

NEBRASKA

Senior Community Service Employment Program

**State Plan
2012 - 2015**

Department of Health & Human Services



Submitted By:

**Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services
Division of Medicaid & Long Term Care
State Unit on Aging**

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Section 1

Strategic Workforce Planning

Nebraska Vision

Nebraska's vision for the years ahead must be about preparing Nebraska to compete in the 21st Century, in an age of technological marvels, new educational challenges, international competition and entrepreneurial opportunity.

The Nebraska Department of Labor has expressed the Governor's Vision in four goals:

1. Maintain a dynamic, demand-driven workforce development system focusing on high-growth, high demand industries with a regional development context;
2. Increase the integration of services to employers and job seekers through multiple public and private partners;
3. Recognize the need to meet the changing long and short-term needs of businesses and individuals with a coordinated, efficient, and less bureaucratic delivery system; and
4. Provide knowledge, skills and resources for learning, earning, and living.

Regional economic development in Nebraska is in the early stages. Future Force Nebraska is an initiative of Nebraska's State Departments of Economic Development, Education and Labor. The challenge will be to develop a strategy for addressing the economic, workforce and educational challenges in the State's high growth demand occupations. Nebraska's high growth demand occupations include biotechnology, construction, entrepreneurship, health services, industrial manufacturing, engineering and transportation.

Nebraska Industry Regions



Source: Department of Economic Development's 2000 Deloitte & Touche, Fantus study

The Department of Economic Development's 2000 Deloitte & Touche Fantus study recognizes that Nebraska includes a number of unique regions. Nebraska's rural regions include the Sandhills which is characterized by ranches and small services. Other rural regions include

ranching and more intensive agricultural production. The I-80 Corridor includes 14 counties with the advantage of a major transportation infrastructure to supplement ranching and intensive agricultural production. Nebraska's Metropolitan Region contains 65 percent of the private sector workforce. This region offers a broad diversity of industries from food processing, transportation and logistics, ethanol and pharmaceuticals, insurance, engineering, business services, heavy machinery, defense, medical research and regional health care services.

The State Department of Labor published a list of occupations that have above average job prospects. These occupations are considered Hot Jobs. Hot Jobs are ranked based on projected employment growth and projected annual openings. Occupations addressing our aging population's long term care support needs are prominently featured.

Nebraska Top 20 Hot Jobs 2004-2014

Occupation Title	Growth Rate (2004-2014)	Estimated Annual Openings
Registered Nurses	27.53%	935
Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer	15.28%	949
Customer Service Representatives	25.26%	728
Retail Salespersons	10.72%	1402
Waiters and Waitresses	15.93%	1075
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	16.78%	973
Cashiers	8.35%	1270
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	14.87%	543
Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants	17.17%	414
Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	11.16%	378
Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	13.71%	324
Child Care Workers	17.46%	336
Office Clerks, General	5.32%	502
Accountants and Auditors	15.84%	300
Computer Software Engineers, Applications	43.15%	189
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	18.53%	284
Teacher Assistants	13.68%	308
Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers	14.85%	307
Receptionists and Information Clerks	15.46%	311
Carpenters	12.30%	286

Source: Nebraska Workforce Development, 2006

The State Department of Labor notes that the most common job vacancies are for office and administrative support, food preparation, sales and transportation and material moving. Some of the most common job vacancies, such as office and administrative support, match the interest of the majority of women over 55 years of age seeking employment. The Senior Community Service Employment Program's (SCSEP) host agencies provide the location and the skills training to help participants develop job skills towards meeting their goal of locating a position in the workforce. Office work, facility maintenance and food service are the most common types of training opportunities offered through host agencies.

Host agency training may need further supplementation by SCSEP sub-grantees and their Workforce Investment Act (WIA) partners to provide local employers with job-ready employees. The office jobs currently available require a working knowledge of computers and their work programs. This technological experience is often underdeveloped by persons over 55 years of age. Computer skills-building classes are offered to participants by the Senior Employment Program and the job-certified training developed by Omaha's Workforce Investment Board (WIB).

Section 2 State Operational Plan

The State Operational Plan will discuss how the Senior Community Services Employment Program functions as part of a State-wide workforce development program to address the needs of older job-seekers and employers. This section will include a brief overview of this older worker initiative. It will also include a discussion of SCSEP coordination with community service organizations, employment training programs and employers. This document will be available for public comment. Comments will be reflected in the Final document.

Section 2.1 Purpose of the State Plan

Nebraska's State Plan describes the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) and the training opportunities which prepare older workers for the jobs available in Nebraska's workforce.

