is a consistent and proven placement sector. However, Vermont will also work to develop strategies for increasing and diversifying placements in all of the private sector industries targeted as growth areas. An example of planned further development is the computer and media technology arena.

(b) Working with One-Stops effectively

Vermont SCSEP has located staff at several of the One-Stop Centers, which serve as the central clearinghouse for all workforce development programs under WIA. This allows staff to steer older workers into VDOL services to meet their specific needs. The shared resources and space also serves to increase older workers utilization of the One-Stop Centers. Vermont will continue to collaborate closely with VDOL via cross referrals, committee work, shared initiatives, and most importantly to assure that seamless services to access all available resources is maximized between SCSEP and VDOL. The individual's SCSEP training plan requires participants be fully engaged at their One-Stop Career Centers in Vermont.

(c) Managing durational limits effectively

The USDOL mandates that SCSEP participants may remain in the program for a maximum duration of 48 months and it has approved Vermont's Durational Limit Policy that allows the possibility of waiver for those who meet USDOL waiver criteria. Vermont SCSEP regularly assesses where participants are in the timeline and keeps participants cognizant of the allocated time in which to acquire unsubsidized employment. USDOL guidelines allow a one-time 12-month increase of for those who meet one or more of the waiver factors defined by them. An enhanced IEP sets goals that must be mastered and the SCSEP focuses on those who have been in the program in excess of two years or in excess of 36 months. The IEP includes a strong emphasis on job search activities (maintaining current resume, creation of an employment portfolio, and active job search). The extension waiver provides transitional services so those who reach the durational limit will receive additional services to achieve unsubsidized employment. To expedite placement and avoid exceeding durational limits, Vermont focuses virtually all of the participants' training time on job search activities. The IEP requires that the participants attend weekly VDOL Networking Workshops or a similar job club and at least two Interview Workshops per month. They are required to attend a Skills Assessment Workshop at Vermont Adult Learning and complete the Career Readiness Program through Community College of Vermont.

(d) Training participants effectively

Vermont has established proactive policies to increase the caveat that unsubsidized placement is the goal of each participant. The use of the Enrollee Wage and Fringe Waiver to provide funding for the skill training; the use of On-the-Job-Experience (OJE) to provide training for specific jobs; and the development of very functional IEPs to guide meaningful and timely training on a continuum all set the stage for training participants effectively. Of particular note is the use of OJE as an effective training tool used as the capstone for the participant's SCSEP training experience when an employer commits to hire a participant.

Vermont strategies for transitioning participants into unsubsidized employment in occupations that support the regional economy are founded on job and community development as an ongoing process that requires establishing rapport and continuity with each employer. This is an evident process that begins immediately upon enrollment rather than being a discrete task undertaken as participants near their final IEP. All services reinforce that SCSEP is a transitional

program by which to secure unsubsidized employment. Mentoring participants to focus on training related to growth areas early in the process, sets the tone of a work search and influences positive exits within the durational limits of the program.

9) Actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP with other programs

(a) Activities being carried out in the State under title I of WIA, including plans for using the WIA One-Stop delivery system and its partners to serve individuals aged 55 and older

Vermont collaborates closely and effectively with the One-Stop Centers as described in 9b. From the leadership perspective, Commissioners and key managers of VDOL have actively engaged with SCSEP over the years, reaching out to invite SCSEP participation in One-Stop and WIA initiatives which assures that SCSEP is integrated into the One-Stop deliver system. VDOL and its regional centers collaborate to coordinate the provision of services to older workers under the One-Stop model. Staffs that are co-located at One-Stop Centers ensure that SCSEP participants register for relevant training services. They regularly search the job data base for job matches that meet the participants' goals, and they partner with One-Stop Career Center staff on employer engagement strategies such as 50+ Job Fairs and the One-Stop rapid response to business closures.

(b) Planned actions to coordinate activities of SCSEP grantees activities in the State under other titles of the OAA

Vermont State Agency of Human Services has located SCSEP and the Older American Act (OAA) administration within DAIL, which administers both. Coordination happens as a matter of course under the direction of the Commissioner of DAIL and the aging team assigned to OAA activities and grants.

At the local level, community senior centers provide health, wellness, and recreational activities. An association called the Community of Vermont Elders (COVE) provides advocacy, training, and support for care providers. COVE sponsors the Vermont Association of Professional Care Providers (VAPCP) with DAIL and VDOL providing efforts to support the association. Vermont has five Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) that either provide or arrange OAA services that consist of case management; health promotion and disease prevention; information, referral and assistance; and legal assistance and family caregiver support. The number of Vermonters served in FY 2011 was 56,765 but it does not include all possible OAA services received. DAIL is also the administering entity for the Aging and Disabilities Resource

Connections (ADRC), which has a statewide presence. Their outcome has been to improve continuity across the aging network, to bridge gaps, and to improve the information and referral system. The Vermont 211 service is a statewide information and referral service capturing all services for the aging population in one place.

