



SCSEP Peer-to-Peer (P2P)
Session I – Service Delivery
January 27, 2021
Workgroup Notes - Breakout Room 2

The following were represented:

AARP Foundation
Center for Workforce Inclusion (formerly Senior Service America)
Florida Georgia Maryland
National Council on Aging
National Older Worker Career Center
New Jersey
Pennsylvania
South Carolina
Tennessee
Washington DC
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.

- ✓ Yes and no, we pushed really hard to get people back by September and then you know COVID-19 ebbed and flowed around the country so it gets worst in places. Places would close, some places didn't close until their infection rate got awful so it's really hard to do it in a concerted way. As a national grantee, we work with sub-grantees so it may be that's our problem versus you know an agency that's able to manage everything itself. I would say that for us some of the challenges are some host agencies are continuing to operate in remote work mode. Like the center where I work right now we're not reporting to headquarters so it's what opportunities are there for participants to work remotely. For those that have reopened either partially or fully, there are social distancing restrictions
- ✓ Basically what our team did to facilitate that transition, was to gather up a ton of resources and materials for at-home training. We have a Google folder with a myriad of training materials that can be printed and mailed to participants and it also links to online resources and relevant coursework. The program directors work individually with participants to do an Individual Employment Plan (IEP), and decide what at-home training they're going to be doing. Also, we've been trying to slowly get as many people back as possible and all of our participants have the right to refuse to go back to a host agency if they feel unsafe or uncomfortable. We have kind of a hybrid going, some people are back at their Community Service Assignments (CSAs) and others are training at home but everybody is doing some kind of relevant training.



SCSEP Peer-to-Peer (P2P)
Session I – Service Delivery
January 27, 2021
Workgroup Notes - Breakout Room 2

If not, describe the reason(s) why?

- ✓ Participants and host agencies are uncomfortable due to COVID-19.

Question #2

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

- ✓ That's a good question because [Grantee] we really are about 54% back right now and the remote training we've been successful at. The biggest issue has always been the way to track it, trying to figure a way to track it back to actual participant training hours. The virtual, the email or the electronic services we were using before, those work really well, but unfortunately, only 40% of our participants have the capability to do that. So we started using facilitated training which in essence is being provided via the phone like a WebEx. We are bouncing around in between the workforce-related job development. Because we've been doing it for so long and I can only go over elevator speeches so many times, that we started to branch out into life skills; self-sufficiency, soft skills training. We have actually purchased textbooks for trainers and we're actually going through the curriculum as if it was an online class. We are just kind of working through textbooks; we started doing this with our "Seven Smart Strategies Guide." All of our participants have a copy of that but again you know that's back when we thought COVID-19 would be over in like you know a month.
- ✓ DC Department of Employment services [administers] the SCSEP program. In the 4th Quarter, we definitely were challenged where all of our participants were basically on paid [sick] leave. In the 1st Quarter of 2020, we got focused on what I found interesting with SCSEP; that the best thing has been the ability to serve participants that don't have technical skills. We put those [participants] in foodservice sites as nutrition aides, and janitorial roles. COVID-19 really eliminated that opportunity for them. In July when we started the new quarter, we actually piloted a SCSEP virtual job club and honestly the first month my whole focus was on helping participants get computers and laptops. I connected them to community partners and Wi-Fi. Establishing profiles online with DC public library for accessibility to things online like YouTube, LinkedIn and our DC Network System so that they could really do things at home. Now we're about 65% who are either virtually working or at a host site. The other 35% are on calls with me on Mondays, Wednesdays Thursdays and Fridays. One of the best things that has come from this is that participants who had not had time to focus on getting their GED'S now have time to get their GEDs.

Facilitator's Comment – We know how devastating COVID-19 has been for everyone, but there are some small positive things that have occurred and the ability for these participants to get their GED's could be seen as one of the small positives.



