



**SCSEP Peer-to-Peer (P2P)
Session I – Service Delivery
January 27, 2021
Workgroup Notes - Breakout Room 1**

The following were represented:

Associates for Training and Development
(A4TD)
Connecticut
Easter Seals
Goodwill Industries
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas Minnesota
Massachusetts
National Able Network
National Urban League
New Hampshire
Operation ABLE, Inc.
The Work Place
Vantage Aging
Wisconsin
USDOL/ETA/OWU
TwoTech, Inc.

Question #1

Grantees have you begun to shift from paid sick leave back to community service assignment training?

If so, describe your strategies and/or challenges with doing so.

- ✓ Located in 10 states and about 40% back. Yes, no longer in paid sick leave pandemic is why. Many states are still on lock down, protocols are varying; ensuring safety of job-seekers, setting up office space, 60% remote and pushing out remote trainings. We are looking for approach where Community Service Assignments (CSA) delivers training.
- ✓ 30% back in person; Iowa and Nebraska are less because they have to meet certain grantee safety requirements (the states of Iowa and Nebraska will not mandate masks and other safety precautions established by grantee). Internet access and laptops, still have folks not in CSA but still doing training and engaging with career coaches. Received funding to do a Digital Divide Program. We are buying Chromebooks, and looking at Teknimedia software that all you do is open the laptop and you are already online; does not need internet access. We are going through all 80 laptops and making sure they are working. We hired college students to deliver training in small cohorts. Received donated laptops, we call them “craaptops” since they are donated and they don’t always work. Some of our older participants who don’t have any digital skills, it is good [for them to work on these]. Our IT



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- department is doing a lot of troubleshooting so many people might want to check with their IT [department] before they accept used lap tops that corporations discard. We are doing a lot of training with mailing stuff out, phone calls, initiative to give Chromebooks to older job seekers.
- ✓ Teenagers say Chromebooks are horrible. However, they are available at low cost or free. Received Chromebooks, and they are horrible to use. Asked others how good they are for older workers? Not good, but if you give them out with virtual training it is good.
 - ✓ Previous SCSEP grantee, Experience Works, donated 50 laptops and 50 iPads for only the cost of shipping. Sorting through the working ones is a challenge, especially since IT is closed/limited. It has been a blessing to receive these and other company donations, although a helpdesk in itself is needed to assist with getting laptops up and running.
 - ✓ Only a few on [paid] sick [leave], one who is actually positive COVID-19. Created a 10-week workbook for job readiness topics. The first was resume building, applications, etc. The second one being launched is “How to Job Search During a Pandemic.” Getting the Chromebooks to participants; placing them with those [participants] with less skills. Peer mentoring program and partnering with high schools for community service requirements.
 - ✓ [Grantee] Our team created job readiness workbooks. Our first one was about resumes and cover letters and the next one we will roll out will be about job development. We are in the process of using Chromebooks as well and Mi-Fi [devices] too.

Question #2

Other than paid sick leave, have participants been engaged in other SCSEP activities? (i.e. skills training, job readiness)?

- ✓ Other activities include [Grantee] workbooks. We shared the first workbook on Google Docs with job readiness topics; Resume Building, How to Job Search in a Pandemic. We will send to Employment Training Administration (ETA) to share.

The challenge will be to get Chromebooks to participants, [who] don't have good computer skills. In the process of [starting] peer mentoring program for those who have good [skills] and partner with those who do not have good computer skills; using virtual platforms. We are developing peer mentoring, and building a digital literacy corps. Connecting with high schools for community service to help our older workers with digital training. The Google Docs workbook, our training team developed it ourselves. We are in the process of creating more.



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Facilitator's Question - Asked if ETA can receive copies to share with the field. Answer was yes.

Question #3

Do you have participants who are not comfortable returning back to their CSA if available?

If yes, how are you addressing this?

- ✓ Social isolation is a big issue – kicked off Oregon weekly town hall 60 participants from across the country; job seekers showed up dressed and prepared, virtually discussing their experiences. The core is social isolation and being real about the fear. Discussing vaccinations and fears out there; having real conversations.
- ✓ People want to go back but adhering to safety protocols, grantees are requiring job seekers to sign off on risks of returning to site and promising to inform Host Agency /CSA immediately if they are not feeling well. Some host agencies provide masks; if they [participants] cannot wear masks then they are required to do virtual only training. Keeping abreast of the spikes [COVID-19] and putting participants on sick leave. Many host agencies are closed. Being flexible and caring about individuals first.
- ✓ Getting a permanent job is so difficult and less on everybody's mind, but they have had placements. Concentrating on the training and supportive services.
- ✓ [Grantee] We have 57% back with CSA, anxious to go back, not allowed without protection plan for safety; wear mask, hand washing etc. to stay safe. Participant also signs off on risks about returning, common sense and taking ownership. We are supplying masks to clients; 4k in my office to send out. A couple [participants] have a note [that they can't wear mask]. If they can't wear a mask, they must do virtual training. Looking at spikes in different areas and putting people on sick leave. Looking at alternative to sites that are closed. We have been doing audits, [of sites and participants]. I called around in New Jersey; check-ins went well. Treading water and figuring out what to do next. People want to get back, maybe 1-2 people playing the system but only with [the same] trouble participants before Covid-19.
- ✓ People want to return [to CSA], not a lot of bad experiences. The community service spirit is rising more than ever before. People still want to get a permanent job but its [Covid-19] on everyone's mind. Some people are getting jobs.

