

Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

Intro: My name is Sheila Baker and I am director of the Senior Community Service Employment Programs (SCSEP) administered by Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging (M4A) in our six-county region. This includes Blount Chilton Jefferson, St. Clair, Shelby and Walker Counties.

The Senior Community Service Employment Program is a national program that provides qualified, low income adults, 55 and older, with part-time subsidized employment and prepares them for the local job market. SCSEP is authorized by the Older Americans Act and administered by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration and is administered by Middle Alabama Area Agency on Aging (M4A).

SCSEP was created in 1965, and is the nation's oldest program to help low-income, unemployed individuals aged 55 and older find work. SCSEP matches eligible older adults with part-time jobs for community service organizations based on their employment interest. Participants build skills and self-confidence, while earning a modest income. Participants work an average of 20 hours a week and are paid the state's prevailing minimum wage.

SCSEP participants must be at least 55, unemployed, and have a family income of no more than 125% of the federal poverty level. Enrollment priority is given to veterans and qualified spouses, then to individuals who are over 75, have a disability, have low literacy skills or limited English proficiency, reside in a rural area, are homeless or at risk of homelessness, have low employment prospects.

M4A is committed to making it possible for low-income and other disadvantaged older adults participate fully in determining their own future and the future of their communities. M4A provides employment opportunities to low-income and other older adults in our six-county region. Participants not only receive training at their host agency but, can attend computer classes, work with various agencies that have job readiness programs, some attend school for GED and/or ESL classes.

For over nine years M4A has operated the Senior Community Service Employment Program and currently partners with a diverse network of local government and non-profit organizations in our six-county service area.

About SCSEP Nationally

- 65,081 low-income older Americans received paid employment and training
- More than 2,000 public and nonprofit agencies (like libraries and senior centers) are supported with more than 34 million staff hours
- 51% of participants gained unsubsidized employment following the program

- \$820 million in community service provided by SCSEP participants – nearly twice the total appropriation for the program
- 88% of participants reported the same or better physical health while working
- 72% reported a better outlook on life while working

Who are SCSEP participants?

- 32% are 65 or older; 13% are 70 or older
- 65% are women; 49% are a racial or ethnic minority; 20% have at least one disability
- 43% have one or more years of college; 39% have a high school diploma; 18% do not have a high school diploma
- 13% are veterans or qualified spouses
- 28% live in rural areas