SCSEP Peer-to-Peer (P2P)
Session I – Service Delivery
January 27, 2021
Workgroup Notes - Breakout Room 2

- ✓ Virtual training, is still a challenge because not all participants have connectivity. Even if we attempted to provide them with a computer, there is just no connectivity. I've read somewhere that folks are using radios to provide training to kids. I'm not sure if I'm ready to explore that type of training as an option, we're trying to think out of the box. We have heard that in Wyoming they are providing drive by services, in a state that never really closed, that's interesting.

Question #3

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

If yes, how are you addressing this?

- ✓ Participants have the right to refuse to go back to a host agency if they feel unsafe or uncomfortable. So we have a sort of a hybrid going some people are back at their CSAs and others are training at home but everybody is doing some kind of relevant training.
- ✓ Not a lot of traffic in the sites they are placed in. [Grantees] We are providing additional safety training and ensuring they have Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and are following the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. So it gives us like a twofold of adding that extra training to make sure that the participants understand everything that's going to be required of them when meeting other people outside.
- ✓ In DC, the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) have not permitted participants to return to the actual role of delivering food, they are only allowed back in an administrative role.
- ✓ [Grantee] We used a website "Care Academy" to provide online training to participants, host agencies and staff on COVID-19 precautions, as a precursor. Wanted to make sure everybody had the same understanding about going back out. But it's a constant struggle to keep up as things keep changing; like "double masking." We're fielding so many calls about that now.
- ✓ If the CDC predictions are correct, we may be facing another national shutdown. That's what's so hard about COVID-19. None of us went into this thinking recovery would be a straight line, but how many step backs we've had to take during the year, is innumerable. It's constantly changing so our responses will continue to evolve and it makes it challenging beyond what you can even imagine.
- ✓ On the other side you don't want to push too hard on a host agency especially because of the liabilities. The larger portion you get into another mess that like Congress couldn't figure out. We're all in this like really difficult position to be able to navigate this and have to be very flexible. I'm sorry to keep going on, but I'm having a really hard time with this.



SCSEP Peer-to-Peer (P2P)
Session I – Service Delivery
January 27, 2021
Workgroup Notes - Breakout Room 2

- ✓ One of the things we started is a voluntary re-entry into host agencies for participants. One of the things we're trying to encourage is returning to the host agency only when you're comfortable and only to those host agencies who want to take participants back. At the end of the day we're doing a fantastic job in providing training in various formats. We have some opportunities come up that will make training for remote training a little bit more trackable or computer based. But then we also run into that conversation of seniors not having the ability to access the internet or the computer. If we provide these things, how long term can we sustain that? Not sure what will happen if we have another shutdown.

Question #4

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

- ✓ A few of the American Job Centers (AJCs) have been providing a bulk of the distance learning for our participants and so much so they have done five days a week. They do this through Zoom check-ins and then provide us with the attendance list as well as weekly progress notes. However, this is one of the AJCs and the rest of them are actually not open and some of them we were co-located in, so this also reduces opportunities. It has been a challenge to even try to get there because we are so spread out and where we are affiliated, we are actually not located in any of the areas that we serve. That's why we're co-located in AJCs and they are very stressed themselves, so when we even are trying to get services for just individual participants, there's just been this long waiting list. They have given us appointments all the way down into March already.
- ✓ The AJCs have been helpful as some have been a lot more helpful than others. I think the larger ones with the capacity to help, have been helpful in delivering a lot of the online services but a lot of the smaller ones I think are just overtaxed themselves so they have not been as helpful as we would like them to be right now.
- ✓ [Grantee] Our office pretty much monitors everything that goes on. As of now, none of our participants in the program are on [paid] sick leave they are working remotely from home. Participants are getting job-ready so that once everything opens back up and that they are pretty much prepared for doing their resumes and doing interviews. We are doing things like that and we track all of that information, but with one of the other extra pieces to the puzzle, is our office also works hand in hand with the AAAs here in the state of Arkansas.
- ✓ The senior centers, support quite a few of our participants. There are some centers that have not completely opened. Those that are open, this is where we can put participants. The senior centers are still providing home-delivered meals. Our participants are now getting trained in this area. So the senior centers for us here in the state of Arkansas, have really been a big help.



