Part 3: Orientation, Assessment and Individual Employment Plan, Assignment Description, Performance Evaluation and Change of a Community Service Assignment

300   Orientation of New Participants

A. Requirements for New Participant Orientation

The project director is responsible for providing a complete orientation for each participant once a host agency assignment is made and, if possible, before the first day of community service at a host agency. Orientation must be completed within 60 days of the assignment date. Participants should be paid the applicable minimum wage for hours of orientation.

Participant orientation must provide at least the following information:

- SCSEP goals and objectives of the SSAI project sponsor and of the sponsor organization (for more information, see section 101-D SSAI Performance Measures);

- Availability of supportive services and a free or low-cost physical examination (for more information, see section 701 Physical Examinations for Participants);

- Training opportunities (for more information, see Part 4 Training);

- Participant's rights and responsibilities;

- Participant meetings (for more information, see section 400 Participant Meetings);

- Obligation to seek unsubsidized employment, including applying for jobs at the host agency and registering with the American Job Center/One-Stop (for more information, see section 500-E Participants Responsible for Seeking Unsubsidized Employment);

- Post-enrollment and unsubsidized employment information that will be collected (for more information, see Part 5 Unsubsidized Employment);

- Community service assignment description (for more information, see section 302 Community Service Assignment Description);

- Customer satisfaction surveys mandated by the U.S. Department of Labor (for more information, see section 101-D SSAI Performance Measures); and

- Allowable and unallowable political activities (for more information, see section 802 Political Activities and Lobbying by Project Sponsor and Participants).

During orientation each participant must be given a copy of the project sponsors' personnel policies and procedures and the following must be covered.

- Hours of community service work-based training (for more information, see section 401 Participant Training After Enrollment);

- Wage rate (for more information, see section 700-E Participant Wages);

- Submission of timesheets, schedule and method of payment of wages (for more information, see section 700 Hours of Community Service and Participant Wages);

- Required benefits (for more information, see section 702 Fringe Benefits for Participants);

- Role of supervisors;

- Evaluation of participant progress (for more information, see section 303-A Annual Performance Evaluation Recommended);

- Provision of safe working environment (for more information, see section 104-B Participant Health and Safety Consultation and Other Monitoring Visit);

- Annual monitoring and safety assessment (for more information, see sections 104-B Participant Safety Consultation and Other Monitoring Visit);

- Documentation requirements;

- Assessment, re-assessments and individual employment plans (IEP) (for more information, see section 301 Assessments, Re-Assessments and Individual Employment Plan);

- Termination policies, including IEP termination (for more information, see section 603 Termination);

- Procedures for complaint resolution (for more information, see section 805-D Complaint Resolution);

- Procedures for reporting assignment-related accidents;

- Travel reimbursement, if applicable (for more information, see section 1100-A Allowable Transportation Costs for Participants);

- Durational limit of 48 months on SCSEP participation (for more information, see section 203-D Durational Limit on Individual's Program Participation);

- Community service assignment limitation (for more information, see sections 700-B Limitations on Hours of Community Service Assignment and section 800-A Change of Community Service Assignment);

- Obligation to report any change in income or family size that may affect eligibility (for more information, see section 601 Recertification of Eligibility);

- Drug-free workplace policy;

- Prohibition from volunteering at host agencies (for more information, see section 103-D Volunteering at Assigned Host Agencies Prohibited);

- Felony checks, if applicable (for more information, see section 203-F Felony Background Checks);

- *Release Form* (for more information, see section 300-A Requirements for New Participant Orientation); and

- Privacy Act Statement (for more information, see section 900-G Privacy Act Statement).

The U.S. Department of Labor considers "community service assignment" and "community service employment assignment" to be the same in that they mean part-time, temporary employment paid with grant funds in projects at host agencies through which eligible individuals are engaged in community service and receive work experience and job skills that can lead to unsubsidized employment. To alleviate potential confusion that participants may have about the two names for the same type of assignment, SSAI encourages subgrantees to clarify the nature of the community service assignment with participants.

During the orientation, each participant must sign a copy of the *SCSEP Release Form*. This form permits the collection of follow-up information when the participant exists and secures unsubsidized employment. A completed and signed copy of the *SCSEP Release Form* must be kept in the participant's file. The form is available in this manual's Appendix II or on the partners' page of the SSAI's website at http://seniorserviceamerica.org.