(c) Planned actions to coordinate the SCSEP with other public and private entities and programs that provide services to older Americans, such as community and faith based organizations, transportation programs, and programs for those with special needs or disabilities

Vermont is a small, socially responsible state with a strong faith-based and human service network whose missions often lessen the needs of SCSEP participants. The spirit of cooperation prevalent across Vermont communities is fortunate for program participants because it narrows gaps among helping agencies that assist the aging population. This cross alignment of programs generally assures that older workers have interagency referrals and services to meet their needs. On behalf of participants, Vermont regularly leverages the resources of organizations like Vermont's Refugee Resettlement program, Veteran's Administration, Public Transit Authorities, Community College of Vermont, Vermont Adult Learning, Vermont Health Access Program, housing shelters, and low income housing programs.

Vermont's sub-grantee, VATD is the grantee for an Aging Worker Initiative (AWI) demonstration grant to provide training and employment services to Vermonter age 55 and over. This new resource augments the two SCSEP grants.

(d) Planned actions to coordinate the SCSEP with other labor market and job training initiatives

Vermont's SCSEP and DAIL either actively participate or administer other labor related projects that augment the goals of SCSEP such as the Aging Workforce Initiative Grant, Vocational Rehabilitation, and the DAIL State Plan. On-going work with the University Of Vermont's Center for Transportation focuses on decreasing transportation barriers that hinder older workers. Limited public transit in rural areas is a problem that will require increased attention over the course of this plan.

Like SCSEP and the OAA programs, Vermont's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is too, administered by DAIL. Working within the same team makes cross referrals and collaboration easy to negotiate. With a high number of participants having disabilities, VR and SCSEP often engage in shared case management of employment goals for mutual clients. The services provided by VR include Social Security Benefits counseling, career coaching, job

development, and specialized employment supports such as adaptive technology and job accommodation consultation. In addition, VR can arrange for broad array of ancillary services tailored to the individual to increase their employability. Another resource provided to SCSEP by VR is a new initiative called Creative Workforce Solutions (CWS), which organizes collaboration across all employment programs. It works to coordinate job placement and employer outreach efforts throughout the state by connecting all Agency of Human Services funded programs in each county. Each CWS team has a Business Account Manager who functions as a liaison of marketing efforts to business on behalf of the regional CWS member organizations.

Vermont SCSEP has worked with the Vermont Association of Business, Industry, and Rehabilitation (VABIR) as a liaison for job referral leads between the private sector and skilled workers with disabilities. SCSEP could increase its working relationship by discussing alignment and cross referrals with this organization. Vermont Adult Education provides the Adult Diploma Program, the Bridge to College Program, and computer and literacy programs to participants. Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) gives non-degree grants to participants for specialized training and community colleges and vocational training centers provide customized and traditional courses for SCSEP participants. Coordination and partnership with this broad network is the cornerstone of the Vermont SCSEP due to the magnitude of leveraged resources that flow from these community collaborators.

10) Community Services that are needed and where they are needed

Vermont's distribution of community services is in accordance with the equitable distribution of available program positions. Vermont will provide community services in areas based on the census of the eligible population and will provide services to target populations relative to their distribution within the state. In a time of scarce Federal as well as State resources, Vermont shares resources equitably among all eligible populations and localities. The specific distribution of positions by county is in Table 2 - Equitable Distribution found earlier in this plan.

Vermont selects community service sites based on achieving a balance between the training needs of the participant and the operational needs of the community organization. The Vermont SCSEP identifies a variety of community service sites to accommodate the diversity in

participants, so the scope of community services are as diverse and varied as are the individual participants. Of primary concern is the on-going process of balancing the participants' community giving while meeting their IEP goals, therefore community service assignments need to be reciprocal.

Host agencies provide relevant work experiences for participants to achieve their employment goals, and they meet their organizational goals by providing meaningful assignments for participants. By collaborating with SCSEP, organizations often expand their community contribution, which creates the win-win partnership for which SCSEP is known. Vermont utilizes a diverse network of community and faith based organizations to achieve this reciprocity. In addition to the traditional types of community service activities, Vermont concentrates on developing host site placements that can train particular high demand occupations based on labor market information and direct input from employers.

The selection of community assignments is made based on relevance to the IEP and the capacity to add value to the community via community service. SCSEP staff continually develops new training opportunities with eligible organizations. The challenge is to provide service while training for high growth jobs. Vermont has been able to create this balance in community service through organizations that understand the importance of utilizing the participants' skills, interests, aptitudes, but also endorse unsubsidized employment within a specified period. Over the next four years, a goal will be to again diversify sites to increase training in environmental and health organizations.