Question #4

Which types of host agencies are available and fully operational? (i.e. Community based organizations, AJsCs, Senior Centers).



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- ✓ Discussed placement where a participant will be placed as an e-commerce manager at Wayfair; contact tracing jobs; work from home call center jobs.
- ✓ Host agency supervisors are hiring participants; familiarity with participant helped a lot.
- ✓ Host agency hires and in New York, contact tracing hires.
- ✓ Food distribution sites and custodial [workers] are big; people who work alone without a lot of contact with public; no resale shops, but after hours [work].
- ✓ Host agency implementing safety precautions; participants working in stores are being hired and in cleaning and custodial jobs.

Question #5

Are host agencies able to continue with the CSAs as they have done prior to COVID-19?

If yes – how are they ensuring that the facility and participants are adhering to the CDC’s COVID-19 safety practices?

- ✓ The American Job Centers (AJCs) are offering free Microsoft classes, and the libraries are offering these no cost options as well.
- ✓ Self-assessment of technical skills, is given to everyone upon enrollment [to determine] what is appropriate for their skills level. This guides our staff for computer training.

Facilitator’s Comment - Responses are embedded in response to other questions. Many are but they have different approaches.

Are you and/or the host agencies (HA) providing safety supplies (such as PPE) and other pandemic-specific supportive services to participants?

- ✓ Conducted a survey about CSA and found that they were all providing protective equipment with no expectation that grantee would. For the most part, the only thing that changed is the number of participants attending due to social distancing. Participants have not been sent back to sites following the leads of state; working remotely from home. Using paper and pencil and connecting with participants every two weeks with wellness calls. These determine needed supportive services. Will suggest staggering components and participants may need to sway from chosen career paths.

Are any HA offering virtual CSAs?

If yes – what are they doing virtually?

Facilitator’s Comment - Though some responses are embedded in other answers, here are a few add-ons:



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- ✓ [Grantee] We are doing remote training as well. We have done paper and pencil due to digital divide, connect with people very 2 weeks to verify they completed training and serves as wellness call. Helps to determine if people need supportive services also. The lack of connection with life outside is an issue, lots of people without family nearby and our call is the most familiar [voice] they receive.
- ✓ Understanding that everyone isn't computer-ready. That is a barrier itself. Understanding is the key. You also have to understand what the nature of the assignment is, and put the Chromebooks to work.
- ✓ Goodwill North Star has free assessments to get [participants] baseline computer knowledge and you do not need licenses. We've added this to their Individual Employment Plans (IEPs).
- ✓ [Grantee] is using GCF LearnFree; Coursera (for more advanced) participants. COR Assessments and Microsoft word classes through tech soup. Contracted with training providers KnowledgeWave; self-assessment of technology skills. American Job Centers (AJCs) offer [Microsoft] Office for free.

Facilitator's Comment - Grantees will send in additional resources, there were so many being "thrown out" by Grantees. Facilitator requested they type them into "chat" during the TEAMS meeting and they are listed below:

<https://www.digitalliteracyassessment.org/>
<https://www.knowledgewave.com/kls-video-trial>
<https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/>
<https://www.khanacademy.org/>
<https://www.coursera.org/>

Are any HA offering modified CSAs?

If yes – describe the modified CSA model (i.e. on-site and virtual, minimizing contact with others, flex hours)

Facilitator's Comment - Responses are embedded in previous answers.

How does the use of remote/virtual CSAs impact those participants who are not computer literate?

- ✓ Some [grantees] are using high school community service requirements to assist elders with computer skills [and also] using college students.
- ✓ [Grantee] We have 3 training remote assignments, working out with the HA and participants and there are several things the HAs are doing. They are providing equipment for our participants; very small numbers.



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- ✓ [Grantee] We've seen not everyone is computer ready. If we give them a Chromebook are they ready?
- ✓ Connecticut received a grant from the State to give all participants Chromebooks.

Question #6

What else is happening that you would like to share (challenges, successes, and promising practices)?

- ✓ Wisconsin State's biggest challenge is going back to work and finding safe work places. Computers and cell phones are not as reliable in rural areas, accessibility and fear of computers. Hearing about workbooks was helpful.
- ✓ Lack of knowledge, lack of technology and fear.
- ✓ Lack of technical Support
- ✓ [Grantee] We started training on safety/efficacy on vaccines and training participants. Every week this changes and we are incorporating this into our weekly updates. We are also doing a lot of things to educate our participants with scam education. We do a bi-weekly "nugget of knowledge," that is emailed or mailed out in a newsletter that has a combination of training, vaccine information and fun stuff to engage participants.

Facilitator's Comment - Asked Grantee to send a sample of the newsletter to Federal Project Officer (NPO) and National Office Liaison (NOL).

- ✓ Massachusetts is hosting a town hall event on February 5, 2021, to talk about their main barriers to employment. Asked the group to help with the Town Hall with 50+ events; SCSEP world, older worker groups, council on aging etc. "What do they think are the main barriers to employment, what can we learn?"
- ✓ Grantee asked if we can take up the question about host agency liability for COVID-19. Wants to portray guidance/confidence.
- ✓ Grantee would love to know what other states and grantees are monitoring in regards to the percentage of [COVID-19] positivity rates. Iowa is still over 10%.