B. Receipt of Orientation and Copy of Personnel Policy Acknowledged

Project sponsors shall have participants sign a statement acknowledging receipt of the personnel policies and orientation.

Project sponsors must document enrollees' attendance at orientation by completing the *Record of Participant Orientation Form* and retaining a completed and signed copy of the form in each participant's file.

Dates from the following documents must be documented on SSAI's Participant Information Webtool:

- Date of Orientation;

- Date of *Physical Examination Waiver Form*;

- Date of Initial Individual Employment Plan (IEP) and dates from each IEP update;

- Date of each Host Agency Monitoring Visit, including the date of the Host Agency Safety Check; and

- Date of the Initial Assessment and dates of each reassessment.

The statement should be included in each participant's personnel record. Project sponsors also should explain and distribute copies of the Privacy Act Statement of 1974 (for more information, see section 900-G Privacy Act Statement).

C. Reorientation

SSAI strongly encourages project sponsors to hold reorientation sessions for participant to revisit subjects covered during the initial orientation and any program changes. Reorientation also provides an opportunity to present new information.

301 Assessment, Re-Assessment and Individual Employment Plan

A. Purpose of Initial Assessment and Individual Employment Plan (IEP)

The initial assessment and Individual Employment Plan (IEP) serve as tools to accomplish the following:

- Help the project director make an effective community service assignment to a host agency;

- Identify appropriate training for the participant;

- Identify unsubsidized employment opportunities and/or prospects;

- Pinpoint any personal, social or other barriers to employment and identify supportive services that will enhance the participant's experience in SCSEP; and

- Establish a plan of action, including goals and deadlines, to enhance unsubsidized employment.

If an appropriate assessment and IEP already have been developed under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, that assessment and IEP may be used rather than developing a new assessment and/or IEP, if such use is reflected in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the local Workforce Investment Board regarding operations at the American Job Center /One-Stop Delivery system and your office.

To assure compliance with SCSEP regulations, all forms used for Initial Assessments and IEPs, and Reassessments and IEP updates must be approved by SSAI. Project directors or their designees may use either the samples that are included in the *SSAI SCSEP Policy and Procedure Manual Appendix II* or an alternate format. Sponsors are not to use any alternate forms until they have received approval from SSAI.

Project Directors and their designees may choose to, but are not required to, complete the SSAI Initial Assessment and IEP, and Reassessment and IEP update forms electronically. The electronic forms are available through the Participant Profile in the SSAI Webtools which can be accessed on the partner's section of SSAI's website at http://seniorserviceamerica.org. Copies of completed electronic forms must be printed and retained in the participant's file.

B. Initial Assessment

Project directors are required to conduct a complete assessment for each participant (1) at the time of enrollment and (2) prior to placement in a community service assignment. All Initial Assessments must be conducted using an SSAI approved format, and recorded in SPARQ. (For more information see 301-A and 301-E Initial Assessment, IEP, and Reassessment/IEP Update Protocol.)

The Initial Assessment helps to build the participant's Individual Employment Plan (IEP). At minimum, the assessment must include:

- Participant's name;

- Date of assessment (this date will be the date of the assessment the IEP was based on);

- Work history;

- Educational history;

- Skills and Interests;

- Talents;

- Physical capabilities;

- Occupational preferences;

- Needs for supportive services;

- Training needs;

- Aptitudes;

- Potential for performing community service assignments;

- Potential for transition to unsubsidized employment;

- Signatures of participants and/or staff member conducting the assessment;

- Case note (optional)

The Initial Assessment contains the following components:

- **Participant's Name**
  Provide the participant's complete name, including any middle name or initial.

- **Date of Assessment**
  Record the date that the assessment is completed. The assessment date will be the indicator for identifying which assessment was used to develop an IEP.

- **Work History**
  Provide information on any significant work experience, including volunteer or home-making activities. Where applicable, provide the name of the employer, job title, dates or duration of the job, the reason for leaving and whether the work was paid or unpaid. Provide specific details on the skills used at each job.

- **Education and Training History (Skills and Interests)**
  Provide information on the participant's educational background. Include degrees, special licenses or certifications obtained (for example, dietary aide, home health certification, etc.). List any additional training received. List any talents and hobbies the participant has that were not previously listed.

- **Occupational Preferences**
  Provide information regarding the participant's occupational preferences such as environment, learning, and type of information they prefer to work with (e.g. numbers, people, data, etc.).

- **Supportive Services Needed**
  Identify and list any supportive services that a participant may need such as transportation, health, housing, food, personal/family, job readiness and job search. Provide referrals as necessary to address the need.