11) The State's long-term strategy to improve SCSEP services, including changes to the design of the program and planned changes in the use of SCSEP grantees and operators to better achieve the program goals; this may included recommendations to the Department

The Governor has convened The Governor's Commission on Successful Aging, with 15 key member representatives. The Director of VATD (Vermont's sub-grantee) was appointed to the Commission and as the Chair of the Workforce sub-committee, which includes VDOL, VR, DAIL, and the business community. By re-thinking the way Vermont jobs are structured, Vermont sees the need to accommodate and respond to the older labor force and those in their retirement years. The Commission has worked for several years to improve conditions for older Vermonters through education, training, and public awareness. The State SCSEP will work to

support the recommendations put forth by the Workforce sub-committee; this initiative will have a positive influence on the future success of Vermont's SCSEP. Vermont SCSEP supports the recommendations of this committee as the core of its long-term strategic plan to improve SCSEP services.

The specific recommendations that relate to the SCSEP include:

- increased training and employment opportunities for older workers;
- making services available and affordable to low-income and unemployed workers; and,
- improving employer knowledge of the availability and value of the older workforce

1. Policies that address employment opportunities for older workers in Vermont

- Identify employer best practices regarding flexibility in the work culture to encourage older workers to remain employed. Consider flexibility like:
 - flex-time work schedules;
 - part time positions;
 - flex-leave (partial year work);
 - flex-careers (worker sabbaticals); and,
 - flex-place (telecommuting)
- Work with State agencies to position Vermont as a model for the employment and retention of older workers through innovative training, re-training, and benefits programs in State government jobs;
- Proactively recruit employers, employees, and government agencies having regulatory jurisdiction or a clear policy interest such as VDOL, DAIL, Economic Services, State Human Resources, and the Treasurer's Office to participate in the initiatives. (Modeled on the GAO recommendation for Executive Action, *Older workers, Labor Can Help Employers and Employees Plan Better for the Future* December 2005);
- Publicize the needs of the labor market to fully engage older workers; and,
- Develop a state initiative focused on improving employer outreach and education. This may include public relations efforts to combat inaccurate stereotypes of older workers with the aim of reducing discriminatory practices

2. Education and training activities that support older workers to remain in or re-enter the workforce.

- Enhance training, educational, and life-long learning resources;
- Create incentives for employers to train older workers;
- Offer free or reduced tuition to Vermont's State Colleges and Regional Technical Centers as space is available in classes and/or as some percentage of class size;
- Identify a list of Vermont employers who are pro-active in hiring older workers and connect older Vermonters to them. Promote these employers through public relations to raise awareness of the benefits of hiring older workers and to advance the proposition that hiring older workers is good business practice;
- Recent government reports have raised concerns that the Federal performance standards used in the WIA programs have resulted in a bias against serving older workers. WIA performance standards via earnings gains and retention measures favor workers with low prior earnings who, subsequent to training enter higher paid, full time jobs. These measures could lead to a bias against serving older workers, many who have relatively high prior earnings or who may want to transition from high paying full time positions to lower paying part time employment (*Government Accountability Office Study 2003*). Legislation is needed to make access to workforce development programs including the Workforce Education and Training Fund, the Next Generation Initiative, the Vermont Training Program Grants, etc more available to older workers seeking training/re-training for lateral career moves and necessary and important yet potentially lower paid positions and part time employment; and,
- Many older workers need computer training. Increase the number of free or low cost venues for computer training geared to the older worker. This could include free computer classes at One-Stop Career Centers, the Regional Technical Centers, Community College of Vermont, and community libraries, etc.

3. Policies to enhance successful job transitions for older workers.

To remain in the labor force into their retirement years will require many older workers to change employers since many seek a change in activity, work schedule, etc.

- A best practice is to place older worker specialist in the One-Stop Centers, which serve as the central clearinghouse for all workforce development programs under WIA. This specialist would direct older workers to services for their specific needs and potentially help older workers feel more comfortable at the One-Stops. VATD has located older worker staff at VDOL for many years through SCSEP. Expand that model to ensure that older workers are represented at all One-Stop Career Centers in Vermont;
- Develop new information tools and improve existing systems that provide outreach to older workers and connect them to employment opportunities utilizing existing partnerships among state agencies and public and private partners; and,
- Support existing programs and partnerships such as SCSEP that meet the specific needs of older workers by providing general career information, peer counseling, job placement, networking, life planning seminars, special services, assessments, computer training and other resources.

In summary, Vermont's four year strategic SCSEP Plan exemplifies partnerships that are well coordinated, work effectively and have been in existence for many years. It also clearly identifies new partners to develop as part of the 2012 – 2015 State SCSEP. The vision of the Governor's Commission on Successful Aging establishes a road map to improve the lives of older Vermonters that coalesces with the needs and the goals of SCSEP.