

# Senior Community Service Employment Program

## Tip Sheet: On-the-Job Experience



**What is On-the-Job Experience?** On-the-Job Experience (OJE) is a specific tool to attract employers to SCSEP and its participants, and to give participants a competitive advantage. During an OJE, a participant who is assigned to a host agency is put in training with an employer for up to 40 hours a week, for up to 12 weeks, in order to gain specialized skills and work experience. An OJE may be combined with work in a community service assignment and/or classroom training (all activities together may not exceed 40 hours per week) in order to maximize skills acquisition.

**Why use it?** OJE can help participants to develop specific skills that aren't attainable through regular community service assignments. In addition, it offers the only opportunity to work with for-profit organizations while enrolled in SCSEP. OJEs should help participants achieve employment at their highest wage and skill level.

**How does payment work?** There are two options for how a participant can be paid during an OJE:

<p><u>Direct payment model</u></p> <p>The grantee pays the participant's wages directly while he/she is at the OJE assignment.</p>	<p><u>Reimbursement model</u></p> <p>Employer pays the participant's wages directly and is reimbursed by the grantee.</p>
--	---

*Note: Both direct payment of wages and reimbursement of wages to the employer must come from the Participant Wages and Fringe Benefits budget line item.*

Within these payment models, grantees have three options for how they can structure an OJE:

<p><u>Option 1</u></p> <p>Grantee pays 100% of OJE wages directly for up to 12 weeks</p>	<p><u>Option 2</u></p> <p>Grantee reimburses employer for up to 50% of wages for up to 12 weeks</p>	<p><u>Option 3</u></p> <p>Grantee reimburses employer for up to 100% of the wages for up to 4 weeks</p>
--	---	---

These options are mutually exclusive and cannot be combined. Grantees can negotiate with employers over how many weeks (up to 12 weeks) the OJE will last and the rate of subsidy.

**What should an OJE contract contain?** At a minimum, an OJE contract with an employer must specify the following:

- Skills and benchmarks that the participant will attain during the OJE
- Hours per week (not to exceed 12 weeks, and 40 hours a week – including any hours at the community service assignment or in classroom training)

- A stipulation that employer will hire the participant at the end of the OJE if the skills and benchmarks are met
- A timeline for skills attainment and hiring
- Wage amount and payment model (reimbursement or direct payment)
- Who will cover workers' compensation

**What does a grantee need to do during an OJE?** The grantee should stay in touch with the participant and employer during the OJE to make sure that everything is going well and to intervene if there are problems. While it is expected that most OJEs will lead to unsubsidized employment with the hosting employer, that may not be the outcome for every OJE. For that reason, the grantee must keep the participant's community service assignment open until the OJE ends and allow the participant to return to the assignment if the OJE is not successful. The grantee must keep a copy of the OJE contract in the participant's file.

**Are there any restrictions on OJE?** Yes, there are restrictions on OJEs for both employers and participants:

Restrictions on employers

- Organizations currently serving as host agencies cannot have OJEs
- An employer may only have five OJEs per job category per 12 month period

Restrictions on participants

- A participant must have been assigned to a community service assignment for at least 2 weeks before beginning an OJE and must remain assigned during the OJE
- The need for an OJE must be detailed in the participant's IEP
- Each participant may only have one OJE per 12 month period

**What is the approval process to use OJE?** Any grantee that wishes to use OJEs must have prior approval from the Department of Labor in its grant agreement. To get approval, the grantee must submit its written OJE policy and sample contracts as part of its grant application; these documents can be modified at any time throughout the year. A sub-recipient may not use OJE unless its grantee has approval to do so from the Department. Refer to [Older Worker Bulletin 04-04](#) for additional information.

**How are OJEs handled in SPARQ?** OJEs are a form of approved training and must be recorded in field 33(c) of the Community Service Assignment Form. The name of the OJE employer must be entered into field 23 of the same form. If the OJE results in unsubsidized employment, field 8 of the Unsubsidized Employment Form must be marked "Yes." These fields in SPARQ are subject to data validation.