This initiative provides training for aging workers through community service organizations (host agencies). Common training locations are provided at schools, hospitals and senior service organizations. Nebraska's SCSEP programs have a working relationship with a wide variety of community organizations. These include local non-profits, senior service organizations (senior centers, Area Agencies on Aging, and will include Aging and Disabilities Resource Centers), other employment training organizations (One-Stops and the Workforce Investment Boards) and local employers. Program adjustments (due to revised regulations, processes, program performance measures or employment niches for older workers) may require substantial changes in program operations. These issues are discussed with Nebraska's project sponsors during regular contacts.

Under SCSEP, project sponsors receive grants to create and pay for part-time (usually 20 hours a week) community service positions for low-income persons over 55 years of age at local public or private nonprofit organizations. The dual purpose of the program is to provide useful community service assignments for the enrollees while promoting transition to unsubsidized employment. Local public and private nonprofit organizations which provide training opportunities also benefit through the work completed by SCSEP enrollees.

Use of Funds

Each enrollee is offered a minimum of at least a 20 hour work week. Enrollees placed in part-time community service employment receive a wage not less than what is established by the

Federal Minimum Wage Law, plus fringe benefits. Host agencies, private nonprofit employers, and public employers provide skill training through subsidized part-time employment in the fields of social services, recreational activities, library services, legal services, health care, education, economic development, conservation, maintenance and restoration of natural resources, community beautification, and other services within communities. A host agency must be a governmental or nonprofit, nonpartisan organization. Examples of host agencies include schools, senior centers, food banks, housing authorities, libraries, community foundations and health agencies.

Participant Eligibility

Eligible individuals are at least 55 years of age, and have an income not greater than 125 percent of the poverty level, or are a member of a family that receives regular cash public benefit payments. Income eligibility must be certified annually. All participants must reside within Nebraska. There is no minimum period of residency for determining eligibility. Grantees may not impose additional eligibility requirements beyond those imposed by federal law. The enrollment priorities for filling vacant authorized positions are as follows:

1. Veterans and qualified spouses.
2. Individuals with the greatest economic need (incomes at or below the poverty level).
3. Those 65 years of age or older.
4. Those seeking re-enrollment following termination of a job through no fault of-their-own due to illness or engaging in unsubsidized employment, provided that re-enrollment is sought within one year of termination.
5. Individuals with limited English proficiency.
6. Anyone with a disability.
7. Those with low employment prospects.
8. Those at-risk of homelessness.
9. Individuals that live in rural areas.

Section 2.2

Organizational Participation

The development of Nebraska's Senior Community Employment Service Employment Program State Plan involved the insight and participation of a variety of interested persons and groups. This planning process involved multiple steps and opportunities for various opinions to impact the initial plan. A brief summary includes:

1. State Title V Agency developed the framework and initial draft of State Plan.
2. Nebraska's Title V programs include Experience Works and the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging. The Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging operates within Douglas and Sarpy Counties while Experience Works is statewide. They recruit, locate community service training and help program participants locate unsubsidized jobs within their community.
3. State Department of Labor and Workforce Investment Agencies provide job-search and work-skills development. The Department of Labor collaborates with the Departments of Economic Development and Education to develop a strategic approach to developing a local workforce with the skills needed for current jobs as well as future opportunities. The Department of Labor provides a wide variety of support services for job seekers. Their workforce development activities include job-training for adults. Some SCSEP participants receive additional training through this program.
4. Workforce Investment Agencies are regional agencies which work with schools, employers and other training partners to provide necessary skills training for persons seeking employment. Nebraska's Senior Community Service Employment Programs are active partners in the WIA's One Stop Shops. Some SCSEP participants also benefit from training opportunities available through the WIA's adult training programs.
5. Area Agencies on Aging provide a wide variety of support services to help persons over 60 years of age live independently within their communities. SCSEP participants often have significant constraints limiting their ability to find and keep a job. Addressing factors such as affordable housing, transportation and caregiver support are necessary also. Their familiarity with community supports makes Area Agencies on Aging important partners for Nebraska's Senior Community Service Employment Programs.
6. Community service organizations provide training to SCSEP participants. These organizations range from senior service organizations such as senior centers to community services including schools and hospitals.
7. Nebraska's State Plan has been posted on the Nebraska Department Health & Human Services web site; <http://dhhs.ne.gov> . Input received during comment period will be included in the Plan.

Section 2.3

Summary of Comments

The State Plan will be e-mailed to Area Agencies on Aging, community service, labor, and business organizations. It will also be posted on the State Department of Health & Human Services web-site. All comments received will be reflected in this Plan.

Section 2.4

Distribution of SCSEP Positions

The Nebraska Equitable Distribution Report provides a basis for determining a fair allocation of program positions with the State. This report is useful for determining where to locate new positions, fill vacant positions, or reduce positions, as necessary. The Nebraska Equitable Distribution Report is contained in **Appendix A** (Appendix A will be completed once US Department of Labor's National Competition confirms Nebraska's National Contractor.) The following is an explanation of the information contained in this report:

1. **Counties** – counties served by program.
2. **Distribution Factor** – equitable distribution of positions within the county listed.
3. **Current Positions** - number of authorized positions for each grantee in the county.
4. **Difference** – variance from the equitable position level.