**SCSEP Peer-to-Peer (P2P)
Session I – Service Delivery
January 27, 2021
Workgroup Notes - Breakout Room 2**

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?

- ✓ One of the things that we realized, is that participants that have felt comfortable returning to their host agencies, are the ones when they get there, we have the host agency providing their COVID-19 guidelines and practices. Most of the host agencies are also providing [COVID-19] orientation for participants that are returning. However, if there are any increased conditions or cases reported, when they get to the host agency, that definitely changes their comfort level and they [participants] will usually want to return back to distance learning again. Even if we talk to the participant about an alternative host agency, they are now reluctant to return back. A few of the host agencies on the other hand, are reluctant to take back participants, if they have been open and operational [without any issues]. The host agencies note that our population is the hardest hit population and most vulnerable population and so they are absolutely worried about liability concerns. They have been very reluctant to take back our participants, even though they are open and operational to the public.
- ✓ Participants are asked to follow CDC guidelines given by the agency. The participants decide if they are comfortable returning or not returning; it is completely voluntary. If participants cannot follow the rules; CDC guidelines and the agency requirements, they will be removed from the host agency.
- ✓ [Grantee] We created a participant acknowledgement COVID-19 form, which is shared during the orientation, it has been helpful.

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

- ✓ PPE and social distancing are more of a concern to the participants. As mentioned previously, we've provided mask and training to participants and staff. We used an online COVID-19 training for participants, all staff and all host agencies, as a precursor to going back. We want to make sure everybody has the same understanding.
- ✓ [Grantee] We had some research done by the Brookdale Center on Aging. One of the other grantees hinted about the importance of [COVID-19] education. One of the things that is important for people to know, is the data on COVID-19. People who are affected or those who have underlying conditions, data shows that if you're young and have conditions, you're likely to have a bad experience with COVID-19 just as if you're 70. So the part of educating people is that if you're healthy and you happen to be 60, you probably won't die from COVID-19. So education is key and the challenge with that again is it's constantly [COVID-19] evolving. We are trying to keep people educated and focused on science you know; see what the CDC is saying.



**SCSEP Peer-to-Peer (P2P)
Session I – Service Delivery
January 27, 2021
Workgroup Notes - Breakout Room 2**

- ✓ The state of Florida is so wide spread, we have transportation issues, and a lot of seniors do not have transportation and we are using supportive services to get them where they need to go.

Are any HA offering virtual CSAs?

If yes – what are they doing virtually?

- ✓ The AAAs, many of them are calling a lot of the residents so many of the remote opportunities have come from that. Participants are able to be call takers; they make care calls, do remote work and administrative work, so many of the host sites have transferred into more virtual types of assignments for seniors. One thing that I've been very aware of is when a host agency request seniors to return on-site, yet their staff has not returned. I'm not letting my seniors be a guinea pig at the same time. I've had a senior that was placed back on site, then I found out that oftentimes the staff were not returning. I don't know if I am willing to allow seniors to be there without supervision, it is something to be mindful of.

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)

- ✓ [Grantee] We are doing things in general using a lot of Zoom webinars for training as well. We have been able to utilize a lot of the online resources, LinkedIn Learning.
- ✓ Slide Share has been a godsend for most of us. We've been reaching out to the libraries in terms of getting workbooks to mail out to participants, we have set up some drop-in and drop-off centers for homework assignments so that they can do independent study. We've made that a part of a formal business learning model so that there are a certain amount of hours of reading material and homework assignments that participants will have to turn in and most of them are comfortable with just doing drop-off. We have the drop-off divided into the last name so that there is no more than five people dropping off something an hour and that has seemed to work out for us. The drop-off is only ideally for participants who are not able to submit things online, so that has been more than helpful as we mailed out workbooks on a bi-weekly basis. To get those back, we send self-addressed envelopes for participants to return homework assignments. This is how we have primarily gotten assignments back into the Zoom telephone conferences. We do weekly check-ins and participants are required to do a one hour check in with us every week to maintain contact. These check-ins are done via Zoom or via telephone conference.



