



**SCSEP Peer-to-Peer (P2P)
Session 2 – Skills Training
February 24, 2021
Workgroup Notes – Breakout Room #2**

Question #1

How are you delivering your virtual/remote skills training for your participants? (e.g. online learning, pen & paper)?

- ✓ [Grantee] early on, two pay periods for paid sick leave. Afterwards, “training packets” [were] mailed to [participant’s] homes. Pencil and paper packets.

Checking to see if they [Grantee] could get on local Community TV, but in Ohio this was not available.

There’s a lot of programming around “know yourself” to help participants with job search. Offering resume help and references help. Career Pathways initiative, and using O*Net now. This is a new language to participants; there are a variety of names for different occupations that participants may not be familiar with. Understanding how to mitigate other barriers to employment. We recently completed a workbook on What Color is your Parachute?

- ✓ [Grantee] We are piloting a digital learning divide waiver, pairing 6 or 7 participants with college students. [Participants] have been given Chromebooks.

About half of participants don’t have access to technology so paper and pencil is used across the board.

There are still people on sick leave because participants are only training 10 hours a week instead of 20.

- ✓ [Grantee] We are doing blended approach as well. Half of the participants are back at host agencies. Some want to be back due to social isolation, and half are doing some kind of remote training. Grateful to Kate [Grantee] for sharing her playbook early in the pandemic. They’ve amassed a library of paper tools for their people to use. It may be redundant material but it creates a muscle memory of how to do their job search. We didn’t want participants to be complacent or to get frustrated with the repetitive nature of job search. As a National Grantee, we contracted with Dynamic Work, they supply a diversity of curricula: Conflict Resolution, How to Dress for an Interview, Soft Skills, etc. They [Grantee] did a 3 month contract/program.

A lot of participants want to go back and the issue is sometimes the capacity of the host agencies.

- ✓ [Grantee] The paper and pencil activities are done on a weekly call. They’d prefer to have the equipment and skills to do it live, but appreciate the ability to do something virtually rather than doing nothing.

- ✓ [Grantee] We had some initial resistance from participants who thought that some of the paper and pencil work was like “school” or “homework”. We closed in Ohio in



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mid-March 2020 (for the pandemic), around St. Patrick's Day. Participants were more involved after the shut down because they were open to the interaction. We are interested to see what employment numbers look like after taking these types of self-reflection in at-home training.

- ✓ [Grantee] We use a lot of pen and paper for participants because there is sometimes a language barrier, and also use Zoom for the same reason. We have been training our participants early in the pandemic to use Zoom as it is a necessary skill these days. Even if the participants can't get on Zoom, we do conference calls to check in and keep participants up to date. We have a laptop loaner pilot program from a different funding source as well. We have purchased 50 laptops so far to loan out to participants to assist them to continue the virtual learning. Equipment wise it is very important. If they don't have the hardware they won't be able to join. However we're finding that if they have a smartphone, since most participants have them, it is also a good way to start them using Zoom or some other platform.
 - [Facilitator's question] Can you deliver training on their phones too? Is there a way they could read that, or is it just like they're sitting in a Zoom class?
 - [Grantee's answer] No you cannot just use the phone, you have to use it together with the paperwork. We mail printed materials to participants and then follow-up with a phone call, otherwise it has no context that you can talk about. For those that can use their Smartphone to get on Zoom, they have no problem viewing the PowerPoint and the training materials.
 - [Grantee's question] Are you translating all of the content into their native language?
 - [Grantee's answer] We plan to translate the material, but because of time, we haven't been able to do it yet. That is one of our final goals to achieve; to have the materials translated to participants in their native languages. We do have staff that can speak different languages, so we present the content now in English and Spanish. That's how we are accommodating the language needs right now. Our goal is to have it translated into Chinese and Vietnamese. We will share translations with everyone once it is done.
 - [Grantee's question] For everyone that has been doing pen and paper, which it sounds like most are or some hybrid thereof. We didn't go the training route and now we're venturing towards the remote assignments of course. Are participants mailing material back in or do they keep it and complete it using the honor code?
 - [Grantee's answer] We conduct short quizzes to make sure participants understand the content. We also have activity logs to make sure they enter the level of activity that they engage. We also have some sub-grantees that have participants mail the completed workbook back.
 - [Grantee's answer] We do a bi-weekly call. We ask participants a series of questions to verify that they understood and did the training and have them submit a self-attestation.