The distribution of Nebraska's SCSEP positions has supported the rural counties. Until the last few years Douglas County, which includes Omaha, had substantially fewer positions than were equitable. During this period, Experience Works shifted a number of their positions into Douglas County. Future Equitable Distribution discussions will focus upon the adequacy of position distribution within the rural counties.

Nebraska Demographics

Twenty-five percent (459,853) of Nebraska's population is 55 years of age or above. The first of the Baby Boom generation reached 60 years of age in 2006. The population over 55 years of age will increase dramatically over the next fifteen years.

Special Populations

The Older Americans Act requires this program provide priority in enrollment for eligible individuals who are veterans or spouses of veterans, those with greatest economic need, individuals who are minorities, and individuals with greatest social need, individuals who failed to find employment using available WIA services, individuals who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness and those living in rural areas.

Greatest Economic Need

The term greatest economic need is defined as persons at or below the poverty level established by the US Department of Health & Human Services. Nebraska's population over sixty years of age includes 24,558 with incomes at or below the poverty level.

Minorities

The term includes American Indians or Alaskan Natives, Asians, Blacks or African-Americans, Hispanics or Latino Americans and Asians or Other Pacific Islanders. Data from the 2010 Census is not currently available for minorities who are eligible for the older worker programs. Most of Nebraska’s African- American lives primarily in Omaha and Lincoln. The distribution of Nebraska’s Hispanic population is broader with a presence on many of the smaller cities such as Norfolk, Lexington and Scottsbluff. The State Unit on Aging’s Four-Year State Plan notes a significant shift within the minority population since the previous Census. Hispanic seniors increased dramatically. The minority population over sixty years of age is 20,286 (6.2% of total eligible population). Nebraska’s minority population over 60 years of age includes:

<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
African-American	7,577	2.3
American Indian	1,318	.4
Asian/Pac. Islander	2,636	.8
Hispanic	7,248	2.2
Other	1,507	.7

Source: 2000 Census

Greatest Social Need

The term greatest social need is defined as needs caused by non-economic factors such as physical and mental disabilities, language barriers and cultural, social, or geographic isolation, including isolation brought about by racial or ethnic status. For purposes of this plan, greatest social need is defined as persons with physical and mental disabilities who are 55 years of age or older. Nebraska’s population over 55 years of age includes 32,235 persons with greatest social need.

Rural & Urban Populations

The Nebraska Department of Labor noted in its 2004 report (Labor Force & Its Demographics) that much of the State’s population growth have been in its urban counties and those along the I-80 Corridor. More remote counties have lost population. Suburban Omaha has grown dramatically in the last ten years. The 2010 Census notes that 34% of the Nebraska population over 60 years of age lives in rural areas. While bio-technology, internet commerce and transportation services are growing rapidly in the eastern cities, most of Nebraska is rural with an economy that is heavily farming and ranch dominated.

Recruitment

Enrollment priority will be given to veterans and qualified spouses, eligible individuals having the greatest economic need, eligible individuals over 65 years of age. Nebraska’s grantees have a history of focusing their efforts upon older individuals both with incomes below the poverty level and those with greatest social need. The State SCSEP program provides 53% of its positions to minority individuals (with Nebraska’s minority population at 6.2% of the eligible population). Over 96% of Nebraska’s grantee’s enrollees have annual incomes below the poverty level. Eleven percent of these enrollees are veterans. Among program participants, 64%

Security Disability to rejoin the workforce. Ticket to Work also provides benefits counselors to help people understand whether participation impacts eligibility for other public benefits. Area Agencies on Aging are familiar with the support need of the elderly and experienced in marshaling community resources to address those needs. One of the State's sub-grantees is the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging. Nebraska's second sub-grantee is Experience Works. Experience Works service area touches all of Nebraska. Experience Works relies upon the staff of each of the eight Area Agencies on Aging to address non-employment support needs of SCSEP trainees.

One significant barrier to employment is an inadequate availability of public transit. The State Unit on Aging has established a Senior Transportation Coalition with the substantial support from Nebraska Easter Seals and Nebraska AARP. Nebraska's efforts have focused upon the development of local coordinated transportation initiatives and regional coordinated transportation systems. The interest in this initiative from human service, transportation providers and State Agencies (Departments of Health and Human Services, Labor, Roads and the Public Service Commission) indicate a continuing commitment to improve the availability and effectiveness of public transportation services.