SCSEP Peer-to-Peer (P2P)
Session I – Service Delivery
January 27, 2021
Workgroup Notes - Breakout Room 2

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

- ✓ One of the things we did in early March was to create a technology and capability tracker. We sent out surveys via email and mail, we also did some verbal surveys with participants. The survey was to gather what they were able to do [with technology] and what type of access to technology they had. This was divided into four different groups and based on what group they were in, determined what type of training they received.

We also created a COVID IEP, and grouped them into different industries based on what their employment goals were, and all of their training was directed to that industry.

Question #6

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

- ✓ The major challenges have been the unsubsidized employment in light of COVID-19. Many of our individuals are just not interested right now in going out to find gainful employment and we don't want to force people to go out and find employment during COVID-19.
- ✓ Recertification has been a challenge, and participants are hesitant to send in original documents. Transportation has been a challenge for participants.
- ✓ COVID-19 is very political, where you go around the country really depends on their response to it [COVID-19]. What Texas is doing is going to be radically different than Maryland in terms of how they view COVID-19. And I mean the participants, we should always remember that are participants are not monolith. We have some participants that are bored to tears and ready to go back to work. We have some that believe it's a hoax and don't want to use any PPE.
- ✓ It runs the gamut so widely. I've been on calls with some states where it's like "what COVID-19." There are host agencies who are saying "get them out here what are you talking about." I've had participants who say if you make me wear a mask, I'll file a grievance. Then I'll go to another state and they want us to provide participants with hazmat suits. That's what makes this so complex for SCSEP. We are leaning on the host agency to define their requirements and protocols and this is what we're following when placing participants at a site. From Maryland to California you're going to get a different response from the participants to the host agencies, to the AJC, to the mayor to the governor from county to county.



SCSEP Peer-to-Peer (P2P)
Session I – Service Delivery
January 27, 2021
Workgroup Notes - Breakout Room 2

Facilitator's Question – How are you working with all these different complexities? What rule are you following?

- ✓ We provide the participant with the host agencies' guidelines and they have to agree to abide by those guidelines. We have them sign off on an acknowledgement form. We have had participants say they're not wearing a mask, but if the host agency requires it, they won't be placed there.
- ✓ Participants who say it is a hoax and they are filing a grievance if we make them wear any PPE. We provide them with the grievance form and information. We have had participants exit the program due to this.
- ✓ [Grantee] We are having challenges around recertification with enrollments. We have not fully figured out how to do this. For those that nothing has changed its easy, but those that have changes with expired ID's or don't have access to make copies, they are very hesitant to mail in original documents, even with us using drop-off centers.
- ✓ Major challenge unsubsidized employment. Many participants are not interested in going out and finding employment during COVID-19. Previously we would have used some type of progressive discipline and encouraged participants to go out, but now we don't want to force anyone to go out over fears of COVID-19. It is definitely negatively impacting our [performance] numbers.

Facilitator's Comment – USDOL expressed that this is a time if you have any questions or want to share something with you peers, that wasn't on our list, this is a good time to do this.

- ✓ [Grantee] This is the first time that I've heard about mailing information out to participants it's really something we never considered, we were doing tele-meetings with participants so this is very helpful for me. So if there is any curriculum, lesson plans or information that could be shared through the Community of Practice (COP) or material through USDOL, this would be very helpful.

Facilitator's Comment – USDOL/ETA/OWU expressed that is the intent to share this information on COP. If Grantees want to send information they've developed to SCSEPTechnicalAssistance@dol.gov that would be great and we will get it posted.