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- [Grantee’s question] My questions was more about the cumbersome nature of having participants mail packages; going to the post office, them going out and not keeping them at home. Not so much the checking but how that works?
- [Grantee’s answer] We buy stamps on line and try to keep the packets small enough for a first class stamp and occasionally throw an extra stamp on there. Our bigger concern was the slow-down with the postal service.
- [Grantee’s answer] With paper materials, there is a concern about participants sending materials back. Actually had someone say “their dog ate their material,” but they were able to answer the questions verbally. We send out things digitally because of the concern of postal delays.
- [Grantee’s answer] Whenever participants have to return something to the grantee, we always send a self-addressed stamped envelope to make it easy to return.

Question #2

How have you assessed the participants’ abilities and comfortability to engage effectively in a virtual learning environment? Specifically the following:

- a. **Use of computer equipment**
No answers received.
- b. **Internet connectivity**
No answers received.
- c. **Access to and familiarity with virtual meeting platforms (Google Meets, MS Teams, Zoom)**
No answers received.

Question #3

For those who do not have the necessary equipment to train virtually, how have you mitigated these deficiencies?

- ✓ No answers received.



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Question #4

What types of training are you providing to your participants? (e.g., soft skills, job readiness, or other skills training related to the participant's goals and objectives)

- ✓ [Grantee] Yes absolutely, I have a 25 page thing, it's just unbelievable, but you've got to know your references. It's so detailed, but it's the type of things we want them to know when they apply for jobs. Many of our participants will go and do paper and pencil applications in different places, usually at retail outlets. Then when you try to think of your references, phone number and email it's impossible. So there's a whole packet that I have, I'd be more than happy to share. It is an extremely long packet and it's not popular.
 - [Facilitator's question] So what about resumes, are you getting back paper resumes that they are creating; and are you converting them or are they quality? Are they better quality than your normally see.
 - [Grantee's answer] For us, we have gotten paper and pencil resumes; it was the most heartwarming thing we've ever seen. We also have participants, especially motivated ones that are sending in paper resumes for review and assistance. Then we have the participants who are more active and come into our office by appointment, and use our resource centers to create their resume. We provide them with a template provided by the AJC and assist them with formatting. These are generally our more motivated folks who are looking for a job right now and want to make more than minimum wage.

Question #5

How can the AJCs be more involved in helping you and your participants with training? (e.g., virtual, in-person)?

- ✓ [Grantee] We really rely on AJC's for specialized training. Senior Companion, provides entry level health care, certification for security guard training, etc. These things used to be covered by Participant Wages and Fringe (PWF) budget but we haven't been able to get these approved in the last couple of years. All of the stuff that we used to be able to fund ourselves but can't now. We partner with the AJC's, we look to the AJCs now for specialized training; Chauffeur Driver's License (CDL) s, fork lift operators, etc., specifically for participants looking for full-time work. This is versus basic training which is resume skills, etc.



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- ✓ [Grantee] It's like the intensive versus the basic or general that is really hard to get. The AJC's don't want to bring the SCSEP Participants in because SCSEP Participants are more part-time versus looking for full-time. Potentially looking at age bias that they want to put those resources towards the younger job seekers that are looking for full-time.