Affordable housing is necessary to rebuild or maintain the economic life of program participants. Housing issues range from locating affordable housing to accessing community supports such as energy assistance and weatherization. Both Area Agencies on Aging and Community Action Programs are familiar with available affordable housing resources.

Program participants are often caregivers for a parent, spouse or grandchild. Nebraska's Lifespan Respite Program, Care Management Program and the Older Americans Act's Caregiver Support Program assist these caregivers. The Area Agencies on Aging are partners with the Lifespan Respite Program. They also provide Care Management and operate Caregiver Support Programs.

This older worker initiative focuses by design on an economically at-risk population. As noted earlier, 96% of participants have incomes below the poverty level, 64% receive public assistance benefits and 48% are at-risk of homelessness. A functional partnership between SCSEP, local aging, housing and community service organizations is necessary to address multiple needs of the program's participants. The Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging (ENOA) reports that persons over 50 years of age who are eligible for General Assistance, Food Stamps or Omaha Section 8 housing are referred to their SCSEP for possible training. ENOA works with both the Department of Health and Human Services and Omaha's public housing to address the support needs of their training participants.

The State Unit on Aging has worked with Experience Works and the Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging to maintain functional partnerships within the WIA system. Nebraska's sub-grantees are active with their local One-Stop Shops. This includes participation on Workforce Investment Boards (WIB) and their committees. All have current Memorandums of Understanding with the WIB. (For an example of increased access, see Section 2.3's description of the job-certified training being developed in Omaha.)

Section 2.8

Avoidance of Disruptions in Service

Program adjustments may be necessary for a variety of reasons. Reasons vary from the population shift documented by a new Census to an adjustment in funds available to support this program. Modest program adjustments (such as yearly Equitable Distribution position level changes) will not have an impact on current individual enrollees. Actual program shifts would occur as participants leave the program for unsubsidized jobs or for other reasons. A decrease in program funding will also require similar action. A substantial cut in funding will require a more significant program adjustment such as a reduction in the weekly participant's training hours. All participants will continue to receive program support during a program adjustment period.

Section 2.9

Improvement of SCSEP Services

Program improvement over the next four years will increasingly focus upon growing industries, developing a closer working relationship with human service organizations, supporting employers and equitably distributing SCSEP positions across our State. Suggestions include:

1. Increase SCSEP focus upon Nebraska's Hot Jobs. Through partnerships with other Workforce Investment Act organizations develop classroom and on-the job training to address our growth industries. Long term care will be a growth industry as our Baby Boom generation increasingly needs a variety of supportive services.
2. Develop a closer working relationship between SCSEP, Ticket to Work and the Centers for Independent Living.
3. Develop a relationship between SCSEP, Nebraska's Aging Network (Aging and Disability Resource Center and Area Agencies on Aging) and the State Department of Health and Human Services to address the multiple support needs common among SCSEP participants.
4. Working with Medicaid to review program guidelines which count SCSEP training income when determining program eligibility. Current rules require interested older persons to choose between training and Medicaid.
5. The distribution of positions will be proportional to the eligible population of persons over 55 years of age. Distribution within rural areas will be monitored to assure equitable distribution of SCSEP positions. Shifting positions will be accomplished gradually as participants leave this program.
6. Work with SCSEP providers to assure timely reporting of participant activity into SPARQ (US Department of Labor web-based reporting system).

Appendix A – SCSEP Equitable Distribution Report

SCSEP Equitable Distribution Report will be completed after the finalization of US DOL's current competition for National Contractors.

Appendix B –

Nebraska SCSEP Providers

Service Provider List

Service Provider	Counties Served	Contact
Senior Employment Program	Douglas, Sarpy	Michelle Dorner Program Director Eastern NE Office on Aging 4223 Center Street Omaha, NE 68105 (402) 444-6684
Experience Works	All counties in Nebraska	Richard Freeman Regional Director PO Box 4040 Des Moines, IA 5033 (800) 782-7519

**State of Nebraska
Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)
State Plan for PY 2012-2016**

Verification of Intent

In accordance with the Older Americans Act (OAA) of 1965, as amended, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services hereby submits the SCSEP State Plan for PY 2012 through 2015. The Division of Medicaid & Long Term Care has been designated and given authority by the Governor of the State of Nebraska to develop and administer the SCSEP State Plan in compliance with all requirements under Title III of the OAA as amended and reauthorized in 2006.

The SCSEP State Plan is hereby approved by Governor Dave Heineman and constitutes authorization to proceed with activities contained with the plan upon approval from the Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.

Date

Vivianne M. Chaumont, Director
Division of Medicaid & Long –Term Care
Department of Health and Human Service

I hereby respectfully submit on this _____ day of _____, 2012, the Nebraska SCSEP State Plan for approval by the Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.

Governor, State of Nebraska