- **Training Needs**
  Assess and provide information about any skills and/or training that the participant will need while in SCSEP. For example, any educational/learning needs, job preparation, job skills, or job keeping skills.

- **Aptitude**
  The project sponsor may select any aptitude test of its choice. It is ~~is~~ the subgrantees responsibility to ensure the test chosen provides basic information on a person's work-related capacity. The results must be attached to the Initial Assessment.

- **Job Readiness**
  Include an evaluation of the participant's job readiness skills which minimally includes their potential for performing at their assigned community service and their potential for transitioning to unsubsidized employment.

- **Signature and Dates**
  Remember to include signatures and dates on the form. Both the project director (or designee) and participant must sign the document and date it.

- **Case Note (Optional)**
  Complete a case note for specific or important information that is not covered on the assessment form and for which you need to keep detailed documentation.   Below are some topics that should be included in a case note:

  - document information about interactions that you've had with the participant that are not found anywhere else on the Initial Assessment;

  - document information about interactions that you've had with others (i.e., host agency supervisor, supportive service agency representative, etc.) about the participant that are not found anywhere else on the Initial Assessment;

  - provide additional information related to any of the previous sections of the Initial Assessment; and

  - document information that assists the reader in better understanding the participant's situation.

Important note: Be sure the participant is not "job ready" (see Section 202-B Ineligible Applicants). If the participant is determined to be job ready, the project sponsor should refer the individual to services in the American Job Center/One-Stop or other partners.

Explore potential community service assignments with the participant and have him or her select three community service assignments that are in line with her or his career goals.

C. Individual Employment Plan (IEP)

The IEP reflects the participant's needs and interests and helps to outline his or her employment goals. An initial IEP must be prepared within 30 days of the participant's enrollment and updated as necessary, but no less than once every six months to ensure the participant is making progress toward his or her goals. All IEPs must be conducted using an SSAI approved format, and recorded in SPARQ (for more information see 301-A and 301-E Initial Assessment, IEP, and Reassessment/IEP Update Protocol).

All initial IEPs must contain:

- Participant's name;
- Name of the Host Agency and Community Service Assignment Title;
- Date the IEP was completed and the date the IEP was entered into SPARQ;
- Unsubsidized employment goal;
- Additional education and/or training;
- Need for supportive services;
- Signatures of participant and staff member completing the IEP.
- Case Note (optional)

The Initial Individual Employment Plan includes the following components:

- **Participant's Name**
  Provide the participant's complete name including any middle name or initial.

- **Date of IEP**
  Record the date that the IEP is completed which is important as it is compared to the date entered in SPARQ during data validation.

- **Date of the Assessment the IEP is based on**
  This date should be the date of the Initial Assessment. If the Initial IEP is based on another assessment prior to or after the Initial Assessment, that date should be reflected.

- **Name of Host Agency and Community Service Assignment Title**
  Provide information regarding the Host Agency where the participant is assigned and the community service assignment/job title they have. Make sure to be specific and **do not** use general terms such as *SCSEP Training or SCSEP Senior Aide.*   Identify a host agency and a community service assignment that will enable the participant to learn and/or strengthen a specific skill or set of skills that are consistent with his/her employment goals.

- **Unsubsidized Employment Goal**
  Note the initial IEP must contain an appropriate employment goal, but subsequent IEPs need not have an employment goal if one is not feasible for the participant. In such cases the IEP should be updated to reflect other appropriate goals for increased self-sufficiency, including supportive services to address barriers, additional training, community service, and/or transition to other programs or services. Discuss the participant's interest in working and identify employment opportunities based on their past work history, talents and hobbies.

- **Additional Education & Training**
  Identify any additional training outside of that received at the community service assignment which the participant will need to acquire to meet the job requirement(s) of their unsubsidized employment goal. Indicate where the additional training will be held along with the start and end dates.

- **Unsubsidized Employment**
  Develop goals and action steps with each participant about unsubsidized placement that was identified on the Initial Assessment. Identify additional skills needed to reach their employment. Document how the participant will achieve/learn these skills/experiences and by when.

- **Supportive Services Needed**

  Determine if supportive services identified on the Initial Assessment have been addressed. If not, determine what additional actions need to take place or identify any additional supportive services that a participant may need such as, transportation, health, housing, food, personal/family, job readiness and job search. Identify the need and provide referrals as necessary to address the need.