- ✓ [Grantee] AJCs have done a great job switching training to virtual. General Education Development (GED) programs have gone virtual, which is great, but there is still a digital divide for folks who can't come into the resource center. It took AJC's a couple of weeks, to a month, to get instructions and everything online. They are all trainings that participants would have normally gone into the resource center or the classroom to take. I don't think there will be group training for another year.
 - [Facilitator's question] So making sure that they are more accessible to people who are not able to benefit from the virtual training and finding out if they can increase more intensive training for specialized skills and certification training?
 - [Grantee's answer] That's a bigger Workforce Innovative Opportunity Act (WIOA) question, that's a bigger one to unpack. I feel if we are paying infrastructure cost, then we already have some expectations of not saying no to all of our participants. I can see both sides though; WIOA doesn't want to serve SCSEP participants because it hurts their performance numbers. SCSEP participants aren't always job ready and that is the disincentive for WIOA.

Question #6

How can you integrate your virtual/remote training delivery strategy into a sustainable program model?

- [Facilitator question] Is paper and pencil a sustainable model moving forward? Or are you looking to change your service delivery method?

- ✓ [Grantee] As long as it remains equitable, we are sticking with paper and pencil. We're happy with some of the things we've heard about people being approved for computers as a supportive service. Department of Labor (DOL) might be one of the most responsive agencies as far as addressing the digital divide. Refurbished computers, low cost internet, and market need, can propel participants into digital inclusion faster than any other methods.

A lot of digital inclusion is as simple as knowing the right places or just being lucky to have been to a class at the right Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) or



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church program. DOL should look at providing technology to participants to bridge the digital divide.

- ✓ [Grantee] We depreciate our computers every 3 years or whatever the current rate is and once the technology reaches the end of its life in the organization, it can be filtered down to participants for instruction.
 - [Grantee's question] How do you assess digital literacy?
 - [Grantee's answer] We use PROVE IT tests – the Link is in the chat.

- ✓ [Grantee] There's an off-the shelf test that we use as well. Do they know how to use a digital application for a job online? That's a big barrier to discover in a participant and it is more common than you'd think.

- ✓ [Grantee] There is more time spent in IT/Troubleshooting with the participants than you would think. At first it's because participants are using computers for the first time or are relatively new to using technology this way. Who is responsible for the IT/Help Desk for participants? Our internal person is incredibly patient and they feel sending participants to a Dell help desk person could/would probably be counterproductive.
 - [Grantee's question] How are you tracking the Learning Management Systems?
 - [Grantee's answer] Our Learning Management System is a spreadsheet; not sophisticated.
 - [Grantee's answer] We track certifications, and things tied to career pathways.

Question #7

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

- ✓ [Grantee] One thing we are struggling with is the Community Service Assignment (CSA) is moving toward remote assignments. We are struggling with: if a participant is going to participate in SCSEP they need some degree of digital literacy, and if someone is looking to work in landscaping or food service these are jobs that don't require them to sit behind a computer? The move toward digital seems like a barrier, or moving away from the core goals of SCSEP.

- ✓ [Grantee] Someone in my organization called it "procedural injustice" in that it doesn't mean to but creates exclusions for individuals who want to participate.



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- ✓ [Grantee] we have a lot of people who want to do jobs that don't require technology access or literacy, such as cleaning or landscaping but there is also a geographic element to it. There have been more issues in New York and California than in West Virginia for example.

Shared through TEAMS Chat:

- ✓ [Grantee question] How was the paper content delivered to participants?
- ✓ [Grantee answer] Mailed and verification of training is done biweekly. Participants must be able to answer questions related to the training and self-attestation on hours spent in order to be paid.
- ✓ Resource: FYI for discounted internet:
<https://www.consumerreports.org/broadband-access/covid-19-relief-package-will-help-families-in-need-of-internet-access/>
- ✓ [Grantee Comment] COVID-19 Relief Package Will Help Families in Need of Internet Access
- ✓ The new COVID-19 relief package includes help for families in need of internet access. Consumer Reports explains who's eligible and how to apply for the monthly benefit.
www.consumerreports.org
- ✓ Kenexa Prove It Test: How to Prepare
Learn how to prepare for your upcoming Kenexa Prove It Test. Practice questions, answers and worked solutions.
www.practicereasoningtests.com