  Based on need identified during the interview, identify any supportive services the participant needs in order to overcome these barriers. Record the following:

  1. Supportive services needed (specific type of service the participant needs)
  2. Person or agency the participant is being referred to (who will provide the supportive services)
  3. Name of person making the referral (your name)
  4. Date of referral
  5. Expected completion date
  6. Date of actual completion

- **Signatures and Dates**

  As with the Initial Assessment, remember to secure signatures and dates on the IEP form. Both the project director (or designee) and the participant must sign the IEP and date it.

The project director, or designee, must make frequent contact with the participant to review and document the progress the participant has made. The project director, or designee, must involve the host agency supervisor in discussions about the participant's job readiness and other progress. Each time the IEP is updated, both the participant and the project director, or designee, must initial and date the change. The project director should notify the host agency supervisor of changes to the IEP.

Participants who refuse to cooperate with the goals stated in their IEP may face discipline up to and including termination by the SSAI project sponsor (for more information, see section 603-B Disciplinary Termination Process and 603-E Termination for Individual Employment Plan Violation).

The project director or designee must update the IEP after each significant contact with a participant (including visits at the participant's host agency), and record the date of each IEP update.

D. Re-Assessment/IEP Updates

Project staff must conduct at least one assessments/IEP updates per participant every six months. The very first participant assessment and individual employment plan is the Initial Assessment and Initial IEP; all subsequent assessments are reassessments with IEP updates. All Reassessments and IEP updates must be conducted using an SSAI approved format, and recorded in SPARQ.

When a participant is re-assessed as unlikely to get unsubsidized employment, the Individual Employment Plan must be revised with other approaches, including but not limited to, additional training, including a new community service assignment, efforts to address barriers and/or transition to other programs or services that the participant can use to become self-sufficient [for more information, see section 301-C Individual Employment Plan (IEP)].

E. Initial Assessment, IEP, and Reassessment/IEP Update Protocol

Sponsors must conduct at least one assessments and IEP updates per participant per six month period. If an appropriate assessment and IEP already have been developed under Title I of the Workforce Opportunity & Innovation Act, that assessment and IEP may be used rather than developing a new assessment and/or IEP, if such use is reflected in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the local Workforce Investment Board and your office. The dates of all Initial Assessments and IEPs, Reassessments and IEP updates, and Transition Assessments and IEPs must be recorded in SPARQ (see question 40c).

F. Purpose of the Transition Assessment and IEP

The purpose of the Transition Assessment and Individual Employment Plan (IEP) for participants who are approaching their four-year time limit on participation or individual durational limit and who are still not job ready, is to give these participants a post-SCSEP survival plan by the time they must be terminated from the program (for more information, see section 203-D Durational Limit on Individual's Program Participation). If a participant agrees to engage in such planning and agrees to share appropriate information, the participant's life situation – for example, whether or not an individual has enough money to cover expenses – must be assessed before the plan is developed.

The participant does have the option to decline the Transition Assessment and IEP process. If a participant declines, project staff must document this decision thoroughly in detailed case notes as well as on the *Transition Assessment and IEP Form* (available in this manual's Appendix II and on the partners' page of SSAI's website at http://seniorserviceamerica.org. However, refusal to participate in the planning process may be unlikely given a participant's financial need for income to replace their SCSEP income after exit.

The transition assessment differs from the typical SCSEP assessment in that it may also involve a review of the participant's finances if he or she agrees to share such information. The goal of this review is to help participants determine if they will have sufficient financial resources when they leave the program. If a participant concludes that he or she has sufficient financial resources, program staff may help the participant to identify community service options to include in the Transition Assessment and IEP, which may be used after exiting the program.

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

Participants' health status should be assessed when applicable, especially if it would identify a disability for which the participant would be eligible for disability benefits.

In the same manner, the resources of numerous community service organizations and programs should be identified in the assessment to address health care, food, shelter, transportation, energy and other needs. For example, participants may be shown how to access such resources as food stamps, meals on wheels, senior dining and food banks, if applicable.

SSAI and its subgrantees will encourage partnerships with local Area Agencies on Aging and local community action agencies for supportive services, including energy assistance, housing and transportation

G. Transition Assessment and IEP

A Transition Assessment and Individual Employment Plan (IEP) must be developed for participants who only have one year left on SCSEP before they reach their 48 month individual durational limit exit date and have not secured unsubsidized employment. The Transition Assessment and IEP needs to be created 12 months before the participant's four-year individual durational limit date and updated three times: 1) within 6 months after the initial Transitional Assessment and IEP, 2) 90 days before the individual durational limit exit date, and 3) 30 days before the individual durational limit exit date. Project Directors can begin providing transition services to these participants a year before exit up to the day the participant reaches their exit date.

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

- Up-to-date information on each participant's transferrable skills and interests and, if applicable for those participants with unsubsidized placement as a goal, specific action steps, such as updating their resume and job-interviewing and job-search skills, getting additional needed training and identifying employers to target and an outreach strategy;

- Up-to-date information on goals and needs for support along with specific action steps, such as developing a personal budget without SCSEP wages or getting permission from the participant to contact social support systems to ensure safety net services throughout the transition; and

- Up-to-date information on continuing community service goals or other plans post-exit and specific action steps, such as identifying other stipend and volunteer programs.

For some participants, the unsubsidized placement goal may be focused on employment with their host agency. For others, the goal will focus on a wide range of employers utilizing the American Job Centers. The Transition Assessment and IEP should also include a schedule of contacts between the participant and subgrantee staff so that the participant can obtain needed coaching and provide feedback as to how well various recommended job search techniques are working, where applicable.

The *Transition Assessment and IEP Form* are available in this manual's Appendix II and on the partners' page of SSAI's website at http://seniorserviceamerica.org.

The dates of all Initial Assessments, IEPs, Reassessment, IEP updates, and Transition Updates and IEPs must be recorded in SPARQ (see question 40c).

H. Project Director Responsible for Initial Assessment, Re-Assessment, IEP, and Transition Assessment and IEP

The project director or designee must complete the Initial Assessment, as well as any re-assessments and Individual Employment Plans (IEPs), and any *Transition Assessment and IEP Forms*, as required. Participants should be aware of the content of the forms and should be in full agreement with the subsequent action plan. All participants certify their agreement by signing these forms and all updates.

302 Community Service Assignment Description

A. Written Assignment Description Required

Project directors are required to work with host agency supervisors to prepare a written community service assignment description for each participant. Copies of the assignment description should be given to the participant and the host agency supervisor and be made a part of the participant's record. Whenever the participant's duties are changed, project directors must revise and date the assignment description. The assignment description should be used to revise and update the *Re-Assessment Form* and the Individual Employment Plan (for information, see section 301 Assessments, Re-Assessments and Individual Employment Plans).

B. Contents of the Community Service Assignment

At minimum, the assignment description should include:

1. Assignment Title: It should reflect the duties and responsibilities of the community service assignment.

2. Duties and Responsibilities: All duties a participant will be expected to perform on the community service assignment.

3. Objective: Training and/or employment objective for the community service assignment. State ways that Individual Employment Plan goals are met or addressed by the assignment.

4. Host Agency: Name and nature of programs and services provided by the host agency.

5. Location: Address and telephone number of the community service site.

6. Hours and Days of Service: Regularly scheduled hours and days of service.

7. Rate of Pay: The hourly wage rate that will be paid to a participant in this assignment.

8. Supervision: Name and title of host agency supervisor.

9. Requirements: Any particular skills, experience or training requirements for the assignment.

10. Training: Describe the general training that will be offered to the participant.

11. Date: The date the assignment began or the date it was revised.

12. Participant's Signature.

303 Participant Performance Evaluation (Optional)

A. Annual Performance Evaluation Recommended

Annual performance evaluations of participants are recommended, but they are not required. Project sponsors may choose to conduct them more frequently if it is in the participant's best interest or the IEP warrants it. Under most circumstances, the host agency supervisor will conduct the performance evaluation. However, project directors may find it necessary to conduct a supplemental evaluation.

The performance evaluation identifies areas of accomplishment, areas in which improvement may be needed and areas in which additional training or experience may improve the likelihood of unsubsidized employment. In addition, the performance evaluation identifies the participant's readiness for unsubsidized employment.

B. Procedure for Performance Evaluation

The host agency supervisor or project director completing the performance evaluation must discuss its content with the participant and provide him or her with a copy of the evaluation. Project directors also should allow the participant the opportunity to comment on or respond to the evaluation in writing. After completion, a copy of the evaluation should become part of the participant's record.

C. Participant Performance Evaluation Form

A sample *Participant Performance Evaluation Form* is included in this manual's Appendix II and on the partners' page of SSAI's website at http://seniorserviceamerica.org.